Integrating Workplace Soft Skills at all Levels of ESL Instruction

Ronna Magy

Donna Price

English for New Bostonians
May 11, 2023
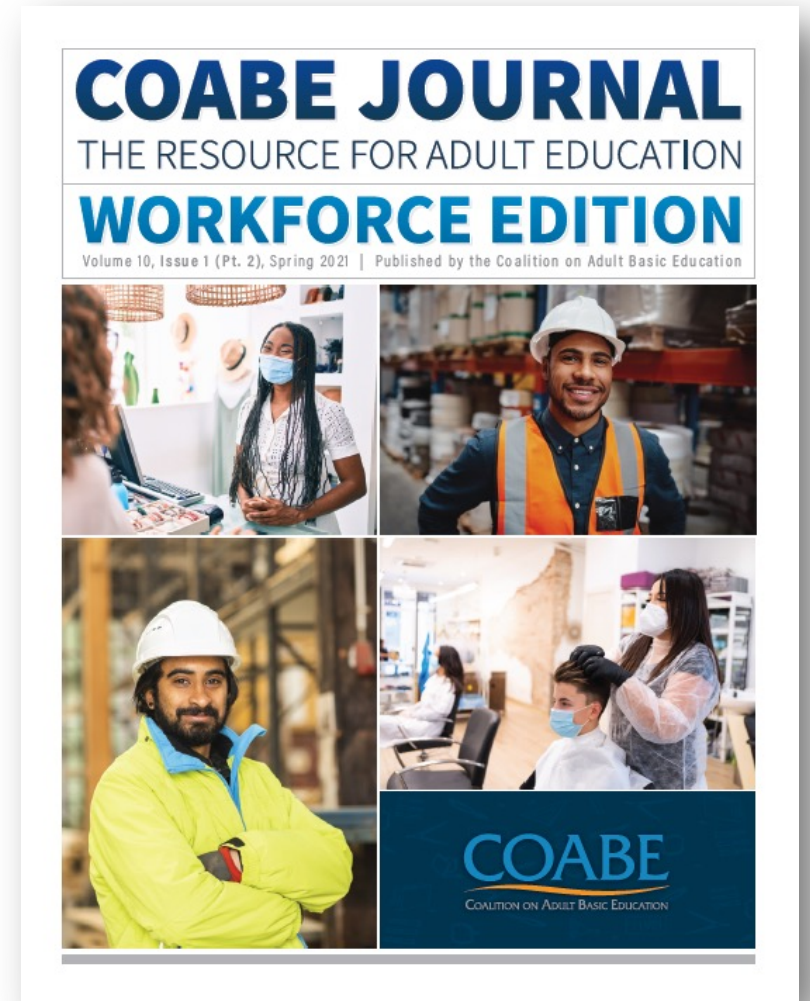
A few questions as we begin ………

1. What do you think are the goals of most adult education students?

2. Look at these words. What do they have in common? punctual, friendly, helpful, reliable, dependable, organized

Agenda and Objectives

- Research based background information
- Soft Skills
- Focus on Oral & Written Communication:
  - One-word selfie
  - Conversation cards
  - Useful language phrases
  - Language frames (oral and written)
  - Problem solving
  - Classroom jobs
  - Exit tickets

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COABE
Coalition on Adult Basic Education

# Soft Skills: Interpersonal and Communication Skills

- Listen well/understand instructions
- Interact with others
- Work in a team
- Teach job duties to others
- Manage time
- Read and comprehend work documents
- Solve problems
- Take initiative and responsibility
- Lead/plan/delegate
- Monitor performance

Sources: SCANS report; 21st Century Skills

Hard Skills: Technical Knowledge and Skills

- Make and repair products (fix a car, weld a pipe)
- Operate machines
- Provide required service
- Use appropriate computer hardware and software
- Demonstrate knowledge of safety standards
- Market and sell merchandise
- Implement appropriate office procedures
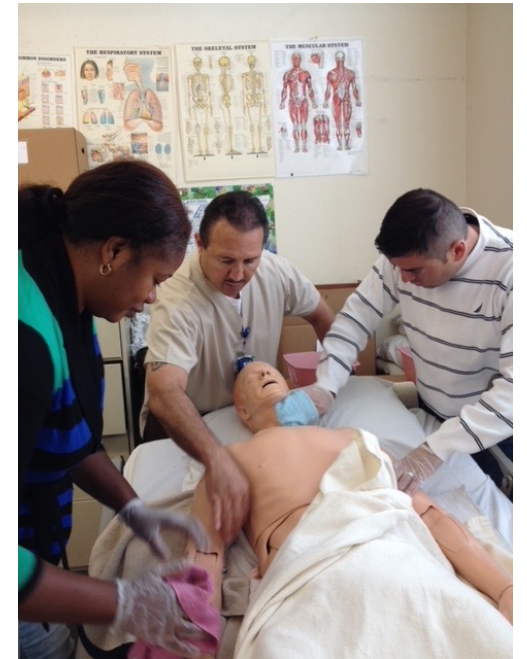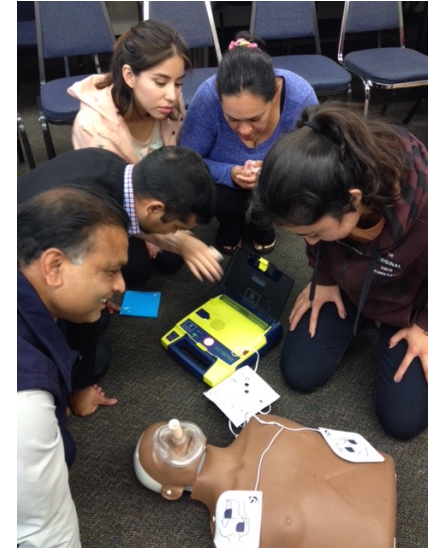
English Language Instruction and Soft Skills
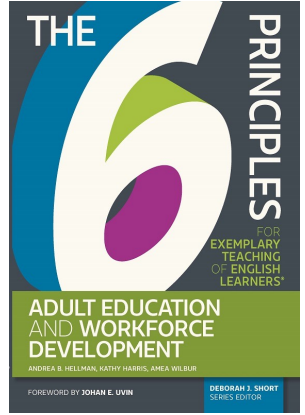
Critical thinking, problem solving, verbal and written communication skills, teamwork skills, and professional manners are the top-rated "soft skills" managers seek in employees (Wonderlic, 2016) and are suitable instructional targets for adult English language classes.

