Lesson Plan 5: Stepping Out of My Comfort Zone

LEARNING OUTCOMES
✓ Recognise what holds us back from trying new things
✓ Identify the benefits of taking risks in developing your full potential
✓ Devise ways of creating new positive habits

SKILLS
• Changing perspective
• Creating positive changes
• Making choices

VALUES
• Challenge and support
• Risk-taking
• Determination
• Courage

RESOURCES
Student worksheet

PREPARATION
Think about what keeps you in your comfort zone. You might like to share this with your students. Choose a new habit that you would like to work on.

TIME NEEDED
50/60 minutes. This is a guide and will depend on the range of abilities in the class.
EXERCISE 1 – COMFORT ZONES (30 Minutes)

“To get something you have never had, you have to do something you have never done”

Start by asking your students in pairs, “What do you think is meant by a comfort zone?” Ask for answers. Then explore what the above statement might mean in the context of their answers.

Possible answers include: where you are comfortable, safe, doing what is easy and familiar and avoiding something new or that feels uncomfortable, etc.

Ask them to “Pick 4 words that describe when you are most comfortable, for example, when are you most comfortable in lessons and when are you most comfortable socially - what words would describe this for you?”

“The greatest danger for most of us is not that our aim is too high and we miss it, but that it is too low and we reach it.”

Michelangelo

Refer to the Michelangelo quote in the student worksheet (shown above) – “The greatest danger for most of us is not that our aim is too high and we miss it but that it is too low and we reach it.” Ask your students to discuss whether they agree with this statement and if they are able to give any examples to back up their choice?

Now ask, “Can you think of a situation where you have remained in your comfort zone?” Ask them to write it down on their worksheet under the heading ‘My Situation.’ You may need to ask for a few examples or share some examples of your own to make sure all students have something they can write about.

Examples could be trying out for a sports team, or an audition for a play, not going to a party, not being able to speak in assembly, being afraid of asking other people for support, or not wanting to be seen to ask for support (e.g. from a teacher), etc. Ask them to share as a class.

Now ask “What is it that kept you in your comfort zone?” Ask them to discuss in pairs or small groups and write some answers on their worksheet where indicated. Ask them to share their answers as a class. Some possible answers are shown below the next question.
You might now ask a more general question to generate a wider range of answers, “What other things might keep you and other people in their comfort zone?” Again allow time for discussion as a pair or group and then ask the groups to share their answers as a class.

Possible answers include: fear of failure, fear of ridicule, lack of opportunity, peer pressure or not wanting to be different, lack of confidence, past lack of success, apathy, lack of support, habit, lack of awareness, etc.

Next ask, “What would have been the benefits if you had stepped out (of your comfort zone)?” Again ask them to discuss in their groups and record on their worksheets and then ask them to share as a class. Some possible answers are shown below the next question.

Next you might want to ask a more general question to obtain a wider range of answers, “What are some other benefits for you or other people of stepping out of your/their comfort zone?”

Possible answers include: achievement, new learning, fun, finding something they enjoy and/or they are good at, success, more confidence, greater self-esteem, new opportunities, etc.

Now ask, “What would help you to move out of your comfort zone?”

Again in their groups and then share with the class.

Possible answers include: identifying some interesting goals, having a reward for trying, support from friends, self-challenge, understanding the difference between win/lose and win/learn

Win/lose – you try something and succeed or fail. When you fail the emotions are such that you do not want to try it again. As we get older we tend to become more risk averse, often based on our experiences of ‘failing’.

Win/learn – we try and remove the emotion often associated with failure. When taking action or trying something new we think of what happens just as a result (which may be better or worse than we would have liked but it is just a result).

We then ask what we might do next time to improve this result – what learning can we take from our first experience and use positively. This takes time and practice and is a skill that many high achievers possess.

**EXERCISE 2 – CHALLENGE MY HABITS (20 Minutes)**

You may want to share the following two points with your students...

1. It is said that we make conscious choices only 5% of the time – the other 95% represents just doing things from habit. Give some examples of the things we usually do unconsciously, for example, breathing, getting up, going to school, behaviour in lessons (from some students). You may want to ask them to add to this list – what else do they do where they don’t think before hand?
2. Now gain agreement that often our biggest challenge is to put in place new positive habits that will help us achieve the things we want and to be successful.

Now ask your students to choose a new positive habit that they would like to work on. You may need to help by giving examples such as doing more physical activity, trying something they have been putting off, thinking before talking out in class, etc. They can make a note of these on their worksheet.

Once every student has at least one thing they would like to develop a new habit in you can ask them the following questions (these are listed with some possible answers). They can write down their answers in the blank spaces provided in the boxes by the questions in the diagram on their worksheet.

An illustration is provided below for an example new habit of ‘eating more healthily’.

What is your reason to change?
Possible Answers - feeling tired, overweight and low energy

What thought or energy will you give this?
Possible Answer - I am prepared to make this a priority in my life and make a plan of action

What time will you give this?
Possible Answer - I will spend 15 minutes planning my daily food and drink intake
What is your first action needed?
Possible Answer - I will ask my parent or carer for their support
When will you do this?
Possible Answer – I will talk with them tonight

Now ask your students who would be willing to share some of their new plans?
You may wish to support and challenge those who are willing to engage in this longer term – for example start the next class by reviewing the agreed actions and sharing results, including celebrating success.

EXTENSION or HOME LEARNING TASKS
1. Write a newspaper article describing how an individual has stepped out of their comfort zone and as a result reached their true potential.
2. Research a successful individual and write a short biography that demonstrates how stepping out of their comfort zone helped them to achieve the results they have.
3. Write a script for a video interview with an individual who has challenged themselves to achieve success. Film this interview and share with the class.
4. Design a poster that shows students challenging their comfort zones and the benefits this brings to them.