



ASPIRATIONS

ACTIVITY

BOOK

Grades 6-12



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Dear Colleagues,

Today's schools are expected to positively impact students on multiple levels from the personal and social to the physical and academic. There are endless rules and regulations in place meant to help schools reach these varied and often competing goals. Yet in the 21st-century world of high-stakes education, we lose sight of the students and what they need to reach their fullest potential.

The Quaglia Institute for School Voice & Aspirations believes that the key to improving education is the establishment of conditions that support student aspirations. If students are to reach their goals and dreams, they need to have the conditions in place that will help them be successful. These conditions, known as the 8 Conditions that Make a Difference, must become a critical, fundamental part of education and school improvement initiatives.

The 8 Conditions are: Belonging, Heroes, Sense of Accomplishment, Fun & Excitement, Curiosity & Creativity, Spirit of Adventure, Leadership & Responsibility, and Confidence to Take Action. It is time to put the 8 Conditions at the forefront of educational initiatives so that all students can strive for and reach their academic and social promise.

This Aspirations Activity Book 6-12 is one of a series of student activity books for K-12 educators that provide ways to teach and implement the 8 Conditions in the classroom. Unlike many books, this book is designed to be copied and shared with your colleagues. Let us know what you think of the activities. If you would like to add one of your own activities to our online database, please contact us at info@quagliainstitute.org.

Have fun!

The Staff

Quaglia Institute for School Voice & Aspirations

**“‘Aspirations’ is the ability to dream about the future
while being inspired in the present to reach those dreams.”**

--Dr. Russell J. Quaglia; Executive Director, Quaglia Institute for School Voice & Aspirations

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CHAPTER 1

Belonging

The Condition of Belonging

The Condition of Belonging means that a student is a valued member of a community, while still maintaining their uniqueness. Belonging is a relationship between two or more persons characterized by a sense of connection and support. A sense of Belonging is a necessary condition for a student's sense of well-being, social engagement, and competence. The Condition of Belonging increases intrinsic motivation by fostering self-confidence and investment in the school community. As a teacher, you have the opportunity to establish a culture of Belonging in your classroom, one that promotes your students' sense of well-being, connection, and self-belief.



Follow Me

An important component to fostering Belonging is building trust. Trust allows students to talk openly and honestly with their peers. Trust-building activities help students to develop mutual respect and understanding of each other. This activity fosters trust between students by encouraging students to be responsible for guiding their partners through several trust activities.

Materials

- ▶ Trust Me Activities (page follows)

Questions to Get Started

1. What makes it difficult to trust people?
2. How can we build trust in our classroom?

Instructions

1. Put students in groups of two for this activity. One student should be the leader and the other the follower.
2. Please read one of the Trust Me activities and then ask each leader to lead their partner through the activity. Remind leaders that they are responsible for their partner's safety.
3. Repeat the activity and have the leader and follower switch roles.
4. Continue this process with all the activities.
5. Students might also want to suggest and direct their own Trust Me activities.
6. Provide students with an opportunity to discuss what it feels like to trust another person.

Discussion Points

- ▶ Trust is something we need to earn.
- ▶ Our classroom will be a stronger community if we trust each other.
- ▶ As members of our class, we are responsible for each other.

Trust Me Activities



- ► FOLLOWERS SHOULD START AT THE BACK OF THE CLASSROOM.
Followers must shut their eyes and have their leader safely guide them across the room. If the class finds this too easy, place a few obstacles around the room so leaders must take more care in giving directions. Leaders cannot hold or touch the followers during this activity.

- ► LEADERS SHOULD ASK FOLLOWERS TO DRAW A PICTURE.
A leader, however, can only give directions one circle or line at a time and may not look at how the follower is progressing. For example, leaders cannot just say, "Draw a house." Followers may not ask questions and must only draw from their leader's directions. Leaders must be explicit with their directions and guide followers by giving short, step-by-step instructions.

- ► LEADERS SHOULD GUIDE FOLLOWERS THROUGH THIS CHAIR SITTING ACTIVITY.
Place chairs around the room. Leaders will guide followers to sit down in a chair, get up, and then sit down in another chair. Leaders should guide followers to five different chairs. Be sure leaders do not allow followers to miss the chair. Followers must keep their eyes shut and listen to the directions of the leader. Leaders cannot touch their followers unless there is a safety issue. Blindfold followers for this activity. Leaders and followers should hold hands and gradually move from a slow walk to a run across open space.



Circle Up!

An important component to Belonging is being part of a group while still maintaining your individuality. Often students mask their individuality in order to fit in or be accepted by their peers. Students need opportunities to share their uniqueness with their peers. This activity helps students learn about each other.

Materials

- ▶ Circle Questions (page follows)

Questions to Get Started

1. What one thing would you like to know about me (the teacher)?
2. What is something no one in this class knows about you?

Instructions

1. Ask students to sit in a large circle.
2. Next, ask one of the Circle Questions. All students should answer the same question.
3. Discourage students from simply repeating what others have said.
4. Start with a different person for each question so every student has the opportunity to be the first to respond to a question.
5. Do not allow anyone to comment on someone else's answer.
6. Choose questions that you feel are the most appropriate for your students.
7. End this activity by asking students what they learned about their classmates.

Discussion Points

- ▶ We all have different ideas, perspectives, and thoughts.
- ▶ The more we learn about each other, the more trust we develop as a class.
- ▶ Our classroom community consists of many interesting individuals.

Circle Questions



1. What is your favorite movie?
2. What trait do you look for in a friend?
3. What do you like to do with a free afternoon?
4. What is the greatest problem in the country? The region? The city?
5. If you could develop one talent, what would it be?
6. What is the greatest value that guides your life?
7. What one quality do you look for in a good teacher?
8. What one person has greatly influenced your life?
9. What gives you the most security?
10. What is your greatest fear?
11. What one word describes students of your age?
12. If you could give your principal one piece of positive advice, what would it be?
13. What is one thing that really annoys you?
14. If you could be a character in a book, which character would you be?
15. What do people like best about you?
16. What do you think about your future?





What Doesn't Belong and Why?

An important approach to fostering Belonging is being open to accepting others. Often students exclude others for superficial reasons. This activity encourages students to think about issues of exclusion and inclusion.

Materials

- ▶ Copies of What Doesn't Belong and Why? Worksheet (page follows)

Questions to Get Started

1. How do you decide if someone is part of your group of friends?
2. How do students judge other students?

Instructions

1. Put students in groups of two.
2. Give each group a copy of the “What Doesn't Belong and Why?” handout.
3. Next, students should decide which word in the group does not belong and why. For example, the words might be car, rock, and grass. Students might say the word car does not belong because it is not found in nature.
4. After students do this exercise with all the words, challenge students to find a way to relate all three words. For example, car, rock, and grass might relate because my parents got mad when I drove my car over a rock and onto the grass. Encourage students to be creative.
5. Provide time for students to share their answers. Ask students to think of creative ways in which the entire class is similar.

Discussion Points

- ▶ Although we are all individuals, we also belong to one class.
- ▶ We need to respect each individual in our classroom community.
- ▶ Sometimes we think we are very different from our peers, when in fact we have much in common.



What Doesn't Belong & Why Worksheet

Look at the three words. Write the word that, in your group's opinion, does not belong and why.

Basketball, Pizza, and Flowers

Which word does not belong and why?

Homework, Ocean, and Hotdog

Which word does not belong and why?

Computer, Bread, and Tree

Which word does not belong and why?

Music, Ice Cream, and Dog

Which word does not belong and why?

Grass, Summer, and Holiday

Which word does not belong and why?

Grades, Height, and Mud

Which word does not belong and why?

Next, find a creative way to relate the three words in each group.



Reflect, Write, and Share

Use the following prompts to help your students reflect on the Condition of Belonging and their role in fostering this Condition for their peers.

Reflect, Write, and Share

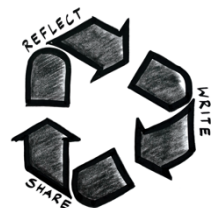
Reflect on what it feels like to be excluded from a group. Write down the words that represent your feelings.

Now, think about one thing you could do to include students who do not feel a sense of Belonging. Share your idea with the class.

Reflect, Write, and Share

Reflect on each of your classmates. What do you know about their interests, hobbies, hopes, and dreams? Write down the names of classmates you do not know well and one thing you would like to know about them.

Now, think about what your class could do to get to know each other better. Share your idea with the class.





One Truth, One Lie, One Someday

An important component of fostering Belonging is for students to understand each other better and celebrate each other's uniqueness. This activity allows students to express their individuality and learn more about their classmates.

Materials

- ▶ Paper and pen

Questions to Get Started

1. What talents and skills do you have?
2. What talents and skills would you like to develop?

Instructions

1. Have students write down three statements.
 - a. Something true about themselves
 - b. Something untrue about themselves
 - c. Something they hope will be true someday
2. Encourage students to write three believable responses.
3. Have students share their responses without following the order of the questions.
4. Other students should try to guess which is the truth, which is untrue, and which is the someday.

Discussion Questions

- ▶ What information do you think is important for others to know about you?
- ▶ Why is it sometimes difficult to share who we are with other people?
- ▶ What was the most interesting thing you learned from this exercise?



Who Are You?

An important component to fostering Belonging is for students to learn about each other as well as to work with each other. This activity uses student interviews as a way for students to learn about their peers.

Materials

- ▶ Interview questions (page follows)
- ▶ Pencil

Questions to Get Started

1. What are some creative ways we can get to know each other better?
2. If you could interview one person, who would it be and why?

Instructions

1. Have students think of reasons why people interview others.
2. Pair students with a classmate they do not know well. Hand out the interview worksheet and allow students time to interview their partner. Students should take notes and be prepared to share their discoveries.
3. Next, have students introduce their partners to the rest of the class using their interview notes.
4. Put all the interviews into a class book for others to read.
5. Follow this activity by asking students to interview adults in the building. It is interesting for students to learn about the custodians, office staff, and other teachers.

Discussion Questions

- ▶ What common interests did you discover that you did not know about before?
- ▶ What new thing did you learn about one of your classmates?
- ▶ Who else in this building would you like to get to know better?



Interview Questions

1. Where were you born?
2. What is one food you really dislike?
3. If you could own an exotic pet, what would it be and why?
4. What summer jobs have you had?
5. What do you like to do on the weekend and after school?
6. What is your dream job?
7. If you had a nickname, what would it be?
8. If you could change one thing about school, what would you change?
9. What do you think would be a great place to visit and why?
10. What do your friends like about you?
11. Think of your own question to ask your partner.





Reflect, Write, and Share

Use the following prompts to help your students reflect on the Condition of Belonging and their role in fostering this Condition for their peers.

Reflect, Write, and Share

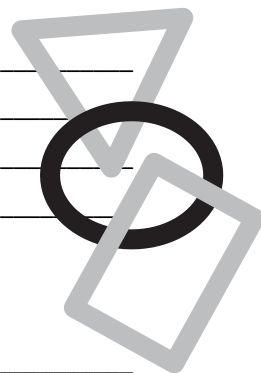
Students come to school with many of their own experiences, perceptions, and ideas about people. Reflect on a few stereotypes you have held at some point in your life. Write why you held these stereotypes.

