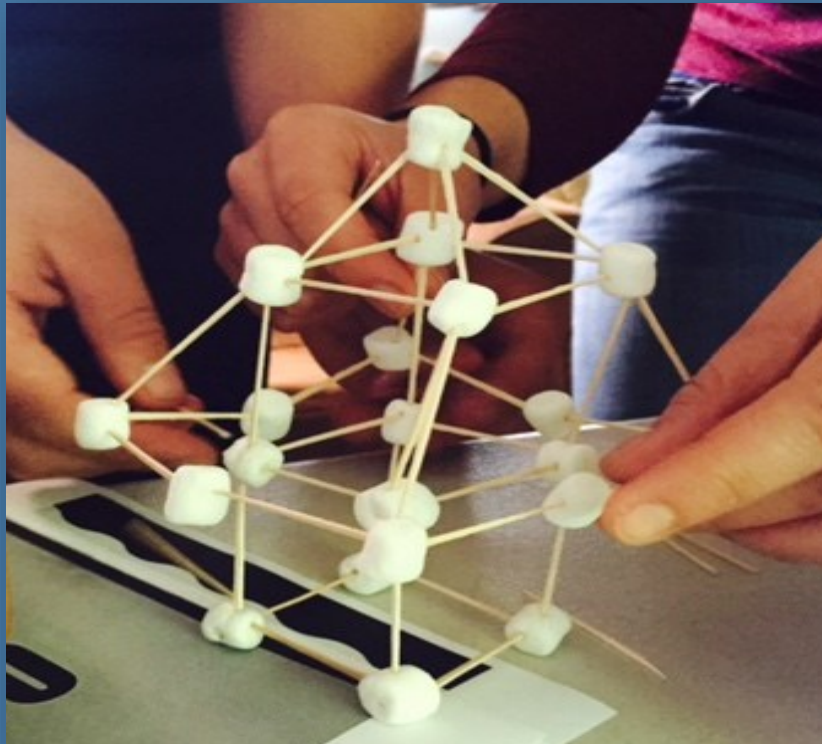


Spring 2019
Sabbatical Research Project

Submitted by:
Robert L. Chaparro

Build a Community to Promote Student Success

*Community Building Guide for EOPS
Instructional Faculty*



*A quick reference guide for educators and leaders to build community,
professional and personal/social skills through structured discussion groups*

***Robert L. Chaparro MS, PPS
EOPS Counselor***

I'd like to dedicate the following poem to Ms. Nelson, my 5th grade Math and Science teacher, who had a great influence on me. She was encouraging, creative, passionate and went the extra mile to make our classroom the best learning center that she could. I remember once when she told the class that she would permanently add any geometric puzzle that anyone of us designed to her Math Lab. After hearing about her offer, I went home, developed a puzzle and gave it to her the following morning. I felt so happy and proud when she accepted my puzzle, laminated it and placed it in the Math Lab! Thanks Ms. Nelson for caring and providing me with an experience and feeling that has lasted a lifetime!

To My Teacher:

Thank you for believing in me

And seeing my best.

For helping me through my struggles

When I didn't understand.

Although you had many other students,

I knew I could count on you.

You were always there for me

To give me that gentle push,

And catch me if I fell.

I am thankful for the wisdom that you shared

When life's problems were too much for me to handle

All by myself.

You not only taught me a school subject,

You also taught me about life.

I will always remember you for making me feel like

I could conquer the world

If I tried my best!

To you I was not invisible,

But a human being.

For this I thank you...

You will be in my heart

Forever!

Introduction

Over the years of providing leadership and facilitator training, people have approached me for lists of activities and energizers that they could use in their classrooms and groups. I would provide them with ideas as well as suggesting that they search for anything that they themselves would want to do if they were students.

In my view, people like to have fun, have their senses engaged and in many instances participate in a little healthy competition. For example, one can consider the old saying, 'a picture speaks a thousand words', and show a meaningful picture to a group. This chosen picture can stimulate a healthy conversation. A leader can also play a selected popular song that is followed by a discussion which can lead to amazing discussions, don't forget to screen for appropriateness! I have also found that activities and teambuilding exercises are effective in teaching important personal/social skills. For example, using an activity as simple as the paper/scissors/rock game with the entire group is effective and fun. First, divide the group into pairs and have them introduce themselves to each other. Then, ask them to play until the best of three eliminates one person. From there, ask the winners to pair off and continue on until there is one class winner. In the act of debriefing or **processing** the activity, the leader can discuss topics such as the importance of getting to know one another, respectful competitiveness, community building as well as having a little fun! It is important to remember what types of activities that an audience likes to do naturally. By providing the participants an opportunity to become engaged, we strengthen the process of learning a new skill.

My advice to those looking for activities to use with their groups is to plan well and then have fun. In the process of designing, selecting and implementing activities we need to match them with our own personalities so that we too can have fun. If we have fun, those who we teach and guide will also have fun.

The purpose of this guide is to assist the individual who seeks to establish community in the group setting while simultaneously developing the personal and social skills of the membership.

Goal of this Guide

The goal of this guide is to provide easy to use strategies to the busy group leader/teacher. The intent is to provide various strategies and methodologies that can be incorporated into normal group and classroom activities. These strategies can be seen as ready to use activities or templates to be modified at the discretion of the user.

The main focus of this guide however is the basic framework of a community building exercises that will provide participants with a setting where they can learn and share in a safe environment.

Potential Application Areas

I believe that the processes presented in this guide will assist in the development of a foundation for positive human interaction and relationship development. I also believe that the principles outlined can be applied to the following areas of human interaction:

Academics

Student and Staff Leadership

Personal Growth Groups

Work Groups

Business

Athletics

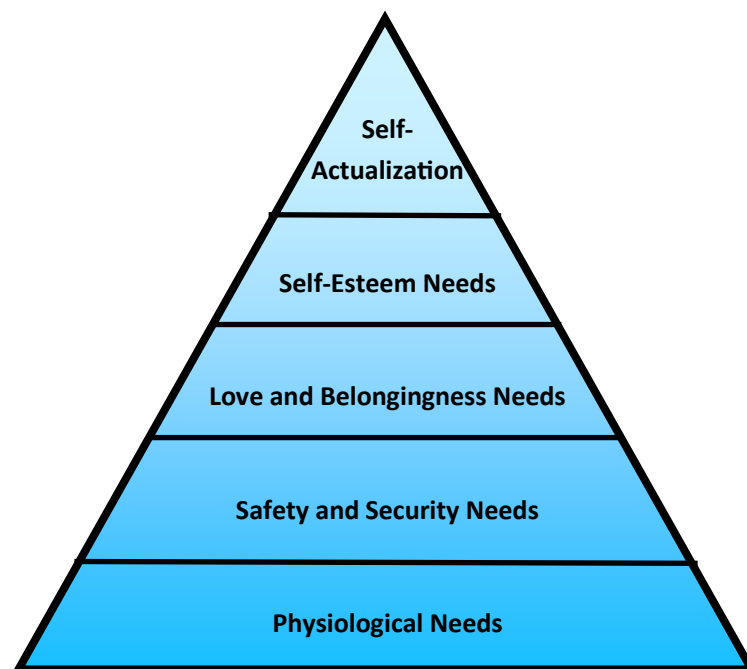
Families

The Human Need to Belong

If I were to specify the most basic of needs of a human being I would chose: **Love, Recognition, Belonging and Respect** as being the most crucial and fundamental. In the following section we learn from a renowned psychologist that there are specific needs which are fundamental and that if they are met, a person will more towards a healthy life.

Albert Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

According to Psychologist Albert Maslow, human beings have fundamental needs that must be met in order to experience healthy development. A human being will progressively grow when the needs at the lower levels are met, allowing the person to ascend to the next level. It is therefore critical to promote acceptance between the membership in efforts to develop a healthy sense of oneself. Developing a strong community base is therefore essential in the development of the individual member.



'The greatest gift that you can give to others is the gift of unconditional love and acceptance'

Brian Tracy

Cries for help all too often go unnoticed.
It is our duty as citizens to realize and
positively react to those cries.

Experiential Exercises

In order to provide the best possible experience where the membership can learn and share in a safe and structured environment, I suggest that we utilize experiential learning exercises. Experiential learning is essentially learning through active participation. Experiential instruction coupled with community building, strengthens the personal/social skills lesson. With these components in place, participants will participate in a lesson designed to teach personal/social skills, reflect on the lesson as well as how these teachings can be applied to everyday life, all in a safe, structured and community based environment.

We Learn by Doing

Aristotle

Community Building as a Prevention Strategy

Prevention Strategies aim to promote positive environment and behaviors while preventing unhealthy or inappropriate situations before they begin or advance to more serious levels.

Essentially, the primary goal of Community Building is to promote:

The Creation of a Safe Environment and Community
Personal/Social Skills and Everyday Civility
Reflective Thinking and Problem Solving Skills
Positive Relationships
Facilitation Skills for both the leader and participants

Consequently, the secondary goal is to prevent:

Interpersonal conflicts and misunderstandings
A lack of motivation, communication, respect, enthusiasm, community and/or trust
Disruptive, inappropriate and hurtful behaviors

Prevention Strategies include the implementation of the following components:

Community Building Exercises
Dialogue's and Discussion Groups
Personal/Social Skills Education
Relationship and Trust Building

My Student Survey

In order to learn more about what students feel is important for their success in the classroom, I developed a 3 question, informal survey and applied it to a small group of students from both the Ventura and Oxnard College campuses. The Ventura College sample consisted of 30 students who were enrolled in Intermediate level English courses and the Oxnard College sample consisted of 30 EOPS students.

The results of this informal survey are described below. I learned that students can be very candid about their ideas, view, concerns and needs. This information can help in the formation of training, strategies and services that can be coordinated to assist our students.

After a general review and basic categorization of the responses, it is clear that students:

- Are impacted by the need to work while being in college
- See the need for time management
- See the need to keep up with coursework
- See the need to get help
- Are concerned about financial issues
- Struggle with stress from family/personal issues
- See the need for teachers to understand and get to know them
- See the need for a safe place in the classroom

The responses are placed below each question in the order of highest frequency. The double** indicates the highest response number of that particular response. For example, the top item may have been repeated 5 times, the second 4 times, etc..

Question one: In addition to providing the best possible instructional experience, what can a teacher do to create a safe, encouraging and inspiring experience for students?

Responses:

*Understand/get to know/talk to students

*Make a safe place

*Encourage students

Fun/engaging activities

Clear subject matter/presentation/explain more

Be positive/no negativity

Be compassionate/care about students

Listen

Offer help

Incorporate life lessons/samples of what they have been thru

Question two: What are obstacles that a student might face that can make college success difficult?

Responses:

**Having to work and be in school

**Time management

*Financial issues

Personal/family issues

Stress

Lack of transportation

Shyness/awkward feelings about asking for help

Lack of resources

Procrastination

Question three: What should a student do to be best prepared, participate, and keep committed to his/her college courses?

Responses:

**Keep up with classwork/stay on the top of the course

**Get/seek help

**Time management

*Be on time/go to class

Set/have goals

Be organized/use agenda

Become involved in school groups

Keep focused

Positive attitude



Community Building and Experience Processing

Lesson Processing is the critical phase of any community building exercises in that it provides the leader/facilitator with a tool to assist the participants to apply a lesson or experience to their everyday lives. The **Experience, Reflection and Application** processing technique adapted from the *'What, So What, Now What'* model by Terry Borton (1970), allows the participants to learn from new information as well as personal life experiences through process questions designed to encourage self-reflection and ultimately personal growth. Lesson Processing steps and sample questions are:

The Experience - Define the experience and describe initial impressions

The Reflection- Identify reactions to the experience as well as the impacts it may have had

The Application- Identify how the person might use the information in the future .

