Business problems mini roleplays game
business communication review

Shuffle the pack of cards and put them face down on the top left box. The first person takes the top card and chooses how they are going to communicate and who they are going to communicate with to solve the problem. The options are to:

- Write an email
- Use chat/ instant messenger
- Phone someone
- Pick a time when you know someone is not available and leave a phone message
- Go and see the person and speak face to face
- Leave someone a note (e.g. put a post it on their computer screen)
- Write a memo for your whole team/ section/ department/ company to read

They should then tell their partners what they are going to say or write, or roleplay the conversation with someone. After that the other members of the group decide whether they managed to find a successful solution. If so, they can keep the card and score one point. If not, their card goes to the bottom of the pile. Play passes to the person on their right. The person with most cards when the teacher stops the game is the winner.

Put the pack of UNUSED CARDS face down here 

Put the card you have turned over face up here 

Useful language to play the game

- "Who's next?"= "Whose turn is it?"
- "It's your turn"= "Take a card"

- "Who are you going to contact (to solve the problem)?"
- "How are you going to contact them?"
- "What are you going to say/ write?"
- "Who is going to play the other role?"

- "I think that would work because…"
- "I don't think that would work/ I'm not sure that would work because…"
- "Let's ask, shall we?"= "Shall we check with the teacher?"

- "Who has the most cards?"/ "Congratulations, you are the winner"

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Playing cards
Instructions for teachers
Photocopy one set of playing cards and one playing board per group of 3 or 4 students. Cut up the playing cards. After they have finished the game, you can discuss how to make the problems not occur in the first place, e.g. choose your email subject lines carefully.

Your colleagues are at the pub waiting for you but you realize that you won't be able to finish your work and join them	Someone sends you an address written in Chinese, but you can't read it because you don't have the right script installed on your computer
Everyone in the section you are in charge of seems to be getting annoyed with the only person who smokes at his desk	It's late in the evening and you suddenly realize you won't be able to make an early morning meeting the next day
There is no attachment on the email someone has sent you	You get a message from one of your colleagues that the person who is coming to meet you at your office can't find the building
You need to change the time of a meeting	You receive an email from someone in Bolivia, but the English is so bad that you can't even understand what it is about
The reply to your email says "OK. Let's do it" but they haven't included your original message and you didn't save it so you don't know what "it" is.	Your emails to a supplier keep getting bounced back.
You have accidentally forwarded a joke email about the incompetent Dilbert cartoon character "pointy haired boss" to *your* boss!	Some in the team you are leading sends so many joke emails that by the end of each day your in box is nearly full.

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You have only just listened yesterday's mobile messages because your battery was flat. One was about today's meeting, which you've missed.	Because of how it is formatted, when you open a report from your boss on your computer it has no paragraphs, bullet points, bold type etc.
You have deleted an email from an important client without reading it because the subject line looked like junk mail.	One of your colleagues keeps using abbreviations and emoticons that no one else understands, like "ROTFL"
You accidentally pressed the wrong button and cut someone off instead of putting them on hold.	You need to phone someone whose name you don't know how to pronounce.
You keep getting wrong number calls with people asking for "Mama Mia Pizza Delivery"	You were put on hold for so long you decided to hang up, but you still need to contact that person.

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