

Lesson 7.3: ACT FAST, Think On Your Feet

Unit: Unit 7, Launch: Career Readiness and FACS Shark Tank (capstone; draws on Individual Growth and Life Readiness) **Topic:** 7.1 Present Yourself **Grade:** 6 to 8 (written at grade 7; see Differentiation for the grade 6 support and grade 8 stretch) **Days:** 1 class period of 40 minutes **Room:** Classroom, desks pushed back or in a horseshoe so a student can stand up and be seen

Standards

- NYS module line: NYS IGLR 3. Employability a) Explore employability skills
- NYS module line: NYS IGLR 3. Employability c) Demonstrate effective communication skills
- CTE theme line: CTE CCO 3. Employability Skills c) List and describe employability skills and ways they benefit individuals in community and work situations
- CTE theme line: CTE CIR 1. Communication f) Demonstrate personal development of communication skills through practice of these skills in a variety of classroom applications
- NYS FACS Learning Standard 3 (Intermediate), Key Idea: Students will understand and be able to manage personal resources of talent, time, energy, and money and make effective decisions in order to balance their obligations to work, family, and self.; Performance Indicator: Students understand how working contributes to a quality living environment.
- CDOS Standard 3a Universal Foundation Skills: Personal Qualities. Students demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between individuals and society and interact with others in a positive manner.
- National FCS 3.0: 1.2.8 Show the work habits, ethics, and professional conduct employers expect.
- National FCS 3.0: 13.3.2 Show the spoken and unspoken behaviors and attitudes that make communication work.

Enduring understanding and essential question

Big idea: When somebody asks you a question you were not expecting, nobody is grading the answer. They are watching how you handle not knowing. **Essential question:** What is somebody actually measuring when they ask me a question I cannot prepare for?

Objectives

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. (Low) Name the four things an employer is watching during an unexpected question (composure, communication, problem solving, adaptability) and give one observable sign of each.

2. (Mid) Given a scenario card with 10 seconds to think, deliver a 30-second spoken answer that stays on the question, states a decision, and gives one reason.
3. (High) Score their own second-round answer on the four traits with a number and one sentence of evidence, and name the single trait they will work on first.

Vocabulary

Tier 2 (general academic): observe, evidence, trait, composure, adapt Tier 3 (FACS): composure, adaptability, professionalism, candidate, employer. See Vocabulary 07.md.

Materials and setup

- Handout 07.03 - ACT FAST Scenario Cards and Self-Score.md: the 24 scenario cards printed and cut into a deck (one deck is enough for the whole class; two decks if the room runs two circles), plus one self-score sheet per student
- A visible 30-second timer with a sound. A phone timer projected works; a kitchen timer from the lab works better because students can see the dial move.
- Slides: Slides 07.03 - ACT FAST Think On Your Feet
- A cleared board section with four headings written before class: **Composure. Communication. Problem Solving. Adaptability.** Keep them covered or off to the side until the reveal.
- The conference chair and the conference list from Lesson 7.2, for the students not yet conferenced
- Setup notes: shuffle the deck before class. Pull the four cards you judge too hard for your room and set them aside, so nobody gets a card that ends the round in silence. Push desks back first; standing up is part of the drill and it does not work from behind a desk. Allergy check: none.

Pre-assessment

Do now hand vote: “Hands up if you have ever been asked a question in front of people and your brain went blank.” Nearly every hand goes up. Then: “Keep your hand up if you thought that meant you were bad at it.” Count. That number is what this lesson is aimed at, and it is worth saying the number out loud.

Do now and hook (Time: 4 min)

On the board: “Write down the last time somebody asked you something and you froze. One sentence. You will not have to read it.”

Debrief in 60 seconds: no shares, just the hand vote above. Then the hook, said standing at the front with the deck in hand: “I am going to ask you questions that nobody can prepare for. They are a little ridiculous on purpose. You get 10 seconds to think and 30 seconds to answer. Nobody is getting a grade. At the end I am going to tell you what I was actually watching, and it is not the answer.”

