

How World Civility Index Helps Young People with Personal Image via a Diverse Focus to Prepare for their Future of Work

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Abstract: Young people are underemployed because of a lack of personal image management skills such as business etiquette, empathy, and intercultural awareness that companies need. IITTI helps young people to enhance these diverse skill sets in order to be prepared for their future of work. We do so by creating a universal, soft skills measurement standard called 'World Civility Index' where job-seekers can earn points after training, and HRs can assess the applicant's level of competency. As this measurement is an open-standard, all employers can adopt to it. It is now part of United Nations Sustainable Development to help young people gain meaningful employment.

Keywords: image - diversity - soft skills - standard assessment - youth employment

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How do we promote youth employability?

We will approach this by working "backward" to arrive at a viable solution. The process goes like this:

What are the top-of-the-list needs of employers?

Answer: They need workers to have flexibility and good attitude.

So how can we get employees to have flexibility and good attitude?

Answer: Employees and new hires need training in diverse image management skill sets such as social etiquette, empathy, civility (collectively called soft skills).

So how can employees show proof and improvement?

Answer: There needs a common measurement system, and IITTI has invented something called ‘World Civility Index’.

That is, this is a standard that allows image management soft skills training to be measurable. When something is measurable, it allows purposeful training. Once there is training, people start having better manners and empathy. So employees start having better flexibility and attitude at work.

For now, the next practical question to ask is:

What is the most-urgent image management training so that young people can thrive in their future of work?

Answer: It is the training for our young people where they will be facing a world of AI (artificial intelligence), robots and driver-less cars. A world that could seem gloomy, with massive unemployment and despair.

But it needs not be this way. We need to show young people that the “future of work” could be full of opportunities. We need to prepare them to thrive, not just survive in life and in the job market.

What is the Future of Work?

With the advancement of AI (artificial intelligence), robots and automated cars, many experts believe there will be massive unemployment. Not only are menial jobs such as warehouse operators, and retail salespersons going to be replaced by robots, but also “high end” professions such as lawyers and doctors who are going to be replaced by a website!

That is, anything that is “routine” and repetitive in nature, be it taking orders in a restaurant, or diagnosing a patient for diabetes, an AI program can do it better.

This is not a science fiction story, but is actually happening today! It is only a matter of time before this situation becomes widespread, which could happen within the next 10-15 years. Humanity has historically placed a lot of values, cultures, and self-worth on the traditional “work”, where we get paid for doing a traditional job. The big question is *What are people going to do then?*

That is, how are people going to make a living? And an equally troubling concern is how are people going to feel (read self-image and mental health) without an identity based on their job?

What Experts are Saying about Employment

Experts are increasingly seeing that some kind of universal basic income (UBI) would need to be established. COVID-19 has actually quickened this where we see country after country giving out money to citizens so that they can pay bills.

Some experts suggest that the future of work will create two classes of people: those who are in high demand, such as software engineers or entrepreneurs, and the majority who are chronically unemployable.

In other words, everyone will be able to have enough money for basic needs such as food and shelter, but beyond this, most people will be idling, creating a society with rampant self-image and mental health issues.

What Could Actually Happen

But the future of work does not have to be like this.

In January, 2022, the IITTI World Civility Index NGO in Canada published a Youth Standard education document about three essences:

- a. Cultivation of hobbies
- b. Learning how to talk to people, especially elderly
- c. Learning how to deal with boredom, anger, death, and other unpleasant feelings

So what is the 'World Civility Index'?

This Index is somewhat similar to a person's credit rating, but instead of measuring how well a person can pay their bills, it measures a person's diverse skill sets such as manners and civility (also called soft skills). Skill sets like business etiquette, empathy, intercultural awareness. The concept is that job-seekers can get the credential based on this Index, as proof in soft skills, to show to employers everywhere¹.

And this group is suggesting that this technological wave will make the traditional "currency" of work-for-money less and less relevant, and a new currency using this Index as the standard measurement that is based on qualities such as self-motivation in exploring hobbies, as an example, or empathy of companionship for our elderly will emerge.

