

Learning About Social Security

*Bennie Goins and
Janice Emge*
Knox County ABE

Students will learn about benefits, deductions, and earnings regarding Social Security through group discussion, information sheets and worksheets, and group work on reports. They will use the KSAs as they work through the required problem solving individually and also in groups.

Objectives

To develop a better understanding about the mechanics and purpose and benefits of Social Security in the workplace.

Work-Based Skills

- **KSAs:** Working on a team effectively; Listening for understanding; Accurately performing work; Standard procedures.
- **SCANS:** Understands systems— knows how systems work; Performs basic math computations; Contributes to group effort; Interprets written information.
- **EFF:** Gather, analyze and use information; Work together.

Background

Students begin by sharing their own experiences with Social Security before doing the activities.

How to Prepare

Teacher provides current copy of social security handbook, Social Security application forms, current articles on Social Security from a newspaper.

Active Learning Methods Used

Total group and small group discussions, oral reports, research work, writing reports, problem solving.

What to Do During the Activity

- Total group discussion sharing individual background information.
- Oral introduction/discussion of work sheet, “Learning More About Social Security.”
- Students read and complete above worksheet.
- Total group discussion and checking of worksheet.
- Divide into three small groups.
 - Group 1:* Peruses current articles on Social Security choosing ones to share with class.
 - Group 2:* Researches history of Social Security, writes up briefly and shares with class.
 - Group 3:* Examines current Social Security forms, etc.; looks at process used to compute earnings, benefits using handbook, etc.; studies information from Social Security office and printouts of wages. Shares (demonstrates) how to compute Social Security with class.

Pre/Post Assessment

Pre-Assessment: Discussion of students’ own experiences with Social Security.
Post-Assessment: Students will be able to fill out form, understand Social Security deduction from paycheck, and generally understand the complete process.



Type

This activity could stand alone or be part of a series on figuring paycheck issues.

Learners

This activity would be suitable for ABE II and ABE III students.

Time Frame

Approximately 1 hour/day for three or four days (up to one week).

Room Set-Up

Any type of room is acceptable as long as there is room for group work.

Materials

Commercial informational sheets and worksheets on Social Security (we used “Learning About Social Security” *Math in Daily Living*, Steck-Vaughn, pp.47&48), articles from newspapers, encyclopedia, history book account of origination of Social Security, Social Security handbook,

application forms, printouts of wages earned.

Learner Handouts

Work sheet on "Learning More About Social Security"

Evaluation by Learners

The students decided that they were better able to understand the whole Social Security process.

Reinforcement/Generalizations

Students were able to use the information learned to understand and compute F.I.C.A. deduction on their own paychecks.

Comment

The students thought this was a valid activity, one they could use immediately. They felt good to have this new knowledge.

Time Clock—What Is My Take-Home Pay?

Mary Ricketts
Greeneville City ABE

Students punch a time clock for their Families First attendance, then, on a weekly basis, use this record of their hours to figure gross pay, withholding tax, and net pay at the pay scales of several different local industries.

Objectives

Students will use time clock to accurately record their classroom hours. Students will compute gross pay, withholding tax, and net pay at the several different pay scales. Students will compare paychecks to learn that hours worked determines the amount of the paycheck.

Work-Based Skills

- **KSAs:** Listen for understanding; Follow instructions; Accurately perform work operations; Dependability; Standard procedures.
- **SCANS:** Mathematics—performs basic computations; Self-management—assess self accurately; Acquires and evaluates information.
- **EFF:** Gather, analyze and use information; Use mathematical concepts and techniques to solve problems; Reflect and evaluate.

Background

This activity was developed out of need for Families First participants to focus on job attendance, the wide variety of wages at various work places, and how their take-home pay is computed.

How to Prepare

Procure a time clock and have a time card for each student.

Active Learning Methods Used

Students are active participants in this activity and in the discussion that follows the activity.

What to Do During the Activity

1. Instruct students on how to figure gross pay, withholding tax, and net pay. Let them do these computations with each other before doing their own from their own time card.
2. Distribute time cards.
3. Figure hours worked for week.
4. Compute gross pay.
5. Compute withholding tax.
6. Figure net pay.
7. Discuss actual take home pay.

Pre/Post Assessment

Pre-Assessment: Students estimate their hours “on the job” for the previous week.

Post-Assessment: Students figure the actual hours from their time card. (Can also compare their hours from week to week.)

Evaluation by Learners

Participants discuss with each other how much take-home pay they have. (They do this on their own! You won’t have to tell them to.)



Type

A continuing stand-alone activity used every Monday morning.

Learners

Suitable for all adult learners.

Time frame

15-25 minutes depending upon whether student is a level 1, 2, or 3 student.

Room Set-up

Each student does computation at his/her desk.

Materials

Time card for each student. Paper and pencil for each student.

Reinforcement/Generalizations

Since this activity is done on a continuing basis, the skills are reinforced weekly.

This activity should give the students insight into the workplace and help them apply this knowledge to their daily life.

Comment

All the students are interested in this activity since their goal is to get a job and make money of their own. They found this to be an interesting and helpful activity.

Where Can I Wear This to Work?

Diane Tatum
Tulahoma Adult Learning
Center

A discussion, through visualization, of what someone would wear to work. Students play a game where they match pictures of clothing to lists of available jobs. A discussion of employer's standard requirements and procedures are emphasized.

Objectives

Students will recognize that different jobs require different dress, make decisions about clothing students might need when going to work, and explore the many work options available to students.

Work-based Skills

- **KSAs:** Played as a game it also develops the ability to get along with others.
- **SCANS:** Understands standard procedures, listens for understanding and performs accurate work operations.
- **EFF:** Reflect and evaluate.

Background Information

This lesson piggybacks on the workforce dress project presented at the Nashville Families First training.