Procedure

Step	Teacher will	Students will	Time
1. Round 1: the drill, tight	Set the rules: stand up, 10 seconds of silence to think, 30 seconds to answer, the timer ends it mid-word if it has to, no do-overs, and the class claps for everyone the same. Deal cards to a first group of six. Keep the pace hard: six students in six minutes, no commentary between answers, no “good job.” Take private notes only.	Six students each draw a card, stand, take 10 seconds, answer for 30 seconds. Everyone else listens with pens down.	6 min
2. Round 2: the drill, harder	Same rules, six more students, with one change announced at the start: the teacher may interrupt once with a follow-up (“What if that does not work?” or “Say that in one sentence.”). Still no feedback between answers.	Six more students answer. The rest listen. Students who answered in Round 1 write one word on scrap paper for each speaker: the word the speaker used most.	6 min
3. The reveal: what I was actually watching	Stop the deck. Uncover the four headings. Say the line: “None of you got the answer right, because there is no right answer to ‘how would you sell a bicycle to a fish.’ Here is what I was writing down.” Take each heading in turn	Copy the four headings and one observable sign each onto the self-score sheet. Call out the second sign for each heading. Name one moment from Rounds 1 or 2 where they saw a trait happen, out loud, without	12 min

	and give the observable sign, then ask the class for a second one and write it under the heading. Composure: did your voice stay level, did you breathe, did you start or did you stall. Communication: did I understand you, did you look up, did you finish sentences. Problem solving: did you make a decision and give a reason, or did you narrate your confusion. Adaptability: when the question changed on you, did you change with it or restart. Then name the transfer directly: an interview, a first day at a job, a customer with a complaint, a principal in your doorway, a judge's question next week in the Shark Tank.	naming the student ("somebody paused and then started clean, that was composure").	
4. Round 3: short, then self-score	Run one fast round with the whole class at once in pairs: partner A draws, partner B is the timer, 30 seconds, then switch. Everyone answers once. Then hand the pen back: self-score	Answer once in a pair. Score themselves on four traits with evidence. Circle one trait to work on.	9 min

	the four traits 1 to 4 on the sheet, one sentence of evidence each, and circle the one trait to work on first. Call two students to the conference chair for the leftover resume conferences while the pairs run.		
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Do now 4 plus 6 plus 6 plus 12 plus 9 is 37; the closure below is 3 minutes. Total 40.

Questions to ask

Monitor understanding:

- What are the four things I was watching?
- Give me one thing you could see or hear that shows composure.
- What is the difference between making a decision and narrating your confusion?
- When I interrupted with a follow-up, what was I testing?

Deepen learning:

- Why would an employer ask a question that has no right answer?
- You froze for four seconds and then started clean. Was that a failure or was that composure? Make the case.
- Which of the four traits is hardest to fake? Why does that matter to the person hiring?
- Where else this year did you have to do this? (Steer toward the lab where a step went wrong and somebody had to decide in ten seconds.)
- Which of the four will matter most when a judge asks your team a question next week?

Check for understanding

Two checks. During Rounds 1 and 2, a private tally on the class list: for each speaker, a check under any of the four traits that showed. This is never shown to students as a score; it is used to name traits out loud in Step 3 without naming students. At Step 4, read over shoulders for the self-score evidence sentence. A “got it” evidence sentence names something observable (“my voice shook for the first five seconds and then it did not”). A “needs more” sentence names a feeling (“I was nervous”). Push once with: “What could I have seen or heard?”

Closure (Time: 3 min)

One-sentence circle, standing: each student says “The trait I am working on is ___ because ___.” Twenty-five students at five seconds each is just over two minutes; keep it moving and

do not comment. Collect the self-score sheets. They go into the FACS folder and come back out in Lesson 7.5, where the same four traits are on the interview feedback sheet, and again in Lesson 7.11, where they are on the judge sheet.

Differentiation and supports

- ELL: the scenario cards are written in short sentences with no idioms, and every card has a one-line picture description on the back so the situation can be understood without full reading. The four traits and their signs appear in Turkish, Portuguese, and Spanish on the self-score sheet, from Vocabulary 07.md. An ELL student may answer in the home language with a bilingual partner translating one sentence of it for the room, or may answer in English with 20 seconds of thinking time instead of 10. Sentence starters on the card back in all four languages: "I would ___ first, because ." **and "That would not work, so instead I would ."**
- IEP and 504 (general): thinking time extended to 20 or 30 seconds on request, no announcement made; the option to answer seated; the option to answer to the teacher and one partner rather than the room; a card drawn and shown in advance for a student whose anxiety needs the preview; no interruption follow-up for students on the do-not-interrupt list the teacher keeps privately; fidget tools allowed throughout; the self-score sheet available as a four-box checkbox version.
- Grade 6 support: a shorter list of scenario cards (the first twelve, which are the concrete ones), 15 seconds of thinking time as the default, and no interruption round. Grade 6 students score two traits instead of four: composure and communication.
- Grade 8 stretch: the last six cards on the deck are the hard ones, where the scenario has a conflict in it and there is no clean answer. Grade 8 students also take one follow-up interruption on purpose, and their self-score adds a fifth line: what they would say differently if the same card came in a real interview.
- UDL checkpoints used: multiple means of engagement (a timed game with no grade attached lowers the stakes of speaking, and every student answers at least once in the pair round so nobody is only watched) and multiple means of action and expression (spoken, seated or standing, to the room or to a pair, in English or with a translated sentence).
- No-presentation accommodation: this lesson is all speaking, so the accommodation matters here more than anywhere else in the unit. A student may do the whole lesson in the pair round only, answering to one partner with the teacher listening from two feet away. A student may also write the 30-second answer and read it, or hand it to the teacher. Nobody is required to stand in front of the room. Participation is scored on answering once in any format, not on where they stood.

