

Initiating, Maintaining, and Ending Conversations Project 25

[Social-Emotional Skills Projects Module](#)

Grade Level Range: Middle School – Adult

To the Teacher:

Social and emotional skills, like most skills (e.g., playing a musical instrument, shooting a basketball, etc.), are complex and not easily learned and mastered. In order to develop proficiency, students need to be given multiple opportunities to practice the skills in class and in real life. The purpose of this project is to facilitate the development of competency in the ability to initiate, maintain, and end conversations. This project is best used as a follow-up learning experience after students have completed the Initiating, Maintaining, and Ending Conversations Learning Experience ([Relationship Skills & Healthy Relationships](#)). The more opportunities students have to use skills in real life the better the chances of them becoming proficient.

Procedures/Directions:

1. This is a follow-up learning experience to the Initiating, Maintaining, and Ending Conversations Learning Experience.
2. Determine how many opportunities you want them to have to practice the skills (and thus entries on their self-monitoring chart) before the end of the project. It is recommended that they have a minimum of 7 chances and preferably more. Since they may not have the opportunity to change daily, it will take some students longer than others to complete the project.
3. Have students complete the “Beginning of the Project Questions.”
4. Explain how to keep the “My Self-Monitoring Log” and how to complete the “Weekly Assessments.”
5. If you are having them keep track of their goals throughout the year (highly recommended), have them complete the information on the My Goals Log. The My Goals Log allows them to look back and see what they have accomplished throughout the year and what they need to do to be more successful.
6. Remind them that it is not expected that they be proficient at the beginning of this project or even at the end of the project. The ability to initiate and maintain conversations may be difficult to master and must be done repeatedly and in multiple situations in order to feel comfortable and to become proficient. The key is to make progress and to understand why they were successful and what they need to do to become more successful/proficient.
7. Explain the grading procedures. Outlined below are different ways to assess and grade this project.
8. Review the *Stages in Learning a New Skill* outlined below.

9. Every 1-2 weeks, using the “Weekly Assessments,” ask volunteers to share how effective they have been using the skills and what they need to do to be more effective.
10. At the end of the project, have students bring all required work to class. Have them complete all assessments, place the documents in an identified order, and turn them in. See the “Possible Assessment & Grading Procedures” outlined below.
11. At the end of the project and before they turn in their work, have a class discussion using the “Initiating Conversations End of the Project Questions.” For their answers on the “Progress & Effort Assessments,” you may want to use the “Are You Someone Who” or the “Thumb O Meter” techniques. See “Nonverbal Self Disclosure Techniques” in [How To Teach SES in the How To Teach Social-Emotional Skills Module](#).
12. For additional information on the process and steps in teaching social-emotional skills, see [How To Teach SES in the How To Teach Social-Emotional Skills Module](#)

Stages in Learning a New Skill

It is helpful if students understand that learning social-emotional skills is not easy and that they will go through different stages when learning these skills. The stages in learning a new skill include:

1. Feeling self-conscious and awkward when using the skill.
2. Feeling phony while engaging in the skill. When teaching these skills, my students would constantly say: “No one talks like this,” or no one does these things. My response was that, unfortunately, not enough people talk like this, and that is a major reason why so many people are unable to successfully work through misunderstandings, impasses, and conflicts in relationships, or maybe the reason so many people are unsuccessful at reaching their goals is that they don’t.
3. Their use becomes more skilled but it is still mechanical.
4. They master the skill, and its use becomes natural, automatic, and fully integrated into their behavioral repertoire. They are able to use the skill without thinking about it.

Possible Assessment & Grading Procedures

Students may be assessed on any or all of the following depending on the extent of the project.