Now, think about one thing you can do to make sure you are not promoting stereotyping and bias in your school. Share your ideas with your peers.

Reflect, Write, and Share

Becoming part of an existing group of friends at school can be challenging. Reflect on ways you have excluded students from being part of your group of friends. Write your thoughts about the challenges students who are excluded face every day.

Now, think about something that you could do to be more inclusive and accepting of outsiders. Share your ideas with your peers.





Promoting Belonging

As educators, we know that the 8 Conditions must be fostered throughout the school building as well as in the classroom to support aspirations. Here are some simple ideas to help you expand this Condition throughout your school.

To foster Belonging school-wide, try these strategies:

- ▶ Eat lunch with a colleague you don't interact with daily.
- ▶ Help out in the cafeteria and take the time to learn about the people who work there every day.
- ▶ Inform the central office of an exciting project or initiative your students are doing.
- ▶ Approach a new teacher or staff member and ask them about any questions they may have regarding the school.
- ▶ Make three positive phone calls to parents.
- ▶ Invite staff members to participate, share their expertise or just introduce themselves to your class.
- ▶ Take a colleague's duty for a day.
- ▶ Attend an afterschool function or meeting that involves your students.
- ▶ Push your colleagues to think about how students' backgrounds and experiences influence their school experiences and expectations.
- ▶ Meet with a student who challenged you last year. Sincerely ask how they are doing.
- ▶ Sit with a group of students at lunch.
- ▶ Ask the school office staff, bus driver, or custodian if there is something you can do to help them.
- ▶ Hang out in the front lobby and greet students before and after school.
- ▶ Invite your principal to your class to help teach a lesson.
- ▶ Ensure that all staff members have a voice at staff meetings.

Heroes



The Condition of Heroes

Heroes are the everyday people — teachers, friends, family — in a student’s life who inspire them to excel and to make positive changes in attitudes and lifestyles. Heroes are people with whom students can connect, who have a positive influence on them, and who listen to and value their ideas. Heroes build trust in others and belief in oneself. As a teacher, you are a hero to your students. They look up to you as someone to learn from and communicate with about many things. Building relationships with your students through support, guidance, and encouragement enables them to become more confident in their academic, personal, and social growth.



I Am...

The Condition of Heroes is about helping students recognize that they are Heroes to the people they interact with every day. Heroes do not have to be adults and do not have to do superhuman feats. This activity allows students to think about all they have to offer and their potential to be an everyday Hero at school and in the community.

Materials

- Paper and writing supplies

Questions to Get Started

1. How do you see your classmates being Heroes every day?
2. Who are a few adults in your life who are everyday Heroes? Why?

Instructions

1. Each student is going to write a personal poem.
2. Each line of the poem should begin with the statement, “I am ...” Leave it open to their interpretation as much as possible, but suggest that they can include statements that might identify their hopes, background, skills, and personal attributes. Poems might include memories from different points in their lives, mottos, favorite phrases, family traditions and customs, and whatever else defines who they are. It is helpful if the teacher first shares their “I am...” poem.
3. Allow students time to think and to write several drafts of their poems. Then encourage students to share their poems with a partner. If time permits, have students create a publishable copy and then display the poems.

Discussion Points

- You can be a Hero by just being kind to others.
- Sometimes we do not notice all of our potential.
- It is important to think about others and their needs.





Linking Generations

Heroes are people who listen to, care about, and act on behalf of others. Our communities often have many unknown Heroes. This activity introduces students to the older population in the community.

Materials

- ▶ Writing paper and pen

Questions to Get Started

1. What one thing do you know about your parents or grandparents' generation?
2. What do you admire the most in an older person?

Instructions

1. Begin this activity by talking about generations and what different generations can
2. learn from each other.
3. Let students know they are going to learn about an older person by interviewing
4. them. Students might want to do this assignment in pairs.
5. Have students think of an older adult they would like to interview and learn more
6. about. Encourage students to think beyond adults at school and immediate family. Perhaps they have an older neighbor or even access to people in a retired population.
7. Once students have decided on their interviewee, they should think about what they want to learn from this person. Encourage students to think of events that might have occurred during their interviewee's lifetime.
8. Next, have students develop 15 interview questions. Share and discuss the questions and then set a deadline for students to conduct their interviews. Students might need help to arrange their interviews.
9. Make sure students take notes during the interview so they can share their findings.
10. After the project is complete, allow time for students to share with the class and write thank-you notes to their interviewees.

Discussion Points

- ▶ We have many everyday Heroes in our community.
- ▶ We can learn much from older generations and they can learn from us, too.
- ▶ Getting to know people in our community connects us all to each other.



What's Inside?

Heroes respect each other and value each other's differences. Respect is more than acknowledging differences. Respect is about knowing differences are important and desired. This activity helps students understand and respect their classmates.

Materials

- ▶ 4 different items that can fit inside a gift box
- ▶ 4 different boxes and an assortment of gift-wrapping paper
- ▶ Slips of paper and pens
- ▶ Tape and a marker



Questions to Get Started

1. What does it mean to respect another person?
2. How do we show respect to our friends?

Instructions

1. Collect four very different items such as a new toy car, a pretend diamond ring, a paper clip, and a pack of gum.
2. Put each item in a gift box and wrap each box differently. The idea is to make the nicest gifts appear shabby and the worst gifts appear attractive by wrapping the gifts accordingly.
3. Mark the boxes 1, 2, 3, and 4 and line up the boxes in front of the class.
4. Give students slips of paper and ask them to number the paper 1 to 4.
5. There are two ways to proceed from here:
 - a. Tell the students what items you have wrapped and ask them to guess what is in each box, or
 - b. Ask the students to guess what is in each box.
6. After all the students write their answers, have them share their guesses.
7. Unwrap the packages and let students see how successful they were at guessing the contents. Ask students, "How quickly did you judge a package by its wrapping?"
8. Ask students to think about why they associated nice wrapping with a good gift. How does this relate to us as a class or school?

Discussion Points

- ▶ We often tend to judge people by outside appearances.
- ▶ Taking the time to get to know someone will help us realize that outside appearances do not always equate with what is inside.
- ▶ Being a hero can be as simple as respecting people who appear different.



Reflect, Write, and Share

Use the following prompts to help your students reflect on the Condition of Heroes and their role in fostering this Condition for their peers.

Reflect, Write, and Share

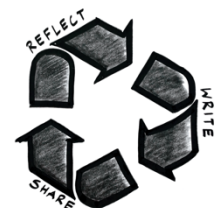
Reflect on a time when you truly were a Hero to someone. Write about why you think you were a Hero and what it felt like to be a Hero.

Now, think of one way you could be a better Hero at school or in your community. Share your idea with the class.

Reflect, Write, and Share

Bullying is something students witness every day. Reflect on a time you were a bully to another student. Write about why you felt it was okay to bully someone else.

Now, think of several actions you currently do that intimidate other students. What could you do differently to decrease episodes of bullying in your school? Share your ideas with the class.



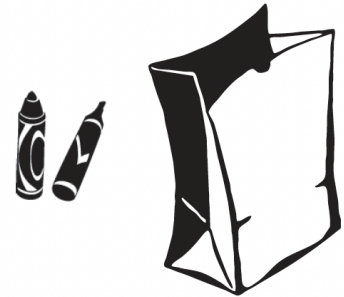


Positive Deposits

Heroes are people who care about each other and support each other every day. This activity encourages students to be a Hero just by acknowledging other people's strengths. This activity works well once students know each other.

Materials

- ▶ Brown lunch bags
- ▶ Enough strips of paper for each student to write a one-word note to every student in the class.
- ▶ Markers



Questions to Get Started

1. What traits or qualities do you admire in friends?
2. What Hero traits do you possess?

Instructions

1. Have students write their names on a lunch bag. This bag will become a mailbox for other students to drop notes in.
2. Ask students to think about a Hero quality they possess and write that quality on the bag.
3. Give each student enough pieces of paper to write a hero-quality statement for each of their classmates. For example, "Sasha has a great sense of humor," "Tyrone is a good listener," "Braydon is always there when needed."
4. Once students have written a quality for everyone, have them deposit the notes in each student's bag.
5. End the activity by having students read their notes silently and then share one quality they are most proud of possessing.

Discussion Questions

- ▶ What does it feel like to be recognized for your potential to be a Hero?
- ▶ What Hero quality do you wish you had?
- ▶ Does everyone have the potential to be a Hero? Explain.



Superpowers

The “superpowers” that Heroes possess are relative depending on your perspective. To ordinary adults, Superman’s ability to fly is a superpower; to children, an adult’s ability to drive a car is a “superpower”. Both are extraordinary modes of transportation from a certain point of view. This activity invites students to consider their ordinary “superpowers.”

Materials

- ▶ Paper and pen

Questions to Get Started

1. What are some of the superpowers that comic book heroes have?
2. What comic book type of superpower do you wish you had?



Instructions

1. Have students consider that Superman’s ability to fly is only extraordinary to someone who can’t fly. Continue by having them consider that an adult’s ability to drive a car is a “superpower” to someone who cannot yet drive a car. Both are extraordinary means of transportation for someone who cannot ordinarily do them.
2. Brainstorm other “superpowers” that adults have from a high school student’s point of view. If necessary, prompt with:
 - a. The ability to spend money any way they want
 - b. Being able to deal with complex emotional problems
 - c. Having credit cards
3. Next, brainstorm “superpowers” high school students possess from a seven-year-old’s point of view.
4. Ask each student to talk about how their perceived superpowers can benefit others.

Discussion Questions

- ▶ Which adult “superpowers” are you most looking forward to acquiring?
- ▶ What one “superpower” do you most want to be known for?
- ▶ How could you use the “superpowers” you have now to help younger family members or students?



Reflect, Write, and Share

Use the following prompts to help your students reflect on the Condition of Heroes and their role in fostering this Condition for their peers.

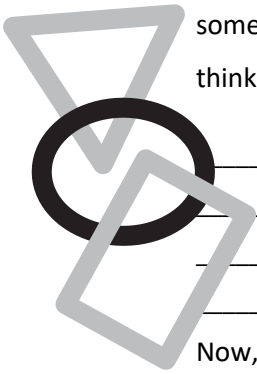
Reflect, Write, and Share

Reflect on a time you read about or witnessed someone being a Hero. Write about why you remember this incident and what impact it had on you.

Now, think about how you can create more opportunities to be a Hero. Share your ideas with your peers.

Reflect, Write, and Share

Heroes respect others and value diversity. Reflect on a time you learned something from someone who was different from you. Write about how their difference influenced your thinking or ideas.



Now, think about one person you could learn a lot from if you just respect them for their differences. Give one idea about how to get to know someone who is different from you. Share your idea with your peers.



Promoting Heroes

As educators, we know that the 8 Conditions must be fostered throughout the school building as well as in the classroom to support aspirations. Here are some simple ideas to help you expand this Condition throughout your school.