How To Prepare

Cut various types of clothing from a catalog or advertisements and mount them on flashcards. Include unusual dress such as party wear and pajamas. Create a list of jobs Families First clients may well do someday. (List could come from the jobs students suggest as goals for their future employment. My list is attached.) Be sure each listed job has at least one outfit available from the cards. Copy the list and mount pictures on individual cards. Number the cards.

Active Learning Methods Used

Visuals with interactive discussion. Could be adapted to a fashion show format.

What To Do During the Activity

1. Ask: How does what you wear create preconceptions in other people's minds? (Share the case study from p. 38 of the *Instructor's Guide*, if available.) Discuss how people form opinions about others based on what they wear. Ask: How do you know what to wear to work? Discuss official and unofficial dress codes (see pp. 38-39 of *Instructor's Guide*, if available).
2. Play the game "Where Can I Wear This To WORK?" by handing out the student sheets of jobs. Flip through the prepared pictures and direct students to place the picture's number in the blanks that correspond to a job that might allow this type of clothing. Once you have gone through the stack once, repeat the pictures with students explaining which jobs they chose for each type of clothing and why. Be prepared to accept several answers and to be surprised at some of your own preconceptions! Note that some jobs require specific uniforms and equipment.



Type

One in a series of self-assessment/employment lessons.

Learners

Appropriate for all learners.

Time Frame

One to two hours.

Room Set-up

Discussion groups.

Media Equipment

None required. This might be interesting scanned into the computer!

Materials

Student sheets listing the jobs described above for each student. The prepared clothing flashcards described in the "How to Prepare" section.

Optional

- Ludden, L.L. *Job Savvy: 2nd edition*. Indianapolis, IN: JIST Works, 1998, pages 57-69.
- Ludden, L.L. and M. Ludden. *Job Savvy: Instructor's Guide*. Indianapolis, IN: JIST Works, 1998, pages 38-39.

3. Discuss types of clothing that might be required in jobs they might choose to do. Is a uniform required? Is safety equipment needed? What everyday clothing will you need to work at your desired job? Make a list of necessities to dress for work. Include things like pantyhose, slippers, underwear, socks, shoes, jackets, etc. Direct the group to make a check next to the items they will need to purchase prior to going to work.
4. Discuss personal grooming needs as part of dressing for work. Direct students to relate stories of people they may have known who were well prepared for work and those who were not—without doing gossip! Direct students to add personal grooming aids they will need to be properly dressed for work to their clothing list.
5. Mention that smoking, chewing gum, and using profanity are not acceptable in many workplaces. Bad habits are also part of the way you dress for work! (If you have *Job Savvy*, work through Chapter 4 as a group.)
6. Encourage students to begin to acquire the items they need to go to work using thrift shops, garage sales, and bargain shops so they will not have to buy all these things at the same time.

Optional

Take students bargain shopping with their shopping lists. Can you provide money for shopping through a grant or donation?

Pre/Post Assessment

Pre-Assessment is accomplished by a discussion of what students think is appropriate clothing to wear to various jobs.

Post-Assessment would include a discussion concerning “What job do you plan to get?” “What clothing will you need to do that job?” Job game sheet completion. Creation of shopping/wish list for that job.

Evaluation by Learners

Learners enjoyed the game as well as the opportunity to evaluate the clothing of others and the roles that they play at work.

Reinforcement/Generalization

This lesson applies specifically to an understanding of an employer’s standard procedures, cooperation and getting along with others.

Comment

This lesson was a lot of fun but also drove home the point that dressing for work is more than just throwing on a pair of jeans and a tee shirt, though that can be appropriate in some jobs!

Teacher's Assistant Training Activity

Barbara Young
Bledsoe County ABE

To gain work experience, individual students take 4-hour shifts serving as a teacher's assistant doing such tasks as answering the telephone, operating the fax, and assisting other students. At the end of their shifts, students summarize the KSAs needed to do this job.

Objectives

The student will identify the knowledge, skills, and attitudes used in performing the job of teacher's assistant. The student will successfully perform the tasks of a teacher's assistant for a 4 hour time period: answering the telephone, operating the fax, assisting other students, etc. The student's self-confidence in performing work activities will increase.

Work-Based Skills

- **KSAs:** All. Student evaluates job experience against all KSAs. Especially emphasized would be: Listen for understanding; Follow instructions; Dependability; Get along with others; Do the right thing; Standard procedures.
- **SCANS:** Applies technology to tasks; Displays responsibility, self-esteem, sociability, self-management, and integrity and honesty.
- **EFF:** Convey ideas in writing; Reflect and evaluate; Use technology.

Background

The KSAs are displayed and students have a working knowledge of them. The teacher's assistant schedule is planned, explained, and displayed well in advance of the assigned day. Students need to have enough familiarity with KSAs to be able to relate them to their experiences during their shift.

How to Prepare

KSAs are displayed and the students have a working knowledge of them. Each student is reminded of his/her appointed day. The students have a general knowledge of the fax, copier, telephone, and are briefed on the appropriate activities and behavior of a teacher's assistant. The teacher provides a schedule for each student with his/her assigned day highlighted. The teacher provides a list of activities the student will be responsible for on his/her assigned day.

Active Learning Methods Used

The students observe the current teacher's assistant and other student assistants. The students practice telephone skills, fax and copier operations from previous activities. Students carry out responsibilities independently.

What to Do During the Activity

The student will dress in an appropriate manner for the job. The student will be on time. The student will answer all telephone calls using proper etiquette and procedure, taking messages if necessary. The student will oversee computer usage and make sure everyone is completing assigned activities. The student will prepare coffee, check restrooms, and sweep/empty trash as needed. The student will use the copier and fax when directed. The student will run errands



Type

This is a continuing stand-alone activity with a different student taking the responsibility each day. It can lead to similar work experience activities.

Learners

This activity is appropriate for all students of all levels.

Time Frame

Advance notification is made 2 weeks prior to the assigned day. The activity itself will require a 4-hour class period.

Room Set-up

This activity's location varies throughout the classroom and work area.

Materials

KSAs display, assistant schedule, list of responsibilities of teacher's assistant.

