



Workplace Skills

Introduction to Workplace Skills

This section provides an outline of the workplace skills that were prepared by the Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills – SCANS (U.S. Department of Labor, 1991). Although the SCANS list of Competencies and Foundation Skills was developed almost ten years ago, SCANS continues to provide an excellent framework for designing ESL/ESOL curricula to meet the often-stated learner goals of “finding a job,” “getting ahead on the job,” or “moving into a better job.”

The SCANS Competencies define the “know-how” needed by all workers -- both native and non-native speakers of English. The competencies apply across employment categories and apply to all levels of employment – from entry level to upper level management. The Foundation Skills require competence in Basic Skills, Critical Thinking Skills and Personal Qualities that lead to self-sufficiency and success not only on the job, but also within the family and in the community.

Workplace and SCANS skills are not limited to vocational, workforce/workplace or employment training programs and can easily be integrated into lessons. In the late 1990s, adult practitioners in California began to explicitly link SCANS with ESL/ESOL language classes through content-based instruction, cooperative learning, and learner-centered classroom management techniques. Successful instructors are integrating strategies that encourage learners to use English in real situations to solve problems, negotiate, teach others, and to learn time management skills.

Before you begin...

Scan the next page: *Ten Easy Things You Can Do to Integrate Workplace Basics (SCANS) into Your Classroom* by Donna Price Machado and Ann Marie Damrau.

Read “ESL and the Employment Connection” by Brigitte Marshall-Mingkwon in TESOL Matters. (June/July 1996). Alexandria, VA. TESOL.

Visit The Spring Institute for International Training – English Language Training Project. Denver, Colorado. [<http://www.springinstitute.org>] – click ELT – click Free Resources – scroll down to SCANS Publications (11 lessons)

10 Easy Things You Can DO to Integrate Workplace Basics (SCANS) into your ESL Classroom Donna Price-Machado & Ann Marie Damrau

Scans: The Missing Link <http://www.springinstitute.com>

(Information in parenthesis lists applicable SCANS competencies.)

1. Start each class with an agenda on the board. *(Organizing, allocating time)*
2. Put students in teams and assign teams classroom maintenance jobs. *(Working in teams, sociability, individual responsibility, allocating materials)*
3. Conclude every lesson by calling attention to the workplace relevance of the lesson and the classroom activities. *(Monitoring performance)*
4. Teach students how to organize their classroom materials. *(Organizing, monitoring performance)*
5. Monitor students' progress with checklists and weekly tests. *(Organizing, monitoring performance)*
6. Pay attention to classroom incidents and conflicts. Develop lessons that teach the appropriate language students should use when dealing with these issues. *(Interpersonal skills, ability to reason, solve problems)*
7. Model appropriate workplace behavior. For example, arrive on time, come with an organized plan, dress appropriately and maintain a positive attitude. *(Understanding systems, individual responsibility, self management, sociability, integrity, honesty)*
8. Encourage students to fix or make minor adjustments in equipment, such as hole-punch, pencil sharpener, overhead projector. Teach the language that supports this activity. *(Trouble shooting)*
9. Designate student trainers or experts who can train new students. *(Teaching others)*
10. Encourage peer revision whenever possible, in writing or pronunciation. Teach the language used to make revisions. *(Understanding systems and individual responsibility monitoring performance, correcting performance)*

FIVE COMPETENCIES (SCANS)

Resources: identify, organize, plan, and allocate resources.

1. *Time*—select goal-relevant activities, prioritize activities, allocate time, prepare and follow schedules
2. *Money* – prepare and budgets, keep records, adjust spending to meet objectives, anticipate future needs
3. *Materials and Facilities* – acquire, store, allocate and use materials or space efficiently
4. *Human Resources* – assess skills and distribute work accordingly, evaluate performance, and provide feedback

Interpersonal: work with others

1. *Participate as a Member of a Team* – contribute to group effort
2. *Teach Others New Skills*
3. *Serve Clients/Customers* – work to satisfy customer's expectations
4. *Exercise Leadership* – communicate ideas to justify position, persuade and convince others, and challenge existing procedures and policies
5. *Negotiate* – work toward agreements involving exchange of resources, and resolve divergent interests
6. *Work with Diversity* – work well with men and women from diverse backgrounds.

Information Management: acquire and use information

1. *Acquire and Evaluate Information*
2. *Organize and Evaluate Information*
3. *Interpret and Communicate Information*
4. *Use computers to Process Information*

Systems: understand complex inter-relationships

1. *Understand Systems* – know how social, organizational, and technical systems work and how to function effectively within them
2. *Monitor and Correct Performance* – distinguish trends, predict impact on systems operations, diagnose deviations in performance and correct malfunctions
3. *Improve or Design System* – suggest modifications to existing systems and develop new or alternatives to improve performance

Technology: work with a variety of technologies

1. *Select technology* – choose procedures, tools or equipment including computers and related technologies
2. *Apply Technology to Tasks:* understand overall intent and proper procedures for setup and operation of equipment
3. *Maintain and Troubleshoot Equipment:* prevent, identify, or solve problems with equipment, including computers and other technologies.

THREE-PART FOUNDATION SKILLS (SCANS)

Basic Skills: Read, write, perform arithmetic and mathematical operations, listens and speaks

1. *Reading* – locate, understand, and interpret written information in prose and in documents such as manuals, graphics, and schedules
2. *Writing* – communicate thoughts, ideas, information, and messages in writing; and create documents such as letter, directions, ,manuals, reports, graphs, and flow charts
3. *Arithmetic/Mathematics* – perform basic computations and approach practical problems by choosing appropriately from a variety of mathematical techniques
4. *Listening* - receive, attend to, interpret, and respond to verbal messages and other cues
5. *Speaking* – organize ideas and communicate orally

Thinking Skills: Think creatively, make decisions, solve problems, visualize, know how to learn, and reason

1. *Creative Thinking* – generate new ideas
2. *Decision-Making* – specify goals and constraints, generate alternatives, consider risks, and evaluate and choose best alternative
3. *Problem Solving* – recognize problems and devise and implement plan of action
4. *Seeing Things in the Mind's Eye* – organize and process symbols, pictures, graphs, objectives, and other information
5. *Knowing How to Learn* – use efficient learning techniques to acquire and apply new knowledge and skills
6. *Reasoning* – discover a rule or principle underlying the relationships between two or more objectives and apply it when solving a problem

Personal Qualities: Display responsibility, self-esteem, sociability, self-management, integrity, and honesty

1. *Responsibility* – exert a high level of effort and perseveres towards goal attainment
2. *Self-Esteem* – believe in own self-worth and maintain a positive view of self
3. *Sociability* – demonstrate understanding, friendliness, adaptability, empathy, and politeness in group settings
4. *Self-Management* – assess self accurately, set personal goals, monitor progress, and exhibit self-control
5. *Integrity/Honesty* – choose ethical courses of action