

River of Dreams – Recognizing Opportunities for Change and Taking Action

Timing of Presentation: Day 3, Morning, “Perseverance”

Purpose:

- Students will be introduced to a historical people demonstrating the characteristic of “perseverance.” Students will identify situations in need of change, make a plan to change them, ask another student to critically read their plan and finally, students will adjust their action plan with consideration to the changes suggested by a peer.

Materials:

- A River Ran Wild by Lynne Cherry
- 4 Box Journal Overhead
- Large art paper for each child
- Crayons/Markers

Instruction:

1. Gives students a chance to share their Perspective Journals.
2. Ask students to get out a sheet of scratch paper for a Quickwrite.
 - a. Say, “I want you to write about a time when you knew “something had to be done.” (Give an example if necessary).
 - b. Allow the students 5 minutes to write encouraging them not to worry about spelling or other writing conventions. Their goal is to put their ideas down on paper.
3. Introduce the book A River Ran Wild by Lynne Cherry.
4. Show the students the 4 Box Journal overhead and explain to them what they will be discussing after reading so that the purpose for reading has been set.
5. To set up the historical background for this text, read the author’s note to the students.
6. Read the book.
7. As a class, use the 4 Box Journal as a guide for discussion, going through each box, asking students for their feedback on the book, and then discussing it.
8. Reiterate to the students that this is a book about a group of people who had a dream and took action to make their dream come true. They saw a need for a change and made it happen.
9. Return to the Quickwrites from earlier to introduce the River of Dreams.
 - a. Ask students to think of a change that they would like to make in their life or their world (it can be the one they wrote about in their Quickwrite or something different).

- b. Encourage them to think of the steps they'll have to take to make that change happen (these should be steps they can take everyday).
 - c. Have students make a list of steps they will take to make that change happen.
 - d. Students will switch lists with a partner. The partner will read the list critically and play the "what if" game with the writer by looking at their action steps and helping the writer see problems with their plan that need to be fixed. These changes will come from looking at this list from other perspectives. Feedback will be phrased as a question beginning with "what if" offering possibilities instead of judgments.
 - e. Students will make changes to their plan based on their partner's feedback.
 - f. Students will draw their own "river of dreams" by drawing a river and marking the river's course with their action steps to make their dream come true.
10. Ask for volunteers to share their "river of dreams."
- a. Remind students to keep track of progress with their goal in their Perspective Journal, writing according to the guide questions.
11. Today's power action is "perseverance." Ask students to think about and discuss the connections between "perseverance" in this book, "perseverance" during the Oklahoma City Bombing, and "perseverance" in their own lives.
- a. How does this book connect to the study of the Oklahoma City Bombing as two historical events?
 - b. Set a class goal for persevering. Post the goal for all to see.

Assessment:

- Review students' "river of dreams." Look for a goal of an action supported by logical steps to reach that goal.

Extensions and Alternatives:

- Use another book related to your current theme of study that tells the story of an activist who perseveres to make a change. Have students still draw some sort of visual representation of their plan.
- Play the song "The River" by Garth Brooks. Critically analyze the lyrics. Compare the lyrics to the book. Compare the lyrics/theme with the other Garth Brooks song studied, "The Change."

