

***Reversing The Trend -
From Narcissism to Compassion***

EDUU 9802

2 Semester Credits/Units

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Course Overview

Welcome to Reversing The Trend - From Narcissism to Compassion. Encourage your students to find greater happiness and purpose in their lives by reaching out to help others. Read and view research that substantiates “giving” is a pathway to happiness while in the U.S. the Trend is moving in the opposite direction. Consider how you can help to reverse that Trend.



Course Text *The Danish Way of Parenting*

by Jessica Alexander & Iben Sandahl ISBN: 978-0143111719

Assignment A1 requires students watch the movie, Michael Moore - *Where to Invade*

Next? available on Amazon prime (a rental fee may be required)

Course Objectives

In this course participants will have an opportunity to:

- Read the book *The Danish Way of Parenting*.
- Read and study resources about how empathy and compassion create greater happiness for the giver.
- Communicate ways that you can help reverse The Trend.
- Share your ideas and take-aways with other course participants.

Course Background and Assignments

Why a Course for Teachers?

In 2003 I was inspired by another to raise funds to build a school in Afghanistan. My friends and I did. I visited the school when it was completed in 2005 and in the interim learned about US involvement in Afghanistan. Observing the horrible living conditions in Afghanistan and knowing that the war we had help fund against the Russians in Afghanistan contributed greatly to those conditions proved to be life altering. I felt compelled to help Afghan families rebuild their lives. In 2004 I founded a non-profit organization, Trust in Education, to provide aid to Afghanistan. Visit www.trustededucation.org for details.

I’ve visited Afghanistan twenty times over the past 13 years. During those visits I became aware of a significant difference between Afghan and American children. Most Afghan children want to be teachers. Very few American children do. Is it just a matter of economics? You made the decision to become a teacher. Why are so few American children not doing the same?

Afghan children also say, when stating they want to be a teacher, doctor, soldier or policeman, “I want to help my people and my country”. I’ve not heard American students express a commitment to “their country” or “their people”. Again, why?

I’ve spent most of my time since 2003 working with volunteers. Early on it became apparent that givers are noticeably happier than those who aren’t. Attending to the needs of others is much less stressful and has been far more rewarding than all other challenges in my life.

These observations and others led me to accept the suggestion by George Pickett to develop this course. Why? Because the consensus seems to be that we are raising too many children who lack compassion and empathy, feel entitled, and are more “stressed-out” than happy. What does that have to do with teachers?

Teachers are on the front line of child rearing and often spend more time with a child than his or her parents. Schools are where children interact with others having diverse backgrounds, beliefs, values and capabilities. Campuses are either “melting pots” or “salad bowls” inside which teachers are the most influential ingredient.

I suspect I needn’t convince you of the need for character development in schools. That’s likely the most rewarding and challenging aspect of your job. This course will provide you with links to studies, articles, and videos that can be shared with those who might not initially support devoting more time to character development. It also assigns a movie, *Where to Invade Next?* by Michael Moore, to elicit your reaction.

The course includes sharing with fellow teachers what you do in your classroom and school to develop character. A best practices list is being maintained that is being shared with all teachers who are interested. Your recommendations could end up on that list. You will therefore be both student and teacher in the formidable task of raising children who are compassionate, caring, empathetic, honest, and proactive, knowing that if they are, they will be happier and more likely to succeed. There are 4 assignments to be completed and placed in course LMS Drop Locations, **A1, A2, A3, and A8**.

There are 4 Forums to post to, Forum **A4, A5, A6, and A7**

How to Submit Coursework

Each completed assignment in this course is submitted to the instructor for review. Follow directions at the end of each assignment on how to prepare and in which LMS assignment folder to place completed work. Name each file submitted with your last name and assignment number (i.e. BrownAssignment3. Make sure you place your full name, course number and assignment number at the top of each document page. You will receive feedback from your instructor within 5 days indicating successful completion of the assignment or the need for revision. Assignment grades will be averaged for the final course grade.

[A grading assessment rubric for written projects is found in this document.](#)

Practical Advice from a Former Principal



Teachers have a major impact on child development. Who among us didn't have at least one inspirational teacher who broadened our outlook on life and made us a better person? I remember several. And, let's face it, you chose teaching not for the compensation you receive. Your greatest reward comes from the positive impact you have on children who pass through your room on their way to adulthood. Your time with them is surpassed only by the moment they return years later to tell you how important you were.

I called upon several educators, including Bruce Wodhams, principal of Springhill Elementary School in Lafayette, California for twenty-four years, to answer questions I had about what you refer to as "service learning". I was and to a lesser extent now am a neophyte. Frankly, I needed to know whether to devote time to creating this course or not.

It's several months later and I'm now convinced that what takes place in schools is essential to addressing our greatest national problem, the decline in empathy, compassion and happiness and the rise in narcissism and a sense of entitlement.

