

Webinar:

Effective Strategies and Tips for Teaching Soft Skills

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Presented by

Emily Kuhn

Senior Campaigns Specialist

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Today's agenda:

- Who is Realityworks, Inc.
- Who are today's students and what makes them unique?
- Practical strategies for teaching soft skills
- Realityworks' soft skills programs
- Free resources!
- Q&A

Who is Realityworks?



We partner with educators, administrators and industry leaders to ensure our offerings meet their needs and make lessons truly meaningful.

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Who are today's students?



Meet Generation Z

- **Born:** 1997–2012
- **Tech-savvy:** Digital natives who've never known life without smartphones or instant internet access
- **Education:**
 - 94% have a high school diploma or are enrolled students
 - 50% are in or have completed college
- **Fun Fact:** Gen Z is more likely to finish high school and attend college than previous generations!

Source: <https://www.aecf.org/blog/generation-z-and-education>



How Gen Z learns best



- **Learning preferences:**
 - Visual, interactive content
 - Real-world relevance is key
 - Immediate feedback expected
- **Challenge for educators:**
 - Competing with constant digital input
 - Attention is hard to *earn*, not because of short attention spans, but because there's so much noise

Source:

<https://www.aecf.org/blog/generation-z-and-education>

Understanding generational differences

Silents	Baby Boomers	Generation X	Generation Y	Generation Z
Born 1925-1945	Born 1946-1964	Born 1965-1981	Born 1982-1995	Born 1996-2009
a.k.a. Traditionalists Veterans Builders	a.k.a. Boomers Me Generation	a.k.a. Gen X Latch-Key Kids MTV Generation 13 th Generation	a.k.a. Gen Y Millennials Echo Boomers	a.k.a. iGeneration (iGen) Post-Millennials Centennials
Telephone	TV	PC	Internet	iPhone, Social Media
Largely disengaged from technology	Early IT adopters	Digital immigrants	Digital natives	Technoholics
Face-to-face	Face-to-face; telephone or email if required	Text messaging or email	Online/social media and text messaging	Visual communication using technology
Teach Me Prefer a structured "command and control" oriented learning, classroom lectures, books and on-the-job training	In Person Prefer classroom setting with in-class participation; will use technology and may prefer books to reading online	Learn by Doing Prefer self-directed learning and freedom to figure things out on own; computer before books	Short and Sweet Thrive on flexibility and space to explore; favor on-demand, highly personalized and interactive training	Get it Now. Do it Now. Learn it Now. Want to learn on their own terms; prefer visual and interactive, bite-sized and hands-on learning; use of technology and social media is a given

The background image shows a trade show floor with various booths and people. A large orange overlay covers the entire image. In the background, a sign for "Hall J" is visible. In the foreground, there are signs for "FACS," and "Realityworks". A person is visible in the background, and a laptop is on a table in the foreground.

What are soft skills?



Source: [Do soft skills make us stronger leaders?](#)

“The incredible thing about soft skills is that they're not only transferable across industries and transcend roles, but they are also **high-income skills** – they are the gateway to high-paying career and business opportunities.”

Source: [3 Soft Skills To Learn In 2025 That Will Pay You Forever \(forbes.com\)](https://www.forbes.com)

Do soft skills matter? YES!



"Qualities such as trust, compassion, stability, and hope reliably boost both **employee engagement and performance**" - 2024 Gallup soft skills analysis



"72 percent of US executives agree that soft skills — communication, creativity, adaptability — are **even more valuable than AI** skills" - 2023 LinkedIn AI study



In a recent survey of UK CEOs, problem-solving was highlighted as the **most valuable skill** for 2024 among all soft skills.



"By 2025, skills such as analytical thinking, innovation, and complex problem-solving will be in **high demand**." - 2023 jobs report by the World Economic Forum

Sources: <https://www.cn.edu/cps-blog/the-role-of-soft-skills-in-the-workplace-why-they-matter/>, <https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/workla/podcast/linkedin-vp-aneesh-raman-on-why-adaptability-is-the-skill-of-the-moment>, <https://uk.themedialleader.com/problem-solving-is-most-valuable-skill-for-2024-say-uk-ceos/>, <https://www.weforum.org/publications/the-future-of-jobs-report-2023/digest/>

