



MAY 22, 2020

FOUNDATIONAL LITERACY IV FOR SELF-CONFIDENCE

GRADES 9 THROUGH 12 AND BEYOND

JEROME TAYLOR, PHD & KANIQUA ROBINSON, PHD
UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH AND CENTER FOR FAMILY EXCELLENCE



The Cultural Project: for Grades 9-12

Promoting Axiological and Spiritual Integrations to Increase Academic Achievement

Self-Confidence (Lesson Plan for Teachers of the Visual and Performing Arts)¹

1. **Positive Expression:** Explores, probes, investigates; attentive, enthusiastic, and engaged when new challenges are introduced; eager to explore new places, meet new people, or examine new ideas, daring in constructive ways; excited and upbeat about living.
2. **Negative Expression:** Is inattentive, disengaged, apathetic, unenthusiastic, shy, reclusive, doubtful, uninterested, unsure of oneself, inexpressive; unwilling to try things new and different; unmotivated; daring in destructive ways.

Demonstration SC—T1: Pedagogical Strategies and Curriculum Materials to Deepen Students’ Valuation of Self-Confidence²

Four Pedagogical Strategies	Poetry	Proverb	Icon
<p>1. Exposure: <i>Instructional materials are presented and discussed to (a) assure deep understanding of the value Self-Confident and (b) explore implications of this value for their school, peers, neighborhoods and themselves.</i></p>	<p>On the last page, we have included one poem by Nikki Giovanni and a second by Richard Wright.</p> <p>In Nikki Giovanni’s Paula the cat, students discuss Paula’s view of herself as an undistinguished feline—neither thin nor fat. But something happens inside Paula: <i>...now I’ve the urge for my spirit to surge and I shall go off to sea.</i> Students</p>	<p><i>No matter how full the river is, it wants to swell further</i> (Congolese proverb). This proverb is introduced and discussed in terms of its intended meaning and implications for individuals and community. Discuss the main implication of this proverb: No matter how much you know, it’s never enough! Why would our African ancestors say such a thing? What would you say about a people able to make such an important</p>	<p>The Nkyinkyin symbol (pronounced n-chin-chin) as reproduced on the last page represents one’s ability to adapt to change. Two principles are critical:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Awareness that things have changed, 2. Willingness to try different ways to manage change. <p>The Nkyinkyin symbol comes from</p>

¹ We have hypothesized that high levels of Self-Confidence orientation will have positive consequences for spiritual integration, promoting a sense of hope, vital connection to community, and openness to self-discovery and transformation. Also we have hypothesized that high levels of Self-Confidence enhance aspects of cultural integration—intellectual competence, emotional resilience, adaptive athleticism, and artistic sensibility. The promotion of spiritual and cultural integrations we expect will have salutary implications for academic readiness and excellence across the basic disciplines of reading, math, and science. Intended for use with classroom teachers or teacher surrogates in after-school or summer enrichment programs for middle and secondary school children. With adaptation these materials can also be used with elementary school children.

² The goal of this lesson is to present a culturally grounded case that intellectual competence is indigenous to our African experience. As such it is intended to counter the common perception among black students that curiosity about academic disciplines is a ‘white thing’—a perception that is now known to undermine academic achievement and contribute to the achievement gap between black and white students. Previously we have referred to this combination of pedagogical strategies and curriculum materials as ‘cultural imaging’ (Taylor, 2002). Our overall plan is to integrate this initiative with complementary strategies that accelerate student achievement in reading, math, and science. Our overall plan is to integrate this initiative with complementary strategies that accelerate student achievement in reading, math, and science. This is a Level IV application of the Committee of Common Causation. Hosted by the Department of Africana Studies, this is an interdisciplinary and interinstitutional organization committed to (a) understanding the role of spiritual, cultural, and axiological factors in mental, social, and physical health outcomes and disparities and (b) designing and evaluating program and policy models that reduce mental, physical, and social health disparities by promoting culturally, spiritually, and axiologically integrative ways of being.

