

Taking Mitigated Risks: Facilitator



Facilitation Protocol

Standards

Being Proactive;

-> namely, single-handedly initiating activities and assuming accountability for them.

SDG Connection: 4

Format

This lesson is designed for small group, and/or full class discussions to occur over 1 50-minute session.

Materials

- No additional materials needed

Purpose

Taking risks is an important part of human existence. While we could live our lives in relative safety, to never take a risk means we miss out on many thrilling opportunities that could be defining experiences of our life. That said, we can mitigate those risks to ensure we are safe and proactive in our tasks. In this lesson, we will explore what it means to take risks and how to mitigate them.

Introduction

Many people take huge risks in search of a thrill. For example, mountain climbers plan exhausting multi-week trips to scale Mount Everest, putting their lives at risk; cliff divers find huge jumping sites to freefall to the water below; skydivers subject themselves to falling thousands of feet from the air.

Why do you think it is that people do these things?

People find enjoyment in pushing what they're capable of.

Of course, risk-taking isn't limited to extreme physical activities. Taking a risk is *anything* that's outside of your comfort zone. For example, starting a business, playing an instrument for a crowd, or trying a new food would all be risks. What are other examples of risks?

E.g. Public speaking, introducing yourself to a new friend group, joining an afterschool club, creating a new dish/starting to cook

Consider This

Almost no risk is worth taking without a contingency plan. A risk is quite literally an *exposure to danger*, whether that be physical, emotional, or social: so we should take every step necessary to **mitigate** risks.

Mitigation refers to minimizing the potential for problems in the future. Mitigation takes many forms, including

- practicing in safe locations
- having the proper equipment and tools to be successful,
- working with others to ensure our success, and
- making good assessments about our minute by minute decision-making.

For example, what would a mitigated risk look like in the following scenarios? How would you prepare?

Preparing to climb Mount Aconcagua in Argentina.

E.g. taking practice lessons on climbing, starting with safer mountains, performing proper exercises and ensuring good form, going with a climbing buddy

Performing a piano suite at a local music recital.

E.g. taking private lessons, practicing the piece over and over, practicing with a smaller group of people first

Introducing yourself to a new person at school.

E.g. taking a friend with you, getting in the mindset that everyone is typically shy at first, practicing what one might say

Dive Deeper

Inherent to mitigated risk taking is the idea of a **growth mindset**. A growth mindset is a way to look at the underlying beliefs people have about their abilities and intelligence.

In the 1980s, researcher Carol Dweck focused on how children deal with failure. She found that some students worked through challenges while others quickly gave up. After looking at thousands of examples, she defined two types of mindsets toward continuing risks: a **fixed mindset** and a **growth mindset**.

A **fixed mindset** means that people believe that there's no opportunity for becoming better at something. For example, not attempting more difficult math problems because they don't see themselves as a "math person."

A **growth mindset** means that people believe there's opportunities to grow through failure, finding ways to build upon skills and slowly become better at something. For example,

recognizing that playing a new instrument is incredibly difficult, but practicing a little bit each day over years to become better.

These studies were expanded upon in the decades since, with researchers finding that people can be shifted from a fixed mindset to a growth mindset – and those who adopted growth mindsets ended up being more more motivated and successful. Note that not *every* situation has a growth mindset model. Sometimes this process is misused to encourage people to do things that do not work with a growth mindset model – leading to judgment and a loss of self-worth.

In thinking about the ripple effect, why do you think people were more successful with a growth mindset?

