

LESSON 3: COLLABORATION AND TEAMWORK

TEACHER NOTES

Age: Late teenager/Adult

Level: Intermediate (B1)

Time: 60 minutes

Focus: Collaboration and teamwork as 21st century skills, listening

Materials: A newspaper page, a tape roll and an object per group for the paper tower challenge (see notes below), one copy of the worksheet per student, PC, Internet connection

Overall Aims: In this lesson, students will:

1. develop an awareness of collaboration, teamwork and their importance;
2. engage in a practical teamwork activity and reflect on their own performance in it.

21ST CENTURY SKILLS

One of the primary aims of this course is to introduce the core skills needed by effective 21st century citizens. The skills introduced and practiced in this lesson are collaboration and teamwork. Although the two concepts sound similar, there are differences between them. The most obvious difference is that collaboration implies a horizontal/equal power relation between people, whereas teamwork requires the presence of a leader. Everyone else in the team are followers, and each follower has a clearly defined role. This lesson looks into both of these concepts, this is a good as both are essential to becoming an effective 21st century citizen.

COLLABORATION CHALLENGE: THE PAPER TOWER

Aims: to introduce the concept of collaboration; to provide real practice in teamwork; to offer an opportunity for self-reflection.

Approximate time: 20 mins

PROCEDURE:

1. Distribute the worksheet and arrange your students in groups of four (slightly smaller or larger groups would also work). Make sure everyone knows the meaning of collaboration.
2. Give each group a full newspaper page, a roll of tape and a not-too-heavy object, such as a medium-sized book or a notebook. Make sure each group gets an identical object.
3. Tell the students they have five minutes to build

a paper tower to hold the object off the ground.

They cannot use any other materials than the newspaper and the roll of tape. **The highest tower** will win the challenge.


4. Let the students work on their towers. Stop when the time is up; don't let the activity drag. Have a quick round of applause for the winning team and hold a discussion around the following questions:
 - Did you 'think together' before starting to build your tower? (*Mention the importance of planning as you elicit the answers, but also emphasize the importance of being flexible when necessary.*)
 - Did each student have a clear role? Were the roles equal? Did you feel happy? If not, what went wrong? (*Emphasize that roles are necessary for well-functioning teams though collaboration may not always require role distribution. Teams include leaders and followers, whereas these may not be necessary for collaboration.*)
 - Did you use time well? Did you run out of it? If yes, why do you think it happened? (*Obviously, this is a good time to mention the importance of time management for teams.*)
 - Were you happy with your own collaboration in the activity? With that of your team members? (*Make sure students talk honestly but gently about each other.*)
 - What did you learn? What would you do differently next time?

LISTENING: THE MARSHMALLOW CHALLENGE

Aims: to elaborate on the concept of collaboration; to enable students to share their thoughts on it

Approximate time: 20 mins

PROCEDURE:

-  **Teaching Tip:** This activity will involve a TED Talk. Although these talks may be hard to follow for some students, they are excellent sources for building up listening skills, especially for academic English students. Here are a few tips for developing listening skills:
- In the classroom, train your students to listen for important content words such as adjectives and nouns as these will carry the main message of what is being conveyed. Tell them it is OK not to

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hear or understand every single word. They can still understand a lot if they focus on the bigger messages given in a talk.

- Also, most students inadvertently focus on what they do not understand in listening activities. Train them to focus on what they understand instead.
- Tell students that listening develops over time and practice makes perfect. It pays off to watch a video more than once. They can view the same TED Talk on their own, with or without the English script, playing it backwards and forwards, with or without translations. Sustained practice pays off!

1. Before class, you may want to check out: www.tomwujec.com/design-projects/marshmallow-challenge
2. Explain that the paper tower activity is built on a popular teambuilding activity known as the Marshmallow Challenge. Give the following information: In the Marshmallow Challenge, groups use 20 sticks of spaghetti, a roll of tape and some string to build a tower that holds a marshmallow off the ground. The group with the tallest tower wins the challenge.
3. Preteach the words: *consistent*, *feedback*, *orient* (v), *prototype*. These words will come up in the video and may pose problems if students do not understand them.
4. Play Tom Wujec's TED talk either from www.ted.com/talks/tom_wujec_build_a_tower or from the link above. The video is 7 mins long, but the first 3 mins will be enough here.
5. Stop at the following sequences and have students answer the questions on the worksheet. Check their answers before you move on to the next sequence:

Stop at 2.00. Ask students to answer the questions in Part 1 on the worksheet and check their answers. Move on to the next sequence.

Stop at 2.18. Ask students to answer the question in Part 2. Check answers. Move on to the next sequence.

Stop at 3.20. Ask students to answer the question in Part 3. Check answers. If you're short of time, stop showing the video at this point. If not, play it to the end (but there are no more questions here for the second half of the video).

Before you proceed to the next activity, hold a discussion about what lessons may be learned from

the Wujec video about collaboration. Ask students to generate ideas in small groups before they share them with the whole class. The main lesson in the first 3 mins of the video is the importance of a fine balance between planning and a flexible approach in collaborative work. However, as is mostly the case, students may come up with rather different and brilliant answers!

Answers:

1. It forces people to collaborate quickly.
2. Orienting themselves – Planning – Building – The Marshmallow Moment
3. Recent graduates of business school.
4. students' own answers
5. Recent graduates of kindergarten.
6. Business students are trained to find the single right plan and then execute on it. As they do this, they run out of time and then face a crisis at the final 'marshmallow moment'. The kindergarteners, on the other hand, start with the marshmallow and build prototypes and test each one. They become engaged in a repetitive process. They continuously get feedback and refine. (Children do not struggle for power may also be a viable answer.)

