

**Literacy Volunteers of Maine
ESoL/ EL Civics/ABE Curriculum Development Project**

Lesson Title: Workplace Behaviors & Cultural Differences in the Workplace

Author: Mary Beth Moyer, Sue Reilly & Sally Lunt

Literacy Program: Literacy Volunteers-Androscoggin

Program Address: 15 Sacred Heart Place, Auburn, ME 04210

Job Type: Entry level housekeeping, retail, light industry/manufacturing

Overview: This lesson introduces/reviews American cultural habits commonly used in the workplace.

This lesson plan is for a segment of a session spent with a workplace literacy student. See full curriculum at: <http://adultresource.coabe.org/resources/workplace-literacy-curriculum>

This is a sample lesson plan of activities to help ESOL students prepare for entry-level jobs in our community. Pick and choose activities suitable to your student's goals and skills. These activities are designed to be adaptable to varying levels and easily modifiable to fit your unique student's skills. Start off each meeting by talking with your student, informally determining how much of the previous meeting they recall and what they want out of that day's meeting. This is also a chance to practice and assess your student's greetings and small talk skills, critical components of getting along with coworkers. This informal "chit-chat" could take anywhere from 5-10 minutes of a one hour meeting.

Each meeting might include two to four topics and should incorporate a variety of activities to develop the student's reading, speaking, and listening skills in English. Be aware that some activities may be tiring because of the amount of language included. It is okay to cover a topic repeatedly for shorter periods of time, ensuring long-term comprehension. Unfortunately some activities are straight memorization and cannot be made as engaging as other topics. Be aware of your student's engagement level and

fatigue. If you are having success with an activity, do not feel like you need to stop after a given amount of time. An engaged and happy student will be a better learner!

Basic Materials that may be useful in addition to materials for activities: whiteboard with markers, notebook to take notes during your lesson and to store lesson plans for planning future sessions, index cards (covered in contact paper to preserve them for regular use), baggies, sharpies

Learning Goal(s): Understanding US cultural practices in the workplace.

Curriculum Area(s): Language, English, US Culture, Workplace Literacy

Time required: 20 minutes, or as fits the student's needs

Materials needed: Images provided

How will I present the information? Images, Discussion, and Role-playing and Practice

As a result of this lesson/unit students will...

Understand The behaviors of eye contact, shaking hands and personal space expected in most US workplaces.

Know: Cultural norms of eye contact, shaking hands and personal space in the workplace.

Do (Skills): Be able to interact appropriately with coworkers and management.

Pre-Assessment

Observe the student's behavior in eye contact, shaking hands, and personal space. As the teacher does the activities, he/she will observe the student's knowledge and practice in each area.

Activity – Eye Contact

Use the images provided or images from magazines and the newspaper to talk about the importance Americans place on eye contact. Does your student make

eye contact with you? If not, talk about why they do not. Somali men in particular may prefer to not make eye contact with women out of respect. If this is the case for your student(s), practice using the language to explain this so they are not perceived as disrespectful in the workplace. “Out of respect, my religion does not let me look women in the eye.”



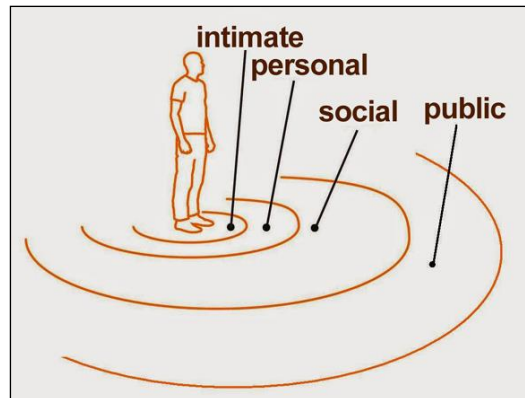
Activity – Shaking Hands

Like eye contact shaking hands is something that students may not be comfortable with depending on their religion and culture. If your student has no objection to shaking hands in an interview with men or women, guide them through the protocol of shaking hands.

If your student prefers to not shake hands, especially with someone of the opposite gender, practice the language they will need to use if somebody extends their hand. “Out of respect, my religion does not let me shake a woman’s hand.”

Activity – Personal Space

Using images provided and images you find in magazines and newspapers, look at how people are relating to each other spatially in family, social, and professional settings. See if your student can describe the relationship between people in the pictures based on spatial relations in each picture. Are the people family, friends, coworkers, acquaintances, or strangers? Do any of these pictures show people being too close or too far apart for the situation? How do concepts of personal space differ between the United States and your student’s home country?



In a group or class, have students act out various scenarios involving spacial differences. A tutor and student can also do this.

Practice how to respond if you feel another person is physically too close to you. Also discuss the signs that your proximity is inappropriate. Example: A coworker often backs away.

Wrap up: Express the positives that the student(s) have achieved.

Post-Assessment: Review what the student has learned and what will be the next step to continue with cultural workplace situations.

Additional Resources: *Workplace Literacy Curriculum*; on the topic of Handshaking: <http://etiquette.about.com/od/Professional-Etiquette/tp/7-Tips-On-Proper-Handshake-Etiquette.htm>