Instead of people being left out feeling "unemployed", the future will free humans from mundane, repetitive chores to new, highly "human" activities that people will find meaning, purpose, and happiness

According to the IITTI World Civility Index group, the key to this 21st century-style education is that we need to have a new mindset. Current classical education is not obsolete,

it is just not enough. Classical education is predominately an education of the brain (math, chemistry, language, also known as hard skills), the 21st century education would also need diverse soft skills such as empathy, patience, and resilience, which really is about an education of the heart.

A historically troublesome aspect of soft skills education (e.g. empathy) has been that there were no standard measuring system that were judged meaningful. For example, it is easy for everyone to understand when a student got 82% in math, but what does it mean when someone gets 82% in empathy?!

A breakthrough with the IITTI World Civility Index group came when they realized soft skills, as an education of the heart, should not be measured the same way as brain skills, with a definitive right/wrong precision answer, but measured based on awareness. So the 'World Civility Index' focuses on measuring the amount of exposures. That is, the more exposure a person has about empathy, for instance, the more empathetic he/she would become.

Essence #1 Cultivation of hobbies

When people are freed from doing the jobs they hate, new wealth will come from people contributing to hobbies they love. On top of the traditional interests such as piano playing or swimming, young people need to be cultivated to develop a curiosity in everything from fashion design to history reenactment.

What wealth is created exactly?

As an example, history enthusiasts can help produce reenactment with high-fidelity historical details, making the show much more realistic and insightful, thus attracting more paying audiences.

Another example is amateur bird-watching. This can contribute to a better understanding of migration patterns, and how climate change is affecting different species of birds, which directly could have implication to agriculture productivity.

This is a different type of producer-consumer economic model. As hobbyists contribute to their passions, knowledge and data produced could be used to create innovative end-products, which in a knowledge-based economy could be exploited and monetized in new and unimaginable ways.

Essence #2 Learning how to talk to people, especially elderly

By connecting young students to our elderly, much of the life experiences of our older generation can be passed on to the young, while the young develop communication and empathy skills.

Not only can this leads to lowered behavioral issues of the young people, and lowering the costs to society in terms of juvenile delinquency, drug use, or cellphone addiction, but also opens up new wealth-creation opportunities when their communication and empathy skills improve.

Our elderly are also benefiting; with a sense of being appreciated, it leads to lower feeling of isolation, lower mental issue. Better mental health lowers the costs to society.

From a different perspective, lowering societal costs is the same as wealth creation. Real wealth creation, that is, not just what the GDP says.

Essence #3 Learning how to deal with boredom, anger, death, and other unpleasant feelings

With traditional jobs disappearing, and the long road of self-discovery that is encouraged, many young people, already inflicted by the instant gratification culture, will need guidance to learn how to deal with boredom.

Other unpleasant feelings are also a reality of life. Traditionally these are dealt with around the family dining table, but increasingly the lifestyle of people no longer allows this. Even for children with the best family environment, a rigorous educational program based on the latest scientific approach would give something that is beyond the individual experiences of such “best” families, and keep most young people away from mental issue and be creative individuals contributing to the new wealth.

How is the World Civility Index measurement system designed?

A biggest challenge is to take measurements in an uncertain and highly volatile world. When a multinational asked the author if he could help in measuring soft skills, he became fascinated in this challenge. For example, how would one measure business ethics, or empathy, or diversity awareness, or civility?

In other words, what is the standard of measurement?

Like they say,

*“Without a standard, there is no measurement.
If you can’t measure, there is no training!”*

That is why although many CEOs say that soft skills are important, there are hardly any major soft skills training in any company.

Goal

So the goal was to find if there was a way to standardize soft skills measurement. Together with soft skills experts from four continents of Asia, North America, South America, and Europe since 2011, they formed a non-profit called IITTI in Canada to set this standard.

Borrow from Rocket Science

To shoot a rocket straight, the strategy is to take many measurements of wind speed, temperature, angle, etc. along the way. Some of these data could be affected by noise where some will be too high and some will be too low. That's ok. The trick is to take many measurements over time so that the average and trend can be seen.

So this is Strategy Number 1: *Take many measurements over a long time.*

Borrow from Economics

The team also looked into the field of economics as it also faces the difficulty of taking measurements in a chaotic world (think the stock market!) How do they do it? Answer: they use a composite number such as the HDI (Human Development Index) to measure life expectancy, education, income, or for stocks, the Dow Jones Index, Heng Seng Index, etc².

