Teaching Soft Skills for the Workplace

Nurse Aide Preparation in the Iowa Pathways to Healthcare Careers Program, 2012-2013

UCLA Project SPHELL . Stephanie Youngblood . syoungblood@support.ucla.edu
• **Hard skills**: technical skills and knowledge learned from a book. Related to IQ. Consistent across jobs.
  - degree or certificate
  - knowledge of a language
  - machine operation
  - computer programming
  - math

• **Soft Skills**: personal attributes/qualities. Related to Emotional IQ. Could change from workplace to workplace.
  - interpersonal skills & communication (verbal & non-verbal)
  - teamwork/collaboration
  - conflict resolution
  - critical thinking: problem-solving and decision-making
  - time & resource management
  - leadership

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**Nurse Aide Job**

- Bathe and dress patients
- Serve meals and help patients eat
- Take vital signs
- Turn or reposition patients who are bedridden
- Collect information about conditions and treatments
- Provide and empty bedpans
- Lift patients into beds, wheelchairs, exam tables, or other positions
- Answer patient calls
- Examine patients for bruises, blood in urine or other abnormalities
- Clean and sanitize patient areas
- Change bed sheets and restock rooms with necessary supplies

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• What soft skills are likely needed that are not described?
• Do you think the employer’s values are accurately described?
• During resume review and interviews (and objectively measure and assess the desired...
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Soft Skills & ESL

- When should we start teaching workplace soft skills?
  - Concurrent with ESL or after "graduation" from Advanced ESL?

- How should we teach workplace soft skills?
  - As part of workplace readiness courses or integrated with ESL?

- How do we assess soft skills?
  - How do students "pass" a soft skills class?
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How should we teach workplace soft skills?

As part of workplace readiness courses or integrated with ESL?
How do we assess soft skills?

How do students "pass" a soft skills class?
Lesson Checklist

- Communication
- Collaboration
- Creativity
- Critical Thinking
- Cross-cultural competence
SAMPLE TASKS: NURSE AIDES

**Team Discussions**
- What Would You Do?
- The Best Nurse Aide

Skills targeted: cooperation, collaboration, conflict resolution

**Body Language Charades**
Skills targeted: non-verbal communication

**Self-Assessments**
Skills targeted: reflection, self-assessment, and personal growth

**Communication Evaluation: Praise, Criticism, or Growth**
Skills targeted: leadership, communication, critical thinking

**State Certification Exam: Role Play**
- Students must demonstrate knowledge and skills in all 3 areas to pass: W.B., L.P.N., and the role of a nursing home patient.
- W.B.: Skills
  - Basic life support: CPR, AED, use of oxygen, use of a defibrillator
  - Bedside techniques: bed making, bed positioning, patient care, personal hygiene, etc.

- L.P.N.: Skills
  - Basic life support: CPR, AED, use of oxygen, use of a defibrillator
  - Bedside techniques: bed making, bed positioning, patient care, personal hygiene, etc.
  - Clinical assessment: vital signs, intake and output, etc.
  - Communication: interpersonal communication, effective communication, etc.

- Nursing care: bedside care, patient teaching, etc.

- **Nurse Aide Case Study and Role Plays**
  Skills targeted: problem-solving, teamwork, collaboration, communication with language and nurse aide knowledge
Self-Assessments

Skills targeted: reflection, self-evaluation, and personal growth
I routinely set realistic goals for myself, and I track my progress until I've reached them.

When I have to make a decision, I pick the first good solution I find.

I approach life with confidence, and I have high self-esteem.

When it comes to managing my workload, I know my priorities.

Team development is an area I admit to cutting back on when time and resources are limited.

I lose time during the day because I'm not sure what I need to get done.

When I want to motivate people, I try to use the same approach with each person.

The work I do on a daily basis reflects my values, and is consistent with the goals I've set for myself.

I'm able to communicate my needs, and I make sure that my message is heard and understood.

