# Six Interactive Activities to Build Academic and Workplace Communication Skills

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Handout and PowerPoint can be found at:

**www.quia.com/pages/donna/workshops**

# Agenda

- ❏ Key academic and workplace communication skills
- ❏ Importance of interactive activities in building communication skills
- ❏ Steps for successful interaction
- ❏ Demonstration of interactive tasks
- ❏ Review of strategies
- ❏ How to access interactive activities

# 7 Cs = the essential skills needed for a society's future workforce

- ❑ Critical thinking / problem solving
- ❑ Communication
- ❑ Collaboration
- ❑ Creativity
- ❑ Cross-cultural understanding
- ❑ Computing
- ❑ Career self-reliance (lifelong learning)

From Bernie Trilling:  21st Century Skills

# Softskills most lacking in students and job applicants:

# <span style="color:red">Communication Skills</span>

"The Importance of Soft Skills in Entry Level Employment and Post Secondary Success" (Pritchard, 2013)

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

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

Hart Research 2018

# 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% |

-- Global Skills Gap
2017

# Soft skills required for successful communication or collaboration:

- Listen well/ understand instructions
- Interact with others
- Work in a team
- Solve problems
- Lead, plan, delegate

# Examples of CCR Standards that apply to interactive activities

- ❑ Participate in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners
- ❑ Ask questions to check understanding and clear up confusion (**clarify meaning**)
- ❑ Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English (**use correct grammar**)

**ELPS Guiding Principle #4:** Social language has an important role in ELLs' English language acquisition process.

Adult ELLs need to develop social language in order to meet family, social, civic, and community needs and responsibilities.

# New NRS Educational Functioning Level Descriptors for ESL

- 6 levels
- Organized into 3 modalities
  - Interpretive
  - Productive
  - Interactive – process and produce level appropriate written and spoken text interactively with purpose of understanding, interpreting, engaging in, and transmitting meaning

# NRS Low Beginning ( level 2) interactive example

- ELLs ready to exit this level are able to:
  - ☐ Actively listen to others
  - ☐ Participate in short conversations about familiar topics
  - ☐ Present simple information
  - ☐ Respond to simple yes/no questions and WH questions
  - ☐ (ELP level 1)

In addition to academic and workplace demands, why are interactive activities important in the ESL classroom?

# Our classrooms provide the only opportunity for many students to interact in English

# What does interaction mean in ESL classes?

❑ Students work together in pairs, small groups, or as a whole class

❑ Students need to interact to accomplish a task

# Steps for ensuring success in interactive activities

- ❑ Teach the language skills needed for the task
- ❑ Prepare learners for the task (e.g. modeling and grouping strategies)
- ❑ Monitor activity
- ❑ Provide closure or evaluation by reflecting on activity

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# Activity #1

## Team builder

## Paperless group activity

All  levels

# What is an interesting book you have read lately?

# Procedure

- Get in groups of 4
- Introduce yourselves and number off
- Step 1 (Interview):
  - #1 ask #2.                    #3 ask #4
  - #2 ask #1                #4 ask #3
- Step 2 (Reporting):
  - In group of 4, #1 tell about #2
  - #2 tell about #1
  - #3 tell about #4
  - #4 tell about #3

# Checklist

✓Teach enabling language
✓Model and set up activity
✓Monitor activity in progress
✓Provide for closure

✓Importance of introductions
✓Team building
✓Time limits

# Activity #2

# Match Mine

## Beginning Literacy Level

**Lesson C** *Where's my pencil?*

## Match mine: 1 of 2

**1** Work with a partner. One is Student A, and one is Student B.

**2** Student A: Place a classroom object card on, in, or under the classroom furniture on the next page and make a sentence. Repeat for each card.

