



Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute  
1990 Volume II: Contemporary American Drama: Scripts and Performance

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## **“We Are One”**

Curriculum Unit 90.02.03  
by Pamela M. Fowler

180 days out of a year for twelve years, children come to a building we now call ‘a school’. In this building they spend six hours traveling from teacher to teacher sitting, writing, listening and hopefully learning basic skills so that they may be able to survive in day to day life.

What are we teaching them? Are we as educators simply satisfied with knowing our kids can “read” when all they are doing is calling the words that are on the paper? Or do we want them to demonstrate that they can understand what the author is trying to convey through his writing? Does it matter that when we say “write” all they do is copy the poem from the door poster and hand it in? Or do we want them to look inside themselves and put down on paper how they are feeling as human beings in this world they live in. When we introduce them to the horrors of slavery, Hiroshima, and the Holocaust is it just the dates and events that took place or is it the faces and the pain we want them to know and learn? Do we try to impress upon our children that history is bound to be our future if we do not stop the cycle of violence and hatred towards each other? Yes, we do try, but rarely have success. We get frustrated when our curriculum units do not progress as expected, and eventually we give up and return to the basic CORE curriculum everyone else teaches.

Over the past years I learned that not only do my students need exciting, innovative and challenging units, I need to teach these units to break up the monotony of the school day and to try to delay my teacher burn out.

I have created a curriculum to enhance a Life Skills course taught in my school. My focus is on learning how to feel and learning what it feels like when you are the other guy. I am also focusing on effective problem solving.

This unit is written to teach children that they are just as important as anyone else in this world. We are going to spend an entire classes period of play therapy activities, activities that develop and enhance feelings of trust and self-esteem.

I am going to begin my unit from the first day of school, using my present class as a model class. It takes weeks for the teacher and students to understand each other’s personality and to develop a sense of trust within the classroom. My personal opinion is that the first three weeks of school are the hardest. This is the time to test and see how far you can go with the teacher and with each student in the class. As we say in the system, “The honeymoon is over!”

My unit may seem like a book of simple games, but these games help develop a sense of confidence within

each child and a feeling of oneness and trust in the classroom. When you have that much security in your class things will go a lot smoother during the year and you will be surprised of the amount of disciplinary problems you will not encounter as a result. Each game has a purpose and is a building block to the next.

The following is a very general outline of what will form the first quarter of the school year. The first quarter of the school year is the longest and most “intact”. (There are very few school holidays)

## **THE FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL: BEGIN TRUST DEVELOPMENT**

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The best way I have found to develop trust within a class is to get everyone involved in a situation that will prove your belief in someone. The games for Trust Development are meant to always be successful and to never force a person to participate, rather to have the class encourage the individual and to say, “Trust us, you will be fine.”

The games and situations that each child will participate in are derived from my past educational experience, Outward Bound Programs, Project Pride and an assortment of books I have researched.

Throughout the first quarter each class will be formulated in the same manner.

We will begin by a warm-up activity to loosen the tension, as well as the muscles and vocal cords. These will be from a variety of materials I have collected from various institutes. The vocal warm-ups ranges from saying and singing the ABC’s to mimicking sounds that are a part of everyday life. The physical warm-ups, I envision consisting of “feeling the space around them,” sculptures, puppets, etc.

After the warm-ups we will engage in a variety of theater games and role playing which primarily aid children (and the teacher) in developing trust, self-esteem and a degree of confidence. After each game we will discuss what happened. Focusing on the good, the bad and the questionable. Questions like “How did it feel to be . . . ?” “Were you comfortable?” Why or Why not? Each person will be expected to contribute the conversation by expressing how they felt about: a) the game and b) themselves as a part of the activity. My goal is to have them express in a complete sentence their honest reaction to the activity and why without me prompting them. If time permits we will repeat the sequence with another game and discussion.

Finally, upon completion of the class period I will calm everyone down with a relaxation exercise.

By the end of the first quarter in my class, I hope, will have developed a sense of trust for one of their peers if not the whole class and for myself. I in turn hope to have learned a great deal about the children whom I will be spending the next nine months with.

At some point in the unit the games will couple with role playing and problem solving situations that the children face daily. I will give them a dilemma and they will have to up with a realistic solution that will solve the problem and/or make it better for all parties involved. We will also use techniques that will help solve school problems effectively. We will work out fights, suspensions, detentions, ‘bad’ days, arguments with teachers and peers. I want to stay away from typical responses like “You just don’t do that” or “Do it because I said so, I am the adult.” I want the children to internalize these statements and understand why they are made. I want them to know the proper behavior in many situations and to develop respect for their peers and adults as well.

