

CTE CONTENT AREA: Business Education
CONTENT MODULE TITLE: Business Communication

MODULE DESCRIPTION

This module introduces students to the fundamentals of effective communication, the various forms of communication, and how communication impacts business effectiveness and workplace relationships. Students will learn and develop creative thinking strategies, listening skills, and communication methods, so they may relate to colleagues in a positive and productive manner. Students will also learn strategies to express themselves in different environments, to recognize and remove communication barriers, and to minimize conflict.

GUIDING QUESTION

What knowledge and skills are necessary to demonstrate an introductory understanding of the various modes, styles, and techniques of effective business communication?

MODULE CONTENT

Business Communication

1. Written Communication

Students will

- a) Analyze a business situation to determine the appropriate form of business communication to use, such as memo, letter, email, etc.
- b) Demonstrate use of conventional formatting and language in written business communications
- c) Detail appropriate use of social media platforms for business communications
- d) Select software applications to efficiently produce business communications

2. Verbal and Nonverbal Communication

Students will

- a) Describe effective verbal communication skills for business situations
- b) Identify the meaning communicated through nonverbal behavioral cues
- c) Tell how inconsistencies between verbal and nonverbal messages can be barriers to effective workplace communication
- d) Demonstrate personal development of verbal and nonverbal communication skills through practice of these skills in simulated business applications

3. Active Listening

Students will

- a) List skills associated with active listening, including clearing mind of distractions, facing the speaker, encouraging the speaker through nonverbal cues, resisting interruptions, and asking focused questions
- b) Describe ways businesses benefit from employees' active listening skills

- c) Demonstrate personal development of active listening skills through practice of these skills in simulated business applications

4. Public Speaking

Students will

- a) List and describe common workplace situations requiring public speaking, such as team meetings, board presentations, conference presentations, teaching new hires, and virtual talks
- b) Understand and apply the elements of effective public speaking, including planning, practicing, pacing, engaging, evaluating, and revising based on feedback
- c) Show how to adjust presentations to address different audiences
- d) Demonstrate personal development of public speaking skills through practice of these skills in simulated business applications

5. Group Dynamics and Conflict Resolution

Students will

- a) List and describe the characteristics of an effective group
- b) Compare and contrast formal (written) and informal (expectations) rules for group interactions in the workplace
- c) Explain how conflict can promote productive group work
- d) List and describe positive methods for managing group conflict
- e) Describe ways businesses benefit from effective group work by employees
- f) Demonstrate personal development of productive group membership through group work in simulated business situations

6. Career Pathways

Students will

- a) Identify career paths of personal interest
- b) Investigate careers that help others develop and apply business communication skills and assess personal skills, interests, and abilities for those careers

ILLUSTRATIVE ACTIVITIES by Theme Module

Career and Community Connections

Virtual Talks

Students produce 2-3 minute virtual talks describing the purposes and benefits of a project they have done in class. Vary the audience for the talks: future students, parents, school leaders, board members, community members. After viewing the videos, discuss the similarities and difference in presentations for different audiences. Students will revise and refine the talks and post them on a school webpage or channel.

Communication and Interpersonal Relationships

Active Listening Drawings

Students work in small groups. One student will serve as the manager and the others as the employees. The manager prepares a simple drawing, which is not shown to the employees.

The manager then gives oral directions for creating the same drawing. Employees use active listening strategies as they prepare their drawings. The manager then displays the original work and the group discusses the successes and challenges employees had in producing their versions.

Financial and Consumer Literacy

Fan "Mail"

Students brainstorm a list of local individuals and businesses which have made a difference to the quality of life in the community and research their specific contributions. Students choose a form of business communication and software to create a fan message to an individual or business from the brainstorm list. Create a class database to track responses received, observing whether a form of business communication was more likely to garner a response.

Health, Safety, and Wellness

Reasonable Accommodations

Invite the school human resources specialist to class to discuss the Americans with Disabilities Act and the concept of "reasonable accommodations." Discuss ways accommodations allow people with disabilities to effectively perform their job tasks. Accommodations presented might include variations in work space and equipment needed to do the task, communication of the work, the tasks themselves, and the time and place that the work is done. Following the presentation, students write reflections on ways accommodations promote effective group work by all employees.

Problem Solving and Innovation

Build a Chair

Students work in teams of three or four. Each team has the same set of materials, such as newspaper, tape, cardboard, and scissors. Team members work together for a set amount of time to build an "office" chair that can support one team member for one minute. Teams test the designs when finished. Following the tests, team members discuss the dynamics of the group in terms of cooperation, collaboration, and conflict.