There are two general groups of process questions. The first is the **Content Process Question** group which allows for an individual to reflect on a educational or life skill experience. The second is the **Life Experience Process Question** group which allows an individual to reflect on a personal life experience or event.

**We need to be brave enough to start a
conversation that matters.**

Samples of Process Questions

Content Process Questions-

Information/data based questions:

The Experience

What was the information presented?
What was the information meant to teach?
What was your basic impression?

The Reflection

What did the experience make you think?
Was there a specific point made that you can relate to?
What did you learn?
What did you think was most useful?
What are key points that were discussed?

The Application

How can this information help you?
Can the experience help you to be a stronger person?
If so, how?
How can you apply what you have learned in the future?
What are situations where you can apply what you have learned?

Life Experience Process Questions-

Experiential exercise based questions:

The Experience

What was the experience?
What was the experience meant to teach?
Describe the experience in one word...
Good, bad, fun, confusing, thought provoking, useful, helpful, Etc..

The Reflection

How did the experience make you feel?
What did it make you think?
How did it effect you?
What did you learn
about yourself, others, life?
How did you react to the experience? Was it a good
reaction for you?
What do you think about your reaction?
What was a significant part of the experience for
you?

The Application

How can the experience help you?
Can the experience help you to be a stronger person? If so, how?
How can you apply what you have learned in the future?
What might be my plan to appropriately deal with
this type of experience should it happen again?

Consider situations that typically involve your students/group members. What are questions that you might use to effectively process an experience?

Sample Lesson Processing

Read the poem '*To Ms. Nelson*' to your class or group and let them know that they will be asked to share their personal reactions to the poem. Ask the participants to consider and share their personal responses to the following questions:

Experience-

What was your initial reaction to the poem? Choose one word.

Reflect -

What did you think about the poem?

How did you feel about the persons story?

Was there any part of the poem that you thought was very significant? What and why?

Have you or someone you know ever felt this way? What did you do when you felt this way?

Apply-

What did you learn from the poem?

Do you think you might treat others differently after reading the poem?

How might you try to help someone who is going through a similar situation?

What lesson can you learn from such a life experience?

Foundations and Structure of a Community Building Exercise

There are essential components that must be defined and developed for a community building exercise to be successful. These areas are listed below and defined in the following pages.

The Mission Statement

The Physical Setting

The Norms

The Facilitator

The Lesson Plan

The Exercises

The Mission Statement

It is important to have a fundamental purpose or intent of an exercise or activity. A mission statement is essential in that it allows the facilitator to easily describe the intention so that the membership will have a clear understanding. In my experience, a short, easy to remember statement is best. A definition that I have found to be effective is:

An activity that allows the participants to build community in a safe and structured environment.

The mission statement will help you to plan effectively in that it establishes basic parameters of your group. It also allows for you to easily describe to others what the objectives are of your specific lesson plan.

What are key words or phrases that might be part of your mission statement? Write them here:

Put your words/phrases into a one to two sentence paragraph. Write it here:

The Physical Setting

In my experiences, having everyone sit in a circle is best in that it allows the participants to see each other. In this formation, the participants will benefit from seeing each other as they speak as well as seeing each others body language. It also allows you as facilitator with opportunities to lead discussions that will assist the membership to learn about the individual members' reactions to topics, promoting understanding and personal empathy.

Unfortunately, most classrooms don't allow for the circle set-up. In this case, you can ask the students to turn their desks slightly to allow for the participants to be able to see each other as much as possible. Should you be facilitating a community building exercise outside of a classroom, it is important to establish an environment where the membership is all at the same eye level, that all consideration for safety is considered and that the arrangement is reasonably comfortable with little disruptions.

Where will you facilitate your discussion? What can you do to make the area conducive for the best dialogue/discussion?

It doesn't take money,
skill or training to help
another person.

What is truly important is
Compassion, Empathy
and Love.

Community Building Categories

The following categories specify the basic focus of an individual community building exercise. The topics themselves can be designed and applied in a system that allow for the incremental growth of the membership. Following these topics allows for the development of a strong foundation which will facilitate the Community Building Process

Topics:

Getting to know one another- Exercises that facilitate the membership becoming acquainted with each other.

Working as a team- Exercises that facilitate the development of a Team feeling and attitude

Problem solving-Exercises designed to promote problem solving and the ability to work together to accomplish a common goal.

Exercise Samples

The following are a series of samples that you can use as described or as templates to create your own ideas. I have learned that not all groups are the same and that each facilitator will have his or her own approach to teaching and guiding. Have fun with the samples!

Getting to know one another

5 things in common Divide the class into groups of 6-8 students. Let them know that the goal of the exercise is to develop a list of 5 things that they all have in common.

Friendship cups Ask all students to write their names on a popsicle stick that you provide them with. Put the sticks in a cup. Write the following items on a separate stick: favorite pizza, favorite color, favorite song, favorite movie, favorite cookie, favorite sport, favorite subject in school, favorite ice cream, favorite place to go, favorite book, favorite person and favorite memory. Put these sticks in a second cup. You begin the activity by taking both cups in front of you. Randomly take a stick from each cup. Begin by saying the name of person whose name is on the stick and asking him/her to respond to what is pulled from the second cup. Pass the cups to each student and ask them to repeat what you did. Its best if the class forms a circle with their desks if possible. You can add your name too to join the fun. The activity ends when the cups gone past everyone.

Scavenger hunt Provide each student with a People Scavenger Hunt [Worksheet](#). Instruct the students to mill around the classroom and look for any student that has the characteristics that is described on the sheet. One they find a match, the person they find should write their name on the paper in the corresponding space. Let them know that one person can only sign the form two times.

Two truths and a lie— Advise the students that they are being invited to introduce themselves by saying three things. Two of the items that they share will be true facts about themselves and a third will be an untruth or a lie. For example the student might say, I have 5 siblings, I have gone to Disneyland twice and I have flown a plane. From these facts the other students have to guess the fact they believe not to be true. You will be surprised what you learn about some students!

Birthday line up— Identify two opposing points in your classroom that are across from each other while making sure that there is room to have the students make a single file line between the two points. Explain that January will be at one end and December will be at the opposite end with the remaining months somewhere in between. Ask the students to get up from their seats and non verbally place themselves where they believe their birth month is. Once they have placed themselves, ask that they then call out their birth month and date for all to hear. You can then ask them to adjust their order, this time allowing them to speak to one another.

My hand— Provide the members of the group with a copy of the hand outline on page 22. Ask the participants to complete the thought by writing a response to each word or phrase. For example, they will write *I aspire to be a teacher*. Ask them to report out to their comfort zone in small groups or to the entire class.

I CARE

PEOPLE SCAVENGER HUNT

Find someone who...

Knows how to swim _____

Has more than 5 siblings _____

Has a pair of red shoes _____

Likes to play checkers _____

Likes to fish _____

Is wearing a watch _____

Has two living grandparents _____

Plays the piano _____

Watched a movie at a theatre during the last two weeks _____

Played two sports _____

First name starts with the letter 'R' _____

Has twins in their immediately family _____

Has written a poem that was not part of a class project _____

Can speak 3 languages _____

Likes a veggie pizza _____

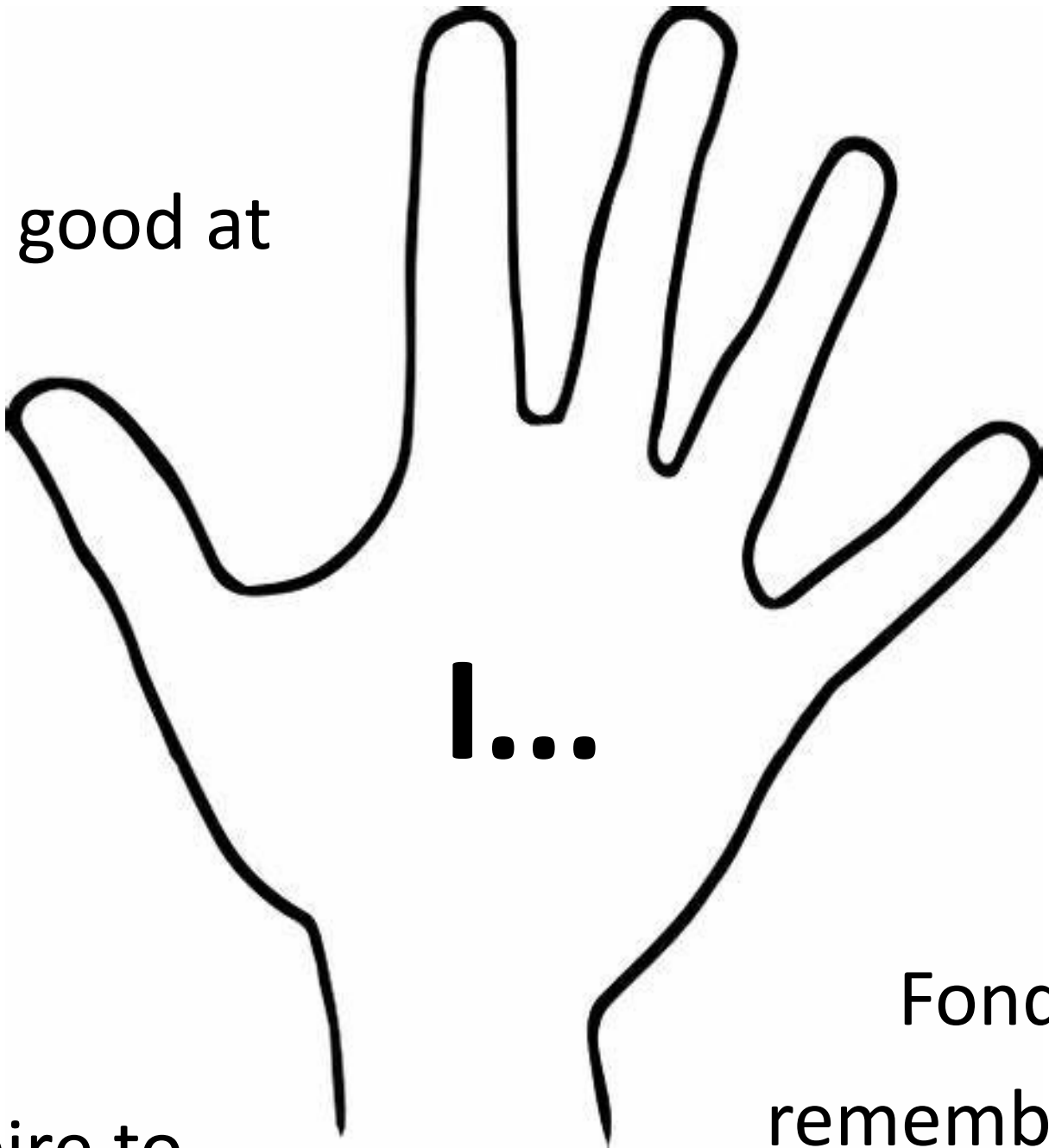
Was born in January _____

Love

Value

Need

Am good at



I...

Aspire to

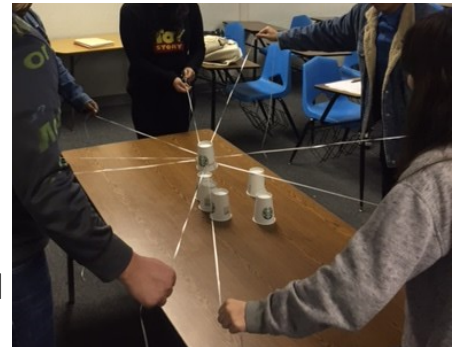
Fondly
remember

Working as a Team

Exercises designed to promote team building and the ability to work together to accomplish a common goal.

