Lesson Plan

Demonstrating Customer Service Skills  
Turning an Unsatisfied Customer into a Satisfied Customer

Objective: Students will examine strategies for communicating effectively with unsatisfied or angry customers.

Workplace Readiness Skill: **Demonstrate customer service skills.**

*Demonstration includes*

* *defining* ***customer service*** *(e.g., internal customer service; external customer service)*
* *identifying the benefits of providing helpful, courteous, and knowledgeable customer service*
* *prioritizing customer service (both within an organization and to external customers and stakeholders)*
* *anticipating needs of customers and coworkers*
* *demonstrating how to provide helpful, courteous, and knowledgeable service to address customer and/or coworker needs.*

Correlations to Other Workplace Readiness Skills:

* Demonstrate work ethic.
* Demonstrate conflict-resolution skills.
* Demonstrate listening and speaking skills.
* Demonstrate big-picture thinking.
* Demonstrate career- and life-management skills.
* Demonstrate professionalism.

Correlations to the Virginia Standards of Learning (SOL):

English: 6.2, 6.7, 7.1, 7.2, 7.7, 8.2, 8.7, 9.1, 9.6, 10.1, 10.6, 11.1

History and Social Science: CE.1, CE.4, CE.14, GOVT.1, GOVT.16

Instructional Steps:

1. ***Tell students that today they’ll be examining customer service strategies for dealing with angry customers. Ask students to demonstrate (silently, with body language only) the behavior of an angry customer.*** Ask students what experiences they have either as an unhappy customer, or as an employee dealing with an unhappy customer. This will get students thinking about the various perspectives involved in dealing with unhappy customers. List some things that make us angry as customers (e.g., slow service, rude employees, carelessness).
2. ***Watch a YouTube video by MindTools entitled, “***[***Dealing with Unhappy Customers***](https://youtu.be/TqJ3GqR5Txg)***” (***[***https://youtu.be/TqJ3GqR5Txg***](https://youtu.be/TqJ3GqR5Txg)***).*** Discuss.
3. ***Break students into pairs and ask them to read the accompanying article by MindTools entitled, “***[***Dealing With Unhappy Customers: Turning a Challenge into an Opportunity***](https://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/unhappy-customers.htm)***” (***[***https://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/unhappy-customers.htm***](https://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/unhappy-customers.htm)***).*** The video is embedded within the article, so the students will have another opportunity to watch it if they’d like.
4. ***Ask students to take notes on Handout #1: Turning a Challenge into an Opportunity.*** Discuss.
5. ***Prepare students to role-play customer service scenarios.*** Distribute the scenarios on Teacher Resource #1: Customer Service Scenarios, break students into pairs or small groups, and ask students to practice acting out their group’s scenario.
6. ***Demonstrate scenarios.*** Ask some or all of the groups to act out their customer service scenario for the class. Ask the student observers to identify strategies being used in the role play; are there any of those identified earlier in the lesson?
7. ***Hold class discussion to share final thoughts.*** Emphasize to students that no matter what field or industry they choose to enter, there will be times when dealing with an angry customer or client is part of the job. The more strategies they have to effectively communicate with customers and diffuse potential conflicts, the better prepared they’ll be for future employment.

Formative Assessment**:**

* Assess student understanding and participation as demonstrated in the class and small group discussions.
* Evaluate student understanding of concepts within the lesson as demonstrated by notes recorded on Handout #1: Turning a Challenge into an Opportunity.
* Evaluate student participation in the role play activity.

Options for Adaptation/Differentiation:

* To complete this activity in a shorter amount of time, replace the role-play portion of the activity with an example in which a student and the teacher demonstrate just one scenario to the entire class. To provide scaffolding, the article and Handout #1: Turning a Challenge into an Opportunity can be read and completed as a class.
* To extend this activity and provide further enrichment, ask students to use what they learned in today’s lesson to create a PowerPoint presentation about effective ways to communicate with unhappy customers.

Suggestions for Follow-up:

* Invite a manager or business owner to discuss the importance of communication in good customer service.
* Many elements of customer service (e.g., listening skills, conflict-resolution skills, resourcefulness) are skills that align with overall workplace readiness, as well as with success in the classroom. Ask students to create a bulletin board of “tips for success” that incorporate some examples from this lesson.