The Cultural Project: for Grades 9-12

Promoting Axiological and Spiritual Integrations to Increase Academic Achievement

Four Pedagogical Strategies	Poetry	Proverb	Icon
	<p>contribute and discuss ideas on why and how Paula got ‘the urge’. Was it something inside Paula? Something or someone outside Paula? And what does Paula mean by going ‘off to sea’? Then students should then be ready to discuss questions of importance for themselves and their communities: What’s your urge in life? Where are you going ‘off to sea’? What about people in your community: What’s the urge of neighbors in your community? Where are they going ‘off to sea’? Or are they?</p> <p>Richard Wright’s poem identifies what’s required once one embraces the ‘urge’ to go ‘go off to sea’:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Dedicated attention to detail, 2. Openness to seeing things familiar in new ways, and 3. Expectation that looking hard enough long enough leads to deep discovery. <p>In verses 1, 2, 3, and 5 of Wright’s Haiku, have students identify the poet’s attention to detail. In verses 2 and 3 invite students to identify the poet’s openness to seeing things familiar in new ways. And in verse 4 explore the</p>	<p>statement from the observation of rivers?</p> <p>Let’s talk about some ‘rivers’ in your life. Is there a math ‘river’? A reading ‘river’? And what does this proverb say about your math ‘river’? Your reading ‘river’? Will filling these ‘rivers’ make it possible for you to go to college? To get a good job? Who do you know lives like they believe this proverb <i>No matter how full the river is, it wants to swell further</i>? ‘What are they like? Do you know anyone whose lives don’t reflect this proverb? What are they like? How would you describe the difference between those who live this proverb and those who do not?</p> <p>If students in your school believed this proverb <i>No matter how full the river is, it wants to swell further</i>, what would your school be like? What your neighborhood be like if everyone lived this proverb? If you yourself lived this proverb, what would your future be like?</p> <p>In what ways might living this proverb improve your neighborhood or community?</p> <p>Who agrees with Robbie’s answer? Why? Is there someone in your family you’d like</p>	<p>Ghana. Who knows where Ghana is? What connection do we have with Ghana?</p> <p>You will notice from the Nkyinkyin symbol that twists and turns characterize the natural flow of life. Knowing when it twists (awareness) and adapting to these twists (managing) are important in successful living.</p> <p>Help students identify twists in math instruction. Then in reading instruction. Then help them examine various ways of managing these twists—being alert during class instruction, completing seat and homework assignments, raising questions, consulting with teachers, going to the public library, seeking tutoring, and so on.</p> <p>How can the principle of Nkyinkyin help you when you encounter a twist in a math lesson or assignment? In a reading lesson or assignment?</p> <p>Who agrees with Robbie’s answer? Why? Let me see the hands of students who would like to wear the Nkyinkyin symbol?. Is there someone in your family you’d like to share this symbol with? Will your promise to do it this week? Discuss it with this person this week?</p>

The Cultural Project: for Grades 9-12

Promoting Axiological and Spiritual Integrations to Increase Academic Achievement

Four Pedagogical Strategies	Poetry	Proverb	Icon
	<p>last implication—expectation that looking hard enough long enough leads to deep discovery. Here students will first need to understand the word <i>reactionary</i> as someone or in this instance something resistant to change. Then they need to understand the many ways the pumpkin was used in traditions observed by American Indians, American Colonists, and Irish Immigrants. Across these traditions the pumpkin stayed the same! This, then, is the pay-off—deep discovery follows deep reflection.</p> <p>Lead students in a discussion of how principal 1 promotes achievement in reading. How does it promote achievement in math?</p> <p>Lead students in discussion of how principal 2 promotes achievement in reading. How does it promote achievement in math?</p> <p>Lead students in discussion of how principal 3 promotes achievement in reading. How does it promote achievement in math?</p> <p>If students in your school understood the meaning of principles 1-3? What</p>	<p>to share this proverb with? Will you promise do it this week? Will you discuss it with this person this week? Will you promise to share with the group how this discussion went?</p>	<p>Will you promise to share how it went next week? Will you promise to share with the group how this discussion went?</p>

The Cultural Project: for Grades 9-12

Promoting Axiological and Spiritual Integrations to Increase Academic Achievement

Four Pedagogical Strategies	Poetry	Proverb	Icon
	<p>might your school be like? If people where you know lived principles 1-3, what would they be like? If you lived principles 1-3, what might life be like for you?</p> <p>Who agrees with Robbie’s answer? Why? Is there someone in your family you’d like to share this poem with?</p>		
<p>2. Engagement: <i>Helping students to (a) lay personal claim to the value Self-Persistence through creative thinking and production and (b) lay communal claim to the value learning orientation by interviewing neighbors, relatives, or acquaintances whose lives exemplify Self-Confidence?</i></p>	<p>Students conceptualize, design, and complete three products—visual, creative, and performance—that express their interpretation of Self-Confidence. We encourage the writing of skits, poems, raps, short story, creative drama, or traditional or contemporary dance performances—each target to express their understanding of the value Self-Confidence.</p> <p>Students describe the content of each other’s production, keep a journal of each student’s production (name and description), and work on creating descriptive props for the display of the group’s productions.</p> <p>Students identify persons in their community who exemplify high levels of Self-Confidence. These interviews</p>	<p>Proverb is integrated into each production. In particular students are challenged to probe relationships between their chosen productions and themes reflected in the poem.</p>	<p>Nkyinkyin symbol is integrated into each production. This can serve as background or foreground, but students are challenged to integrate this symbol in their chosen productions.</p>

