

Guideposts for Success: Lesson Plans and Activities

Developed by the Institute for Educational Leadership

LESSON 9: BARRIERS...WHAT THEY ARE AND WHAT TO DO ABOUT THEM

AT-A-GLANCE

We all face barriers in life for which we may need assistance or use an accommodation. An accommodation is simply an adjustment or any tool that is used to help you be more productive. For example, some of us may be short in stature and need to use a step stool (or ask taller people) to reach items for us. Some of us may have difficulty remembering things, so we write down lists to help us. Some people who use wheelchairs may need for a desk to be elevated so they can work comfortably. Some barriers may be obvious, and others not so much. This lesson discusses the different barriers young people may face when seeking employment.

ICEBREAKER

Being open to considering new ideas and another's point of view is one way to begin to reduce and eliminate barriers—especially attitudinal barriers. Oftentimes, people are set in the way they think and in the way they consider ideas (and aren't always open to considering new and different ways to solve issues and create solutions). This activity is designed to have students experience how a different way of thinking is necessary to solve what appears to be a simple crossword puzzle. (Activity 9.1).

Say something to the effect of: I'd like to begin today with a simple crossword puzzle. It's only 4 across and 4 down...shouldn't take much time at all. Work independently...and let's see who can get the correct answers.

ICEBREAKER DISCUSSION

Ask the question: what did you "assume" when you were asked to do a crossword puzzle? (Possible answer: that the answers would be words and those words would connect to the other words.) Go through all of the across answers first. When it's noticed that all of the answers are the same (BITE), ask how that could be possible with what students know about crossword puzzles? Then, read the down answers [B's (bees), I's (eyes), T's (tease), and E's (ease)]. Was this activity easy or difficult for you? When you heard you were going to do a crossword puzzle, what was your immediate thought? Did you change your mind when you saw how "simple" the puzzle looked? How did you feel when the answers were revealed? What is your "takeaway" from this activity?

LESSON/ACTIVITY

Discuss the word "barrier." Ask students what they think the word means...and what are some barriers some may face in school. Address the issue from a physical or environmental standpoint (such as someone who uses a wheelchair not being to enter a building because there is no ramp) to attitudinal or societal. Begin a discussion about the following situations that may or may not have an impact on work. Why could it be a barrier? If someone you knew had this barrier, what steps would you recommend they take to "accommodate" the barrier?

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Use the attached “Potential Barriers in the Workplace” checklist to determine if students have or perceive themselves as having barriers to work in the following areas:

- Transportation
- Disclosure
- Interpersonal skills
- References
- Health
- Previous work-related experience
- Childcare
- Criminal record

As a group, and without naming names (unless a student wishes to discuss his or her particular situation), create a list of some suggestions to help alleviate the impact for a friend who may have experience one of these barriers. Are there other barriers that have not been discussed? Make a list of the barriers and suggestions for eliminating or alleviating these barriers.

REFLECTION

Do you experience any barriers at home or at school? What have you done to reduce the impact of these barriers? If you had a friend who experienced barriers in school, what might you do to help them?

EXTENSION

For some students, assistive technology helps eliminate barriers in school, at home or at work. Research and explore how technology has advanced to help people who experience difficulty with learning, walking (or being mobile), reading, hearing, and seeing. How might this technology help others—both with and without disabilities? What about some technology that assists the elderly?

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ACTIVITY 9.1 – SOLVE THIS CROSSWORD PUZZLE

1	2	3	4
2			
3			
4			

Across:

1. Dogs do it
2. Mosquitoes do it
3. Sharks do it
4. People do it

Down:

