

INTERACTIVE ACTIVITIES TO INTRODUCE TEAMWORK SKILLS

Author: Murleen Bellinger
School/District: Waverly High School, Box 426, Waverly, NE 68462
E-mail address: mbelling@esu6.org

This activity started as a result of being on a learning team at our school. I volunteered to be on the “Character Education” learning team. The team read and discussed the book, “The Seven Habits of Highly Effective Teens,” by Sean Covey.¹ As part of our requirement while on the team, we were to select a Habit and create a lesson plan using ideas from the book. I chose Habit 6, which was Synergize. The habit basically dealt with teamwork and problem solving. I chose the habit knowing that teaching teamwork and problem solving was part of my curriculum for my school-to-work class. However, it can be adapted for any class that includes problem solving and decision-making in the course content.

I start the unit with a brainstorming activity. The students use note cards to write down as many ideas as possible to solve the problem given to them. In groups, I have them discuss their ideas and pick out the groups top three choices. We discuss the top choices and come up with a solution to the problem.

To help the students determine his/her personality style for working in a group. I have the students complete the assessment that is included in the Seven Habits book: *It's All in Your Mind*.² We discuss their personality “fruit” and what it means when working in a group/teamwork setting. The book provides a description of what each fruit means as to characteristics in problem solving and working in groups.

The next activity involves grouping the students for a cooperative learning activity. The activity is to have the students create a structure using playing cards. Of course, you could use any building material such as Legos, popsicle sticks, etc. The recorder of the group writes down comments made as well as positive and negative characteristics of teamwork while the “carpenters” are building their structure. We discuss the positive and negative examples of teamwork skills, and I have the students come up with skills that are needed for effective teamwork to take place.

The last activity involves creating an audio podcast. I have the students role-play by reading a script and recording their voices on an iPod. I upload the recording into my Angel site for the class. The students are then to listen to the audio podcast and write down how the steps in the decision-making method were used to solve the problem. Lastly, as a culminating activity, I post questions on the discussion board for Angel. Through these questions, the students are to reflect on what they now know about teamwork and how these activities have influenced or changed their teamwork skills.

¹ Covey, Sean. The 7 Habits of Highly Effective Teens. New York: Franklin Covey Co., 1998.

² Butler, Elizabeth. As printed in The 7 Habits of Highly Effective Teens, by Sean Covey.

SHARE AN IDEA INFORMATION DOCUMENT

Idea Title: Interactive Activities To Introduce Teamwork Skills

Objectives:

- The student will be able to understand the attitudes and behaviors associated with teamwork.
- The student will be able to understand how these attributes compare to their own personality.
- The student will be able to demonstrate those attitudes and behaviors in a cooperative learning activity.
- The student will be able to apply those attributes to a role-play situation.
- The student will use a decision-making guide to find a solution to the role-play scenario.

Overview:

The students will do a variety of activities to determine what skills are needed for an effective team as well as how to use those skills to solve problems at work.

NBEA Standards:

NBEA Standards for Career Development—Self-Awareness, Workplace Expectations, and School-to-Career Transition

NBEA Standards for Communication—Foundations of Communication, Social Communication, Technological Communication

NBEA Standards for Computation—Problem-Solving Applications

Concepts/Skills Reinforced or Mastered:

One of the skills reinforced or mastered in this activity includes a thorough knowledge of the skills needed for effective teamwork. The concept of brainstorming will help the students to come up with ideas for skills needed for effective teamwork as well as solving problems. Using a personality/teamwork assessment tool, the students will be able to see what type of personality qualities they possess that makes them an effective team member. Students will also demonstrate mastery of the decision-making method to solve a work-related problem. Lastly, the students will be introduced to the use of an iPod to create an audio podcast, which will be used with the decision-making method. As a culminating activity, the students will use an online teaching web site such as Angel to interact with the other students in the class through a discussion board.

Course/Grade Level:

Any high school class that uses teamwork or problem solving will be able to use these activities.

Materials/Resources/Equipment:

Materials:

- Index cards
- Flip chart, paper, or marker board
- Playing cards or other “building” material
- *It's All In Your Mind*—personality/teamwork qualities assessment
- Script for role-playing problem at work

Equipment:

- iPod/Microphone
- Computer for Angel

Resources:

Covey, Sean. *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective Teens*. New York: Franklin Covey Co., 1998.
Workplace Videos, Glencoe McGraw-Hill Publishing, 2000

Time Required to Complete the Lesson/Unit:

This unit should take the students approximately three to four days to complete depending on the class sizes and extent to which you present the activities.

