

Collaboration

Developing Skills for the
Classroom and Beyond

Goal

The goal of this tool is to explain what collaboration means, introduce key terms and develop the skills and apply them in the classroom and beyond.

You will also reflect after each activity about what worked, what didn't, and how you can improve.

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What is Collaboration and why is it necessary?

Collaboration is necessary in educational settings and in businesses. It occurs when Individuals work together for a common purpose to achieve learning or benefit a business.

Collaboration involves being open-minded, inclusive, sharing of knowledge, critical thinking, teamwork, self-management, focus, and accountability.

Collaboration promotes teamwork, encourages innovation and leads to more efficient problem-solving.

Through a collaborative environment classrooms and businesses enhance engagement, morale and overall success of students and employees.

Skill: Trust

Trust is built over time.

Team members can be open, honest and rely on each other for support to work towards a common goal.

- Set expectations
- Encourage knowledge sharing for all in group
- Respect for each other
- Develop Positive Relationships



Activity: Trust - virtual setting or live

“Day in the Life”

Create a dedicated channel on your team communication platform where remote or in person group members can share pictures of their day-to-day lives.

If they frequent any places during their normal daily routine encourage them to share pictures!

As simple as this is, it is an effective trust activity for team building because it provides students with the opportunity to get a glimpse of each others' lives and learn more about who they work with.

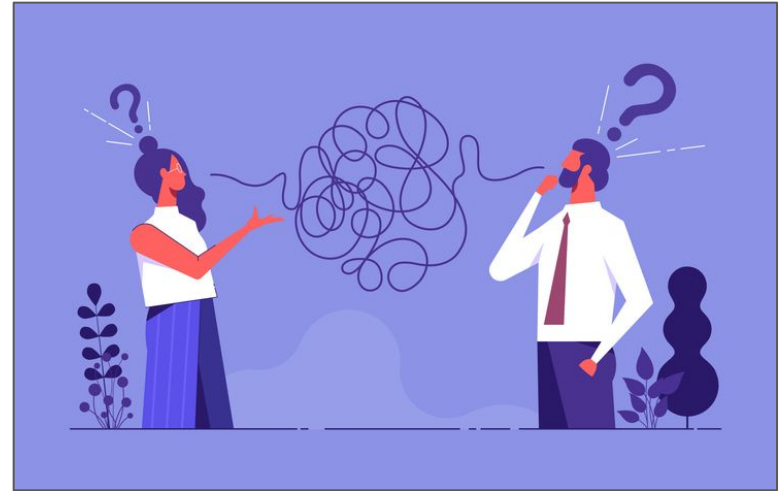
Each person can then share their life stories.



Skill: Communication

Effective communication is the process of exchanging ideas and thoughts, opinions, knowledge and data so that those receiving the message can understand with clarity and purpose.

- Be a good listener (active and engaged)
- Use words effectively to convey thoughts
- Speak clearly and concise (organized thoughts so easily understood)
- Be aware of non-verbal clues (tone, eye contact, facial expressions, and hand gestures)

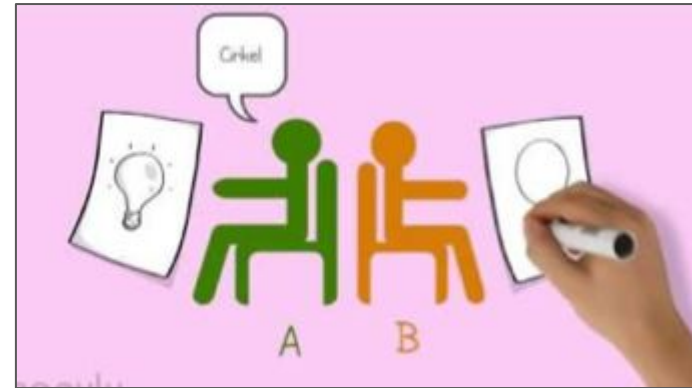


Activity - Trust and Communication

Back-to-back drawing

For back-to-back drawing, get into pairs and sit them back-to-back. Give one of them a pen and paper and select an image from your textbook. The individual with the image communicates verbal instructions to the other on how to recreate it.