Learner Handouts

Assignment schedule, assignment duties list.

and check papers. The student will do one interesting thing for the other students and teacher on their “assistant day.” It can be to share a refreshment (bought or homemade), share a newspaper article, share an Internet item or activity, share a personal story and/or photos, etc.

Pre/Post Assessment

The student will write in his/her journal what skills it takes to be a teacher’s assistant prior to/after their assigned day. The teacher will chart the various jobs available that use some/all of these skills from student responses. If the student chooses to repeat the activity, he/she can be assigned a second day after all students have completed their first assigned day.

Evaluation by Learners

The follow-up discussion at the end of all assigned days allows the students and teacher to evaluate the activity and its benefits. If they choose to repeat the activity, students can be assigned a second day after all students have completed their first assigned day.

Reinforcement/Generalizations

As the students perform as a teacher’s assistant, the students will identify the KSAs used in the activity. They will be able to apply these same skills to jobs available in our area. The teacher will chart the various jobs available that use some/all of these skills from student responses.

Comment

This activity has proven to be very enjoyable to the students. They were excited about their assigned day and met it with eagerness. Some commented about how hard it was, especially for four straight hours. A few begged to do it again! It has been a positive experience for all of them. Each one has a photo of this special day in his/her portfolio and it is a cherished memento of the day.

Working with Different Personality Styles

Joyce Munda
North Tennessee Private
Industry Council ABE

Using props and scenarios provided by the teacher, students role play passive, assertive, and aggressive personalities in the workplace as well as the worker who deals with these personalities. Class discussion following the role play includes how the application of the KSAs can be affected.

Objectives

Student will identify work styles (passive, assertive, aggressive) and get practice dealing with people of all styles. This lesson also is an evaluation tool to see if students are grasping KSAs listed.

Work-Based Skills

- **KSAs:** Getting along with others; Talking and listening with respect; Cooperating with others; Doing the right thing.
- **SCANS:** Serves clients/customers-works to satisfy customers' expectations; Sociability—demonstrates understanding, friendliness, adaptability, empathy, and politeness in group settings.
- **EFF:** Resolve conflict and negotiate; Respect others and value diversity.

Background

Teacher must understand the communication model. It would be helpful to have already done lessons on communication from Steck Vaughn's "Workforce: Building Success: Communication" book or Contemporary's "Communication" Book 1 and/or Book 2.

How to Prepare

Instructor needs to put together scenarios or role-play situations commonly found at work (1/2 hr to 1 hr).

Active Learning Methods Used

Learners will role-play. Learners will do active observation, discuss what they saw, and draw on their past experiences and imaginations to develop the role-playing and creatively use the props.

What to Do During the Activity

Introduce the activity by reviewing the communication model and passive, assertive, and aggressive styles. Talk about how all kinds of people are in the job world, and we have to deal with them. Pass out props and let students pick a scenario to develop. Allow 5 minutes planning time (use timer). Do the role-play with rest of class observing actively. Discuss alternative reactions and what is acceptable in the workplace. Tie in the ideas of respect and doing the right thing. Some examples of props & scenarios are:

- **Cap**—fast food worker behind counter dealing with a disagreeable customer (then an agreeable one).
- **Broom**—fast food worker being asked to clean up an area (then ordered to do it).
- **Mop**—fast food worker being asked to mop an area soiled by a loud disrespectful group of teens.
- **Spray cleanser**—Office worker—tidying up her own area—who is interrupted by a picky co-worker.
- **Spray cleanser**—office worker tidying up her own area who is



Type

Best used as part of a series of lessons on communication in the workplace.

Learners

Suitable for all learners.

Time Frame

This lesson can stand alone, 10 min. per group plus discussion/observation time. Overall 30 - 45 min.

Room Set-up

Activity can be done at tables or in a cleared area.

Transparencies

Could put communication model on one to use in the review/intro.

Materials

Teacher can put together a prop box with mop, caps, hairnet, towel, spray cleanser, papers, newspaper, broom, etc., to facilitate the role-play but these could be done without props. Typed script starter of job situations should be cut apart with one for each group. A timer for

rehearsal time is suggested.

Learner Handouts

Just the scenario settings listed in “how-to.”

- interrupted by a boss (do two ways).
- **Hairnet**—kitchen worker being asked to interrupt salad preparation to help out housekeeping (nursing home setting).
 - **Towels**—housekeeping worker who interrupts person in room to clean the room (do it two ways with agreeable guest and rude guest).

After the scenarios are acted out encourage discussion by observers. Do not allow activity to become critical of personalities. Point out style differences and encourage another reaction.

Pre/Post Assessment

By introducing the activity with a review of the previous learning about communication model and aggressive, assertive, passive styles, this activity is really an evaluation tool to see if those concepts are understood as well as to see if the learners are grasping the KSAs of talking and listening with

respect and cooperation and doing the right thing. These will be evaluated through the discussion.

Evaluation by Learners

Learners can do a written summary and suggest additional scenarios for use on another day.

Reinforcement/Generalizations

This activity will reinforce good listening, talking with respect, cooperation, and doing the right thing in other areas of students' lives and in thinking about work situations. Learners will also be getting practice with passive, assertive, and aggressive styles found not only in work situations but in all areas of their lives.

Comment

If you don't already know, this activity will help you learn who the cut-ups in your class are! Students usually enjoy this activity, especially with the props available.

KSAs vs Problem-Solving Techniques for Employment

Doris A. Harrison
Memphis City ABE

Students are presented with a list of job requirements such as “An employee must have a reliable means of transportation to get to work each day.” In groups, the students brainstorm and discuss each requirement and develop possible solutions to meet these requirements.

Objectives

Students will consider the requirements necessary in order to hold a job and become self-sufficient employees. Students will analyze these requirements and formulate plans to meet the requirements. Students will gain self-confidence in their ability to solve problems and become self-sufficient employees.

