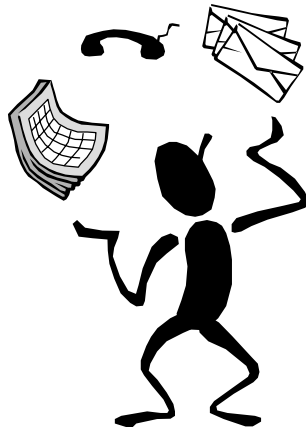


Vocational Preparatory Instruction

Staff Self-Training Program

Complementary Skills Module

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COMPLEMENTARY SKILLS

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PRE-TEST

1. Define the term: "Complementary Skills."
2. Name four (4) Community Agencies that you may use to assist your students with a problem.

3. Name the three basic solutions for good "Money Management."

4. How can you help your students to get a Credit Report?
5. Who would be the best person to contact for "Job expectations" – other than technical skills?
6. Name four aspects of "ATTITUDE."

TRUE OR FALSE

7. ____ We should discuss health issues with our students.
8. ____ We can relate "Complementary Skills" to our basic skills training.
9. ____ Students may experience a sense of loss when they complete their training.
10. ____ Sexism is a term designated for women only.
11. ____ Government applies to local, state, and federal agencies only.
12. ____ Ignorance of specific laws is generally accepted as an excuse if a violation occurs.

COMPLEMENTARY SKILLS

INTRODUCTION

According to the Florida Department of Education "STUDENT PERFORMANCE STANDARDS;" Occupational Area: Instructional Support Services: Program Title – Vocational Preparatory Instruction (VPI) July 2000: Under Basic Skills, Section 07.0, the following items were identified in the curriculum guidelines as "complementary skills."

Demonstrate awareness of complementary skills – the instruction in complementary skills is based on individual need and *may include, but is not limited to* the following.

The student will be able to:

- 1.1 Identify sources of community service agencies
- 1.2 Demonstrate consumer awareness
- 1.3 Identify principles of business organization and management
- 1.4 Practice health maintenance skills
- 1.5 Demonstrate knowledge of responsible citizenship
- 1.6 Demonstrate a basic understanding of governmental structure
- 1.7 Recognize fraudulent practices
- 1.8 Demonstrate cultural and environmental awareness

The complementary skills component of Vocational Preparatory Instruction comprises those skills that an adult must have to function in today's society. This program *may include, but is not limited to*: reading materials and exercises in the areas of community resources, money management, consumer credit, occupational information, consumer education, personal and social skills, mental and physical health, personal interactions, environmental events, and government and law. Information that builds complementary skills is vital to many special needs students who may be denied opportunities for upward job mobility because of their lack of skills. Complementary skills' materials should be available in several reading levels and languages to accommodate all students. Many complementary skills materials are available from local community agencies.

STRATEGIES

The terms “may include” and “is not limited to” provide VPI staff with a wide range of opportunities to provide students with the “complementary skills” that they may need to be successful outside of the educational arena. These “complementary skills” can include “life skills” for making the adjustment from school to work. Since VPI is designed to meet academic skills (those basic skills for reading, mathematics, and language), complementary skills may be included in the materials used for basic skills remediation. For example, reading materials directed toward the educational concept of “understanding the main idea” may include pamphlets from your local/community health clinic dealing with topics such as HIV, AIDS, & Sexually Transmitted Diseases or information on public health clinic services, stating locations, types of services available, and hours of service. For math, helping a student understand that if he/she can place \$1000 in a savings account and somehow manage to leave it there for a year, using a mathematical process to figure interest, that student will have more than \$1000 at the end of that year – and understand why! Or, if a student needs to purchase a vehicle listed at a certain price, has to finance that vehicle, and is shocked to find that a \$6000 car may end up costing him/her over \$8000 – the explanation and understanding of why is a complementary skill. In the area of language, having a student write a letter to a prospective employer, using correct grammar and punctuation, is an example of the practical application of complementary skills.

In designing a format for the complementary skills that you intend to offer, keep in mind that business owners, vocational instructors, VPI instructional staff, and students often refer to complementary skills as “*Common Sense*” skills that one must have to succeed in the real world. Your format for preparation of materials for complementary skills may be nothing more than having printed materials available: on display in your lab, or a file cabinet holding only materials that may be utilized for these skills. Having a supply of videotapes of local news programs, community service announcements, or informational programs may also be a valuable resource.

