



The Training Post

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Winter Edition

January 2025



Ready. Set. Goals!

Enhance and Embrace Your Skill Fitness!

It's 2025, so let the resolution setting begin. The gyms are typically full this time of year, and while physical fitness is important, there are many other areas you can focus on strengthening. How's your skill fitness? Find ways to sharpen your expertise and stretch your potential. This could be mentally, intellectually, emotionally, and the list goes on.

In this edition of **The Training Post**, we want you to warm-up and flex your

skills with our featured training and development opportunities, professional growth advice, and beneficial updates and tips for the Learning Management System (LMS) and ePAR.

Google defines a goal as being the object of a person's ambition or effort; an aim or desired result. Whatever your goals may be, lock in and do what it takes to succeed. You got this!

“
Don't
limit your
challenges,
challenge your
limits.”
– Jerry Dunn

New Releases > In each edition of **The Training Post**, be sure to check out the list of highly recommended Quarterly Courses, Specials, and Training Promotions.

Clerical Apprenticeship Program for Excellence (CAPE) - Mercer County Community College (MCCC)
Starting January 28, 2025

Discipline and Grievance Handling - MCCC
January 28, 2025

Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) - MCCC
February 5, 2025

Personnel Management Information Systems (PMIS) - NJ Civil Service Commission (NJCSC)
February 11, 2025

Please contact CLIPTraining.Support@csc.nj.gov with any registration or program inquiries.

Public Speaking - MCCC
Two-day course - February 25, 2025 & March 4, 2025

County and Municipal Personnel Systems (CAMPS) - NJCSC
February 25, 2025

Techniques for Improving Performance (TIPS) (*Classes can be taken individually) - MCCC

- *Courtesy, Respect, and Professionalism - March 18, 2025
- *Face to Face Communication - March 25, 2025
- *Conflict Resolution - April 1, 2025
- *Team Building - April 8, 2025



2024 National Learning and Development Month Recap

Last October marked the second year the Civil Service Commission’s Center for Learning and Improving Performance (CLIP) observed National Learning and Development (NLD) Month. In 2024, we continued to promote the vital correlations between employee training, retention, and development. This annual event has become a valuable opportunity to reflect, connect, and advocate for our mission.

CLIP provided our workforce with diverse learning opportunities to strengthen the knowledge and capabilities needed to deliver exceptional public service. CLIP also worked collaboratively with representatives across the State. Representatives from the Division on Civil Rights, the Department of Human Services, the Office of Innovation, and Forge Health facilitated four of the eleven virtual learning events.

Based on our LMS reports, 33,067 training instances were recorded and completed during this month-long observance, which is a 20% increase from last year. Training instances include CLIP’s free and paid web-based training and CLIP webinars.

The chart below represents the participating departments that have access to the NJ LMS, their active user count, and the 2024 NLD training instances achieved per department.

Participating Departments and Active User Count	Training Instances	Participating Departments and Active User Count	Training Instances
Law and Public Safety-8042	4,577	Civil Service Commission-276	295
Children and Family Services-6570	3,535	NJ Housing Mortgage and Finance-306	273
Dept of Treasury-3953	3,385	Dept of Agriculture-297	228
Dept of Transportation-3358	2,684	Student Assistance Authority-179	141
Dept of Environmental Protection-2750	2,508	Board of Public Utilities-251	127
Dept of Human Services-7420	2,463	Dept of State-201	127
Motor Vehicle Commission-2896	2,431	Office of Homeland Security-176	123
Dept of Health-6630	2,386	Casino Control Commission-37	51
Dept of Labor-3027	2,004	Legislature-State Commission of Investigation-44	33
Dept of Corrections-Central Office-2595	924	Governor's Office-140	30
Dept of Community Affairs-1072	754	Ocean BOSS-353	6
Office of the Public Defender-1309	733	Asbury Park-108	6
Dept of Military and Veterans Affairs-1861	618	NJ Educational Facilities Authority-12	3
Juvenile Justice Commission-1354	609	Essex County DFAB-916	2
Office of Information Technology-725	578	Office of Higher Education-37	2
Dept of Education-802	550	Passaic BOSS-423	1
NJ State Parole Board-679	536	Middlesex BOSS-297	1
Dept of Banking and Insurance-451	343		
Total Training Instances-33,067			



Student Spotlight

Christina Noble

Participation in CPM “helped me to gain confidence in the work I do...”