To foster Heroes school-wide, try these strategies:

- ▶ Learn the reasons why three of your colleagues decided to become a teacher.
- ▶ Give students time to write notes of thanks/appreciation to adults in the building.
- ▶ At your next staff meeting, recognize a teacher who did something to make a difference in a student's life.
- ▶ Ride the school bus either to or from school with the students. This will give you a better perspective on someone else's job, as well as exposure to the experiences students have at the start or end of the school day.
- ▶ Learn a few words or a phrase in a language spoken by members of your ESL community.
- ▶ Visit the middle school before the end of the school year. Introduce yourself to your future students.
- ▶ Invite parents to your class to share their knowledge and expertise. Remember, knowledge comes in many forms.
- ▶ Write a note of appreciation to your mentor or someone who has supported you as an educator.
- ▶ Make an extra effort to listen to students.
- ▶ Mentor a new family in your community or your school. Periodically check in with them and offer support and guidance.
- ▶ Take the time to understand where your colleagues hope to be professionally in five years.
- ▶ Eat lunch with the custodians, office staff, or bus drivers. Be sure to bring dessert!
- ▶ Offer students a stress-free environment to hang out in during lunch or after school once a week.



CHAPTER 3

Sense of Accomplishment

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The Condition of Sense of Accomplishment

The Condition of Sense of Accomplishment recognizes effort, perseverance, and citizenship as signs of a student's success. Educators have traditionally used a narrow view of accomplishment that refers to academic achievement, innate ability, or who is "best in the class." Sense of Accomplishment, however, is viewed in terms of personal growth and effort, not just outcomes and academic results. As a teacher, you have the opportunity to celebrate your students' accomplishments in visible ways. Taking time to recognize and support your students' efforts will result in students who are motivated to persevere through difficult tasks and to create a healthy classroom environment through hard work and dedication.



Headliner

Sense of Accomplishment is about recognizing all the things students do that are accomplishments. Students should be proud of their accomplishments whether they are big or small. This activity encourages students to realize that accomplishments can be more than good grades and sports trophies.

Materials

- ▶ Paper, pencil, computer access
- ▶ 3-4 front pages of newspapers
- ▶ Smartphone



Questions to Get Started

1. What accomplishments have you been recognized for at school?
2. What one thing would you like to accomplish this school year?

Instructions

1. Students are going to write a front page for their own newspaper that highlights their accomplishments.
2. Place various newspaper front pages around the room for students to view. Discuss what makes an interesting front page. Remind students that the headlines must be about their accomplishments.
3. Students should develop a newspaper name, headline article, and several shorter articles. Teachers might want to prepare their own front page to share.
4. Allow students time to think, plan, and create their front pages.
5. Let students take a picture for their front page.
6. After several brainstorming sessions, have students create their front page on a computer or phone.
7. Put together a book of front pages and invite guests to view the student newspapers.

Discussion Points

- ▶ Finishing long-term projects takes perseverance and effort.
- ▶ We are all successful in many different ways.
- ▶ Celebrating each other's headlines is a great way to acknowledge the accomplishments of our peers.



Musical Chairs Review

Sense of Accomplishment is about perseverance and effort. Effort occurs when students try their best and perseverance is evident when students don't give up. This activity challenges students to persevere at a difficult academic task.

Materials

- ▶ Music playlist
- ▶ Teacher- or student-created review questions

Questions to Get Started

1. What does it mean to persevere?
2. Why is it important to persevere during difficult tasks?

Instructions

1. Explain to your students that they are going to play Musical Chairs Review.
2. Place chairs around the room. Teachers should prepare a series of review questions to ask students.
3. While playing music, ask students to mingle around the room. When the music stops, each student must find a chair.
4. The student left standing must answer a review question based on something the class is currently learning. The student has ten seconds to answer. If they answer correctly, they are "out" and get to ask the next question. If they answer incorrectly, everyone stands up, removes another chair, and the round is replayed. This time two students will be left standing and the first one to answer correctly is "out". Play continues until one student is left.
5. The game continues until there is only one student standing. Students can also work in pairs to avoid one student standing by themselves at the end of the review.

Discussion Points

- ▶ There are many different ways to be smart.
- ▶ To be successful we need to put forth effort.
- ▶ Sometimes we might try our hardest and still not win.





Tangled Up!

An important component of fostering Sense of Accomplishment is for students to be able to work together to achieve success as a group or class. This activity challenges students to work together to solve a problem.

Materials

- ▶ 2-foot pieces of rope - one for each student

Questions to Get Started

1. Why is it challenging to work with students who are different from you?
2. How could you be more helpful and supportive when working with your peers?



Instructions

1. Put students in groups of ten and have each group stand in a circle.
2. Give each group ten pieces of rope.
3. Ask students to put the pieces of rope in the center. Then each student should grab an end of a different piece of rope.
4. The group should be tangled.
5. The challenge is for the group to untangle themselves without letting go of the ropes.
6. The challenge is complete when students are untangled and standing in a circle still holding onto their rope ends.
7. Ask groups what strategies they used to solve this challenge.

Discussion Points

- ▶ Working in groups can be difficult, especially when we all have different ideas.
- ▶ We need to respect what everyone can add to our class.
- ▶ When each member of a group listens and learns a lot is accomplished.



Reflect, Write, and Share

Use the following prompts to help your students reflect on the Condition of Sense of Accomplishment and their role in fostering this Condition for their peers.

Reflect, Write, and Share

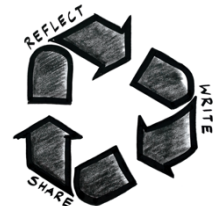
Reflect on a time you gave up because an assignment or task was too hard. Write about what it feels like to be frustrated.

Now, think about one idea or strategy you could use when you are frustrated and want to quit. Share your idea with your peers.

Reflect, Write, and Share

Sense of Accomplishment is about putting forth 100% effort. Reflect on the last assignment you did where you really put forth effort. Write about why you put forth effort on this project.

Now, think of one way to get yourself to put forth more effort on school projects. Share your idea with your peers.





Tower Power

Sense of Accomplishment is about recognizing and rewarding students who persevere even if the end result is not a “success”. This activity challenges students to persevere in a task that might be challenging and frustrating.

Materials

- ▶ Paper and/or file folders

Questions to Get Started

1. What does it mean to persevere?
2. Why is it important to persevere during difficult tasks?

Instructions

1. Students will need to be in groups of three or four for this activity.
2. This activity challenges students to build the highest tower possible from paper and/or file folders.
3. Students may not use tape or any other materials. They also may not use anything to support the tower.
4. Give groups an equal number of supplies. Next, give students a specific amount of time to complete their towers. Towers can be rebuilt and adjusted as many times as needed.
5. When time is up, congratulate all builders and talk about how the groups planned and built their towers.

Discussion Questions

- ▶ What does it feel like when a project or plan fails?
- ▶ How does perseverance relate to academic achievement?
- ▶ How do you make yourself persevere during difficult school tasks?





All Politics is Local

“All politics is local,” said the late Speaker of the House, Tip O’Neill. For students, that means they are first citizens of their school, district, and the local community. While activism at the state or federal level is commendable, activism at the local level can produce results that are closer to home.

Materials

- Pens and paper

Questions to Get Started

1. What does it mean to be a good citizen?
2. What do you think the expression “All politics is local” means?

Instructions

1. With students, identify several local issues that concern students. Encourage students to think locally on a spectrum from their school to their city or town. A school concern might be the perennial dress code issue, a district concern might be crowded classrooms, and a town/city issue might be ball fields that are in poor condition.
2. Once there is a list of four or five items, ask students how they would begin to effect change. You might ask:
 - Whom could they write to about this issue?
 - What public forums could they attend?
 - What contribution could they make personally?
3. Have a group of students compose a letter signed by all students to the appropriate official (principal, superintendent, mayor, etc.) expressing their concern and their willingness to help.
4. Be sure to follow up on responses and any projects that emerge.

Discussion Questions

- Why is it easier to obtain results at the local level, rather than the state or federal level?
- How does a willingness to become involved help your chances of getting an official to respond?
- What is the role of civic advocacy in a democracy?



Reflect, Write, and Share

Use the following prompts to help your students reflect on the Condition of Sense of Accomplishment and their role in fostering this Condition for their peers.

Reflect, Write, and Share

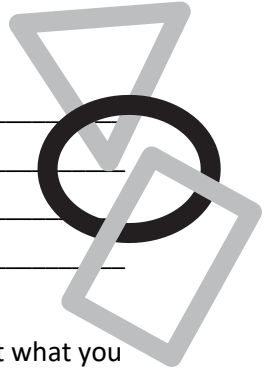
Reflect on a time you volunteered your time or skills to help others. Write about how your presence made a difference for others.

Now, think of one way you can make a difference on a daily, weekly, or monthly basis for people in your school or community. Share your idea with your peers.

Reflect, Write, and Share

Reflect on a school assignment that took you an extra-long time to finish. Write about what you did to motivate yourself to finish the project.

Now, think about one idea you would share with peers who might struggle with being motivated or inspired to work hard and put forth effort. Share your idea with your peers.





Promoting Sense of Accomplishment

As educators, we know that the 8 Conditions must be fostered throughout the school building as well as in the classroom to support aspirations. Here are some simple ideas to help you expand this Condition throughout your school.

To foster Sense of Accomplishment school-wide, try these strategies:

- ▶ Recognize students for something unrelated to tests and academic achievement.
- ▶ During a staff meeting recognize two colleagues for their accomplishments.
- ▶ Share with your students the accomplishments you are proud of achieving.
- ▶ Take the time to thank support staff members for their efforts.
- ▶ Grade students on their effort.
- ▶ Allow students to redo tests, papers, or quizzes for one week.
- ▶ Survey parents to understand what qualities they value and want for their students.
Their answers may be surprising.
- ▶ Publicly acknowledge students who are successful outside of sports and academics.
- ▶ Engage your students in conversations about citizenship.
- ▶ Create a portfolio of your accomplishments.
- ▶ Help your students create life resumes. Students will be surprised at everything they have accomplished in life.
- ▶ Take the time to recognize parents who help at school. Give them a certificate of recognition, a thank you card, or some other form of acknowledgment.
- ▶ Ask your school principal what they are proudest of achieving as an administrator.
- ▶ Make an effort to finish a personal or professional project you have been postponing.
Take note of what this feels like.
- ▶ Have an open and honest discussion with your colleagues about how academic standards impact student effort and vice versa. What do your colleagues think?



Fun & Excitement

The Condition of Fun & Excitement

The Condition of Fun & Excitement is characterized by students being inspired. Inspired students are actively engaged and emotionally involved in their school work. Students who exhibit Fun & Excitement are usually self-confident, curious, and prepared; they are willing to meet the challenges of the day. Teachers who foster Fun & Excitement provide new opportunities, initiate challenges, and respect individual interests. After the first three Conditions — Belonging, Heroes, and Sense of Accomplishment — are established, you can motivate your students through a fun and exciting classroom environment.



Circles of Fun

Fun & Excitement is about students being fully engaged in learning. Fun & Excitement strives to transfer student passion for fun into classroom learning. This activity challenges students to work together to solve problems.