## *TIME PERIOD*

The unit will begin on the first day of school and continue throughout the first quarter of the year. I am confident that the time I have allowed for each activity will be sufficient. Each lesson is designed to last a total of 45 minutes and I am expecting the unit will be taught three times a week in order to be beneficial for both the teacher and the student.

## *MY CHILDREN*

The children I service are fifth, sixth and seventh, and eighth grade students. These children are classified as Learning Disabled, Socially-Emotionally Maladjusted and/or Educable Mentally Retarded. These labels are based on the testing results each child is required to be given in order to remain eligible for special services each year.

Despite these labels, the bottom line is that my children are very needy emotionally as well as academically. It is my opinion that some of my children are having academic problems because they are not able to cope outside of school. In their lives there is nobody saying that right is right or that wrong is wrong. They don't know the difference. I have some to believe that if a child is confident and praised for not only his achievements, but for the efforts he puts forth in reaching his goals, he will prove to be a productive member of your classroom and eventually of society, so long as this nurturing continues at various levels. My class lacks a great deal of this nurturing and confidence building.

They are from a place where anger is the only emotion to exhibit, inflicting pain on others as a result of this anger is okay and no one outside of the neighborhood is worth trusting or has ever proven to be worthy of their trust. "After all," I was once told, "You teachers can leave her. I have no where to go except here." I am in a position where I not only see the pain my children suffer, but I also know it. I want to use my experience as learning devices for my children to help them grow, mature and reach for more than they are now. I also want to help them develop the confidence to do whatever they want to do, go to college, own a business or simply leave the area they are growing up in for better and safer neighborhood.

Through this development my children will be able to "read between the lines" and internalize the pain and anguish of those who survived the Holocaust and the other horrors of our past. They will be able to identify with the feelings of oppression and will now have the strength to overcome it without hurting others in the process.

My class is still young enough so that breaking down barriers will not be as difficult as is they were 15 or 16 years old.

I teach in a setting where my special education students are mainstreamed into the regular education classes. I am their base, their security and at times their controlling force, when they need it. My class is small, with eight full-time students who receive 16-25 hours a week of special instruction and an additional ten who come to me throughout the day for supportive help with their regular education classes. These ten part-time resource students receive special instruction of 1 to 15 hours a week. The children for whom this unit is written are those who will be with me on a full-time basis.

As you read through "We Are One" you will notice that the teacher becomes a part of the whole, your class. Without you there is a void. The class will seem 'not quite right', and the kids will feel it. You will do what you ask the kids to do. You will risk yourself as well. You will now allow the children to see the teacher as a real

live person who also has feelings and emotions.

### *FINAL COMMENTS*

These names are meant to develop confidence and a feeling of oneness and trust in the classroom. They are also meant to be fun. I have included many 'risk' situations for both the teacher and students. Risk is something we all have to take throughout our lives and it is scary when we risk a friendship or our lives or our reputation. The risk becomes less intimidating if we know that there is someone around us who we trust and feel comfortable with. Risk is an important part of "We Are One". Without risk you will never know your boundaries, your limits or your capabilities. Just have fun!

Scary? Yes it is. You will now know and be more able to understand how your kids feel. I can almost guarantee that once you show the kids that you sincerely are participating and letting your guard down in hopes of helping them help themselves they will begin to take risks not only in school, but outside of your classroom and eventually at home and on the streets. They will trust you. You will also receive a different respect from the kids than you normally would have without this interaction. The unit will begin to flow, everyone will have fun and look forward to the next session.

Before I begin, I must also add that the feelings you touch upon and relationships you develop in this 45 minute time period should be carried over into the entire school day. Use the information that has been taught. Have the students practice the skills in the cafeteria, in the playground, during free time or wherever they are. This reinforces the skills and the more reinforcement the kids receive, the more likely they will internalize the messages.

What is important to keep in mind that you are also a human being and should be one. Just because teaching is a profession, no one said that you have to be two different people. Don't change your personality the minute you walk through your classroom door and do an about face when you leave. Consistency is the key. You're mad, okay. Be mad. Show the kids how to work through the anger and how to get rid of it. Show them what it means to 'put it all behind you and continue.' To the kids it is just a bunch of words. Worthless words unless they are taught what they mean and how to do it.

This unit is planned for 42 days. It is assumed that it will be taught three times a week for a 45 minute class period. I have anticipated the first quarter to go as follows:

Day 1-3—Getting to know us

Day 4-16—Trust Development

Day 17-29—Self-Esteem

Day 30-42—Cooperative Learning

# FIRST THINGS FIRST

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## RULES, RULES and MORE RULES

### *The First Day of School*

Scenario: The school bell rings. Children walk through the hallway looking up at the door numbers and then back to their assignment cards for their homerooms.