Below are the questions I posed and the answers Bruce gave;

1. Importance of Providing Service Learning in Schools

A. How important is it?

Answer:

Service Learning (or Character Development) is an integral aspect of any school's curriculum and not limited to the elementary setting. Almost all high schools now have a service requirement for graduation and it is now becoming more evident at various colleges and universities. It is imperative that there be a coordinated continuum of skills and activities to be learned and practiced from preschool to college; unfortunately, such offerings at the moment seem to be random, sporadic and too hit-or-miss to have the same impact as other traditional areas of a school's curriculum (e.g., math, history, etc.)

Character Development is important for a variety of reasons. Our culture is a heterogeneous one in which the traditional means of providing structured moral and ethical lessons (e.g., church, extended family, etc.) are not necessarily provided anymore. If we are to flourish or even exist anymore as a culture, it is imperative to provide a systematic approach to deliver those common values of a democracy (i.e., the freedoms enumerated in the Bill of Rights as well as the responsibilities implied by those same freedoms). Such values will not be achieved through osmosis. Democracy requires cooperation and that demands a systematic and consistent approach.

A culture in which laissez faire capitalism is the objective of so many of those in power and a marketplace that places undue emphasis on isolated technological pursuits cannot survive without a strong ethical foundation which, in our pluralistic society, can only be practically delivered by the public school system.

B. What do we hope to achieve through service learning?

Answer:

Character Development needs to emphasize those basic values that are embraced by all recognized mainstream religions and are encapsulated, again, by our Constitution's Bill of Rights and succeeding amendments. In my view, these values are best represented by Michael Josephson's Six Pillars of Character (from his program Character Counts): Trustworthiness, Respect, Responsibility, Caring, Fairness & Citizenship.

C. Is there any empirical evidence or studies that support service learning?

Answer:

Yes, there have been studies that support the teaching of character in schools that have shown reduced absenteeism, truancy, vandalism, discipline issues, etc., by those educational institutions that promote a schoolwide, systematic delivery of a character curriculum. For specific data, I would suggest you go online to Character Counts (<https://charactercounts.org/>). They have extensive data that answers many of your queries better than I.

2. Buy in by Parents, Teachers, Administration, School Boards

A. What resistance is there to devoting time to service learning?

Answer:

There will always be resistance to such innovative curriculum due to the following:

1. Not enough time in the day to add more to an already bursting curriculum;
2. That character development is the parents' or church's job, not the school's;
3. You are trying to indoctrinate my child;
4. A plethora of other complaints from those who are fearful of change.

B. What are the best ways to overcome resistance?

Answer

1. It is imperative to keep it simple, stressing those factors that everyone can agree on (i.e., The Six Pillars of Character);
2. Providing of factual data showing the improvement in school atmosphere from other schools;
3. Having parents participate (especially those already in a leadership role) in workshops and being integral team members in the implementation of the program;
4. Make it fun for the students (parents usually react positively if their children are reacting the same).

3. Buy in by Students –

A. What role should the student government and leaders within each class play?

Answer:

Have school-wide student government be an integral part of implementation as well as elected

representatives from each classroom whose sole elected responsibility is towards the operating of the program. Make it fun; have classroom and school-wide objectives with appropriate rewards for ALL students. Have every aspect of the school day reflect the character traits the school is promoting.

B. What service learning projects/programs do students enjoy?

Answer:

Some projects should be individual, some team oriented, that include home and community (i.e., local businesses, local youth organizations, other schools, etc.). For fund-raisers, include local, national and international causes, but allow the students to choose these causes with appropriate adult guidance. Community projects that include actual physical activity and group participation off-campus are usually popular.

C. Which projects and programs have the greatest impact?

Answer:

The school, home and community projects that are the most successful are those that are generated by the students. It is not a matter of how much money might be raised, for example, but what kind of buy-in and participation comes from the students. The number one goal is to support the growth of character, not to necessarily be #1 in raising money or support for a particular cause.

4. Service Learning Projects/Programs that have proven successful;

A. Those that don't involve raising money.

Community service; visiting retirement homes, hospitals; community beautification projects; campus beautification projects; any project that promotes team building while addressing one or more of the character goals.

B. Those that involve raising money.

Definitely local causes; also national and international causes that may have a personal connection to students (e.g., American Cancer Society for a student going through cancer treatment).

C. Those that can be undertaken by a single class

Campus beautification and improvement projects; bake sales/Jamba Juice sales, etc. to raise money or awareness for a special project; classroom projects that promote team building.

D. Those that involve more than one class – grade level(s) and entire school.

All of those previously mentioned can be a classroom project, a school wide project or a community project with other organizations or schools.

E. Those that can occur during lunch or on the playground

Campus cleanup efforts or small garden projects are feasible.

F. Those that involve the community.

Cooperative programs with scouts, churches, other schools, youth sports, etc., at some point (perhaps not at the very beginning) are effective and rewarding.

G. Those that include the family (parents and siblings)

Individual student “contract” pursuits (showing good character traits at home and being rewarded at school and/or home); goals/objectives for both home and classroom; parents volunteering for various aspects of character developing projects.

5. What doesn't work and why? Lessons learned.

Answer:

Do not let it be top-down implementation; buy-in from staff, students and parents/community is imperative. All stakeholders need to be involved at the very beginning of pursuing a program. Do not try to do too much right off the bat; let the program evolve and grow naturally. Let the “personality” of the school be reflected in all of the character pursuits.

