

# 5 Ideas for Incorporating Soft Skills Into Any Classroom



# Soft Skills Programs

Soft skills, or employability skills, are essential for success in any career. This guide is intended to support classroom training and give you ideas for incorporating soft skills lessons into your classroom today.

At the end of this guide, you'll find five unique posters focused on the most desired soft skills in the workforce.

Realityworks offers comprehensive products and programs for teaching employability, leadership and other key soft skills that can be implemented into any classroom. Pathway-specific activities are also available.



# Idea 1:

# Role-play

# workplace scenarios



## How it helps

Role play is great for many reasons – it builds confidence, improves problem-solving and communication skills, and of course, it's a great method of student-driven, active learning, which today's students crave.

## How to do it

- Be creative: Instead of going off a predetermined dialogue, give your students prompts and allow them to be creative
- Bring in others: Invite teachers, administrators or even community members to participate
- Create classic scenarios: Job interviews, dealing with customer complaints, handling disruptive clients, marketing new products
- Introduce new ideas: Incorporate technology, modern dilemmas, debate

### Suggested activity:

1. Set up the room with desks facing each other, so students can debate easily.
2. Ask students questions, such as "You finish your assigned task at work. Do you go home early or do you find other tasks to accomplish?" or "You're presented with several tasks and need to accomplish them all by the end of the day. How do you prioritize?"
3. Have students pick a side to each question and explain their argument.

# Idea 2:

## Regularly assign collaborative work



### How it helps

Collaborative work builds cooperation, communication and teamwork skills by forcing students to work with one another to learn content and apply it.

### How to do it

- Encourage students to “teach” each other
- Learn more: “Group Work in the College Classroom” - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5a7hP9doTBg>

### Suggested activity:

1. Divide students into small groups.
2. Present them with a problem and a time limit to solve it in. The problem can be workplace-specific, such as a challenge for nursing students to get a cranky, ill patient out of bed when he or she doesn't want to. Or the problem can be general, like coming up with work-from-home guidelines for a staff of 10 at a local retail store.
3. When the time is up, come together as a class and have students share how their group tried to solve the problem.

# Idea 3:

# Practice giving and receiving feedback



## How it helps

According to a 2019 study by LinkedIn, critical thinking and problem-solving skills top the list of key professional traits employers are searching for across the globe.\* Peer-to-peer feedback can be an effective way to help students develop those skills – plus, it increases student engagement and helps them see the relevancy of what they're doing.

## How to do it

- Set expectations: Feedback is about helping, not judging
- Use a feedback rubric to fine-tune the process and encourage specific suggestions
- Keep it anonymous to provide comfort
- Moderate and review feedback from students to ensure it remains fair and helpful
- Start small, with a short assignment like an introduction to an essay or an assessment worksheet

## Suggested Activity:

1. Collect the rough draft of a writing assignment.
2. Pass out the drafts randomly to different students.
3. Provide a rubric that will be used for grading the assignment.
4. Have students review the draft and make notes based on the rubric.
5. Pass the drafts back to the original students and have them edit the drafts based on the feedback.

\*Reference: <https://www.cnbc.com/2019/06/21/future-of-work-these-5-traits-pose-the-biggest-skills-gap-linkedin.html>

## Idea 4:

# Make intentional assignment tweaks



### How it helps

These days, demand is growing for employees who can adapt to an ever-changing workplace, who are open to new ideas, and who don't panic when things don't go according to plan. How can you encourage these traits in your students? Intentional assignment tweaks is one way. Intentional assignment tweaks, or changes half-way through an assignment, can help your students learn how to be flexible and adapt to change.

### How to do it

- Plan assignment tweaks that you could easily implement
- Observe students as they react to these kinds of changes
- Offer encouragement as they learn to adapt

### Suggested Activity:

1. Create a pre-planned project for students
2. At the last minute, change one key aspect of the assignment so students have to learn to adapt to change
3. After the assignments are submitted, start an open discussion with the students about flexibility and how they dealt with changes at the last minute, relating the conversation to time management and explain how that can help in unexpected situations

## Idea 5:

# Incorporate soft skills discussion posters into your classroom

### How it helps

The right poster content can jump-start engaging discussions on soft skills and why they're so important. Use these five posters discuss specific skills that are important in today's workplace, and help your students gain a better understanding of the skills they'll need to succeed.