Marshmallow towers Divide the class into groups of 4-6 students. Provide each group with 20 mini marshmallows and 10-15 toothpicks. Instruct groups to build a free standing structure utilizing all of the items they were given. Explain that they cannot break the toothpicks or tear the marshmallows and that they will have 8-10 minutes to complete their structure.

Cup tower building Cut 6 pieces of ribbon into pieces that are approximately 36 inches long. You can adjust length as necessary. Tie all six to a small rubber band so that they are equally spaced. Next, put 6 coffee cups upside-down on a flat table. Advise the groups of 6 students that they are expected to build a tower using only the rubber band to lift and stack the cups into a tower with 3 at the bottom level, 2 cups in the middle and one on top. As a team they will gently open and close the rubber band to grab and lift the cups.



Eggs can Fly— Divide the class into groups of 4-6 students. Provide each group with the following items: One uncooked egg, a sandwich baggie, a lunch size paper bag, a 6 inch piece of scotch tape, 3 rubber bands, and 3 napkins and 3 straws. (You can conveniently place the items in the bag.) Once each group has their items, let them know that they are expected to create a structure or cocoon that will embrace the egg to protect it from a fall. Advise them after 15 minutes of teamwork, each bag will be tossed into the air to see if the egg has survived the fall.

Trapezoid Puzzle- Divide the class into groups of 4-6 members. Provide each group with three trapezoids. Instruct the groups to form a triangle shape from the trapezoids on flat surface by placing them next to each other. Advise them that they cannot overlap the trapezoids nor can they fold or cut them (see sample lesson plan on page 38).

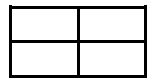
Problem Solving

Exercises designed to promote problem solving and the ability to work together to accomplish a common goal. Samples of these exercises are available in the following pages.

A to A, B to B- Divide the class into pairs and provide a worksheet to each dyad. Advise them that the goal is to connect A to A, the B to B and the C to C using only three lines that cannot cross with each other. The rules are that they must stay inside the square and that the lines cannot touch each other or any other line in the square, see solution on page 26.

Count the squares— Provide groups of 2-4 students with a worksheet. Ask them to come up with answers to each of the questions being posed. After each group has had time to reach a conclusion, have each group come up and report out their findings. In total, there are 14 squares.

Find the Numbers— Provide groups of 4-6 students a find the numbers worksheet. Advise the groups that this is a timed exercise and they will have approximately 20 seconds per round. Let them know that they can only begin when you say **go** and they must end when you say **stop**. Advise them that after you say **go**, as a group they are to find the numbers beginning with the number one (1) and circle it. Once they have found 1, they must they search for 2, 3, 4, etc., circling each as they go along. After a first round of 20 seconds, ask all teams to stops, pens/pencils down. Ask them to report out the numbers they reached. Next, let them know that there will now be a round two. For this round, discuss the importance of asking questions about the exercise, the same way they would ask fact finding questions about an assignment or a test. Let them know that you will help them with a fact about this exercise. Ask them to fold the worksheet into 4's so that there are crease marks. The worksheet should look like this:



Once the folds are done, let them know that there is a sequence to the numbering system on the worksheet. The numbers are in order going clockwise around the worksheet starting with the 1 being in the upper left box, the 2 being in the upper right, the 3 in the lower right and the 4 in the lower left, continuing from there. With this information begin the second round giving the teams a second 20 seconds. Advise them to start where they left off at the end of the first round, so if they got to the number 11 after round one, they will pick up with number 12 for round two. After 20 seconds, ask them to report out their final number. In most cases groups will not only double their number total, but add a few more. Discuss that this occurs due to them having additional strategy information. Erase the page number at the bottom of the template before making your copies!

A

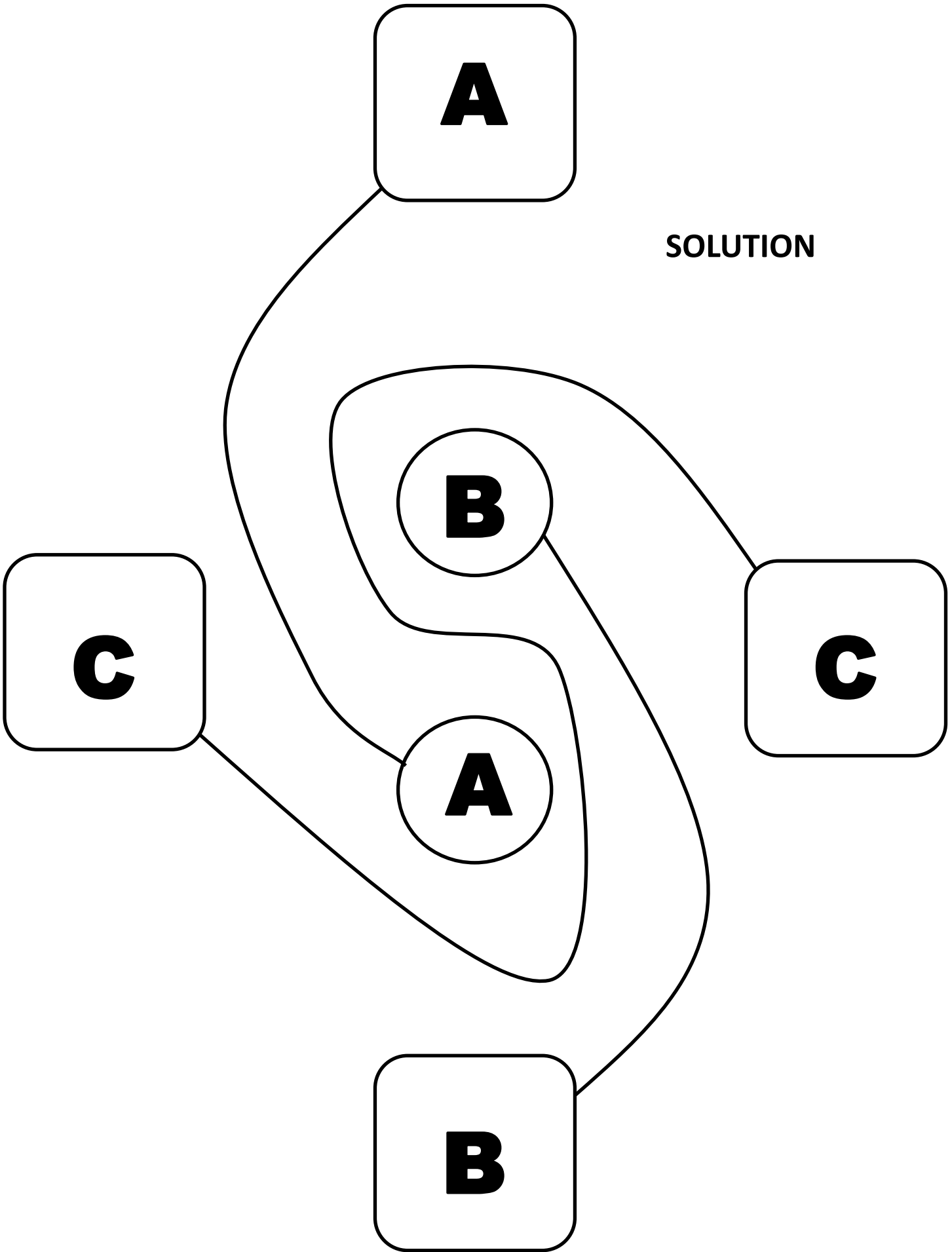
B

C

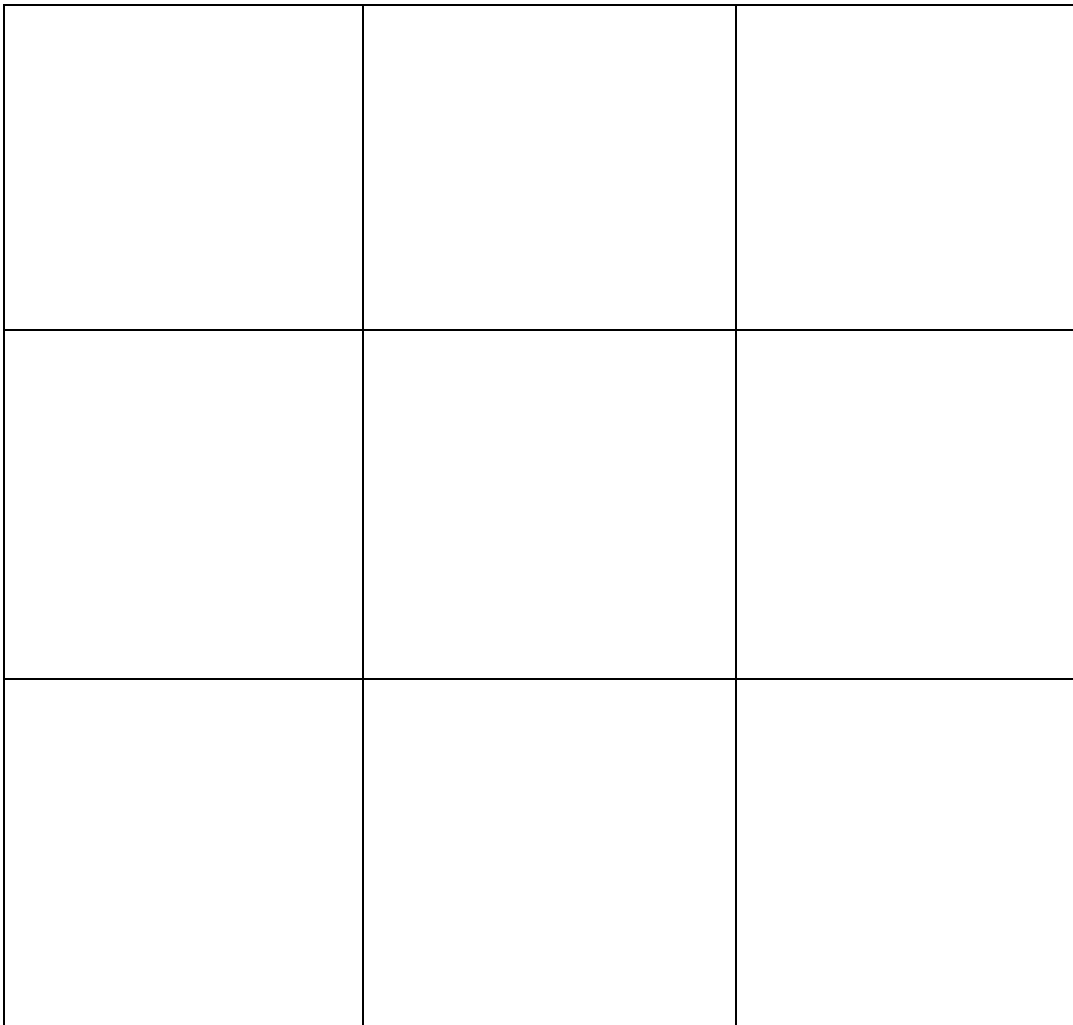
C

A

B



Count the squares

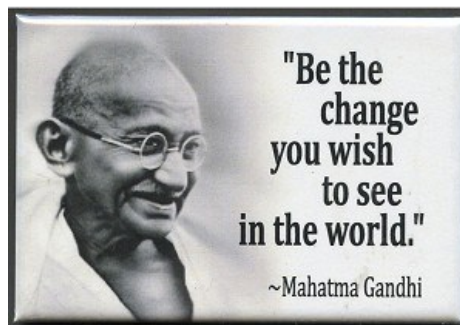


1 26 30
33 57 2 14
53 37 34
22 10 18 38
21 29 45
25 41 50
42 6
5 46
9 13 54
49 17 58
60 44 27 3 39
48
36 11 23
16 4 52 19 43
24 31 15 47
40 12 7
28 32 35 55
20 56 7
8 59 51

Inter-Personal Skills to Foster Relationships

The following are strategies that can be used to improve relationships between people.