When I encounter a problem, I immediately begin looking for potential solutions.

When there's conflict, I use my communication skills to find solutions and work things through.

I'm aware of the differences between leadership and management.

When discussing an issue with someone, I try to stay one step ahead in the conversation, and I actively think about what I'm going to say next.

When I encounter a setback, I have difficulty focusing on the situation positively and objectively.

I'm motivated to complete all of my work in a timely manner.
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Body Language Charades

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<th>Facial Expression</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bored</td>
<td>Everything’s Okay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tired</td>
<td>Come on</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Angry</td>
<td>Stop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pleased</td>
<td>That’s enough</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sad</td>
<td>Tell me more</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confused</td>
<td>Wait a minute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interested</td>
<td>Go away</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sorry</td>
<td>Body Posture—I’m interested.</td>
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<td>-------------------</td>
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<td>Excited</td>
<td>I’m bored.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guilty</td>
<td>Don’t call on me.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shocked</td>
<td>I’m nervous.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mischievous</td>
<td>I’m confident.</td>
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Communication Evaluation: Praise, Criticism, or Growth

Skills targeted:
leadership, communication, critical thinking
Praise

Criticism

Feedback
1. Mr. Jones told me how much he appreciated your thank you note after the job interview. He thought it was a great personal touch.
2. Your handwriting is so messy- it looks like a child filled out this vital signs form!
3. I noticed that you’ve been coming in late the last couple of days.
4. How many times do I have to tell you how to dress the patient starting with the weak side?
5. You look great today.
6. It would work better for me if I could explain my version of the story out loud before you ask questions.
7. You’ve improved a lot this week.
8. I found it difficult to evaluate this resume because it was messy.
9. I liked it much better when we got to choose our patients instead of being assigned.
Team Discussions

• What Would You Do?
• The Best Nurse Aide

Skills targeted: cooperation, collaboration, conflict resolution
A hospitalized Native American patient tells the nurse that later in the day a medicine man from his tribe is coming to perform a healing ceremony to return his world to balance.

What would you do?

a. Tell him it is a waste of his time since it is not scientific.
b. Ask him if you can watch the ceremony because you’ve never seen one before.
c. Tell him that’s OK, because you know it addresses his spiritual needs.
d. Ask him why he doesn’t go to a Christian church.

When the nurse takes a surgical consent form to an Asian woman after the surgeon has provided the information about the recommended surgery, the patient refuses to sign it.

What would you say?

a. “Didn’t you understand what the doctor said to you about the surgery?”
b. “Are there other people you want to talk with before making this decision?”
c. “Why won’t you sign this form? Don’t you want to do what the doctor recommended?”
d. “I’ll have to call the surgeon and have your surgery cancelled until you can make a decision.”
**The Best Nurse Aide**

You are choosing among the four applicants below for a nurse aide position in your hospital. Who would you hire, and why? Discuss with a group, and defend your choice.

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<th>Juana</th>
<th>Evicente</th>
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<td><strong>Speaks English fluently and with a very mild accent.</strong></td>
<td>Has basic communication skills in English.</td>
<td>Can read and write extremely well in English but sometimes struggles with understanding oral language.</td>
<td>Can speak well and understand others, but has very little knowledge of standard English grammar and spelling.</td>
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<td><strong>Has never worked in healthcare until now.</strong></td>
<td>Worked as a registered nurse in her country and just got certified as a nurse aide a few months ago.</td>
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<td>Completes her rounds on time and doesn’t have any complaints from patients.</td>
<td>Completes her rounds on time and accurately.</td>
<td>Does his rounds with patients quickly, and then helps other coworkers with their rounds.</td>
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• Nurse Aide Case Study and Role Plays

Skills targeted: problem-solving, teamwork, collaboration, communication with language and nurse aide knowledge
Case Study and Role Play Communication Activity

Part 1: Case Study Directions:
1. Discuss the following questions with your partner or group.
2. Then, read the case study 2 times: once quietly to yourself, and a second time out loud with a partner or small group.
3. When you finish reading and feel you understand the situation presented, read the questions and think for one minute.
4. Discuss the questions with your group. Be ready to share your ideas with the whole class.

