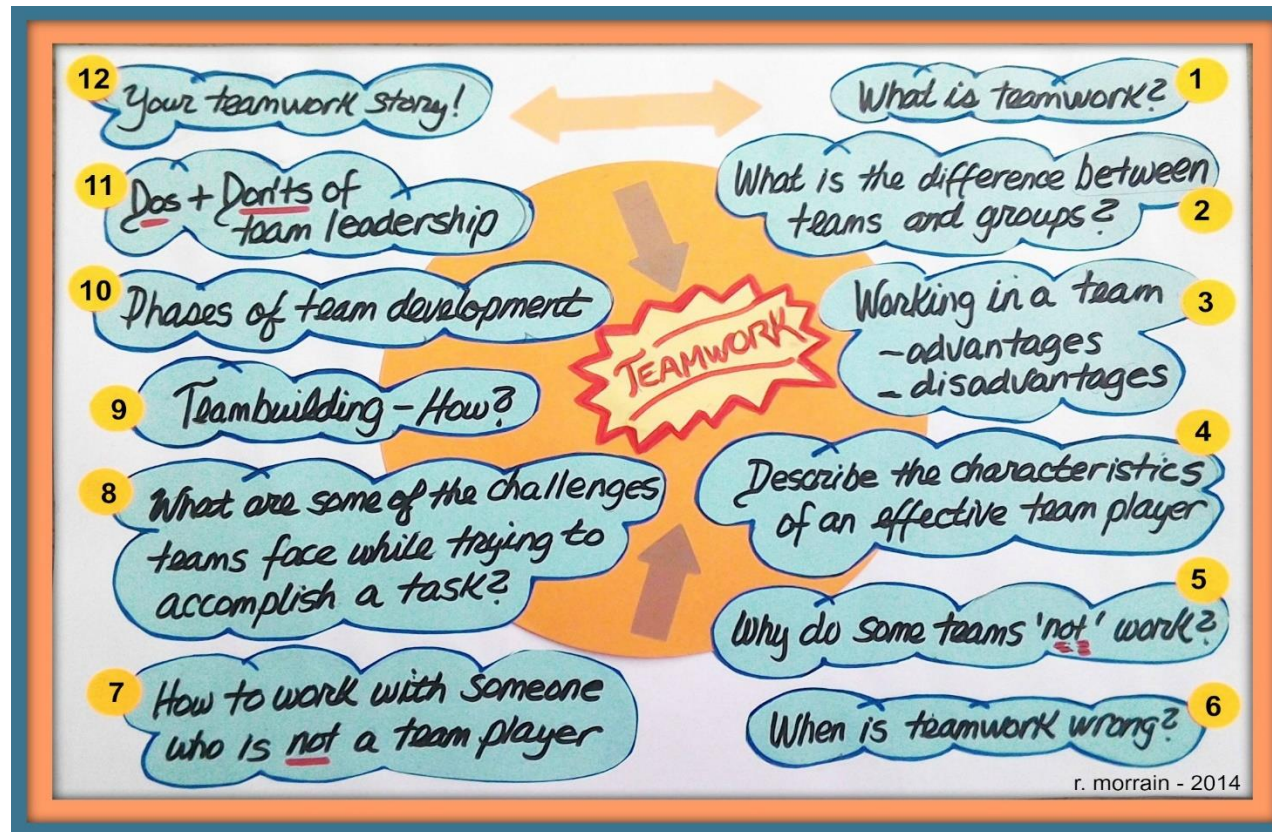


MIND MAPPING MATTERS: TEAMWORK

Using ready-made mind maps in your business English classroom



Teamwork

There is an increased emphasis for teachers/trainers to support learners in acquiring soft skills. While the list of soft skills to learn (and teach) is long, no one skill could be more important than teamwork. It is not enough to expect learners to read an article from a textbook, and then answer multiple-choice comprehension or vocabulary questions in order for them to understand the very multi-faceted topic of teamwork and teambuilding. Therefore, it becomes imperative to create a very active learning cycle, which will support learners in understanding this mother of all soft skills.

Try something new by implementing this Task-Based Learning (TBL) cycle. Give your learners the opportunity to show what skills and experience they bring to the table, while allowing them to increase their soft skills inventory and knowledge along the way. Your task as teacher in this learning cycle is to guide the learners through a 360° journey of discovery. By using this ready-made mind map, you enable them to learn from each other, as you stand back and observe them become creative, collaborative and communicative. Everyone wants to succeed in their career, work life, school life, and private life. By understanding teamwork and teambuilding, they are sure to come closer to achieving their goals.

Who are the participants?

Participants are business people, apprentices, or university students with a language pre-knowledge level of B1+ to C2. This TBL/PBL learning cycle was conceptualized for a middle to high resource corporate or university-learning environment, and is adaptable to group sizes from 4 to 30.

Your learning environment should have the following materials and equipment:

Fully stocked Moderation Kit¹, flipchart, flipchart paper, brown poster paper, extra markers, pencils, 4+ pairs of scissors, 4+ glue sticks, wireless internet connection, several laptops, projector, 3-4 moderation boards, white board, and speakers. A copy of the mind map for each participant, or have learners take a picture of it from the image projected onto the wall.