So this is Strategy Number 2: *Create a single number to represent soft skills measurement.*

How to Build Ethics by Dan Ariely

Dan Ariely, behavioral economist at MIT, said during a TED Talk about moral and ethics that just by the fact that people are thinking about it would improve morality. So in essence if people are exposed to the right kind of message frequently, behavior would improve (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MNFXuJLZcwY> around 8-minute mark in the video).

So this is Strategy Number 3: *Expose people frequently to the message.*

How People Learn Behavior by Albert Bandura

Albert Bandura, psychologist at Stanford University, said that most complex human behavior is learned observationally. So a 3-hour lecture on ethics will not do as much as a 5-minute video.

So this is Strategy Number 4: *Deliver content about complex behavior in videos.*

What has been done

Many of the image management soft skills training had traditionally been done via classroom activities. But from knowing that the most effective means for learning complex behavior is by watching videos, the IITTI Standard now specifies a “blended learning” approach where some of the more competency-based subject matters such as business etiquette are to remain classroom-based with a written exam, and complex behavior subject matters such as civility, empathy, and cultural diversity awareness are video-based (Strategy No. 4: use videos).

To have a frequent delivery, the team delivers short 5-minute lessons of articles and videos on a daily basis (Strategy No. 3: frequent) called IITTI **Reading Program**.

To achieve a single-number goal, the team developed the composite index called IITTI **World Civility Index** where different IITTI certificates (written exams), reading articles, and activities would earn varying number of points (Strategy No. 2: single number measurement).

For example, for the Reading Program, each lesson will earn the user one (1) World Civility Index point, so over months and years, a person can gradually accumulate many points to build up his/her individual World Civility Index points to show employers (Strategy No. 1: take many measurements over a long time).

That is to say, for the major part, the design criteria of the World Civility Index has been:

1. High-frequency (every day)
2. Low-intensity (5 minutes each)
3. Long-term (years)

This has been proven to be very effective for young people, as the model of delivery fits general life-style of urban living: fast-pace, no time for sitting in a lecture at a physical location, inexpensive fees.

Notes:

1. Dan Ariely on our buggy moral code (2009). Retrieved from YouTube, January 1, 2022, from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MNFXuJLZcwYaround> 8-minute mark in the video
2. Bandura, A. (1969). *Social-learning theory of identificatory processes*. Handbook of socialization theory and research, 213, 262.

Resumen: Los jóvenes están subempleados debido a la falta de habilidades de gestión de la imagen personal, como la etiqueta comercial, la empatía y la conciencia intercultural que necesitan las empresas. IITTI ayuda a los jóvenes a mejorar estos diversos conjuntos de habilidades para estar preparados para su futuro laboral. Lo hacemos mediante la creación de un estándar universal de medición de habilidades blandas llamado “Índice de civildad mundial” en el que los solicitantes de empleo pueden ganar puntos después de la capacitación y los recursos humanos pueden evaluar el nivel de competencia del solicitante. Como esta medida es un estándar abierto, todos los empleadores pueden adoptarla. Ahora es parte del Desarrollo Sostenible de las Naciones Unidas para ayudar a los jóvenes a obtener un empleo significativo.

Palabras clave: imagen - diversidad - soft skills - evaluación estándar - empleo juvenil

Resumo: Os jovens estão subempregados devido à falta de habilidades de gerenciamento de imagem pessoal, como etiqueta comercial, empatia e consciência intercultural de que as empresas precisam. O IITTI ajuda os jovens a aprimorar esses diversos conjuntos de habilidades para se prepararem para o futuro do trabalho. Fazemos isso criando um padrão universal de medição de habilidades sociais chamado ‘Índice Mundial de Civildade’, no qual os candidatos a emprego podem ganhar pontos após o treinamento e os RHs podem avaliar o nível de competência do candidato. Como esta medida é um padrão aberto, todos os empregadores podem adotá-la. Agora faz parte do Desenvolvimento Sustentável das Nações Unidas ajudar os jovens a obter empregos significativos.

Palavras chave: Imagem - Diversidade - Soft Skills - Avaliação Padrão - Emprego Jovem

[Las traducciones de los abstracts fueron supervisadas por su autor]