One at a time they straggle into the classroom. They look so cute and innocent . . . ?

With each face you smile a warm and welcoming smile accompanied with a pleasant “Hello”. You take their cards and sketch their face into your memory and label each with the appropriate name. The first few almost always sit as far from each other as they possibly can. One in the far left corner by the window and the other in the far right corner. No one sits right up front unless they absolutely have to. The next few seats themselves somewhere in between the first two. As each new student walk through the door, they all maintain a look of hoping to see a familiar face (even if they do not like the person it belongs to). The staggering continues for about an hour or so.

Finally it seems to end. You assume they are all here. Looking at them from the front of the room, they stare at you, blankly waiting for your instructions. The ball is in your court now. A lot depends on how you begin. You have to give your introductory speech and may be your expectations for the year. Then you proceed to required paperwork like schedule, home phone numbers and parent’s names. Last, but not least, you explain school rules, regulations, fire drill procedure and the school tour. Finally you have completed all the necessary first day work. You now have a total of about two hours or so to go. There they are again. Sitting, and staring at you, waiting for directions. Now what???

### **Goals**

1. To establish a positive learning environment.
2. To involve students in taking pride in their learning environment.
3. To introduce the decision making process.
4. To involve students directly in the decision making process.
5. To make students directly responsible for classroom behavior.

### **Time Period 45 minutes**

***Rationale Every classroom has its own rules and regulations that each child is expected to follow. Class rules are meant to be obeyed by the entire class, so let them make the rules and make them directly responsible for following them as well as accepting the consequences for breaking***

**them.**

**Material Marker, chart paper or chalk and a chalk board.**

### **Presentation**

1. Explain to the class the importance of working together and how much easier our year will go if we all work together.
2. Explain the fact that everyone has to follow rules regardless of age. Give examples of the rules you must follow as an adult in and out of school.
3. Ask the class to name some rules they had to follow over the summer.
4. Present to the class 'a democracy' and how it functions. Discuss how it can work in the classroom.
5. List on the board a rule given to you by each child. Allow them to present something that the child thinks would be elective in the classroom. Allow for no discussion about the choices given. Go around as many times as necessary.
6. Read over the rules one at a time and discuss whether or not they are effective for the classroom. Here the teacher plays a number of roles. You are a participant, mediator and ultimate decision maker in case of a stale mate.

Rules can also be unwritten as well. An unwritten rule is one in which everyone knows what is expected of them and what behavior is unacceptable. For example, when announcements are presented on the Public Announcement System (PA) all conversations are to stop . . . including the teacher's. This teaches the children how to listen to what is being said and very basic manners. Not to interrupt someone not to speak when another person is speaking

7. Once the rules are set and have been discussed, you can't ask for others which may keep mayhem a stranger to your class.
8. The teacher is allowed a few unwritten rules. These can be very basic rules that deal with manners or they can simply be pet peeves of the teacher.

For example, I am not very fond of the way students refer to each other. They use 'nigger' in the same manner we use 'the'. I don't believe they know what the word has meant or what the definition of it is. So in my class my teacher rule is 'no one is to use the word nigger PERIOD.'

9. Once the rules have been set, post them attractively in a space where everyone can see them.

## GETTING TO KNOW US

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Getting to know us is designed to help the teacher acquaint him/herself with his/her class as well as letting the children find out about each other by interacting. These activities will be beneficial for the student as well, because they will start to know you in a way other than in a teaching role.

Many of the activities are done in a circle. The circle allows for everyone to see each other and also creates the feeling of the class as a whole. When a student is absent the circle will feel incomplete. This is noticeable by the size of the circle and by the difference in the amount of space between its members.

Getting to Know Us is a three day section. Day one begins the first day of school after Rules, Rules, Rules.

### *DAY ONE:*

Title: SPACE FLIGHT APPLICATION

#### **Goals**

1. To begin to develop relationships.
2. To establish a positive group setting.
3. To develop listening skills.

#### **Materials**

1. Copies of Space Flight Application for each student and teacher.
2. Pencils.
3. Name cards of each student on desks facing inner circle.

### *CLASSROOM SET-UP*

All desks placed in a circle.

### *CLASS SIZE*

8-10

### *SPECIAL NOTES:*

Mainly a teacher directed activity.

### *PRESENTATION*

1. Explain to the class the reason for doing this exercise. Focus on the goals. You may want to remind the students to be mature and supportive of their classmates.
2. Direct the class to place their finger or pencil on the top part and find "Name".
3. Instruct them to fill in their name, first and last.

4. Have them fill out the entire section of information, phone number, today's date, their home address, teacher's name, grade, birth date, and place of birth. Reassure them that their spelling does not count. Just do the best they can.