Session one – Introduction

- Project mind map onto the wall.
- Ask your learners to work in small groups and answer questions #1, #2, #3 and #12.
- Give them 20-30 minutes think time (this depends on the group size).
- Allow them to use their smartphones, tablets, computers, or laptops to research for answers.
- Each group must answer all three questions (#12 must be answered individually).
- Act as a moderator (after think time) and gather all the possible answers to #1 – #3.
- Create an interactive conversation with them in order to elicit their answers.
- Visualise the answers on the board or flipchart (have a few students write the answers for you).
- End this session by moving to the individual storytelling part (#12).
- Review what was talked about (for language purposes) and ask questions (for comprehension purposes).

(OPTIONAL)

- Finish this task at this point by asking learners to write a small essay on the topic “Why do we need teamwork?”, or create a prompt question of your own.
- Participants can research the unfinished questions as homework, and bring in the finished writing assignment.

Round two – Creating the scenario and explaining the task

- Participants are to create a half-day Teamwork and Teambuilding Workshop for their company or school.
- They will only have a short time to submit a proposal for the complete workshop.
- The workshop has eight modules (#4 – #11), and each module should last a maximum of 20-25 minutes, (five additional minutes for Q&A Session.).
- Divide the class into eight groups. Each group will be responsible for the creation of one module. If there are fewer than eight participants, you can choose to assign two modules each in order to cover all topics.
- The workshop must include the following modules:
 1. Characteristics of a good team player (#4)
 2. Dos and don'ts of team leadership (#11)
 3. Teambuilding – how? (#9) and Phases of team development (#10)
 4. Why some teams *do not* work? (#5) and When is teamwork wrong? (#6)
 5. How to work with someone who is not a team player (#7)
 6. What are some of the challenges teams face when trying to accomplish a task? and What solutions can be presented (#8)

7. Your teamwork story (best and worst teamwork experience) (#12)
 8. What communication behaviours should a team leader observe in his or her team?
 9. Additional topics can be added if needed – let learners come up with other ideas
- Each module must have: (not necessarily in this order)
 - a. A handout or a poster as an overview.
 - b. A questionnaire or poll (let learners decide how they will tackle this)
 - c. Video (self-made if possible, or from the internet)
 - d. A roleplay or simulation (integrated into the module)
 - e. PowerPoint presentation (Pecha Kucha preferred)
 - f. Q&A session
 - Set some time perimeters or a time frame for the whole learning cycle.
 - In an apprenticeship programme, or university learning environment, outline how you will assess them for this task, and what larger role (if any) this may play in their final assessment.
 - In a corporate learning environment, or as part of a corporate workshop, explain how you will give them feedback.

Round three – Forming groups, assigning roles, getting started

- Have the learners choose their own teams, and get started with the task.
- Give them some think time in order to choose their roles within the team (15 to 30 minutes).
- Answer any questions they may have about the task.
- Have them report their results to you, and the whole group, in the form of a plan/overview of their module (small presentation).
- Set a clear time frame and time deadline with them.
- Create an overall presentation schedule after every group has presented their plans.
- Post the schedule on your LMS, or cloud, for everyone to have access to for clarity.
- Show them all the materials they have at hand to be creative.
- Let them get started on their creative journey.
- Walk around, observe their behaviour, and interact with them.
- Ask them questions during the preparation process in order to get them thinking.
- End this round, but beforehand, make sure everyone understands their role in getting this right.
- Academic learners will have to manage their time and tasks outside the classroom.
- Corporate learners may have to manage their time and tasks inside the workshop.
- In a corporate learning environment or workshop, the time frame may need to be adjusted.

- Adjust this TBL cycle according to your participants' needs, and your experience as a teacher.
- Review their work before they present. Make vocabulary, grammar, or other language corrections if needed.

Round four – The teamwork and teambuilding workshop @ a school or company

- Make it as real as possible. Put posters all over the room.
- Set the right atmosphere by serving drinks and playing some background music.
- Have the students make some small talk with each other (this will help them to relax).
- Get the workshop started by making a short introduction and thank them for coming.
- Pass out the workshop schedule and have the students present in that order.
- Stand back and become the observer in this part of the TBL cycle. Allow this part to take its natural course. Do not interrupt them, and keep to schedule.

Ending or assessing this learning cycle

As mentioned before, an assessment or feedback session should take place after presenting. Learners or workshop participants must have some form of feedback. You decide what works for you, and what works for the learning situation you are dealing with.

¹ Google the term 'Moderation Kit', and then click images to get an idea of what a business moderation kit should look like and what it should contain.

Note. This mind map initially appeared in IATEFL BESIG Magazine *Business Issues* Summer edition 2017

12 Your teamwork story!

11 Dos + Donts of team leadership

10 Phases of team development

9 Teambuilding - How?

8 What are some of the challenges teams face while trying to accomplish a task?

7 How to work with someone who is not a team player

1 What is teamwork?

2 What is the difference between teams and groups?

3 Working in a team
- advantages
- disadvantages

4 Describe the characteristics of an effective team player

5 Why do some teams 'not' work?

6 When is teamwork wrong?

TEAMWORK

r. morrain - 2014