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FOR EXCELLENCE IN MIAMI-DADE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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RESILIENCY/CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

Teaching vs. Reaching

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Teaching vs. *Reaching*

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Goals and Objectives

Goals

The goal of this project is to have the teacher write personalized and profound End-of-Year letters to each student that capture a moment at a certain age, as well as a specific grade. These End-of-Year letters will allow students to reflect on their growth, their thoughts, and the circumstances of a particular phase in their life and specific school year. This can be particularly powerful as a learning tool, helping students see their progression, understand how their perspectives might have changed, and appreciate the journey they've been on. It also serves as a personal time capsule, giving them a tangible connection to their past selves. In addition to memorializing their time, these End-of-Year letters will validate students' worth and act as a tangible reminder that can be carried with them through adulthood and revisited whenever the former student's want or need arises. In the struggles of life that will invariably come, these letters will help them to always believe in themselves and continually seek to become the best versions of themselves.

Objectives

Students and Teacher will take part in a variety of verbal and written activities that establish and strengthen communication skills.

Teacher will use information learned from individual and group conversations, as well as written activities, to write a personalized and profound End-of-Year letter to each student.

Florida Standards

1. WL.K12.IH.9.2 – Participate in activities where communication in the target language is expected.

2. WL.K12.SU.5.6 – Write fluently about complex topics, emphasizing the important issues in a style appropriate to the reader.

3. EL.0-8m.IV.G.1 – Show motivation to engage in written expression and appropriate knowledge of forms and functions of written composition.

4. ELA.K12.EE.6.1 – Use appropriate voice and tone when speaking or writing.

5. SP.PK12.DH.4.6 – Apply auditory discrimination and phonological skills to enhance understanding spoken and written language, when appropriate.

Course Outline/Overview

"Knowledge is transferable, but an emotional connection is transforming. And putting those feelings and emotions in a profound, personalized End-of-Year letter that a student can keep as a constant reminder that they are respected, appreciated, and valued can shift and shape a young person's life for the better in the future years to come."

- John "Coach" McHale

When one looks at the term "Subject Matter," it is always important to remember that "Subject" (human being) comes before "Matter" (course material). Or as I like to think of it, the person comes before the pupil. Theodore Roosevelt, perhaps the most progressive president to ever rule the country, hit the nail on the head long ago, when he proclaimed, "People don't care how much you know, until they know how much you care." In fact, for me, this quote has always summed up the foundation of the student/teacher relationship. The teachers who had the greatest role in shifting and shaping my life, as well as most of the lives of my friends, were those who displayed compassion, demonstrated commitment, and developed connections. These influential and inspirational teachers earned our trust, respect, and loyalty, because they took the time and put in the effort to assure us we were welcomed and valued in their presence. They always put the person in front of the pupil, and because they did so they became difference-makers, whose lessons – both on subject material and life experiences – lived on, and increased in intrinsic value, long after their class had ended. That being noted, I can only imagine how much stronger that

influence would have been had I received a letter to take with me at the end of the year. Not only would it have memorialized who I was at that age and stage of my life, it would have been an always accessible reminder of who I could become in the future.

Memories fade like the days as one ages

But Ink only fades in shades on the pages

In Teaching versus Reaching, the aim is to make sure that at the end of the year every student leaves your class with an unforgettable keepsake: a profound, personalized End-of-Year letter.

The subtitle is "Teaching is Putting Information in, while Reaching is Pulling Information out," and this course is designed around the belief that the best way to achieve the greatest results in a classroom begins with getting to know your students on the deepest level. In other words, only when a teacher knows where one's students come from (home life, environment, culture, and familial and personal expectations), what they are going through (physically, financially, emotionally, mentally, and spiritually) and who they wish to become (their goals, desires, hopes and dreams) is a teacher able to fully understand and give one's students the life-altering support and inspiration they need to become the best versions of themselves, not only as pupils, but as people. Therefore, from the characteristics and traits that create goodwill and positive vibrations in a classroom, to the strategies and activities that create connections and establish and strengthen communication, to the approaches and tactics for generating inspiration and compiling information, and, finally, to the organization and arrangement of a profound personalized End-of-Year letter, this course covers all aspects of what it take to become a lifelong difference-maker for the better of your students.

Lesson Plans and Step-by-Step Guide in Implementing

C's the Day to Pave the Way for Writing Profound, Personalized Letters

Lesson 1: **CLARITY and CONFIRMATION (12 – 18 minutes)**

The Letter I wish I would have received at the end of my ____ grade year

In this lesson, teachers will write a letter to themselves from their favorite, most admired, most respected, most challenging, most inspiring, or most memorable teacher.