Because successful training programs are not just about content, each edition of **The Training Post** will spotlight an individual who has been involved in one or more of the many professional development programs offered by CLIP.

Christina Noble, Director of Youth Services for the City of Atlantic City, is a 2024 Certified Public Manager (CPM) Program graduate. She was conferred the Askew Award acknowledging her exemplary Capstone Project, “Development of a Strategic Youth Services Collaborative and Hub for Sustainability and Efficacy.” Ms. Noble recognized the need for a comprehensive, collaborative hub to foster engagement between community stakeholders and organizations providing services to young adults. With over 15 years of experience in local government, Ms. Noble focuses on identifying, implementing, and managing recreational, educational, and community service programs that positively impact today’s youth.

Drawing from personal experience, Ms. Noble became aware of the profound impact government plays in residents’ quality of life, expressing that “local government is where the change happens on a grand scale.”

Ms. Noble’s desire to deepen her understanding of government institutions motivated her to seize the opportunity to participate in the Certified Public Manager (CPM) Program. Her expectation was “to gain a deeper understanding of the inner workings of local government and its processes.” Ms. Noble shared that her stint in the CPM Program introduced how to conceptualize and use the Logic Model which helped her “organize and add clarity to thought, especially when considering measurable projects.” Additionally, topics focusing on project management, planning, communication, and customer service were influential in her development of a “strategic collaboration across the city that is sustainable and efficacious.”

Ms. Noble explained, participation in the CPM Program and receipt of the Askew Award “helped me to gain confidence in the work I do and build a supportive network on which I can depend.”



Tips for Self-learning and Mastering New Technology - Part 1

Do you feel overwhelmed with the rapid pace of technological change? With new platforms constantly emerging, like <https://ai-assistant.nj.gov>, self-learning and mastering tech skills can build confidence when operating technology and streamlining your work processes.



1. Set a Learning Goal

Setting a learning goal helps to guide and keep you focused. One simple way to frame your goal could be, I want to learn how to create effective prompts using AI or I want to leverage the features of NJ AI Assistant in my workflow.

2. Seek and Gather Resources

During this stage, you identify the resources needed to accomplish the goal. While there are numerous resources

online, choosing the wrong ones can hinder your learning journey or result in you losing interest. So, be judicious and invest some time vetting the experts from those with just

“an interest.” Check out our NJ Learning Management System. Some other sources to consider are YouTube, Coursera, and LinkedIn Learning. Having valuable and reliable resources can make the difference to your learning experience.

3. Decide How You Will Evaluate Yourself

One of the most effective self-learning strategies is self-assessment. At this stage, the outcome should be some evidence that you

are progressing towards your goals. Ask yourself - how do I know that I have reached my goal? Some ideas to showcase what you have learned would be to incorporate the skill into a work product or teach it to a colleague.

By integrating these tips into your learning experience, you can drive your skill fitness to master any technology. In the next article, we’ll explore effective learning strategies for mastering new technology.





The BUZZ

Getting in Your Reps

At CLIP, we strive to provide our participants with innovative and cutting-edge learning experiences. “The Buzz” features the latest training trends and noteworthy “buzz” about various professional developmental themes. Repetition is a cornerstone of cognitive development and a crucial factor in acquiring new professional skills. In this edition, we discuss how repetition not only refines execution but also builds confidence, reducing hesitation and enhancing performance under pressure.

The Importance of Repetition in Skill Acquisition

In the book *Outliers*, Malcolm Gladwell outlines his 10,000-hour rule. It exemplifies “practice makes perfect.” Gladwell attempted to quantify this age-old wisdom. 10,000 hours, he says, is precisely how much practice it takes to become perfect, or as close to it as you can hope to achieve. The key to mastering a particular skill is repetition.

It takes a rare individual, or a rare level of obsession, to seek that 10,000-hour mark. We may have one passion or vocation that commands that level of dedication. 10,000 hours is approximately 417 days. How many skills do you think you’ve spent 417 days developing? Luckily, for most of us, perfection is not the objective.