Work-Based Skills

- **KSAs:** Dependability; Standard procedures; Work on a team effectively.
- **SCANS:** Problem solving—recognizes problems and devises and implements plan of action; Self-management—assesses self accurately, sets personal goals, monitors progress, and exhibits self control.
- **EFF:** Reflect and evaluate; Solve problems; Cooperate with others; Read critically.

Background

Our customers/students face many problems that must be resolved before they can become self-sufficient employees. These problems that seem so mundane to ordinary potential employees have become “mountainous obstacles” to our customers, mainly due to the fact, that the old welfare system has caused them to become too dependent for too long. With the new welfare system, our government is allowing our students/customers the opportunity to free themselves from

this dependency and become self-sufficient employees for themselves and their children.

How to Prepare

Generate a list of general job requirements given by employers in your area. Recruit former students who have succeeded in overcoming these difficulties to be part of the concluding class discussion.

Active Learning Methods Used

Discussion, problem-solving, teamwork.

What to Do During the Activity

The teacher will pass out to each group of 5 students/customers, a list of the general job requirements given by employers. Requirement examples are:

1. An employee must have a reliable means of transportation to get to work each day.
2. An employee must be on time for work each day or risk the probability of being fired. (This is especially true during one’s probationary period.)

These are just two examples of some problems our students face and must resolve to become self-sufficient employees.

Students form groups of their choice. Each group chooses their own coordi-



Type

This is a stand-alone activity which could be used several times with different sets of requirements of employment. It could also be a part of a series of lessons on work readiness.

Learners

Appropriate for all learners, especially since learners will work in teams.

Time Frame

This activity can take up to 30 minutes each day or an hour depending on the teacher’s digression and the students’ interest.

Room Set-up

Tables/desks or chairs are set up in groups of 5 for brainstorming sessions.

Materials

Teacher needs list of job requirements. Students need

pencil and paper and “can do” attitudes!

Learner Handouts

The list of Employment Requirements.

nator and secretary. In these small groups they will first be asked to thoroughly discuss the list of requirements given by the employer to make sure everyone understands.

Next each group is encouraged to brainstorm and discuss these requirements in order to make a list of possible solutions that will enable them to meet these employers’ requirements.

They will next come together as a class and discuss the plausibility of these solutions becoming reality for them. The teacher will try to recruit at least two prior students who have found employment and who have experienced some of these same problems. These prior students will evaluate our problem-solving solutions, to see if they are useable or practical. This will help to prove, without a doubt, that there are solutions that have worked and will work, so that the students can feel confident about using these suggestions. (If I am unable to find any prior students, I use employers or job-readiness counselors.)

Pre/Post Assessment

Pre-assessment was the students’ defeatist attitudes about getting and keeping a job! The list of possible responses to the job requirements serves as a post-assessment.

Evaluation by Learners

The follow-up large group class discussion of the information given will allow the entire class to scrutinize the reliability of these solutions. The class as a whole will then agree to give these problem-solving solutions for employment a trial to see if they really could work for them.

Reinforcement/Generalizations

The KSAs have already been posted all around the room and discussed earlier by the teacher and students. The work requirements and the KSAs will be related in the discussion, and the KSAs will remain posted around the room for the students viewing during the activity.

Comment

We all need to remember, in my humble opinion, that before our customers can become effective and self-sufficient employees, certain real-life problems for them must be resolved.

Problem Solving and Holding a Job

Carole Cheatwood
Lawrence County ABE

In this session, participants practice problem solving techniques as a group by planning possible solutions and listing the disadvantages and advantages to each solution. This is especially good for Families First participants who are about to enter the workforce.

Objectives

Students will identify possible problems to holding a job. They will list possible solutions, use problem solving strategies, and participate in group discussions. In the process, they will also practice writing and reading. The writing may be difficult for some lower level writers.

Work-Based Skills

- **KSAs:** Listen for understanding; Talk respectfully; Follow instructions; Cooperate with others; Get along with others.
- **SCANS:** Thinks creatively, generates new ideas; Generates alternatives, considers risks, and evaluates and chooses best alternative. Recognizes problems and devises and implements plan of action; Works with others.
- **EFF:** Cooperate with others; Solve problems; Reflect and evaluate.

Background

This activity was developed out of the need for Families First participants to focus on getting a job and keeping it by trying to solve any problems that may hinder them from keeping a job in the future.

How to Prepare

Review steps to problem solving from the *Workforce: Building Success Problem Solving Book* Lesson 3. (Steck-Vaughn, 1997 edition).

Active Learning Methods Used

Discussion of real problems and how to solve them, writing and working as a team.

What to Do During the Activity

This session follows a six step format:

1. Timed Writing
2. Suggestions of Problems
3. Possible Solutions
4. Advantages and Disadvantages
5. Group Discussion
6. Follow-up Discussion

Timed Writing: Topic: “The main things that can be a problem to my holding a job are...”

Participants will write 7 minutes about the topic without letting the pen stop. If the participant cannot think of what to write, he/she shall write his/her first and last name over and over until another thought pertaining to the topic comes into his/her head. When time is called, the participant must put down the pen and stop writing.

Suggestions of Problems:

- Participants may volunteer or the facilitator may collect the papers and read them out loud omitting the names.
- List problems mentioned in the writings on the board.

Possible Solutions:

- Have participants, as a group, pick



Type

This lesson should be done after participants have been introduced to the basics of problem solving. I use the *Workforce: Building Success Problem Solving Book*. (Steck-Vaughn, 1997 edition). Lessons 1-3 will be sufficient background information.

Learners

This activity is suitable for most learners preparing to enter the workforce.

Time Frame

2+ hours depending on the number of participants and how talkative they are.

Room Set-Up

Any type of discussion configuration where a flat surface for writing is available and where all participants can focus on the board.

Materials

- Board with appropriate writing utensils
- Paper and pencil for each participant

one problem off the board to solve as a group.

- Participants will brainstorm any possible solutions which will be written on the board.

Advantages and Disadvantages:

Participants will brainstorm again and list all possible advantages and disadvantages to each of the possible solutions listed previously.