Teachers will follow a letter template that allows for:

1. a nickname they wish they had been remembered by.
2. specific incidents they were a part of that took place in that teacher's class
3. the advice they most wish they were given at that stage in their life.
4. the words of encouragement they would have loved to have been told.
5. the recalling of hard losses, obstacles overcome, and great achievements.
6. listing their best personality traits, special talents, passions, pursuits, and dreams.
7. acknowledgment of kind acts, loyalty to friends and family, and service to others.
8. condolences for the loss of a loved one, friend, or pet.
9. anything else not listed above.
10. a special signing off and a P.S.

Materials:

• Worksheet

• notebook or note sheet

Assessment:

• Teachers will be able to describe, analyze and confirm the feelings of pride, comfort, peace, self-worth, gratitude, and any other emotion this letter brings to them.

• Teachers will be able to understand just how much a letter from them to their students will mean in terms of appreciation, encouragement, validation, belief, and love.

Lesson 2: **COMMITMENT and COMPASSION (12 – 18 minutes)**

Approaches and Awareness for generating inspiration and compiling information

In this lesson, teachers will learn that most often what they give will be returned to them, as well as the importance of keeping a student inventory list.

Teachers will receive, review, and reflect on the following worksheets:

1. The Great 8 – How Communication is Established, Strengthened, and Improved

2. Student Inventory – Facts, Traits, Talents, Passions, Incidents, ETC.

3. Letter Categories – Summarizing Specific Groups of Students

4. Quotes on Cruelty and Compassion

5. The Wall of Fame – The ongoing celebration of student accomplishments and characteristics

6. Student Storage – Small items that generate great amounts of appreciation and respect

7. All a Board – The environment you create is indicative of the commitment you will make

8. POEM – The Magic Wand of Words

Materials:

• Worksheets

• notebook or note sheet

Assessment:

• Teachers will be able to describe and analyze the approaches to teaching that benefit students the most, as both a person and a pupil.

• Teachers will be able to understand the importance of using a student inventory sheet to keep detailed and up-to-date information on each student, and how this will allow for the most profound and personalized letter possible.

Lesson 3: **CONNECTION and COMMUNICATION (12 – 18 minutes)**

Activities and Strategies that initiate/enable understanding, insight, and revelations

In this lesson, teachers will learn strategies that build bonds and establish and strengthen communication on the deepest levels.

Teachers will receive, review, and reflect on the following:

1. Personal Profile **WORKSHEET** – 12 questions covering simple to significant preferences, perspectives, and purpose passions, purpose

2. 3 to one(self) **ACTIVITY** – Letters from each student to past, present, and future self

3. Song Journals **WORKSHEET** – How to conduct them, along with 2 examples

4. Hot Seat **ACTIVITY** – How to conduct it, along with sample questions

5. Weekly Circle of Life Knowledge QUESTion **ACTIVITY** – How to conduct it, along with sample questions. These questions must be CURRENT and DIFFERENT than Hot Seat questions. i.e. What did you see this week that moved you to tears?, What was the best/worst thing that happened in your life this week?, Kindest thing you did for another this week?, Did anything unexpected happen to you – good or bad – this week?, ETC.

Materials:

• Worksheets

• notebook or note sheet

• Radio/CD Player

Assessment:

• Teachers will be able to describe and analyze the activities and strategies that forge connections and create communication on the deepest level.

• Teachers will be able to understand the importance of using a wide variety of strategies and approaches to communication in order to extract the most profound and personal information.

Lesson 4: **CONCLUSION (5 minutes)**

End Results with Everlasting Lessons

In this lesson, teachers will see the final results that come at the end of a year in which all the C's were implemented.

Teachers will receive, review, and reflect on the following:

1. A General End-of-Year letter that all students receive with the same message.

2. A Profound and Personalized End-of-Year letter, specifically tailored to each student.

3. A General Holiday letter of hope, advice, and well-wishes for all students.

4. A Specific Letter written for a specific student in regard to a specific incident.

5. A published book centered around a teacher's End-of-Year letters to students.

Materials:

• Letters – Examples of Personal End-of-Year, General End-of-Year, Holidays, and Specific Occasions

• POEM – The Power of the Pen

• Class set of Books (Let It Be Known) – centered around End-of-Year letters to students

Assessment:

• Teachers will be able to see, touch, and experience the final product (various letters and a published book), resulting from a full year of implementing the C's.

• Teachers will be able to understand the importance of the role they play in the lives of their students, and the different ways in which they can make a lifelong contribution, ensuring that the lessons they teach in class last long after the year has passed.

Resource List

Supplies and Supplemental Materials:

- Books – 40 Copies of Let It Be Known at Wholesale Price ($10/book)
- Worksheets – 40 Copies of Each