



Face Your Fears HEAD-ON!



Lesson Plans

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Based on The Success Principles for Teens: How to Get From Where You are to Where You Want to Be

Anticipatory Set: I was trembling, sweating profusely, my stomach ached. I was a nervous wreck. Why did I agree to do this? “This is crazy!” I told myself. I should run. No! That would be stupid. I should hide. Hmm. I’m sure they’ll find me. I know! I will tell them I must have a stomach virus. Everyone is getting it. But, then I will let down my family and friends who helped me prepare for this moment. And, not to mention they are watching. Oh, wow! My head’s spinning just thinking about it. I can’t do this. I’m too scared. What am I going to do????

What would you do?

No matter who you are, where you are, or what you’re doing, we all have to deal with fear of some kind.

Procedures:

- Begin the class with acting out the story in the Anticipatory Set. Ask the questions “What would you do?” Many students will say they would run, would get sick (literally), would go home and never look back, etc. Some students will say they would take a deep breath and do their best, push through the moment and get sick when it was over, or complete the task and move on. But, what have you accomplished if you don’t try?
- Write or display the word FEAR. Ask students what that word means. (Answers will vary) Explain that we look at the word FEAR as Fantasized Experiences Appearing Real. What does that mean? We tend to bring unrealistic or improbable fears into our lives.
- Ask students:
 - “How many of you are afraid of heights?” Ask those students who raised their hands why they are afraid. Was someone in your family hurt, are you afraid of getting hurt, etc.?
 - “How many of you are afraid to pick up a snake?” Ask those students who raised their hands why they are afraid. Were you bitten by a snake, was a friend bitten by a snake, do you watch movies with snakes who always bite?
 - “Is anyone afraid to give a speech in class?” Are you afraid you will mess up, your friends will make fun of you, you will make a bad grade?

Many students will simply say they don't know why they are scared of something. They just are.

- When our imagination gets carried away, it can work against us and really hold us back. Many times we find our fears are not as bad as they seem. Our brains tend to focus on what we don't want to happen. When we realize this, we can change our focus and find the courage to look our fears straight in the eyes and take a bold step forward.
- Think back to some fearful experiences you conquered. Maybe the first time you drove a car, your first date, the first time you jumped off a diving board. What did you do after you conquered one of these fears? (Answers vary) Many of us will try it again, and again, and again. Soon, all the fear is gone and you are trying new twists on the old experience.
- Perform a hands-on "fearful experiment." (See 11.1)
- Shrink the risk to shrink the fear. To overcome your fears shrink the risks first. If you are afraid to give perform in a school play begin performing your lines in front of the mirror with no audience. After completing this task well try performing in front of a couple of good friends. The more you practice, the larger the audience should get until you can walk onto stage and perform with little fear. The story told at the beginning of class was my first time to play piano for my church. I was in the first grade when I was asked to play my first church service. I did face my fear and play the entire service. I can say that all of my songs were very fast, probably due to nervous fingers. But, because of my facing my fear I eventually played piano at every church service and later majored in music education which required me to perform many recitals in front of my peers and faculty.
- Everyone gets nervous and/or becomes doubtful from time to time. The thing that separates an average person from an extraordinary person is how each responds to fear. Fear should not be the single force that determines the decisions we make. Some risk must be taken in order to grow stronger, wiser, and more competent.

Closure: Ask students to try and conquer one fear before you return. Remind them to shrink the risks to shrink the fear.

"Fear is never a reason for quitting; it is only an excuse!"



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Hands-On Activity

This is an example of a hands-on activity which would be performed by an employee of Gulf World Marine Park. You can set up a similar activity using other common fears.

- Remembering the answers from the question: “How many of you are afraid of picking up a snake?” Select one of the students who raised their hand stating they are afraid of picking up a snake and have them come to the front of the room.
- Ask the student to tell the class why they are afraid to pick up a snake. Ask them to be specific.
- As the student explains his/her fear pick up the box previously hidden upon your arrival to class.
- Discuss the student’s fears and ask if there was a snake who had never bitten before would he/she pick up the snake?
- Depending on the answers you may elaborate or probe into more details.
- Explain the reason you are asking is because they have an opportunity today to begin overcoming their fear. In the box is a snake. This snake is a very docile snake and has never bitten anyone. It is not slimy, it has previously eaten and is not hungry, it is around people every day, and is one of the smallest non-venomous snakes in its species.
- Ask if they would like to see the snake. Slowly open the box, as not to scare the student.
- Ask if they would like to touch the snake.
- Slowly pick-up the snake and hold it as you ask the student if he/she would like to hold the snake.
- Hopefully, the student will want to hold the snake. You can begin the process again or repeat certain areas to make the student feel more comfortable.
- Once the student hold’s the snake ask the class to give him/her a round of applause.
- Said to the class: “See how easy it is to overcome fears when you shrink the risks and shrink the fear. If you approach every fearful situation in this manner you will begin to slowly overcome all of your fears.”