We often take for granted that because we work with adults, our students already have the skills necessary to exist in the everyday world. After all, the majority of our students may already be (or have been) employed (may be working part-time or even full-time) as they receive their training for their vocational program choice. Many are parents (raising children

in today's society is no simple task); and the majority of our students are already actively involved in the communities in which they live (attend churches, participate in school activities for their children, or participate in community, social, political, or cultural activities). Our students are generally "unemployed or under-employed" which may be the primary reason why they are in school. What we must consider is that some students (all based on individual need) may need to become more aware of acceptable and/or available services, information, agencies and organizations in the society in which they live in order to feel successful and productive. For example, if a special needs student (economically disadvantaged) has been raised in an environment where his/her family has lived "*from paycheck to paycheck*," that student may not have ever been exposed to the need for banking services, except perhaps to get a check cashed. By exposing the student to a banking facility and the financial services offered by that institution, that student will have more knowledge of choices available. This knowledge might benefit that student by allowing more control of his/her money. It may be nothing more than learning that bank services may make one's life more convenient. Some businesses that hire our students utilize *direct deposit* for their employees' salaries. Sharing how that procedure works allows that student to know and understand just what is happening with his/her money and how to access that money.

COMMUNITY RESOURCES

Perhaps the best way to introduce this section is to define the term "community resources." What are they? What purpose do they serve? How do we find out what services are out there? Which services do we need to have available for our students? How can our students access these services? In the Northwest Florida area, a publication offered through Children's Services Center provides a Directory of Community Services for Escambia County (Pensacola area) and two adjoining counties (Santa Rosa & Okaloosa). *First Call for Help* is a comprehensive listing of health and human service organizations and agencies in the area. It offers free telephone assistance to finding the proper agency or program that can help you solve a problem. In addition, a weekly electronic Bulletin Board of community services and events is also available. Because of the demand and the wonderful world of electronic technology, the complete directory is also offered in disk form called the "Directory on Disk." For a copy of this resource, E-mail: cscintnt@gulf.net

In the text, agencies are listed alphabetically and programs are listed under the agency that provides the service. Perhaps the area that you serve (generally done on a countywide basis) also has this available. You may want to contact your local Chamber of Commerce or directly contact Children's Services. Often, social workers associated with local hospitals, mental health facilities, or family and children services will have this resource book available. Examples of this Directory of Community Services include:

- Toll Free Social Service Resource List (800 numbers for assistance)
- Alcoholics Anonymous (AA)
- American Red Cross
- Association of Retarded Citizens (ARC)
- Better Business Bureau
- Big Brother/Big Sister
- Boy Scouts of America/Regional Council
- Catholic Social Services
- Children's Medical Services
- Community Drug and Alcohol Commission
- Deaf Service Center
- Division of Blind Services
- Department of Environmental Resources
- Epilepsy Society
- Educational Opportunity Center
- Energy Services
- Florida Department of Children & Families/Adult Services Program Offices
- Florida Division of Vocational Rehabilitation
- Food Source
- Goodwill Stores
- Grant-A-Wish Foundation
- Girl Scout Council, Inc.
- Hospice (Northwest Florida region)
- Helping Hand Mission
- Home Health Agency
- Internal Revenue Service (IRS)
- Job Corps
- Leukemia Society of America
- Life Crisis Center
- Lion's Sight Program – Help Us Save Sight
- March of Dimes Birth Defects Foundation
- Mental Health Association
- Narcotics Anonymous
- Neighborhood Enterprise Foundation – housing rehabilitation

- Parents, Family, and Friends of Gays and Lesbians
- Postal Services
- Public Defender Office
- Salvation Army
- Social Security Administration
- Special Olympics
- United Way Organizations
- United States Customs Services
- University listings
- Veteran's Center & Services
- Women's Intervention Services and Education (WISE)
- YMCA locations and numbers

These community services and organizations are designed to help meet the needs of the population residing in the area. Often students need basic information in order to get assistance for a specific problem area. The term "Knowledge is Power" certainly pertains to our students. We empower our students by assisting them to accomplish their goals. One way to do this is to have information available for them. (It is also important to remember that with correct and up-to-date information, frustration levels are less likely to interfere with accomplishing one's goals!)

Utilization of these community services can also be tied to the basic skills remediation offered through Vocational Preparatory Instruction (VPI). Again, relating the subject areas of math, reading, and language to community service organizations may be as simple as having pamphlets available for students to read. Exercises in writing to agencies for additional information, or conversational telephone techniques can be accomplished with a specific basic remediation goal in mind. These techniques are especially helpful for ESOL students. If some of the agencies have a fee for the services they deliver, having a student work that fee into a monthly budget could accomplish a mathematical connection; again developing complementary skills.

MONEY MANAGEMENT

According to the College Survival textbook (Becoming a Master Student, 1991; Ellis) used by several community colleges in the state of Florida, money management is a simple concept. That concept is "Money problems result from spending more than is available. The solution... Don't spend more money than you have!" Unfortunately, as VPI staff, we often do not hear

questions about money until a problem arises. Money issues to our students are real. Having the complementary skills available for students to utilize to deal with money effectively may provide students with choices for dealing with financial issues. Information about money management can be found in several "survival skills" texts used in both secondary and postsecondary educational institutions, as well as information from Credit Unions, Banking Institutions, and Financial Services Organizations.