- *Positive and encouraging words*
- *Positive tone and voice*
- *Welcoming Body Language*
- *Eye contact*
- *Positive Attitude*
- *Active Listening*
- *Smiles*
- *Open ended questions*
- *Putting the cell phone away*
- *Words of encouragement*
- *Random acts of kindness*
- *Being in the moment*
- *Offering to help as needed*
- *Being consistent*
- *Being non-judgmental*
- *Being respectfully honest*
- *Being empathetic*



Guidelines to the use of Exercises

In the process of selecting an exercise that you will apply, it is important that you consider the following specifics of each individual activity. Detailed information in each of these areas will ensure a positive experience for the membership.

Objectives

Each exercise used needs to have specific objectives or intended outcomes. Objectives assist in making sure that the exercise is in line with the overall goals of the meeting or session. Having clear objectives also helps the process the exercise with the membership by helping them to understand why you have chosen the specific exercise.

Risk Levels

In the process of creating a list of exercises in which I will request the members to participate, I try to categorize them according to the level of risk they pose to the people who will participate. Utilizing the levels of **Low-Risk, Medium Risk and High Risk**, I will categorize my exercises into these groupings based on how I believe the membership will *feel* about them as well as how much of a threat they can be in the areas of personal safety and security. Although such a categorization can be very subjective in that each person and group will have personalities, perceptions and needs, I have found such a list to be useful.

	<i>Low</i>
	<i>Medium</i>
	<i>High</i>

I have also learned that it is wise for me to participate to the best of my ability in any exercise that as facilitator I introduce to a group. In my view, it can be very useful to model participation while being appropriate in the area of self-disclosure. Often times the membership will appreciate being guided through the exercise by the facilitator in terms of instruction as well as the specifics to proper participation.

**Gently smile and see
what happens!**

Guidelines to the use of Exercises

Materials

I have learned that appropriate materials are important to make an exercise flow effectively. Many kits and exercise materials are available for use for small and large groups. I have learned however that inexpensive common household items such as tape, paper, string, popsicle sticks and spaghetti noodles can be extremely effective supplies for a good exercise. Later in this guide, you will find information on how to use such items for various exercises that you can create. Go shopping in your cupboard and see what you find!

Environmental issues

It is important to consider the physical aspects of the location when you apply exercises. Depending on the nature of the exercise, you may need ample space for movement, proper lighting and temperature, seating space and or space to write or take notes. Caution should be taken when applying exercises that require any physical movement that may cause injury to the membership.

Timing

Exercises can also be known as stage-setters in that they set and maintain the tone of the meeting. When applying an exercise, I have found the timing to be of utmost importance. Take care to place the exercise at a time when there has been enough trust developed, should the exercise be a **Medium to High Risk** exercise. I have found it useful to actually describe the exercise to the membership and to allow them to discuss what they think about it and if they as a group want to attempt the exercise. I will remind them that each member will have an opinion that needs to be respected and that the goal is for the group to work as a team at all times.



Making the classroom and activity pop!

Music

Candy

Motivational Posters/Pictures

YouTube Videos

Food

Stickers

Going outside

Energy

Smiles

Words of encouragement

Small groups

Introductions

Nature walks/campus tours

Guest speakers

Motivational Quotes

Jokes

Teambuilding exercises

Birthday celebrations

Potlucks

The Three F's:

FUN, FOOD & FABULOUS FACILITATION

**WOW
QUANTITY!**

Norms and Agreements

Norms are guidelines for standard, acceptable and expected behavior. Essentially, they are the basic guidelines that the facilitator utilizes to keep the group on task as well as protecting the personal rights of the membership. Norms essentially assist the facilitator to build a safe environment or **'safe zone.'** Although norms will prescribe certain behaviors, they do not carry the status or stringency of rules. It is recommended that the membership agree to the Norms which will aid in their enforcement when necessary. Consequently, agreements are behavioral Norms that the group has agreed to follow.

I have often used the *Right to Pass* Norm depending on the situation. I believe that it does provide the member with the right to be excused from participating should the topic be too personally challenging. However, caution should be taken because the members might use this Norm as a way out of becoming involved. In most cases I will use the *Participate to the best of your ability* norm in that it encourages participation, whatever that participation level might be. As facilitator you can interchange these Norms from each of the groups depending on your particular need.

In my experience, the goal is for the membership to reach a point where they will confront each other when it comes to those members not honoring the Norms. This occurs when the Facilitator takes the time to discuss or process with the members how they feel when the Norms are not being honored.

Sample Norms

Practice Active Listening

Encourage others as you are able

Participate to the best of your ability

X-Tech– which is the non-use or minimization of technology

Treat others the way you want them to treat you

Introduction to the Intention of exercise norms:

The following is a list of guide or lead questions that can be used to introduce and process Norms. The questions can be seen as warm-up questions or in-depth discussions.

Warm up questions for a brief norm dialogue:

Why is the norm valuable for people to learn?

Describe one way to apply the norm regularly? What is a specific technique?

What are the impacts when the norm is used/not used?

When was a situation when you experienced someone followed the norm described? How did the experience feel?

When was a situation when you experienced someone not applying the norm? How did the experience feel?

When was a situation when you did/did not apply the norm? What happened?

What might you do to improve your skills in this area?

How is the community impacted when the norm is applied amongst the membership? Not Applied?

Being
Caring,
Consistent,
and Calm goes
a long way.

Facilitation

The act of facilitation which is the guiding of a group to reach the stated mission and objectives, is done by the group leader or more appropriately called the Facilitator. The Facilitator also acts as an advocate and educator to the membership and will use the groups Mission, Objectives, Norms and Lesson Plan to effectively guide the group.

Following the application of a topic or exercise, the Facilitator will utilize exercises and discussion questions to encourage dialogue between the membership. When necessary, the Facilitator will return to the Norms of the group should the membership lose focus and direction.

Even though staying on topic is best, I have found a productive session doesn't always have to stay on the described topic. I have facilitated groups where the discussion moved to topics that paralleled to some degree the original topic, thus making it appropriate. In his case, if the Facilitator follows a organized lesson plan structure and adheres to the Norms, the revised topic, often dictated by the energy and needs of the group, can be very effective. I have learned to not force a group discussion, but to *go with the flow*.

The One on One Facilitator

Throughout my years of experience as academic counselor and educator, I have learned that Facilitation skills are applicable the group, as well as the 'one on one' situation. Having a 'one on one' conversation with a student can allow me to teach such valuable skills as communication, self reflection and self advocacy skills, to name but a few. Although the one on one scenario does not have the group process and learning element, many skills can be taught in a personal conference. The following section describes the many skills that can be taught and modeled in a 'one on one' or group situation.

Effective Facilitation

Personal Traits

Flexible
Observant
Self-aware
Positive
Neutral
Compassionate
Supportive
Welcoming
Patient

Goals for the process group

Guide group to accomplish mission, objectives and outcomes
Group/member focusing- adherence of norms
A safe, welcoming environment to allow for learning and sharing
Encourage self-empowerment, self-advocacy and emotional learning
Demystification of areas of unknown
Encourage ownership of thoughts, feelings and actions as appropriate
Life, Personal/Social Skill Development

Effective Strategies

Lesson plan
Time manager
Partial participant with comfortable and appropriate self-disclosure
Processing agent-encourage reflection and growth
Enforcer of the applicable rules, policies, and laws as deemed appropriate
Role Modeling
Recognizer of the membership for their contributions
Active Listening
Open-ended questions
Advocate for the members and their rights to participate
Inclusion

THE LESSON PLAN AS A LIVING DOCUMENT

A typical plan for a community building exercise will have many components. Listed below are the elements of an individual group session as well as the description of each. Although each will generally incorporate the following components, you will find that not one session will be identical to the other, that each of the components will adjust and change as the membership grows as a group. The basic goal of the Lesson Plan is to create a setting for the implementation and processing of the objectives and topic.

Welcome- Welcoming the group participants to the exercise, whether the activity is fixed number of sessions or a single exercise.

Overview of Objectives- A review of the intent of the lesson or activity

Introductions (As needed)

Review of Norms—A review of the established Norms

Warm-up (Optional)— A brief presentation or activity that is meant to stimulate and inspire thoughts about the upcoming lesson/experience. Samples- music, videos, quotes, pictures, poetry or a question of the day.

Content- Information, data, details and/or instructions that relate to the topic

Main Exercise- Application/Rehearsal of the exercise/activity related to the topic. Samples-Worksheets, role-plays, activities, etc.

Lesson/Experience Processing- The discussion lead by the Facilitator that provides the participants with an opportunity to reflect on an experience , what they thought and felt about it and to in turn discuss what they might do as a result of the experience.

Evaluation— A discussion that provides feedback to the facilitator on what they participants felt about the lesson/activity

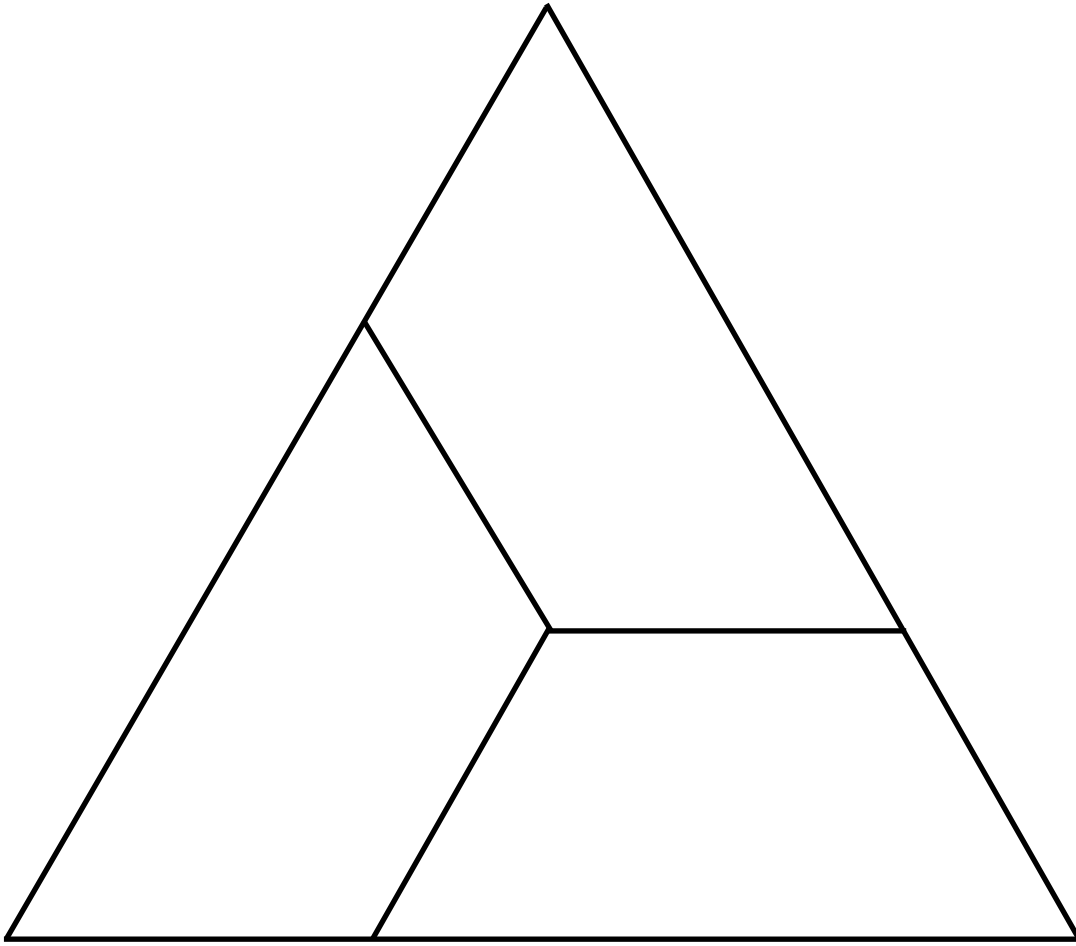
Closure

Lesson
Topic

Date

SECTION	DESCRIPTION	TIME
Welcome Review of Objectives Review Norms Warm-up (Optional) Content-Information Instructions Details Main Exercise Processing Evaluation Closure	<h1>THE TEMPLATE</h1>	