Supplies: Paper and pencil and pictures from text book
People 2
Time: 10 minutes



Skill: Positive Relationship

In both school and workplace settings, positive relationships contribute to increased job satisfaction, commitment, collaboration, and overall well-being. By prioritizing respect, trust, effective communication, transparency, authenticity, active listening, encouragement, and avoiding negative behaviors like gossiping, individuals can cultivate a supportive environment that enhances productivity and satisfaction.

Maintain a Positive Attitude: Cultivate optimism, enthusiasm, and supportiveness. Focus on finding solutions, being proactive, and looking for opportunities to improve the work environment and help your colleagues succeed

Foster a Sense of Community: Create a supportive and inclusive work environment where everyone feels valued and respected. Encourage social interaction, team-building activities, celebrate diversity, and promote a sense of belonging.

Practice Active Listening: Listen attentively to your colleagues, seek to understand their perspectives, and show that you value their input. Active listening promotes trust and effective communication

Be Respectful: Show respect for your colleagues' time, opinions, boundaries, and cultural differences. Listen carefully before responding, consider their viewpoints, treat them with kindness and professionalism to earn their respect.

Activity Create a Story

Collaborative Storytelling:

The team sits in a circle, and each person contributes a sentence to create a story. The story can take any direction, and team members must actively listen and build upon each other's ideas. This activity fosters creativity, active participation, and the ability to work together towards a common goal.

Alternative: Write the story and then act it out or make a video

Record the story and play back or this activity can be done as a written collaboration as well, creating a written document where all members of the group contribute.

Set guidelines such as how long the contribution should be, how many times each person can contribute, editing each others work. Freedom to create twists and turns but must make sense and logical with what is in the story.

Supplies: Recording device
People 5-10
Time:5-10 minutes



Plot Generator



Skill: Roles when collaborating

Assigning roles when collaborating provides structure, accountability and positive interaction. Roles ensure engagement and enhance ownership. Having a role can develop higher-level thinking, and communication skills, individual accountability. Rotating roles and responsibilities can also help build an effective team.

Types of Roles

Manager / Facilitator

Technician / Harmonizer

Reflector

Reader

Spokesperson / Presenter

Public Relations

Recorder

Process Analyst

Role Cards



Activity: Roles and Responsibility

Activity: "Life Characteristics Showcase"

Each person in the group has a role. The goal as a group is to develop and share a presentation that represents a Characteristic of Life with an explanation and examples. The presentation must be orally presented with a visual presentation (google slide or poster / banner). Assign roles, select a characteristic of life, develop a presentation and share.

Teacher assigns one of the following Characteristics of Life to each group

- composed of one or more cells, -reproduces,
- adapts, -grows and developments, -organized
- responds to environmental changes or maintains homeostasis (pH changes, temperature, water)

TECHNICIAN/HARMONIZER
"What do we need? I'll get it."

Participate actively.

Reach an agreement with your group members before you write anything down. Write answers that are clear and complete.

Gather any necessary materials if they are not at your lab station.

Conduct the experiment or activity, choosing other group members to help you when necessary. **Show** your group each step of the experiment or activity.

Help clean and put away the materials.



READER
"Okay, I'll read the activity out loud for everyone."

Participate actively.

Reach an agreement with your group members before you write anything down. Write answers that are clear and complete.

Read every word in the activity, so everyone follows the same order of activities.

Read slowly enough that other group members can read along and process the information well.

Help clean and put away the materials.



MANAGER
"Let's stay on task and get this done. No slacking."

Participate actively.

Reach an agreement with your group members before you write anything down. Write answers that are clear and complete.

Keep track of time, so your group can meet the goals for the day. **Push** everyone to get all their work done and to stay focused on your tasks.

Make sure everyone does his or her assigned job and keep up group morale.

Help clean and put away the materials.



SPOKESPERSON
"Our group found that..."

Participate actively.

Reach an agreement with your group members before you write anything down. Write answers that are clear and complete.

Only group member who **interacts** with teacher.