Hellman, A., Harris, K. Wilbur, A. (2019) *The 6 Principles for Exemplary Teaching of English Learners: Adult Education and Workforce Development.*

LinkedIn

Top 10 Most In-Demand Soft Skills

(Based on % of members with skill who were hired into a new job)

	Skill	
1	Communication	57.9%
2	Organization	56.5%
3	Teamwork	56.4%
4	Always Punctual	55.9%
5	Critical Thinking	55.8%
6	Social Skills	55.8%
7	Creativity	55.0%
8	Interpersonal Communication	55.0%
9	Adaptability	54.9%
10	Friendly Personality	54.6%

Berger 2016

Linked in Talent Blog

The 2023 Most In-Demand Skills

1. Management
2. Communication
3. Customer service
4. Leadership
5. Sales
6. Project management
7. Research
8. Analytical skills
9. Marketing
10. Teamwork

Dewar 2023

Hart Research Associates

## The learning priorities that executives and hiring managers value most highly cut across majors.

Very Important* Skills for Recent College Graduates We Are Hiring

■ Business executives ■ Hiring managers

Skill	2014	Business executives	Hiring managers
Able to effectively communicate orally	5% in 2014	80%	90%
Critical thinking/analytical reasoning	81% in 2014	78%	84%
Ethical judgment and decision-making	81% in 2014	77%	87%
Able to work effectively in teams	83% in 2014	77%	87%
Able to work independently (prioritize, manage time)		77%	85%
Self-motivated, initiative, proactive: ideas/solutions		76%	85%
Able to communicate effectively in writing	82% in 2014	76%	78%
Can apply knowledge/skills to real-world settings	80% in 2014	76%	87%

* 8-10 ratings on a 0-to-10 scale; 15 outcomes tested
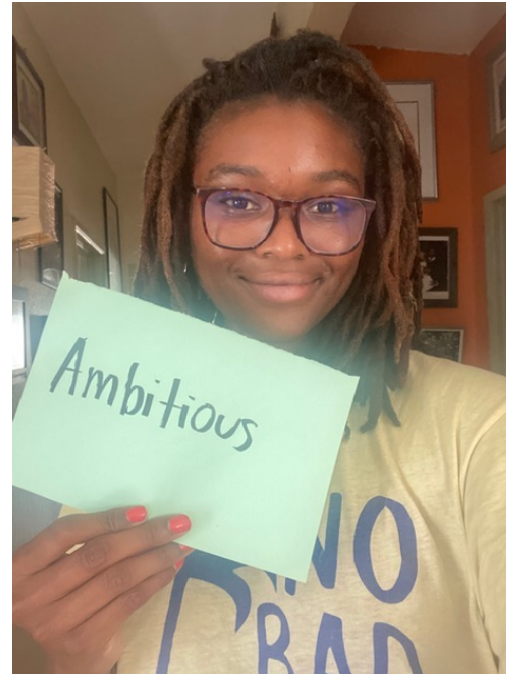
Hart Research 2018

Oral Communication: One-word Selfie
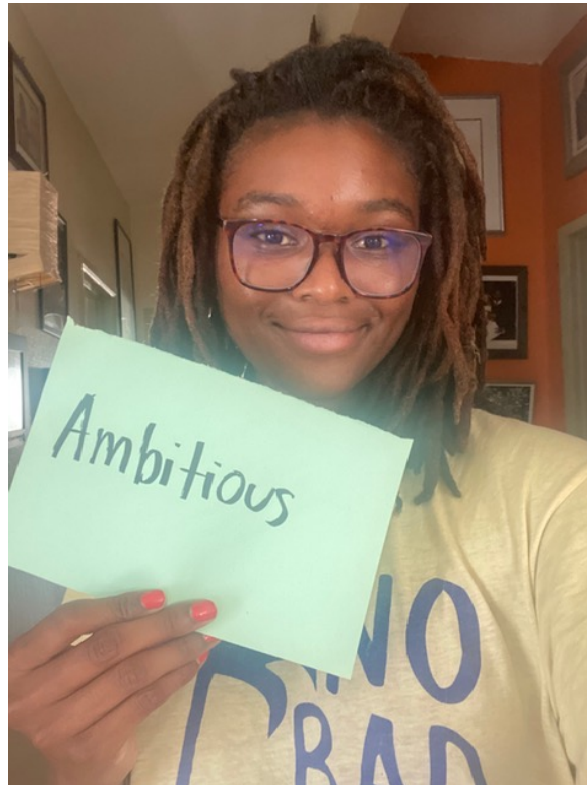
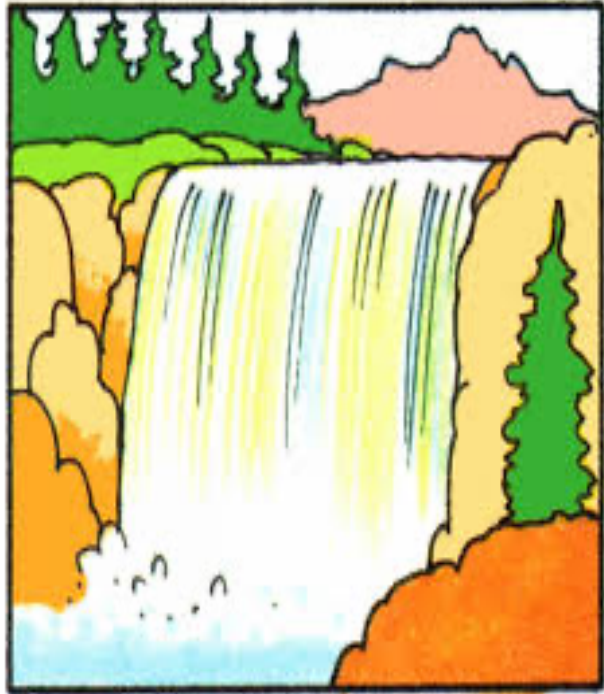# Favorite word selfie: One Word

Donna

Yeelena

Reine

Discuss the words in the context of transferable soft skills in the workplace.