SECTION	DESCRIPTION	TIME IN MINUTES
Welcome	Welcome the class to today's workshop that will focus on Teambuilding	
Review Objectives	To strengthen the abilities of the class to work together to reach common goals; to practice communication skills and to become acquainted.	1
Review Norms	Respect towards others, Active Listening, Encourage others, Participate to the best of your abilities	1
Warm-up (Optional)	Question to Consider: What are the characteristics of a good team?	1
Content-Information Instructions Details	Divide the class into groups of 4-6 members. Provide each group with three trapezoids after you have copied and cut them out. Instruct the groups to form a triangle shape from the trapezoids on a flat surface by placing them next to each other. Advise them that they cannot overlap the trapezoids nor can they fold or cut them (see sample on next page).	2
Main Exercise	Once the groups have their trapezoids, advise them that they will have 5 minutes to complete the task of creating a triangle. Remind them that they are encouraged to follow the stated group norms.	5
Processing	Once the 5 minutes have passed, begin the Processing of the activity regardless of whether the groups have completed their triangles. Let them know that it is okay if they weren't able to complete the puzzle, that the most important thing is that they did not stop trying to complete the task. Let them know that you have a few questions for them. Remember that the Lesson Processing steps include the Experience, Reflect and Apply . Sample process questions are: <i>What did I learn from the experience about myself and others? What was a significant part of the experience for me? How and when can I apply what I have learned in the future?</i>	
Evaluation	Invite the membership to share what they thought about the activity.	
Closure	Thank the membership for participating!	



The Trapezoid Puzzle Template

Our whole life is solving puzzles

Erno Rubik

SECTION	DESCRIPTION	TIME
Welcome	Welcome the class to today's workshop that will focus on developing community in the classroom	
Review Objectives	To strengthen the abilities of the class to work together to reach common goals; to practice communication skills	
Review Norms	Respect towards others, Active listening, Encourage others, Participate to the best of your abilities	
Content-Information Instructions Details	<p>Advise the group that today's exercise is meant to help the group get to know one another through personal updates. Let the membership know that there are 5 categories of personal updates. They are:</p> <p>Questions– An appropriate question that will help the member learn more about a specific topic.</p> <p>Bugs- Something that is on the members' mind that might be bugging them.</p> <p>Appreciations- Something the member appreciates and/or is thankful for.</p> <p>Advice Request– A request for advice regarding what to do about a certain situation.</p> <p>Achievements- Something that was accomplished, no matter how small</p> <p>Something fun that recently happened– Something that was a fun event for the person.</p> <p>For visual purposes write the categories on a poster board or the white board. Begin by asking the membership if anyone has a response to any of the updates. After 6-8 minutes of updates, begin the processing of the exercise. If there are still members interested in updating, let them know that a follow up session can take place at the time of your choice.</p>	
Processing	<p>Once the 5 minutes have passed, begin the Processing of the activity. Remember that the Lesson Processing steps include the Experience, Reflect and Apply. Sample process questions are: <i>What did I learn from the experience about myself and others? What was a significant part of the experience for me? How and when can I apply what I have learned in the future? Might I treat other people differently based on what I have learned? If so, how?</i></p>	
Evaluation	Invite the membership to share what they thought about the activity.	
Closure	Thank the membership for participating!	

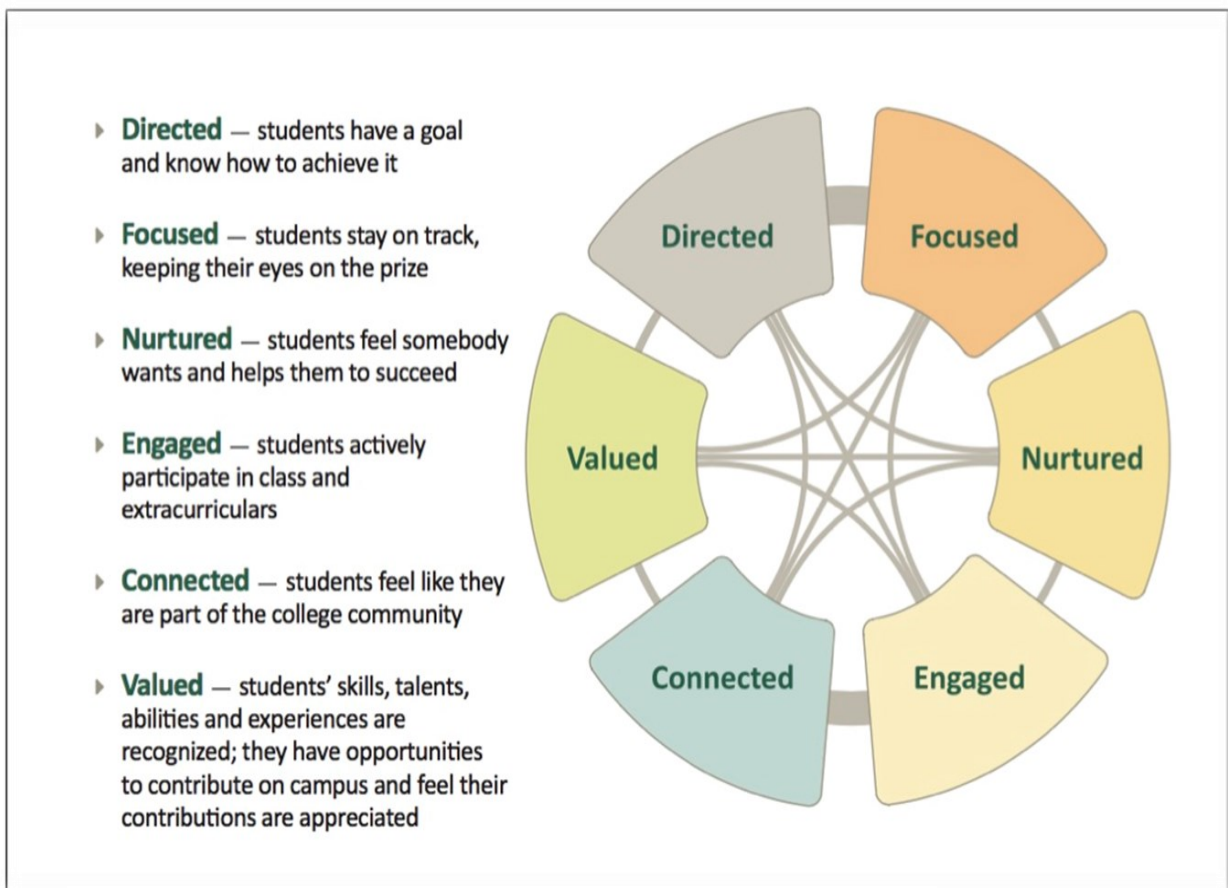
The RP Group Success Factors Framework

The RP Group established this “success factors framework,” to serve as the foundation for our exploration of what California community college students say they need to succeed.

According to the RP Group of the California Community Colleges, *research indicates that student support must be (1) integrated into students’ daily experience, and (2) included in the overall curriculum. This research also demonstrates that students are more likely to succeed when they are directed, focused, nurtured, engaged, connected, and valued.*

As educators it up to us to be mindful about these suggested factors and to apply the concepts as we assist our students. Through awareness and application of the principals outlined in the factors ,we can help or students grow and consequently be successful.

Defining the Six Success Factors



Community Building and Providing Nurturing Environments

As counselors and facilitators, I believe that it is our responsibility to best serve our students as guides, advocates and support systems as they navigate through the complex process of initiating, maintaining and completing an educational journey. Critical in this process is being a viable and consistent presence as described so well below:

“She welcomed me during her office hours and she helped me personally . . . she gave me emotional support and she really cared. She was also interested where my future was going and gave me advice.” RP Group Focus Study Participant, Student Support (Re) Defined: Using student voices to redefine support - January 2013 -

This student quote highlighting a community college math teacher, was taken from the RP Group Publication Student Support (Re) Defined, which outlines what community college students say institutions, instructors and others can do to help them succeed. This research also tells us that ***when someone cares about a student and his or her achievement, the student will also likely to experience success in the other factors.*** The definition of Nurture by definition is to *‘Care for and encourage growth or development.’*

Of the Six Success Factors, I believe the Nurtured Factors play a part in developing community in the classroom as students sense the connection with the instructor and in turn is in a better place to relate and feel comfortable with his/her peers. As we build community, we build relationships and we also build trust. This trust as well as empathy for one another can in turn be contagious leading to a more positive classroom experience. Through community building in the classroom, we can develop these nurturing environments.

Nurturing has the ability to transform people’s Lives.

John C Maxwell

The world would be
different for the better if we
were to carefully listen to
one another.

Emotional Intelligence

It is clear that many college students struggle with many personal issues. According to an article in the Chronicle of Higher Education- Students Who Feel Emotionally Unprepared for College Struggle in the Classroom 10/8/15:

“Two out of three students surveyed said they felt more emotionally unprepared than their peers in both their final year of high school and their first semester of college. The effects of that perception manifest themselves in a variety of places, including the classroom.”

In order to assist ourselves and our students, I believe that Emotional Intelligence skills are critical to relationship building and personal success for both the classroom instructor as well as the student. According to researcher Daniel Goleman, an emotionally intelligent person will exhibit 5 skills: Self awareness, self regulation, motivation, empathy and social skills. As educators, we need to spend time becoming more aware of our own levels of Emotional Intelligence in order to assist our students to become emotionally healthy.

5 Components of Emotional Intelligence

Self Awareness

Definition- Knowing ones emotions, strengths, weaknesses, drives values and goals-and their impacts on others

Hallmarks- Self confidence, realistic self assessment, self deprecating sense of humor, thirst for constructive criticism

Self Regulation

Definition-Controlling or redirecting disruptive emotions and impulses

Hallmarks- Trustworthiness, integrity, comfort with ambiguity or change

Motivation

Definition-Being driven to achieve for the sake of achievement

Hallmarks- A passion for the work itself and for new challenges, unflagging energy to improve

Empathy

Definition-Considering others’ feelings especially when making decisions

Hallmarks- Sensitivity to cross cultural differences, ability to develop others emotionally

Social Skill

Definition-Managing relationships to move in desired directions

Hallmarks- Effectiveness in leading change, extensive networking, persuasiveness

Getting to know our students

The following are strategies that are useful when attempting to understand a person better. As indicated in the survey that I conducted, students value others who attempt to get to know them for who they are. This begins with getting to know them at a personal level. This step will help develop **relationships** that will lead to **trust**.

The following are areas where we can concentrate on when working to get to know our students. Having this type of information can lead to stronger relationships as well as strengthening our own empathy skills.

Consider getting to know your students in these areas. You can interview them, ask them to complete a questionnaire and/or have open dialogues.

