LESSON PLAN ON PERSERVERANCE
MAPLEWOOD MIDDLE SCHOOL: SULPHUR, LA
MUSIC EDUCATOR: MICKEY SMITH, JR. (MUSIC EDUCATOR AWARD WINNER)
ENGLISH EDUCATOR: LACEY BLOCKER

INTRODUCTION
Use this lesson plan to teach students about perseverance. Students will read a text lesson, discuss Mickey Smith Jr. and reinforce the theme and understanding of 'keep on going' with famous examples of perseverance. Students will conclude the lesson by creating a poster commemorating a famous figure that persevered in some way.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES
After this lesson, students will be able to:
• define perseverance
• identify various examples of perseverance in their own and others' lives

LENGTH: TWO DAYS
Day one: introduction (listen to music, view videos, read children's book) 30-60 minutes

Day two: complete formal lesson 30-60 minutes

MATERIALS
Watch Louisiana Teacher wins GRAMMY https://youtu.be/sFPqUa5DXzs
• KEEP ON GOING (PERSEVERANCE TO THE PROMISE) https://youtu.be/VggdE0NRS-8
• The Adventures of Little Mickey: KEEP ON GOING Children’s Book
• KEEP ON GOING” Music Video https://youtu.be/0bErbqkJgL
• Copies of the text lesson Perseverance & Promise: Definition, Quotes & Examples (see below)
• Paper for posters
• Art supplies

CURRICULUM STANDARDS
• CCSS.MUSIC (N/A)
This lesson identifies and defines the concepts of perseverance and promise using the message and music of Music Educator Mickey Smith Jr. Music can be categorized in many different ways, but one of the simplest is its purpose. Program music is music with a subject. It is representational. Program music contains an extra-musical subject, be it a story, a painting, or a landscape. The other category is absolute music, or music for music's sake. It is non-representational, purely abstract, and without any reference to subjects outside of the music itself. Knowing the composer's intent, the original context, or even the title of a composition can indicate whether you're listening to program or absolute music. One indicator that you're listening to program music is the presence of lyrics, which tell a story and present a subject. So, what purpose does music have? It all depends on you, the listener. We will explore the message in the music of Mickey Smith Jr. in this lesson.
KEEP ON GOING

• CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.8.4
Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including analogies or allusions to other texts.

• CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.2.A
Introduce a topic clearly, previewing what is to follow; organize ideas, concepts, and information into broader categories; include formatting (e.g., headings), graphics (e.g., charts, tables), and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension.

KEY VOCABULARY
• Perseverance
• Patience
• Promise
• Program Music
• Mickey Smith Jr.
• Thomas Edison
• Richard Nixon
• Harland Sanders
• Michael Phelps

INSTRUCTIONS
Begin the lesson by asking students to reflect on a time in their lives when they overcame a challenge of some sort. Ask them to write this challenge down and think about what they did to overcome it.

USE THE FOLLOWING HISTORICAL FIGURES TO REINFORCE THE LESSON FOR STUDENTS
• Science & Politics
  o What challenges did Thomas Edison overcome to invent the light bulb?
  o How is the story of Thomas Edison a good example of perseverance?
  o Can you think of any other scientists that persevered in their work?
  o During what events in his life did Richard Nixon persevere?
  o How is politics a particularly good example of perseverance in many cases?
  o What other politicians have persevered in recent memory?

• Business & Sports
  o What challenges did Harland Sanders overcome to create KFC?
  o Why is it important to persevere in business? What happens if you don't?
  o Does anyone have any personal examples of perseverance in business?
  o What did Michael Phelps do to become one of the greatest Olympic athletes ever?
  o What roadblocks stood in Michael Phelps's way on his way to fame?
KEEP ON GOING

PERSERVERANCE POSTERS

- The topic of perseverance is a particularly good one to make inspirational posters for. The poster will be titled KEEP ON GOING & DISCOVER YOUR SOUND. Students will choose a figure or organization from the real world to make a poster about (Students can choose one of the four listed in the text lessons but encourage them to also look elsewhere).
- Students can either choose a famous figure, or one from their lives. They should illustrate the poster with a picture of the person and/or their deeds, as well as a quote that is inspiring.
- Students can share their posters and hang them around the room. Alternatively, you can have them take their posters home to hang in their room for daily inspiration.
- As an exit ticket, students can take the associated quiz (see below).

This lesson will define perseverance and promise using the message and music of GRAMMY Music Educator Mickey Smith Jr. while reinforcing what it means to keep on going using 1-4 case examples of perseverance in various fields as well as quotes related to this topic centering around the people you’ll learn about.

WHAT IS PERSERVERANCE?
Perseverance can be seen as tenacity or the persistence of some sort of purpose or action that you have decided to embark upon in the face of all sorts of difficulties. So, if you recently decided to start a business and you keep going despite all sorts of financial problems, then you're trying to persevere. If you've decided you're going to run a marathon and keep training day after day despite how difficult it is to do so, you are persevering.

WHAT IS PROMISE?
Promise can be seen as a commitment by someone to do or not do something. Promise can also be a long-term goal or objective. So, if you recently decided to start a business and you keep on going despite all sorts of financial problems and you achieve it, then you've reached your promise. Sometimes this referred to as the promised-land. If you set a goal to run a marathon and you finish the marathon (even if you come in last), you met your promise because your goal was to run a marathon.
Let's go over some examples that may help inspire you to KEEP ON GOING & DISCOVER YOUR SOUND (ie persevere to your promise) despite the odds in several different fields: music, science, politics, business, and sports.