Group Discussion:

Participants may discuss possible solutions to the other problems listed on the board. Participants should conclude the following:

- (1) Find a back-up plan to the back-up plan.
- (2) Try to take care of these problems before they get a job.
- (3) Don't be afraid of change since having a job will require a lot of changing and shifting of schedules.

Follow-up Discussion:

- How important are problem-solving skills in the workplace?
- What would you do if a piece of equipment broke down at work and you could not do your job?
- What would you do if your car breaks down on the way to work?
- What would you do if your daycare is closed on a day you are scheduled to work?

Pre/Post Assessment

Pre-Assessment: The timed writing serves as the pre-assessment.

Post-Assessment: A follow-up discussion about how important problem-solving skills are in the workplace.

Evaluation by Learners

Participants may be asked if they will try some of the suggested solutions to the problems if one arises.

Reinforcement/Generalization

Follow-up discussion guides and reinforces the importance of using problem solving skills in the workplace and also to aid in keeping a job.

Comment

This lesson worked well with the students. They were actively involved in this learning process.

Dependability and Problem Solving

Carole Cheatwood
Lawrence County ABE

Through an all-class discussion, students will review how to identify a problem and then use this knowledge to identify and relate class and workplace attendance to dependability problems. Students then summarize through journal writings.

Objectives

- Students will identify reasons why dependability is so important in the workplace.
- Students will utilize problem-solving skills in relating workplace attendance to dependability.
- Students will demonstrate the use of critical thinking, listening, talking respectfully, writing, following instructions, and problem solving skills to facilitate group discussions.

Work-Based Skills:

- **KSAs:** Dependability; Listen for understanding; Cooperate with others; Talk respectfully.
- **SCANS:** Problem solving—recognizes problems and devises and implements plan of action; Responsibility; Communicates thoughts in writing.
- **EFF:** Cooperate with others; Solve problems; Convey ideas in writing.

Background

This activity was developed to bridge the problem solving skills learned previously and the introduction of the first KSA (dependability) that employers indicated as very important (from the Dent Davis survey).

How to Prepare

Review problem solving steps to guide the discussion. Have board and markers ready to write during brainstorming.

Active Learning Methods Used

Discussion, Writing and Problem Solving

What to Do During the Activity

This session has a four-step format:

1. Review how to identify a problem (gather, organize, and interpret).
2. Discussion of attendance as related to dependability.
3. Identifying the Problem.
4. Journal Writing.

Introduction: Review how to identify a problem and write on the board.

Discussion: As a group, discuss attendance as related to dependability.

Identify the Problem:

- a. Have students brainstorm possible “excuses” for not attending class and write all suggestions on the board.
- b. Cross off unreasonable “excuses.”
- c. Categorize reasons that are related.
- d. Discuss “excused” reasons for an absence in class.
- e. Discuss “excused” reasons for an absence in the workplace based on personal experiences.
- f. Cross off all unexcused reasons for absence in the workplace (this should be all reasons including death in the family since this, too, is not always excused without some kind of benefit package).



Type

Group type session can be stand-alone or part of a series of KSAs.

Learners

This discussion/activity is suitable for all learners.

Time Frame

This activity takes from 1-2 hours depending on how much information participants offer.

Room Set-Up

Any type of discussion format where a flat surface for writing is available at the end.

Materials

- Board with appropriate writing utensils
- Paper and pencil for participants (for journal writing)

Journal Writing: Allow 10 minutes for students to write about what they learned during and their reactions to the session.

Pre/Post Assessment

Before actually identifying the problem, learners have the opportunity to review what they have learned in a previous session.

Evaluation by Learners

The journal writing serves as an indicator of the evaluations by learners.

Reinforcement/Generalizations

By crossing off all unexcused reasons for an absence in the workplace, participants will realize how very important dependability is in the workplace.

Comment

This session worked well with all levels of learners. All students participated and were interested. Those students who are unable to write may dictate to another student for feedback on the session.

Changes/Staying the Same

Randy Brison
Dickson County ABE

This activity uses a study of the characters in *The Glass Menagerie* to lead student to examine conflict/crisis situations and whether dealing with those situations requires staying the same (KSA: dependability) or changing (KSA: learning/personal development).

Objectives

- Students will gain and reinforce understanding of KSAs.
- Students will gain awareness of their personal need for change and staying the same in certain situations — the need to be dependable (the same) balanced with the need to learn KSAs they may lack.
- Students will become more familiar with drama as a form of literature and its applications to life and work.

Work-Based Skills

- **KSAs:** Dependability; Listening for understanding; Cooperating with others; Stay calm under pressure; Accept and manage change.
- **SCANS:** Listening—receives, attends to, interprets, and responds to verbal messages and other cues; Assesses self accurately.
- **EFF:** Learn in new ways; Listen actively; View critically; Reflect and evaluate.

Background

It seems the main obstacles many of my students face are opposites—they lack the ability to be dependable (attendance, timeliness, following SOP, doing the right thing) and at the same time are afraid of change in their lives (the move to working, getting off assistance, learning new skills). I thought using the poignant story of

Laura in *The Glass Menagerie* might be a non-threatening way to help students examine these issues. (This lesson was developed as part of the Beyond *To Kill A Mockingbird* project through the Tennessee Literacy Coalition, Meg Nugent directing.)

How to Prepare

For best effect, teachers with low-level students will need volunteers to read the four parts in scene 7. Teachers with multi-level classes might use higher-level students as readers. A drama group or class might be a good source of help. Readers should be fairly familiar with the scene. As a last resort, a videotape of the play could be used.

Optional: Students may do research to learn more about the playwright Tennessee Williams, since the play contains autobiographical elements.

Active Learning Methods Used

Students will discuss KSAs and elements in the play, take notes and write responses to teacher prompts. Students will write a letter of advice to Laura as a follow-up activity.

What to Do During the Activity

1. Students were asked to remember what KSA stands for
2. Students listed as many KSAs as they could remember in 30 seconds.