- *Interests*
- *Goals*
- *Likes/Dislikes*
- *Concerns*
- *Values*
- *Needs*
- *Fears*
- *Significant and meaningful life events*
- *Dreams*
- *Purpose*
- *Skills*

Our Purpose as Educators

It is important that we have examined our purpose not only as educators, but also as human beings. A purpose statement will help us to specify the directions that we are taking and the reasoning that we have chosen this direction.

A purpose statement can be shaped by our experiences, skills, likes, feelings and visions and is a living statement that will grow and change as we do. According to Simon Sinek, author of *Start with Why*, a purpose statement is also considered a 'Why' statement. He describes the 'Why' as why we do what we do and that individuals, teams and companies all have why's. Having such an individual statement will help us to be more focused and productive. Why statements, according to Sinek are *'revealed through specific stories and experiences that have affected their life and shaped who they are.'*

Developing a purpose or Why statement can be a very involved and time consuming process. However, to get you started on such a journey, I have developed a worksheet to help you and your students to get started. You can consider asking them to work on these statements individually and then ask them to pair up to discuss the results to their comfort levels.

If you have a strong purpose, you don't have to be pushed. Your passion will drive you there.

Roy Bennett

Personal Purpose Planning Sheet

Thoughts that can be part of your statement:

Something profound that I remember

Something I love to do

Something I am good at/like about myself

Something that is needed and/or can enrich others and myself

Consequently I can write:

What I do

(Example- I create positive experiences...)

What result I want to see

(So that people will feel motivated...)

What inspired me to act

(Because I know what it feels like to have a positive experience and to be encouraged)

Combine your three statements below.

Encouragement of Positive Personal Traits: Affirmations

Each person will have characteristics that make them who they are as well as setting them apart from others. An effective goal in the process of developing community is to encourage students to reflect on their own personal qualities as well as the qualities of those around them.

Consider the following exercise: Ask students to write down the following statement on a piece of paper:

The world is fortunate to have me because...

Once they have done so, ask them to write a response to the statement. To help them complete the statement, you can advise them that they can interchange the word 'world' with '*my family is, my friends are or my community is.*' Once they have completed the phrase, you can ask for volunteers to read their phrases. Discuss the activity by using the processing questions discussed earlier in this workbook. I have learned that this type of exercise is powerful, but is also a high risk exercise for many students. As facilitators, it is up to us to be encouraging as well as patient. With constant reinforcement, students will grow and become more confident as we work to create trusting relationships.

Affirmation Slips

Another exercise that I have found to be very useful when reinforcing positive thinking is *Affirmation Slips*. These fortune-cookie-like slips (see the next page) are individual thoughts that you will provide for each student. It is best if you cut and copy multiple copies so that you have a good mix. Colored paper works well. As students enter your classroom, ask them to randomly pick a slip that are place in a cup, so that they are standing upright. You will see that students will favor certain colors, so having a variety works well. Once the students are all present, ask for volunteers to read their slip. You can ask the class what they think about what they have chosen as well as why it might be important for them to have and believe. I have even gone as far as having my students *defend* or say what makes their statement true. Although this can be challenging and require encouragement, it is a powerful exercise!

**I am here if
You need me**

SupportingPeopleBuildingCommunity

*You Have Greatness
Inside of You*

SupportingPeopleBuildingCommunity

**Never
Give Up**

SupportingPeopleBuildingCommunity

I am proud of you

SupportingPeopleBuildingCommunity

**YOU ARE
AMAZING**

SupportingPeopleBuildingCommunity

You got this

SupportingPeopleBuildingCommunity

**You are
Talented**

SupportingPeopleBuildingCommunity

**You are a
Champion**

SupportingPeopleBuildingCommunity

I ADMIRE YOU

SupportingPeopleBuildingCommunity

**You are
The Best**

SupportingPeopleBuildingCommunity

My sincerest thanks go to the following people who assisted me
in the development of this project:

Paula Munoz

Ventura College EOPS Coordinator

Gabriel Arquilevich

Ventura College English Department Instructor

Cesar Flores

Oxnard College EOPS Coordinator

Spring 2019 Sabbatical Research Project

Submitted by:
Robert L. Chaparro

EOPS Student Success Workbook

**Robert L. Chaparro
EOPS Counselor
Spring 2019**

Purpose of this Student Workbook

Esteemed EOPS Students,

Congratulations on your decision to pursue a higher education! This decision will impact the rest of your life in a profound way.

I believe that we enroll in college in hopes to ensure a better life for ourselves and those close to us. We enter the decision with high hopes and good intentions. Although we might be nervous, even a little scared; we begin our college journeys with high hopes.

The purpose of this workbook is to provide you with the tools necessary to navigate through the often-challenging experience of going to school. It is divided into sections to that will assist you to make and follow through with your plans.

Stay focused on your goals... success is right around the corner!

Robert

The following is a close look at my educational experience. I hope it may help you as you move forward through your own educational journey.

My decision to go to college

I can honestly say that I chose to enroll in college after my high school graduation because my sisters had all gone to school. I did the basics as I prepared to enter Ventura College: stood in line to register, filled out the Financial Aid Application, bought the basic supplies and went to class. And that is where it stopped. I am not sure if I didn't know that there many things that I had to do to be successful, or that I didn't want to know. Things like talking to my teachers, getting tutoring or asking questions when I didn't know something. I felt content with my basic strategies; besides, I was able to stay in my comfort zone. Prepared or not, I was now in college. I was about learn a lot about myself... whether I knew it or not.

Never opening a book

I can remember a variety of different feelings during my first semester at VC. I remember the nervousness that came with being in new surroundings while simultaneously wanting to fit in. It was tough for me to have to walk into a crowded class. When I think back, this was one of the things I dreaded the most. I can remember seeing friends here and there, which made it easier for me. Once I ran into a guy who I had met in high school. He had hung around with a different group than the one that I did, so we rarely spoke. Nevertheless, we had lots to say since we now had something in common. For me it worked out well, I now had someone to walk into class with.

I started out as a full time student with 12 units. The schedule consisted of English 3, Math 9ABC, History 4B and a PE class. I was also working fulltime at Kmart. Needless to say, I had a busy schedule. My mothers' income was minimal, so I helped her as I could while paying for my car and personal expenses.

It was during this semester that I heard something that would stay with me for a long time. Once while talking to someone in my English class, the person asked

me what I thought about being in the 'bonehead class.' Not being sure what he meant, he explained that the English we were in was for dumb people, this was not true of course! After hearing this, my self-esteem was brought down a notch! Here I was proud about being in college, then was told that I was dumb. This didn't sit well with me.

I went to class about 80% of the time. I would have a binder with me and I took notes the best that I could. I also did a lot of daydreaming in those days. Nothing in particular, it seemed as if though I would get bored real easy, particularly during class time. So when it came to study time, I can honestly say that it was practically non-existent. I can remember having books that I never opened. I eventually got behind and decided to drop most of them. I wound up completing 3 units that semester.

Being embarrassed by my grades

After two semesters, I had completed 11 units with a 2.1 GPA. At the time, I don't remember being extremely bothered by this fact, but I do remember thinking that I didn't like school very much. It was a lot of work, and I really didn't feel very motivated to work hard at it. Yet, I knew that school was an opportunity for me to secure a better future for myself. One day this line of thinking received an adjustment after I spoke to a friend on campus. In those days, a student would receive a grade report somewhat like a report card. I had just received my report, which didn't have information that I was proud of. After a brief conversation about school, my friend wanted to know what my grades were from the previous semester. Let's just say that I wasn't completely honest with my friend. I said that I had done well in my classes, when in reality, I had received mediocre grades. This was the first time I really felt embarrassed about my achievement in school. Interestingly enough, I never considered that my final grades were directly related to how much work I had put in. Maybe I hadn't thought about it or I didn't want to think about it. Or maybe I really liked having money in my pocket while having a car, which was consuming my time and energy. One thing for sure, I was working too much. More importantly, I was embarrassed!

Studying hard with only a small change in my results

I realized that I **did** want to do well in school and that I really cared about my success. No more fooling myself that I wasn't bothered by low grades. So somewhere around my third semester, I decided to apply myself in the best way that I could. I made a point to try to get to all my classes, to be on time as well being prepared once I got there. One thing I do remember was getting a backpack. I saw a guy who I knew who had one. He made it look cool because he didn't wear it with both straps over his shoulders, he simply draped one strap over his right shoulder and slid it off whenever he needed it. After buying one of my own, I found it to be useful to keep school stuff in... pens, pencils, highlighters and the like. More importantly though, I could keep food in the small pouch. This I thought was worth all the effort! I remember taking a lot of notes while doing my best to be accurate. Unfortunately, keeping focused was tough. I would catch myself continuing to daydream during class and then being brought back to 'real life' when either people started to move or the teacher changed where he had been standing or changed his voice level. I found that I was missing information, which I needed to study. Unfortunately, I still wasn't at the point where I would ask for help. I was on still on my own. Whenever I would go to the library to do homework, I would struggle with concentration and focus there too. Any passerby, noise or movement would immediately catch my attention. I ended up reading, reviewing or studying something two three or four times! Boy was I frustrated!

My success would also be impacted by my stress level when I came to taking tests. I would do my best to study by highlighting, circling important things in my notes and reviewing handouts and chapters. I remember getting to the point that I was over highlighting books. I would highlight and then highlight some more! After a while, the whole page was pretty much highlighted. When it came to tests and quizzes I remember freezing up, and having my mind go blank. Needless to say, I didn't do very well at test time. I wasn't giving up just yet though. I knew I had to keep trying.

Pushing myself to the limit

This is where it came together for me. I learned that **I needed to seek help**. I felt the passion and drive to succeed, but I needed a plan and people to get me through. I sensed that I was talented to do well, but also very unfocused and unorganized. I made an **appointment to see a counselor, I sought tutoring**, I joined **M.E.Ch.A.**, the Chicano student organization and finally, I applied for and was accepted into **EOPS**, where I received the guidance I needed as well as I finding my home on campus. I also learned about my ADD-like symptoms that I had. Although the results came slowly, my grades improved and so did my confidence. Eventually, due to my **involvement on campus**, I ran for and elected to be Student Body Vice President. Not a bad achievement for the lost kid who first entered Ventura College two and half years earlier.

The moral of my story is that where there is a will, there is a way. Although my story might not be as troubled as some of the journeys that I have heard during my years as a counselor, it was a difficult road for me. So to you, I offer this advice:

**Never give up and never give in! Your success is just around the corner.
Read on, I think this workbook might help you!**

**Repeat this phrase 3 times saying it a little louder
each time that you say it:**

Yes I Can

Yes I Can

Yes I Can

Defining your Purpose: The Basis for Success

Over the last 20 years, I have asked students the same basic question, *what is it that has motivated you to come to school?* The answer, although it came in many variations, boiled down to the same answer, *“To make a better life for myself and those around me.”*

It is having a purpose that will drive your success in college. When one has a purpose or intention, it becomes easier to reach the goal because there is reason to do what it takes to reach the goal. In my view, a purpose is emotionally driven meaning that how we feel, which is based on who we are and what we have been through, drives us to act.

According to Merriam Webster, a purpose can be defined as *‘the reason for which something is done or created or for which something exists.’* A purpose statement or a sentence that describes my purpose might include any one or combination of the following phrases:

- *Motivational Emotions based on experiences*
- *Talents that you feel good about*
- *Contributions that you would like to make to the community*
- *Needs that you see exist-Family, self-fulfillment and the needs of others in general*

After much thought, I formulated my own purpose statement, which I have written below. Having such a statement has helped me to keep inspired as well as keeping focused.

My Purpose-To be the best community/family member and educator to assist others to see their full potential because I know what it feels like to struggle.