1. Teacher grade (and or student self-evaluation) of the completeness and depth of student answers on the “Weekly Assessments” and the “End of the Project Assessment” using the Generic Rubric for Assessing Self-Awareness, Self-Insight, & Self-Knowledge below.
 1. Self-evaluation of their progress at the end of the project. See the “Progress Evaluation” below.
 2. Self-evaluation of their effort. See the “Effort Evaluation” below.
 3. Self-evaluation of the extent to which they charted every day they had the opportunity to change. For example, the charting grade is a percentage of the number of days they charted divided by the number of days they actually charted. For example, if the project was assigned for 21 days (they had to have 21 days when they had the opportunity to use the skill) and they didn’t chart 2 of those (they had 2 “Z’s”), their charting grade is 90 (19/21): they charted on 19 of the possible 21 days. See the “Initiating Conversations Project Evaluation Summary” below.
 4. At the end of the project, have students bring all required work to class. It may be easier to take them through each of the assessments one at a time in class to avoid confusion.
 5. Using the assessments and rubrics, have students evaluate their work and place the grade in the appropriate space on the “Initiating Conversations Project Grade Summary” below.
 6. Collect all the documents in an order that will make it most manageable for you to review and grade.
 7. For additional information on evaluation and grading, see the How To Assess & Grade SES Skills in the Assessment & Grading Module

Collecting All the Work at the End of the Project

As you are aware, collecting multiple papers for projects can be daunting and an organizational nightmare if you cannot review, assess, and grade student documents online. At the end of the project, have students bring all required work to class. It is easier to take them through each of the assessments one at a time in class to avoid confusion. Have students transfer their grades from the documents you will collect to the Initiating Conversations Project Grade Summary below. If you cannot review, assess, and grade student documents online, have them place all hard copies in the same order as listed on the Initiating Conversations Project Grade Summary with that document on top. If you are collecting hard copies, providing them with a manila file folder may be helpful. See below for an example of a generic assessment grade summary.

Reporting Grades

Decide whether you want to give a single grade for the entire project, including all criteria, or report each separately. Reporting each criterion separately (e.g., a grade for their effort, a grade for their progress, and a grade for a self-assessment of their written work, a grade of your assessment of their written work) provides more specific, detailed feedback for students and parents. If you are giving separate grades, you must determine the weight each one will have and let them know at the beginning of the project.

Initiating, Maintaining, and Ending Conversations

Beginning of the Project Questions

How Effective Am I At the Beginning of This Project

At the beginning of this project, how effectively am I using these skills? Circle the number that indicates how effectively I am using these skills.

1. How effective am I at greeting someone I don't know well?

1-----2-----3-----4-----5
Not Effective Somewhat Effective Very Effective

2. How effective am I at initiating a conversation with someone I don't know or know well?

1-----2-----3-----4-----5
Not Effective Somewhat Effective Very Effective

3. How effective am I at introducing myself to someone I don't know?

1-----2-----3-----4-----5
Not Effective Somewhat Effective Very Effective

4. How effective am I at keeping a conversation going?

1-----2-----3-----4-----5
Not Effective Somewhat Effective Very Effective

5. How effective am I at organizing an activity with another person or group?

1-----2-----3-----4-----5
Not Effective Somewhat Effective Very Effective

6. How effective am I at comfortably ending a conversation?

1-----2-----3-----4-----5
Not Effective Somewhat Effective Very Effective

Initiating, Maintaining, & Ending Conversations Self-Monitoring Log

Rating Scale:

How effective was I in using these skills today?

1-----2-----3-----4-----5
Not Effective Somewhat Effective Very Effective

NA = Not applicable for the conversation today. That is, if for some reason it was not appropriate or I didn't have the opportunity to use a skill on a particular day would write "NA" in the space provided.

How To Use The Chart:

Keep the chart in a convenient location where you will see it, and remember to complete it daily (e.g., next to your bed, on your bedroom door, etc.). Place the dates in the second column, starting with the day you are to start the project, and the ratings (1-5 or NA) in the rest of the columns. For example, write 5/1/ 5/2, etc. for the date. Rate each skill 1-5 or NA. The rating should be done each day you use a skill. If you forget to chart on a day when you had the opportunity to use a skill, place a (**Z**) in the space the following day, even if you successfully used the skill. Do not chart the next day other than putting a (**Z**). Part of your grade may be based on charting every day you had the opportunity to change.