Adapted from Katie Welch, TESOL 2020: Differentiating instruction in online classrooms

Waterfall Chat:
What is your favorite selfie word? What is one word that describes you?

Rationale

The waterfall chat is a fun technique because students are all thinking at the same time, but can't copy each other. In addition, it gives the students who need more time to process information time to type in their answers. Chats are usually are very fast. The waterfall chat slows things down.

Procedure

Type your word in the chat but **DON'T HIT ENTER!!!** When I say 3, press enter.

Ready? 1-2-3. **Enter.**
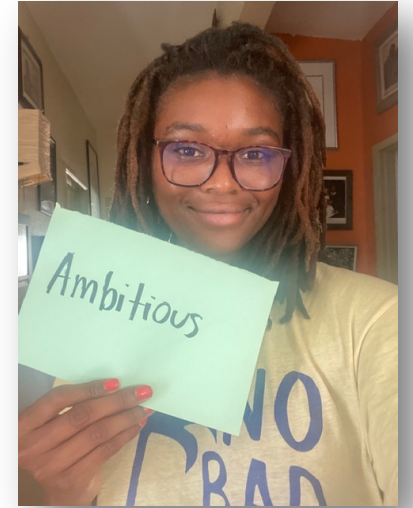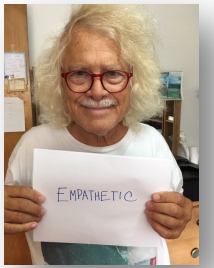
Ice-breaker: Favorite Word Selfie

To get to know your students better, do this "favorite word selfie" activity.

1) Students **post selfie*** with one word that describes themselves.

2) Students **introduce themselves** and tell why they chose that word.

3) Students **find someone who** they have something in common with and explain why.

In beginning level classes, give students a list of five words and let them choose from: friendly, helpful, cooperative, on time, organized.

* **Post on Padlet, Canvas, Google Slides, website, etc.**

Adapted from Katie Welch, TESOL 2020: Differentiating instruction in online classrooms

Favorite Word Selfie Breakout Rooms

Now that you have decided on one word that describes yourself, you are going to see how it feels to practice with your word in a breakout room.

1. **Introduction & Selfie Share**: Introduce yourself to your partners, tell them the word you chose and why you chose it.

2. **Find Commonalities**: Find someone you have something in common with and discuss what you have in common.

3. **Report Back:** Be ready to come back to the whole group to report something you learned about yourself and your partners.

**Does anyone want to share one thing
you heard from another person?**

One Word Selfie Activity on Padlet
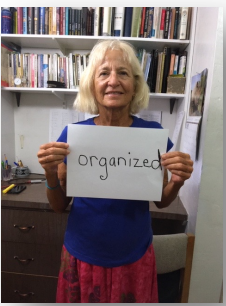
Favorite Word Selfie Homework: Directions and Model

Beginning Level: Write one paragraph.

 My name is _____. I was born in _____. My favorite word is _____ because _____.

Intermediate/Advanced:

Write two paragraphs.

- 1st paragraph: Background information about yourself.

- 2nd paragraph: Why you chose your favorite word. Give at least two examples.

- You will read your paragraphs to your classmates and submit it to your teacher.

My name is Donna. I was born in Kansas. I have lived and worked in San Diego for over 40 years. I enjoy working with people, swimming and running.

The word that describes me is **organized.** *I chose that word for many reasons. First, I keep track of my ideas and make to-do lists. Also, I have a schedule and manage my time. I meet deadlines and work well with people in case I need assistance to finish a job. Finally, I'm organized because I need to find things I'm looking for!*

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Favorite Word Selfie Assessment

1) After students write their two-paragraph assignment about their favorite selfie word, they read it aloud to the class.

2) Students submit their written assignment to the teacher (email, text, or LMS).

Oral Communication: Conversation Cards

Conversation Cards

Student A: Ask any question to student B.

Student B: Answer the question and then ask a different question to student C.

Student C: Ask a new question to student A.

Do you like to work alone or with people? 1	Do you like to work the day shift or the night shift? 2	What are two things you do not like to do at work? 3	What are two things you like to do at work? 4
Do you have a manager, or do you like to be your own manager? 5	Do you speak English or your native language at work? 6	What are two jobs you do not want to have? 7	Do you like to go out for lunch or bring lunch from home? 8
Do you write letters, emails or reports at work? 9	Do you answer calls or take messages at work? 10	Do you take a car, bus or train to work? 11	What are two jobs you want to have? 12

Adapted from Ventures Online Resources www.cambridgeone.org

Ways to Practice Conversation Cards Online

1. Teacher **shares screen** with conversation questions. In a chain drill fashion, students ask each other the questions.

2. Students in Zoom **Gallery** view. Teacher posts the questions in the chat box. In a chain drill fashion, students ask each other the questions.

3. **Students in Breakout Rooms**. Teacher posts the questions in the chat box. Students ask each other the questions. Or, teacher posts a file in the chat box and students open the file and share their screen.

4. Students **photograph the questions**. They toggle back and forth between Zoom screen and questions if they are on a phone.

Conversation Cards Assessment

1. After students come back to the whole group **from breakout rooms,** ask, "What did your partner say about...."

2. After students ask and answer **in gallery view**, teacher asks about students' answers, for example, "What can Maria cook? Who remembers? What languages does Bin speak?"

3. For homework, students can write out the answers to the questions and submit them to their teacher. Students can also practice the questions and answers orally at home.

Oral Communication: Useful language phrases

There is a great need for functional language associated with asking for information, making requests, providing explanations, discussing problems or making amends when things go wrong. (Wrigley 2015)

Thanks for your time.

Are you with me?