Type

This activity can stand-alone or be part of a series of literature-based lessons.

Learners

Adaptations (provided) make this lesson appropriate for all levels.

Time Frame

About 1 1/2 to 2 hours.

Room Set-up

As much like a theater/stage as possible with students in a semicircle around the staging area.

Materials

A dry-erase board or newsprint pad for taking notes and writing comments, copies of Scene 7 for readers.

Learner Handouts

Play copies.

Then the students called them out while teacher/reporter wrote them on board/pad. Class discussed listed KSAs and what they mean. Teacher led students to add any missing KSAs (top 11).

3. Students were asked which KSAs required sameness and which required change. Depending on the students, each skill required one or the other or a strange combination.
4. Teacher introduced *The Glass Menagerie* stressing the fact that Laura and Tom face problems and that each copes with those problems in different ways, one by changing, one by staying the same. The question put before students is this—which method is effective, or is either method effective, given the circumstances.
5. Teacher/students give brief biography of Tennessee Williams with facts pertaining to play—abandoned mother, absent father, creative but undependable son, withdrawn/insecure daughter.
6. Teacher summarizes plot leading up to Scene 7, giving character sketches of Tom, Amanda, and Laura, and stressing the fact that Amanda has forced Tom to bring home a friend to set up with Laura.
7. Readers perform Scene 7.
8. Students discuss coping strategies of Tom and Laura and their effectiveness. Prompts include the following—What should Laura do? What should Tom have done if not run away? Did either accomplish his/her objective? What was his/her objective?

Pre/Post Assessment

Students write a letter of advice to Laura stating what she should do (change/stay same) and why. (Some students mentioned that they were like Laura!)

Evaluation by Learners

Students discuss whether they can relate to the play. “Was it good?” I asked.

Reinforcement/Generalizations

Students receive credit (grades, incentives) for research and presentation work.

Comment

It was nice to get away from just workbook-based lessons, and the students seemed to enjoy having somebody different (volunteer readers) as part of class. It made the play more like a real performance. And when a student said “That’s like us in this class — we can choose to withdraw or we can choose to change,” that was a great teacher moment.

“Minds-R-Us, Inc.”

Diane Oakley
Chattanooga State ABE

The students become part of our “company” when they join the class. They are “paid” an hourly wage based on their experience (number of hours in class). They must “buy” their break time as well as other privileges. Students receive a bonus for being on time.

Objectives

Students will improve class attendance and punctuality. Students will gain experience and strengthen their interviewing skills. Students will resolve conflicts and negotiate changes in the “contract.” Students will demonstrate leadership in the classroom.

Work-Based Skills

- **KSAs:** Listen for understanding; Talk respectfully; Dependability; Getting along with others; Standard procedures.
- **SCANS:** Communicates information in writing; Creates documents such as directions, manuals; Displays responsibility, self-esteem, sociability, self-management, and integrity and honesty; Exercises leadership; Negotiates.
- **EFF:** Provide leadership; Exercise rights and responsibilities; Manage resources.

Background

This activity was developed in my classroom as a means of encouraging and rewarding regular attendance in a positive, encouraging atmosphere.

How to Prepare

Play money should be photocopied onto different colored paper (each color will represent a certain denomination). Students can be introduced to the idea that it is important to reward

regular attendance because that is so important for employment. Students can be allowed the opportunity to name the company, set the hourly wage, etc. However, the instructor might want to have already worked out a general idea about the amounts that would be most workable. The instructor should have already gathered some incentives (paperback books, notebooks, pencils, and/or have contacted local businesses to request free admission passes, reduced price coupons).

Active Learning Methods Used

Students are active participants in a simulated workplace setting. Simulation and discussion.

What to Do During the Activity

Students select the name for their company. Hourly wages and the number of hours necessary for promotion are agreed upon. The guidelines for operation are explained. An accountant is selected to handle the “company bank;” a personnel manager is selected to explain the company policies to new students. Other positions can be used as needed. Anyone performing an extra responsibility will get a bonus. Students who arrive on time get a bonus.



Type

This is an on-going daily activity in class involving little additional class time once it has been established.

Learners

This could work with any level class.

Time Frame

The first time the company is introduced may take an hour. Each day a little time will need to be taken to insure smooth operations. When a student is ready for a promotion, the interview of each student will probably take 15 minutes. The critique of the interview should take 10-15 minutes.

Room Set-Up

Nothing extra is needed.

Materials

Play colored money; incentives.

Learner Handouts

A time sheet will need to be developed to encourage students to arrive on time and attend regularly.

Possible Amounts:

Position	Number of Hours Attendance	Hourly wage
Trainee	0- 20	\$ 5
Entry level	21- 80	6
Professional	81-200	8
Supervisor	201-300	10
Asst. manager	301-400	12
Manager	401-500	15
Vice president	above 500	18

Cost of Class Breaks:

30 minutes = \$25;

20 minutes = \$20;

15 minutes = \$15.

Cost of other incentives can be decided by the class.

When a student has completed the required hours to be eligible for a promotion, he/she is to come to class dressed for an interview. A student is selected to do the interviewing after possible questions have been discussed in class. The employee will present his/her "time card" to the employer, and they will discuss the employee's attendance record as well as other appropriate questions.

After the interview, the other students may have the opportunity to evaluate the employee's attitude, displayed effort, and cooperation. Students will also give positive feedback on the clothing chosen and make suggestions for change.

On a regular basis, the company should have management/team meetings. A student can be selected to facilitate the meeting. Employees are to discuss and resolve any conflicts that have arisen with any of the operating procedures. Changes to the contract can be made by majority vote.

Pre/Post Assessment

Pre-Assessment: Note attendance and promptness to class.

Post-Assessment: This activity can be evaluated by the willingness of the students to participate and any positive changes in attendance and promptness to class.

Evaluation by Learners

Students will continually evaluate the activity in the team meetings.

