Workforce Preparation: Project-Based Learning

Classroom Workplace Code of Conduct

Classroom as Workplace is a classroom structure that introduces on-the-job expectations and provides opportunities to practice and improve workforce preparation skills that matter. When introduced in a classroom setting, workforce preparation skills that are transferable across multiple contexts and job sectors can be developed, with the students provided opportunities to demonstrate competency in targeted skills on a daily basis. The culminating activity and product is the development of a set of rules or a code of conduct that identifies and describes expectations of the students using workforce preparation skills that matter.

At the conclusion of this task, the students will be able to:

- Identify skills that matter in the creation of a classroom code of conduct.

Time required: 8 hours over 4 days

Facilitator Preparation

- Collect sample workplace handbooks to use throughout the task.
- Prepare flip chart sheets with the skills that matter (critical thinking, communication, processing and analyzing Information, self-awareness, navigating systems, adaptability and willingness to learn, respecting differences and diversity, and interpersonal skills) and their definitions.
- Identify and invite a human resources representative from a local business to serve as guest speaker on the topic of workforce preparation skills. Be sure to prepare the speaker with information about the classroom code of conduct activity and the Skills That Matter.

Materials

- Flip chart and markers
- Sample workplace handbooks

- Computers for students
- Paper and pencils
- Skills That Matter handout (Appendix A)

Procedure

Stages in the Project	Activity/Task Descriptions and Possible Materials	The Skills That Matter Addressed or Evident
Identification of a task to complete, a problem to address, a plan to make	• Day 1: The teacher should prepare flip chart sheets, each of which has one skill that matters and its definition. • Introduce the activity by telling the students that they will begin to discuss the skills that matter and the way these skills look in a workplace. Ask the students to think about skills that are important in the workplace. List these skills on a flip chart and refer to them as the Skills That Matter are introduced. Distribute the "Skills That Matter" handout (Appendix A). Tell the students that they will be discussing each of the skills and determining how each skill might be used in the classroom if the classroom were their workplace. Examples may include communicating with the students working on a project together and knowing whom to talk to about a problem with another student. As classroom workplace activities are identified for each skill, ask the students to complete the handout with the appropriate skill or skills. • Invite a human resources guest speaker who is prepared to present information about the skills that matter in his/her workplace. Ideally, a panel representing various sectors that have diverse examples would enhance this activity.	**Start of processing and analyzing information**

Stages in the Project	Activity/Task Descriptions and Possible Materials	The Skills That Matter Addressed or Evident
Determining a final project outcome or product *Will the group create posters and have a gallery walk with others in the school building? Will they create a short video or start a class blog?*	• The teacher will tell the students that the product of this activity is a classroom handbook that uses the skills that matter in the expected and appropriate behaviors in the classroom. The code of conduct is one part of the classroom as workplace structure that encourages teamwork, punctual attendance, calling in when absent or tardy, and making appointments outside of class time, for example.	**Navigating systems**
Preliminary investigation *Where can we learn more about the topic? What resources are available? What do we already know, and what do we want to learn?*	• Day 2: The teacher will divide the class into groups of three to five students. The teacher will share some authentic workplace handbooks with the groups and instruct the students to look for places in the handbooks where the Skills That Matter are identified and also look for examples that could carry over into the classroom. The students should discuss this, write their responses on paper, and be prepared to share their findings with the class. Report out.	**Critical thinking** **Processing and analyzing Information** **Interpersonal skills** **Communication**

Stages in the Project	Activity/Task Descriptions and Possible Materials	The Skills That Matter Addressed or Evident
Researching the topic *Possible sources are guest speakers, interviews with others outside of class, visits to the library, and internet research. Encourage learners to leverage all their linguistic resources (or translanguaging), reading materials, or collaboration with others in their first language.* *The teacher may also provide language supports if needed to complete the tasks.*	• Day 3: The teacher should lead a class discussion that brings together the two activities that can inform the classroom workplace handbook: study of the "Skills That Matter" handout and review of the authentic handbooks. As a class activity, the teacher should lead a discussion that helps the students identify the Skills That Matter and classroom behaviors that are appropriate and should be included in the code of conduct. The teacher should take notes on a flip chart so that the information is readily available throughout this process.	**Critical thinking** **Processing and analyzing Information** **Interpersonal skills** **Communication** **Respecting differences and diversity**