Materials

- ▶ Two Hula Hoops
- ▶ 4 marbles or small bouncy balls
- ▶ Empty paper towel rolls cut in half-lengthwise (one per student)

Questions to Get Started

1. What do you find fun to do at school? Why?
2. What are you most interested in learning about?

Instructions

1. Inform students that as a class they are going to try several fun challenges.
2. Ask the entire class to stand in a circle holding hands. Place a Hula Hoop between two students' hands. Challenge the class to pass the Hula Hoop around the circle without breaking the handholds. Students must step through the Hula Hoop and have their bodies pass through the hoops. After students attempt the challenge, ask for suggestions for improvement and then allow students to tackle the challenge a second time.
3. For the next challenge, students must figure out a way to pass a marble from point A to point B. Divide the class in half and have groups go to one side of the room. Give each student half a paper towel tube.
4. The challenge is for each group to pass the marble from one end of the room to the other. The marble moves by rolling it down the paper towel tube.
 - Students may not walk with the marble in their tube.
 - If the marble drops, the group must begin again.
5. Have teams race each other. Give teams several attempts to revise and improve their strategies.
6. Ask students to think about what made this activity fun. Then inquire about their ideas to make everyday learning more fun.

Discussion Points

- ▶ Learning can and should be fun.
- ▶ Working together is exciting, but also challenging.
- ▶ As a class, we can solve many problems together.



My Expressions

Engaging students is the key to Fun & Excitement. Students of all ages learn better and enjoy learning more if they are actively involved and engaged in whatever they are learning. This activity encourages students to express ideas through finger painting.

Materials

- ▶ Finger paint
- ▶ Paper

Questions to Get Started

1. What does it feel like to be completely involved in an activity?
2. What does it mean to be excited about learning?



Instructions

1. Give each student paper and finger paint.
2. Let students know they are going to express their ideas through finger painting.
3. Use a theme the class is currently studying. For example, if students are reading a book about history or studying plants use this as a starting point.
4. Challenge students to summarize their learning through painting a picture with finger paints. Students should not write words. Help students be abstract and unique with their projects.
5. Once projects are complete, allow students to share and explain their finger paintings.

Discussion Points

- ▶ Painting can help us express ourselves and learn.
- ▶ Listening and reading are only a few ways to learn.
- ▶ Our minds work in different ways when we use art and music to help us learn.

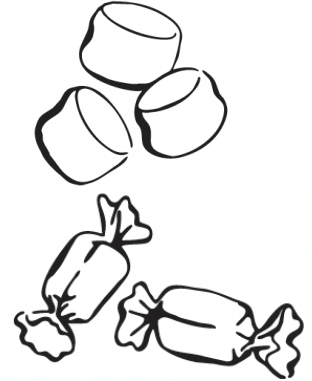


Fun with Food

Fun & Excitement is about enjoying learning and enjoying being at school. This activity encourages students to have fun while creating a visual representation of who they are.

Materials

- ▶ Small paper plates
- ▶ Lemon slices, grapes, pretzel sticks, assorted small candy, raisins, chocolate chips, marshmallows, fruit loops, string licorice, etc.



Questions to Get Started

1. If you were to describe yourself as a piece of fruit, what would it be and why?
2. What is the best school project you have ever completed? Why?



Instructions

1. Give students a paper plate and inform them that they will have fifteen minutes to create a representation of the multiple flavors of their personality.
2. Students may use up to seven food items to talk about the various aspects of themselves. Allow students to figure out how they can represent themselves with the given items rather than giving them ideas.
3. Encourage students to be creative. Displays might be abstract.
4. After fifteen minutes, students should share their display and explain why it represents them.
5. Let students eat their creations!

Discussion Points

- ▶ People express themselves in all different ways.
- ▶ Using a different medium to express ourselves can be challenging and exciting.
- ▶ Laughing and having fun at school during appropriate times is great.



Reflect, Write, and Share

Use the following prompts to help your students reflect on the Condition of Fun & Excitement and their role in fostering this Condition for their peers.

Reflect, Write, and Share

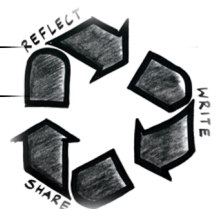
Reflect on a time when learning was fun for you. Write about what this felt like and why it was so much fun.

Now, think about something that bores you at school. What one idea do you have to make something that is boring more exciting? Share your idea with the class.

Reflect, Write, and Share

Reflect on how you like to learn. Write about what teachers can do to help you learn better and more effectively.

Now, think about one thing that your teacher could do differently to make school more interesting for you. Share your idea with the class.





Un-Bored Games

Perhaps nothing is more fun and exciting for students than to change rules and do things differently. This activity takes games all students know—Monopoly, Battleship, Go Fish—and invites them to adjust the rules.

Materials

- ▶ A variety of board and card games

Questions to Get Started

1. What subjects and assignments do you find fun to do at school? Why?
2. What rules do you think get in the way of school being a more exciting place?

Instructions

1. Have students bring in board or card games.
2. Divide students into groups of three or four. Students should be in a group that is playing a game they already know.
3. Have students re-write the rules of the game they have selected.
4. Allow students to play their new game and share the new rules with the entire class.

Discussion Questions

- ▶ Why do you think changing the rules of a game makes playing that game more fun?
- ▶ What rule changes would make professional sports more fun to watch?
- ▶ What new rules would help promote Fun & Excitement at your school?





Popsicle Learning

Engaging students is the key to Fun & Excitement. Students of all ages learn better and enjoy learning more if they are actively involved and engaged in whatever they are learning. This activity encourages students to express ideas in an unconventional way.

Materials

- ▶ Popsicle sticks or toothpicks
- ▶ Glue

Questions to Get Started

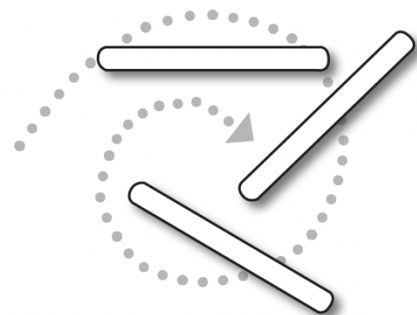
1. What does it feel like to be fully involved in an activity?
2. What does it mean to be excited about learning?

Instructions

1. Let students know that they are going to be tested on their learning.
2. Pick any subject the class has been studying.
3. Give each student a handful of popsicle sticks and/or toothpicks and glue.
4. Give students twenty minutes to represent their knowledge by using the sticks or toothpicks. Students may not write words.
5. Ask students to share their work. Allow students to self-grade their final products. Make sure students explain their assessments.

Discussion Questions

- ▶ Did you find you were more engaged in this activity than if you had been asked to write a two-page paper on the subject? Why or why not?
- ▶ What makes building and creating fun?
- ▶ What ideas do you have for making schoolwork more engaging?





Can We Get Off the Subject?

Fun & Excitement is about laughter as well as learning. This variation on the tandem story writing exercise encourages students to think differently. The goal is to have fun and be creative.

Materials

- ▶ Photocopy the story starters on the next page and cut into strips

Questions to Get Started

1. What is “divergent thinking”?
2. Why might divergent thinking be important?

Instructions

1. Tell students that they are going to play an improvisation game. Make it clear that everyone will have a turn and that you are not looking for the actors in the room or for great performances.
2. Someone will start a scene based on a slip of paper that you hand them. Once the scene starts, each student must continue the scene in a way that is connected to what preceded it but also continue in an entirely different direction. For example, for the starter: “It was the last five minutes of the championship football game ...” the next person might add, “Who knew that in the stands at that very moment, a college recruiter was watching the game.” A third student might continue, “The person next to them was so animated watching the game they were jumping up and down with excitement.” And so on.
3. If the class is large, you may want to have two stories going at once.
4. You may want to develop story starters that connect to what you are teaching as a way of reviewing. Add a rule that students must use what they have learned in your class within the story.

Discussion Questions

- ▶ Why is it a challenge to get ourselves to think differently?
- ▶ How could a process like this be applied to a real-life situation?
- ▶ What happens when there is no wrong or right way to answer?

Can We Get Off the Subject?

Story Starters

Scenario #1

It was the last five minutes of the championship football game and we were down by two. We had the ball in the middle of the field with one minute left.

.....

Scenario #2

My parents just told me we are going on a trip. When they told me where we were going, I was thrilled.

.....

Scenario #3

As they walked into the school long past dark, Jill and Leon heard footsteps behind them. They dared not turn around.

.....

Scenario #4

I walked into the store to get some candy and a soda. Little did I know that Chris was there, too.

.....

Scenario #5

I thought I was prepared for the final test. How was I supposed to know the teacher was going to ask that?



Reflect, Write, and Share

Use the following prompts to help your students reflect on the Condition of Fun & Excitement and their role in fostering this Condition for their peers.

Reflect, Write, and Share

Reflect on a subject that really interests you. Write about why you find this subject interesting.

What is it about this subject that engages you?

Now, think about one idea you would suggest to your teacher to make a boring subject more engaging. Share your idea with your peers.

Reflect, Write, and Share

Reflect on a time that you were so engaged doing an activity or learning that you lost track of time. What does it feel like to be so engaged that you lose track of time?

Now, think about what you could do to help yourself be fully engaged more often.

Share your idea with your peers.



Promoting Fun & Excitement

As educators, we know that the 8 Conditions must be fostered throughout the school building as well as in the classroom to support aspirations. Here are some simple ideas to help you expand this Condition throughout your school.

To foster Fun & Excitement school-wide, try these strategies:

- ▶ Use different resources to teach a lesson.
- ▶ Organize a fun activity before the start of your next staff meeting.
- ▶ Allow your students to play board games at the end of a hard week.
- ▶ Teach from a different place in your room.
- ▶ Ask for student ideas and input about what makes a lesson interesting.
- ▶ Team-teach with a colleague.
- ▶ Use community resources to engage students.
- ▶ Share your passions and hobbies with your students.
- ▶ Assist a staff member with their job.
- ▶ Have a potluck lunch with your students.
- ▶ Co-teach a lesson with students.
- ▶ Do something to make the staff room, entranceway, or office more interesting.
- ▶ Display student work in the hallways.
- ▶ Create and participate in school spirit days.
- ▶ Let students hear you laughing and enjoying your work.
- ▶ Help make your school building more appealing.
- ▶ Post jokes and funny stories in the staff room.
- ▶ Organize a staff breakfast.



Curiosity & Creativity



The Condition of Curiosity & Creativity

The Condition of Curiosity & Creativity is characterized by inquisitiveness, eagerness, a strong desire to learn new or interesting things, and a desire to satisfy the mind with new discoveries. Curiosity invites students to ask “Why?” while creativity provides the initiative to ask “Why not?” The intensity of Curiosity & Creativity tends to diminish over time due to the habituating effects of the school environment. Therefore, as a teacher you must pay careful attention to creating a classroom that promotes questioning and creative exploration in order to maintain student motivation.



What's the Question?

Curiosity & Creativity encourages students to challenge themselves, ask questions, and think about many different solutions. Creative students approach problems with unique strategies and perspectives. This activity engages students by challenging them to think creatively.