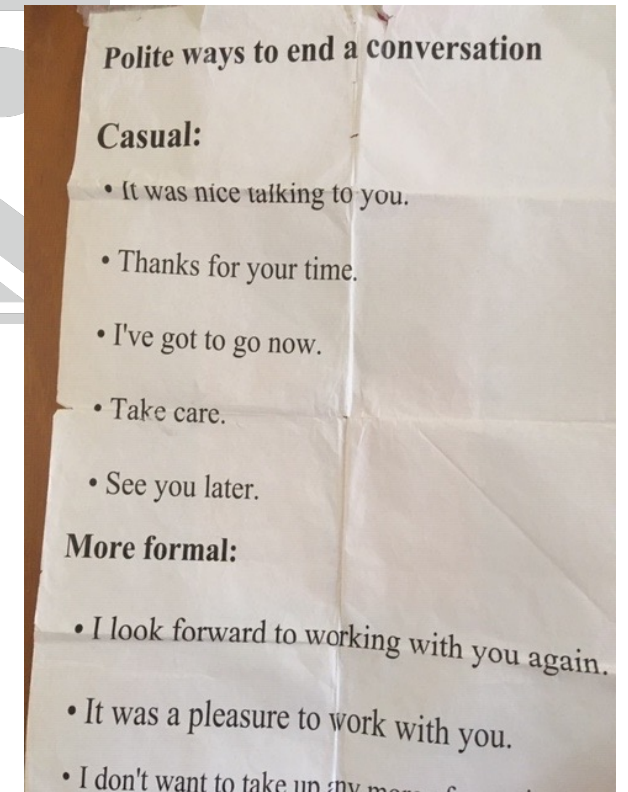Please accept my apology.

Useful Phrases
Courtesy: Simple Phrases for Leaving

Casual:

- *It was nice talking to you.*
- *Thanks for your help.*
- *See you later.*

More formal:

- *I look forward to working with you again soon.*
- *It was a pleasure to work with you.*
- *I don't want to take up any more of your time.*

Oral Communication: Language Phrases

1. **Zoom Gallery View**: Teacher posts several useful phrases for one function in the chat box.

2. **Modeling**: Teacher models how to embed the phrases into the lesson. For example, when the breakout room activity is over, students end the conversation with simple phrases for leave taking.

3. **Breakout Rooms**: Students refer to the phrases in the chat box and use one or two when appropriate while completing an assigned task.

4. **Assessment**: Teacher drops in and out of breakout rooms to monitor students' use of the phrases
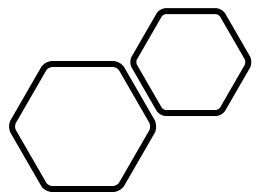
Chat

From Me to Everyone:

Polite phrases to say goodbye
It was nice talking to you.
Thanks for your time.
I look forward to working with you again.

Oral Communication: Oral Language Frames

What did you do last weekend?

I went_____.
I saw a lot of people _____ing.

Why Use Frames for Oral and Written Language?

Frames……..

- Guide and structure learning
- Can be used for both synchronous and asynchronous learning
- "….help students to gradually pick up academic language and eventually use it to compose their own…..without help."

~Zwiers, J., (2004) *Developing Academic Thinking Skills, p. 50.*

- Scaffolded language and is more easily accessible to students. Frames provide language models on which students can build their own ideas and content.

~Parrish, B., (2019) *Teaching Adult English Language Learners, pp.168-170.*
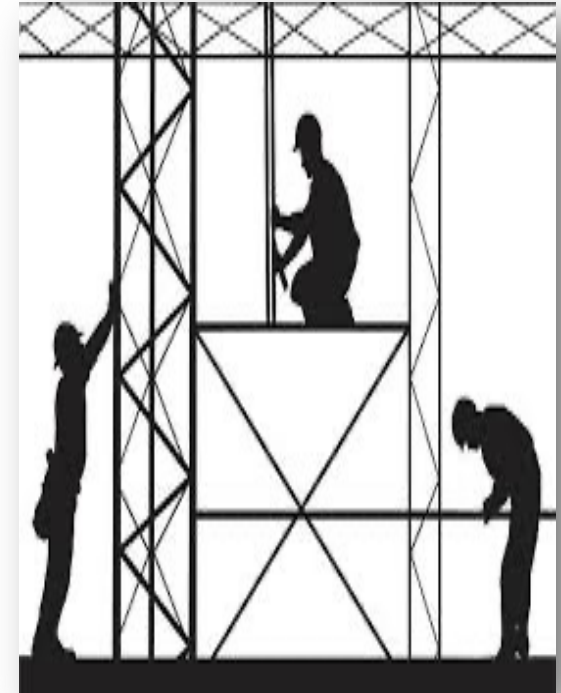
Oral Language Frames
Ways to Practice Online and Face-to-Face

In the context of a speaking and listening lesson….

1. **Zoom Gallery View**: Teacher posts questions and language response frames in chat box.

2. **Modeling**: Teacher calls on individual students. They complete language frames with their own information.

3. **Breakout Rooms**: Round Robin style, students take turns asking and answering using the language frames.

4. **Assessment**: Students return to whole class and report what one of their classmates said in the breakout room.

Oral Language Frame: Practice Activity 1

1. What time did you get up this morning?

    I got up at _____because _____

2. What time did you go to bed last night?

    I went to sleep at _____because _____.

3. What time did you_____?

    I _____ at _____ because _____.

Assessment: For community building, when students return to whole class, ask individuals to report on how a classmate responded to one of the questions. *Who did you talk to? What did he/she say?*

Oral Language Frame: Talking about Current Events

A. What is an advantage of _____?

B. One of the advantages of _____ is _____.

A. What is a disadvantage of _____?

B. One of the disadvantages of _____ is _____.

- Getting vaccinated & getting a booster
- Taking a class online
- Shopping online
- Working remotely
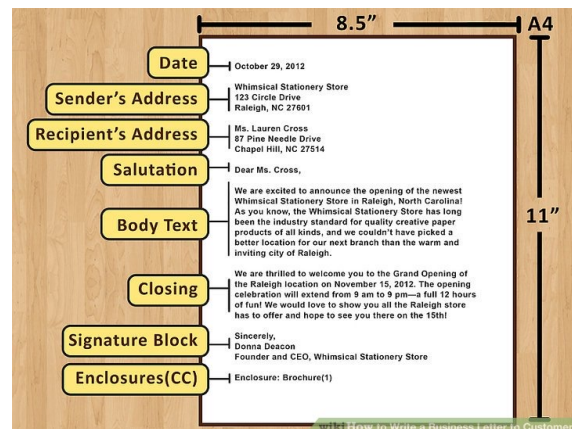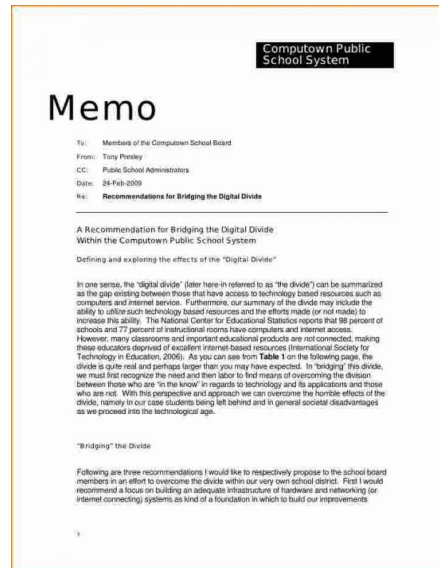- Watching the news