A. Questions (Think alone for 1 minute, then discuss with your partner or group)

1. Have you ever had to work with a new patient without knowing anything about him/her?

2. How often do you think you will have to provide care to a patient you know nothing or very little about?

3. What rules do most nursing centers have for communicating and reporting changes in a patient?

4. Who should you talk to if you have a concern about a patient?
B. Case Study (Read once alone and again out loud with your partner or group. Make sure you understand the situation.)

Mrs. Chen is 85 years old. She has lived at the Manor Nursing Center for about a year. You are the nursing assistant on duty today on Mrs. Chen’s unit on the evening shift.

Mrs. Chen has recently learned that her daughter, who lives in another state, is seriously ill. After the evening meal, you notice that Mrs. Chen is not her normal self. She is usually talkative, but tonight she is not talking much. She is also limping, but you don’t know why. She seems very upset and angry. You try to talk to her but she doesn’t respond.

When you come back later to help Mrs. Chen prepare for bed, you find that she is already asleep on her bed, still in her clothes. When you wake her up to help her change and wash, she seems disoriented and says something rude to you.

C. Discussion Questions: Discuss with your group.

1. What should each person on the team (nursing assistants, licensed nurse, doctor) know about Mrs. Chen?

2. When should you ask for help with Mrs. Chen? Who should you ask?

3. When should you make a report about the change in Mrs. Chen’s condition?

4. What kind of report should you make, and who should receive it?
Part 2: Role Play Directions:
1. Keep thinking about Mrs. Chen’s Case Study and the questions you discussed with your partner.
2. Read and make sure you understand Scenario 1 (below).
3. Write down any “Useful Language” in the box (We will talk about this together).
4. Decide which role you and your partner will play.
5. Act out the scenarios with a partner. Use the “Useful Language”. Practice several times until you feel confident.
6. Be ready to present to the class!
7. Repeat for Scenario 2 😊

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<td>To offer more information:</td>
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<td>To agree:</td>
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<td>To disagree:</td>
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<tr>
<td>To suggest a solution:</td>
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<td>To conclude the conversation:</td>
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**Scenario 1:** Student A is the nursing assistant working with Mrs. C. Student B is another nursing assistant who has worked with Mrs. C for a long time. As Students A and B pass each other in the hall, Student B asks about Mrs. C’s condition and student A reports to her. Decide together what to do.

**Scenario 2:** You have decided you need to make a report to the licensed nurse concerning Mrs. C’s condition. Student A is the nursing assistant. Student B is the licensed nurse.
State Certification
Exam:
Role Play

- Students must exhibit knowledge and skills in all 3 areas to an R.N. or L.P.N. playing the role of a nursing home patient:
  - hard skills
    - nurse aide curriculum: muscle exercises, vital signs, dressing patient, personal care, etc
  - soft skills
    - body language, active listening, cultural competence, conflict resolution, clear communication, problem-solving, etc
- conversational English proficiency
  - clear, comprehensible written and verbal communication
SAMPLE TASKS: NURSE AIDES

Team Discussions
- What Would You Do?
- The Best Nurse Aide
  Skills targeted: cooperation, collaboration, conflict resolution

Body Language Charades
Skills targeted: non-verbal communication

Self-Assessments
Skills targeted: reflection, self-assessment, personal growth

Communication Evaluation: Praise, Criticism, or Growth
Skills targeted: leadership, communication, critical thinking