**Example** "The book is on the chair."

**3** Student B: Listen and place the cards on your own grid.

**4** Student B: Check your answers with Student A.

**5** Switch roles.
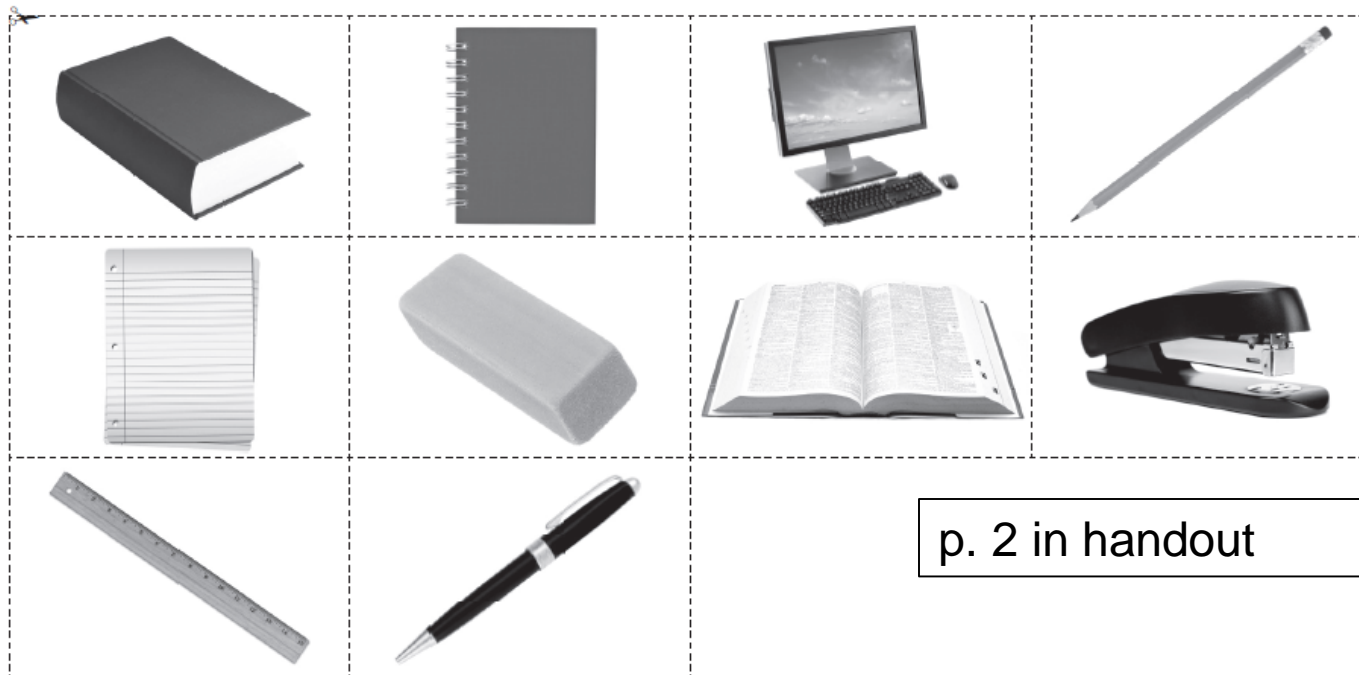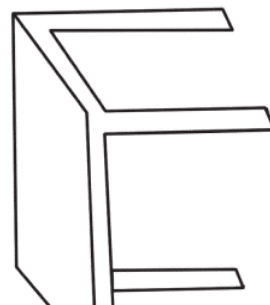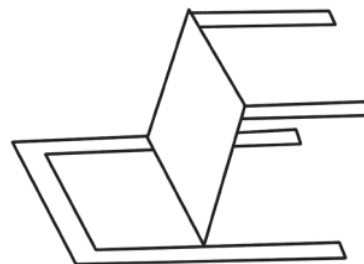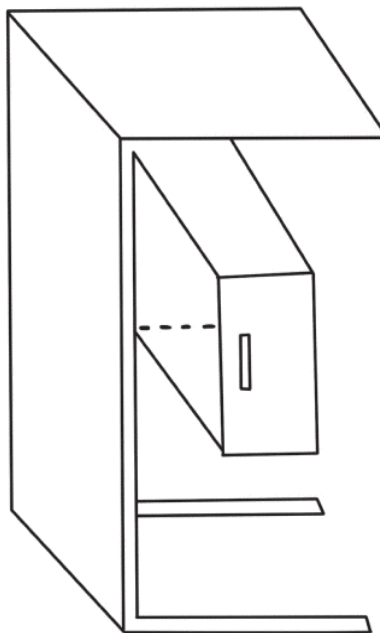


p. 2 in handout

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# Reflection

- What softskills and communication skills are being developed by this exercise?