Neuroscience emphasizes how much even 10 hours of practice can help, let alone 10,000. Rooted in the brain’s ability to strengthen neural connections through repeated exposure and practice,

repetition transforms unfamiliar tasks into second nature. This process, known as long-term potentiation, plays a vital role in mastering technical abilities and soft skills essential for professional growth. When a skill is practiced repeatedly, the brain encodes it into procedural memory, enabling more efficient performance over time.

Cognitively, repetition reinforces pathways in the brain, making retrieval of information faster and more reliable. This is particularly important in the workplace, where quick decision-making and problem-solving rely on well-practiced expertise. Additionally, repetition aids in overcoming the forgetting curve - a concept that illustrates how memory retention declines without reinforcement. By revisiting concepts or tasks regularly, professionals can retain knowledge longer and adapt it to real-world scenarios.

Repetition also cultivates resilience and adaptability. As we encounter challenges during repeated practice,

we develop strategies to overcome obstacles, fostering critical thinking and innovation.

To maximize the benefits of repetition, it is essential to engage in deliberate practice. This means focusing on specific aspects of a skill, seeking feedback, and making incremental improvements. By incorporating repetition into a structured learning plan, professionals can accelerate their development and achieve mastery more efficiently.

So, pick a skill you want to improve and try it for 15 minutes daily. Then, after a while, you can gradually increase your time. As long as you are getting in your reps, the rest will follow.



Learning new skills works multiple areas of the brain.

ePAR Insider: Improve Your ePAR Outcomes with Enhanced Communication Skills



Effective communication is a vital part of our work and plays a significant role in our ePAR ratings. Like other job-related factors that influence our final evaluation, verbal and non-verbal communication skills can be honed through practice and training. This is also true for raters, as the ability to communicate goals, strengths, and areas for improvement is critical to elevate leadership skills.

The Learning Management System (LMS) offers a variety of courses designed to strengthen your communication

abilities and are available with a CLIP All-Access Pass. Notable course options include: [Identify Your Communication Styles](#), [Interpersonal Communication Skills](#), and the comprehensive [Dynamic Communication Skills for Workplace Success Learning Path](#).

As we start the new year, let’s focus on highlighting the tools that will boost our success - starting with enhancing our ability to communicate positively and effectively.



The “LMS Café” has something for everyone. In each edition of **The Training Post**, the LMS community can find information on new course releases, blended learning recommendations, and for our LMS administrators, system updates.

Make Skill Fitness Your New Year’s Resolution

Often, a New Year’s resolution comes in the form of a new gym membership and a focus on physical fitness. This New Year, switch it up and take some time to evaluate your skill fitness. If the following areas are “out of shape,” try these tips.



1. Focus

For improved focus, assess your sleep, diet, and exercise. The average adult should get around 7-9 hours of sleep per night. If you don’t, create a sleep routine that can get you to bed earlier. Your body also needs nutrient-rich foods for focus. You can eat intentionally by starting with a healthy breakfast and then bringing a nutrient-rich snack or lunch to work. Lastly, the average adult should engage in at least 150 minutes of heart-pumping exercise per week. If this seems overwhelming, start small. Take advantage of creative times to engage in exercise during the day: take the stairs, walk at lunch, stand during video calls, or implement “deskercises.”

For instance, deliberately analyzing what is being said, conveying interest, noticing the speaker’s nonverbal cues, and providing feedback. To begin, choose one skill per conversation to focus on, whether to monitor it or practice it.

2. Active Listening

This may seem counterproductive, but to improve your active listening, you can start by monitoring your habits during conversations to identify your limitations. Does your mind wander or allow distractions? Do you formulate your response? Do you interrupt? Do you send negative cues? Once you’re aware of these weaknesses, you can be proactive by removing distractions (like your technology) and challenging yourself to implement active listening skills that are missing from your repertoire.

3. Creating Relationships

Building relationships with your colleagues doesn’t have to be a daunting or time-consuming task. Simply find the time, make it count, and start with the basics. If you have a busy schedule, utilize transition times to socialize with coworkers: chat in the elevator, while walking to your car, or before a meeting. Moreover, make that time count by being fully present. Don’t check your email, scroll social media, or send a text while you are socializing with peers; just be present. Finally, if chatting doesn’t come naturally to you or you’re not sure where to start, begin by establishing common ground or asking your colleagues simple questions about themselves.

To learn more about active listening and relationship building, see CLIP’s [Techniques for Improving Performance Series \(TIPS\)](#).



