



EXERCISE: PERSONAL FAILURE AND SUCCESS MAPPING

Subject(s): Social Studies, English and Theatre

Goals: Students will be able to:

- Develop ideas individually and collaboratively.
- Propose and select alternatives to solve problems while building an ensemble.
- Use verbal and nonverbal techniques for presentation.
- Produce, analyze, and evaluate auditory, visual and written media messages.

Show Connection: *Failureland!*'s protagonist ends up in Failureland because she views herself as a failure *before she's even begun her journey*. So many of us halt our paths because we don't see the value we already have and we do not see a way forward toward improvement.

Materials:

- Large Pieces of Paper
- Arts and Craft Supplies

Set Up:

- Divide the students into two-person partnerships.
- Give each partnership two large pieces of paper and a marker.
- Substantial floor space is required for this exercise.

Description:

- Invite the students to reflect on where anxiety, fear, nerves, trauma, stress, neurosis live on their body, especially when connected to thoughts of failure and success. Where do the memories of the past live within them? Where in their body do they feel failure? Where do you feel success? Where and how do you feel different kinds of failure and success in your body? (Personal failures and successes vs. broader, more public ones.)
- After this reflective moment, partnerships should head to the floor, with one partner laying down on the large sheet of paper given to them. Partners take turns tracing their partner's body, making sure to trace the region of the body where their partner says they hold and experiences these anxious feelings. If it's their whole body, that's fine. If it's just one or two body parts that is also fine as well. Once the tracing is done, invite each person to take the traced sheet of paper of themselves to do more work on.
- Assuming they have some negative space surrounding the actual tracing, invite them to divide the negative space into three areas. The student will be asked three questions. Each question should be answered

visually (no words allowed!) within one of the subdivided areas (one area for each question), using the provided arts and craft supplies.

- How has failing at something served you? How does failing help us?
 - How can failure harm you?
 - What is something in life that you really want to achieve or accomplish? What is the risk of failure in pursuing that?
- Then, within the tracing of their body, students subdivide *that* area into three sections. Students then visually represent and respond to the following questions with provided arts and crafts supplies. (No words allowed). As before, one question and answer for each subdivision:
 - What is a non-physical quality or trait you like about yourself?
 - What is a non-physical quality or trait that within yourself that you would like to see changed or that you would like to progress past? What are the healthy resources and who are the healthy helpers who could help you?
 - Between the two rounds of visual questioning and subdividing, you're looking at at least 20 minutes of art response time. Encourage vocal discussion amongst the students as they find the answers to the questions.
- As a class, lay out or post the students' pieces around the classroom, creating a "Museum of Failure and Success" Have the students wander around their classmates' work, observing it and responding to some of the following questions as they browse the work.
 - If you had to make a noise to represent how this whole class felt about themselves, what would it sound like?
 - What is a message of support you would say to another member of this class, after looking at and interpreting their piece?
 - What is one word you would use to describe how this class feels about themselves and what they are capable of?
- Be sure to hear and see some of their responses to the work.

Discussion:

- What is a challenge that you feel is uniquely put upon your generation when it comes to succeeding and sometimes failing? (Maybe it is an expectation, a preconceived notion, etc.) Who is responsible for placing those challenges and expectations on you?
- What sort of solutions might there be, short term or long term, in bridging the divides between society, ourselves and the expectations and realities we hold up towards one another? How do we recognize the things we need to improve within ourselves without getting bogged down by them?