The following information comes from the College Survival textbook used for incoming college freshmen. (Ellis)

Telling the truth about your present financial circumstances is essential – know what you actually have coming in and what you spend. Spend no more than you have! Sounds simple, doesn't it? However, for a problem to exist – the preceding has somehow failed. Looking at options available takes some skill . . . *complementary skill!!*

The base for money management is so that you can control your money – NOT for your money to control you! Generally solutions fall into one of three categories:

- Increase money coming in
- Decrease money going out, or
- A combination of the previous two

Increase Money Coming In:

- Consider a part-time job. Earn the extra money rather than living on hopes that money coming in will miraculously appear.
- Seek a promotion within your current employment.
- Look for a better job.

Decrease Money Going Out:

By continually monitoring your expenses, you can determine how to decrease what you spend. Here are some ways of decreasing what you actually spend.

1. Look at the big-ticket items. Look to the items that cost the most – housing, automobiles – these can make the greatest impact on your spending.

2. Use the telephone. You can save time, gas, and money shopping if you call ahead to see who has the best prices and the most convenient locations.
3. Comparison Shop. Prices vary – sales take place at different stores at different times. Do your homework before you head out to purchase. This is also one way to control impulse buying. Shop at second-hand stores, thrift shops, or garage sales.
4. Be aware of quality. Often the cheapest product is not always the least expensive over the long run.
5. Keep receipts. Complaints carry more weight when you have proof of purchase.
6. Complain. If you feel that you did not get your money's worth, start with the salesperson and work your way up until you are satisfied.
7. Use coupons. More often than not, you can use coupons to decrease the prices of items that you use continually. Also some stores recognize coupons from other stores.
8. Cook for yourself. Eating out is really expensive... and habit forming!!
9. Plan your wardrobe in advance. Purchase clothes at the "end of the season" sales and purchase clothing that you can "mix and match."
10. Conserve energy. Turn off lights; cut a 15 minutes shower to 10 minutes; keep doors and windows closed to conserve heating and air conditioning.
11. Keep housing costs reasonable. Consider location, utilities included in rent, size of what you need versus what you want.
12. Pay CASH. Avoid interest charges.
13. Fix things yourself. Often it is cheaper to buy a friend lunch to help you than to pay a repairperson.
14. Notice what you spend on "fun." Seek what entertainment is available for free!

You need a list of "FREE" or "Almost Free" FUN!

exercise
 climb a tree
 play cards
 window shop
 people watch
 draw
 go fishing
 star gaze
 visit a library
 visit a store
 write a poem
 play a game
 hike
 go to a public park
 swing

work a puzzle
 fly a kite
 moon watch
 visit a museum
 sing out loud
 bicycle ride
 watch a movie on TV
 call a friend (local)
 go swimming
 go visit someone
 look at old photos
 listen to music
 walk on the beach
 attend a school's
 theater production

15. Use public transportation or car pools. Consider the expense associated with cars: insurance, parking, gas, oil, repairs, maintenance.
16. Postpone purchases. Put purchases on "hold" for a week – is it still important?
17. Shop for groceries with a full stomach. This also decreases impulse spending.
18. Budget. This is a first step process; it should begin with what you have "coming in" versus what you have "going out."

Relating money management to the basic skills remediation areas can be multi-faceted. Basic budgeting is pure and simple – a mathematical process of addition and subtraction. However, connecting financial information to the areas of reading and language can also be accomplished by providing your students with pamphlets from banking institutions, consumer service organizations, or credit unions. Having your student preview the information and share it with other students is both informative and educational. You could have students research, then compare and contrast different financial institutions in the area. Requesting that your student write a letter of complaint to a store where a purchase was made, expressing dissatisfaction with the service, product, or price is also an appropriate exercise for checking writing skills. A video-taped session where a student rehearses a complaint should reveal appropriate behaviors including eye contact, assertive behavioral approaches, language and conduct, and expressing the complaint with the goal of positive results. These videotaped sessions provide immediate feedback for our students to observe.

Students are often unaware of how they appear to others; videotaping allows students to see and hear exactly how they react to these situations.

CONSUMER EDUCATION

The Consumer Credit Counseling Service (CCCS) provided the following information, offices throughout the District of Florida. (The National Foundation for Consumer Credit)

Consumer education involves various aspects of consumer credit services, including education, financial counseling, and debt reduction services to consumers. Their mission is to provide education on the wise use of credit, preventive and rehabilitative financial counseling, and debt reduction. CCCS offers information on budgeting, credit and life's changing situations, money management, home buying, car buying, holiday spending, smart shopping, and more. The Consumer Credit Counseling Service provides one-on-one sessions and group presentations.

- Financial counseling is to help you establish or repair a credit rating, or re-establish credit, or counsel on money management issues. A trained counselor will assist in the development of a realistic spending plan.
- Debt reduction attempts to develop a realistic repayment plan schedule acceptable to both you and your creditors.

