

## **Our Social and Emotional Lives: Writing as Self-Affirmation**

**Khristy Powell, Charlevoix Elementary School**

### **The Demonstration**

**This lesson demonstration is meant to support my contentions that:**

- Effective teachers must address the needs of the “whole” child.
- In order to reach their full potential, students must feel they are safe and educators must foster an environment in which all students feel loved, appreciated, and valued.
- Writing is very personal art form in craft and expression;
- Teachers must provide a wide range of texts, provide ample time, and be comfortable allowing students to express themselves in their own individual way.
- Communication is an ever-evolving art form therefore teachers must plan to be flexible and adaptive.

### **The Step-by-Step Lesson Development: (Writing invitations are woven into the steps.)**

This lesson is part of a unit on self-awareness. It is meant to address social and emotional learning standards through participation in the writing process.

The following link is the presentation to guide the lesson:

[https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1eOWGv\\_IFfSxXR53quD1QwF-cT3FD6yn8Gsnhea-bzUg/edit?usp=sharing](https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1eOWGv_IFfSxXR53quD1QwF-cT3FD6yn8Gsnhea-bzUg/edit?usp=sharing)

#### **Setting Overview**

This lesson is meant for upper elementary students.

Guiding Question- What strategies does author use to make this writing a personal expression of self?

#### **Mentor Texts:**

- Look Me in the Eye by John Elder Robinson, Chapter 3 “Empathy”
- The Reason I Jump by Naoki Higashida, “Q11-Why don’t you make eye contact when you are talking?”
- Giraffes Can’t Dance by Giles Andreae and Guy Parker-Rees
- “Miss You” cartoon by LM

#### **Supports:**

- Mozart music
- Glitter jars
- <http://www.instructables.com/id/DIY-Calming-Glitter-Jars/>
- Affirmation cards

## The Step-by-Step Lesson Development continued:

- Thought Catcher

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1s1MCX4CuVthYS6H3mhCPb6OUXhLQJXbzoeqI5dtSM9w/edit?usp=sharing>

### Process

*(2 min.) Inclusion Activity-Affirmation Cards:*

It can be difficult to share our personal experiences with others so writing partners will be set up to support communication.

Each student reads affirmation card aloud and then find partner with same color card. *(10 min.) Picture Book- (Whole Group):*

Read-Aloud of Giraffes Can't Dance

Prompt 1-Students reflect on the "Thought Catcher" page

- There are many things I think are fun and I am really good at doing. One of the things I'm really good at is \_\_\_\_\_.
- Describe how you feel when you are participating in activity you are good at.
- Think of a time you felt successful. Explain the situation and what made you feel that way.

*(2 min.)* Students share their strength with their partners and whole class.

*(2 min.)* Stand and Stretch- yoga poses guided by teacher

*(15 min.) Quick Write- (Whole Group/Independent):*

Read-Aloud of The Reason I Jump "Q10-Why can't you have a proper conversation?"

Prompt 2-Students reflect on the "Thought Catcher" page

- There are some things that are hard for me to learn. Some of my friends are good at these things and I wish I were, too. One thing I think is hard is \_\_\_\_\_. When I can't do that well, I sometimes feel \_\_\_\_\_.
- Describe a time you felt as if you failed. Include details; what made you feel as if you were a failure? What would you differently next time?

*(2 min.)* Class will have an opportunity to share their writing with their partner.

*(2 min.)* Meditation

<https://app.gonoodle.com/channels/think-about-it/let-it-go?source=explore-categories>

*(2 min.)* Cartoon- *(Partners)*

Explore sample text- "Miss You"

## The Step-by-Step Lesson Development continued:

Prompt 3-Students reflect on the “Thought Catcher” page

- I know everyone needs a friend. One way I am a good friend is \_\_\_\_\_.
- Tell the story of a time you really needed a friend, someone to support you.
- Is there a time you saw that someone else could use some help or support? How did you know they needed a friend? What did you do to help them?

(2 min.) Gratitude-students share with partner

(15 min.) *Memoir-(Whole Group)*

Read-Aloud *Look Me in the Eye*, Chapter 3 “Empathy”

Prompt 4-Students reflect on the “Thought Catcher” page

- I notice that people act differently when they are upset. Some like to be quiet and alone; others like to be with their friends. Some people cry and some people might get mad and yell. When I’m upset I usually \_\_\_\_\_.
- Is there a time you had immediate regret for the way you acted? Describe what happened.
- Write about a strong emotional experience you’ve had in your life.

