

CLASSROOM SCULPTURE



MAIN FEATURES

Reinforced skills (TASC Cluster)	FOCUS ON SOLUTION
Suitable for	Teachers, Students
Difficulty level	Intermediate
Individual setting	No
Group setting	Yes
Minimum number of participants	6 or more
Average time length	60 minutes
Special Equipment	No
Online	No

1. DESCRIPTION

Classroom sculpture is a practice aimed at giving a spatial representation of the inner image that individuals (teachers or students) have about themselves and their relationships within the classroom environment. This practice, guided by a facilitator, helps an individual (the sculptor) to express how he/she experiences classroom relationships and tensions or a given conflictual situation; it allows to make an internal process (experience, feeling, perception) visible and to show options for new awareness and solutions.

2. AIM / BENEFITS

This practice uses body postures and spatiality as a narrative of the relational models of communication, power, closeness and distance. The person, who makes a personal interpretation of an event that happened in the classroom (or of the perceived classroom climate), becomes the artist (sculptor), and asks other members of the group to assume a specific body position and expression that reflects the perception of the sculptor about the classroom. This allows the individual to remove himself from the scene generated by sculpture to get a more objective view and opens the possibility to new awareness and solutions.

3. COMPETENCIES CLUSTER(s) related

CLUSTER NR 5 FOCUS on SOLUTION

Why

Solution-focused approach does not focus on understanding more and more about the problem as a path to change but rather focuses on understanding more and more about how things will be better once the problem is solved (Smock, McCollum, & Stevenson, 2010). With this practice entailing debriefing conversations with the whole group, each participant has an opportunity to highlight and reinforce solution-focused principles and practices.

4. HOW TO DO THE PRACTICE

Step 1 / Preparation

Classroom Sculpture aims at the visual representation of how an individual experiences his/her own classroom, general climate or some specific conflictual situations. A teacher (or a student) plays the role of facilitator which identifies the person taking on the role of "sculptor" (e.g., a teacher or student willing to face a conflictual situation). In the case of a group with more than 6 members, the facilitator divides the participants into two smaller groups so that the sculptor can get feedback from one group whose members observe the sculpture of the classroom and relate through their own experiences or emotions. The described practice can be played, with some adaptation, in different contexts such as a group of teachers or a group of students.

Step 2 / Explanation

The facilitator explains what a sculpture classroom is and how a sculptor who uses clay is able to mold clay into any shape he wishes. Clay does not take shapes by itself unless manipulated by the sculptor to do it. Therefore, group members are told they should not move or place themselves differently from how they were positioned by the sculptor who could be a teacher or a student with a problem to solve within the classroom environment.

Step 3 / Warming up

To show the group what can be done, the facilitator can give some examples for warming up before starting the real exercise. Group members are asked to represent classroom members with the facilitator giving them a position or pose that performs an action or emotion expressing something about a real or symbolic state. For example, there might be someone on the floor, someone positioned away from the other members, someone walking, someone closer to the other members, and so on.

Step 4 / Sculpt and interpret

At this point the sculptor is invited to compose his/her own sculpture; once finished the sculptor can also place himself in the scene in order to represent the way he/she sees himself in relationship with the classroom. After the sculptural action, the members of the group who did not take part in the sculpture are invited to share their interpretation of what the sculptor has done. The sculptor shares with them the possible intentions he/she had to generate that representation. It is a non-directive activity to allow for creativity as much as possible. It is necessary to allow time to elaborate and discuss what is observed on the sculpture.

Final step / Focus on solutions

After sharing the interpretations on the sculpture, the facilitator tells the sculptor (teacher or student) to start the last step focused on a possible solution. The facilitator can say something like: "sculpt the classroom again thinking about how it would be if in the next two years things were going really well for this classroom". This part of the activity helps to generate the future, the solution preferred by the sculptor. This is what arouses action and instills confidence in a particularly vulnerable situation or "special" moment of teaching or learning experience in relation to a certain classroom climate state. The preferred future sculpture directs attention away from defense and blame and, instead, orienting it towards action and the construction of solutions.

5. DEBRIEF

At the end of the exercise it would be helpful to consider what might happen by putting in relationship the sculpture with the real life dynamics in the classroom. Finally, it would be interesting to pay attention to the building of a solution through the last step of the practice, a lens through which even the most distressed teacher or student is able to view how he/she is in the classroom and how he/she could be in the classroom.

In the most critical circumstances it is generally easier to think: "if only the classroom or that student/classmate/teacher could change its attitude, I would be happier". It is important to understand that changing others is something we have no control over. However, we can better control what we do for ourselves or what we need to do to help the change.

6. SPECIAL MATERIALS

There is no need for special materials.

7. TIPS AND TRICKS

The facilitator has an important role and should properly prepare each step before the exercise, for example: preparing a structured presentation of the exercise, a checklist of instructions for each step of the exercise and an outline to lead the final discussion.

8. ON-LINE VERSION

No online version is foreseen for this practice.



9. REFERENCES - WEB-REFERENCES

- Ajmal, Y., & Ratner, H. (2019). [*Solution focused practice in schools: 80 ideas and strategies*](#). Routledge.
- Burkinshaw, A. (2016). [*Solution-Focused Practice: An NSPCC Toolkit for Working with Children and Young People*](#). Canadian School Counselling Review, 1(1), 61.