How Can I Get a Copy of my Credit Report? (Debt Counseling Service) www.cccs-wfa.com

You can get a copy of your credit report from three major credit reporting agencies, for a small charge per copy. The three listed are:

Equifax
P. O. Box 740241
Atlanta, Georgia 30374-0241
(800) 6 85-1111

TransUnion
P.O. Box 390
Springfield, Pennsylvania 19064-0390
(800) 916-8800

Experian
P.O. Box 8030
Layton, UT 84041-8030
(800) 682-7654

PERSONAL AND SOCIAL SKILLS

When business owners were asked what their expectations of future employees were, *OTHER THAN HAVING THE TECHNICAL SKILLS*, general responses included some of the following:

Someone...

Who will show up for work
Who likes what they are doing
Who will approach their work with a positive attitude
Who interacts well with others & works well by him or herself
Who is comfortable with change... accepts change
Who is pleasant
Who is on time
Who is willing to do "extra" if necessary – go the extra mile
Who leaves their personal problems at home
Who can provide input for the purpose of improvement
Who does not make "waves"
Who you can depend on
Who wants to get ahead
Who knows when to "back off"
Who can adapt to different situations
Who respects themselves and others
Who takes pride in their work
Who knows what is expected of them!!

Sounds like the ideal employee, doesn't it? Perhaps what our business leaders are saying is that not only do our students need to know the technical aspects of their chosen vocation, but that they must also possess certain personal & social skills in order to be successful. We know that in order to provide employers with students that meet their demands, that we must somehow make sure that our students have access to these extra skills. VPI can provide, on an individual basis, both personal and social skills training for those students who need them. In addition, referrals to community agencies, schools, and local service organizations may provide your students with an opportunity to brush up on some needed skills. For example, if your VPI lab has the appropriate equipment, a video camera and TV monitor, students may be able to see themselves as they interact with others.

Pre-determined scenes may include: interviews with prospective employers; how to appropriately approach other workers or employers with work concerns; interactions with the boss, or simply view oneself for appearance, posture, personal hygiene, use of slang language, eye contact, body language, etc.

Again, these personal and social skills can easily be incorporated to the three basic skills areas: For reading-include materials that actually state what employers want. In addition, materials may be available that show the consequences of bad attitudes, poor work ethics, teamwork, information on how to get and keep a job, and tips for being successful on the job. (Scriptographic Booklet – Channing L. Bete Co., Inc.) For language – utilize opportunities for students to express how they feel and what they think about company policies and procedures. Perhaps having students write letters to their bosses about something with which they disagree or writing a suggestion for a suggestion box at work – something about which the student feels strongly. Emphasize that correct grammar, punctuation, style, and form can impress the boss and draw attention to the subject. For math – have a student that traditionally arrives late to figure how that tardiness can affect his/her paycheck. Actually have them figure hourly wages and deduct for time not on the job. Example: If an employee is forty (40) minutes late for work and the hourly rate is based on 15 minute increments then the student would have to round off the time, figure the hourly wage, break it down into quarter-hour increments, and determine how much money would be deducted from his/her paycheck. Generally, if the situation concerns money you should definitely have their attention!

ATTITUDE

Why is attitude so important? It is the way you present yourself to other. What could be more important? This includes: *How you look... What you say... How you say it... and... What you do...*

A **positive attitude** reflects... Who You Are!!

- Are you willing to learn to recognize that no one has all the answers?
- Do you do your best on the job and suggest better ways of doing your work?
- Do you demonstrate enthusiasm in whatever you say or do?

- Are you willing to grow to prepare yourself for a better job?
- Do you welcome changes, like to experiment and try new ideas?
- Do you cultivate a sense of humor by not taking yourself too seriously and getting some fun out of your work?
- Are you seriously interested in others needs and problems?
- Do you look at others' point of view and consider how they feel, think, and why they act as they do?
- Are you a good listener, willing to learn something from others?
- Are you able to work with others to achieve common goals through cooperation?

KEYS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF A POSITIVE ATTITUDE

- Keep others informed. Communication is the key to good relations
- Be punctual, the "Golden Rule" of time
- Be cheerful, smile even when you do not feel like it
- Use polite words like *please, thank you, may I, do you mind?*
- Be helpful and build trust with others
- Be patient. Some things just take time to do correctly

POSITIVE ATTITUDE ON THE JOB

Your success depends on your attitude!

- Dependability . . . get to work and do the job
- Pride . . . satisfaction with what you have accomplished
- Respect . . . the rights of others; give credit to others for what they do
- Consideration . . . for self and others
- Knowledge . . . the more the better (school, people, books, experience)
- Enthusiasm fuels progress!