  - ☐ Requesting clarification
  - ☐ Giving and following directions

# Activity #3

# Conversation Cards

## Advanced Level

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| What would happen if everyone drove smaller cars? | What would happen if people stopped using paper? | What would happen if people used public transportation more? | What would happen if there were no more plastic bags? |
| What would happen if everyone recycled? | What would happen if everyone had electric cars? | What would happen if gas were $20 a gallon? | What would happen if everyone cut down on their energy use? |
| What would happen if everyone tried to use less water? | What would happen if no one threw their trash in the ocean? | What would happen if everyone carpooled to work? | What would happen if everyone walked to their jobs? |
| What would happen if everyone bought fewer items? | What would happen if everyone used energy-efficient appliances? | What would happen if people were fined for wasting food? | What would happen if people didn't throw trash in our streets? |

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# Checklist

✓Teach enabling language
✓Model and set up activity
✓Monitor activity in progress
✓Provide for closure

✓Turn taking
✓Reporting back
✓Asking for clarification

# Activity #4

# Information Gap

Low Beginning Level

*What's your name?*

## Share information

**A** Ask Student B questions. Write the answers.

**A** What's his first name?
**B** His first name is Adam.
**A** How do you spell that?
**B** A-D-A-M.

**1**

First name: *Adam*

Last name: Chang

Middle name: _____

Zip code: 10034

Area code: _____

Telephone number: 555-3168

**2**

First name: Maria

Last name: _____

Middle name: Elena

Zip code: _____

Area code: 291

Telephone number: _____

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## Share information

**Student B**

**A** Answer Student A's questions.

**A** What's his first name?
**B** His first name is Adam.
**A** How do you spell that?
**B** A-D-A-M.

**1**

First name: Adam
Last name: _Chang_
Middle name: Edward
Zip code: _____
Area code: 212
Telephone number: _____

**2**

First name: _____
Last name: Mora
Middle name: _____
Zip code: 95667
Area code: _____
Telephone number: 555-9072

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# Checklist

✓Teach enabling language
✓Model and set up activity
✓Monitor activity in progress
✓Provide for closure

✓Skills for clarification
✓Correct as a whole class

# A word about setup and modeling

- Sometimes it's important that students not see their classmates' papers

  - Consider having students sit face to face

  - Place a file folder as a visual barrier between students sitting side by side

- Arrange room so there is plenty of space for walking around, moving chairs and tables, etc.

- Always model what you expect students to do.
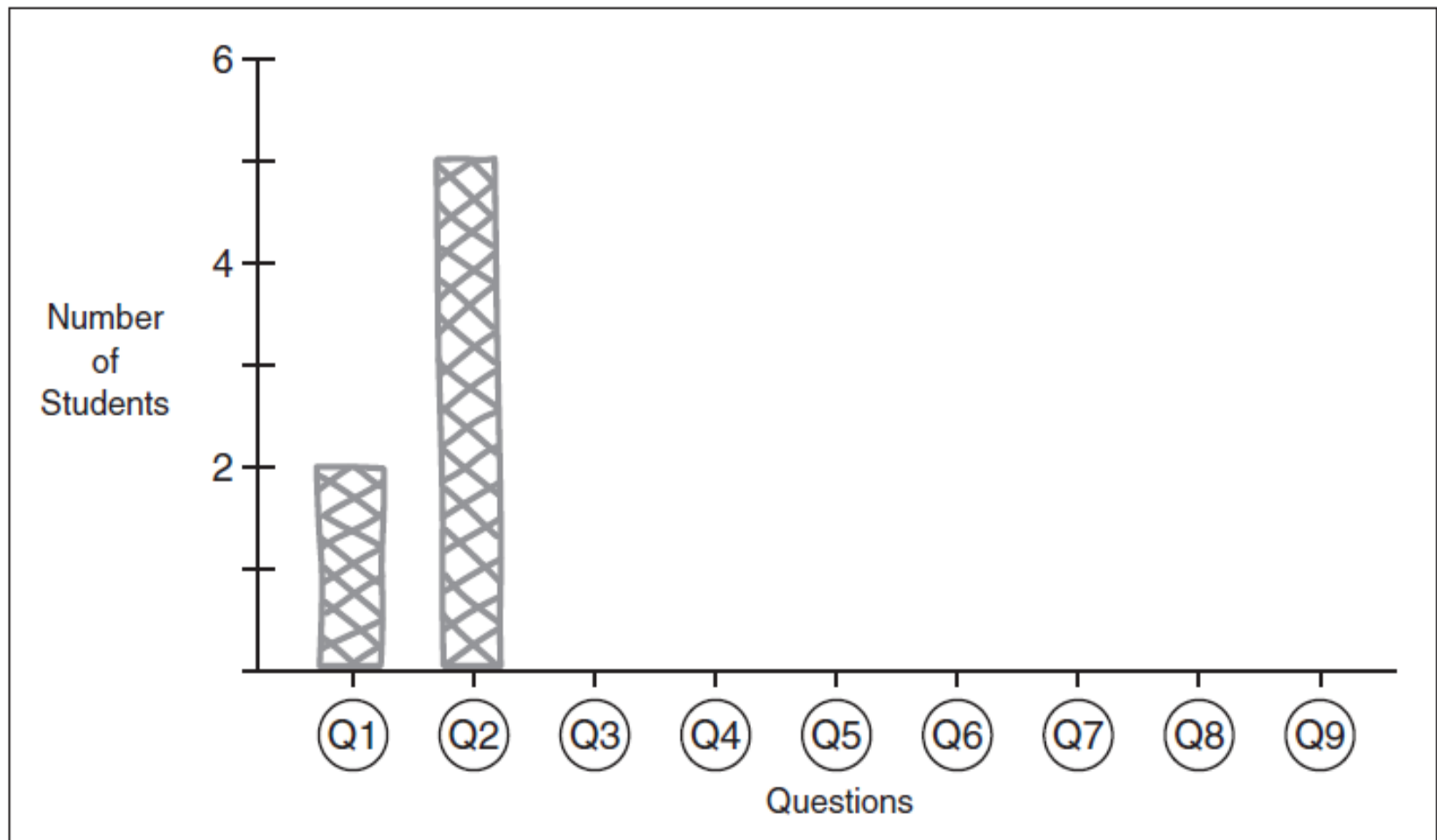
# Activity #5