Materials

- ▶ None

Questions to Get Started

1. Why is it difficult to think creatively?
2. What does it mean to think “outside the box”? Give examples.



Instructions

1. The teacher should write some words on the board. For example: yellow, 12 months, and India.
2. In pairs, ask students to develop several questions that match the answers. For example,
 - a. “Yellow” might be: What is your favorite color? What makes you think of summer? What would be a great name for a golden retriever?
 - b. “12 months” might be: How long does a bad week feel like? What is the longest time it has taken you to read a book? What was your favorite age?
 - c. “India” might be: Where are you going on vacation? What country has the most unusual food? What do you think is a cool name?
3. Challenge pairs to come up with creative and fun questions. Do several rounds of this activity. Then let pairs of students lead the activity by writing three words on the board.

Discussion Points

- ▶ Thinking of creative answers can be challenging.
- ▶ Being creative makes learning fun.
- ▶ Sometimes we get ideas stuck in our heads and thinking differently is difficult.



Human Machines

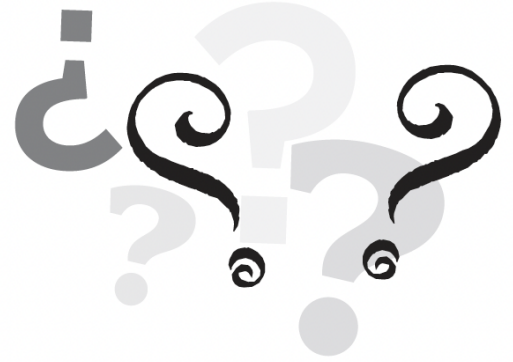
Curiosity is about helping students ask questions. The Condition of Curiosity & Creativity maintains that there are no stupid questions (though there may be more or less relevant questions) and that there may be many right answers to the same question. This activity encourages students to be curious and then creative with their representation of machines.

Materials

- ▶ None

Questions to Get Started

1. What does it mean to be curious?
2. What are you curious about?



Instructions

1. Ask your class to brainstorm types of machines that are used in daily life. Write the names of the machines on chart paper or the chalkboard.
2. Let students know that they are going to work in small groups to create models of actual machines. Using their bodies, students must act out the workings of a machine. Students must decide what machine they will create and how they will act it out. When groups perform their machines, other students should try to guess the machine and what it does.
3. Begin this activity by asking a few students to work with you to demonstrate how to make a human washing machine (you will only tell the students you are working with that you are going to demonstrate a washing machine). You might have two people holding hands with outstretched arms and a third person inside moving like the agitator blade. Next, ask the class to guess what machine you are demonstrating.
4. Divide the class into groups of 4-6, and give them 5-10 minutes to decide on and create a machine.
5. Each group should perform their machine.

Discussion Points

- ▶ Curiosity allows us to wonder about the world around us.
- ▶ By using our imaginations, we can create many wonderful things.
- ▶ Often there is no right or wrong answer to a question.



Create a Holiday

Creativity is about ensuring that learning is relevant and engaging for all types of learners.

Creativity encourages students to use their artistic, musical, and physical skills as vehicles for learning. This activity fosters creativity by asking students to create a new holiday.

Materials

- ▶ Art supplies
- ▶ Paper and pencil



Questions to Get Started

1. How do you find answers to your questions?
2. What does it mean to be creative?

Instructions

1. Begin this activity by having a short discussion about holidays. Why do we have holidays? Who decides holidays? How do holidays vary from country to country?
2. Next, put students in groups of two or three.
3. Let students know that they are going to create a new holiday.
4. Students should consider the following:
 - a. Why is this a holiday?
 - b. What is celebrated?
 - c. How is it celebrated?
 - d. What traditions represent this holiday?
5. Ask students to develop a sign or banner to represent their holiday.
6. Have students share and explain their new holiday.

Discussion Points

- ▶ Creativity encourages us to think of how to do things differently.
- ▶ There are many unanswered questions and undiscovered ideas.
- ▶ Curiosity helps our minds grow and discover wonderful new things.



Reflect, Write, and Share

Use the following prompts to help your students reflect on the Condition of Curiosity & Creativity and their role in fostering this Condition for their peers.

Reflect, Write, and Share

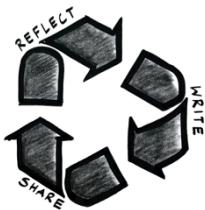
Reflect on something you learned at school, but really did not understand. Write about what it feels like not to understand an answer.

Now think about one thing you could do to understand an answer that does not make sense to you. Share your idea with the class.

Reflect, Write, and Share

Reflect on a person you feel is creative. Write about why this person is creative.

Now, think about one thing you could do to help yourself be more creative. Share your idea with the class.





Seek and Hide

Both Curiosity & Creativity are products of the imagination. Wonder leads to inquiry and inspiration.

This activity combines Curiosity & Creativity in a way that fully engages a student's sense of wonder.

Materials

- ▶ Library and/or internet resources

Questions to Get Started

1. What is something you have enjoyed learning so far this year?
2. What is something you have always wanted to know?

Instructions

1. Ask your students to create a list of questions they would like answered. If you are a subject teacher, you may want to limit the questions to that subject. Alternatively, have students wonder more broadly. For example, "Why is the sky blue?" "Why do people in some countries drive on the left and others on the right?"
2. Pair students and have them select a question to research.
3. Tell students they have three days to find the answer to their selected question.
4. After three days, have each pair devise three additional "answers" to hide what they have learned. For example, if they have learned that the sky is blue due to the refraction of sunlight in the atmosphere, they should also create "answers" such as:
 - a. Because the sky reflects the blue of the oceans.
 - b. Because the atmosphere is made up mostly of oxygen and oxygen is blue.
 - c. Because the upper atmosphere is very cold and cold is blue.
5. Have the students present their four answers (one correct and three made-up) as multiple-choice questions to their classmates.
6. Award points based on how many students were misled by each team.

Discussion Questions

- ▶ Why is researching your own question sometimes more interesting than researching questions a teacher assigns?
- ▶ Before answers could be researched in libraries and on the internet, how did people learn?
- ▶ What are you most looking forward to learning in school?



Unraveling Inventions

Creativity encourages students to invent and develop new ideas and products. Many inventions have a less than-straight line from idea to the final product. Some inventions were created by accident. We use these products, taking for granted the story behind them.

Materials:

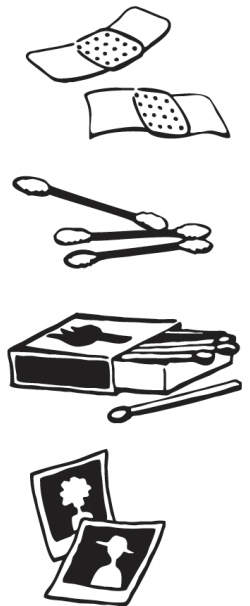
- Inventions such as: Velcro, Sticky notes, a Polaroid picture, a light bulb, a slinky, a USB drive, a band-aid, wooden matches, some Q-tips.

Questions to Get Started

1. How do you think inventors invent things?
2. What inventions would you like to see someday?

Instructions

1. Assign a group of students to each of the inventions you brought to show the class.
2. Tell them they must try to trace the invention back to the original problem the inventor may have been trying to solve. Why did the inventor invent this product?
2. They should list as many steps and missteps as they can think of. For example, the inventor of Velcro may have developed Velcro that stuck too strongly, Velcro that did not stick at all, Velcro that didn't stick when it was wet, etc.
3. Students should then find the actual story behind the invention and report back to the class.



Discussion Questions

- Why is the process of inventing seldom straightforward?
- If you were going to invent something, how would you go about it?
- What realistic invention (e.g., not a gadget that does your homework for you) would make the school day easier?



It's All Relative

One key to fostering Curiosity is to help students realize how what they are learning is relevant to their current and future lives. In some cases, this can be difficult. This exercise engages student's curiosity by helping them make connections between school and life.

Materials

- ▶ Paper and pen

Questions to Get Started

1. What is relevance?
2. Why is it sometimes difficult to see the connection between school and our everyday lives or future goals?

Instructions

1. With your students, list on the board four or five things you have learned in the last few months.
2. Put students in groups of four and assign each group an item on the board. Have students list the many ways their current learning can be connected to their current life or future goals.
3. Encourage students to consider not just the relevance of the subject matter itself (e.g., calculus is relevant if you want to become an engineer), but also the relevance of how they learned it (e.g., being detail-oriented and checking your results in calculus is relevant to any future that includes being detail-oriented).
4. Provide students an opportunity to share the connections they discovered.

Discussion Questions

- ▶ Why are we more interested in information that is relevant to us?
- ▶ What can we do to make better connections between what we are learning in school and our everyday lives?
- ▶ What subjects are most relevant to you right now? What subjects are most relevant to your future?



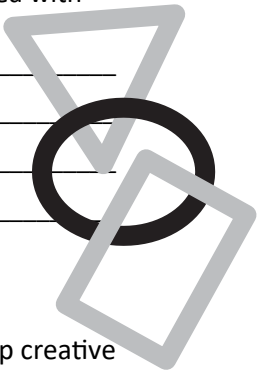
Reflect, Write, and Share

Use the following prompts to help your students reflect on the Condition of Curiosity & Creativity and their role in fostering this Condition for their peers.

Reflect, Write, and Share

Reflect on a time you felt learning was relevant and meaningful to you. Write about your level of engagement when learning is relevant.

Now, think about one suggestion to make school more relevant for you. Share your idea with your peers.



Reflect, Write, and Share

Reflect on a time when you felt you were creative. Write about what you do to develop creative and unique ideas.

Now, think about one thing you could do to be more creative at school. Share your idea with your peers.



Promoting Curiosity & Creativity

As educators, we know that the 8 Conditions must be fostered throughout the school building as well as in the classroom to support aspirations. Here are some simple ideas to help you expand this Condition throughout your school.

To foster Curiosity & Creativity school-wide, try these strategies:

- ▶ Provide students with an opportunity to assess their own work.
- ▶ Talk with support staff who have been in the school for a while about the changes they have seen in education.
- ▶ Incorporate art and music into a lesson.
- ▶ Ask a “Why not?” question at your next staff meeting.
- ▶ Take the time to acknowledge a creative staff member.
- ▶ Think of two solutions, instead of problems, for the next school issue you face.
- ▶ Challenge your colleagues to think about their assumptions about education.
- ▶ Involve students in the planning of a lesson or unit.
- ▶ Initiate a book club for staff members.
- ▶ Change a lesson you usually present as a lecture to a hands-on, interactive lesson.
- ▶ Suggest a new way to hold an open house, parent nights, or other events that have been done the same way for a long time.
- ▶ Pose questions with no answers.
- ▶ Engage students through “What if?” inquiry. (e.g., What if the snow never melted? What if we could develop a car that ran on water?).
- ▶ Let students paint and get messy during a lesson.
- ▶ Involve your students in acting and using their imagination.
- ▶ Change the seating arrangement at your next staff meeting.
- ▶ Play music for your students in between lessons.



