

Quick Guide to Teaching Workplace Readiness Skills

[CAREER READINESS](#) | [COMMUNICATION SKILLS](#) | [SOFT SKILLS](#)

Is the pressure on you to better prepare students with work readiness skills? Join the club of teachers looking to develop or expand their workplace readiness skills curriculum. I once compared my daughter's soccer team's lack of conditioning to [skipping out on soft skills in the classroom](#). "Sadly, their awesome soccer skills have little value on the field if they don't have the speed or endurance to play the game. In the same way, leaving soft skills lesson plans out of your courses puts your students at a disadvantage in the workplace." Make sure your students are going to be able to compete in the workplace!

Why we must work on improving soft skills?

In the not too distant past, qualification was king. But that is not so in today's job market. The early bird doesn't necessarily get the worm. Not unless that bird knows how to work on a team and put together a coherent email or presentation. But don't just take my word for it...

In a [Times of India](#) article, Surabhi Pillai says:

"Up until now professional qualification was enough, but in contemporary times, besides having a superb degree one also needs to have an extraordinary personality and the right attitude. Some people are born with the grace and charm required to make that killing success, while some others have to acquire it! And those who refuse to wake-up to the call of the hour are sadly jolted out of their reverie when sudden need arises."



Grace and charm? Oh yes. The bar for skills has been set high. But in the competitive job market we're in, everyone is finding away to meet and even raise the bar on skills. That leaves things like professionalism, leadership, communication, and yes, even grace and charm, to set talented candidates apart.



In Dr. Shikha Seetha's paper ["Necessity of Soft Skills Training for students and professionals"](#) he says,

"In today's world, where the survival of the fittest is the norm, it has become imperative to sharpen one's technical skills, and more importantly, one's soft skills. Technical skills can be learnt, applied and measured to an established degree. But the same cannot be said of soft skills. Soft skill is a sociological term for an individual's Emotional Intelligence (EQ). It can be broadly defined as personal attributes that enhance an individual's interactions, job and career prospects."

So, um...yeah...improving soft skills? For your students, it's an absolute must! And not just a lesson here and there. Workplace readiness needs to be a way of thought and a goal to achieve backed by standards and dedicated course time and curriculum. To





read more about why workplace readiness skills are so important, check out this [article](#).

And do you know where to find soft skills lesson plans?

And so where can you go to find [work readiness skills](#) and soft skills lesson plans that you can start using right now with your students? The good news is that you have some really great options. And these options don't require hours of time spent developing curriculum and writing lesson plans.

Check out [SkillsUSA](#): “SkillsUSA is a partnership of students, teachers and industry working together to ensure America has a skilled workforce. SkillsUSA helps each student excel. We provide educational programs, events and competitions that support career and technical education (CTE) in the nation’s classrooms.”

For some free lesson plans for professionalism and soft skills, take a look at this great resource from the US Department of Labor. I love the title: “[Soft Skills to Pay the Bills](#).”

Looking for something more in-depth and comprehensive? [CareerCenter21](#) will provide you with engaging, interactive, age-appropriate and up-to-date curriculum. Students go through the curriculum and then take quizzes. Later, module tests verify their achievement in the content areas. And not only is the curriculum provided, the grade book helps you gauge how well your students are learning and understanding the content. This is more than a digitized textbook thrown online. That’s been done. This is a fully developed tool that includes many resources that follow “[Understanding By Design](#)” techniques, starting with what students need to understand and then designing curriculum that will bring students to that end regarding [workplace readiness](#).





Why these workplace readiness lesson plans are worth a look

CareerCenter21 offers workplace readiness lesson plans and curriculum appropriate for middle school and high school. What do workplace readiness curriculum and lesson plans look like?

For example, the Professionalism module specifically has students discover the expected appearance and personal characteristics of an employee. They learn a number of personal traits belonging to successful employees, such as: honesty, good communication, time-management, goal setting, problem solving, and teamwork. Students practice dealing with workplace situations and evaluate the effectiveness of various employees. By the end of this module, students will be better prepared to enter the professional workforce.

In the **Personal Qualities and Desirable Traits** units, students will learn about the ideal personal characteristics an employee should have. It discusses the importance of an appropriate appearance while on the job and the traits one should exhibit while interacting with both clients and coworkers. Students will reflect on their own traits, noting their own strengths and weaknesses. Specifically, they will:

- Understand the importance of a first impression.
- Learn about appropriate dress in a professional setting.
- Understand that personal appearance includes dress, body art, and personal care.
- Identify ways to maintain good health and personal care.
- Identify important mindsets to have as an employee.
- Understand effective *communication* and appropriate interaction.
- Learn the importance of personal and professional growth.



In the **Personal Management** unit, students will learn about the importance of time management to an employee. Students will also learn how to apply a general problem solving method to workplace situations. Specifically, they will:

- Understand the importance of *time management*.
- Identify time management tools.
- Explain how to create a time management plan.
- Identify when reevaluating must occur.
- Identify *problem solving*.
- List the steps of the problem solving method.
- Apply the problem solving method to a scenario.
- Understand when to consult and compromise.

In the **Teamwork** unit, students focus on the importance of the team in the workplace. Students will learn about teamwork and the different roles a worker can have within a team. Students will examine strengths and weaknesses they might have in inhabiting each of the roles. The unit will discuss leadership, describing the traits that make a good leader. Finally, the student will attempt to successfully lead an effective team. Specifically, students will:

- Identify the *characteristics of an effective team*.
- Understand conflict resolution strategies.
- Explain what *leadership* is.
- Identify types of leaders.
- Setting goals
- Selecting the right team members
- Leadership *communication*
- 5 roles of an effective team
- Assigning roles
- Making leadership decisions



And that's not all. That's just the Professionalism module. Other important workplace readiness skills are covered in these relevant modules:

- [Career Research](#)
- Job Seeking Skills
- Resumes & Interviews
- Digital Citizenship
- Web Research
- Professionalism
- [Personal Finance](#)
- Personal Project Management
- [Written Communication](#)
- Telephone/Verbal Communication
- Non-Verbal Communication
- Career Soft Skills
- Microsoft Office Fundamentals
- [Entrepreneurship](#)
- Business Ethics/Law
- Digital Citizenship
- Online Safety
- Cyberbullying
- Computing/Network Systems

For more about workplace readiness skills and career readiness lesson plans, check out these articles:

- [Soft Skills Curriculum: What, Where, and Why](#)
- [Employability Skills Lesson Plans and Career Readiness](#)
- [3 Ways to Master Life Skills Lesson Plans](#)
- [Career Readiness Curriculum How-To's from a Middle School Teacher](#)





Want a free lesson plan for teaching customer service skills? Check it out here:

