

LESSON PLAN

These Lesson Plans are a culmination of schoolwide activities and classroom activities, ranging from grades K-12

Passing Notes

Submitted by Kate - Davis, California

Objective:

To help students realize that sharing compliments makes them feel good

Grade Level:

Elementary to Junior High

Scope:

Class Activity

Materials Used:

Envelope for each student

Enough strips of paper for each student to write a compliment about all the other students in class

Procedure:

I usually do this around a holiday of some sort – Christmas, Valentine’s Day or the end of school.

Before beginning, I think of a time that someone’s kind words made a difference for me and I share about that with the class in as non-syrupy way as I can. I also talk a bit about the importance of telling the truth when complimenting others.

Then I introduce the activity “Passing Notes.” I tell my students that this activity can be a very powerful one for all of us because there are so few times that we get to know how others see us. I tell them that they will have a chance to kindly give each person in our class, including me, a compliment that is about something that is true. I repeat in several different ways that it is important to only mention the good parts about someone since it would be disappointing for anyone to get an insulting comment in his/her envelope.

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I also model what good specific compliments sound like – “I like how you always say ‘good morning’ and look happy” or “You have the best outfits!” I do this so someone does not end up with an envelope full of “You are nice” comment slips. (This makes a good “showing details” lesson for English teachers.) My whole talk takes 7 – 8 minutes. I also privately let people know that if they really can’t think of a compliment for a particular person’s envelope, they can pass it on.

The activity’s ‘Nuts & Bolts’:

1. I give each student an envelope and have him/her put his/her name on the front of it.
2. I also put a handful of slips of paper on each student’s desk and explain that they will be writing one anonymous compliment on each slip of paper and sticking it into the appropriate envelope.
3. I also explain how the envelopes will be passed from person to person so they circulate throughout the whole classroom.
4. Estimating how much time is left in the period, I let them know how much time they have to write each comment before they need to pass the envelope on to the next person.
5. I stand ready to replenish the supplies of paper slips and to answer any questions that may come up.
6. I also every now and then call out reminders about what types of things people get compliments on – how their hair looks or if they seem to be in a good mood most of the time, if they have interesting hobbies or nice looking eyes or say funny things in class, etc.
7. I make sure to put my own envelope into the activity too. It’s fun to have my own compliments to look at.
8. Because the activity is anonymous, I do check some of the comments after class to make sure sensitive or kids who stand out for some reason do not get any hurtful comments. This checking may take a few days so I usually do the activity several days before I hand all the compliment-stuffed envelopes out.

It may take a bit of doing, but this one activity has been a great community builder in my classroom and given some shy kids a real thrill when they see how well they are regarded by others.