Name of Lesson 9: Perseverance & Resilience

Topic: Understanding and expressing perseverance and resilience

Gifted Standard and element(s):
G6: Relationships and Connections
d. Seek opportunities to become a productive/proactive community member.

G9: Self-Reflection
a. Recognize and develop areas of strength in self.
b. Recognize areas of weakness in self and develop strategies for improvement.

G10: Respect for Others
b. Recognize the value of individual differences.
c. Recognize the strengths of others.

Unit Essential Question(s):
- How do character strengths and virtues help us and others to be our best selves?
- How can I recognize the use of character strengths and virtues in others?
- How can I choose which character strengths to use in differing situations to achieve both academically and personally?
- How can I use character strengths and virtues to be a positive and productive community member?

Lesson Questions:
- What is the character strength of perseverance?
- How can the character strength of perseverance be used in my life to help me?

Lesson Summary: In this lesson, students will explore the character strength of perseverance, particularly through the skills of resilience and endurance by using an analogy of the growth of a tree.

Assessment Description/Performance Task:
☑ Constructed response ☑ Informal assessment
☐ Performance task ☐ Selected response

Brief Description of Assessment: Students will create an illustration synthesizing resilient thinking and strategies for perseverance in their personal lives.

Instructional Methods:
- Lesson Overview:
  - Hook: Talk walk on resilience in nature
  - Discuss questions for resilient thinking
  - Brain storm strategies for perseverance
  - Discuss the resilience poster
  - Dilemmas for resilience and perseverance
  - Assessment: Student created illustration

- Hook/Activator: Take a walk outside if weather permits discuss the following scenario (research shows just being out in nature has a profound effect on brain chemistry and focus). Ask students to find a small plant. Ask students “What would happen if you grabbed the plant?” The students may say something like “the plant will come out of the ground,” or “the leaves would be crushed.” Next, ask “What might happen to the plant if there was a big storm?” Accept all reasonable answers, and lead them toward the idea that the plant “might die.”
Next, ask students to find a tree and ask the same questions. Lead the discussion to the discovery that the tree would not be affected as the plant was. For instance, it could withstand the body weight of a person, and even a storm would probably not destroy it, and a person certainly couldn’t pull it out of the ground.

Next, ask students if they could choose which to be in a storm, a plant or a tree, which would they choose? (Most students will choose the tree because it is stronger.)

Explain that people are like plants and trees, and we can actually choose how strong we grow. We all will have sun and rain in our lives but, unlike plants which are specific seedlings that grow into pre-determined species, humans can choose what they become. We can choose to soak up the sun and let the rain help us grow. We can choose to grow our roots deep in the earth to make us sturdy and strong. We can choose to be a small plant or a sturdy tree.

Ask the students what gives trees and plants the ability to grow. They will probably say sun, rain, and soil. Explain that in our lives the sun represents the love we receive in this world (our parent’s love, and the love of important people); the rain represents the challenges we face; and the roots in the soil represent how we respond to our experiences. If we only have love without challenges, we will shrivel up from the heat. If we only have rain and hide from the sun, we will get washed out. But if we have a good balance of sun and rain, then we can learn from our experiences and grow our roots deep into the earth to make us strong and steadfast.

On the way back to the classroom, you can pretend to trip or stumble. Then say "I actually meant to do that because recovering from the stumble makes me stronger!“ Lead students to a conversation about challenges we can sometimes choose (such as joining a sports team, making new friends, or learning something new. Or, we can choose not to challenge ourselves affectively (emotionally) and cognitively (academically) by giving up, not trying new things or not being our best.

As you continue the walk, ask about challenges we have (such as siblings getting into our stuff, bothering us, having to do chores, having too much homework, having too many commitments and not enough time, or doing what your parents and teachers want us to do when we want to do other things, some may even be more serious such as hunger, money, divorce, cancer, grandparents or pets dying.) Point out that in our lives when we feel loved, or give love, when we feel hope, gratitude and respect for others – these experiences are like the sun – they help us to be successful in life. The things we cannot control (such as other peoples' behavior or our environment) are the challenges we face, like the tree experiencing rain. Both are just part of life. Choosing to have a positive attitude, and choosing to have this perspective about our lives, will ultimately help us to grow stronger, and grow into a stronger person like the tree.

At the end of the walk, explain that the tree is “resilient” because it is able to withstand challenges and to grow, despite the conditions or the weather around it. Explain that when we choose to act like the tree, we can be resilient too.

• Teaching Strategy:
  1. Give students a deeper definition of resilience: “the process of successfully adapting to difficult or challenging life experiences.” You may also wish to describe it as recovering from set-backs in a positive way. It often involves the ability to persevere in spite of obstacles. Project the “Resilience Acrostic Poem” (attached), or give each student a copy, as you review the concept. Explain that this poem describes an attitude of resilience.

  2. Distribute large (11x16) blank sheets of paper. Tell students that they will be creating a drawing with a tree to represent themselves and how they can use resilience to grow stronger. You will be modeling the drawing step by step as students create their own. (An example of what you might draw is shown in the student samples, attached. Student drawings don’t all have to be the same, you just want to be sure students have room to use the parts of the drawing to
represent ideas about resilience.) Tell them to begin by drawing a sun in one upper corner of their page. In the other corner, have them draw a raincloud. Next, ask them to draw a tree with roots, a large trunk and many branches. After all students have finished drawing their trees, show them how to complete the picture (and the analogy) in the following steps:

a. Write your name on the trunk, and have students write their names on their trees.

b. Tell them that the rain cloud represents challenges they have in life. These should be challenges in which they need to choose positive, or resilient attitudes (for example, lack of support from others, criticism from others, failures). Illustrate by writing one of your own challenges, and ask students to write ONE of their own. Tell them they will add more to the cloud after you have shown them what each part represents.

c. Next, tell them the sun represents love, support and happiness. In the sun, they will list the sources of these things in their own lives. List ONE example and have students follow, again waiting to complete it until all elements are illustrated.

d. Next, tell them that the branches represent what you can do to be resilient. (Keep the acrostic poem available so that they may refer to it.) Write something you have done in your life, and as ask students to write ONE on their own tree, again waiting to add more.

e. Finally, the roots represent the character strengths they might access in order to grow strong and be resilient (for example, humor, perseverance, social intelligence, etc.). List one of your own on the model tree, and have students follow with ONE of their own. Suggest to students that they might want to refer to the character strengths posters in the room as they complete their drawings.

3. Allow students time to complete their drawings. They may add more detail as they wish, but they should try to include several examples for each element of the drawing.

• **Summary by the Learner:** Students will illustrate their understanding of resilience by drawing a tree to represent the various elements of real life challenges and successes.

### Differentiation:

- Some students may need one-on-one help to identify multiple ideas for the elements of the picture.

- Allow students to expand ideas and offer more detailed illustrations as they are able.

### Materials for this Lesson:

- Large sheets of paper for each student (11x16)
- Crayons
- Acrostic Poem about Resilience (attached)
- Students samples of completed illustration (attached)

### Vocabulary for this Lesson:

- **Perseverance** - Finishing what one starts; persisting in a course of action in spite of obstacles; “getting it out the door”; taking pleasure in completing tasks

- **Resilience** - the process of successfully adapting to difficult or challenging life experiences
Remember you are good enough
Everyone is different
Stop comparing yourself
Individuality rocks 🍀
Learn something new daily
Involve yourself in what you love doing
Enjoy things that make you happy
Not everyone can be 1st, 2nd, or 3rd
Care about yourself and others
Expect that some days won’t be great

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Examples of Student illustrations: