

Rainbow Beads

A Study of Capacities of Leadership

Objective:

Students will discuss the characteristics of positive leadership demonstrated inside academic and elective classrooms, on athletic fields and in the real world. Students will create a bracelet to remind them of the importance of those characteristics, what inhibits them, and what evokes them.

Materials needed:

- Snack size closeable plastic bags
- UVA beads (8 colors) amazon.com (one of the beads begins as a pink bead and then changes to a orange bead with UV light)
- Elastic banding or other bracelet material
- 11 x 13 Construction paper (red, yellow, purple, pink, blue, green, 2 oranges)
- Access to UVA light...sunshine ☺

Prior Set-up:

- Set up baggies in color coded sets with 25 beads and one 10 inch piece of elastic banding. Mark bag with a system to identify colors (R for red, PK for Pink...etc)
- Set up construction paper by writing the coordinating word in the center of the paper, large enough for participants to read, but small enough to allow for webbing of answers around it.
 - Red: Compassion/Caring
 - Yellow: Evaluation
 - Purple: Interpersonal Skills
 - Pink: Communication
 - Blue: Team Building
 - Green: Time Management
 - Orange: Discipline/Vision
 - Orange (for the pink to orange beads): Skills Building
- When setting up the workshop area place construction paper stations around the room with enough coordinating bags to cover the number of participants. Stations should be equal in numbers.

Workshop:

- Invite participants to take a seat at each station. You should group students carefully to avoid students choosing groups with friends. If you have a mixed grade level group with a wide variety of grades, you may want to have students line up based on height or age and count off 1 - 8 to allow for random and equal placement.

To maximize the potential for input and discussion, you should not have more than 5 students at each station.

- If your workshop participation is MORE THAN 40 students, then create TWO stations for each characteristic and break up groups into smaller groups.
- Begin by introducing each of the 8 topics as characteristics of positive and meaningful leadership. Ask students in their groups to discuss their assigned characteristic to determine where or how they might see that characteristic demonstrated in an academic classroom, elective classroom, athletic field, or real world. Give students 7 minutes to brainstorm with their peers, using the space on the construction paper to web their responses.
- Circulate around the room while students are discussing responses. If they are struggling, encourage them by offering suggestions such as, “how might you see caring and compassion during lunch?” or “what would you do in a math classroom to demonstrate skill building?” or “how does participating in band/student government/athletic teams encourage team building?” Use these opportunities to ensure that student groups are looking at all areas of their educational experience when answering the question.
- Next ask students to choose three of their academic classroom responses and three of their extra-curricular or elective classroom responses that best exemplifies their characteristic.
- Have students share out their responses in a systematic manner. Invite feedback or discussion if there are responses that students may not agree with, or if there are modifications others wish to offer.

Some sample lists follow:

- Effective Communication
 - Good public speaking skills
 - Good understanding of verbal and nonverbal communication
 - Good listening skills
 - Comfortable speaking to people in different positions of authority as well as peers
- Vision
 - Recognize the big picture as well as the small details
 - Ability to share vision with others

- Ability to move others towards that big picture patiently
 - Ability to modify as necessary to ensure the success of the big picture
- Team-building
 - Ability to lead others to a common goal
 - Ability to motivate
 - Ability to deal with conflicts within a group setting
 - Ability to delegate
 - Ability to evaluate and use evaluation as a tool for improvement
- Compassion and Caring
 - Ability to empathize with others in different situations
 - Desire to find projects that serve the community
 - Tangible reaching out to different social groups for participation
- Time-Management
 - Ability to set priorities
 - Ability to say no
 - Scheduling
 - Organization

- Interpersonal Relationships
 - Ability to manage conflict
 - Ability to share responsibilities
 - Positive character traits: trustworthy, honest, thoughtful, considerate, caring, ethical, integrity
- Evaluation
 - Willing to listen to constructive criticism
 - Offering effective criticism and solutions
 - Use of evaluative data in planning new projects or activities
- Skill-Building
 - Willing to develop skills through a variety of methods
 - Attendance at leadership workshops and events
 - Through videos or books
 - Taking opportunities to lead certain activities which provide true leadership experience.
 - Willing to share skills with others