5. To begin the application, you are going to read each line aloud to the class and help them think.

'There are \_\_\_ people in my family.' Have the children count those people who live in the same house with them and write the number in the blank.

'In my family we have \_\_\_.' This could be anything from 'fun' to a new sofa.

6. Continue down the application from #1-12.

7. Guide the class through. Get them thinking.

8. Allow enough time for everyone to think and write their answer.

9. If there is someone who can't quite seem to come up with an answer, give him/her some help, suggest something, then no on.

10. Once the application has been completed, the sharing portion can be done in a variety of ways. Each will be explained and you can use portions of each to fit your own teaching style and personality.

TYPE A (Teacher Directed)

11. Begin at the top of the application and go around the circle and ask each student to complete the statement.

12. Start with name and address information in this format: I'm going to start and I want you to listen to the information. I want you to tell us your name, where you live, how old you are, when your birthday is, and what grade you are in. My name is \_\_\_\_\_. I live \_\_\_\_\_. I am \_\_\_ years old. My birthday is \_\_\_ and I am in the \_\_\_ grade. (teacher fills in the information about him/herself) Now we will go around the circle. "Tell us about yourself." Begin to your right, prompting as needed.

13. After everyone has finished their introductions, ask each student how many people are in their family. You may even want them to tell you who they are. (2 brothers, a sister and mom)

14. Pre-empt the share time by saying, "I have \_\_\_ people in my family, how many do you have, \_\_\_?"

15. Continue around the circle until everyone has answered.

16. Proceed down the list in the same manner.

17. Always begin by completing the statement yourself then ask the students.

18. Discussions may begin to arise. Be sure to keep them short. Using this procedure, time is of the essence.

TYPE B (Student Directed)

11. Begin at the top of the application.

12. Start with name and address information in the same format as states in the teacher directed procedure.

13. After everyone has finished their introductions, explain to the group the following information.

14. Say, 'Look at your application and put your finger on a statement you want to know about another person in this room.'

15. 'Now we are going to go around the circle. Each person will choose someone and ask them to complete the statement.'

16. 'You should say it like this: "\_\_\_ (name), What do you like to do during your free time?"

17. There are a few rules,

1. The same person cannot be asked twice. Everyone must get a turn. Me included.

2. Your questions must be asked in complete thoughts.



3. Your answers must be complete thoughts. No one word answers.

4. Every question must begin with the name of the person you are asking.

If you do not know or forget someone's name, you have to ask them to tell you/remind you of their name.

5. No one can ask the same question.

6. And above all, WE MUST BE POLITE!!!!

Any questions?

18. You can begin to model what you want.

19. Go around the circle until everyone has asked and answered three questions.

TYPE C (Mix and Share)

11. Partner the class.

12. Explain that each pair is going to share three things about themselves with their partner.

13. Their partner is going to then share three things about themselves.

14. The class will then come back to the circle.

15. Each pair is going to tell the group two of those three things they learned about their partners.

16. They will introduce their (new) friend in the following manner: "This is \_\_\_ (name of partner).

She/He likes \_\_\_, \_\_\_, \_\_\_

She/He has \_\_\_ people in her/his family.

17. The partner will then introduce their partner to the class.

18. Continue in this manner until everyone has introduced their (new) friend to the class.

## THE BEST THING ABOUT ME

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While you are still in a circle and just before the class is about to end pose the following statements to the class and ask them to complete them uniquely:

1. My name is \_\_\_ and the best thing about me is \_\_\_. Go around the circle again and have them complete this statement:
2. My name is \_\_\_ and the only thing everyone knows about me is \_\_\_. Write down the responses to these statements and save them. They will be used in Day Two of Getting to Know Us.

## ENDING THE CLASS

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To bring this session to a close, collect the Space Flight Applications and place them in individual folders you will use through out the year. These folders will be made in the last session of GETTING TO KNOW US.

### *DAY TWO*

#1

Title: DO YOU REMEMBER?

### **Goals**

1. To develop memory skills.
2. To further establish positive learning environment.
3. To recall names and personal information.
4. To develop skills of relating names to faces and information learned.

### **Materials**

1. 3x5 index cards
2. Space Flight Application of each student
3. The Best Thing About Me Statements

### *Time Period*

10-15 minutes

### *Classroom Set-Up:*

Students are standing shoulder to shoulder facing the teacher.

