

College and Career Readiness K-8

Lesson Title: *Improving Soft Skills: Overcoming Shyness*

Grade Level: Elementary and Middle School

Main Character: Glen

SEL Competencies: Relationship Skills, Self-awareness

Introduction

Glen is a high school student who admits to being very shy, which kept him from participating in social activities. Not only did Glen feel socially isolated, he missed out on the many opportunities for social learning that are essential for college and career success. Glen realized that despite his fear of rejection that he needed to learn how to make friends. He did this by becoming involved in school and community activities.

Activity 1

Watch the video: *Improving Soft Skills: Overcoming Shyness*

Activity 2

If you are working with a team each person should take time to reflect individually before discussing with a partner or the group.

Think about how Glen describes himself at the beginning of the film as he is reflects on his time in middle school and his first year in high school.

Take a few minutes to think about students you know who like Glen may feel socially isolated. Brainstorm some potential activities that could help the students you are thinking of (your list could include extra-curricular activities). What could you do to encourage these students to take advantage of the opportunities you have listed?

Consider the motivation of students. In talking about the importance of social interaction Glen says, “those people don’t have the confidence to say ‘here I am world’ and go out and conquer it”. What do you think is preventing the students you are thinking of from becoming more involved in activities that encourage positive social interaction? What could be done to help these students?

Activity 3

The United States Department of Labor lists six essential soft skills that students will need to master to be successful in the 21st century workplace. Consider that many of the jobs that current students will have as adults do not exist now. These soft skills are:

Communication

Enthusiasm and Attitude

Teamwork
Networking
Problem Solving and Critical Thinking
Professionalism

Which of these soft skills do we see Glen developing in the film? Assess your professional practice regarding development of soft skills. How do your pedagogical decisions support the development of soft skills, particularly for students like Glen who clearly need additional skill development opportunities?

What useful activities do you need to develop further and use with more frequency? What are some activities that do not promote soft skill development that might need less use? How will you implement these changes? What additional resources might be necessary?

Activity 4

Consider your school context.

How do you rate your school in intentionally supporting the development in soft skills for all students? Why is explicit teaching of the six soft skills not adequate?

What opportunities for developing soft skills does your school excel at? What are some areas you see for improvement? What resources and training would be necessary to make the changes you believe are needed? What quality programming could be further developed and supported?

Additional Resources

US Department of Labor Soft Skills: The Competitive Edge
<https://www.dol.gov/odep/topics/youth/softskills/>