## Group Interview

### Low Intermediate Level

# Student interview

**A** Work in a group. Ask questions. Write the number of students on the chart.

| Do you . . . | Number of students | |
|---|---|---|
| | Yes | No |
| 1. carpool instead of driving alone? | 2 | 4 |
| 2. cut down on energy use by turning lights off? | 5 | 1 |
| 3. use environment-friendly cleaning products? | | |
| 4. save water by taking fast showers? | | |
| 5. recycle bottles and cans? | | |
| 6. use recycled paper towels and tissues? | | |
| 7. use energy-efficient appliances? | | |
| 8. use public transportation? | | |
| 9. think global warming is a problem? | | |

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**B** Work with your group. Look at Exercise A. Complete the bar graph. Draw a bar to show the number of *yes* answers for each question.

# Checklist

✓Teach enabling language
✓Model and set up activity
✓Monitor activity in progress
✓Provide for closure

✓Grouping strategies
✓Assignment of roles/ tasks
✓Language for summarizing results
✓Time limits

# Activity #6

# Jigsaw

## High Intermediate Level

## Rosemary Hernandez

Rosemary is a secretary at a doctor's office. She greets patients, and she always gets along with them very well because she is polite and a good listener. She uses the computer to make appointments and fill out insurance forms. She uses the phone to call insurance companies and order office supplies.

## Kong Park

Kong is a waiter at a restaurant. He is friendly with customers and responsible, and he can be trusted with money. He also knows how to fix kitchen appliances and use the cash register. He is responsible for opening the restaurant in the morning and counting the money at night when he is closing up.

## Marguerite Cook

Marguerite is a clerk at another grocery store. She has superb communication skills and loves to answer questions that customers have. She teaches new clerks how to do their jobs and always tries to help her manager and co-workers. When there are sales, she makes and puts up signs. She also makes the weekly schedule for her co-workers.

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| | Soft Skills | Hard Skills |
|---|---|---|
| **Rosemary Hernandez** | *greets patients* | |
| **Kong Park** | | |
| **Marguerite Cook** | | |

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# Checklist

✓Teach enabling language
✓Model and set up activity
✓Monitor activity in progress
✓Provide for closure

✓Note taking skills
✓Summarizing skills
✓Time limits
✓Role assignments

# Summary

## What makes interactive work successful?

# Ten principles

1. Activities flow out of regular classroom work
2. Needed language must be taught
3. Students understand why
4. High interest content
5. Start with structured tasks
6. Clear modeling
7. Clear roles for students and time limits
8. Plan for grouping of students
9. Monitor activity while in progress
10. Provide closure and evaluation

p. 10 in handout

# One source to access materials

- [www.cambridge.org/ventures/resources](http://www.cambridge.org/ventures/resources)
- 60 collaborative activities for each of 5 levels
- Free to download after signing up as a teacher

p. 11 in handout, 2nd reference

# Thank you!

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