### How to do it

#### Suggested activity:

1. Print the posters out and hang them up around your classroom or office
2. Put students into five small groups and station each group at one of the posters
3. Encourage students to discuss the questions on the bottom of each poster within their group

#### Suggested activity:

1. Print the posters out and give one to each student
2. Direct the students to answer the discussion questions individually, on a separate sheet of paper
3. Come together as a class to discuss what the students wrote



# FLEXIBILITY

A readiness to adapt to new or different situations



## Discussion Questions

- Why is it important to be flexible in the workplace?
- Describe a time when you had to be flexible recently.

# PROBLEM-SOLVING

The process of finding solutions to difficult issues

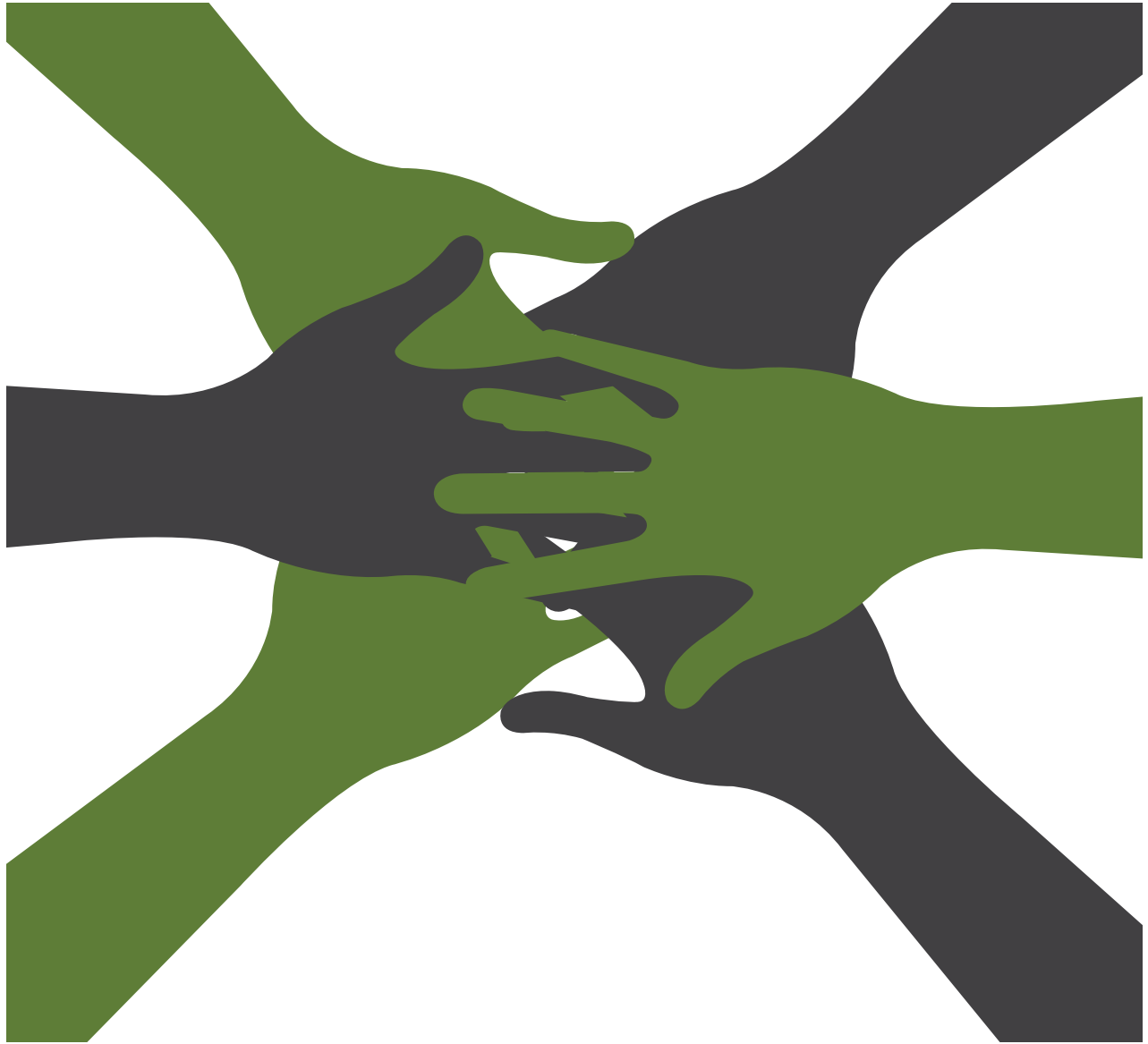


## Discussion Questions

- How does problem-solving benefit the workplace?
- Describe a problem you faced recently and how you solved it.
- What could you do to improve your problem-solving skills?