11 Essential Soft Skills In 2025

 Communication

 Leadership

 Critical Thinking

 Problem Solving

 Time Management

 Collaboration

 Adaptability

 Emotional Intelligence

 Growth Mindset

 Creativity

Source: <https://www.forbes.com/advisor/business/soft-skills-examples>

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Practical Methods for Teaching Soft Skills in Any Class

Encourage teamwork

Steps to integrate immediately:

1. Divide your class into small groups and assign each group a topic relevant to your current lesson.
2. Give each group a clear task, like researching their topic and presenting it to the class in a creative way
3. Allow time for group discussions, and emphasize the importance of teamwork in their final presentation.
4. After presentations, lead a class discussion on how they worked as teams



Cultivate empathy

“With every lesson concept, reminders on the importance of empathy should be built in. Personally, I also like to include exam questions on selecting the best empathetic response or professional behavior for the situation. We need to help our students build that human-to-human connection.”

- *Kasey Carlson, MSN, MEd, Nursing Curriculum Technology Manager, WI*

Free guide: Classroom Ideas to Help Students Develop Empathy Toward Older Adults

Get it here: <https://www.realityworks.com/geriatric-training-tools/>

Classroom Ideas to Help Learners Develop Empathy Toward Older Adults

A guide to engaging today's students in developing geriatric sensitivity



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Add relevancy with real-world examples



Try this in class:

- **Ask:** “Where do you work?”
- **Ask:** “How do you use teamwork, communication, or problem-solving there?”

Discuss how those same skills show up in careers they’re exploring

Example: Fast-food jobs

- Teamwork: Cooking + serving correctly
- Communication: Coordinating for safety + service

Incorporate scenario-based learning

- **Classic Scenarios:**
 - Job Interviews
 - Customer Complaints
 - Handling Disruptive Clients
 - Marketing New Products
- **New ideas:**
 - Incorporate Technology
 - Host Debates
 - Bring in Others!



Free guide: Using Scenario-Based Learning To Explore Careers

Get it here: <https://www.realityworks.com/sample-scenario-cards/>

Implement networking activities



- Time the interactions
- Use pre-planned questions or cue cards
- Debrief afterwards:
 - How much did you learn?
 - Did it feel like a conversation?
 - What made it easier or more difficult?

Make intentional assignment tweaks



- Adaptability – the new competitive advantage!
- Add a new requirement
- Shift a deadline
- Work with students to manage frustration



Make time for reflection

When?

- Before something important (or are expected to do something)
- During something important
- After something important



Tools for teaching soft skills in any class





Employability and leadership skills programs

- Each program includes lessons specific to individual soft skills.
- Each lesson also gives students the chance to apply each of these skills 2-4 times per lesson
- **Learn more:**
<https://www.realityworks.com/product-category/career-and-technical-education/soft-skills/>

Online employability and leadership skills programs

- Web-based options
- Designed for any classroom
- Real-world scenarios and activities
- Self-paced and interactive
- Variety of license lengths and terms
- Free trials available

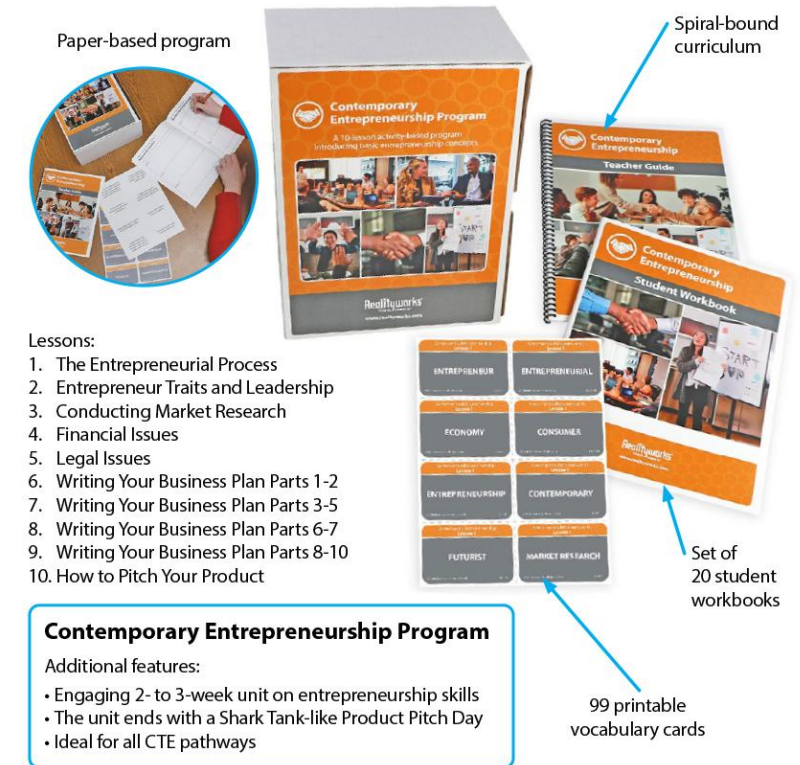
Learn more:

