Lesson Plan

Initiative and Self-direction:

When to Take Initiative and When to Seek Guidance

Objective: Students will examine workplace situations and explore when it is appropriate to take initiative vs. when to seek guidance from a superior.

Workplace Readiness Skill: **Demonstrate initiative and self-direction.**

*Demonstration includes*

* *recognizing the importance of proactive, independent decision making*
* *identifying workplace needs*
* *completing tasks with minimal direct supervision*
* *applying solutions.*

Correlations to Other Workplace Readiness Skills:

* Demonstrate integrity.
* Demonstrate work ethic.
* Demonstrate conflict-resolution skills.
* Demonstrate customer service skills.
* Collaborate with team members.
* Demonstrate big-picture thinking.
* Demonstrate career- and life-management skills.
* Demonstrate professionalism.

Correlations to Virginia Standards of Learning (SOL):

* English: 6.1, 6.2, 6.3, 6.7, 6.8, 7.1, 7.2, 7.3, 7.7, 7.8, 8.2, 8.7, 8.8, 9.1, 9.6, 9.7, 10.1, 10.6, 10.7, 11.6, 11.7, 12.6, 12.7
* History and Social Science: CE.4, CE.14, GOVT.16

Instructional Steps:

1. ***Define and discuss* initiative*.*** *Initiative* is defined as *energy or aptitude displayed in initiation of action*. Synonyms include *drive*, *hustle*, *enterprise*, and *ambition*. Ask students why they think that employers might want workers who demonstrate initiative. Ask students for examples of how workers might demonstrate initiative.
2. Introduce scenarios. Explain to students that the class will be exploring workplace scenarios and then determining appropriate courses of action for the workers in those scenarios. Distribute Handout #1: When to Employ Initiative.
3. ***Read and discuss scenarios.*** Ask students to work in small groups to read through and discuss each scenario. In each, the guiding questions for the students to consider are
   1. What should the employee do?
   2. Is it always a good idea to make independent decisions in the workplace, or are there times when it is more appropriate to turn to a team member or manager?
   3. What will be the effect of the chosen action?
   4. How might the employer feel about the outcome?
4. ***Reflect on the lesson.*** Ask students to reflect in writing. Use the following prompt:

*Employers value workers who demonstrate initiative and self-direction. In what ways are these characteristics desirable, based on the discussions you had about the five scenarios? In what ways is it sometimes not appropriate to demonstrate initiative? Explain your thoughts.*

Formative Assessment**:**

* Gauge student understanding throughout the small-group discussions.
* Use the “Journal Assessment Rubric” to assess student understanding of the concept as demonstrated in writing.

Options for Adaptation/Differentiation:

* To offer scaffolding to students, complete a whole-group walk-through of just one or two scenarios from Handout #1: When to Employ Initiative.
* To offer an extension option to students, ask them to create their own scenarios related to demonstrating initiative in the workplace.

Suggestions for Follow-up:

* Ask students to interview an adult (parent, neighbor, employer, or friend) about situations when demonstrating initiative paid off in the workplace.
* Ask students to complete activities associated with the lesson on page 36, “Never Underestimate the Power of PMA,” in [Soft Skills to Pay the Bills — Mastering Soft Skills for Workplace Success](https://www.dol.gov/odep/topics/youth/softskills/) (<https://www.dol.gov/odep/topics/youth/softskills/>), from the U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Disability Employment Policy.

Teacher Resources

[Soft Skills to Pay the Bills — Mastering Soft Skills for Workplace Success](https://www.dol.gov/odep/topics/youth/softskills/) (<https://www.dol.gov/odep/topics/youth/softskills/>), U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Disability Employment Policy.

[Workplace Readiness Skills (WRS) Assessment: Virginia Overview](https://www.ctecs.org/virginia/virginia-overview) (<https://www.ctecs.org/virginia/virginia-overview>), Career and Technical Education Consortium of States (CTECS).

[Workplace Readiness Skills (WRS) for the Commonwealth: Instructional Resources](http://cteresource.org/wrs/index.html) (<http://cteresource.org/wrs/index.html>), Career and Technical Education (CTE) Resource Center.