



Relationship Skills

Can You Be Stumped?

Pre-Teaching/ Guiding Language:

Sometimes it's hard to find the “silver lining” or to “look on the bright side”. Therefore, it is so important to cheer on our friends and classmates and help encourage them when you see they might be struggling! Think back to a time when a class assignment seemed unmanageable, like it would be easier to just give up. What do you wish someone said to you? Do you wish they offered a helping hand or some supportive words?

When you are in the thick of a problem, it can be hard to separate what is happening in the moment, and what else is going on around you. This activity is meant to combine the language and collaboration skills necessary to work jointly on a project or critical thinking questions. It will also build a repertoire of skills that will help you provide encouragement to your friends and classmates.

Tips for providing encouragement:

1. Use your words. The best way to provide encouragement is by saying it. Great job! I see how hard you're working, keep it up!
2. Smiling! A little smile can go a long way to brighten someone's day.
3. Providing positive reinforcement. When you see someone doing the right thing or making a good choice, acknowledge and thank them. Try and “catch them in the act” of doing something great.
4. Listen! Being a good listener is often the most important thing we can do. Instead of rushing and trying to fix things, building rapport in the beginning makes our encouragement mean even more in the future.
5. Praise effort and progress no matter how small it may seem to you.

Key Takeaways:

- Students will increase comfort by working with new peers.
- Students will work on their conversation and research skills simultaneously.
- Students will learn ways to encourage others.
- Students will work to be more supportive of classmates and friends.

Duration + Materials:

- 10-15 minutes
- Pen and paper

Key Vocabulary:

- **Encouragement-** The act of giving someone support, confidence, or hope.
- **Reinforcement-** The process of encouraging or establishing a belief or pattern of behavior, especially by encouragement or reward.
- **Repertoire-** A stock of skills or types of behavior that a person habitually uses.
- **Praise-** Express warm approval or admiration.



Activity:

1. Brainstorm for 2-3 minutes with students about how they like to receive encouragement or ways they have provided encouragement.
 - a. Is it publicly? Through written notes?
Privately (1:1)?
2. After your brainstorm and based on your current lessons or activities, give students 5-10 minutes to write at least 5 of the most puzzling questions they can think of (and the answers).
 - a. Prompt students to only draw from their current lessons or activities.
3. Break students up into pairs or small groups.
 - a. It's important that YOU as the teacher curate the pairs or groups to avoid students being left out.
4. Allow students to have 5 minutes to quiz each other back and forth and see who can solve all the questions.
 - a. Encourage students to use the different methods of encouragement to cheer on and support their classmates.
5. Any questions students did not solve, they can work together to find the answers too!

Reinforcement Activities:

1. Teachers can incorporate pair and share activities into their lessons. Teach a lesson to the whole class and then pair students up and have them come up with what they think are the key takeaways from that lesson.
2. Teachers should continue to model these skills for their students
3. Teachers should positively reinforce students when they observe students naturally using these skills.