(2 min.) Affirmation-students re-read affirmation cards aloud, then to self

(30 min.) *Invitations to writing:*

As a class we will list the mentor texts and genres we’ve studied and then students will use the time to write.

Over the course of the lesson, students were given a variety of “Dig Deeper” writing prompts. They can choose to develop one further or take their writing in another direction; the writing may be in any genre or format they choose.

If students are struggling, they may use the the affirmation card at the edge of the desk to indicate a need support or can take a minute or two and focus thoughts using the glitter jars.

(5 min.) *Shared Writing:*

Students may share writing with partners and the whole class if they are comfortable. Allow students that opportunity to keep their work private if they are not yet comfortable sharing. Be sure to allow students to express their personal experiences- that is part of the work!

## **Bibliography:**

- Higashida, Naoki, KA Yoshida, and David Mitchell. *The Reason I Jump: The Inner Voice of a Thirteen-Year-Old Boy with Autism.* , 2016. Print.
- *Manifest Your Magnificence - 64 Affirmation Cards for Kids*, Magnificent Creations. "Miss You" cartoon by LM
- Mulvahill, Elizabeth. 21 Simple Ways to Integrate Social-Emotional Learning Throughout the Day. 21 October 2016. January 2017 <<https://www.weareteachers.com/21-simple-ways-to-integrate-social-emotional-learning-throughout-the-day/>>.
- Parker-Rees, Guy, Billy D. Williams, David Mansfield, and Giles Andreae. *Giraffes Can't Dance*. Norwalk, CT: Weston Woods, 2007.
- Perner, Darlene E. and Monica E. Delano. *A Guide to Teaching Students With Autism Spectrum Disorder*. Arlington: Council for Exceptional Children, 2013.
- Robison, John E. *Look Me in the Eye: My Life with Asperger's.* , 2007. Print.
- Sabin, Ellen. *Autism Acceptance: Being a Friend to Someone With Autism*. Watering Can Press, 2006.

## **Possible Lesson Extensions and Adaptations:**

- Create a class set of affirmation cards or start individual affirmation journals to visit on a daily basis.
- Start a kindness campaign and post affirmations on student lockers or cubbies.
- Work with PE classes to incorporate breath and body work to pacify anxiety.
- Pull small lunch groups together to work on targeted empathy or social skills training.
- Connect with "Girls on the Run" to promote positive self-image, body awareness, and community.
- Each student can create their own 'Dreamboard'.

## **Affect Demonstrated Throughout the Lesson and Described by Your Students:**

- Calm, relaxed, inclusive manner; empathetic voice and tone
- Soothing delivery and atmosphere
- Your well organized and structured activities were reassuring
- Encouraging with praise and invitations
- You played Zen music while we were writing.
- We loved that you read aloud to us.
- You observed and acknowledged our positive social interactions

### **Best Practices Modeled in the Lesson:**

- You offered many choices; the writing invitations were varied and appropriate
- You gave us multiple opportunities for movement
- You offered support for anyone who needed it
- You allowed for time to talk with a partner; you gave us many invitations to pair/share, as well as share with whole group
- You provided several thoughtful mentor texts
- You checked in with your students to make sure we were on track
- You offered us plenty of time and opportunities for writing.
- You provided an organizer for our writing
- You were very reassuring and anticipated our anxieties and questions
- You anticipated any problems or challenges we might face
- You provided clear instructions orally and in writing
- You used music, stretching, and a multi-sensory approach/delivery
- You gave us guiding questions and spiraled back through the guiding questions throughout lesson
- The entire lesson was well-planned, as were the transitions; great scaffolding
- Mentor texts were well placed, well chosen, and varied; it was a terrific, intentional genre review
- Thought Catcher handout was a great invitation

### **Common Core State Standards Embedded in the Lesson:**

- W:5.3-Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, descriptive details, and clear event sequences.
- W5.4: Produce clear and coherent writing.
- W5.10: Write routinely over a period of time.
- RL5.7: Analyze how visual elements contribute to meaning.
- RI:9- Integrate information from several texts on the same topic in order to write or speak about the subject knowledgably
- RL:5.2-Determine a themes of a story, drama, or poem from details in the text, including how characters in a story or drama respond to challenges or how the speaker in a poem reflects upon a topic; summary the text.
- SI:1- Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions, one on one, in groups, and teacher-led with diverse partners on Grade 5 topics and texts, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.
- SL:2-Summarize a written text, read aloud, or information presented in diverse media or formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.