Presentation:

1. Write each student's name in the lower right hand corner of the card.
  2. Use the information learned from the SPA and the Best Thing About Me from Day 1.
  3. Choose 3-4 statements each child had said the day before and write them on individual cards in the first person.  
I like baseball and
  4. Mix cards.
  5. Line the class up shoulder to shoulder facing you.
  6. Begin with the first child in line. (either right to left or left to right)
  7. Read the first card aloud to the first child.
  8. This child must identify the person who made the statement yesterday. He/she can look at the faces of his/her classmate if they need to.
  9. If the student can correctly identify the author of this statement he/she can stay in line.
    - a. If she/he is unable to identify the person he/she must sit down.
    - b. When given an incorrect answer, place the card back into the pile. Do not give the answer. It will come up again and maybe the person who is asked the question will be able to answer it correctly.
  10. Go on to the next person in line and repeat steps #7-9 until the cards run out or until there is only one child standing.
- Choose unique statements for each child so they do not get confused. You may even ask a student to identify his/her own statement.

#2

Title: PUT YOURSELVES IN ORDER

**Goals**

1. To develop cooperation skills.
2. To develop listening skills.
3. To further develop positive learning environment.

**Materials**

None

*Time Period*

10 minutes

*Classroom Set-Up*

Area cleared for movement of class members.

*Presentation:*

1. Say to the class, "Put yourselves in order by height, from tallest to shortest."
2. Allow time for the class to organize themselves in a line.
3. Praise the class for their success.
4. You may want to go down the line and ask them how tall they are. Point out the fact of the students in front and behind them.  
Notice the number of inches difference.
5. Ask the class to put themselves in order by the following information:
  1. Birthdate
    - a. day
    - b. month
  2. Shoe size
  3. House number
  4. Total of telephone number
    - a. first three digits ( $4+6+9=19$ )
    - b. last four digits ( $8+1+7+4=20$ )
    - c. all seven digits ( $4+6+9+8+1+7+4=39$ )
  5. Hair length/height
  6. Weight
  7. Distance from school

#3

Title: THREE CHANGES

**Goals**

1. to improve observation skills.
2. to develop memory skills.
3. to improve memory skills.
4. to develop listening skills.
5. to improve listening skills.

**Materials**

None

*Time Period*

10 minutes

*Classroom Set-Up*

Divide the class into two even teams.

Stand them facing each other in a line shoulder to shoulder.

*Presentation*

1. Spread teams out at arm's length.
2. Each person facing their partner must observe each other.
3. Tell the class to notice their partner's dress, hair accessories, etc. Allow for approximately one minute for his. Allow no talking.
4. Tell each team to turn their backs to their partner.
5. Have them make three changes in their appearance. i.e. untie a shoelace, pull pant leg up, switch their watch to the other wrist, etc.
6. Take approximately one minute to allow them to make the changes.
7. Turn teams around at the same time to face each other again.
8. Each partner must then identify the three changes.
9. When both partners have identified all three changes have the pair raise their hands. Commend the teams for their efforts.
10. Change partners and play again.
11. Continue for as long as you would like. Three to four turns are usually sufficient.

## *ENDING THE PERIOD*

Each class ends with a relaxation activity.

Title: RELAXATION TECHNIQUE

### **Goals**

1. To wind down the class.
2. To calm students down after activity.
3. To prepare students for next class.
4. To learn how to relax.
5. To lessen feelings of stress.

### **Materials**

None

### *Classroom Set-Up*

1. Lights off.
2. Students sitting in a circle (No desks).
3. Students eyes closed.

### *Notes*

Teacher directed activity.

### *Presentation:*

1. Instruct the class to keep their eyes closed all throughout the exercise and to respond to your voice.

\*The first few times the class participates in this technique, they will feel awkward. Some may giggle and we all know how contagious giggling is. Remind them to keep quiet and proceed. Your voice is soft and quiet. Sit or stand in one place for the first few times. This way distractions will be avoided. Put a DO NOT DISTURB sign on your door and relax your class.

2. Say:

“TAKE A DEEP BREATH IN THROUGH YOUR NOSE AND EXHALE THROUGH YOUR MOUTH. START WITH YOUR FEET. FEEL YOUR FEET INSIDE YOUR SOCKS. WIGGLE YOUR TOES, SCRUNCH YOUR TOES REAL TIGHT . . . AND LET THEM GO. ROLL YOUR ANKLES AROUND AND AROUND TO THE RIGHT, NOW GO ROLL THEM AROUND THE OTHER WAY. MOVE UP TO YOUR CALVES. TIGHTEN THE MUSCLES IN YOUR CALF TIGHT, TIGHT, TIGHT AND RELAX.

LIFT YOUR LEGS UP AND HOLD, HOLD, HOLD . . . NOW DROP YOUR FEET TO THE FLOOR.

RELAX . . . INHALE . . . AND EXHALE . . . GOOD. RELAX.