Written Communication: Writing Frames

Written Communication in the Workplace

- **During the job search:**
  - Job application forms
  - Resumes
  - Cover letters
  - Thank you notes
- **On the job:**
  - Memos
  - Emails
  - Text messages
  - Instant messages
  - Instructions
  - Business letters
  - Safety reports
  - Accident reports
  - Proposals
  - Bulletins
  - Promotional reviews

Hart Research Associates

The learning priorities that executives and hiring managers value most highly cut across majors.
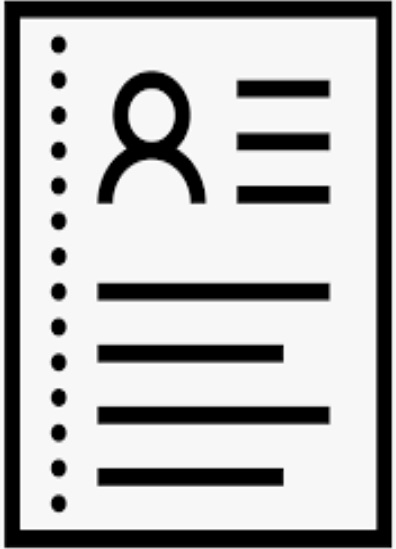
Very Important* Skills for Recent College Graduates We Are Hiring

■ Business executives ■ Hiring managers

Skill	Business executives	Hiring managers
Able to effectively communicate orally (75% in 2014)	80%	90%
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Able to work independently (prioritize, manage time)	77%	85%
Self-motivated, initiative, proactive: ideas/solutions	76%	85%
Able to communicate effectively in writing (82% in 2014)	76%	78%
Can apply knowledge/skills to real-world settings (80% in 2014)	76%	87%

Hart Research 2018

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Written Communication: Sentence Frames
Job History/Job Resume

1) I came to this country in _____.

2) In my home country, I worked as a _____.

3) My first job in this country was as a _____.

4) I'm looking for a job as a _____.

5) My work skills are: I can _____, _____, and _____.

Written Communication: Paragraph Frames Important Events

I want to describe three important events in my life.

First, _____.

Second, _____.

Third, _____.

Next year I'm going to _____.

Adapted from Jeff Zwiers

Written Communication: Paragraph Frames Beginning Level

Draw pictures of three important events in your life.

Write about your pictures.

Three Important Events

My name is _____.These are my important events.
First, _____
Second,_____
Third,_____

Written Communication: Word Bank

C Write about Rosa. She is sick, too. Complete the note.

daughter	Dear	home	May 20, 2008	stomachache

May 20, 2008

_____ Mr. O'Hara,

Rosa Martinez is my _____ . She is
at _____ today. She is sick. She has
a _____ .

Please excuse her. Thank you.

Sincerely,
Maria Martinez

Written Communication: Paragraph Frames Analyze Information

How Fresh Is Your Fruit?

Most people need to eat at least two pieces of fruit every day to be healthy. Apples, bananas, and grapes are the most popular kinds of fresh fruit in the U.S. People like these kinds of fruit the most.

Map: Where Is Fruit from?
Some popular fruits are from the U.S. Some are from other countries.

Apples
Most apples in the U.S. are from the state of Washington. 60% of the apples in the U.S. are from Washington. New Hampshire, New York, and West Virginia also have a lot of apples.

Apples are most fresh from August to October. But people buy apples all year. Stores keep apples in the refrigerator for a long time, like 10 months. The refrigerator makes apples taste fresh, even when they are old.

Grapes
87% of grapes in the U.S. are from California. Washington and New York also have grapes. Most people eat about eight pounds of grapes in a year.

Caption: Grapes are a popular fruit.

Bananas
Latin America has the most bananas in the world. 94% of bananas in the U.S. are from Latin America. The U.S. buys most bananas from Guatemala and Ecuador. Most people in the U.S. eat about 26 pounds of bananas every year.

Fresh Fruit
Most people do not know how fresh their fruit is. Fruit is not fresh when it travels many miles, like from Guatemala to the U.S. Fruit is not fresh when it is in the refrigerator for a long time.

How fresh is your fruit? Where is it from?

Write a paragraph about a popular fruit in your class and a popular fruit in the U.S. Use information from the article to explain how fresh it is.

People in my class eat a lot of fruit. The most popular fruit in my class is ____. ____ students like ____. A lot of people in the U.S. eat different kinds of fruit. One of the most popular types of fruit in the US. is ____. Most ____ in the U.S. are from ____. They (are / are not) fresh because they travel from ____. We need to know how fresh our fruit is.

Future 2e, Student Book 1
CCRS Writing

Written Language Frames: Ways to Practice

Online practice

1. **Zoom Gallery View**: After class discussion about the writing task, teacher posts a written language frame in the chat box.

2. **Breakout Rooms**: Working individually and together, each student fills in their own language frame.

3. **Assessment**: Students return to whole class and read their work.

Oral Communication: Problem Solving

LinkedIn

Top 10 Most In-Demand Soft Skills

(Based on % of members with skill who were hired into a new job)

#	Skill	%
1	Communication	57.9%
2	Organization	56.5%
3	Teamwork	56.4%
4	Always Punctual	55.9%
5	Critical Thinking	55.8%
6	Social Skills	55.8%
7	Creativity	55.0%
8	Interpersonal Communication	55.0%
9	Adaptability	54.9%
10	Friendly Personality	54.6%

Berger 2016

Why Teach Problem Solving?

In the Problem-Solving Process........

