As an introductory lesson in my English 9 classes I spoke with the students about Grit and had them watch a 4 minute YouTube video, then I handed out two strips of sandpaper, one of 60 grit and the other of 320 grit. I had them introduce themselves to the class by stating what they have mastered, by practicing when they held up the 320 paper, and what they still needed to work on when they held up the 60 grit paper. The students where comfortable with this way of introducing themselves in the classroom. It gave me the opportunity to learn names, and have them practice listening to each other. The students also saw that a lot of the things they struggle with others do as well. Students seemed to really enjoy the physical representation of the sandpaper as they planned out what was easy and what was more difficult for them. The example I gave them at the beginning was of me when I was their age. I was terrified of public speaking, obviously with practice and desire I have gotten over that. And the thing I was good at, reading and writing is what I turned into my profession. A lot of students pointed out that what they struggle with is that they procrastinate, a very valuable thing to be aware of as they start their high school career and I will help them learn to get over that obstacle.

Of course, a few students figured out that they could use the little strips of sandpaper to sand down their pencils. They cleaned up the dusty mess that they made on the desks, and I learned a lot about those students in this lesson. I learned how other students react to their distractions, most saw the humor in their discovery, but a few were overly annoyed. This is and was valuable to expand the lesson and show some tolerance and have students realize that in life you do not have to be serious all the time. These freshmen classes are together in an academy and they are learning how to take care of themselves, and each other.