<table>
<tr><th>Stages in the Project</th><th>Activity/Task Descriptions and Possible Materials</th><th>The Skills That Matter Addressed or Evident</th></tr>
<tr><td>Drafting and developing a final product
What language support is needed to finalize the project? Language development activities with the teacher or volunteer are part of the process. Peer editing and feedback are necessary.</td><td>• Day 4: The teacher should lead a review of the flip chart notes from the previous day to create a list of five to 10 classroom workplace behaviors that will serve as the code of conduct. Any Skills That Matter required for the behaviors should be identified. The code-of-conduct behaviors (see below) must be agreed on by a majority of the students, and if there is not a majority, the students' codes should be posted in a prominent place in the room and followed according to student input for accountability.

<table><tr><th>Classroom workplace code of conduct</th><th>Skill that matters</th></tr><tr><td>1.</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>2.</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>3.</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>4.</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>5.</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>6.</td><td></td></tr></table></td><td>Navigating systems
Respecting differences and diversity</td></tr>
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Stages in the Project	Activity/Task Descriptions and Possible Materials	The Skills That Matter Addressed or Evident
Evaluating the project and outcomes *How is the success of the project evaluated? Include audience feedback, self-evaluations on personal and group participation, and peer evaluation. Create rubrics that may assess content, language use, numeracy, and cultural understandings, as appropriate.*	• Debrief the students using reflective questions such as the following: – Which classroom workplace behaviors will be easy for you to follow? Why? – Which classroom workplace behaviors will be difficult for you to follow? Why? – Which skills that matter might you need to improve? How do you know?	**Self-awareness**

Recommended steps adapted from Maximizing the benefits of project work in foreign language classrooms, by B. Alan and F. Stoller, 2005, *English Teaching Forum, 43*(4), 10–21; *Teaching adult English language learners: A practical introduction, by B. Parrish, 2019,* Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, England; Knowledge in action: The promise of project-based learning, by H. Wrigly, December 1998, *Focus on Basics, 2*(D), 13–18. Sample project adapted from Parrish, 2019.

Appendix A. The Skills That Matter in the Classroom Workplace

The *skills that matter* are the foundational skills needed to function effectively in the workforce and in civic and community life.

Critical thinking
Critical thinking is the open-minded, rational, and informed by evidence in order to arrive at decisions or conclusions that go beyond factual recall. In adult education classrooms, critical thinking skills involve actively applying thinking strategies that range from analyzing relationships between components to drawing conclusions from a variety of data. In the classroom workplace …
Communication
Adults with strong communication skills can convey information to others effectively and efficiently—both verbally and nonverbally as well as in writing. Communication skills also include the effective use of visuals, multimedia, and digital platforms to convey information. In the classroom workplace …
Processing and analyzing information
In processing and analyzing information, first identify a topic, problem, or issue and then gather the information needed to develop and test solutions. Finally, assess and reflect on the results. In the classroom workplace …
Self-awareness
Self-awareness is the ability to take stock of one's own emotions, thoughts, and values and to recognize their impact on one's own (and others') behavior. In the classroom workplace …

Problem solving
Problem solving has been identified as one of the top two skills employers look for in job applicants, but it is also part of adult daily life (e.g., work–life balance, parenting choices, managing finances, etc.). The key stages in problem solving are to 1) identify the problem, 2) propose solutions, 3) analyze solutions (and consequences) in order to select a solution, and 4) apply or implement the solution. In the classroom workplace …
Navigating systems
Navigating systems is successful operation within the institutions and organizational structures that are part of communities, workplaces, schools, and families. In the classroom workplace …
Adaptability and willingness to learn
Adaptability is the quality of being able to roll with new situations, such as a change in leadership, a revised work assignment, or an unexpected life event. In the classroom workplace …
Respecting differences and diversity
Respecting differences and diversity is the ability to interact with others respectfully, accommodating their different lifestyles and needs and accepting their diverse viewpoints and expertise. In the classroom workplace …
Interpersonal skills
Sometimes called “people skills,” interpersonal skills are the qualities and behaviors a person uses to interact with others appropriately. They are essential to successful communication and systems navigation across contexts. In the classroom workplace …