

PROBLEM SOLVING SCENARIOS

Don works in a large warehouse and he always wears his safety equipment.. His co-worker, Mike, always forgets his safety equipment. He often asks to borrow Don's equipment when Don isn't using it. Last week, Mike broke Don's safety glasses, and yesterday he lost Don's back belt. Don doesn't want Mike to get hurt, but he doesn't want to loan Mike his equipment. What are some things he can say to Mike the next time Mike asks to borrow something? [J. Spigarelli 2008]

Manuel has a very important job interview at City College today. The campus is very large and but cannot find the employment office. He asks different people for directions but he is lost. It's five minutes before the job interview appointment. What is your advice for Manuel? [J. Adelsonm-Goldstein, 2008]

A Long Lunch

Sylvia works as a receptionist in an insurance company. She is getting married soon. Every day Sylvia goes out to lunch. She meets with her friends and they discuss the wedding plans. Sylvia needs advice on such things as the dresses for the bridesmaids, the flowers, and the party gifts. There is a lot to talk about.

Sylvia's official lunch break is from 12 p.m., noon, to 1 p.m. Sometimes the conversations are long and Sylvia gets back a few minutes late.

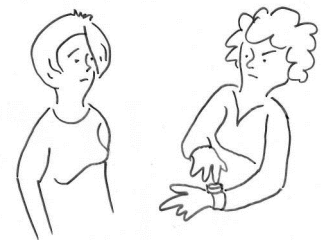
Sylvia thinks that's okay. The company is not very busy this time of year, and sometimes the big boss is gone for 2 hours or more for lunch. Some days, she doesn't come in at all.

Besides, Sylvia is not a lazy worker. She works very hard at her job and sometimes even stays a few minutes late to help out. Sylvia thinks, "I deserve some extra time for lunch, especially now. After all, I only get married once."

One day, as Sylvia leaves for lunch, her boss stops her in the hallway. She looks at Sylvia and says, "If it's okay

with you, do you think you can be back by 1 o'clock just once?"

Sylvia is not sure what the boss means. Sure, it's not much trouble to come back from lunch by 1 o'clock just one time. Sylvia is not sure how to respond.



(Heide Spruck Wrigley—Jim Powrie—Literacywork International)

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PROBLEM SOLVING PLANNING CHECKLIST

BEFORE CLASS

- Write a lesson objective based on learners' needs.
- Choose a topic for the problem scenario that matches the lesson objective.
- Locate or write a problem scenario that relates to the lesson topic. (E.g. community appearance: tagging)
 - ___ find news articles about a local community issue
 - ___ use ready-made problem scenarios from a text or website (See References, p. xx)
 - ___ use student-generated problem scenarios
- Identify the key vocabulary and concepts that may be new to students
- Determine how you will share the scenario with students
 - ___ write the scenario on the board, or project it, for students to read
 - ___ read the problem to the class
 - ___ act out the situation
 - ___ show a video depicting the problem
 - ___ provide a handout that includes the situation and comprehension questions
- Plan the application stage of the lesson where students explain their solution and the rationale for selecting it. Will students...
 - ___ write a letter to propose their solutions?
 - ___ role play a conversation where they explain their solution?
 - ___ create a presentation explaining their solution?
 - ___ Other: _____

IN CLASS

- Share the lesson objective and link it to learners' needs and goals.
- Model the problem solving process with the class.
 1. Share the scenario with class.
 2. Check learners' comprehension of key vocabulary and content, and provide instruction as needed.
 3. Ask students to identify the main problem in the situation. (If students disagree, list their different ideas and then engage them in a prioritizing task to help them determine the most pressing problem.)
 4. Have students brainstorm solutions to the problem while you record them.
 5. Take one of the proposed solutions and discuss its consequences.
- Group learners and have them identify the consequences of the remaining solutions
- Have groups select the best (or top two or three) solutions and prepare a rationale to present to the class.
- Follow up a problem solving activity by having students:
 - ___ write a letter, giving advice to someone experiencing a similar problem.
 - ___ write and/or roleplay a conversation that demonstrates how to solve the problem
 - ___ create a presentation that explains and defends the solution
 - ___ design a survey to find out which solutions other people would choose (school staff, students from other classes, relatives, colleagues at work, friends.)

PROBLEM SOLVING TASK TEMPLATE

A. Read or listen to the story.

B. Retell the story to a partner.

C. Respond to these questions.

1. Who is the employee in this story?
2. Where does the employee work?
3. What is the employee's problem?

D. Discuss these questions.

4. Is the employee responsible for the problem? How do you know?
5. What is your advice to the employee? Why?

E. Write a note about the problem.

Dear _____,

I was sorry to hear about your problem. I have a suggestion. I think you should

F. Read your note to your classmates.

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