What’s Brewing

View our [CLIP All Access](#) themed courses for this quarter.



National Mentoring Month



[Mentoring: Building a Relationship](#)



National Leadership Day



[Inspirational Leadership: Transform Your Mindset by Lifting Others Up](#)



Women’s History Month



[National Women’s History Month](#)

LMS Barista

Boost Your Skill Fitness with Our Fresh Home Page!

Flex your learning muscles with the new LMS home page which has all your favorite toolboxes with a crisp, modern look and two exciting new toolboxes to supercharge your training journey.

- **All About You:** Quickly find all your assigned courses and keep tabs on your progress with easy access to your training transcript.
- **CLIP Catalog:** Your gateway to free CLIP online courses, browse training currently enrolling, and the all-new CLIP Exclusive link which gives CLIP All Access Pass holders instant access to Open Sesame content in the Learning Catalog.

[Check out the new home page](#) and see what’s brewing just for you!

Signature Blends

(*available with a CLIP All Access Pass)

*Professional Productivity: Remembering Names and Faces

Classroom Complement: [Techniques for Improving Performance Series \(TIPS\)](#)

*Productivity and Time Management

Classroom Complement: [SOS! Time Management](#)



Writing @ Work

Resolve to Write “Con conversationally” in the New Year

Eighteenth century novelist, Laurence Sterne posited that, “Writing, when properly managed, is but a different name for conversation.”

Sterne inferred that writing and conversing are analogous because they both fulfill the following functions:

- * Relating ideas
- * Relating information
- * Posing questions
- * Responding to questions

When we approach writing as a means for “conversation,” the end result is an ideal mix. Conversational writing contains words and phrases that are familiar to the intended audience. It is meaningful, relevant, and does not contain formal words or sentence construction.

When we write conversationally, our purpose is to engage and sustain the reader’s understanding and interest,

and enhance professional relationships with co-workers, management, and external entities.

Tips for Writing Conversationally

Keep it Familiar

Write words and phrases you use in everyday communications, including contractions like “can’t” and “don’t.” Your reader(s) will recognize your writing style and understand your message.

Short Sentences

Write concise sentences. Spare your reader(s) the effort of trying to decipher your message.



Personal Pronouns

Using “you” and/or “I” makes it clear to your reader(s) who is being referred to throughout your message.

Active Voice

Express actions directly rather than indirectly. This makes it clear to your readers that you have completed or will perform an action.

If you are interested in learning more, please register for our [Business Writing](#) class.



Congratulations to:
Medha Havnurkar
-DOH

You have been selected to receive the “Free Single-Day Training.”

Thank you to all of our Fall “Question Corner” respondents.

Fall Question:
What career decisions did you make that unlocked a great opportunity?

Fall Responses >



If you have questions or suggestions for topics you would like to see in **The Training Post**, email us at Trainingfeedback@csc.nj.gov.

Click the icon to subscribe to **The Training Post**



Winter 2025

Credits

LaVida Stalsworth, Chief Editor,
Writer: Intro, NLD Summary
Denise Salvatore, Editor
David Allen, Writer:
ePAR Insider
Ashley Rosati, Writer:
Professional Development Toolkit
Eugene Lanzoni, Writer:
The Buzz
Darrell Waytes, Writer:
LMS Barista
Tira McCants, Writer:
Student Spotlight
Charleen Johnson, Writer:
TechTips
Janet Thompson, Editor, Writer:
Writing @ Work
Chrysti Neuman, Designer

Question Corner

Winter Question:

What new skills will you incorporate into your “skill fitness” plan and why?

Respond >

Respond to be entered into our FREE Training Drawing. By submitting to the Question Corner, you are authorizing CLIP to publish your response.



Ready. Set. Goals!

State of New Jersey

Governor Phil Murphy | Lieutenant Governor Tahesha L. Way

Civil Service Commission

Chair/Chief Executive Officer Allison Chris Myers

Did You Know?

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Tech Tips:

van Loon, M. H. (2019). Self-assessment and self-reflection to measure and improve self-regulated learning in the workplace. Handbook of vocational education and training. Developments in a changing world of work, 1-34.

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Professional Development Toolkit:

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Writing @ Work:

2020. Tips for Writing in a Conversational Tone, Lingual Box, Yambao, K.