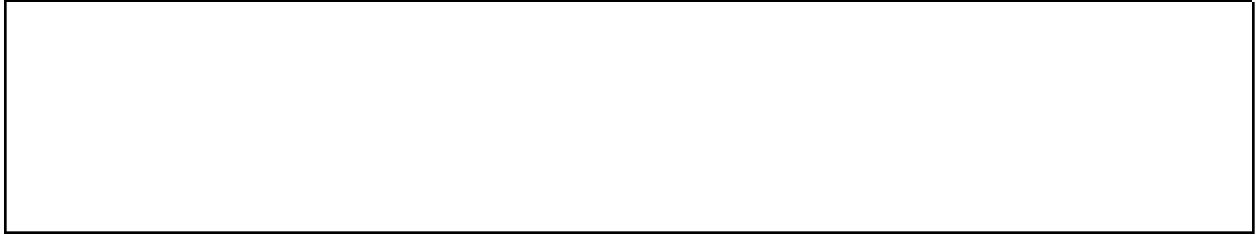
There's a lot of power in the way we think about ourselves, and those that believe they can succeed are more likely to push themselves further

Consider a risk that you may want to take. For example, is there a certain activity, challenge, skill, or concept that you wish you understood more about, either personally or academically? What is it?

To mitigate our risks, we want to think about ways we can make learning this idea or tackling this challenge more feasible. What can we do to mitigate our risks?

Along the way, we want to remember that we have a growth mindset. What can we do to remind ourselves that we can continually improve? What steps can we take to ensure we keep at it?

Finally, let's consider what we will have accomplished when we're successful. How long do we think it'll take? How will we feel when we succeed?

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for a user to write their response to the preceding questions.

Reflect

How would you rate your understanding of this concept? <i>Place an "X" in the corresponding box below.</i>				
				

How has your understanding of this concept changed as a result of this lesson?

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Which individual or community actions could this activity inspire?

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Why is it important to take risks in life? How can we mitigate these risks so they're not dangerous?

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Take it Further

Take Action Develop a plan to tackle a personal or community challenge. What steps will you need to take in order to get there? What actions can you take within a certain number of weeks to make a difference? Log your progress and take on the challenge!	Community Connection Create a list of mitigated risk activities that would occur in your community, such as public speaking, creating a public mural, and exploring a park. Consider your comfort level and preparedness for these tasks, then sign up for a wide variety of activities that challenge your safety level (within reason). Make a log of everything that you complete.	Peer Assistance Coaching others through their tasks is just as important as trying tasks yourself. Identify a challenge that someone in your peer group wants to attempt that you have knowledge on. Utilize your skill set to develop a plan and coach your peer through the process.
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Media

<u>Choose Possibility</u> (Book) "Our careers are a series of choices, some of which feel scary and make-or-break. What do you do when you become paralyzed by fear and unable to act? And what if you do make a move that doesn't work out the way you'd hoped? How do you continue to take risks to find success, not once but many times?"	<u>Grit</u> (Book) "In this instant New York Times bestseller, pioneering psychologist Angela Duckworth shows anyone striving to succeed—be it parents, students, educators, athletes, or business people—that the secret to outstanding achievement is not talent but a special blend of passion and persistence she calls "grit.""	<u>Growth Mindset Podcast</u> (Podcast) "A growth mindset is the belief that you can do anything if you work for it. Your host Sam Harris finds remarkable individuals doing extraordinary things and breaks the processes down to show how anyone can achieve anything."
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Extend

Language Arts	Mathematics
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Have students create risk-taking plans in regard to academic subject areas. How can students take a risk within their classes? What would this look like in an English class?	One of the greatest risks one can take in their career is starting their own business. For many reasons, this is a complex task, but certainly has added complexity due to financial information. Calculate how much it would cost to start businesses and take on creative endeavors.
Science Every scientific experiment is inherently risky, but we use our knowledge of science to ensure that we don't place people in danger. Design a lab experiment where students are free to use multiple (and obviously safe, chemicals) to design their own labs.	Social Studies Throughout history, leaders, inventors, activists, scientists, and more have been jailed or worse, killed, for their work, often knowing the risks that went into it. Describe why various people are willing to take the ultimate sacrifice to do the work they believe in.
Art Expressing yourself through art is a risky endeavor — as all creativity is — and this is especially the case in arts where you express yourself through dance and theater. Challenge students to compete in friendly dance competitions or theatrical performances.	Physical Education Mitigating risk is an inherent part of any physical activity. Provide students an in-depth analysis of why stretching and other warm-up activities are paramount to healthy exercise, giving students the tools to mitigate their risk of injury.