With a purpose in place, you will find that it is easier to go through a series of steps meant to assist you with the completion of your goal. The following is a form to help you create your personal statement:

Personal Purpose Planning Sheet

Thoughts that can be part of your statement:

Something profound that I remember

Something I love to do

Something I am good at/like about myself

Something that is needed and/or can enrich others and myself

Consequently, I can write:

What I do

(Example- I create positive experiences...)

What result I want to see

(So that people will feel motivated...)

What inspired me to act

(Because I know what it feels like to have a positive experience and to be encouraged)

Combine your three statements below.

**If you have a strong purpose, you don't
have to be pushed. Your passion will
drive you there.**

Roy Bennett

Making the Decision

The process of making your decision needs to include various considerations. For example, your decision needs to:

- *Be made when you are at peace*
- *Be one that involves your complete dedication and commitment*
- *Includes the feedback from those you trust*
- *Developed utilizing a process or method*

Although making a decision can be difficult, it can be easier if you plan and reflect on what you are deciding. Having time to think is very important in the process of making a wise and healthy decision. It is important to remember that making a decision can lead to a commitment that will require following through on your part. Therefore, you need to have made the decision using a detailed system.

The IDEAL Method of Decision Making

IDENTIFY

Write down what it is that you need to decide on.

DEFINE

Define the options that you have

EVALUATE

List the pros and cons of each option

ACT

Choose an option and follow through on the decision.

LEARN

Once you have decided and have followed through on your choice, make a list of what you have learned as well as how you feel about your choice.

IDEAL Method Sample

IDENTIFY

Begin by writing down what it is that you need to decide on.

Should I work more hours to help pay my bills?

DEFINE

Define the options that you have

*I can work more
I can keep to my current hours*

EVALUATE

List the pros and cons to each option

*If I work more: PRO- I have more money, I can pay my bills off, and I'll feel more relaxed
CON- My grades will suffer, I will be stressed, and my budget will be really tight*

*If I work less: PRO- I have a greater chance to do better in my classes, I can graduate sooner,
CON- Money will be real tight, I won be able to go out as much*

ACT

Choose an option and follow through on the decision.

I will choose to work less

LEARN

Once you have decided and have followed through on your choice, make a list on what you have learned as well as how you feel about your choice.

I learned that if I learn to manage my time better, I can still make it on a limited budget. I learned that I need to keep my grades up that will then enable me to apply for scholarships

IDEAL Method Template

IDENTIFY

Begin by writing down what it is that you need to decide on.

DEFINE

Define the options that you have

EVALUATE

List the pros and cons to each option

ACT

Choose an option and follow through on the decision.

LEARN

Once you have decided and have followed through on your choice, make a list on what you have learned as well as how you feel about your choice.

Developing the Action Plan

Once you have made a decision, it is important to have a plan of action to help you keep organized and focused on the decision. A basic action plan will include five elements:

- What actions you will take to accomplish the decision
- How you will accomplish your actions
- When you will accomplish your actions
- What resources you will use to accomplish the plan
- The completion date(s) of your actions

Review the sample template below to give you an idea about how to organize your plan. It is important to remember that an action plan is a living document in that it will grow and change as you move forward. Do your best to keep to the overall plan as well as the dates. However, life can impact plans and we need to adjust as needed. You may need to from time to time *revisit, revise and reapply* your plan. That is, you may have to adjust the plan if something occurs that is out of your control.

What Define the action	How Define how you will accomplish the action	When Target a specific date for action completion	Resources List resources you might utilize	Completed Indicate when action was completed
<i>Sample: Get an A in my Math course</i>	<i>Seek tutoring regularly</i>	<i>Visit the tutoring center twice weekly Mondays and Fridays</i>	<i>The college Tutoring Center</i>	

Seeing the Lifelong Value

A college education is an accomplishment that has benefits that are lifelong for both you and many others. By completing an education, you will be leading by example. Others close to you such as your children, family members, friends and your community may begin to believe that an education is something that they can also achieve. Like the old saying goes, *'If I did it, so can you!'*

Seeing my older sisters go to college created a belief in my mind that going to college was something that what was typically done by our family members. When I graduated from high school, I immediately thought I would be going to community college because going to school was ***the thing to do***.

The following is a list of benefits that you can expect by completing your educational goal:

- *Financial security*
- *Empower and inspire others to do the same*
- *Attaining knowledge and skills*
- *Establishing a system of routine*

Navigating the Life Journey

As with most things in life, the journey to complete your educational goals will be challenging. Obstacles such as personal tragedies, lack of money or a fear of failure are but a few of the list of obstacles that can negatively impact you. In reality, obstacles that appear to be devastating are only temporary if you reflect on what you can do to make the situation better, seek help and develop a plan.

Read the following story written by a former student of mine. She is the perfect example of heart and determination. I had the pleasure of seeing her recently and she is doing very well. She has her own foundation where she works to provide assistance to those in need. She graduated from community college with her Associates Degree, completed her Bachelor's Degree and is applying to Master's Degree programs. She is truly amazing!



Where I am Now

Growing up was tough, my mom walked out on me and my two sisters when I was 2 yrs. old. My dad raised me. He was a heroin addict as well as whatever else was in his system. Abuse, neglect, emotional and mental abandonment is what we had. I never had PARENTS. I started using drugs and getting into trouble. Never went to school, fighting, and to get where I was not coming home. I was always told “you’re going to mess up, you’re nothing in your life and you are never going to become anything in life.” So it stuck in my head. I started gangbanging and using drugs. Eventually I got into the justice system, in and out of juvenile hall and other placements. Then I went to prison. There were times while I was in there that I never thought I was going to see daylight or the outside world again. My release date came and I got out. I was out for a little while, then got pregnant and went back for a violation. I was incarcerated for two months. I had my baby girl three weeks later. I started to attend college and enrolled in my EOPS class. I didn’t take it serious at first. I was in a state where my past was haunting me and I came very close to dropping out of school. I was at the point where I was thinking, ‘I am a mess up’, just an ex-convict that will never amount to anything. I was very depressed and ready to quit.

On a Friday, I went to my EOPS class and that day was an emotional wreck. My instructor passed out some copies of a book that he had made that had student’s life experiences in it as well as other good motivation readings. One story that hit me hard was one of the first stories in the book. It was about a man who also had a criminal background and other stuff. He talked about how far he had come and is still moving forward. He also talked about how he had his ups and downs and that hit me like, WOW, you can do this. It put me back on track and motivated me to move forward. I am still enrolled at Ventura College. I have 2 jobs and moving into a positive direction. Anyone can move forward in life no matter what it may be. We all have set backs, but we just need to turn that set- back into a positive. My time in prison was a setback, but the positive is that I am alive today, working and enrolled in college, but most off all I have my beautiful baby girl. **Just keep it pushing, stay strong, achievement is within, not in the situation.**

Using the Tools- Personal

Taking care of yourself is at the very heart of educational journey. *You cannot take care of anyone or anything if you are not taking care of your own emotional and physical needs first.* When you develop your plan of action, you may want to include items from the following list:

- *Positive thinking**
- *A good diet-avoid fast food, eat fruits and vegetables and drink plenty of water*
- *Resources for self-care-utilize campus resources*
- *Mindfulness Meditation**
- *Physical Exercise-at least 30 minutes, 3 times a week*
- *Self-confidence evaluation and suggestions**
- *Using a personal support team-identify people you can trust and speak to them regularly*

*Samples for these items are described in the following pages

I truly believe that you will be in a better position to identify and apply these items if you have spent time on working on your purpose. Our purpose is what drives us and consequently motivates us to act. I have always told my students that I can share with them all that is necessary to succeed in college, but if they aren't motivated to use those strategies, the information has no value. Consider the following samples for you to use.

SAMPLE ONE

A Daily Focus Reminder

Complete the following worksheet using the following affirmation list and Personal Qualities for Life, School and employment lists and post it someplace where you will see it every day. You can add to it as you like as you see fit.

My daily positive thinking reminder

What I will accomplish...

I have decided to pursue this goal because...

My strengths are...

Review and select words and phrases that capture who you are.

What you choose is absolutely TRUE!

My Self-Affirmation List

People like having me around

I am talented

I am kind

I am a positive person

I am help others

I am a very gifted

People enjoy my personality

I am creative

I am lovable and capable

I am a hard worker

I have a good sense of humor

People can trust me

I am loyal

I am dedicated

I am motivated

People seek me out

I am kind to others

I give my best

I am a good friend

I am very bright

I am intelligent

People enjoy my company

I never give up

I am a joy to have around

I am a unique person

I am worthy

I have a calm personality

I welcome others

I am magnificent

Review these Personal Qualities Life, School and Employment to identify the qualities that best describe who you are:

Imagination

Allowing your thoughts, ideas and dreams to flow freely without questioning, challenging or negating

Confidence

Believing at all times that you are able, and that you will achieve what you have set out to do

Patience

Accepting that what you want will not always come at the exact time and day that you want it

Openness

Willingness to try new ideas, approaches and options

Honesty

With others and yourself regarding who you are, what you need and what you will do

Punctuality

Not just on time, but early so to allow for preparation

Self-awareness

For who you are, who you are not and who you would like to be

Industriousness

Simple hard work with attention to the small details and the goal of completing your task to the best of your ability

Personal Qualities for Life, School and Employment

Respect

For yourself and all that is part of your environment. People, the community, differences and nature

Balance

The application of all the parts of your life in a healthy, appropriate and timely manner

Faith

The positive outlook that you obtain from your personal source of belief, wisdom and guidance

Commitment

Starting and finishing what you said you will do

Health

The care and maintenance of your mind and body

Independence

Willingness to travel your personal path alone as needed

Service

Helping others at their time of need regardless of who they are

Perseverance

Picking yourself up and getting going again after you have fallen, whether it be the first or hundredth time

SAMPLE TWO

Mindfulness Meditation

Being mindful can be described as a heightened state of awareness on our body, feelings and thoughts. It helps us to control our thinking that can negatively impact us and helps us to shift to thoughts that can help us to be healthier.

Mindfulness can also help to reduce the time spent in judgement and evaluation. Mindfulness helps us to be situated in the present and to allow feelings that can take control of us such as anger, fear and sadness to come and go without an impact on us.

Why Mindfulness:

- To become more relaxed and calm
- To cope better with stress and anxiety
- To prevent myself from getting into depression
- To have better concentration and focus
- To cope with chronic pain or illness
- To enjoy and appreciate my life more
- To handle strong emotions more successfully

Mindfulness meditation is the practice of training our thoughts to remain in the positive. Essentially it is a time meant for you to sit quietly and practice controlling your thoughts. In reality it is something that you will become better at if you practice it regular. Try it! The instructions are on the next page.

Mindfulness Meditation- Give it a Try!

To practice Mindfulness Meditation, find a quiet place where you can sit undisturbed. If you have not done this exercise before, you can use the following steps to get you started.

- Sit up straight in your chair, feet flat on the floor. You can also sit in a comfortable place with your legs crossed.
- Place your hands on your lap
- Close your eyes
- Place one hand on your belly
- Concentrate on your breathing
- Consider a thought or word that you will quietly repeat
- If your mind wanders, bring it back to your breathing or your thought
- Use a timer to allow you to do the exercise for 3 minutes. You can progressively increase time to 15-30 minutes as time goes by and you become more comfortable
- The goal would be to do this exercise daily



We spend precious hours fearing the inevitable. It would be wise to use that time adoring our families, cherishing our friends and living our lives.

Dr. Maya Angelou

SAMPLE THREE

Complete the following survey. Once you have done so, evaluate yourself to see where you need to improve. I think you will get the basic idea!