Reinforcement/Generalizations

Ask students to discuss what skills employers want most in their employees and what skills they are developing with this activity.

Comment

This activity works well in our class and is a very flexible activity that can be adapted to the needs of individual classes. Students should be encouraged to claim ownership in the company by making suggestions and changes to the original format to make it work better.

“Minds-R-Us, Inc.” Operations Manual

Because new students cycle through our classes on a regular basis, experienced students create a class operations manual to help new students “catch up” on some of the work-related activities that have already been completed in the class. Using the Operations Manual is similar to the orientation/training manuals used by some companies. Experienced students are selected to guide new students through specific sections of the manual.

Objectives

- New students will quickly adapt to and feel a part of the classroom environment.
- New students will quickly comprehend information regarding the operations of the class.
- Experienced students will practice communication skills and leadership roles.

Work-Based Skills

- **KSAs:** Standard procedures; Work on a team effectively; Cooperate with others; Talk respectfully.
- **SCANS:** Locates, understands, and interprets written information such as manuals; Communicates information in writing; Creates documents such as manuals; Allows students to work with other students of diverse backgrounds.
- **EFF:** Gather, analyze and use information; Guide and support others; Respect others and value diversity; Convey ideas in writing; Read critically.

Background

It is sometimes difficult to give each new student adequate time for orientation with so many other activities going on in the classroom. Instructors might neglect to mention certain policies. In

addition, having an operations manual enables students to obtain some benefit from activities done previously in the classroom without having to constantly repeat activities with the entire class.

How to Prepare

Ask experienced students to write down all of the information they feel would be helpful to a new student. The instructor can compile and add any necessary information. As new activities are completed in class, the instructor will write a summary and guidelines for completing the activity. Students who have already participated in the activity should be identified and trained to help new students through the activities.

Active Learning Methods Used

Students must recall details and gather new information from print materials which they will use.

What to Do During the Activity

Ask the experienced students to make a list of all the helpful information a new student might need. Depending on the abilities of the students, they can compile and edit the information; otherwise, the instructor can compile the list, making deliberate errors using

Diane Oakley
Chattanooga State ABE



Type

This activity creates a workbook which can be used by new students to catch up, and also a manual which becomes a standard part of our class routines and can be easily modified to incorporate new activities.

Learners

Most suitable for students with an independent reading ability.

Time Frame

The majority of the time would be spent in developing the written materials. Experienced students would assist new students on an as-needed basis.

Room Set-Up

No special needs.

Materials

Notebooks that can easily have pages added. Written material concerning the operating procedures of the classroom. Written forms of the most successful class activities related to work.

Learner Handouts

The written materials for the manual.

the grammar skills the students are working on and ask the students to proof the materials.

Students can also write up the activities completed in class for later inclusion in the manual. Other students can make suggestions on how to improve the written form of the activities to make sure these written activities are clear and accurate.

Explain the need for someone to help orient new students. Compile a list of those students who are willing to help and the activities they would like to assist the new students in completing.

As new students enter the class, the designated leader would welcome the student and introduce them to the operations manual.

Pre/Post Assessment

Students compile the materials to be included in the manual and are evaluated by the improvement in their writing skills. The instructor can observe how effective other students are in assisting new students.

Evaluation by Learners

Do new students appear comfortable and quickly fit in with the class?

Reinforcement/Generalizations

Students should be able to move into classroom activities more easily if they have the opportunity to experience in some way the kinds of information and activities that set the tone for the classroom environment.

Comment

Capable students are given increasingly more challenging responsibilities as they show an interest and ability in helping to develop the materials and assist other students.

“The Standard of Living”

Diane Tatum
Tulahoma Adult Learning
Center

This activity is based on a study of the short story “The Standard of Living” and ties the story to work skills through class discussion and essay writing.

Objectives

- Students will read and analyze a contemporary piece of literature.
- Students will write a brief essay about job related values.
- Students will connect the story and the coping skills in it to the everyday work world.

Work-Based Skills

- **KSAs:** Reading—understands and interprets written information; Writing—communicates thoughts, ideas in writing; Thinks creatively, visualizes; Works with others.
- **SCANS:** Cooperate with others; GED skills of reading, analysis of short story, essay writing.
- **EFFs:** Read critically; Reflect and evaluate.

Background Information

“How do we teach work skills while teaching literature?” is a question that concerns Families First instructors. No special background is necessary to teach this lesson.

How To Prepare

Read the story. Reproduce the handouts if materials are available.

Active Learning Methods Used

Reading and discussing. Writing and quiz, if handouts are available.

What To Do During the Activity

1. Direct class to consider what job they think they would like to have and write it down. List under the job the positive and negative aspects of that job. *Ask:* How might this job be “trapping?” Allow students to reflect and discuss as interested to create interest and pre-thought about the story. Direct students to stop there with their pre-writing.
2. Read the first 5 paragraphs aloud, allowing different students opportunity to read. *Ask:* What jobs do they have? (stenographers) How are they dressed? Is their dress appropriate? How can you tell? (“conspicuous, cheap, and charming”) Do you think they like their jobs?
3. Read the remainder of the story, either aloud or individually depending on the group’s reading ability. Write down unfamiliar vocabulary words as the group reads to look up later.
4. Discuss the game the girls play. *Ask:* Why do you think they play the game? Have you ever played a similar game when window shopping? Why did the price of the necklace spoil the game? Why do the girls seem to “droop and drag?” Have you ever felt this way when faced



Type

Stand alone or in conjunction with a unit on employment.

Learners

ABE Levels II and III.

Time Frame

Depends on your readers’ ability, one or two class sessions.

Room Set-up

Group set-up.

Materials

Short story: Parker, Dorothy. “The Standard of Living.” *50 Great Short Stories*. Ed. Milton Crane. New York: Bantam Books, p.22-27.

Learner Handouts

Nyman, Mary. *Teaching with 50 Great Short Stories* edited by Milton Crane. Portland, Maine: J. Weston Walch Publisher, 1994, pages 8-10.

with being unable to afford something, even in a game? Discuss coping skills when the stresses of everyday life close in. How do you cope? How does the game allow the girls to cope with the “ordinariness” of their lives?

