

Stress Tree Lesson Plan

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Intention

To have the students talk about what stress is, how they were taught to handle stress, and how they currently relieve stress.

Population

ESOL 3 and 4. Can be adapted to other levels.

Materials

- Fabric, such as pieces of velvet and cotton to make the clouds, leaves, roots and branches.
- Real twigs, pine branches, etc. easily found around the site (This was the students' idea.)
- Cardboard-to make the big piece of trunk of the tree.
- Construction paper and fabric to make the leaves.
- [Stress tree template](#)

Preparation

- Discuss how a tree grows and changes and how that can relate to how we grow and change as we learn about new ideas.
- Review vocabulary related to trees and stress

Implementation

- Pass out the stress tree template
- Have students fill out own stress tree. Can work in pairs.
- Create a classroom stress tree that represents a composite of students' responses

Follow Up

Have students continue to add to the tree as different ideas and strategies emerge throughout the cycle.

Classroom Snapshot

It was interesting to see people's different point of views on stress. Some commented how in their country, taking some "down time" and relaxing wasn't something that was seen as a "good thing" because as a woman, you have to always do house chores and be busy. We also talked about how our families dealt with stress and how today we have learned to take on either the same approach or new approaches. Talking about it was relieving to the students; they enjoyed sharing and laughing as we talked. We then started the actual art activity and as we started it was interesting to see how the women were able to gather around and work

together in figuring out how to place different parts of the tree on the poster board. We even had one student that stood out by showing some of her leadership abilities; she sort of took charge in directing and helping the other students illustrate the tree. She gave suggestions and also helped others who needed help with cutting and pasting. The students were smiling and laughing as they worked together. They really enjoyed their art activity and realized that although we all have similar stressors; we are all learning new ways to cope with it more efficiently.

What I Would Plan Differently

When we got to the point where we were going to start making the tree on the poster board, we went around two at a time to post things on the tree. This made things structured but not very fun. Some students were slower than others, and we saw some people starting to feel impatient waiting for their turn. We decided to just let people come up as they were ready and also allow them to do anything extra on the tree. This approach made the activity much more involved and invited those who wanted to show some leadership and creativity to do so. It also worked well because we only have a group of 10 students so it was manageable.

