

How Do You Persevere?

When Things Go Wrong I Shall... Creating a Culture of Empathy and Relationships in Classrooms

Sequence of Activities:

I. Introduction:

Intention circle: Gather ourselves, connect to breath and being present, introduce name and one word feeling check-in

II. Icebreakers

A. Sleepwalker: ensemble task activity. Seats will be scattered throughout the space. One seat will be empty. One student is a designated “sleepwalker” whose objective is to sit on an empty seat. The group’s objective is to prevent the “sleepwalker” from sitting down by moving from one seat to another. The goal is to prevent the Sleepwalker from sitting down for 1 minute.

1. How do we work together to accomplish this goal? How do we actively listen to each other’s ideas? When something goes wrong how do we respond?

(This illustrates how we communicate and what we rely on to communicate—language, movement, eye contact—what happens when those are limited or manipulated?)

III. Concentric Circles: The Sun and Moon & Graffiti Board

A. Students will be assigned to be a Sun or a Moon. The Moons will create a circle and then face out. The Suns will form a circle facing the Moons. Facilitators will give prompts from below encouraging people to think about the questions on your senses; what it feels, looks like, etcetera. Ex. “Moons ask Suns ‘What is Success?’ and Suns have one minute to respond. If there’s a pause, then Moon’s ask the prompt question again. Each response to the prompt question has to be different. Then the Moon/Sun circles rotate to have a different partner.

1. What is Success? (Think about how it looks, feel, sound like, etc.?)

2. When something goes wrong... (how does it make you feel, what does it look like, sound like?)

3. What is Perseverance? Definition: continued effort to do or achieve something despite difficulties, failure, or opposition. (What does it look like? What does it sound like? Feel like?)

4. Graffiti board the responses

5. Unpack the responses

(*ESL Adaptation: Have another person scribe the responses and eliminate the writing on the graffiti board.)

IV. Write: Meditate, write, and share

A. Writing exercise: Share a story of when something went wrong. How did you persevere, moved forward?

B. Pair up and share

(*ESL Adaptation: Meditate. Share out loud with a partner. One partner listens while the other tells their story, they reversed roles.)

V. Write a Letter of Encouragement.

A. This will be a free writing session. This is for the student's eyes only. This will not be shared. When a time is challenging, you feel things are going wrong, or need words of encouragement they will read this letter that they address to themselves.

Prompt: You are to write a letter of encouragement to yourself; a motivational letter, a compassionate letter, a love letter that no one will see but you. Then put it in an envelope, self address it, and we will mail it out to you.

(*ESL Adaptation: Write the letter in your native language)

VI. Optional Performance:

Turn the letter of encouragement into a monologue.

VII. Closing Circle: Reflection time