# TEAMWORK

Successful cooperation between a group of individuals



## Discussion Questions

- Why is teamwork important in the workplace?
- Describe a time when you had to work in a team recently.
- How does a good team member behave? How does a bad one behave?

# COMMUNICATION

A system or process of exchanging information

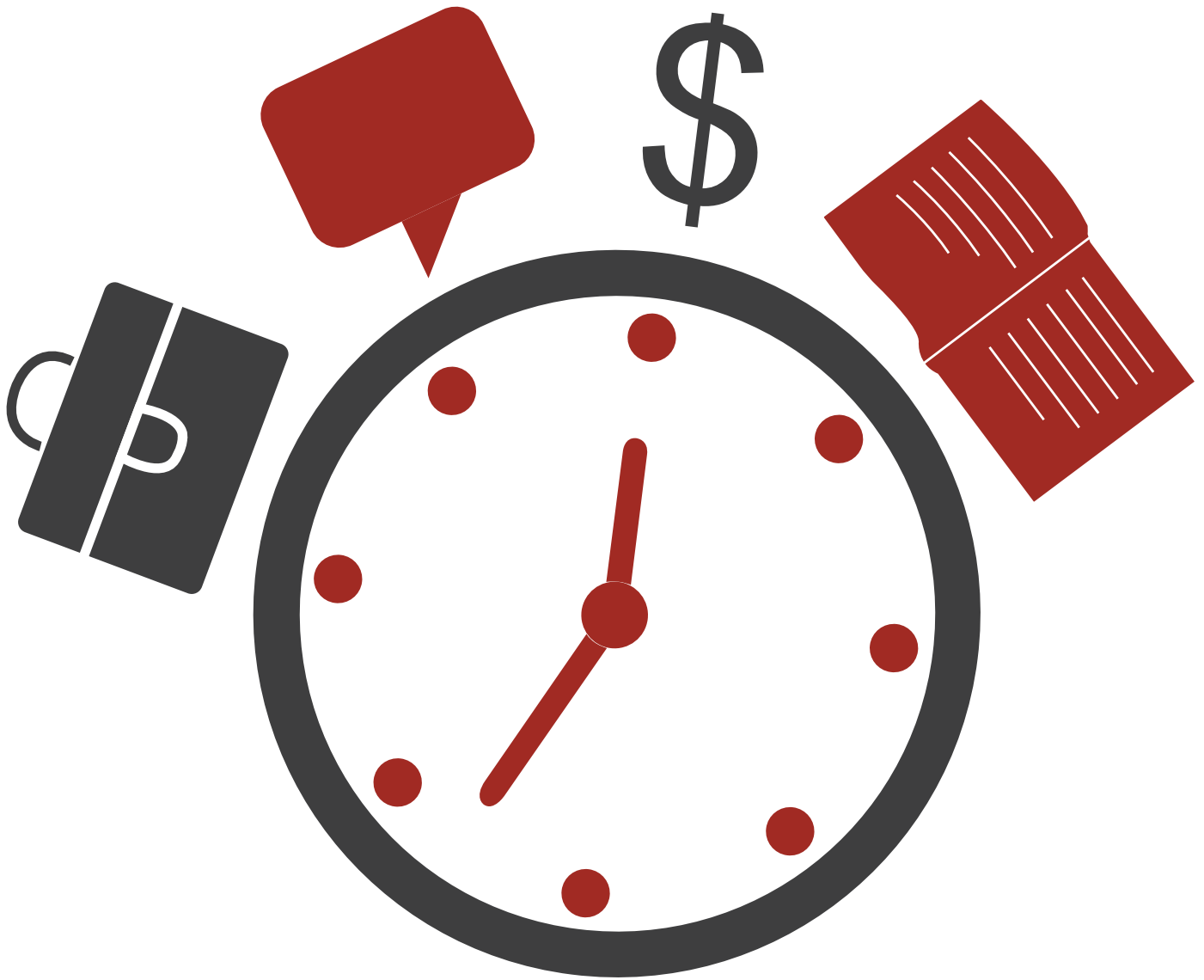


## Discussion Questions

- What does effective communication look like?
- Why and when do we need effective communication?
- Describe a situation in which you saw good communication. Describe a situation in which you saw bad communication.

# TIME MANAGEMENT

The process of dividing time between many activities



## Discussion Questions

- Why is time management important?
- Describe an experience in which you successfully managed your time recently
- Describe an experience in which you could have managed your time better. Explain.