Spirit of Adventure

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The Condition of Spirit of Adventure

Spirit of Adventure is characterized by a student’s ability to take on positive, healthy challenges at school and home, with family and friends. Students experience Spirit of Adventure when they tackle something new without the fear of failure or success. As a teacher, you can encourage and support your students’ Spirit of Adventure by urging them to explore new things. By creating an atmosphere that allows for healthy decision-making and healthy risk-taking, students become more confident and resilient. Students with Spirit of Adventure see life as full of opportunities worth exploring for their own sake.



The Sideways Ladder

Spirit of Adventure is about helping students face their fears and pursue healthy risks. Healthy risks allow students to grow and learn. This activity challenges students to be healthy risk-takers.

Materials

- ▶ 10 pieces of round wood (2 feet long and 4 inches thick)

Questions to Get Started

1. What challenges you academically?
2. What can you do to overcome your fears and apprehensions?



Instructions

1. **Be sure** to have a safety discussion before beginning this activity.
2. Let students know they are going to attempt a group challenge together.
3. Students should line up facing each other.
4. Give each pair a wooden rod to hold. The group should create a horizontal ladder.
5. The challenge is for one student to climb across the horizontal ladder. Peers should hold the rods tightly as their classmates climb across.
6. Begin this activity by having the rods close to the ground.
7. Do not force any student to climb the ladder.
8. After the session, discuss what it was like to complete the challenge. How did you overcome your fears?

Discussion Points

- ▶ Doing challenging activities is difficult for many of us.
- ▶ Overcoming a fear feels great.
- ▶ Sometimes we need to challenge ourselves to see how much we can accomplish.



I Can Do It!

Spirit of Adventure is about setting and achieving goals. This activity encourages students to choose goals that are important to them and work towards achieving their goals.

Materials

- ▶ Goal Setting Guide (page follows)

Questions to Get Started

1. What has been your experience with goal setting?
2. What one goal have you recently achieved?

Instructions

1. Begin by discussing several of your own personal or professional goals with your students.
2. Let students know that they are each going to set one measurable, realistic, and meaningful goal.
3. Put students in groups of two to help each other with the Goal Setting Guide.
4. After the sheets are complete, ask students to share their goals as well as their plans to reach their goals.
5. Revisit goals on a daily or weekly basis. Give students opportunities to revise and alter their goals.

Discussion Points

- ▶ Goal setting is an important skill that can help us be successful.
- ▶ It is important to think about your future and what steps you need to take now to reach your goals.
- ▶ It is okay to revise and change goals, if you try and can't reach them.



A few skills and talents I currently have are:

One skill I would like to improve is:

Write a realistic goal that begins with "I":

What three steps do I need to take to achieve this goal?

1.

2.

3.

Two people who can help me achieve this goal are:

I will evaluate my success in reaching this goal by:

Go For It! Try to reach your goal every day!



My Risk-Taking Skills

Spirit of Adventure is about challenging yourself to succeed as well as not being afraid to fail.

This activity has students identify some of their school fears and then create a plan for improvement.

Materials

- ▶ Extra-large pieces of paper
- ▶ Markers
- ▶ Copies of My Willingness to Take Healthy Risks (page follows)

Questions to Get Started

1. What skills are you proud of being able to do?
2. How can you improve your skills?

Instructions

1. Put students in groups of three and have them individually complete the Take Healthy Risks questions. Then have each group discuss their answers.
2. After ample time, have each group develop their own definition of a Healthy Risk Taker.
3. Let each group present their definition.
4. Next, ask students to identify one school fear they have. Have students discuss their fears in small groups and then think about ways to lessen these fears.

Discussion Points

- ▶ If you try your best and fail, you might still learn a lot.
- ▶ Taking risks can be scary, but also instructive.
- ▶ People of all ages can push themselves to be healthy risk-takers.

MY WILLINGNESS TO TAKE HEALTHY RISKS

Circle which statement better represents you. Then answer the question that follows.

1) **DO YOU PREFER TO** a) follow the crowd or b) make your own decisions?

What does your answer say about your willingness to take risks?

2) **DO YOU PREFER TO** a) do things where you will be successful or b) do things that are challenging?

What does your answer say about your willingness to take risks?

3) **IS IT SCARIER FOR YOU TO** a) fail or b) succeed?

What does your answer say about your willingness to take risks?

4) **WOULD YOU RATHER SCHOOL BE** a) too easy or b) too hard?

What does your answer say about your willingness to take risks?

5) **WOULD YOU RATHER** a) have someone set goals for you or b) set goals for yourself?

What does your answer say about your willingness to take risks?

6) **ARE YOU** a) challenged by something you don't know or b) scared of the unknown?

What does your answer say about your willingness to take risks?

7) **DO YOU THINK STUDENTS WHO ARE HEALTHY RISK TAKERS** a) are born risk-takers or b) learn to take risks?

What does your answer say about your willingness to take risks?

My greatest school fear is:

Finish the sentence. Healthy risk-taking is:



Reflect, Write, and Share

Use the following prompts to help your students reflect on the Condition of Spirit of Adventure and their role in fostering this Condition for their peers.

Reflect, Write, and Share

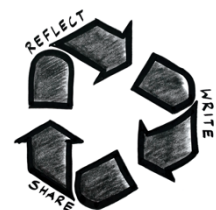
Reflect on a time you were afraid to try something new. Write about what it felt like to be afraid and what you were afraid of at that time.

Now, think about one thing you could do to lessen your fears. Share your idea with the class.

Reflect, Write, and Share

Reflect on an experience you had where you were successful. Write about what your peers thought about your success.

Now, think about one way your peers could be more helpful in supporting you when you are successful. Share your idea with the class.





RISK ASSESSMENT

Spirit of Adventure is about healthy risk-taking. This exercise is designed to help students see where they have already taken healthy, and maybe not-so-healthy, risks in their lives.

Materials

- ▶ Paper
- ▶ Each student should have three differently colored markers



Questions to Get Started

1. What is the difference between a healthy risk and an unhealthy risk?
2. How can you anticipate whether a risk will be healthy or not?

Instructions

1. Have students draw a timeline that represents their life so far, plus ten years into the future. The line should begin at zero and extend into their twenties.
2. Let them know that you will not be collecting their timeline, nor will they be asked to share anything that they do not wish to share.
3. Ask students to use a second color to indicate:
 - a. The best decision they have made so far.
 - b. The worst decision they have made so far.
 - c. The three biggest risks they have taken in their life so far.
 - d. An obstacle that got in the way of them doing something they wanted.
4. Ask students to use a third color to indicate:
 - a. Two big decisions that are in their future.
 - b. Two risks they may have to take someday.
 - c. An obstacle that they may face in the future.
5. Have students reflect on the past and future risks and mark them as either H – Healthy or UH – Unhealthy.

Discussion Questions

- ▶ Is there any pattern to your risk-taking? Are you a risk taker or risk averse?
- ▶ How has risk-taking affected your life so far?
- ▶ What factors do you use to decide whether a risk is healthy or not?



Know It All

Spirit of Adventure encourages students to take healthy risks. This activity encourages students to take risks by providing them with a safe and comfortable environment to share or teach out of their expertise or interest.

Materials

- ▶ None

Questions to Get Started

1. What do you feel you know a lot about?
2. What does it feel like to speak in front of the class?

Instructions

1. Discuss areas of interest and knowledge with your students, making sure that all students have the opportunity to share an area they feel competent in with the class. Place no limit on what a student may be good at or know about—video games, the home team, where to shop for the best shoe bargains, etc.
2. Let the class know that they are going to prepare a short presentation or demonstration about their interest or expertise. Allow students to bring in props if appropriate. Also, remind students to practice their presentation.
3. Allow students the opportunity to share their expertise over several weeks. Remind students that the presentations are part of a No-Laughter Zone unless the presenter intends to be funny.

Discussion Questions

- ▶ Why do you think public speaking is such a big fear for people?
- ▶ Why is it easier to talk in front of the class when you are confident in what you are talking about?
- ▶ Would you go into a career that involved regularly speaking in front of an audience? Why or why not?



Reflect, Write, and Share

Use the following prompts to help your students reflect on the Condition of Spirit of Adventure and their role in fostering this Condition for their peers.

Reflect, Write, and Share

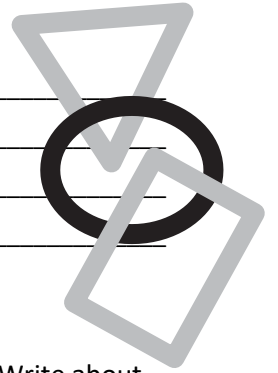
Reflect on a time you were afraid to try something new. Write about why you think you were afraid.

Now, think about what others could have done to help you overcome your fear. Share your idea with your peers.

Reflect, Write, and Share

Reflect about a time you or someone you know made fun of someone successful. Write about why you think students make fun of people who succeed.

Now, think about one thing you could do to celebrate others' successes. Share your idea with your peers.





Promoting Spirit of Adventure

As educators, we know that the 8 Conditions must be fostered throughout the school building as well as in the classroom to support aspirations. Here are some simple ideas to help you expand this Condition throughout your school.

To foster Spirit of Adventure school-wide, try these strategies:

- ▶ Share your professional goals with your students.
- ▶ Do something outside your teaching comfort zone.
- ▶ Teach something at your next staff meeting.
- ▶ Allow students to teach a skill or hobby to the entire class.
- ▶ Speak or present at your next school board meeting.
- ▶ Job swap for a class with a teacher who teaches something different from you.
- ▶ Understand your students' academic fears.
- ▶ Challenge your students to learn outside their strengths.
- ▶ Give your students opportunities to challenge themselves physically.
- ▶ Ask a colleague about their professional goals.
- ▶ Give your colleagues a pop quiz –Do they know the school's goals? Do they know the school's vision or mission statement?
- ▶ Solicit input from parents on goals they hope their children will achieve.
- ▶ Take the time to think about the purpose of your next school initiative. Does the purpose make sense? If not, speak up.
- ▶ Have a staff lunch where staff members bring in unusual and creative foods.
- ▶ Take a course to challenge yourself.
- ▶ Read a professional book outside of the area you teach. Discuss the book with someone who teaches in that area.



Leadership & Responsibility

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The Condition of Leadership & Responsibility

The Condition of Leadership & Responsibility means students are able to express their ideas and are willing to accept consequences for their actions. It cultivates accountability for the classroom environment and school community. Fostering leadership empowers students to make just and appropriate decisions and to take pride in their actions. Teachers who promote this Condition teach, and expect, their students to be good decision makers. They provide legitimate decision-making opportunities, seek student input, and expect students to be accountable for their actions and words. Students are trusted to make the right decisions and are recognized for doing so.



My Opinion Matters

Leadership & Responsibility is about students feeling confident about voicing their opinions and ideas. This activity encourages students to think about and voice their opinions.