TIGHTEN YOUR BUTT MUSCLES TIGHT, TIGHT, TIGHT AND RELAX (HERE IS WHERE THEY TEND

TO GIGGLE). PULL YOUR STOMACH IN REAL TIGHT AND HOLD IT, HOLD IT, HOLD IT . . . GOOD, NOW RELAX . . . ROLL YOUR SHOULDERS BACK SLOWLY 1, 2, 3 AND NOW THE OTHER WAY SLOWLY 1, 2, 3 GOOD.

PULL YOU SHOULDERS UP TO TOUCH YOUR EARS HIGHER, HIGHER, HOLD IT . . . GOOD NOW DROP THEM AND RELAX.

INHALE SLOW 1, 2, 3 AND EXHALE TROUGH YOUR MOUTH. SHAKE YOUR ARMS OUT. SHAKE YOUR WRISTS. TIGHTEN YOUR HANDS INTO A FIST REAL TIGHT, TIGHT, TIGHT AND . . . RELAX SHAKE THEM OUT. ROLL YOUR HEAD TO THE RIGHT AND VERY SLOWLY AROUND IN A CIRCLE EASY, BE CAREFUL. ROLL YOUR HEAD THE OTHER WAY, EASY AND SLOW. DROP YOUR HEAD TO THE LEFT. MAKE YOUR LEFT EAR TOUCH YOUR LEFT SHOULDER WITHOUT MOVING YOUR SHOULDER. YOU WANT TO FEEL THE STRETCH IN YOUR NECK NOW DROP YOUR HEAD TO THE RIGHT, EASILY. FEEL THE STRETCH. DROP YOUR HEAD FORWARD NOW SO THAT YOUR CHIN TOUCHES YOUR CHEST AND RELAX. INHALE 1, 2, 3 AND EXHALE. AGAIN INHALE 1, 2, 3 AND EXHALE. SLOWLY PICK YOUR HEAD UP, AND OPEN YOUR EYES.

3. Turn on the lights.

4. Be sure to keep a quiet atmosphere.

5. Ask the class how they felt doing the exercise.

6. Rearrange the classroom back in order.

### *Day Three*

#1

Title: TELEPHONE

#### **Goals**

1. To further develop memory skills.
2. To develop listening skills.
3. To improve listening skills.

#### **Materials**

None

*Time Period*

10 minutes

*Classroom Set-Up*

Seat class in a circle. (no desks)

*Presentation:*

1. Ask and discuss with the class about the word 'communication'.
2. Explain to them that the activity is based on listening and paying attention.
3. You will begin the sequence.
4. Use a short phrase which is fairly easy and whisper the phrase into the ears of the student sitting to your right.
5. He/she is to repeat what was heard to the person to their right.
6. If the child did not hear or fully understand what was said they can dial the OPERATOR, by saying 'operator' and you are to repeat the phrase. This can be done only once.
- 7 The sequence continues until the information gets to the person on your left.
8. This student is to say what was heard out loud.
9. If the information was relayed correctly, the last person then becomes the 'informant'.
10. If it was not relayed correctly the first 'informant' gets to choose the next person to begin the next round.
11. Continue this sequence as long as you choose to varying the information to be relayed.

#2

Title: CIRCLE STORY

**Goals**

1. To improve memory.



2. To develop skills in sequencing.
3. To develop and improve listening skills.
4. To develop creativity.

**Materials**

None

*Time Period*

10 minutes

*Classroom set-up*

Seat children in a circle with no desks.

*Presentation:*

1. Explain to the class the goals of this activity.
2. Begin the activity as if you were telling a story.
  3. State a sentence and then stop.
  4. Turn your head towards the student who will be next. Use this signal so that there will be no interruption of the story line.
  5. Proceed around the circle to each student.
  6. Each student must add a complete thought to the story in a sequential manner.
  7. You can proceed this way once or twice until the story is complete.

#3

Title: WHEN I GO TO CALIFORNIA

**Goals**

1. To develop memory skills.
2. To develop remembering a series in a circle.
3. To develop listening skills.
4. To develop and improve patience.

### *Time Period*

15 minutes

### **Materials**

None

### *Classroom Set-Up*

Seat students in a circle without desks.

### *Presentation*

1. Tell the class to think of what they would like to take on a trip to California. Give them a minute to come up with some things in their head.
2. The first person starts by saying "When I go to California, I am going to take a trunk" (or any other object).
4. The third person takes a trunk and the second object and adds a new one.
5. Each player takes in exact order all that has gone before and adds a new object.
6. If a person makes a mistake he/she must sit inside the circle and cannot add an object.
7. Go around the circle once so that everyone has an opportunity to contribute and stop.
8. Play a second time. This time set a goal for no errors.
9. You can change the state with each round and play as often as you see fit.
10. You can also pair students up when you play two or more rounds for one state.