5. Direct students to look up the meanings of the accumulated vocabulary words. Discuss the vocabulary in the context of the story and the basics of the story.
6. Direct students to write an essay based on their pre-writing about their desired job, its positive and negative aspects, its trapping potential, and a means of escaping that trap. When students have finished, allow volunteers to share their essays by exchanging with another student or reading aloud.

Pre/Post Assessment

Pre-Assessment: pre-writing.

Post-Assessment: essays, quiz (if using handout materials).

Evaluation by Learners

Interest and essay content.

Reinforcement/Generalization

This story addresses how to cope in everyday life—a skill we all need.

Comment

The story is most appropriate for Families First students. It was an interesting activity and gave the students new insights into the workplace.

Workplace Bingo

Judy Shuford,
Williamson County ABE

This activity combines the fun of playing bingo with active participation in discussion designed to create awareness of workplace issues.

Objectives

- To increase understanding, acceptance, and use of workplace skills by playing a fun, easy, and familiar game.
- To learn to know others in the class and become more aware of each others' views.

Work-Based Skills

- **KSAs:** Getting along with others; listen for understanding; follow instructions.
- **SCANS:** Sociability—demonstrates understanding, friendliness, adaptability, empathy, and politeness in group settings.
- **EFF:** Speak so others can understand.

Background

This activity requires no prior instruction and can be an introductory activity to familiarize students with each other and with workplace issues.

How to Prepare

Copy bingo cards. Obtain markers. Acquire prizes for winners (restaurants may donate free meals, and department stores may donate make-up samples). If desired, prepare five boxes with numbers in each box for the particular letter.

Active Learning Methods Used

Students are active participants in the game and in the discussion time when ideas and experiences related to the workplace are shared.

What to Do During the Activity

1. Distribute bingo cards and pen/pencil to each participant.
2. Tell each person to write a number between 1 and 10 in each box below the "B" column. Then write a number between 11 and 20 under the "I" column and so on . . .
3. The leader then calls out a letter and number combination by drawing from a prepared box of letters/numbers or by choosing a number and writing the number to keep up with which ones have been called.
4. When a player(s) has a square, he/she needs to do what the space asks.
5. When a player has a bingo (across, up, and down, T, diagonally, four corners, or whole board, as decided in advance), he/she wins some token of achievement (free menu items or meals from restaurants, make-up samples, etc.)

Pre/Post Assessment

Workplace issues will already have been discussed, but with an open entry class, new students may also be present. The discussion included in the activity will reveal the understanding and acceptance of the particular skills. The written evaluation mentioned below will also be helpful.



Type

Single activity that can be used in conjunction with any lesson plan.

Learners

Especially suitable for adult learners who are preparing to enter the workforce.

Time Frame

Time varies depending on advance agreement on bingo rules (whole board, four corners, etc.) and the amount of discussion encouraged.

Room Set-Up

Works well played around a large table.

Materials

Bingo card and pencil/pen for each player. (See attached example.)

Evaluation by Learners

Students conclude each day with written comments on their progress in addressing knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed in the workplace. They will have the opportunity through this written activity to evaluate the game experience.

Reinforcement/Generalizations

The discussion on workplace issues should give the students insight on facets of their lives that they can improve. The work skills discussed will be reinforced each day through planned activities such as additional discussions, worksheets, videos, etc.

Comment

The students really enjoy playing a game, and it allows them to get to know each other in a fun way while improving their work skills at the same time.

Overcoming Stereotypes & Assumptions for Better Workplace Relations

Susan King
Cheatham County ABE

Students are led through an exercise to make them more aware of their own prejudices and then are led to recognize how stereotypes & previous assumptions can be barriers to working with others. They then write an essay on their conclusions about their attitudes following these discussions.

Objectives

Students will recognize how their attitudes can interfere with communication and relationships in the workplace, both with coworkers and supervisors. They will develop more objectivity and the ability to get along with others who are different from them.

Work-Based Skills

- **KSAs:** Getting along with others.
- **SCANS:** Works with diversity—works well with men and women from diverse backgrounds; Basic skills/writing.
- **EFF:** Respect others and value diversity; Reflect and evaluate.

Background

A continuation of lessons based on *Teaching Tolerance* (Southern Poverty Law Center).

How to Prepare

Only mental preparation is needed.

Active Learning Methods Used

Discussion/brainstorming, writing.

What to Do During the Activity

1. Write on board the words: Migrant worker, Immigrant, Redneck, Homosexual/Lesbian, HIV positive. (Include any other groups that are often stereotyped.)

2. Have student write down words that come to mind for each of these “labels.”

3. Discuss their perceptions as illustrated by their words. Ask why they believe whatever they do — on what do they base these perceptions? First hand experience? Hearsay? One person from that group?

4. Write on board: “Welfare Recipient.”

5. Discuss what words they’ve heard in reference to this term. (Often “lazy,” “welfare cheat,” “always pregnant,” “get a job,” etc. will be mentioned.)

6. How does this make them feel? Is this perception true? On what does the public base this? Is it fair?

7. Refer again to the first “labels” written on the board.

8. Lead the class into discussion of how “labels” and perceptions can create barriers to how we relate to others. Discuss how the workplace is filled with increasingly diverse people with whom we must get along and work.



Type

Stand alone activity.

Learners

Suitable for all levels.

Time Frame

One hour.

Room Set-up

Students should be seated comfortably in a way to encourage discussion.

9. Have students write an essay on their conclusions about their attitudes following these discussions.

Pre/Post Assessment

Content of essay.

Evaluation by Learners

Discussion progression.

Reinforcement/Generalizations

Can be used in all areas of life's relationships.

Comment

This is an eye-opener for some students, leading them to a more tolerant, accepting view; to others who are firmly entrenched in their prejudices it is less effective.