Sustainability

Green Office

Students collect a variety of "Green Office Checklists" from a variety of sources. Working together, students use these resources to develop a checklist for their classroom or the school. Potential categories include waste and energy use. Students improve green practices in their environment by publicizing the checklist through appropriate social media and applying the checklist in class.

STANDARDS ADDRESSED

New York State Career Development and Occupational Studies (CDOS) Standards
Intermediate Level

<http://www.p12.nysed.gov/cte/>

Standard 1: Career Development

June 2018

NYS Middle-level CTE

Preliminary Release for Field Review and Piloting

Students will be knowledgeable about the world of work, explore career options, and relate personal skills, aptitudes, and abilities to future career decisions.

Standard 2: Integrated Learning

Students will demonstrate how academic knowledge and skills are applied in the workplace and other settings.

Standard 3a: Universal Foundation Skills

Students will demonstrate mastery of the foundation skills and competencies essential for success in the workplace.

Common Career Technical Core Standards

<https://www.careertech.org/career-ready-practices>

Career Ready Practices

1. Act as a responsible and contributing citizen and employee
2. Apply appropriate and academic and technical skills
4. Communicate clearly and effectively and with reason
5. Consider environmental, social, and economic impacts of decisions
9. Model integrity, ethical leadership, and effective management
10. Plan education and career paths aligned to personal goals
11. Use technology to enhance productivity
12. Work productively in teams while using cultural global competence

National Business Education Standards

<https://www.nbea.org/newsite/curriculum/standards/index.html>

Career Development

I. Self-Awareness Achievement Standard

Assess personal skills, abilities, and aptitudes and personal strengths and weaknesses as they relate to career exploration and development

III. Workplace Expectations Achievement Standard

Relate the importance of workplace expectations to career development

V. School-to-Career Transition Achievement Standard

Develop strategies to make an effective transition from school to career.

VI. Lifelong Learning Achievement Standard

Relate the importance of lifelong learning to career success

Communication

I. Foundations of Communication Achievement Standard

Communicate in a clear, complete, concise, correct, and courteous manner on personal and professional levels

II. Societal Communication Achievement Standard

Apply basic social communication skills in personal and professional situations

III. Workplace Communication Achievement Standard

Incorporate appropriate leadership and supervision techniques, customer service strategies, and personal ethics standards to communicate effectively with various business constituencies

IV. Technological Communication Achievement Standard

Use technology to enhance the effectiveness of communication

RESOURCES

New York State Department of Labor

New York State Career Zone

<https://nydcdt.files.wordpress.com/2012/08/careerzoneclassroomactivities1.pdf>

Career Zone Activities: Dream It, Plan It, Make It Happen! This resource contains an extensive list of interactive activities that correspond to the NYS CareerZone website. All activities are meant to be brainstormed, discussed, and researched and can be altered to suit one's program and resources. Activities are coded as "Create," "Play," or "Present."

GCFLearnFree (Goodwill Community Foundation Global Learning)

<https://www.gcflearnfree.org>

GCFLearnFree offers free online tutorials designed to help individuals learn technological skills they need to live and work. Website contains programs on more than 180 topics, including more than 2,000 lessons and more than 800 videos. More than 55 interactive games are also available.

Association of Career and Technical Education

Career Planning Guide

https://www.acteonline.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/ACTE_CC_Paper_FINAL.pdf

Research has identified middle school as a time when students can benefit the most from career exploration, a process of building self-awareness, learning about potential careers, and developing a plan for reaching future goals.

AdvanceCTE

Middle Level Career Interest Inventory

<https://cte.careertech.org/sites/default/files/StudentInterestSurvey-English.pdf>

AdvanceCTE provides a Career Interest Inventory worksheet to use with students in helping them identify the potential matches to the 16 career clusters available to them

Association of CTE Administrators (ACTEA)

CTE Strong Videos

<http://www.ctestrong.com>

Edge Factor has created a series of inspirational videos related to career and education that provide students with a very contemporary perspective on CTE options. Career Cluster videos provide a new look at the many career options that students have in high school and beyond.

Business Teachers Association of New York State (BTANYS)

<http://www.btanys.org/>

The Business Teachers Association of New York State provides networking, support, and professional growth opportunities for its members to effectively educate today's students for tomorrow's global economy.

Career and Technical Education Technical Assistance Center of New York (CTE TAC)

<http://nyctecenter.org/>

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The Career and Technical Education Technical Assistance Center (CTE TAC) operates under a state contract to assist the New York State Education Department (NYSED) in carrying out its mission of improving the quality, access, and delivery of career and technical education through research-based methods and strategies resulting in broader CTE opportunities for all students.