TEAMWORK

Aims: to introduce the concept of teamwork; to clarify the difference between collaboration and teamwork

Approximate time: 20 mins

PROCEDURE:

1. Have students work in small groups again so they get more experience functioning in teams.
2. Tell them to work through the worksheet in groups.
3. When they have finished, elicit their answers.

Answers:

Characteristics of Effective Teams

1 – 3 – 4 – 6

The Process of Teamwork/Collaboration

3 – 4 – 2 – 1

Why Teams Fail

1. b
2. c
3. a

LESSON 3 WORD LIST

Each lesson finishes with a two-column word list. The Key words column includes **topical words** explicitly taught in the lesson. The other column, Academic words, includes words from Coxhead's **Academic Word List** that university students frequently encounter in English medium classes (and may already be familiar with). These are peppered in each given lesson and are presented in a list so students can pay attention to them. A short vocabulary exercise follows each word list.

ACADEMIC VOCABULARY EXERCISES

Answers:

- | | |
|----------------------|--------------------|
| A. | B. |
| 1. <i>acquire</i> | 1. <i>conflict</i> |
| 2. <i>coordinate</i> | 2. <i>process</i> |
| 3. <i>resolve</i> | 3. <i>team</i> |
| 4. <i>achieve</i> | 4. <i>goal</i> |

HOMEWORK: FREE WRITING ACTIVITY

Picasso once said, 'Without great solitude, no serious work is possible.' Teamwork is important in today's work environments, but there is still a lot of room for (and value in!) individual work and retrospection. Consider your (future) job. Which one is more important in it: collaboration or individual work? Write a short paragraph explaining your answer.

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WORKSHEET

COLLABORATION CHALLENGE: THE PAPER TOWER

MATERIALS



A single sheet of newspaper



A role of tape

RULES

- You must work in groups.
- Your challenge is to build a freestanding tower to hold the object your teacher gives you off the ground.
- You may use ONLY the materials shown above.
- You have five minutes to build your tower.
- The team with the highest freestanding tower wins the challenge!

Tip: Careful planning, clear roles for each student and good timing are essential for this challenge.

LISTENING: THE MARSHMALLOW CHALLENGE

You will now watch Tom Wujec's presentation on the famous 'Marshmallow Challenge'. Your teacher will stop the video at certain points. Watch carefully and then answer the questions in your groups.

Part 1

1. What is the main difficulty of the Marshmallow Challenge?
2. What are the steps most groups follow in the Marshmallow Challenge?
3. According to Wujec, who consistently performs poorly in the Marshmallow Challenge?
4. Who do you think consistently performs well?

Part 2

5. What is Wujec's answer to question 4? Did you guess correctly?

Part 3

6. What are the reasons for the difference in the performance of these two groups?



For discussion: What do we learn from Wujec about collaboration?

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WORKSHEET

TEAMWORK

In today's workplaces, most people not only collaborate but also work in teams. Working in a team is an 'acquired skill'. This means you can improve your teamwork skills through practice. This course presents you with many opportunities to do so. To begin with, let's get our facts straight:



Characteristics of Effective Teams

Four of the below characteristics belong to effective teams. Discuss which ones make the right answer. Have a group answer ready and be prepared to justify it.

1. Having a common goal: Team members agree on a shared goal.
2. Competition: Team members compete with each other for success.
3. Being organized: Teams need clear roles for each member.
4. Making equal effort: All team members put equal effort in the task.
5. Avoiding conflict: Team members avoid disagreeing with each other.
6. Showing respect: All members treat each other with respect.

The Process of Teamwork

Most teams go through the following steps before they start to perform well. However, the steps are given in jumbled order. Reorder them with your group members.

1. Performing: Performing without problems, feeling motivated, respecting each other and working together to achieve the goal.
2. Norming: Getting rid of disagreements, becoming more organised and more coordinated.
3. Forming: Getting to know each other, agreeing on goals, processes and roles.
4. Storming: Having disagreements between team members.

Why Teams Fail

Below are the three most common reasons why teams fail. Match each reason with the right explanation.

Reason	Explanation
1) Lack of direction	a) This is the ideal recipe for failure! Disagreements in a group are natural. However, if they are not resolved properly, there is no success.
2) Lack of motivation	b) If team members do not know where the team is going or what the goals are, the team cannot perform properly. Team leaders must set clear goals.
3) Unresolved conflict	c) If members are not inspired, they do not put enough effort in the task. As a result, the outcomes are never excellent.

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WORKSHEET

LESSON 3 WORD LIST

Key words	Academic words
collaborate	achieve
consistent	acquire
feedback	challenge
orient	conflict
prototype	coordinate
	goal
	justify
	norm
	process
	resolve
	role
	task
	team

In this lesson, you studied the Key words on the left.

You also encountered the Academic words on the right. These words are frequent in academic life.

ACADEMIC VOCABULARY EXERCISES

A. Use the verbs below to complete the sentences. Do not change them.

acquire *resolve* *coordinate* *achieve*

1. People aren't born with a natural ability to work with others. On the contrary, it usually takes time to _____ teamwork skills.
2. The team leader is expected to _____ the actions of team members and make sure that everything flows correctly.
3. For successful teamwork, it is important to _____ conflicts within the group.
4. Having a common goal is essential to become an effective team and _____ success.

B. Use the nouns below to complete the sentences.

conflict *goal* *process* *team*

1. Respect is the first thing you need to resolve a _____ between two people.
2. The _____ of teamwork involves several stages.
3. Do you usually prefer working on your own or in a _____?
4. When there is no collaboration between team members, it gets harder to reach a _____.