Assessment

Objective	Standards met	Learning task	Assessment (formative or summative; tool)
1. Name the four traits and one	IGLR 3. a); CCO 3. c); National FCS 1.2.8	Step 3 reveal and the copied headings	Formative; self-score sheet checked

observable sign of each			for four traits with a sign each, complete, partial, or missing for daily work
2. Deliver a 30-second answer on the question with a decision and a reason	IGLR 3. c); CIR 1. f); CDOS 3a Personal Qualities; National FCS 13.3.2	Rounds 1, 2, and 3	Formative; the teacher's private trait tally. No grade is attached to any single answer, and students are told that before they speak
3. Self-score the four traits with evidence and name one to work on	IGLR 3. a); Std 3 PI D; CDOS 3a Personal Qualities	Step 4 self-score and the closure sentence	Formative; the evidence sentence is checked for an observable detail. The same four traits are scored by a peer in Lesson 7.5 and by an adult judge in Lesson 7.11

The four traits are not separately graded. They appear inside Rubric 07 criterion 2 (the interview) and criterion 6 (the pitch), so this lesson is the teaching that those two criteria assess.

Homework

None. Optional: ask one adult what the hardest question they ever got asked in an interview was, and what they said.

Connections

Inside the building: the drama or music teacher, if your school has one. What this lesson calls composure, they call stage presence, and they have exercises for it that take three minutes. FACS gives them a room full of students who now have a reason to care about it; they give FACS a breathing and projection routine that actually works. Community: any adult who interviews people for a living (a manager, a recruiter, a coach, a military recruiter) can run one round of this deck as a guest in six minutes, and the reveal lands harder from a stranger.

Sources

- NYS Middle Level CTE FACS Content Module 01, Individual Growth and Life Readiness, lines 3. a) and 3. c).
- NYS Middle Level CTE Theme Module 01, Career and Community Opportunities, line 3. c); Theme Module 02, Communication and Interpersonal Relationships, line 1. f).

- NYS Learning Standards for FACS (1996), Standard 3, Intermediate. NYS CDOS Standard 3a, Personal Qualities. Wording per 02 Standards/STANDARDS SOURCES - web research.md. *[Sal: confirm against the NYSED PDFs.]*
- National Standards for FCS Education 3.0 (LEAD FCS Education, 2018), competencies 1.2.8 and 13.3.2.
- Sal's own materials: the ACT FAST rapid-fire interview drill he built and taught, including his own reflection on it, which said to keep the scenario rounds tight and give more time to the teaching reveal. That is why Step 3 is 12 minutes and Rounds 1 and 2 are 6 each.

Teacher notes

- Sal's own reflection on this drill is the design note for the lesson: the rounds are fun and they run away with the period if you let them. Keep Rounds 1 and 2 to six minutes each with no commentary. The reveal is the lesson. If you are behind at minute 12, cut Round 2 to four speakers rather than shorten Step 3.
- Do not give feedback between answers in Rounds 1 and 2. The moment you praise one answer, every student after it starts performing for you instead of thinking, and the reveal stops working because they think the answer was the point.
- The clap-for-everyone rule matters. Say it once at the start and enforce it on the first answer.
- Count how many students freeze completely. If it is more than three, add 10 seconds to the thinking time in Round 2 and say why out loud: "I am giving you more time because more time is what real interviews give you when you ask for a second."
- The transfer line to say in Step 3, in these words or close to them: "You are going to stand in front of a panel next week with a business idea, and one of them is going to ask you something you did not plan for. This is that skill."
- *[Sal: your own version of this drill used slightly absurd scenarios on purpose. Keep the absurd ones. They make it safe to be wrong, which is the only way a kid will risk answering at all. Swap in the ones your students laughed at.]*
- Use the pair round in Step 4 to finish the Lesson 7.2 resume conferences. Two minutes each, and the room is busy enough that nobody notices.
- Keep the self-score sheets. They come back in Lesson 7.5 and again in Lesson 7.12, where students compare the trait they circled today to what a peer and then an adult observed.