- Real-life problems are posed in oral or reading contexts
- Individuals and student groups build the soft skills of oral communication, leadership, collaboration, teamwork, critical thinking, decision making
- Student groups/whole class collaborate to identify the problem, possible solutions, consequences, build consensus based on the best solution
- Language frames scaffold and guide group conversations

Problem Solving Scenario

Problem:

Freddy is a painter. He paints houses. The supervisor gives Freddy and his co-workers instructions every morning. The supervisor speaks very fast. Freddy doesn't understand what the supervisor is saying.

What should Freddy do?

1. Freddy says to the supervisor, "I'm sorry. Could you repeat that?"

2. Freddy asks his co-workers questions when the supervisor leaves.

3. Freddy doesn't ask questions. Then he starts to work.

4. Freddy_____.

Future Second Edition, Student Book 1, p. 44.

Problem Solving
Oral Language Frames

Ask for an opinion
- *What do you think she/he should do _____?*

Provide a possible problem solution
- *I think he/she should _____because_____.*

Consider the consequences of taking an action
- *If she/he does _____, then _____might happen.*

Report a group decision to the whole class
- *Our group thinks he/she should _____because _____.*
- *Some of the people in our group think that she/he should_____ because_____. Others think that he/she should _____.*

Make a Decision + Consider the Consequences!!

What should Freddy do?

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Problem Solving Breakout Room Instructions

In the breakout room:

1. Select a group leader, recorder/reporter, timekeeper.

2. The group leader reads the problem aloud.

3. Each person gives their opinion (one minute) about how to solve the problem.

I think she/he/they should_____ because _____.

4. As the group talks and tries to come to consensus, the group considers the consequences of possible decisions.

If he/she/they do/does_____, then_____.

5. When each group returns to gallery view, the reporter reports the group's decision to the class.

We think she/he/they should _____because_____.
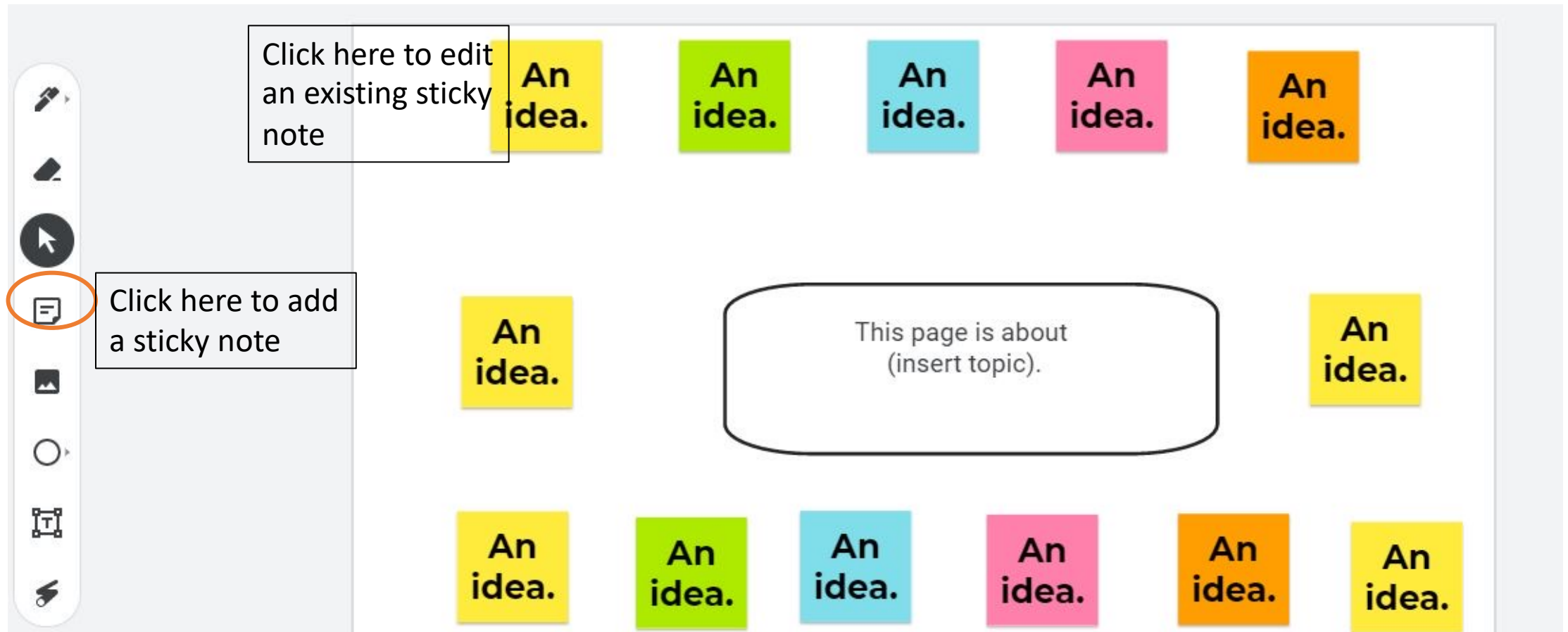
Problem Solving Scenario #2: Breakout Room

Problem:
It's Monday at 1:00 pm. Cecilia is working on her job as a hotel front desk agent. She just got a call from the school nurse. Her son is sick, and she needs to pick him up. Cecilia is scheduled to work until 4 pm. She asks the hotel manager for the afternoon off. The manager wants to help, but no one in the building is available to take Cecilia's shift.

What should Cecilia do?

1. Cecilia should leave work, even though her manager said no one is available to work for her.

2. Cecilia should try to call another worker to substitute for her.

3. Cecilia should pretend she is sick.

4. Cecilia should call her husband or a neighbor to pick up her son at school.

5. Cecilia should _____.

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In the breakout room:

1. **Select** a group leader, recorder/reporter, timekeeper.

2. The group leader **reads** the problem aloud.

3. Each person **gives their opinion** (one minute) about how to solve the problem.

I think she/he/they should_____ because _____.

4. As the group talks and tries to come to consensus, the group **considers the consequences** of possible decisions.

If he/she/they do/does_____, then_____.

5. When each group returns to gallery view, the reporter reports the group's decision to the class.

We think she/he/they should _____because____.