Steps to Build my Self Confidence

	Always	Often	Sometimes	Occasionally	Never
<i>I stand up straight</i>					
<i>I avoid comparing myself to others.</i>					
<i>I practice positive self-talk</i>					
<i>I accept compliments</i>					
<i>I acknowledge my strengths</i>					
<i>I help others to know how to treat me</i>					
<i>I am willing to try new things</i>					

Consider completing this informal survey and seeing your responses as guides as how you can improve your life. Share the results with your personal support team to obtain feedback and ideas.

Using the Tools-Academic

There are many tools that you can use to organize yourself so that you can have the best educational experience. Each of these areas are vital to your success and should be used regularly. Review the following areas to provide you with ideas to consider.

- *Having an Organized Homework Session**
- *Using a calendar or an agenda*
- *Keeping up with important tasks when you are done with your homework**
- *Keeping your binders, notebooks organized, in order and dated*
- *Time management**
- *Using campus resources such as the Tutoring Center, EAC, LRC, Counseling and EOPS*
- *Being in regular contact with all of your teachers*
- *Observing steps to be prepared while you are in class**

*Samples for these items are described in the following pages.

SAMPLE ONE

Elements of a Successful Homework Session

Evaluate your current homework session by reviewing the following suggested strategies. In the years of asking students to self-reflect on their status, the number one issue of concern is the presence of a cell phone, which is very distracting! Review the list and see how you rate.

- Sit upright in a seated position, feet flat on the floor as much as possible
- Have plenty of light in your immediate area
- Ensure that you have plenty of workspace to spread out as needed
- Have all materials needed accessible, books, notes handouts, previous assignments index cards, etc.
- Turn off your cell phone, put it away, out of site
- Do not have background distractions: music, TV, computer-unless you need it for your work.
- Do not become involved with any social media
- Avoid food during your homework session- a light healthy snack and water are ok
- Should you begin to lose your focus, get up and take a short stretch break (2-5, minutes), then, get back to work
- Consider having a small “Motivational Visual” in front of you. A visual is an item that helps you to remember why you are in school. In most cases this item might be a picture of a loved one or any other inspirational item.
- Consider doing as many as possible homework hours in the library, tutoring center or any other quiet area on campus.
- Take advantage of the college technology centers to do online homework.

SAMPLE TWO

Things to do when you have completed all of your homework assignments

Just because you have completed all of your homework, it doesn't mean that you are done preparing yourself for your classes. Consider the following list of tasks that will help you keep up and also get ahead.

- Make and review index cards and study guides
- Read ahead
- Re-read previous chapters
- Review or re-write notes
- Develop practice tests and take them
- Go get tutoring
- Update your calendar
- Meet with your teachers
- Form a study group to compare notes, study etc...
- Re-organize your binders or organization systems
- Read for pleasure- a good magazine or book
- Avoid: Too much TV, internet, Facebook, Instagram,

SAMPLE THREE

Weekly Time Manager

	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
7:00am							
8:00							
9:00							
10:00							
11:00							
12:00pm							
1:00							
2:00							
3:00							
4:00							
5:00							
6:00							
7:00							
8:00							
9:00							
10:00							
11:00							
12:00							
1:00							

Time Manger Specifics

Here a few hints to help you design a Time Manager. This list was developed over time being built on the knowledge that each item has a particular purpose that can vary from person to person. Although these are valuable strategies, the most important element is that you remain **consistent**. I have shared with many students that the best way to be consistent is to **remind yourself about the reason that you are choosing to be in college**. This goes back to your purpose that was discussed earlier in this workbook. Consider using this list as a guide to complete your own manager:

- The three basic components that are labeled:
- Class, work and homework (study or review times)
- Manager does not have: meals, volunteer, travel, family resp., etc...
- Colors identifying each component that are clearly separated by lines
- At least 2 hours of homework time for each unit that you are in:
12 units = 24 hours of study time.
- If you have a difficult time keeping focus, your homework times should be divided into smaller chunks such as 20-40 minutes.
- Manager may need to be changed weekly due to changing work or other schedules

Practice doing things that require

Zero Talent:

Being on time

Having a positive attitude

(About yourself, your circumstances and the future)

Doing extra

(Going the extra mile)

Being prepared to the best of your ability

A good work ethic

(Give it your absolute best!)

Being coachable... taking in feedback

**The day someone
quits school,
he is condemning
himself to a
future of
poverty.**

Jaime Escalante

SAMPLE FOUR

Class Success Survey

To learn more about your ability to be successful, place a **Y**-Yes, **S**-Sometimes or **N**-No next to the item below as it applies to you. The objective is to try to do as many of the activities below on a regular basis to ensure your academic success.

___ Set and carry Grade Goals for the semester

___ Organize a system for notes and handouts

___ Utilize and carry a weekly planner/calendar or agenda

___ Show up at least 5 minutes early to class and stay for the entire class meeting

___ Sit as close to the front of the classroom as possible

___ Be in the 'Learning Ready' position when class starts, (Learning ready is being ready to take notes with all necessary class materials and supplies with you)

___ Review the class syllabus for dates, tests, projects, teacher contact info, etc.

___ Meet and introduce yourself to all instructors soon after the semester has started and request regular help/guidance as needed

___ Review all class notes as soon as possible after class, preferably sometime during that same day

___ Do not miss a class for anything else but emergencies or illness

___ Request help from the instructor as soon as you sense you need it

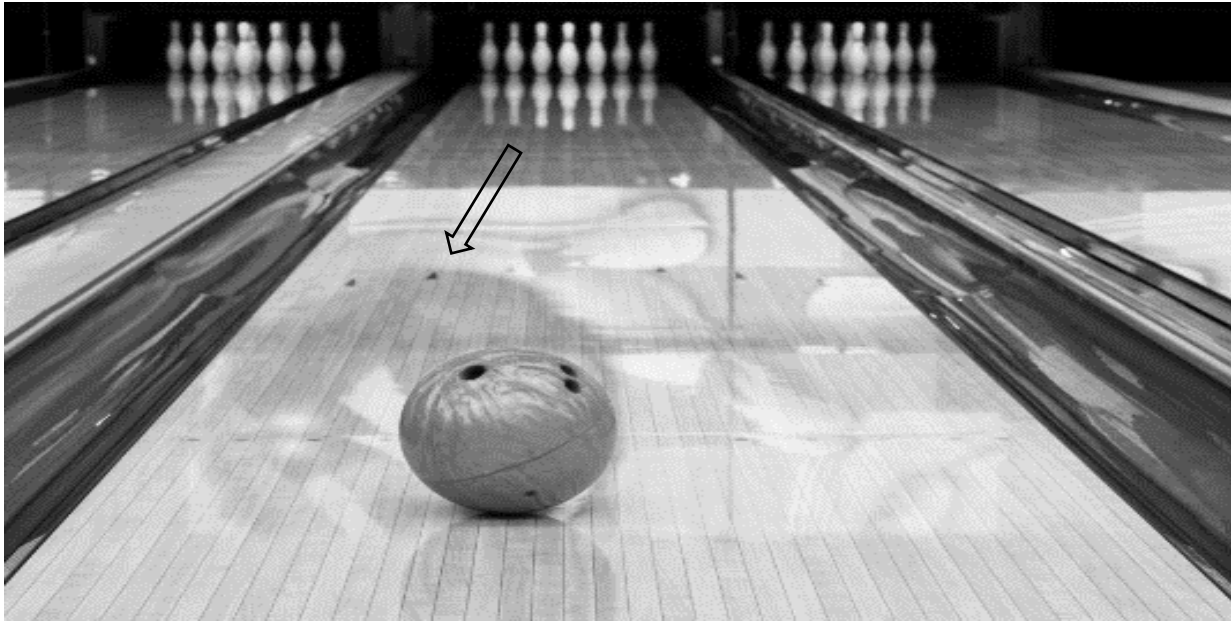
___ Complete homework and turn in on time in the format specified by your teacher

___ Have a positive attitude about being in class seeing it as an opportunity and not a task that you are forced to do

___ Turn off your cell phone, (Yes, off! Lights and vibrations can be distractive)

___ Form study groups with your classmates

Keep your eyes on the arrows, Not the Pins!



I was taught that when you go bowling, the best strategy is to focus on the arrows that are placed at the beginning part of the bowling lane, as shown in this picture. This strategy allows you to have a more accurate chance of hitting the pins that are off in the distance.

Having success in college will be no different. To do well in a class, you must focus on all the short range tasks such as time management, contact with your teacher, Tutoring and good study skills first as opposed to worrying about your final grade. These short-range tasks will assist you in reaching your long-range goal of getting a good semester grade.

Emotional Intelligence

According to researcher Daniel Goleman, Emotional Intelligence (EQ) is defined as the ability to identify, assess, and control one's own emotions, the emotions of others, and that of groups. Emotional Intelligence skills help us to have better relationships with others as well as being emotionally healthy. Being emotionally intelligent will help you to have better relationships with others and to have greater personal and professional success.

Review the following list and see if there is an area where you can attempt to learn more about yourself. What might be a strong area for you? Where can you improve? Which area might require further investigation?

What is most critical is that we must get to know ourselves in order to successfully work with others. This includes our family, friends, teachers and coworkers.

Self-Awareness-

Knowing ones emotions, strengths weaknesses, drives values and goals-and their impacts on others

Self-Regulation-

Controlling or redirecting disruptive emotions and impulses

Motivation-

Being driven to achieve for the sake of achievement

Empathy-

Considering others' feelings especially when making decisions

Social Skill-

Managing relationships to move in desired directions

Consider completing the exercise on the following page by writing your personal answer after each of the words on the list to your comfort zone. What might you have learned about yourself?

Who am I?

I...

Value

Love

Am good at

Need

Fondly remember

Aspire to

Fear

Want

The importance of acts of CARE towards others

According to Merriam Webster, the definition of the word *care* (n) is *the provision of what is necessary for the health, welfare, maintenance, and protection of someone or something.*

I believe that it is imperative for all of us to nurture and care for each other through an outwardly open and authentic system of care, support and concern. I also believe that the feeling one gets when being cared for can inspire caring behavior, making it contagious or simply that 'Cared for people will Care for People.'

CARE Strategies

Consider the following list of how to care for others as well as oneself:

Compassion- Accept people for who they are and what they might be going through

Advocacy- Actively support people as they learn and grow

Reassurance- Remind people that things will be okay as long as they keep trying

Endurance- Assure people that you will always do your best to be there for them

CARE benefits

Being a caring person has amazing benefits! Check out the following list:

- Helps another person!
- Helps ourselves as we feel good about our actions
- Is contagious
- Is related to personal illness prevention

Studies also show that people who provide acts of CARE:

1. Are significantly happier, joyful and less stressed
2. Can shift ones attention from their own issues
3. Experience a **positive feedback loop** and want to keep on helping

IN LAK'ECH YOU ARE MY OTHER ME

A TIMELESS MAYAN PRECEPT:

'YOU ARE MY OTHER ME

IF I DO HARM TO YOU

I DO HARM TO MYSELF

IF I LOVE AND RESPECT YOU

I LOVE AND RESPECT MYSELF'

Cared for people will Care for People.

Take the Summer Institute Pledge EOPS pledge!



I pledge

**To believe in myself
and my potential**

**To serve my community,
to respect and empower
myself and others**

**To remember that I am
resilient and will continue
onward regardless
of any struggle**

**To be diligent and to stay
true to my purpose,
dreams and plans**

**To be mindful of my
rights and needs, to
advocate for myself
and others**

**To believe that I am a
powerful human being**

My sincerest thanks go to the following people who assisted me in the development of this project:

Paula Munoz,
Ventura College EOPS Coordinator

Gabriel Arquilevich,
Ventura College English Department Instructor

Cesar Flores,
Oxnard College EOPS Coordinator