

SETTING EXPECTATIONS



AGENDA

- Starter
- What You Put In Is What You Get Out
- Building Cooperation
- Overcoming Obstacles Contract
- Conclusion
- Student Assessment

Objectives

Students will recognize that their active participation is critical to their getting the most from the Overcoming Obstacles course.

Students will identify the challenges and benefits of working with other students in a group.

Students will recognize the need to cooperate with and respect other class members as they master life skills together.

Students will identify a set of rights that promote cooperation and respect in the Overcoming Obstacles classroom.

Materials Needed

- 15 sheets of newspaper for each group (Part II)
- About 1 metre of masking tape for each group (Part II)

Starter (2 minutes)

Ask students if they have ever seen a preview for a movie that seemed interesting. Ask whether they went to see the movie when it opened. If so, find out if the movie was better than they thought it would be. Was it worse? Did it meet their expectations?

Tell students that this lesson is about setting expectations and that they will discuss as a class what to expect from the lessons, from the teacher, and from one another.

Part I What You Put In Is What You Get Out (10 minutes)

Purpose: Students identify what they expect from the Overcoming Obstacles course and why their active participation is required to meet those expectations.

1. Students identify their expectations for this class.

Remind students that the previous lesson provided an overview of what they'll be learning in the Overcoming Obstacles course. Ask students to write down their expectations. Offer examples such as the following:

- I'll learn to make better decisions.
- I'll learn how to use my time more efficiently.

2. Students discuss how they will acquire life skills.

Remind students of the discussion in the previous lesson about the best way to learn a song for a concert. Ask students to recall their conclusions about the best way to develop new skills. (Students should mention that it's best to learn by doing and practicing.)

Ask students to review their expectations and to consider how well they'll meet those expectations if they don't practice the skills. Ask students how well they will succeed if they only sit in their seats and listen to you talk and watch others develop these life skills. Encourage discussion.

Conclude by emphasizing that Overcoming Obstacles is a course about life. Explain that you will help every student relate the skills and activities to their own life, but it's ultimately up to each student to practice the skills in order to master them.

Part II Building Cooperation (20 minutes)

Purpose: Students demonstrate the benefits of group work and the importance of cooperation to group success.

1. Students identify the importance of learning how to work with others.

Ask, “Why is it important for you to be able to work as part of a group?” Point out to students that as young people now and later as adults, they will often be required to work in groups or teams. Explain to students that group activities will be a frequently occurring format in the Overcoming Obstacles course and that the course will teach them skills that will enable them to function well as part of a team. Tell students that you expect them to work cooperatively.

2. Students participate in a cooperative group activity.

Divide the class into groups of four or five students. Have students arrange their desks to create an open work space for each group. Distribute 15 sheets of newspaper and three feet of masking tape to each group.

Give the groups the following directions:

- Please don't start until I tell you to do so.
- Using only the materials I gave out, you will have 10 minutes to build the highest freestanding tower you can.
- The tower cannot be taped to the desks or to the floor. It must stand on its own.

Answer any questions students may have, then instruct them to begin. Circulate through the room, observing group interactions and noting conversations and comments. Watch for evidence of both cooperation and dissension.

3. Students reflect on the experience.

When 10 minutes have passed, check students' results and involve all groups in a discussion of the experience. Ask the groups to describe how they built their tower and why they think they were or weren't successful. Share your observations and encourage students to elaborate on what took place. Ask for examples of how all team members contributed. Allow students to discuss, in respectful terms, any tensions that developed.

Give each group two to three minutes to summarize what they learned from the experience. Offer questions such as the following for guidance:

- What is easy about working with others?
- What is difficult?
- Why is cooperation necessary?
- What will your group do differently the next time you work together?

Ask the groups to share their summaries. Have them describe what it is like to work as a team and how to improve cooperation in the future. Write their responses on the board.

Part III Overcoming Obstacles Contract *(20 minutes)*

Purpose: Students work together to establish guidelines and expectations for the class.

1. Students recall their expectations for the class.

Point out that so far, students have stated their expectations for the course, and you have stated your expectation of how students will work together cooperatively in groups. Explain that students also have a right to expect certain treatment and behavior from fellow students in this class.

2. Students discuss the purpose of rules.

Ask students to name some school rules and to suggest reasons why these rules are in place. Affirm that rules are designed not just to stop negative behavior, but to protect the rights of those who behave appropriately.

3. Students create a classroom contract.

Have students brainstorm a list of rules, rights and responsibilities of working in this class. Write student responses on the board.

Guide students to reach an agreement and formalise a class contract. This should include statements like every class member must be treated with respect and every class member must feel valued.

Formulate contract and have students sign the document. Place the contract where students can see clearly and remind students that this document will be referred to frequently in this class. It provides a statement of mutual understandings about respectful behavior that will be expected from all members of the class.

Conclusion *(3 minutes)*

Ask students to explain the relationship between participating in class and learning. Elicit from students the following key points that were taught in this lesson:

- Each student is responsible for giving the most to and getting the most from the content taught in this course.
- Students will work together in groups in this course, so they must know how to cooperate with others.
- The class contract will remind students of how they expect to be treated and how others expect to be treated by them.

Student Assessment

1. List three advantages and three disadvantages of working with others in a group.
2. List five examples of times when people must work together in a group or as a team.
3. What skills are necessary for people to work well together?

LESSON EXTENSIONS

Using Quotations

“History has demonstrated that the most notable winners usually encountered heartbreaking obstacles before they triumphed. They won because they refused to become discouraged by their defeats.”

Ask students to research a person who has overcome obstacles. Have students write at least three paragraphs on the obstacles the person overcame and prepare a two-minute presentation.

Addressing Multiple Learning Modes

Have students create the following lists:

1. Their expectations for school.
2. Their responsibilities.
3. Experiences they would like to have (e.g., skydiving).
4. The skills they hope to learn.
5. What they hope to learn about themselves and others.

Ask students to share one item from each list.

Writing in Your Journal

Ask students to write a letter to themselves. Have them include their expectations for school, events or experiences they are looking forward to, special memories, and first impressions of the year.

Discuss writing letters to yourself as a technique for staying focused on your dreams and keeping yourself “in check.”

Addressing Multiple Learning Modes

Have students create a collage titled Things I Want to achieve this year. Have students place it in their books or folders and review their progress during the year.

Homework

Have students keep a list of the obstacles and challenges they face over the next three days. At the end of the three days, have them note next to each obstacle which skills from the “Table of Contents” activity sheet can help them overcome that obstacle.

Have volunteers share the skills they most look forward to learning through this course.

Additional Activity

Have students read excerpts of books from people who faced failure or setbacks before becoming successful

Ask students to choose and discuss five key ideas from one of the books.