Lesson Plan/Activities:

1. Divide the class in to groups of 3-5 students, or you could just have one group participate in the activity. Each participant is given three blank index cards. Place a few in the middle of the table in case the students come up with more ideas. Explain to the students that this is going to be a brainstorming session that will be individual as well as team based. In the brainstorming session, there are no right or wrong responses. The participants are going to have 3-5 minutes to write down as many solutions as possible to the problem as state below on the index cards—one idea per card. If they think of more solutions, the participant can grab a card in the middle of the table. Once the five minutes is up, the teacher/facilitator takes the cards, shuffles them, and reads through them. The top five ideas are written down on a flip chart or marker board and discussed further. You could also have each team pick their three best solutions.

Use the following problem to brainstorm possible solutions:

You work in a bakery. A customer calls fifteen minutes before she is coming in to pick up the birthday cake she ordered that morning. The cake was to be decorated for her husband's 40th birthday, which is tonight. You find the cake has not been made. What options does the bakery staff have to solve this problem?

2. Share the skills needed for an effective team or you could continue the process with the index cards or write the responses on a flip chart/marker board. What teamwork skills would have been used or helped to have in the above situation?
3. Complete the "It's All in Your Mind" teamwork personality assessment by Kathleen Butler as printed in The 7 Habits of Highly Effective Teens by Sean Covey. Discuss the results and what each means.
4. Teamwork activity using cooperative learning.
 - a. Divide the class into groups of 4-5 students. In each group, the students will have to appoint a *runner*, *recorder*, *architect*, and *carpenter(s)*. The runner is to pick up 20 playing cards from the teacher. The architect is to supervise the building of a structure using the playing cards. The carpenters are to build the structure. The recorder is to write down comments, progress, disagreements, etc., while the structure is being built. When the structure is done or time is up, the runner will present the recorder's findings. You could also divide the groups into their personality "fruits" from the "It's All in Your Mind" assessment.
 - b. Tell the students they have 5 minutes to build a structure that has at least three stories. They may only use the cards.
 - c. When time is up, ask if any groups successfully solved the problem or were close to solving the problem. Then write the word "Teamwork" on the board. Use the findings written down by the recorder and also ask the students what attitudes and behaviors previously discussed were helpful in their attempts to solve the problem.
 - d. Write the words "NOT Teamwork!" on the board. Ask students to list some of the attitudes and behaviors they encountered that made their group less successful in working together.
 - e. From these two lists and their own experiences, ask each group to create five guidelines for successful teamwork in a cooperative setting. Share the lists with the class. You could also discuss how each "It's All in Your Mind" style would affect or help the group.
5. Discuss the five steps in the **Action Plan** decision-making guide as printed in The 7 Habits of Highly Effective Teens. By Sean Covey. The first step is to define the problem. The second step is to look at the other person's way. The third step is to think about your way. The fourth step is to have the group brainstorm possible solutions to the problem. The last step is the "High Way," which is to select the best solution to the problem.
6. Select students to participate in a role-playing activity to illustrate the process of using teamwork and problem solving to find a solution to a situation at work through the **Action Plan**.
 - a. The students will read the script while being recorded on an iPod.
 - b. The iPod audio podcast will be uploaded to Angel.
 - c. After listening to the script, the students will take the steps in the **Action Plan** and record what took place in each step. You could also divide the students into groups to record their results.
7. Have the students share what they wrote for each step.
8. For a culminating activity, I have the students answer questions posted on a discussion board on Angel. This serves as their assessment or reflection on developing teamwork skills.

IT'S ALL IN YOUR MIND

BY KATHLEEN BUTLER

Read across each row and place a 4 in the blank that best describes you. Now place a 3 in the blank for the second word that best describes you. Do the same for the final words using a 2 and a 1. Do this for each row.