Report out your group's data to the class, **interact with other groups** to compare results, if directed to do so.

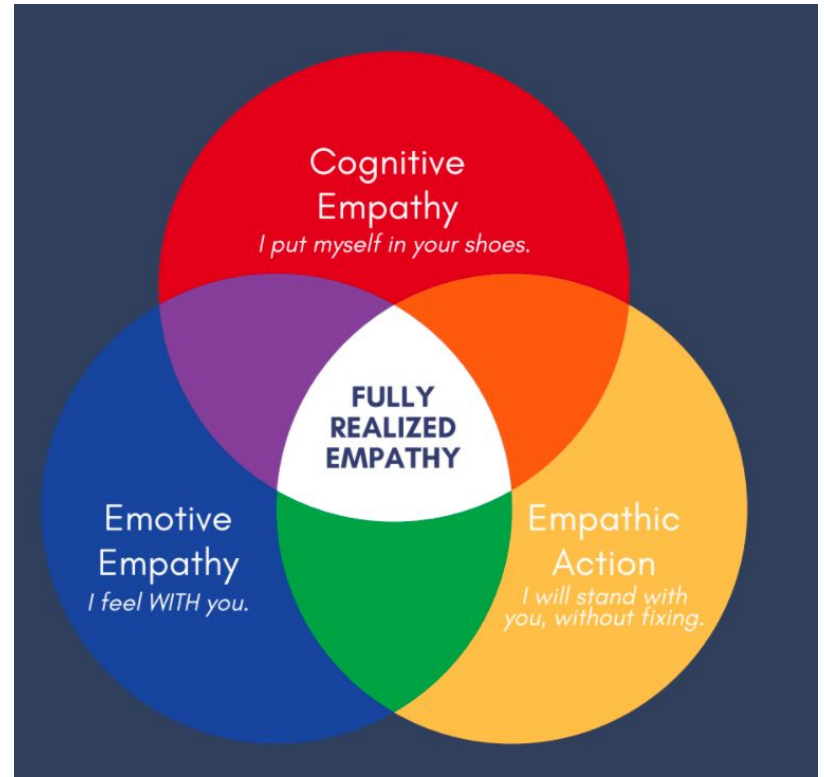
Help clean and put away the materials.



Skill: Empathy

Empathy is the ability to understand and share feelings (put yourself in the other person's shoes), perspectives and experiences of others. Empathy helps to build a positive working environment.

- Active listening
- Eye contact
- Show appreciation
- Understand different perspectives
- Share feelings
- Supportive working environment



Activity: Empathy

The Interview

In this exercise, you will interview another person and learn about their hopes, dreams, struggles, and experiences.

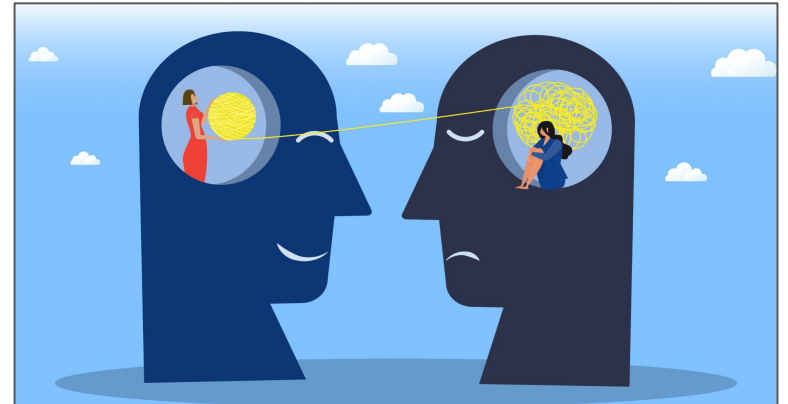
- What is the best thing that ever happened to you?
- What do you love about yourself?
- What is something you regret in life?

Make representations of what you learned about each other. This could be a report, or an artistic representation like a collage or a song or each person tell the other person's story. If time does not allow. Use your empathy skills by not only including the facts of what you learned, but what you think your interviewee felt during the various experiences they've had.