#4

Title: "A" MY NAME IS ALICE

### **Goals**

1. To improve remembering a series in a circle.
2. To improve memory skills.
3. To improve listening skills.
4. To improve concentration skills.

## *Time Period*

20 minutes

1. Explain to the class the general procedure: "We are going to go around in a circle using the letters of the alphabet, and we are going to think of people's first names that begin with each letter. You have to listen and remember all the names that come before you and then take the next letter in order and say a name which begins with the letter. One rule: You cannot use anyone's name in this classroom.
2. The first person says, " 'A' my name is Alice." (or any other name that begins with A)
3. The second person says, " 'A' his/her name is Alice, 'B' my name is \_\_\_\_.
4. The third person says 'A's name, 'B's name and then takes the next letter and gives it a name.
5. Each player says, in exact order, all that has gone before and continues with the next letter of the alphabet.
6. Continue around until you get to Z. Depending on the size of your class you may choose to stop when the person who began the series is confronted again. You may say "Okay, keep going, just omit A-J."
7. If a person makes a mistake he/she must sit in the center of the circle and cannot add a name.
8. Play again and set a goal for no errors.

#5

Title: RELAXATION TECHNIQUE

See Day 2 for specific instructions

## **TRUST DEVELOPMENT**

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Trust is not something that is or should be frivolously given away. It ought to and deserves to be earned. We all know people or have known someone who trusts everyone they meet and we all know the consequences they have had to deal with as a result of doing so. At a young age, children can be very trusting. Once they approach their teens they have experienced so much pain and rejection, the part of them is so very trusting is suddenly tightly shut.

To prove to a child that it is safe to trust us as adults, is a task in itself. We experience an emotional roller

coaster. I want to, through this section of the unit, make that part of our job a little easier and less emotionally taxing.

Following are activities to help develop trust within the classroom, not only between students but between the students and yourself as a teacher and an adult.

*Day 4: Warm Up Activity: (5 minutes)*

Vocal

1. INSERT
- 2.

Physical

- 1.
- 2.

*ACTIVITIES*

Classroom Activity: (20-30 minutes)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Relaxation Technique: (7 minutes) See Day 2

*Day 5*

## **BUILDING SELF ESTEEM**

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Low self esteem runs rampant in our classrooms. With many of our children this can undermine their ability to succeed in school. Young students try desperately to hide their \_\_\_, by over compensating. Lack of self confidence can show in various forms. The child who talks insistently, the young girls who flirts with every male that crosses her path, the boy who just doesn't seem to leave your side, and the student who sits quietly at his/her desk and never causes a problem are all calling to us and saying 'I don't think I am worth anything. Notice me so that I will feel okay about myself for a moment.' These kids need their self esteem boosted. As teachers we see the children a lot, sometimes even more than their own families. We have the power (yes it is actually power) to either build a kid's confidence or totally destroy it. Some teachers and teaching staff do not believe that by the way we react of ignore a child, we are making some sort of impression on them. We need to be conscience of this power and purposely boost their self esteem in our children, individually as well as a whole class. Following are some suggestions for doing both. These suggestions are not time consuming or 45 minute class activities. Rather they are simple and subtle ways to foster self esteem in you students. Shy or

withdrawn child:

1. Initiate conversation by saying Hello (not How are you?), pat him/her on the shoulder as you walk by.
2. Pair him/her up with a more outgoing child in practice drills.
3. Ask him/her to help you in the classroom often.

Clinging Child

1. Give him/her something personal, from your desk, to keep at theirs.
2. Hold a conversation with the child only if he/she has completed 85% of the work. Make this known to the child.
3. Initiate conversation with the child only if it is evident that he/she has not been bothersome. Make the conversation short and pat him/her on the shoulder upon conclusion and praise him/her on accomplishment.

Giver Upper

1. Establish a positive goal for completing a specific amount of work, followed by a verbal reward.
2. Insist the child make conscience daily decisions and verbalize his/her decisions to you before goal is accomplished or attempted.
3. Praise the student of individual accomplishments on a regular basis.

Fostering self esteem as a class:

1. Decorate the room with students work.
2. Develop a class slogan and use it often.
3. Measure each student's height and weight and keep a record of it on a monthly basis.
4. Spontaneously praise the class for minor accomplishments on a daily basis.
5. Say one positive thing to every child in your classroom twice or three times a day, EVERYDAY.
6. Walk around the class and pat each child on the shoulder or back or head, include a wink or a smile.

## COOPERATIVE LEARNING

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Cooperative learning is not a new concept for the classroom. We have been cooperatively learning since the first day we have been able to interact with others. We give some information, they give some information and together we come up with a shared goal.