Materials

- ▶ None

Questions to Get Started

1. What does it feel like to voice your opinion?
2. What is your overall opinion of your school?

Instructions

1. Before beginning this activity, the teacher should think about a variety of controversial school issues that matter to the students. This might include the dress code, homework policy, discipline rules, etc.
2. Put students in groups of four as long as there is an even number of groups.
3. Give two groups one issue to think about. Assign one group the task of supporting the issue and the other group the task of coming up with counterarguments. Let students know that they might not agree with the side they have to defend, but that seeing both sides of an issue is an important leadership trait.
4. Give students 15-20 minutes to develop sound points in defense of the opinion their group must support.
5. After enough time, allow two groups to debate the issue in a “fishbowl” setting. Make sure there is some structure to the debate.
6. After each debate, ask the rest of the class which side was more effective and why. The class might even want to invite the principal to hear the arguments.

Discussion Points

- ▶ Leaders have ideas and share their ideas with others.
- ▶ Leaders have their own opinions and do not always agree with the opinions of others. Leaders, however, do listen to other’s opinions even when they do not agree.
- ▶ All of us can be leaders.



Leadership Roles

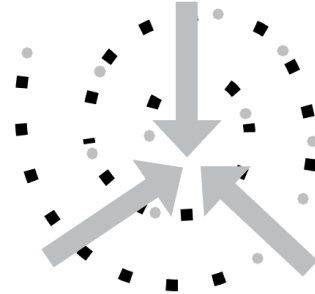
Leadership & Responsibility encourages all students to develop leadership skills. This activity challenges students to think about what they add to group work and what skills they might need to work on to be better participants.

Materials

- ▶ Paper and pencil

Questions to Get Started

1. Why is it difficult to work with others?
2. How can we be better listeners?



Instructions

1. Have each student put their name on a piece of paper and fold it in half vertically. On the left column write Adds to a Group and the right column Needs Help in a Group.
2. Let students know that they are going to evaluate themselves and their peers on how they contribute to group work. Remind the class that this activity intends to help us be better leaders. Comments should be well thought out and not mean-spirited.
3. First, ask students to evaluate themselves and then pass their papers around the room for others to fill in. Students must sign their names after their comments. After students have completed the worksheets, let them discuss what they think their strengths and challenges are. Depending on the maturity of the students, they might share their answers in small groups or only share the positive comments in front of a large group.
4. Encourage students to think about what they can do with the information they learned today.

Discussion Points

- ▶ Leaders are people who listen carefully to ideas.
- ▶ Sometimes we have to try things a few times before we get it right. Leaders, too, make mistakes and try again.
- ▶ Reflecting on our leadership strengths and areas for improvement can make us more effective.



Let's Decide

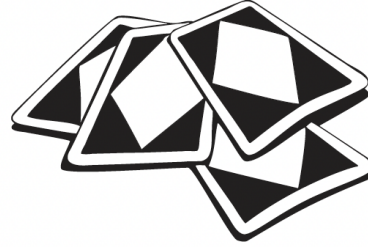
Leadership & Responsibility is about students making decisions. All too often students wait to see what decisions other people make and then just agree. For this activity, students must think about difficult situations and then decide what they would do in each situation.

Materials

- Scenario Cards (page follows)

Questions to Get Started

1. What types of decisions do you make?
2. How do you make a decision?



Instructions

1. Photocopy and cut out the Scenario Cards.
2. Put students in groups of three.
3. Let students know they are going to be talking about the scenarios in their groups.
4. Hand out a few cards to each group. After the group has finished discussing the scenario on one card, they should discuss a new card.
5. After groups have discussed several scenarios, bring the class together. Discuss with the class their decision-making process. Which decisions were difficult and which were easy? Did students disagree?

Discussion Points

- Leaders make decisions.
- Good leaders think about the positive and negative consequences of their decisions before they make a decision.
- Sometimes there is no right or wrong decision. Leaders might have to choose between two rights.

Leadership & Responsibility Scenario Cards

GOSSIP

Your friends are talking meanly about someone. They are saying things that you know are not true. They ask your opinion. How do you handle this situation? punished. What do you do?

DETENTION

During class, you threw something across the room. The teacher blames someone else and gives them a detention. If you get another detention, you will be in lots of trouble. What do you do?

THE CHANGE

After paying for a new sweatshirt, you walk out of the store. You realize you have too much change. Your friends are excited because now you can buy everyone ice cream. What should you consider in making your decision? What do you do?

MY BROTHER'S HOMEWORK

You have a huge assignment due in two days. You realize your brother did the same assignment last year. He is willing to give you the assignment for a price. What do you do and why?

THE CALCULATOR

Your math class lets you use calculators for tests. You learn that you can pre-program lots of answers into your calculator. Other students already do this. What do you do and why?

WHAT IS FAIR?

The principal asks you to help organize an assembly for students. You can choose five students to help you with this project. Many students want to help. How do you choose students in a fair way?

PROJECT TIME

Your teacher has put you in a group with two students you really don't like. As a group, you must work together for two days. The other students talk all the time and don't ever seem to listen to you or your ideas. What do you do?

MY CLASSROOM

Your teacher has asked you for one suggestion to make the class a better place for all students. You would like to move your desk to make the class better for you. This does not help other students. What suggestion do you make to your teacher?



Reflect, Write, and Share

Use the following prompts to help your students reflect on the Condition of Leadership & Responsibility and their role in fostering this Condition for their peers.

Reflect, Write, and Share

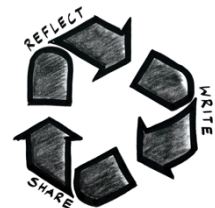
Reflect on students who you know are effective leaders. Write about what you feel makes them a good leader.

Now, think about one leadership skill you could learn from effective leaders and incorporate it into your own leadership skills. Share what you could learn with the class.

Reflect, Write, and Share

Reflect on the idea that people either are or are not leaders. Write about whether you think everyone can be a leader.

Now, think about one thing you could do differently to be a better leader. Share your idea with the class.



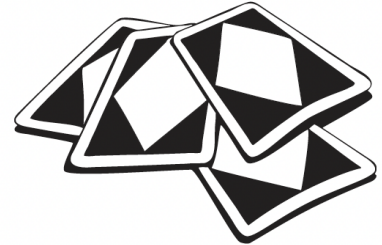


What's Right?

Leadership & Responsibility is about students making decisions. All too often students wait to see what decisions other people make and then just go along. This activity asks students to think about some situations, what they might do, and why.

Materials

- Scenario cards (page follows)



Questions to Get Started

1. What types of decisions do people your age make?
2. How do you make a responsible decision?

Instructions

1. Photocopy and cut out the scenario cards on the following page.
2. Put students in groups of three.
3. Let students know they are going to be talking about decisions in their groups.
4. Hand out a few cards to each group. After the group has finished discussing the scenario on one card, they should discuss a new card.
5. After groups have discussed several scenarios, bring the class together. Discuss with the class how they made decisions, what was difficult about their decisions, and what they decided.

Discussion Questions

- Why are some decisions difficult to make?
- How do you go about weighing the positive and negative consequences of a decision?
- Decisions between right and wrong can be obvious. How do you decide between two decisions that are both right?

Leadership & Responsibility Scenario Cards

PROTEST You are a member of your school's student run school newspaper. Some students are planning to walk out of class to protest a recent change in administration at your school. Your fellow journalists want to encourage students to take part, but you do not think that the school newspaper should be advocating participation, as students could be	WRONG DECISIONS You recently heard about a student who was suspended from school. You know the principal is being unfair and is suspending the student for the wrong reasons. You are intimidated by authority figures and you are not sure if it is okay to question authority. What do you do?
DRIVING LICENSE You just received your temporary license. The state law says that you cannot have anyone in the car for the first six months of your license. Many of your friends ignore this law. After school one day your friends are pressuring you to drive them home. They say the law is stupid. What do you do?	NIMBY Not in My Back Yard! The land behind your backyard is forest. Many people use it for walking and exploring. The town has decided to build a much-needed ball field. You play ball and know a new field is needed. However, your backyard would become crowded. There is also an environmental concern. There is nowhere else in town to locate a new ball field. What would you do?
WHOSE PROM IS IT? Your prom is approaching and you are very excited to attend with your friends. The school board has announced that students may only attend the prom if they are traditional couples. Many students are upset with this decision. Some are going to protest and not go to the prom. You don't like this decision, but it is your prom and you don't want to miss it. What do you do?	DOUBLE CROSS COUNTRY You run cross-country for your school. During a race, one of your teammates whispers to you that they know a short cut that won't get you caught. Around the next turn in the trail, they take a hard left and no one sees them take this short cut. Your team wins the meet. What do you do?
ADOPTED You recently overheard your mom talking about your friend. You heard her say that your friend is adopted and they have no idea. You can't believe no one has told them. You wonder why it is a big secret. What would you do?	PARTY POOPER You are at a party and the parents of your friend start serving beer. The parents say they would rather have kids drink in their home where they know they are safe, than out in bars or in the street. Your parents do not support this idea. What would you do?



Value Judgement

Leadership & Responsibility encourages all students to be accountable for their decisions and actions. Responsibility means making decisions based on what is genuinely worthwhile, not simply based on what is personally satisfying.

Materials

- Paper and pen

Questions to Get Started

1. What does it mean to be responsible?
2. How do responsible people make decisions?

Instructions

1. Put the following chart on the board (omit the letters in parentheses):

	Personally satisfying	Personally unsatisfying
Truly valuable	(a)	(b)
Not valuable	(c)	(d)

2. Discuss with students that decisions can be made based on either personal satisfaction or what is truly valuable. While what is satisfying can be of value, sometimes personal satisfaction and value can be at odds with one another.
3. With students brainstorm various decisions and where they fit on the chart. For example, smoking might be personally satisfying, but it goes against the value of health and so would be in box (c). Exercise is good for me and might be something I enjoy—box (a). However, I may not like to exercise and exercise anyway because I know it is good for me. Then exercise would be in box (b).
4. Have students copy the chart onto some paper and add decisions they have made in the past year and where the decisions might fit on the chart.

Discussion Questions

- In terms of the chart, what do you think it means to be responsible?
- How do you resolve conflicts between what is valuable and what is satisfying?
- What values are most important to you?



Reflect, Write, and Share

Use the following prompts to help your students reflect on the Condition of Leadership & Responsibility and their role in fostering this Condition for their peers.

Reflect, Write, and Share

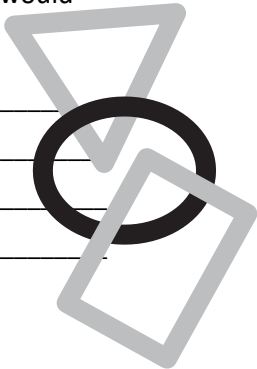
Reflect on whether you think all effective leaders possess some of the same traits. Write about what you think these traits are.

Now, think about one way you could improve a leadership trait for yourself. Share your idea with your peers.

Reflect, Write, and Share

Reflect on bad or ineffective leaders you have known or studied throughout history. Write about what makes someone a bad or ineffective leader. Be specific.

Now, think about one thing you consistently do that is not something a positive leader would do. Share your thoughts with your peers.





Leadership & Responsibility

As educators, we know that the 8 Conditions must be fostered throughout the school building as well as in the classroom to support aspirations. Here are some simple ideas to help you expand this Condition throughout your school.