<i>Example:</i>							
Imaginative	2	Investigative	4	Realistic	1	Analytical	3

Column 1		Column 2		Column 3		Column 4	
Imaginative		Investigative		Realistic		Analytical	
Adaptable		Inquisitive		Organized		Critical	
Relating		Creating		Getting to Point		Debating	
Personal		Adventurous		Practical		Academic	
Flexible		Inventive		Precise		Systematic	
Sharing		Independent		Orderly		Sensible	
Cooperative		Competitive		Perfectionist		Logical	
Sensitive		Risk-Taking		Hard-Working		Intellectual	
People-Person		Problem Solver		Planner		Reader	
Associate		Originate		Memorize		Think Through	
Spontaneous		Changer		Wants Direction		Judger	
Communicating		Discovering		Cautious		Reasoning	
Caring		Challenging		Practicing		Examining	
Feeling		Experimenting		Doing		Thinking	

Now add up your totals for each column and place the total in the blanks below:

Column 1 _____ Column 2 _____ Column 3 _____ Column 4 _____
 (Grapes) (Oranges) (Bananas) (Melons)

If your highest score was in column 1, consider yourself a grape.
 If your highest score was in column 2, consider yourself an orange.
 If your highest score was in column 3, consider yourself a banana.
 If your highest score was in column 4, consider yourself a melon.

Butler, Kathleen as printed in The 7 Habits of Highly Effective Teens. By Sean Covey.
 New York: Franklin Covey Co., 1998.

Case Study Using Role-Playing To Solve A Problem Through Teamwork

Narrator: Five characters will role-play a situation to determine whose job it is to put the DVD movies back on the shelf.

Characters:

Brad	Amanda
Betty	John
Manager	Narrator

Brad: It wasn't my job! It was Amanda's job! The policy around here is that the new employee puts the DVDs back on the shelf. She's the newest employee. It's her job!

Amanda: I don't get to work until 2:00. By the time I get here, the DVDs returned last night should have already been put away. Otherwise, they're just lying around and the customers can't find them.

Betty: You're just trying to get out of doing your job.

Amanda: No! Brad gets here at 10:00. He should already have it done by the time I get here.

Brad: You're the newest employee.

Amanda: What's your problem?

Brad: What's your problem?

Amanda: I do my job.

John: But you're the newest employee. It's your job to restock the shelves.

Narrator: Voices are getting louder.

Amanda: But Brad gets here earlier. I am only trying to think about the benefit to the customer.

Betty: Are you just trying to get out of your job?

Brad: You're impossible.

Amanda: No, you are!

Manager: Okay, okay! What's the problem? Amanda, continue stocking the shelves. Brad, go checkout the customers.

Narrator: Both are taking a break from each other to calm down. Later in the day, the manager speaks to Brad and Amanda.

Manager: Amanda, Brad is right. The new person puts away the videos.

Amanda: So you mean Brad shouldn't have to expect to do this anymore.

Brad: Told you!

Manager: Brad! On the other hand, that rule was made when everyone came to work at the same time. However, since Amanda doesn't come into work until later in the day, the customers have a right to expect that all the DVDs brought in last night will be back on the shelves.

Brad: So Amanda doesn't have to expect to do this job either?

Amanda: No, I get it! Whoever comes in the am, that's you Brad reshelves all the videos brought in the night before.

Brad: Okay, so I don't have to put all the DVDs back on the shelf all day? Just those that come in the night before. Amanda should have to do that when she comes in at three.

Manager: Exactly! Also, I would like you two to start treating each other with a little respect. It's good to have a sense of humor. What happened to yours? Every customer and employee that comes in here deserves to be treated with a little courtesy. Okay? And, by the way, the customer is always right and always comes first.

Narrator: Next day! Their voices are calm and respectful.

Amanda: Brad, I am here now. I'll finish those. Why don't you go take a break?

Brad: Okay, thanks! I think I will. Hey look, there's a whole set of sci-fi movies that just got returned. I thought you might want to know.

Amanda: Thanks, Brad.

Adapted from Problem Solving video, Workplace Videos 2000, Glencoe McGraw

Putting Away Returned Videos—Case Study

After listening to the role-playing situation about who is responsible for reshelving returned videos at the video store, record what was the result or individual feeling in each step of the *Action Plan* decision-making guide.

Define the Problem—
 Their Way—
 My Way—
 Brainstorm—
 High Way—

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION BOARD:

The Angel web site will contain questions the students will need to answer about their feelings on the role-playing situation, the cooperative learning activity, and teamwork in general. The students will use the discussion board to record their feelings. Questions include:

- How did teamwork come into play when building the structure with playing cards?
- Why is it important that every member pull his/her own weight in a group project?
- What skills do you think you possess when working in a team situation? What can you bring to the group that will make the project a success?
- What was your assessment style? Did you feel it accurately depicts your teamwork skills?