Day #	Date	Skill: Greet Someone I Don't Know Well	Skill: Initiate A Conversation With Someone I Don't Know or Know Well	Skill: Introduce Myself To Someone I Don't Know	Skill: Keep A Conversation Going	Skill: Organize an Activity with Another Person or Group	Skill: Comfortably End a Conversation
1							
2							
3							
4							
5							
6							
7							
8							
9							
10							
11							
12							
13							
14							
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19							
19							
20							
21							

Weekly Assessments

Week # 1 Assessment: How successful was I at using these skills this week?

1-----2-----3-----4-----5
Not Successful Somewhat Successful Very Successful

Which of these specific skills did I use best (greeting someone I don't know well, initiating a conversation with someone I don't know or know well, introducing myself to someone I don't know, keeping a conversation going, organizing an activity with another person or group, or comfortably ending a conversation)?

Which of these specific skills do I need to work on the most (greeting someone I don't know well, initiating a conversation with someone I don't know or know well, introducing myself to someone I don't know, keeping a conversation going, organizing an activity with another person or group, or comfortably ending a conversation)?

How many days did I chart this week (the number of days I had a rating (1-5) and/or NA? _____

Week # 2 Assessment: How successful was I at using these skills this week?

1-----2-----3-----4-----5
Not Successful Somewhat Successful Very Successful

Which of these specific skills did I use best (greeting someone I don't know well, initiating a conversation with someone I don't know or know well, introducing myself to someone I don't know, keeping a conversation going, organizing an activity with another person or group, or comfortably ending a conversation)?

Which of these specific skills do I need to work on the most (greeting someone I don't know well, initiating a conversation with someone I don't know or know well, introducing myself to someone I don't know, keeping a conversation going, organizing an activity with another person or group, or comfortably ending a conversation)?

How many days did I chart this week (the number of days I had a rating (1-5) and/or NA)?

Week # 3 Assessment: How successful was I at using these skills this week?

1-----2-----3-----4-----5
Not Successful Somewhat Successful Very Successful

Which of these specific skills did I use best (greeting someone I don't know well, initiating a conversation with someone I don't know or know well, introducing myself to someone I don't know, keeping a conversation going, organizing an activity with another person or group, or comfortably ending a conversation)?

Which of these specific skills do I need to work on the most (greeting someone I don't know well, initiating a conversation with someone I don't know or know well, introducing myself to someone I don't know, keeping a conversation going, organizing an activity with another person or group, or comfortably ending a conversation)?

How many days did I chart this week (the number of days I had a rating (1-5) and/or NA? _____

Week # 4 Assessment: How successful was I at using these skills this week?

1-----2-----3-----4-----5
Not Successful Somewhat Successful Very Successful

Which of these specific skills did I use best (greeting someone I don't know well, initiating a conversation with someone I don't know or know well, introducing myself to someone I don't know, keeping a conversation going, organizing an activity with another person or group, or comfortably ending a conversation)?

Which of these specific skills do I need to work on the most (greeting someone I don't know well, initiating a conversation with someone I don't know or know well, introducing myself to someone I don't know, keeping a conversation going, organizing an activity with another person or group, or comfortably ending a conversation)?

How many days did I chart this week (the number of days I had a rating (1-5) and/or NA? _____

Using the criteria on the Generic Rubric for Assessing Self-Awareness, Self-Insight, and Self-Knowledge, grade yourself on your answers to all the questions.

End of Project Assessments

How Effective Am I At the End of This Project

At the end of this project, how effective am I at using these skills?