WHAT IS PROGRAM MUSIC?
Program music, can be instrumental music that carries some extra musical meaning, some “program” of literary idea, legend, scenic description, or personal drama. It is constructed with so-called absolute, or abstract, music, in which artistic interest is supposedly confined to abstract constructions in sound. The term “program music” is not generally used in regard to pop music, however some popular music does have aspects in common with program music. In this lesson we explore how Mickey Smith Jr.’s song “Keep On Going” speaks to something greater than audible “sound” alone.
KEEP ON GOING

MUSIC & EDUCATION
Our lesson starts with and focuses on an example of perseverance and reaching your promise in music. **Mickey Smith Jr.** is a successful Louisiana educator, musician, and artist who despite growing up in a small, impoverished, rural community, overcame the odds through music and became the first in his family to go to college and win the Recording Academy and GRAMMY Museum’s *Music Educator Award.*

Music helped Smith find himself and helped give him a sense of focus. But his first sounds on the sax were so bad his mother told him to KEEP ON GOING out the house, down the driveway, out the yard, across the street and into the woods! Learning music and developing his personal potential into his promise was a process. Smith says that there is no overnight success, only over-life success. Meaning it took many years of practice, perseverance, persistence, patience and even personal pain to finally achieve a level of success. At one point in his teaching career Smith considered leaving the profession but a letter of gratitude from a student inspired him to KEEP ON GOING.
Perhaps one of the greatest examples of perseverance in science is that of Thomas Edison. Thomas Edison was a prolific inventor who invented the first commercially viable light bulb. You know, only the thing that turned night into day all over the world. This didn't happen overnight, however; it took many years of theories and experiments to finally get it right. What many people don't know, is that Edison was also the man who developed some of the earliest storage (alkaline) batteries.

Edison conducted more than 9,000 experiments when developing the light bulb before successfully reaching his goal. When asked isn’t it a shame that with the tremendous amount of work you have done you haven’t been able to get any results? Edison replied: Results! Why, man, I have gotten lots of results! I know several thousand things that won’t work! And that’s the beauty of Edison and his perseverance. He never saw a failed attempt as something to be ashamed of. Instead, every failure was a piece of important knowledge that resulted finally, in a successful outcome. For Edison, F.A.I.L probably meant First Attempt in Learning.
Another great example of perseverance not found much today in politics is Richard Nixon, the 37th President of the United States of America. No matter your view on his politics and/or scandals, nowadays few people run for the highest political office of a state or the nation more than once after they've failed the first time. The challenges of running for any elite office (governor or President) are immense in time, energy, and finance. But Nixon, wasn't one to give up. He clearly persevered:

- As incumbent Vice President, Nixon ran for President of the United States of America against John F. Kennedy in 1960 and lost.
- Nixon ran for Governor of California in 1962 and lost.

Nixon then famously stated, at what many seemed was the end of his political career: *You won't have Nixon to kick around anymore, because, gentlemen, this is my last press conference.*

But Nixon persevered, he:

- Ran for the Republican nomination for President of the United States again in 1964, and lost. This still didn't stop him!
- Ran for the Republican nomination for President of the United States of America again in 1968 and lost the popular vote but eventually won enough delegates to secure the party's nomination.
- Finally, he won the Presidency itself in 1968.
KEEP ON GOING

BUSINESS & SPORTS

Another example of perseverance comes to us from the world of fast food from none other than ('Colonel') Harland Sanders, of Kentucky Fried Chicken (KFC) fame. This man had anything but an easy beginning. His dad died in 1896 when he was just six years old. At around age 10, while many 10-year olds were playing games, Sanders had to support his younger sibling so they could be properly fed and clothed. He went to work in numerous jobs such as farmer, street car conductor, salesman, and even fireman.

But his hard life did not stop him. Sanders wanted more in life, and by age 40, he was running a service station and then a restaurant. This was during the worst economic time in U.S. history, the Great Depression. Despite these personal, financial, and national hardships, his restaurant eventually became famous for his fried chicken, and he began to franchise his operations in 1952 to create, what was to become a company that has tens of billions of dollars in revenue every year. Despite this, Sanders didn't persevere for the sake of money alone, as he once said: *There’s no reason to be the richest man in the cemetery. You can’t do any business from there.*

Last, but not least, is someone who has persevered despite many detractors. His name is Michael Phelps, one of the greatest Olympians of all time. In order to become so great he’s had to train constantly for well over a decade to maintain peak condition in the face of stiff competition. Elite athletes like him have to give up foods many people enjoy on a regular basis, leisure and other pleasurable activities to pursue their dreams. They have to fight through injuries and the thought of losing in front of the world. Yet Michael Phelps once said "You can't put a limit on anything. The more you dream, the farther you get." Despite others’ theorizing a limit on how much he could win over the years, Phelps has:

- Won more gold medals than any Olympian in history (summer or winter Olympics)
- Won more medals in total than any other Olympian in history (summer or winter Olympics)
- For four straight summer Olympic Games, won more medals than any other athlete at those games

In all, he's had to outcompete (directly or indirectly) over 11,000 contemporary elite athletes from around the world in order to do this.

LESSON SUMMARY

Realizing your potential to reach your promise or goal is a path that requires perseverance. Perseverance refers to tenacity or the persistence of some sort of purpose or action that you have decided to embark upon in the face of all sorts of difficulties as evidenced in the personalities above.