The Cultural Project: for Grades 9-12

Promoting Axiological and Spiritual Integrations to Increase Academic Achievement

Four Pedagogical Strategies	Poetry	Proverb	Icon
	<p>are conducted by students who collectively identify interesting questions to ask. Their reports are written and shared with classmates and classroom teacher or teacher surrogate.</p>		
<p>3. Embracement: <i>Since teaching is the best way of learning and learning is best supported by encouragement from significant others, students are helped to (a) create an art gallery of their productions that illustrate the value Self-Confidence and (b) train students as docents to introduce the value Self-Confidence in their productions to significant others who are invited to tour their art gallery, and (c) take their art gallery on tour to experience broad communal support of the value Self-Confidence by people of the neighborhood as well as by people from our historical past.</i></p>	<p>Students prepare an art gallery display of their productions with props.</p> <p>Student docents will host the event to which parents, relatives, neighbors, and community leaders are invited. Students develop the script of what to direct attention to, how to introduce the materials in ways that pique the interest and understanding of guests, and how to interpret the production as an expression of Self-Confidence. They also are encouraged to include interview materials with pictures of local exemplars of Self-Confidence.</p> <p>A roster of persons touring the gallery will be maintained. Following the exhibition, names of all persons attending will be made available to all participating students who will be supplied with magnets that used to post this list of community supporters on their refrigerator door.</p> <p>Finally, students request cooperation of</p>	<p>Proverb is integrated part of each production or it may be used as a separate introductory display which is introduced and explained by student docents.</p>	<p>Nkyinkyin symbol is an integral part of each production or it may be featured as a separate introductory display that is introduced by student docents who point out its significance in relation to each production.</p>

The Cultural Project: for Grades 9-12

Promoting Axiological and Spiritual Integrations to Increase Academic Achievement

Four Pedagogical Strategies	Poetry	Proverb	Icon
	<p>area churches and human service organizations who are asked to sponsor display of their artistic productions for their constituencies. Student docents are available for hosting; previously developed introductory and interpretive scripts will be used here as well.</p>		
<p>4. Embodiment: <i>Moving students from seeing to being— from seeing Self-Confidence in new light to being exemplary role models of Self-Confidence at school, at home, and with peers.</i></p>	<p>We identify the family, school, and peers as primary socializing environments for students. The purpose of embodiment is to help students imagine how Self-Confidence can be implemented in each of these environments. Our intent here is to move students from passive to active participants in these socializing environments and to enable and encourage student initiative and leadership in these environments.</p> <p>At home, what behaviors can you change to show more Self-Confidence?</p> <p>At school, what behaviors can you change to show more Self-Confidence?</p> <p>With friends, what behaviors can you change to inspire them to show more Self-Confidence?</p>		<p>Students are asked here and subsequently how they plan to integrate the Nkyinkyin symbol into their productions.</p>

The Cultural Project: for Grades 9-12

Promoting Axiological and Spiritual Integrations to Increase Academic Achievement

Four Pedagogical Strategies	Poetry	Proverb	Icon
	<p>Then we attempt to induce self-monitoring behaviors: How will you know whether your Self-Confidence orientation is improving or getting worse at home? At school? With friends? What will you look for?</p> <p>We attempt to stimulate and consolidate intrinsic motivation to improve behaviors associated with Self-Confidence: What poetry might help to encourage you? What cultural sayings? What symbols? Which of your artistic productions?</p> <p>Finally, we equip students with methods that may prove useful should they run into problems implementing their intentions to promote Self-Confidence with family, at school, or with peers. This system of identifying the problem, defining the problem, exploring alternative solutions to the problem, taking action, and evaluating results will be taught through role playing activities.</p>		

The Cultural Project: for Grades 9-12

Promoting Axiological and Spiritual Integrations to Increase Academic Achievement

Nikki Giovanni

I'm Paula the cat
Not thin nor fat
As happy as house cats can be

But now I've the urge
For my spirit to surge
And I shall go off
To sea.

Richard Wright

In the melting snow
that is tracked into the house
is one green grass blade.

As the popcorn man
Is closing up his wagon
Snow begins to fall.

“ say Mr. Beetle,
are you taking a detour
crawling on my knee?”

If pumpkins could talk,
I am sure they would be
Reactionary!

It took five seconds
For the barefoot boy's wet tracks
To dry on the porch.



Nkyinkyim

(pronounced n-chin-chin)

The Adinkra Symbol
Representing Adaptability