# Networking & Social Confidence Lesson Plan

Time: (up to) 90 Minute session

**Resources:\***

Game board

Dice

Rules

Playing pieces

3 different question cards for game

**Introduction to the importance of Networking**

(10 mins)

Background - Interviews with employers, national research with employers associations and research and interviews with graduates about skills all mention networking / social confidence as a skill new and recent graduates need in most – if not all - professional workplaces.

To help students learn more about networking – what it is and isn’t, what we all gain from doing it, and how to do it successfully - the Creating Future-Proof Graduates team at Birmingham City University have created the Networking Game.

Example Learning Outcomes:

* Participate in some networking activities
* Have opportunity to discuss the benefits of networking
* Considered your strengths and weaknesses in relation to social confidence

**Preparation to play Board Game**

(5 mins)

* Make sure students in table groups of 4/5
* Make sure each table has playing board, a set of multiple choice; true / false and interactive cards (green, yellow and pink - placed on the correspondingly coloured corner of the board), set of counters, one or two dice and a sheet of the rules.
* Go through rules with whole group and make sure all happy

**Play Board Game**

(45 mins)

* PLAY
* Tutor to support / encourage full participation *(sometimes there is more discussion about a question than an attempt to actually answer it – particularly the interactive questions)*

**Networking and CVs**

(15 mins)

* Reiterate importance
* CV’s / business cards etc
* Any questions about networking

**Take away message** – participants individually to reflect on the lessons learnt for them from the session /game and action plan to plug any gaps they have spotted in their confidence in their ability to network.

\***Resources**

Even if you are using the resources supplied with the ‘Compendium’ from the Creating Future-Proof Graduates project dissemination, you will still only have one set of everything and will need to assemble more sets.

The game board, questions, rules and a copy of these ‘teacher notes’ are available to download from: <http://www.bcu.ac.uk/futureproof/resources/network> (and check out the other resources from the ‘Creating Future-Proof Graduates’ project while you are there!)

* The gameboard can be printed onto A3 and although small it was used in this format during trials.
* Each set of cards can be printed in black and white onto coloured paper to correlate with the question type:

Green = multiple choice

Yellow= true / false

Pink = interactive

*Tips for printing 6 cards per A4 page:*

* *Go to PRINT*
* *In ‘Page Handling’ on the ‘Page Scaling’ drop down menu select ‘Multiple pages per sheet’*
* *Select 6 from the drop down menu*
* *NB On ‘Finishing’ tab make sure that ‘print style’ is selected to ‘1-sided printing’*
* Playing pieces can be anything small enough to move around the board eg different coloured buttons. I used these squeezable Moody faces which players loved! <http://www.nda-toys.com/product/10211/MOODY_FACES_RRP_109>
* Dice – I found it difficult to buy dice other than boxes of 24 very small ones from Games Workshop. For the trials I used large pink fluffy dice from a shop that supplied cheap and cheerful resources for hen nights! They were very popular (and cheap)

ALTERNATIVE DELIVERY SUGGESTIONS

**Invite the Faculty / course careers adviser to support delivery**

In one of the trials the faculty careers adviser helped to deliver the session including leading the final session on networking and CV’s as shown above. The Careers Service had excellent handouts they used with students on networking and CVs so students had good resources to take away with them. It also added to the support available in the room while the students played the board game

**Establishing a base for student social confidence / networking understanding**

As part of the trial of this resource the research included questions (Appendix 1) - prior to playing the game - investigating students awareness of employability skills (in particular as they related to their subject of study if it was vocational) and their confidence in their skills.

To test the effectiveness of the resource and their understanding of the skill student participants also completed questionnaires (Appendix 2) after using the resource. These could easily be used / adapted in the classroom to prompt some self awareness, reflection and action planning to further develop their skills.

Any feedback on game use, variations and suggestions for changes would be gratefully received! Email me [ruth.lawton@bcu.ac.uk](mailto:ruth.lawton@bcu.ac.uk) or ph 0121 331 5126

**Appendix 1: Pre game questionnaire**

Using the table provided below, reply to the following three questions:

1. In your opinion, what are the most important skills needed to be a *(insert vocational area)* (please give a minimum of 5 and up to 10 skills)?
2. Rank your list of skills in order of importance. Start with “1” for the “*most important”* and then continue in decreasing level of importance.
3. From your list give an estimate of your skill level of competency in this area. Use the following scores to indicate level: 1 = very low; 2 = some competency; 3 = quite competent; 4 = very competent.

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **[1]** Skill name | **[2]** Rank importance | **[3]** Your own level |
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1. Can you give an example from your experience as a *(insert vocational area)* when networking was important?
2. How much experience do you feel you have in dealing with different social situations as a *(insert vocational area)*? Please explain why.
3. How would you define “Networking”?

**Appendix 2: Post game questionnaire**

1. In advising a colleague on how to approach a networking opportunity, what would be your suggestions in helping them to deal with difficult social or networking situations?
2. Please name the most important thing(s) you learnt in this session on networking
3. Give a score to each one of these activities related to how***useful***each was in helping you develop your understanding of networking*.*

**4= very useful; 3 = useful; 2 = a bit useful; 1 = not useful; 0 = I do not recall this**

* 1. The Networking Board Game
  2. Discussion

Please add any other comments you wish to add on the session

4. Rate your own level of confidence in dealing with networking and social situations

*Circle the answer that best describes your level.*

**1** **2 3 4**

not very confident a bit confident  quite confident very confident

Can you explain why you chose this rating? (you may continue overleaf)

5. What can you do to maintain or further develop your confidence socially? Identify 3 actions you can take (make sure your plans are SMART)