<https://www.realityworks.com/soft-skills-implementation/>



Contemporary Entrepreneurship Program (online or paper-based)

- Use the instructor portal to access a user guide, CTSO alignments and printable completion certificates
- Choose from teacher, site and district licenses for 1-, 3- and 5-year terms
- Aligns to the National Content Standards for Entrepreneurship Education



Learn more: <https://www.realityworks.com/product/contemporary-entrepreneurship-program/>

Middle School Employability Skills Program

- Engaging, easy-to-implement program
- Integrates hands-on activities as well as real-world applications to teach students 20 soft skills
- Employability skills in the program were chosen by teachers as highly desired.
- Workbooks provide a wealth of activities to apply what they have learned
- Scenario cards build in the power of scenario-based learning for problem solving and critical thinking

Lessons:

1. Communication
2. Problem Solving
3. Interpersonal Skills
4. Responsibility
5. Teamwork
6. Work Ethic
7. Listening
8. Respect
9. Critical Thinking
10. Time Management
11. Professionalism
12. Decision-Making and Goal Setting
13. Honesty and Integrity
14. Team Building
15. Conflict Resolution
16. Creativity
17. Motivation
18. Flexibility
19. Self-Confidence
20. Stress Management



Paper-based program written specifically for middle school students

Set of scenario cards



Middle School Employability Skills Program

Use this program to:

- Supplement existing employability skills
- Teach a complete unit on skills
- Generate real-life discussions
- Prompt reflection activities
- Generate ice-breaker activities

Spiral-bound curriculum



20 student workbooks

Soft skills activity cards



- Written by industry professionals
- Themed around specific careers
- Key questions included

Free samples:

<https://www.realityworks.com/sample-scenario-cards/>

More resources

- **Free infographics:**
<https://www.realityworks.com/resources/realityworks-interactive-posters/>
- **Free Guide: 5 Ideas for Incorporating Soft Skills Into any Classroom:** <https://www.realityworks.com/soft-skills-implementation/>
- **Free lessons:**
 - [12 Easy Entrepreneurship Activities For Any Class \(Plus 3 Free Lessons\) – Realityworks](#)
 - [3 Free Lessons to Help Students Develop Power Skills - Realityworks](#)

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KEY SOFT SKILLS TO PRACTICE

Soft skill development helps individuals navigate the modern workplace. Soft skills improve the quality of everyday actions. Below are 8 key soft skills to practice.¹²

Responsibility⁸

Responsibility relates to having authority over something that is within your control. At the workplace, responsibility could entail being held accountable for completing any tasks assigned to you.



Flexibility¹³

Flexibility requires adapting to a changing environment. This involves handling feedback and adjusting to different situations as they arise.



Self-Confidence¹⁰

Confidence plays a huge role in performance. A confident employee is productive and able to contribute their best work. Confidence also means taking on projects that may lead to unfamiliar territory.



Interviews⁷

While recruiters are interested in your qualifications, they are also evaluating how well you will fit into the company. Exercising soft skills during interviews shows your ability to work professionally with others and contribute to the team.



Problem-Solving¹¹

This soft skill involves coming up with solutions to problems that may arise. To be successful in this area it is important to think "outside of the box" when it comes to complex problems.



Negotiation¹¹

Negotiation involves asserting influence and persuading others. This typically means finding solutions that benefit both parties.



Presentation Skills¹¹

Presentation skills involve presenting ideas clearly and persuasively. This uses other soft skills like communication, self-confidence, and stress management.



Networking⁹

Networking is the act of building connections with people who share common interests. Broadening your network opens you up to business opportunities, whether that is recruiting or being hired onto a job.



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