MENTAL AND PHYSICAL HEALTH

What areas of this are YOU comfortable discussing with your students? Is there a need for discussing subjects like personal hygiene, alcohol and substance abuse or addiction, sexually transmitted diseases or AIDS, pregnancy, emotional or psychological illnesses, or appropriate diet and sleep with our students? The answer is YES – where else are they going to discuss these issues? With their vocational instructors? The answer is probably not yes. Students often turn to VPI instructors because our role is multi-faceted. Because our students elect to enter the world of work through vocational/technical training, often the subject areas of mental and physical health seem to be overlooked. Unfortunately, some students – and instructors – tend to give their physical and mental health less attention than they would give their automobiles. The direct connection between these subject areas and work is that without good physical and mental health work may not be a realistic goal. When these areas directly affect our lives in a negative manner our jobs may be on the line. As learning managers, knowing what agencies can provide needs in these areas, and sharing that information with our students is tremendously important. Often our students are so busy with their education, raising families, working part-time or full-time, and struggling to meet the needs of others, that they leave themselves out. Providing information in the form of pamphlets, referral directories, individual counseling sessions, etc., may allow students to make good choices in the areas of health related issues.

HEALTH ISSUES

Having your students make an honest assessment of their present health status may be a starting point for dealing with physical health issues. Having information available for students to access health related facilities may be an important key to helping them to be successful in dealing with health related problems. Health issues are personal and sensitive areas for all people. Without appearing that you are intruding in the student's personal space, sense a comfort level for discussion; if any area appears to be in need make available the information in pamphlet or directory form so that the student can make the appropriate contact. Often, general areas like vision, hearing, and overall status of health are comfortable for most to discuss. Becoming a Master Student (Ellis) views health issues in terms of "*taking care of your machine*," comparing the human body to machinery. In the text, Ellis states that taking care of your machine includes:

Fuel It – use the appropriate nutritional guidelines for your body

Move It – exercise improves your performance level

Rest It – our bodies need rest, without it the results can be devastating

Observe It – we are the experts when it comes to knowing our bodies.

Pay attention to changes – often this is a first clue to need for repairs.

- *Weight loss or gain*
- *Sores or ulcers that do not heal in three weeks*
- *Skin changes – color, bleeding*
- *Headaches*
- *Sudden vomiting*
- *Persistent pain in specific areas*
- *Vision problems*
- *Cough – persistent*
- *Breathing changes – shortness of breath*
- *Persistent indigestion – stomach upsets*
- *Change in bowel movements – habits*
- *Urination discomfort*
- *Lumps or thickening in breast areas (male & female)*

Protect It – choices about sex, use of drugs, risky behaviors, etc., can be hazardous to both physiological and psychological health.

Safety consciousness is a big part of any job – students need to be aware of safety issues involved in their vocation. General safety knowledge is a plus – on the job or at home. This can be discussed in general terms on most subject areas from appropriate clothing to specific issues dealing with the vocational area (chemicals, electricity, safety equipment, etc.).

Again, relating these issues to the basic skills areas for remediation is most appropriate. Having materials available that discuss health topics/issues (STDs, childhood immunizations, allergy problems, vision and hearing assessments, etc.) may enhance your student's knowledge and increase an awareness of possible existing problems. Contacting the appropriate agency for assistance may be a first step toward problem solving and social skills practice.

Inquiring about the fees for these services and having the student work that into his/her budget is utilizing math processing. Decision-making skills are also taken into consideration as each student recognizes "need" and chooses the route most appropriate for him/her. Although we know our students are resourceful, having options for them encourages value clarification and decision-making.

PERSONAL INTERACTIONS

This area, closely related to personal and social skills, is unique because it deals specifically with the transition from school to work. It emphasizes the fact that both "people and relationships" change. Our students often experience stressors related to their present situations: the combination of home, school, work, family, and life in general. The transition from the educational area to the professional world of work can be a stressful one. Several concepts will be presented that deal with this transition. As we work with VPI students, again, our individualized approach should determine the necessity of choosing the areas of need. (*About Life Skills # 49544A-6-93*)

SAYING GOODBYE TO OLD FRIENDS

Often relationships are formed among our students with other students, instructors, and staff. Although some may continue to be life long friends, others may be left behind as our students move from school to work. These relationships are important to our students because often students form study groups and associate their personal success with the friends with whom they have attended classes, studied, and perhaps socialized together. Like our children, when we re-locate to another area, there is a sense of loss.

MAKING NEW FRIENDS

As our students embark on the next phase of their lives, it is often as stressful to make new friends, as to lose old ones. Development of skills for encouraging new relationships is as unique as the individual student. A new environment, the work environment, provides opportunities for our students to meet new people, develop new friendships, and even maintain old ones. As VPI instructors, we need to encourage our students to establish friendships. Because we often fill the counselor role as well, students may turn to us for advice about friendships. Many students find it much more difficult to make friends as adults, than when they were children.

HANDLING INTIMATE RELATIONSHIPS

Once our students complete their vocational training, dealing with work schedules, responsibilities, financial issues, etc. can place a strain on personal relationships. In dealing with partners, significant others, this change from school to work may present a new set of problem areas:

- Are you willing to change your plans to accommodate a partner?
- Is career advancement your main priority?
- What compromises are you (or your partner) willing to make?