- Willing to teach workshops
 - Willing to lead by example
 - Willing to offer CONSTRUCTIVE criticism
- Tell students that they will be creating a bracelet to demonstrate their desire to exhibit those characteristics of leadership as well as their interest in seeking each of these characteristics in their everyday lives. Draw attention to the participants' baggies of beads, identifying them as beads that represent that characteristic...obviously the same color as the construction paper. Participants should be confused as all of the beads are white, except for the Skills Building station with the orange construction paper and the pink beads.
- As participant confusion continues, direct participants outside ("let's go, we are heading on a brief field trip!")
- As participants expose their bags of beads to sunlight they will begin to notice the beads changing color. Ask them what they think is going on. Many participants will guess that it is UV light that is changing the beads. Validate their responses.
- Quiet the group and pose this question, allowing for some wait time and requiring hands up to answer the question: "UV brought out the color in those beads representing those leadership characteristics we just discussed. What, in your world, brings out those characteristics in you?"
 - Participants should respond with a variety of answers, to include:
 - A good attitude
 - A good advisor
 - The right peers or friends
 - Opportunities
 - Involvement in clubs/activities/athletics
 - A good coach
 - Family
 - Attending conferences or workshops
 - Having responsibilities
 - Other people having high expectations
 - An advisor who notices that you have some leadership talents
 - A particular project that is important to you
 - A friend that encourages you to participate in leadership activities
 - Coaches and team-mates who encourage you to step up as a leader
 - A parent who encourages you to get involved and supports your involvement through services such as rides, meals etc.

- Ask participants to exchange beads so that they can build their bracelet so that it is reflective of all the characteristics of positive and meaningful leadership. (Encourage participants to take all but a few of their beads out of their bag to exchange, placing their new beads into the bag as they move through the crowd.)
- Take participants back into the workshop room
- Draw attention to the fact that the beads are now turning back to their original color...and most bracelet beads will be white, though every person should have about 3 pink beads. Ask participants to think about things that inhibit the acquisition of these characteristics in their lives.
 - Participants should respond with a variety of answers, to include:
 - A bad attitude
 - A bad advisor or one that is indifferent
 - Hanging around a bad group of friends
 - Uninterested friends or friends who make fun of you for being involved
 - No family support
 - No opportunities
 - No involvement in clubs or activities
 - Not going to workshops or conferences
 - Not having responsibilities
 - Low expectations
 - Lack of ambition
- Participants will be concerned about building their bracelets without knowing what the colors are for each of the beads.
 - While students are putting together bracelets draw attention to our shared desire to CONTROL situations.
 - Relate our need for control to putting together the bracelet with the colored beads in a CHOSEN sequence. Relate this need for control to real world situations...etc.
 - Discuss the fact that when the bracelet is done, it will still have all 8 colors of beads represented in a colorful array on an elastic band that we can wear to remind us of these characteristics of positive and meaningful leadership.
 - OPTION: You can take your group of participants back outside. Have them look at their bracelets...recognizing how beautiful they are EVEN THOUGH they couldn't control how the beads went on the band. Give them 30 seconds of silence...and ask them to look at their bracelets again.... "Was it the end of

the world that you DIDN'T have control?" "Did it truly negatively impact your world?" "Is it okay to give up control sometimes?" etc.

Closure: While students are outside ask them to look around at the bracelets on the other students in their workshop. How are they alike? How are they different? Remind them that they all have the capacities of leadership in some way or another.

If they were all great communicators and none of them were great managers of time, they would all know what's going on but would never actually make the time to do it.

If they were all great at team-building and none of them cared about skill building, they would all work WELL together on planning projects, but their projects and their planning would be outdated because they didn't exercise their ability to continually update their skills through leadership development.

This is why it is important that all kinds of people are involved in the various projects and facets of the Student Government Association....so that we can share and enhance our strengths and improve our weaknesses.