Supplies: none

People 2

Time: 3-6 minutes and share time with full group



Skill: Teamwork

Teamwork is the collaborative effort of a group to achieve a common goal or complete a task efficiently and effectively. Successful teamwork is characterized by clear communication, mutual respect, shared goals, division of tasks based on strengths, and effective problem-solving.



Activity: Teamwork

“Helium Stick”

Use a very thin dowel rod (the thinner the better) and hold it horizontally about chest height and ask the participants to rest the stick on the top of their index fingers and lower it to the ground as a team.

Rules:

Both fingers must remain on stick at all times. Start over if anyone loses contact.

Must start standing with rod chest high to the tallest person.

Notice what happens as you lower the rod.

Supplies: long thin stick / rod

People: 6-9

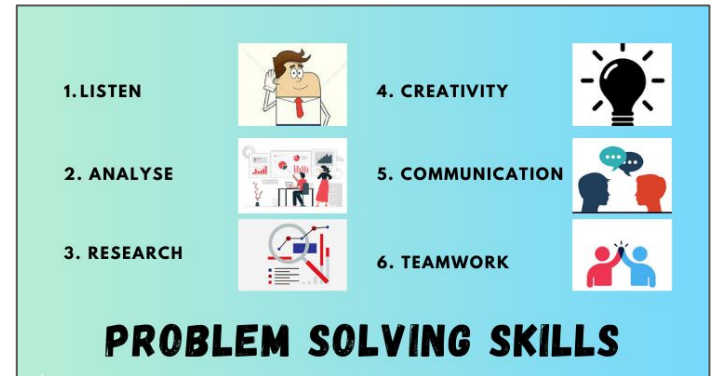
Time: 10 minutes



Skill: Problem Solving

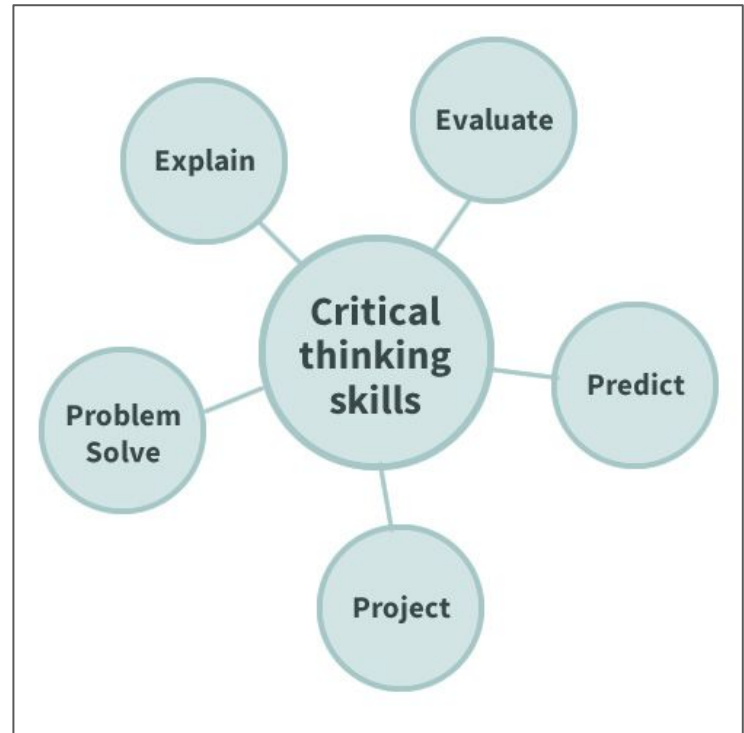
Problem-solving skills are super important because they help you deal with change, talk well, and think of new ideas for old problems. These skills let you listen carefully, think smartly and creatively, find new solutions, make strong choices based on facts, and work together as a team. When you're good at problem-solving, you use your time and things wisely. It promotes teamwork, critical thinking, and strategic decision-making, leading to improved outcomes and organizational success.