Remember that *open communication* is the key to working out important issues with couples. Encourage students to openly discuss upcoming changes that their new jobs may present – location, hours, shift work, salaries, benefits, etc.

ENVIRONMENTAL EVENTS & CULTURAL AWARENESS

These two units are combined because, like all aspects of complementary skills, they are closely interwoven. This section deals with assisting our students to become aware of those events, social and cultural changes, their home, work, and school environments, and the constant transitions that they must make in order to be successful in each arena.

"Acceptance, goodwill, and respect are the cornerstones of successful communication and exchange – ones that cross all barriers of class, gender, race, and ability..."

Bob Abramms-Mezoff
Diane Johns

Those of us who can study, work, and live with people from other cultures and races will enjoy more success in school, on the job, and in our neighborhoods. Learning about diversity opens up possibilities of benefiting from change, instead of just reacting to it.

We have always lived with people of different races and cultures. Multiculturalism refers to racial and ethnic diversity. Culture is simply one society's solutions to on-going problems, such as how to dress, eat, worship, work, think, and learn. Therefore, this culturalism can relate to business, residence, work, school, and social environments. The basis for multiculturalism is simple: people differ.

The key to multiculturalism is also simple... "*Culture is different from, not better than, or worse than... one's own culture.*" (Ellis, 1994)

Learning to live with diversity is a process of returning to step one... where we must question our biases and assumptions. It takes courage to go outside of the confines of one's own culture, where one feels safe and secure, and experience the culture of others. By accepting human diversity, we gain access to alternative viewpoints on every issue.

Several concepts will be presented in this section; each is unique to help our students become more comfortable in a diversified world.

- Have a genuine desire to understand (communicate) across cultures
- Back up your desire with knowledge
- Gain skill in communicating with other cultures
- Look for common ground
- Assume differences in meaning
- Look for individuals – not group representatives
- Get inside a different culture
- Find a translator, mediator, or role model
- Celebrate your own culture
- Ask for help – to understand differences
- Point out discrimination – in work, in policy, in business practices

Information in the form of pamphlets, news articles, or television documentaries are available that deal with this issue. In relating this to basic skills, again, reading the information is important; discussion with other students may lead to a better understanding of the subject matter. Having our students write a paper about previous experiences with others from different cultures or with disabilities may be enlightening – not only for the information, but also in how the material is presented in written form. Math skills may include calculating the percentage of students or employees that presently have to deal with these issues. (Ratio & Proportion) How does it relate to the student's present situation, or future employment situation? What is the present minority classification? What numbers represent this segment of the population?

DEALING WITH SEXISM

Sexism and sexual harassment are real. In the environment in which our students live, work, educate, or even shop people experience sexual harassment. This bias can take many forms. Although men can be subjects of sexism and sexual harassment, women are more likely to experience this form of discrimination. Even the most well-intentioned people may behave in ways that hurt or discount women.

Sexism takes place when...

- Businessmen and women use only masculine pronouns: he/his/him when referring to both men and women.
- Career counselors label a career an inappropriate choice for either gender.
- Women are expected to carry out only traditionally "female roles" such as child care or nursing.
- Men are expected to carry out only traditionally "male roles" such as construction or truck driving.

Many kinds of behavior – both verbal and physical – fall under the title of sexual harassment. Become aware of the strategies stated below in dealing with this area of discrimination. (Ellis, 1994)

- Point out sexist language and behavior
- Observe your own language and behavior
- Encourage support for others that have experienced harassment
- Set limits; value yourself; decide what kind of comments and actions make you uncomfortable and refuse to tolerate them!
- If you are sexually harassed – take action! There is legislation that protects your rights.

HARASSMENT DEFINED:

Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitute sexual harassment when:

1. Submission to this conduct becomes a condition of employment

2. Women's response to such conduct is used as a basis for employment decisions
3. This conduct interferes with work performance or creates an offensive work environment.

Title VII Civil Rights Act
of 1964

If your students are faced with sexism and sexual harassment issues, inform them that Federal government agencies such as the Office for Civil Rights and the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission may provide assistance if needed. On the local level, public interest law firms, legal aid societies, and unions that employ lawyers may also be of assistance to represent students when faced with these issues. (Ellis, 1994)

EMPLOYEES WITH DISABILITIES

Equal opportunity for people with disabilities is the law. Both the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 offer legal protection. In addition, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 extends earlier legislation. Job discrimination cannot be based on disability. The term disability includes chronic illness, physical challenges, and learning disabilities. The Job Accommodation Network (1-800-526-7234) offers help in placing employees with learning or physical disabilities. The following guidelines are appropriate for dealing with environmental conditions in this section.

Use Available Resources – Inquire about other services that might be available.

- Permits that allow you to park a car closer to place of employment
- Note-taking services
- Meeting transcriptions
- Manuals/Policies & Procedures on tape
- Signing interpreters
- Assistance for physical limitations
- Transportation – public or private
- Closed captioning for televised instruction
- TTY/TTD devices for those with hearing impairments
- Screen enhancers for visual impairments (computer)

Speak Assertively – let your needs be known so that you can perform the job you were hired to do.

