Lesson 1.16      Cultivating Curiosity and Grit

Objectives: Students will be able to:

1) Describe personal qualities that help them to learn.
2) Identify the role and importance of obstacles and setbacks in learning.
3) Define and provide examples of perseverance and grit.
4) Assess their current level of grit and describe how they can increase it.

Materials Needed: Handout 1.16.1 and 1.16.2  Speakers for video

Bell Ringer

Read the quote and answer the question:

Everyone is born with an intense drive to learn. Babies don't worry about making mistakes or humiliating themselves. They walk, they fall, they get up. They just barge forward.

— Carol Dweck, Ph.D.

Now that you are older, are obstacles and setbacks you face more of a good thing or more of a bad thing? Explain your answer.

Introduce Lesson and Essential Questions

Today we will explore the importance of curiosity, perseverance, and grit to becoming self-motivated and resilient learners.

Essential Questions

- What role do obstacles and setbacks play in learning?
- What type of perseverance helps us to focus on and reach long-term goals?
- How can we develop perseverance and grit?

Philosophical Chairs

To answer the Bell Ringer: Are obstacles and setbacks more of a good thing or more of a bad thing? we are going to break into two groups for Philosophical Chairs, a respectful way to debate an issue.

Video: Life From a Baby’s Perspective

Show video: “Life From a Baby’s Perspective” (1:47.)

- What qualities do babies display in exploring their environment or learning to walk? (Curiosity, perseverance, undeterred by obstacles or setbacks)
- In what ways do you, or someone you know, display these same qualities?
- How can we regain these qualities if we have lost them? (Use a growth mindset, be more curious, cultivate enthusiasm for learning new things, practice perseverance and overcoming obstacles to learning, keep our goals in mind)
Activity: Count the Squares

[Ask students to find as many perfect squares as they can on their own (on Handout 1.16.1). Then, as a class, identify all 30 squares. (Look for four sets of 3 x 3 squares and nine sets of 2 x 2 squares.)]

- How many of you found 16 or more squares? 20 or more? 24 or more? 28 or more? All 30 squares?
- Why did some find a few squares while others found all 30?
  (Tried harder, didn’t quit, used a growth mindset)
- For those who tried the longest, what kept you going?

Perseverance and Grit

Perseverance means to keep trying (persist) at a task. Grit is a super kind of perseverance. Grit refers to having a passionate commitment to a long-term goal and showing unswerving dedication to achieving it — whether by becoming accomplished at a musical instrument or getting into college.

To develop perseverance and grit:
1. Cultivate curiosity and a deep interest in what you are learning.
2. Increase your effort, don’t blame your ability.
3. Learn from failure, and apply its lessons.
4. Talk to yourself to guide your learning.
5. Learn from role models and mentors.

On the handout, rate yourself on how often you do each of the above. Think about what you need to improve upon to become “gritty”.

Video: Learning to Dance in a Year

[Show video about a young woman who taught herself to dance (3:54). Discuss it within the context of perseverance and grit.]

Wrap Up

[Review the Essential Questions.]

- What role do obstacles and setbacks play in learning?
- What type of perseverance helps us to focus and reach long-term goals?
- How can we develop perseverance and grit?

Reflection/Application

Have students do a perseverance walk by interviewing someone who overcame obstacles to achieve something positive. Answer the questions on Handout 1.16.1 in paragraph form (approx. 750 words).

- What did they want to achieve (their goal) and why?
- What were the obstacles they faced and overcame?
- What kept them going and on track?
- How and when did they reach their goal? How did it feel?
- What have been the benefits of reaching their goal?