1. How effective am I at greeting someone I don't know well?

1-----2-----3-----4-----5
Not Effective Somewhat Effective Very Effective

2. How effective am I at initiating a conversation with someone I don't know or know well?

1-----2-----3-----4-----5
Not Effective Somewhat Effective Very Effective

3. How effective am I at introducing myself to someone I don't know?

1-----2-----3-----4-----5
Not Effective Somewhat Effective Very Effective

4. How effective am I at keeping a conversation going?

1-----2-----3-----4-----5
Not Effective Somewhat Effective Very Effective

5. How effective am I at organizing an activity with another person or group?

1-----2-----3-----4-----5
Not Effective Somewhat Effective Very Effective

6. How effective am I at comfortably ending a conversation?

1-----2-----3-----4-----5
Not Effective Somewhat Effective Very Effective

Progress Evaluation At The End of the Project Rubric

Compare how successful you were at the project's beginning and end at using these skills. Based on your progress, give yourself a grade using the criteria below. Remember, you were not expected to be proficient at the beginning or even at the end of this project. The willingness and ability to use these skills may be difficult to master. They must be done repeatedly and in multiple situations to feel comfortable and to become proficient. The key is making progress and understanding why you were successful and what you need to do to become more successful/proficient. To what extent did I make progress in being able to:

1. Greet someone I don't know well,
2. Initiate a conversation with someone I don't know or know well
3. Introduce myself to someone I don't know
4. Keep a conversation going
5. Organize an activity with another person or group
6. Comfortably end a conversation

90 – 100 = Advanced: Above and Beyond. Since the beginning of the project, I have made significant progress in successfully using these skills.

80 – 89 = Proficient. At Standard. Since the beginning of the project, I have made good progress in successfully using these skills.

70 – 79 = Needs Improvement. I made some progress in using these skills since the beginning of the project, but I was capable of making more progress.

60-69 = Needs Significant Improvement. I made little progress in successfully using these skills since the beginning of the project. I hardly used these skills.

50 = Not Acceptable. I made no progress in using these skills since the beginning of the project. I didn't do any of the assignments or very little of them.

40 = I never used these skills or didn't turn the project in.

Based on the progress I made in using all of these skills, I believe I deserve the following grade:

Discuss why you believe you deserve this grade.

Effort Evaluation For Initiating Conversations Project

Using the criteria below, give yourself a grade for my effort throughout this project.

To what extent did I give my best effort in being able to:

1. Greet someone I don't know well,
2. Initiate a conversation with someone I don't know or know well
3. Introduce myself to someone I don't know
4. Keep a conversation going
5. Organize an activity with another person or group
6. Comfortably end a conversation

90 – 100 = Advanced: Above and Beyond. I gave my **best effort** throughout this project and used the skill whenever I had the opportunity.

80 – 89 = Proficient: At Standard. My effort was **good**, but it was not my best effort. I used the skill in most but not all situations when I had the opportunity or when it was appropriate.

70 – 79 = Needs Improvement. This was **not a good** effort for me. There were more than a few opportunities when I could have used the skill but didn't.

60-69 = Needs Significant Improvement. This was a **poor** effort for me. There were multiple opportunities when I could have used the skill and didn't.

50 = Not Acceptable. I **didn't try** to use the skill.

40 = I never used these skills or didn't turn the project in.

Based on my effort to become more proficient using these skills, I believe I deserve the following grade:

Explain why you believe you deserve this grade.

Generic Rubric For Assessing Self-Awareness, Self-Insight, & Self-Knowledge

To earn a grade of 90 or higher, you must meet **all** of the criteria in the 90-100 range listed below. To earn a grade of 100, your work must be perfect. To earn a grade of 80-89, you must meet **all** of the criteria in the 80-89 range listed below. Even if one question was not answered, if the answers are incomplete, or if you hurried through parts of the assignment to get it done, the highest grade **you** can give yourself is a 79. Based on the quality of your work, I may give you a higher grade but do not give yourself a grade higher than a 79 if it is incomplete.

90 – 100 = Advanced: Above and Beyond. My answers demonstrate deep and complex self-awareness, self-insight, and self-knowledge.

- Best Effort, Best Work
- All the Questions Have Been Answered
- The Answers are Complete and Fully Supported in Great Detail
- Answers Show **Deep & Complex** Insight: I Thought Very Deeply About The Answers to **Each** Question.