Plan Ahead – map out your needs prior to employment, taking your disability or needs into consideration.

Choose terminology carefully – Not special treatment... use adjustment and alternative options.

Ask for appropriate treatment – not favoritism.

Take care of yourself – If you require periodic rest breaks, work that into your work schedule.

You can choose your attitude toward these conditions – openly discuss this with prospective employers. They should know the law. However, your students are the ones dealing with the need for accommodations to perform the job for which they were hired. (Ellis, 1994)

GOVERNMENT AND LAW

As students in a Vocational Preparatory Course, the need for information about how the government works (local, state, and federal) may seem unrelated. However, as our students become active members of the society in which we live, that information may provide them with the necessary elements for problem solving, a better understanding of how and why things work as they do, and also assist them in their attempt to be productive citizens. Understanding governmental structure (whether local, state, federal or company) is no simple task, but understanding how government and laws affect our lives on a daily basis is information that our students need to know.

For example: Assisting our students to understand how their place of employment is structured may be no more than reviewing the chain of command – from our students (as new employees) to the top ranking official. Knowing whom to approach if problems arise at the work place is as important as knowing what to say and how to say it. This is an excellent opportunity for business to interact with the educational process in sharing this type of information. Students have a need to know where and to whom they can turn for help. How their place of employment is “governed” may be a key factor in their job satisfaction.

Local, state and federal governments also play a tremendous part in our daily lives and the lives of our students. Having knowledge available about government agencies and organizations provides students with information they can use.

Access to up-to-date information on the Internet will provide knowledge of recent legislative changes and how those changes apply to the individual.

SOCIAL SECURITY

Publications are available that provide good information about the Social Security Administration. (SSA Publication No. 05-10080 March 1998) ICN 468350

Students may get an estimate of their Social Security Benefits by requesting a PEBES (Personal Earnings and Benefit Statement) form. This is accomplished by calling a toll free number 1-800-772-1213 or accessing the Internet address <http://www.ssa.gov>. This information is based on your own earnings record. Social Security Tax Dollars are generally distributed in the following manner. Out of every dollar paid in Social Security and Medicare taxes: (SSA Publication # 05-10080)

- Seventy cents goes to a trust fund that pays retirement and survivor benefits
- Nineteen cents goes to a trust fund that pays Medicare benefits
- Eleven cents goes to a trust fund that pays disability benefits

The Social Security System provides a minimum “floor of protection” for retired workers, and for workers and their families who face a loss of income due to disability or the death of a family wage earner. Social Security payments are based on two underlying philosophies: The system is designed so that there is a clear link between how much a worker pays into the system and how much he or she will get in benefits. The Social Security program is a way of providing a base of economic security to workers in today’s society.

Worker’s Compensation is another governmental organization that provides care for employees who may become hurt or disabled while on the job. Most employers have this information available through their Human Resources or Personnel Department. The Worker’s Compensation Guidelines are designated in the Florida Statutes 440, Chapter 38F. Students may access this information through a toll free number: 1-800-342-1741 to the Department of Labor and Employment Security.

LAWS

Whether local, state, federal, school, or company based, laws affect how our students react to their surrounding environments. The key to understand laws is to emphasize to our students that with laws come consequences. Our basic understanding of laws is that they are *"rules established by authority, society, or custom that specify a code of ethics or behavior that is acceptable."* Laws apply in all layers of society authorizing what is and what is not acceptable. The simplest explanation of this would be that speed limits are designed to provide a safer environment in which to drive a vehicle. When a violation of that law occurs, consequences are eminent. Assisting our students to understand that some laws are carved in stone and some are implied may be of great service. Ignorance of the law is not an excuse for violating the law. By relating the "cause and effect" philosophy to students, perhaps they will have a better understanding of how laws affect their daily lives.

In addition, having available information on how violations of local, state, or federal laws might affect one's employment is important. Often a discussion with students emphasizing this concept helps them to realize practical applications like: If you're in jail then you can't go to work! Or, if you have to pay a fine for violating the law then that cost comes directly from the money you earn!

Relating the importance of laws and how they affect our students can be correlated to the basic skills areas of Vocational Preparatory Instruction. Using informational pamphlet for reading, and using the Internet for researching state statutes provides students with reading experience as well as using reference materials. Requiring students to write a paper on the consequences of violating laws can provide you with insight into your student's understanding of the process of law and the justice system. Having students figure the amount of tax or Social Security that comes out of a paycheck provides them with mathematical exercises in calculating percents and deductions. Figuring weekly, monthly, and yearly incomes helps provide realistic expectations. Having a student calculate a monthly budget and including an unexpected expense – like a traffic ticket - may also help make them aware of the need for including unexpected expenses as a budget category or even emphasize the need for a savings account for emergencies.