Problem:
It's Monday at 1:00 pm. Cecilia is working on her job as a hotel front desk agent. She just got a call from the school nurse. Her son is sick, and she needs to pick him up. Cecilia is scheduled to work until 4 pm. She asks the hotel manager for the afternoon off. The manager wants to help, but no one in the building is available to take Cecilia's shift.

What should Cecilia do?
1. Cecilia should leave work, even though her manager said no one is available to work for her.
2. Cecilia should try to call another worker to substitute for her.
3. Cecilia should pretend she is sick.
4. Cecilia should call her husband or a neighbor to pick up her son at school.
5. Cecilia should _____.

Jamboard: Sticky note brainstorming template

Click here to edit an existing sticky note

Click here to add a sticky note

An idea.

An idea.

An idea.

An idea.

An idea.

An idea.

This page is about (insert topic).

An idea.

An idea.

An idea.

An idea.

An idea.

An idea.

An idea.

Jamboard: Sticky note brainstorming

https://jamboard.google.com/d/1i064nin8vJJEbDGdblT1HAmWxH
Q_JAEDCi147K6CjU4/viewer?f=0

Problem Solving Assessment: Polls

Polls

What should Cecilia do?

📊 00:00:10 | 1 question | 0 of 0 (0%) participated

1. What should Cecilia do? (Single Choice) *
0/0 (0%) answered

1. Cecilia should leave work, even though her manager said no one is available to work for her. (0/0) 0%

2. Cecilia should try to call another worker to substitute for her. (0/0) 0%

3. Cecilia should pretend she is sick. (0/0) 0%

4. Cecilia should call her husband or a neighbor to pick up her son at school. (0/0) 0%

5. Cecilia should _____. (0/0) 0%

End Poll

Teacher reads each of the possible solutions aloud, tabulates and summarizes class information.

- *Everyone agrees that Cecilia should_____.*
- *Some people think that Cecilia should_____.*
- *Most people think that Cecilia ought to_____.*
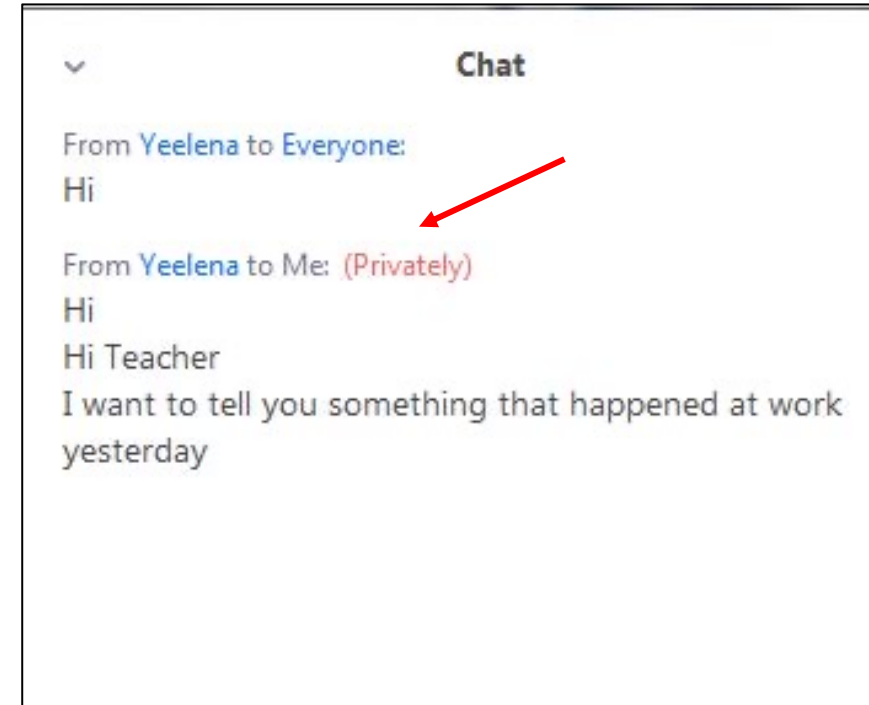- *According to our class, the best solution is for Cecilia to_____.*

Problem Box:
Discuss real problems
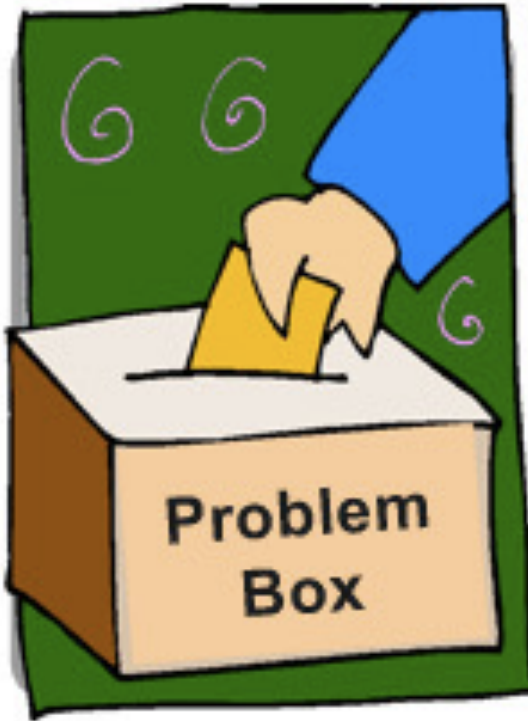
Face-to-face classes
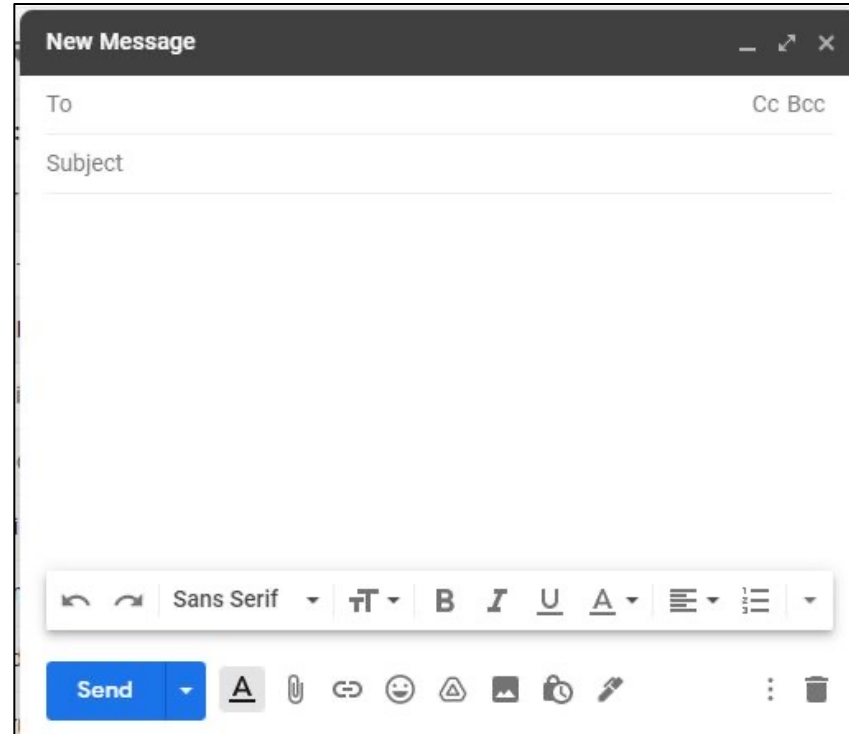
Online classes: email