To foster Leadership & Responsibility school-wide, try these strategies:

- ▶ Invite several students to an adult decision-making committee.
- ▶ Attend a parent meeting and be sure to contribute ideas.
- ▶ Make sure every voice is heard at the next staff meeting.
- ▶ Ask the opinion of a colleague you usually don't ask for advice.
- ▶ Arrange for your students to mentor younger students.
- ▶ Take the time to share your leadership goals with your principal.
- ▶ Accept a new leadership role at school or in your community.
- ▶ Next time wait to speak, sit back and listen to other's ideas.
- ▶ Develop a system to gather feedback and suggestions from parents.
- ▶ Invite a leader from your community to share their leadership experiences with your class.
- ▶ Attend a district-wide, decision-making meeting.
- ▶ Pick a specific leadership skill to teach and reinforce with your students over the course of a month.
- ▶ Attend a student council meeting.
- ▶ Gather student input and ideas before teaching your next unit or lesson.
- ▶ Invite your principal into the class to share some of the difficult decisions they must make every day.
- ▶ Take an inventory of your leadership strengths and weaknesses. Share these with your students or colleagues.



Confidence to Take Action

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The Condition of Confidence to Take Action

Confidence to Take Action is the extent to which students believe in themselves. It encourages them to dream about their future while being motivated to set goals in the present. This Condition is what we strive for; all other Conditions must be established and supported for students to attain this level of aspiration. Confidence to Take Action is characterized by a positive and healthy outlook on life and by looking inward rather than outward for approval. Teachers can help build their students' Confidence to Take Action by providing support, celebrating diversity, and encouraging independent thinking. By enhancing the quality of academic and personal growth, teachers empower their students to become active and involved members of their learning environment.



I Am Not!

Confidence to Take Action is about understanding who you are and who you are not. This activity helps students think about themselves by expressing who they are not.

Materials

- None

Questions to Get Started

1. What is one trait you hope you never acquire?
2. Who are you most like in your family and why?

Instructions

1. Students are going to be challenged to find something entirely different from their characteristics or preferences.
2. Students should gather items for this project by going on a walk through the school building or outside. Let students know they need to find an item and then explain to the class why this item does not represent them.
3. When students bring their items back to class, ask each to describe why the item is not like them. For example, a student might bring back a rock and respond that a rock is not like them because rocks are hard and plain. Challenge students to be creative.
4. To end this activity, encourage students to think of a metaphor or object that does represent who they are.

Discussion Points

- Sometimes thinking about who we are not helps us define who we are.
- If you are confident in yourself, act with confidence.
- Take the time to think about ways to boost someone else's confidence.



Build a Better World

Confidence to Take Action is about making a difference in the school, community, and world. All students need to dream about and act upon what differences they can make.

Materials

- ▶ None

Questions to Get Started

1. Why is it important to take action in causes you believe in?
2. What difference can a student make in this world?



Instructions

1. Put students in groups of three or four.
2. Let students know they are going to have an opportunity to build either a better community or a better world.
3. Students should begin by brainstorming their ideal community/world. What would be different? Why? Take the time to help students see beyond their immediate needs such as the need for a skateboard park.
4. After students have done the appropriate amount of brainstorming, ask them to represent their new community/world through a picture, story, collage or any display that truly represents their visions.
5. Allow enough time for students to share their visions. If possible, invite community leaders to hear the final projects.

Discussion Points

- ▶ People of all ages can make a difference in their communities and the world.
- ▶ Making a difference feels great.
- ▶ Small acts can make a big difference.



Reflect, Write, and Share

Use the following prompts to help your students reflect on the Condition of Confidence to Take Action and their role in fostering this Condition for their peers.

Reflect, Write, and Share

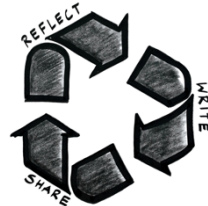
Reflect on a time that your actions made a positive difference for someone. Write about how your actions affected another person.

Consider a positive action you could take within your school or community this week. Share your idea with the class.

Reflect, Write, and Share

Reflect about someone who boosts your confidence. Write about what specifically this person does to make you feel good about who you are.

Now, think about other ways you could boost your confidence. Share your ideas with the class.





IDENTIFYING INTERESTS

Students can build Confidence to Take Action just like any other skill. One simple way to do this is by recognizing the things they are already doing and working to get better at them, or by trying something new!

Materials

- Copy of the activities chart (see next page)

Questions to Get Started

1. What does it mean to be self-confident?
2. What are you confident about?

Instructions

1. On the activity charts, ask students to identify their interest as follows:

- ✓ by the things they already do and enjoy
- ✗ by the things they used to do but have stopped
- by the things they would like to try

The rest can be left blank.

2. Ask students to look through the list and shortlist the top three activities that they would either like to do more of, would like to start doing again, or have never tried before but would like to. Some may be daily activities like practicing an instrument, some might be things that are done once a week like volunteering. Be sure students think about how often they could actually do these things.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

3. Next, ask students to pick **one** of interest they would like to focus on. Ask them to write down their goal and make a plan to start doing this activity. Students should be specific: they should write down how, when and where they will do this, and what they will need.

Example

I used to skateboard and I'd like to start again. To make sure I do this, I will speak to my best friends and ask if they want to join me. We can go to the skate park. We will need to bring our skateboards, helmets, and knee pads. Can we ride our skateboards to the park?

IDENTIFYING INTERESTS - ACTIVITIES

Health and Fitness		
Exercise class/Gym	Swimming	Other:
Cycling	Yoga/Tai Chi	
Running/Jogging	Skateboarding	

Sports		
Athletics	Ice Hockey	Wrestling
Baseball/Softball	Field Hockey	Football
Soccer	Tennis	Other:
Golf	Table tennis	

Creative		
Crafts	Painting/Drawing	Writing letters/poems/stories
Knitting/Needlework	Photography	Playing a musical instrument
Singing	Woodwork	Other:
Model building	Film and Video	

At Home		
Cooking/baking	Gardening	Pet ownership
DIY	Other:	

Social		
Eating out	Volunteering	Social media
Faith-related activities	Visiting family and friends	Youth club
Other:		

Leisure at Home		
Board games	Playing cards	Listening to music
Reading	Watching TV/streaming channels	Puzzles/crosswords
Video games	Films	Other:

Outdoor Hobbies		
Camping	Water sports	Walking
Climbing	Horse riding	Hiking
Fishing	Cycling	Other:



Feeling Confidence

Confidence to Take Action is about believing in yourself and your abilities. This activity helps students tap into times when they felt extremely confident in what they were doing.

Materials

- ▶ Art supplies for making collages.

Questions to Get Started

1. What does it mean to be self-confident?
2. What are you confident about?



Instructions

1. Let the students know they are going to take a trip down Memory Lane. Some might have to travel further back than others, but everyone, at some time, has felt self-confident.
2. Ask students to consider a time they felt very confident in what they were doing. The memory might relate to school, sports, music, a hobby, or even a relationship.
3. Have students make up a collage of that memory. The collage need not be literal. Encourage students to be abstract and creative.
4. Have students share their creations either in small groups or with the entire class if time allows.

Discussion Points

- ▶ What does it feel like to be self-confident?
- ▶ What activity or event would you like to be as confident in as you depicted in your collage?
- ▶ How could you tap into previous experiences of acting with confidence today?



Become the Change You Want to See

Confidence to Take Action means making a difference in the school, community, and world. All students need to imagine and act upon solutions to problems they see around them.

Materials

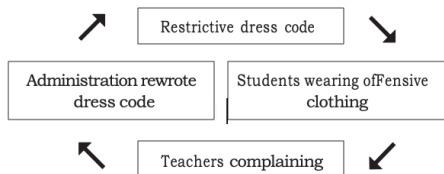
- Paper and pen

Questions to Get Started

1. Why is it important to take action in causes you believe in?
2. What difference can a student make in the world?

Instructions

1. Brainstorm some things at school that the students don't like.
2. Have students select one of the issues and write that issue on a piece of paper.
3. In pairs, have students trace the problem in school back to something students are or were doing. For example, if students do not like the current dress code, they should ask where the dress code came from. Perhaps the dress code was revised a few years ago by the school administration. Why did the administrators revise the dress code? Teachers were complaining that students were wearing shirts with offensive words. In turn, teachers complained because students were wearing offensive clothing. The circle closes because the purpose of the restrictive dress code is to prevent students from wearing offensive clothing. The diagram would look like the one above. Depending on the issue, the number of links in the circle may vary. You may need to invite a veteran teacher or administrator into the class to help with some of the history.
4. Let students know that the highest leverage for change is to make a change to oneself. People and systems resist being changed, but if you change something you are doing, you can usually effect change somewhere else in the chain of events.



Discussion Questions

- Why do people resist being told to change?
- Why is it important to consider changing yourself if you want to create change?
- What change can you make to bring about a result different from the one you currently do not like?

Restrictive dress code

Teachers complaining

Administration rewrote dress code

Students wearing offensive clothing



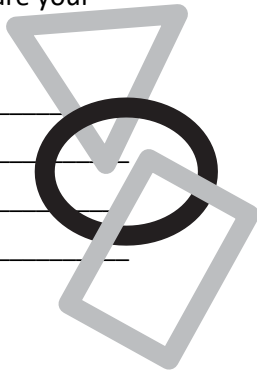
Reflect, Write, and Share

Use the following prompts to help your students reflect on the Condition of Confidence to Take Action and their role in fostering this Condition for their peers.

Reflect, Write, and Share

Reflect on someone you think has made a positive contribution to the world. Write about what you think pushed this person towards greatness.

Now, think about what it would take for you to be seen as someone of greatness. Share your idea with your peers.



Reflect, Write, and Share

Reflect on a time when you really made a positive difference in someone else's life. Write about how this changed that person's life even if the change was small.

Now, think about small things students could do every day that would positively affect others' lives. Share your ideas with your peers.



Confidence to Take Action

As educators, we know that the 8 Conditions must be fostered throughout the school building as well as in the classroom to support aspirations. Here are some simple ideas to help you expand this Condition throughout your school.

To foster Confidence to Take Action school-wide, try these strategies:

- ▶ Speak up on a school issue that you don't agree with.
- ▶ Become involved in an educational initiative at the local or state level.
- ▶ Make an effort to compliment colleagues on something they do well.
- ▶ Listen to ideas and suggestions from the support staff.
- ▶ Invite parents into your class to help with a class project.
- ▶ Acknowledge individual student's strengths.
- ▶ Take the time to notice what your principal does well.
- ▶ Teach a lesson or theme that you have never taught before.
- ▶ Challenge yourself to overcome a personal or professional fear.
- ▶ Create an opportunity for your students to support each other.
- ▶ Team-teach with a colleague you have never worked with before.
- ▶ Ask students to evaluate you.
- ▶ Search online for new educational ideas or initiatives.
- ▶ Ask your students to help you solve a problem or dilemma.
- ▶ Challenge your students to think about societal issues ranging from poverty to the environment.