POST TEST

1. What are COMPLEMENTARY SKILLS?
2. Name at least two community agencies that you may use in your school area?

3. Money Management: Name three "FREE" fun things your students can do:

4. How can "BUDGETING" – as a section of complementary skills – be worked into basic skills remediation in a VPI Lab.?

5. Name five expectations that employers desire from students –OTHER THAN THE TECHNICAL SKILLS:

6. Attitude includes which of the following: (Circle the correct choices)
How you look What you say How you say it What you do

TRUE OR FALSE

7. ____ Your student's success depends on his/her attitude.
8. ____ Complementary Skills and Basic Skills Remediation should remain separate from each other.
9. ____ Without good physical and mental health, work may NOT be realistic goal for our students.
10. ____ An example of sexism would be when an instructor uses only masculine pronouns when referring to people in general.
11. ____ When a student feels that he/she has been sexually harassed, it is important to encourage that student to speak up and address the problem.
12. ____ Worker's Compensation deals specifically with employees that are hurt or disabled while on the job.

REFERENCES

First Call for Help - directory

A service of Children's Services Center

About Life Skills (pamphlet)

Channing L. Bete Co., Inc.

#49544A-6-93

200 State Road

South Deerfield, MA 01373

To order: Call (800) 628-7733

Time Management Skills

1998 Channing L. Bete Co., Inc.

#73180A-7-98

Writing a Winning Resume

Channing L. Bete Co., Inc.

#72616A-4-98

Decision Making Skills

Channing L. Bete Co., Inc.

#15867A-10-87

Attitude

Channing L. Bete Co., Inc.

18101G-5-90

Going for Your Goals

Channing L. Bete Co., Inc.

73221A-7-98

Balancing Work & Family

Channing L. Bete Co., Inc.

#40667A-10-93

Job Interview Skills

Channing L. Bete Co., Inc.

#72583A-4-98

Helping You Become Money Wise

Consumer Credit Counseling Services of NW Florida

Individual & Family Counseling

Catholic Charities USA

Emergency Assistance
Catholic Charities

Health Insurance for Uninsured Children
Florida KidCare
Internet Address: www.floridakidcare.org
1-888-540-KIDS

Shelter – Domestic Violence
Favor House of Northwest Florida, INC.

Children's Advocacy & Child Abuse Prevention Center
Gulf Coast Kid's House
4400 Bayou Blvd., Suite 30 B
Pensacola, FL 32503
(850) 433-5437

Children's Services Center
Florida Dept. of Children & Families

Health Clinics
Escambia Community Clinics
Baptist Health Care & Sacred Heart Hospital

Big Brother/Big Sister
Volunteering Community Services
(850) 433-5437

WIC Women/Infants/Children
WIC – National Number 1-800-342-3556
Pamphlet available from: The Learning Curve/Weingart Design
4614 Prospect Ave. Suite 421
Cleveland, Ohio 44103
1-800- 795-9295 FAX 215-881-7177

Becoming a Master Student. Ellis, 1991 / 1994
Sixth and Eighth Edition – textbook

SOCIAL SECURITY Deaf or Hard of Hearing TTY 1-800-325-0778
Internet Address: <http://www.ssa.gov>

Publications: Understanding the Benefits #05-10024

Retirement Benefits #05-10035

Survivors Benefits # 05-10084

Disability Benefits # 05-10029

Social Security - continued

Medicare # 05-10043

Your Taxes – What They're Paying For . . .Where the Money
Goes #05-10010

Social Security – Your Number #05-10002

What you need to know when you get retirement or survivor's
benefits #05-10077

**APPENDIX A
ANSWERS TO PRE-TEST**

1. Skills other than "technical" skills that our students need in order to successfully function on the job and in life.
2. Any of the following: AA, Big Brother/Big Sister, Goodwill, Salvation Army, Catholic Charities, Fl. Dept of Children's Services, YMCAs, Public Defender, etc.
3. Bring more money in; decrease money going out; combination of the two
4. Credit Counseling Services: Mail a request (for a fee) to any of the three addresses listed.
5. The EMPLOYER
6. How you look... What you say... How you say it... What you do...
7. TRUE
8. TRUE
9. TRUE
10. FALSE
11. FALSE
12. FALSE

**APPENDIX B
ANSWERS TO POST-TEST**

1. Those skills other than technical skills needed to be successful on the job.
2. ANY AGENCIES: Library, Public Health, Mental Health Center, Chamber of Commerce, YMCA, Banks, Schools, Children's Services, HRS, Catholic Charity
3. ANY THREE: Parks, Concerts, School Plays, Cards, TV, MUSIC, Physical Activity
4. Example: Deducting expenses for health care, etc.
5. ANY FIVE: Be on time, Like what you are doing, Leave personal problems at home, Respect self and others, Know what is expected, Go the extra mile, etc.
6. Circle ALL FOUR
7. TRUE
8. FALSE
9. TRUE
10. TRUE
11. TRUE
12. TRUE