Online classes: students send a private message in chat

Classroom Job: Athletic Trainer

Hi everyone!

It's time to take a stretch break.

Stand up, stretch, reach, look left and right…

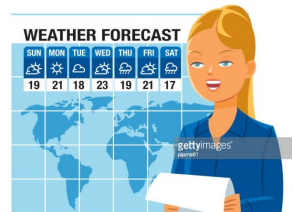# Transferable Work Skills: Classroom Jobs in Online Classes

Classroom jobs:

- Provide students opportunities to **use English in practical ways**
- Provide ways for students to learn real world skills in practical ways
- Boost student engagement in the class
- Build autonomy
- Help support the teacher

From Sam Kary, New EdTech Classroom and Thom Gibson, Essential Student Jobs for the Classroom of Tomorrow
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vbkRanR1rNU&ab_channel=NewEdTechClassroom

Transferable Work Skills: Student jobs in the virtual classroom

JOB	JOB DUTIES	LANGUAGE FOR THAT JOB
Trainer	• Demonstrates to students how to do something on Zoom or in a learning management system. • Uses the chat box to communicate with students • May stay after Zoom class to assist students	• What can I help you with? • What's the matter? • Let's meet on Zoom later. Digital language: • Click, scroll, drag and drop, delete, arrow, etc.
Athletic Trainer	• Uses a timer to stop the class after 45 minutes. • Leads the class in a stretch break for 1-2 minutes.	• It's time to take a stretch break. • Stand up, stretch, reach, look left and right, etc.
Meteorologist News Anchor	• Provides a 1-minute summary of the weather for the day/week. • Summarizes an important news event.	• Today the weather is going to be clear, cold, cloudy, windy, etc. • I'm going to share some important news with you.

Essential Student Jobs for the Classroom of Tomorrow, by Thom Gibson
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vbkRanR1rNU&ab_channel=NewEdTechClassroom

Transferable Skills: Classroom Jobs in Online Classes

1. **Zoom Gallery View**: Teacher describes several jobs, what the duties of the jobs are and some of the language needed to do the job. The teacher only does a few jobs at a time and after a week or two adds a new job. She explains the idea of 'transferable skills.'

2. **Modeling**: Teacher models how to do the job and the language needed for that job. For example, the trainer assists students who have computer problems. Trainers can work with the students who need assistance online after the Zoom class or discuss when to meet in the chat box.

3. **Assessment**: Teacher asses how students are doing with their jobs and gives private feedback.

Chat

From Me to Everyone:
Choose a job you would like to do for two weeks.
Trainer
Athletic trainer

Transferable Work Skills: Student jobs in the face-to-face classroom

| JOB	JOB DUTIES	LANGUAGE FOR THAT JOB
Trainer	• Help new students. Ask them to sit with you. Introduce yourself. • Show the new students where to sign in. Show them where the materials are. • Help the students feel comfortable.	• Hi. Welcome to the class. My name is ____ What's your name? • Every day you sign this sheet when you come in. When you leave, you sign out. (Show the student the sign-in sheet). • The books and materials are over there in the cabinet. (Show the student). • If you have any questions, please ask me. I can help you.
Materials Manager	• Pass out papers for the teacher. • Distribute and collect books. • Be sure the cabinet is neat before you leave. • Be sure all materials (dictionaries, books, etc.,) are put away before you leave.	• Did everyone get a handout? • Here you are. Here you go. • Who needs one? • There is one book missing. • Who forgot to put back the …

Communication: Exit Tickets

Exit Tickets: Oral and Written Communication

- What workplace skills did you practice today?

  (teamwork, oral communication, adaptability....)

- What academic skills did you practice today?

  (reading, writing, grammar....)

- What do you want to practice more?

- What did you like today?
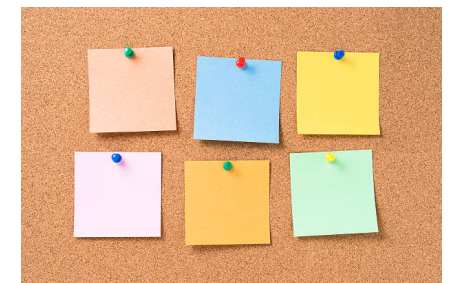
Adapted from Sarah Lynn and Susan Reade COABE 2020

Exit Tickets on Padlet
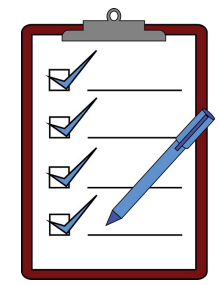
Did We Meet Our Objectives?

Can you identify several oral and written communication activities that can be taught in ESL classes?

- One-word selfie

- Conversation Cards

- Useful phrases

- Language Frames (oral and written)

- Problem Solving

- Classroom jobs

- Exit tickets

Can you describe some of them to a colleague?

Your Biggest Takeaway

What is your biggest takeaway from today's presentation? Write your answers in the chat.

Which two activities do you think you might do in the next couple of weeks? Write your answers in the chat.

One-word selfies

Classroom jobs

Exit tickets

Oral and written frames

Conversation cards

Problem solving

Useful phrases

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