

Title: Communication and Soft Skills in the Workplace

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Featured Externship Business: [Reinhart Foodservice](#)

Overview / Description:

When talking to numerous departments at Reinhart Foodservice, all department heads emphasized the need for communication between departments and wanting to hire employees who possess excellent soft skills.

For this unit, students will complete a job experience, job shadow, or community service experience where they will observe communication at the workplace as well as note examples of soft skills in the workplace. Students will also explain how they used communication skills and soft skills. Finally, they will present their findings in a PowerPoint presentation.

Subject(s):

English Language Arts (esp. Communications class)

Grade Level(s):

Grades 11-12

Learning goals/objectives:

After completing this activity, students should be able to:

- recognize the value of soft skills and communication in the workplace
- deliver a formal presentation using good eye contact, proper articulation and volume, and good word choice
- create a digital media presentation that synthesizes ideas and articulates information with the audience in mind

Type of Activity:

- Individual
- Whole Class

Teaching Strategies:

- Discussion
- Life Experience
- Presentations--Learning from Peers

Content Standards

Wisconsin Standards for English Language Arts

Speaking and Listening--Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas

SL4. Present information, findings, and supporting evidence, conveying a clear and distinct perspective, such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning, alternative or opposing perspectives are addressed, and the organization, development, substance, and style are appropriate to purpose, audience, and a range of formal and informal tasks.

SL5. Make strategic use of digital media (e.g., textual, graphical, audio, visual, and interactive elements) in presentations to enhance understanding of findings, reasoning, and evidence and to add interest.

SL6. Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and tasks, demonstrating a command of formal English when indicated or appropriate.

Model Academic Standards for School Counseling

Career Development Domain

Content Standard G: Students will acquire the self-knowledge necessary to make informed career decisions.

- Core Performance Standard 2: Develop positive interpersonal skills necessary to be effective in the world of work.

Length of Time and length of class periods: 6-7 days

Soft skills, communication skills, teamwork, verbal and nonverbal messages, and listening will be taught throughout the semester of the communication class. Students will do their community service, job shadow or employment hours outside the school day. They will be given four days of class time to prepare their PowerPoint presentations, and actual presentations will take place over 2-3 days.

Materials List:

- Unit handouts
 - [Hour Verification Form](#)
 - [PowerPoint Requirements](#)
 - [PowerPoint Grading Rubric](#)
- [Soft Skills Employers Seek](#)
- [Teamwork](#)
- [Non-verbal Communication](#)
- [Listening on the job](#)

Directions (Step-by-Step):

1. Students will complete 4+ hours of community service at a non-profit, work experience at a paid position preferably where you will work with several other employees, or at a job

shadowing experience. Students should have an employer or supervisor sign their hour verification form and return to the teacher.

2. Students who complete their 4 hours and receive an “excellent” rating will earn 50 points (out of 50.) A “very good rating” will earn 45 points, a “minimal” will earn 40, and a “poor” will earn 35 points.
3. Students will create and present a PowerPoint reflecting on their volunteer/job shadow/work experience focusing on the following points:
 - Slide 1: Title slide with your name
 - Slide 2: Introduce your experience
 - Where you volunteered/shadowed/worked
 - What you accomplished
 - Who benefitted from your activities
 - Why you chose this opportunity
 - Slide 3: What is the mission of your non-profit or purpose of your company?
 - Slide 4: What soft skills are necessary to be successful in this experience and why?
 - Slide 5: What communication skills did you use at your experience?
 - Slide 6: What kind of verbal and nonverbal messages did you observe at your volunteer/work place? How was listening important for you to be a successful volunteer/worker?
 - Slide 7: Did you observe any difficulties that others had with communication or teamwork? Explain.
 - If not, what kind of difficulties could you imagine happening at your volunteer place? Explain.
 - Give an example or two of something you learned from this class that could help make communication more clear or teamwork run more smoothly.
 - Slide 8: How did taking this class help you to become a better communicator and employee/volunteer? What did you gain from being a volunteer?
4. Review with students that PowerPoint presentations will be given as a speech with note cards, eye contact, articulation, good volume and specific word choice and vocabulary.

