METACOGNITIVE SKILLS

LESSON 6-29 ▲ MY VOICE

**LEARNING GOALS/OUTCOMES**

* Be able to define what “voice” means
* Understand why having a strong voice matters, especially in relation to going to college
* Assess the qualities of their personal voice

**MATERIALS NEEDED**

* **Student Handouts:**
* Speak UP! Worksheet
* **Chart paper and markers**
* **Computer with internet access** to display video of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King’s “I Have A Dream” Speech (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gdTpU5WZHHM>)

**CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES**

1. **Share with students that in telling their story they will also be learning how to express an opinion that is heard and considered by others.** Share with students that while we all have opinions we do not all always have strategies to have that opinion recognized as important. Culture and age plays a role in how we are heard and considered.
2. **Ask the students to brainstorm a list of opinions** that students have about different topics. If it does not bubble up from the student discussion, include the topic of going to college. Make a list of the topics on the chart paper.
3. **Explain that having a strong voice is important for everyone** and that it is a spoken expression, feeling or an opinion. Ask students to share examples where someone used their “voice” in a powerful way to express themselves. Try and elicit both positive and negative circumstances. List these on the board.
4. **Share with students that they are going to hear one of the strongest “voices” modern time, the famous “I Have a Dream” speech from Martin Luther King.** Their task while they view the video is to think about how they can express ideas and opinions and have them heard the way this short speech was and has continued to be heard. Talk about the messages that Dr. King was trying to express and why they are still so powerful today.
5. **Break students into small groups around one of the topics they listed in the brainstorming.** Give them time to talk about how they would express their opinion to another group of students or even their parents. Ask students to visualize having a conversation with their parents or their peers about college. Why will a strong, personal “voice” matter, especially when you are talking about college?
6. **Handout the *Speak UP! Worksheet* and ask students think through and document strategies for using a strong voice.** Ask students to complete the worksheet individually and then share it with a partner or small group. Conclude the activity with a group discussion of how important it is to find your own voice and your own strategies.
7. **In closing, go back to the original list of topics you charted.** Lead a discussion in whether students have different ideas now about expressing their “voice.”

**STUDENT PRODUCTS**

* **Completed *Speak UP! Worksheet***

**ADDITIONAL RESOURCES AND OTHER INFORMATION**

* **FACILITATOR NOTES**

Finding one’s voice is a very personal process and one that is important for all teenagers, especially the underserved student. Be aware during this lesson of the cultural norms that govern how voice is expressed for students in their family, community, and culture.

* **ENRICHMENT ACTIVITIES**

1. Teenagers often have difficulty differentiating between having a strong voice and being assertive and being aggressive or mean. In this activity, put up the definitions of strong voice/assertiveness, aggressiveness and meanness on chart paper and place them around the room. Share the definitions with students and ask them to give examples of when someone has strong voice or is assertive, when someone is aggressive, and when someone is mean. Lead the students in a discussion of the differences and how this plays into how students talk about their dreams or their personal story.

Suggested definitions:

* **Strong voice:** Believing in your right to express your idea, opinion or feeling so that you are heard and considered
* **Assertiveness:** Being confident and direct in claiming one’s rights and putting forward one’s views
* **Aggressiveness:** Being quarrelsome or belligerent
* **Meanness:** Unkindness, spitefulness, or unfairness.

1. Using the definitions from the previous lesson, talk with students about how culture plays an enormous part in how we express ourselves and appropriately express our own, strong “voice”. Ask students to share and chart the differences or appropriate practices and strategies for expressing yourself if you are from a Latino family, a Russian family, a Punjabi family…. Share your successes and failures with using a strong voice, particularly in our multicultural world.

* **EXPLORATION OPPORTUNITIES**

Middle school and high school students are attuned to the social culture of the teen years and how challenging it is to speak up. These norms are sometimes the hardest for an individual to challenge. Give students an opportunity outside of class to create scenarios where a student has spoken up about an issue that is important to teenagers, especially if it has to do with going to college. Give students time to share the scenarios in class.

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LESSON 6-29 STUDENT HANDOUT

SPEAK UP! WORKSHEET

Everyone has the right to have their ideas, opinions, and concerns heard. Think for a minute about times someone you know expressed themselves in an effective manner. Now think about a time when someone else expressed themselves in a way that was aggressive or mean.

Work with a partner to see if you can come up with ways to handle the following situations when you should Speak UP!

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Speak Up When: | Great Strategies | Not So Great Strategies |
| You do not understand something. |  |  |
| You need help. |  |  |
| You want to share what you need. |  |  |
| You would prefer NOT to do something. |  |  |
| You want someone to help you reach a goal. |  |  |
| You have an idea to share. |  |  |
| You have a solution to a problem. |  |  |
| You have an opinion. |  |  |