- Identify and define the problem
- Consider possible solutions
- Evaluate options
- Choose the best solution
- Implement the solution
- Evaluate the outcome



Skill: Critical Thinking

Critical thinking is the ability to assess and analyze data, evaluate information to determine options, and come to logical conclusions. These skills are beneficial for all people to make their own opinions, learn how to act responsibly, understand consequences, and ultimately think for themselves.



Activity: Problem solving and Critical Thinking

Escape Rooms

Escape rooms in educational settings offer a practical application for students to practice collaboration and reflection on their decision-making processes. By engaging in escape room activities, individuals are encouraged to think critically, work as a team, and develop essential skills that are crucial for success in various aspects of life. Escape rooms can be timed to allow for time management skills to develop.

Supplies: Computer / laptop / phone
People: 4-6
Time: 45-60 minutes



Tuckaway General Store

You have been transported inside the General Store at Shelburne museum and see that you are locked in. Look around the room and find clues to help you solve the puzzles that will open all four locks to escape. Good luck!



Self-evaluation for working collaboratively

How is it going?

Are you developing skills that help build:

- Trust - Integrity
- Effective Communication - Interpersonal skills
- Positive Relationships - Professionalism
- Roles - Lifelong learning
- Empathy - Interpersonal skills
- Open Mindedness - Professionalism
- Flexibility and Adaptability - Professionalism
- Leadership - Professionalism
- Teamwork - Lifelong Learning

Interpersonal Skills

Speaks clearly, confidently, and with appropriate eye-contact with audience.

Applies active listening skills using reflection, restatement, questioning, and clarification.

Integrity

Treats others honestly, fairly, and courteously (words required).

Accepts responsibility for one's decisions and actions.

Professionalism

Accepts feedback and attempts to learn from mistakes or misunderstandings.

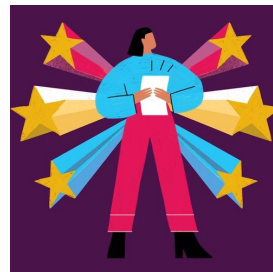
Demonstrates positive attitude toward work and others.

Manages conflict respectfully while maintaining progress toward a goal.

Lifelong Learning

Seeks feedback and asks questions to strengthen own understanding.

Uses newly learned knowledge and skills to complete specific tasks.



Collaborative Effectiveness Evaluation

Are you collaborating effectively?

Periodically complete a group evaluation.



	0 POINTS	1 POINT	2 POINTS
ACADEMIC FOCUS	Little to no academic discussion was observed. The team was off-task and unfocused.	Some team members were unfocused or off-task. Some discussion was not about the assignment.	Academic discussion was overheard throughout the activity. All conversations were about the assignment.
EXPLAIN AND UNDERSTAND	No explanations were overheard throughout the activity.	Some members were overheard giving explanations. Some team members were working to understand the lesson.	Every member was overheard giving explanations. Everyone was working to understand the lesson.
HELP EACH OTHER	The team asked the teacher for help before asking each other.	Some members were asking each other for help before asking the teacher.	All members were asking questions and helping each other before asking the teacher.
WORK TOGETHER	The team did not work together and/or copied each other's work.	Some team members worked together.	The entire team worked together and answered the same questions at the same time without copying.

Overcome the Challenges

1. Poor Leadership
2. Miscommunication
3. Lack of vision or goal setting.
4. Poor Engagement amongst team members
5. Physical barriers or lack of tools
6. Burnout
7. Imbalanced Distribution of work / tasks
8. Distrust or disrespect



Resources

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Thank you to Biogen for providing the opportunity to learn first hand about the importance of collaboration in a global corporate field.

Biogen is a leading global biotechnology company that pioneers science and drives innovations for complex and devastating diseases. Biogen is advancing a pipeline of potential therapies across neurology, neuropsychiatry, specialized immunology and rare disease and remains acutely focused on its purpose of serving humanity through science while advancing a healthier, more sustainable and equitable world. Founded in 1978, Biogen has pioneered multiple breakthrough innovations including a broad portfolio of medicines to treat multiple sclerosis, the first approved treatment for spinal muscular atrophy, and two co-developed treatments to address a defining pathology of Alzheimer's disease.





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