80 – 89 = Proficient: At Standard. My answers demonstrate significant self-awareness, self-insight, and self-knowledge.

- Good Effort, Good Work, but Not My Best
- All the Questions Have Been Answered
- The Answers are Complete and Supported
- Answers Show **Significant Insight**: I Thought Deeply About The Answers to **Most** of the Questions.

70 – 79 = Needs Improvement. My answers demonstrate some but incomplete self-awareness, self-insight, and self-knowledge.

- This is Not Good Work or Good Effort for Me
- Some of the Questions Are Incomplete or Have Not Been Answered
- Some Answers are Not Well Developed: I Didn't Think Deeply About the Answer to Some of the Questions
- I Hurried Through Parts of the Assignment to Get It Done
- Answers show **Incomplete** Self-Awareness, Self-Insight, & Self-Knowledge

60-69 = Needs Significant Improvement. My answers demonstrate a lack of self-awareness, self-insight, and self-knowledge.

- Poor Effort and Poor Quality of Work for Me
- Many of the Questions Are Incomplete or Have Not Been Answered
- Many Answers are Not Well Developed: I Didn't Think Deeply About the Answers to Most of the Questions, and My Answers Lack the Necessary Details and Support.
- I Hurried Through Large Parts of the Assignment to Get it Done
- Answers show a **Lack** of Self-Awareness, Self-Insight, & Self-Knowledge

50 = Not Acceptable. The Task Needs to be Completed or Done Over.

40 = The Assignment Wasn't Turned In

Initiating Conversations End of Project Questions

1. How does it feel (and why does it feel this way) to be more effective at greeting someone you don't know well, initiating conversations with someone you don't know or know well, introducing yourself to someone you don't know, being able to keep conversations going, organizing activities with other people or groups, and comfortably ending conversations?
2. Which of these specific skills are you most successful using (greeting someone you don't know well, initiating conversations with someone you don't know or know well, introducing yourself to someone you don't know, being able to keep conversations going, organizing activities with other people or groups, and comfortably ending conversations)?
3. Which of these specific skills do you need the most work on (greeting someone you don't know well, initiating conversations with someone you don't know or know well, introducing yourself to someone you don't know, being able to keep conversations going, organizing activities with other people or groups, and comfortably ending conversations)?
4. What impact has being more effective using these skills had on you and your relationships?
5. What contributed to your success (or lack thereof) in using these skills more effectively?
6. What do you need to do in the future to be better at using these skills?

Using the criteria on the Generic Rubric for Assessing Self-Awareness, Self-Insight, and Self-Knowledge, grade yourself on your answers to all the questions.

Initiating Conversations Project Grade Summary

Student Self-Evaluation of the Completeness & Depth of Their Answers

Students grade themselves using the criteria on the Generic Rubric for Assessing Self-Awareness, Self-Insight, and Self-Knowledge.

_____ My Self-Evaluation Grade For My Answers on The Beginning of the Project Questions

_____ My Self-Evaluation Grade For My Answers to The Weekly Questions

_____ My Self-Evaluation Grade For My Answers on The End of the Project Questions

Student Self-Evaluation of Their Progress

_____ My Self-Evaluation Grade For My Progress

Student Self-Evaluation of Their Effort

_____ My Self-Evaluation Grade For My Effort

Student Self-Evaluation of The Extent To Which They Charted

_____ My Self-Evaluation Grade For Charting:

Teacher Evaluation of the Completeness & Depth of Their Answers.

Teachers grade students using the criteria on the Generic Rubric for Assessing Self-Awareness, Self-Insight, and Self-Knowledge.

_____ Teachers Grade For The Completeness & Depth of Students Answers on the Beginning of the Project Questions.

_____ Teacher Evaluation Grade For The Completeness & Depth of Student Answers on the Weekly Assessments.

_____ Teacher Evaluation Grade For The Completeness & Depth of Student Answers on the End of Project Summary Questions.

(My signature indicates all the self-evaluation information is
a complete, accurate, and an honest assessment!)