Wrap-Up:

After experiencing a job/community service placement, students should have a first-hand look at the type of skills needed to be successful in the workplace. Being a top-notch employee is more than just getting training in a specific job. Students will learn the importance of soft skills, communication, teamwork and listening, and after hearing that all employers desire people with those skills, they will use this information to become better employees and to sell themselves as they move to job interviews and the world of work.

Formative/Summative Assessment:

Students will receive points based on their rating from employers and for completing their work hours.

Their summative assessment is a presentation based on the soft skills they learned in their work or community service placement, as well as an analysis of teamwork, communication, and listening skills. They will report on these skills and analyze their importance in the workplace, hopefully transferring this information to a future job experience.

Extension Activity for differentiation:

- Students with special needs may be given a work experience within the school setting.

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Communication and Soft Skills in a Volunteer/Job Shadow/Work Experience Hour Verification Form

Complete 4+ hours of community service at a non-profit, work experience at a paid position preferably where you will work with several other employees, or at a job shadowing experience. Have an employer or supervisor sign the hour verification form and return to your teacher. Students who complete their 4 hours and receive an “excellent” rating will earn 50 points (out of 50.) A “very good rating” will earn 45 points, a “minimal” will earn 40, and a “poor” will earn 35 points.

4+ hours of community service, job shadowing, or employment were completed.	
Yes	No
Date:	Hours:
Date:	Hours:
Date:	Hours:
Date:	Hours:
<p style="text-align: center;">_____ (student’s name) displayed courtesy and met the requirements for the position.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"> Excellent Very Good Minimal Poor </p>	
Supervisor’s signature_____	

Communication and Soft Skills in a Volunteer/Job Shadow/Work Experience PointPoint Requirements

Present a PowerPoint reflecting on your volunteer/job shadow/work experience focusing on the following points:

- Slide 1: Title slide with your name
- Slide 2: Introduce your experience
 - Where you volunteered/shadowed/worked
 - What you accomplished
 - Who benefitted from your activities
 - Why you chose this opportunity
- Slide 3: What is the mission of your non-profit or purpose of your company?
- Slide 4: What soft skills are necessary to be successful in this experience and why?
- Slide 5: What communication skills did you use at your experience?
- Slide 6: What kind of verbal and nonverbal messages did you observe at your volunteer/work place? How was listening important for you to be a successful volunteer/worker?
- Slide 7: Did you observe any difficulties that others had with communication or teamwork? Explain.
 - If not, what kind of difficulties could you imagine happening at your volunteer place? Explain.
 - Give an example or two of something you learned from this class that could help make communication more clear or teamwork run more smoothly.
- Slide 8: How did taking this class help you to become a better communicator and employee/volunteer? What did you gain from being a volunteer?

Communication and Soft Skills in a Volunteer/Job Shadow/Work Experience PowerPoint Grading Rubric

Requirements:

1. Eight PowerPoint slides
2. PowerPoint presentation given as a speech with note cards, eye contact, articulation, good volume and specific word choice and vocabulary
3. Mechanical errors will result in a lower grade

Slide Number	Information Required	Points
1	Title Slide with your name <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-profit where you volunteered/job you shadowed/place you worked • approximate dates 	5
2	Tell what you did at the site.	5
3	Mission of your non-profit or purpose of your company <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are their goals? • Who do they help or what product/service do they create? • Where are they located? 	10
4	Explain the soft skills you observed or used at the site.	10
5	In what ways did you and others use verbal communication at the volunteer site.	10
6	In what ways did you and others use nonverbal communication at the site.	10
7	Did you observe any difficulties that others had with communication or teamwork? What issues could you foresee with lack of teamwork?	10
8	How was listening important for you to accomplish your tasks at the volunteer site?	10
9	How did taking this class help you to become a better communicator and employee/volunteer? What did you gain from your 4+ hours as an employee/volunteer?	10
Mechanics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No mechanical errors 	10
Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pictures on every page • 5-7 words per bullet • 3-5 bullets per slide • Transitions between slides 	10
Delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give a prepared speech • Do not look at the screen, look at the audience • Practice, practice, practice 	50
Final Grade		/150