1. Insects that buzz
2. Organs of vision
3. What big brothers do to little sisters
4. Without effort

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ACTIVITY 9.1 – ANSWER KEY

1. B	2. I	3. T	4. E
2. B	 I	 T	 E
3. B	 I	 T	 E
4. B	 I	 T	 E

B's = BEES

I's = EYES

T's = TEASE

E's – EASE

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ACTIVITY 9.2 - POTENTIAL BARRIERS IN THE WORKPLACE

<p>Transportation</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I have my own car and can provide my own transportation to and from work—or I am confident I can get a ride from a friend or family member.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I know how to use public transportation, am comfortable using public transportation and will use public transportation to get to and from work.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I'm not sure how I will get to work.</p>	<p><i>CHECK ONE:</i></p> <p>(A) _____ <i>Transportation will not be a problem for me.</i></p> <p>(B) _____ <i>Transportation might be a problem for me.</i></p>
<p>Disclosure</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I am very comfortable discussing and disclosing any disability-related accommodations I need to be successful on a job.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I use accommodations in school—but don't think I'll need any accommodations on the job.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I am not (or would not be) comfortable discussing disability-related accommodations I might need for a job.</p>	<p><i>CHECK ONE:</i></p> <p>(A) _____ <i>I am comfortable with issues of disclosure.</i></p> <p>(B) _____ <i>I am unsure about my disclosure needs related to a disability.</i></p> <p>_____ <i>This question does not apply to me.</i></p>
<p>Interpersonal skills</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I usually have a good attitude, feel good about myself and get along with lots of different types of people.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I believe that if I treat people with respect, they will treat me with respect.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I don't like to do what others tell me to do.</p>	<p><i>CHECK ONE:</i></p> <p>(A) _____ <i>I am not worried about getting along with people on a job.</i></p> <p>(B) _____ <i>I am not sure if I'll get along with different people on the job.</i></p>
<p>References</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I have asked three people who know me well to be a reference for me. I have their names, addresses and phone numbers written down—and have let them know I am looking for work.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I know three people who can say good things about me—but I haven't asked them to be a reference for me yet.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I don't need references.</p>	<p><i>CHECK ONE:</i></p> <p>(A) _____ <i>I have 3 solid references.</i></p> <p>(B) _____ <i>I haven't asked anyone to be a reference for me yet.</i></p>
<p>Health</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I am in good physical and emotional health. If I am prescribed medication, I take it regularly and responsibly.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I have some medical issues – and should probably see a doctor soon.</p>	<p><i>CHECK ONE:</i></p> <p>(A) _____ <i>I am in good physical and emotional health.</i></p> <p>(B) _____ <i>I am not sure about my physical and emotional health.</i></p>

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<input type="checkbox"/> I don't know if I have any medical or emotional issues.	
Work Experience <input type="checkbox"/> I have experience (either paid or volunteer) that relates to the job I am applying for. <input type="checkbox"/> I have no direct work experience related to this job—but am prepared to explain how I have the specific skills needed to be successful. <input type="checkbox"/> I have never worked and have never volunteered before.	CHECK ONE: <i>(A)_____ I have some work-related or volunteer experience—and can discuss it in a job interview.</i> <i>(B)_____ I have no idea how I will talk about previous work-related experience.</i>
Childcare <input type="checkbox"/> I have a child/children—but have childcare all worked out. <input type="checkbox"/> I have a child/children and am not sure how I will be able to keep a job. <input type="checkbox"/> I have no children, so childcare is not an issue for me.	CHECK ONE: <i>(A)_____ I have childcare arranged.</i> <i>(B)_____ I worry that I won't be able to hold a job because of childcare issues.</i> <i>_____ This question does not apply to me.</i>
Criminal Background <input type="checkbox"/> I have been in trouble with the police, but have never been charged with a crime. <input type="checkbox"/> I have a police record of criminal activity (misdemeanor or felony) and worry about how it will affect my future. <input type="checkbox"/> I have worked with a counselor to have my record expunged. <input type="checkbox"/> I have never had problems with the law.	CHECK ONE: <i>(A)_____ I have worked on a plan for discussing my history—and what I've done to prove I'm on the right track now.</i> <i>(B)_____ I worry that I won't be able to get a good job because of a criminal background.</i> <i>_____ This question does not apply to me.</i>
I HAVE CHECKED _____ A's I HAVE CHECKED _____ B's	

For every “B “you checked, work with a teacher, a parent or someone you trust to help you develop a plan of action to overcome or alleviate this barrier to employment.