

Techniques/Activities to Promote the Seven Essential Life Skills

The following is a list activities that will create a welcoming, comfortable environment, as well as help foster the 7 essential life skills. These skills will help students reach their full potential and become lifelong learners.

Some of the activities are very simple and take just a few minutes at the start of class. They can be done as a “break” to refresh their minds.

Skill: Focus & Self Control

Activity: Do/Say the Opposite

Instructor will perform an action, like reaching to the sky and students will do the opposite action, like touch the ground. You can also do a modified version of this. Say a word and the students will say the opposite; up/down, left/right, black/white, etc.

Activity: Color & Words

Prepare flash cards using various colored paper with various color words written on the paper in a variety of colored markers. For instance, on yellow paper write red in purple. You can also use white paper and just have the color word in different ink. Hold the card up and ask the student to read what the word says, not the color it's printed in/on. Or have the student tell you the color of the paper, or the color of the words. Either way, your students will have to exercise great control to tell you the correct answer.

Sill: Perspective Taking

Activity: Analyzing art

Using any form of art (paintings, iconic photographs, sculptures, etc) ask student to think about what the artist was thinking. Why would Andy Warhol paint soup cans? Did Picasso really see women's faces that way? Instructor can use this as a verbal discussion or a short writing prompt.

Skill: Communicating

Activity: Express Yourself

This activity can be done in a variety of ways.

- 1) Read a descriptive passage from a book and ask students to draw what they visualize.
- 2) Listen to a song and ask student to draw what they think the song is about.
- 3) Read a passage from a book and ask students to draw a picture from a particular character's perspective.

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Activity: Daydreaming Chats

Give students a prompt for a verbal discussion. Don't let them slide with one and two word answers! Here are some suggestions:

- 1) If I won one million dollars I would....
- 2) I can't live without.....
- 3) If I were to travel anywhere it would be.....
- 4) If I had a genie in a lamp, I would wish for....

Activity: Songs

Choose a song and show students the lyrics, without telling them it is a song. Discuss the meaning. What is the writer trying to communicate? Is their theory the only meaning behind the lyrics of the song? Then, show the video, or play audio to the song from YouTube. Did their opinions change? How does the visual make us change our thoughts? Some popular choices are:

Pearl Jam, Just Breathe	Lyrics	Video
Neil Young, Heart of Gold	Lyrics	Audio
Bob Dylan, Like a Rolling Stone	Lyrics	Audio
Red Hot Chili Peppers, Under the Bridge	Lyrics	Video
The Beatles, Across the Universe	Lyrics	Audio
Simon & Garfunkel, Sound of Silence	Lyrics	Audio

You can find others [here](#).

Skill: Making Connections

Activity: Optical Illusions

Show various optical illusions and discuss what they see. There isn't a right or wrong answer. It's up to the student to make those connections with the image. You can find lots of optical illusions [here](#).

Activity: Finish the story

Tell a story, or read a short book, without an ending. Ask the student to finish the story. They will have to infer using events that happened throughout the story to guess how they think the story will end.

Activity: First Impressions

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Students will have a few seconds (depending on student's level, but no more than 45 seconds) to write the first 5 things that come to mind when they see a particular piece of art. Be sure to reassure them that they don't need to worry about spelling or grammar. This may also be a verbal exercise, but it's important to not have the student's process interrupted. Explore the student's impressions. Why did it remind them of ____? Why is the question you want to keep asking. Get your student to delve deep into thoughts. They should have a clear path to why something reminded them of something else.

Skill: Critical Thinking

Activity: Watch Commercials

Play TV commercials and discuss. Who is the target audience? How do you know? What are some general claims made? What type of stereotypes are present? Ask students to question the claims. How can you find out how accurate they are? You may even compare two commercials for same product from different time period. How have society norms made us think about commercials differently?

Links to commercials: [Maytag dishwasher 2000s](#)
[GE 1980s dishwasher](#)
[M&Ms Do Anything For Love](#)
[M&Ms Can't Control Around Chocolate](#)

Activity: The Question Game

Carry on a conversation by only asking questions. For example:

Tutor/Teacher: How was your day today?

Student 1: Is going to rain all day?

Student 2: Do you prefer the sunshine?

Student 3: Don't you like outdoor activities?

This will force students out of their comfort zone and cause them to think critically about their language knowledge.

Activity: What if?

Tutor/Teacher will pose a question based upon common knowledge and ask students to explain what would have happened if one aspect had changed. For example, "The Civil War occurred between the North and South. What would have happened if the North would have let the South leave the United States?" Teacher can guide students with additional questions. Think about geography (Would the U.S. have expanded and settled the West? Would California still remain with Mexico?), global economies (How would a smaller U.S. change the exports of The Literacy Center is a Certified [Mind in the Making](#) Facility. Some activities included in this document have external sources and have been modified to serve our low level learners.

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other nations?), war (If the U.S. was smaller, would WWI have ended with a victory?), and laws (The Civil Rights Movement happened about 100 years after southern slaves were freed. If the U.S. was divided into two nations, how do you think the Civil Rights Movement would have occurred?).

Activity: Things that are not

Grab any item within reach. Ask students to list all things item could be used for other than its original purpose.

Activity: Our favorite show

Student and tutor mutually agree on a weekly TV show to watch. Each week, begin the lesson with conversations about the show. Discuss character analysis, plot & setting, and theme. This will teach students how to observe details that are required for reading, and help them make inferences as to why a character did something.