State Certification Exam: Role Play
- Students must evaluate knowledge and skills in all 3 areas to pass (A, B, C, L) in all 3 areas, including the role of a nurse aide: patient care
  - Non-verbal skills:
    - non-verbal communication: other skills required (e.g., technical, professional)
    - soft skills:
      - verbal, written, cross-functional
  - professional conduct:
    - interpersonal, business, personal, professional
    - interpersonal, professional, personal, professional
  - ethical conduct:
    - professional, personal, professional

- Nurse Aide Case Study and Role Plays
  Skills targeted: problem-solving, teamwork, collaboration, communication, and nurse aide knowledge
Links:
Cultural Competence Quiz: https://goo.gl/C2Ddy3

Soft Skills Self-Assessment: https://goo.gl/0pnL7V

Skills to Pay the Bills (Soft Skills Curriculum): https://goo.gl/DJAQAQ

Non-verbal Charades: https://goo.gl/XIzIxI

Nurse Aide Case Study: https://goo.gl/6kWN50
Soft Skills & ESL

- How should we teach workplace soft skills?
- How do we assess soft skills?

SAMPLE TASKS: NURSE AIDES

- Nursing Home
- Hospice
- Home Care

Hard Skills: technical skills and knowledge learned from a book, related to IQ and consistent across jobs.
- Degree or certificate
- Knowledge of a language
- Machine operation
- Computer programming
- Math

Soft Skills: personal attributes and qualities related to Emotional IQ. Could change from workplace to workplace.
- Interpersonal skills & communication (verbal & non-verbal)
- Teamwork/collaboration
- Conflict resolution
- Critical thinking, problem-solving and decision-making
- Time & resource management
- Leadership

Nurse Aide Job Description

- Provide personal care
- Help with dietary
- Help with medication
- Help with personal hygiene
- Help with elimination
- Help with activities of daily living
- Help with physical therapy
- Help with psychological counseling
- Help with spiritual counseling
- Help with educational counseling
- Help with recreational therapy

- What is the role of hard skills?
- What soft skills are highly valued in this job description?
- Bathe and dress patients
- Serve meals and help patients eat
- Take vital signs
- Turn or reposition patients who are bedridden
- Collect information about conditions and treatment plans from caregivers, nurses and doctors
- Provide and empty bedpans
- Lift patients into beds, wheelchairs, exam tables, etc.
- Answer patient calls
- Examine patients for bruises, blood in urine or other injuries/wounds
- Clean and sanitize patient areas
- Change bed sheets and restock rooms with necessary supplies

- What is the ratio of hard to soft skills?
- What soft skills are likely needed that are not explicitly listed?
- Do you think the employer's values are accurately reflected in this job description?
- During resume review and interviews (and beyond), how could the employer objectively measure and assess the desired soft skills?
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<tr>
<td><strong>Has never worked in healthcare until now.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Worked as a registered nurse in her country and just got certified as a nurse aide a few months ago.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Worked as a nurse aide in the US 15 years ago and just recertified.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Has worked as a nurse aide in the US for 5 years.</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Is often running behind on her rounds with patients.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Completes her rounds on time and doesn’t have any complaints from patients.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Completes her rounds on time and accurately.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Does his rounds with patients quickly, and then helps other coworkers with their rounds.</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Is extremely popular with patients.</strong></td>
<td><strong>She is well-liked among patients.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Patients often complain that she is not very friendly.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Patients like him, but don’t know him well.</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Coworkers get frustrated and upset with her because they always have to cover for her when she is running behind on tasks.</strong></td>
<td><strong>She gets along well with coworkers and helps when she can, even if it means she has to stay late.</strong></td>
<td><strong>She does not feel the need to help coworkers who are running behind.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Coworkers love him because he is always offering to help others.</strong></td>
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<td>When there is a problem among the team, she bosses teammates around and doesn’t listen well.</td>
<td>She avoids getting involved when there is conflict among coworkers.</td>
<td>She sometimes offers good solutions when there is a problem among the team.</td>
<td>He tells the supervisors anytime coworkers are having a disagreement.</td>
</tr>
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