In the classroom we structure our lesson competitively, where students are working against each other to attain a goal, i.e. exams. We also structure our lessons individually, where students work alone and have no interaction with other classmates, i.e. book reports, library research. This section uses both and structures the class towards cooperative learning.

Rarely do we allow our students to work cooperatively. In cooperative learning students work together toward a shared goal. Through cooperative learning students learn to work in small groups, learn the assigned material and be individually accountable for their share of the assignment.

1. Tell them they are going to be working together for a while.
2. Have the groups come up with a name that represents their group. Tell them that everyone must agree on the name. Learn to talk it out. Don't bully anyone into agreeing.
3. Handout one manilla folder to each group and the rest of the materials.
4. Instruct the group to create a logo/insignia which represents their name as a group and the people in the group.

\*The class will already know to do this from the lesson on the class insignia presented in the Self Esteem section.

5. Give them about 30 minutes to decide and create. Circulate the room talking to each group to either help them or to be sure they are all on track and participating.
6. Ten or fifteen minutes prior to the class ending bring the class back together to discuss the folders. Randomly choose or have the group choose a spokesperson to show and explain what their name is and what their logo means.
7. Encourage the class to compliment each other by applause or a few words of acceptance on their part.

*From Day 31 to Day 42 the format of the class will be as follows:*

1. Warm up activity (5 minutes)
2. Class Activity ( 15 minutes)
3. Cooperative Learning Activity (12 minutes)
4. Class discussion (10 minutes)

For activities refer to bibliography

### *Implementation*

Examine the subject areas, curriculums and lessons you teach and decide where cooperative learning will be most beneficial.

### *Forming Groups*

When you form the groups for cooperative learning, keep the groups small. You can use pair, threesomes, groups of four or five. No more than five in a group. Keep in mind that you want one low student, one high student and two middle students. Don't forget to take their personalities into consideration. **DO NOT GROUP FRIENDS TOGETHER!** This defeats the purpose.

In addition put a quiet student with one who is outgoing. Opposites usually work well. They tend to take on each others traits. This develops new friendships as well.

### *Setting up the room*

In setting up the room make sure groups are far enough from each other so no interaction amongst groups take place. If you have table, they are ideal. If not seat the desks so that the children are facing one another.

### *Day 30*

Title: BUILDING GROUP IDENTITY

#### **Goals**

1. To improve academic performance.
2. To improve positive learning environment.
3. To develop positive self-esteem.
4. To improve thinking skills.
5. To develop positive interaction techniques.
6. To develop more positive attitude about school, subject areas and teachers.
7. To develop more positive attitude about and toward each other.

8. To improve more positive psychological adjustment.

*Time period*

45 minutes

**Materials**

1. manila folders (one per group)
2. scissors
3. construction paper
4. glue
5. pencils
6. crayons
7. markers
8. magazines
9. drawing paper

*Classroom Set-up*

Put desks in groups

*Presentation:*

1. Explain to the groups the idea of cooperative learning as well as the goals.

SPACE FLIGHT APPLICATION

NAME \_\_\_\_ PHONE \_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_  
ADDRESS \_\_\_\_ TEACHER \_\_\_\_ GRADE \_\_\_\_  
DATE OF BIRTH \_\_\_\_ PLACE OF BIRTH \_\_\_\_  
month/year City/State

There are \_\_\_\_ people in my family.

In my family we have \_\_\_\_

1. My closest friend is \_\_\_\_  
We enjoy doing \_\_\_\_ together
2. The sport I like best is \_\_\_\_  
An actor I like best is \_\_\_\_  
An actress I like best is \_\_\_\_
3. Two TV programs I like are \_\_\_\_
4. My hobbies are \_\_\_\_
5. Two magazines I like are \_\_\_\_  
A newspaper I like is \_\_\_\_



6. The school subjects I like most are \_\_\_\_  
Those I do not like very much are \_\_\_\_
7. When I grow up I'd like to be \_\_\_\_
8. When I have free time I like to \_\_\_\_
9. The two best books I've ever read are \_\_\_\_
10. On Saturdays and Sundays I like to \_\_\_\_
11. Two people I have read about and like very much are \_\_\_\_
12. Check the types of books you like to read:
- ☐ Animal Stories
  - ☐ Biography
  - ☐ Fairy Tales
  - ☐ Folklore
  - ☐ Historical
  - ☐ Home and Family Life
  - ☐ Humorous
  - ☐ Mystery
  - ☐ Other Lands
  - ☐ Our Country
  - ☐ Poetry
  - ☐ Science
  - ☐ Make-believe
  - ☐ True

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