6. Is enough time being devoted to service learning?

Answer:

In most schools, there is not enough time devoted to Character Development. It needs to be integrated across the curriculum, not set aside as a discrete subject to be taught; school wide assemblies focusing on Character Development, particularly in the beginning of the program, are necessary. Use literature, history and current events as a springboard to discussions and assignments regarding character.

Bruce is highly respected in the Lafayette community, one who practiced what he preached. He and I spent several weeks meeting with teachers and principals to get their feedback. We were astounded and encouraged by how receptive everyone was, knowing full well that teachers are already overly burdened by what they are expected to accomplish. Whether a Character Development Program is developed in Lafayette remains to be seen. Reasonable men and women will differ on what it should include or whether one should be adopted at all.

You needn't wait for the design and implementation of a program in your school. You control the time you have with your students and yes I'm well aware of the pressures placed upon you and your students to do well on “the tests”. In hindsight, however, how important was it for me to learn algebra and trigonometry and know when the Delaware was crossed? I could have used more time devoted to character development and where to insert a comma.

The Case for Giving

We all know that giving makes the giver “feel good”. We should, therefore, expect that those who have more give more. The opposite is true. There are studies to prove it. Submit the question to google should you need verification.

Why is there an inverse correlation between wealth and giving? The answer most frequently given is that the poor know what it’s like to be poor and thus more likely to come to the aid of someone who is. Whatever the reason, character development includes teaching children to be more empathetic, compassionate, caring and giving. It’s for their own good. They will be happier!

Should you need to persuade others of the value of these traits I’ve copied and pasted an article below, that may be helpful. The article, Five Ways Giving is Good for You, was written by Jill Suttie and Jason Marsh and published in the December 13, 2010 Greater Good Magazine.

https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/5_ways_giving_is_good_for_you



Five Ways Giving is good for you” by Jill Suttie and Jason Marsh

“A 2008 study by Harvard Business School professor Michael Norton and colleagues found that giving money to someone else lifted participants’ happiness more that spending it on themselves (despite participants’ prediction that spending on themselves would make them happier). Happiness expert Sonja Lyubomirsky, a professor of psychology at the University of California, Riverside, saw similar results when she asked people to perform five acts of kindness each week for six weeks.

In a 2006 study, Jorge Moll and colleagues at the National Institutes of Health found that when people give to charities, it activates regions of the brain associated with pleasure, social connection, and trust, creating a “warm glow” effect. Scientists also believe that altruistic behavior releases endorphins in the brain, producing the positive feeling known as the “helper’s high.”

Giving has also been linked to the release of oxytocin. In laboratory studies, Paul Zak, the director of the Center for Neuroeconomics Studies at Claremont Graduate University, has found that a dose of oxytocin will cause people to give more generously and to feel more empathy towards others, with “symptoms” lasting up to two hours. And those people on an “oxytocin high” can potentially jumpstart a “virtuous circle, where one person’s generous behavior triggers another’s,” says Zak.

Giving is good for our health

A wide range of research has linked different forms of generosity to better health, even among the sick and elderly. In his book *Why Good Things Happen to Good People*, Stephen Post, a professor of preventive medicine at Stony Brook University, reports that giving to others has been shown to increase health benefits in people with chronic illness, including HIV and multiple sclerosis.

A 1999 study led by Doug Oman of the University of California, Berkeley, found that elderly people who volunteered for two or more organizations were 44 percent less likely to die over a five-

year period than were non-volunteers, even after controlling for their age, exercise habits, general health, and negative health habits like smoking. Stephanie Brown of the University of Michigan saw similar results in a 2003 study on elderly couples. She and her colleagues found that those individuals who provided practical help to friends, relatives, or neighbors, or gave emotional support to their spouses, had a lower risk of dying over a five-year period than those who didn't. Interestingly, receiving help wasn't linked to a reduced death risk.

Researchers suggest that one reason giving may improve physical health and longevity is that it helps decrease stress, which is associated with a variety of health problems. In a 2006 study by Rachel Piferi of Johns Hopkins University and Kathleen Lawler of the University of Tennessee, people who provided social support to others had lower blood pressure than participants who didn't, suggesting a direct physiological benefit to those who give of themselves.

Giving promotes cooperation and social connection

When you give, you're more likely to get back: Several studies, including work by sociologists Brent Simpson and Robb Willer, have suggested that when you give to others, your generosity is likely to be rewarded by others down the line—sometimes by the person you gave to, sometimes by someone else.

These exchanges promote a sense of trust and cooperation that strengthens our ties to others—and research has shown that having positive social interactions is central to good mental and physical health. As researcher John Cacioppo writes in his book *Loneliness: Human Nature and the Need for Social Connection*, “The more extensive the reciprocal altruism born of social connection . . . the greater the advance toward health, wealth, and happiness.”

What's more, when we give to others, we don't only make them feel closer to us; we also feel closer to them. “Being kind and generous leads you to perceive others more positively and more charitably,” writes Lyubomirsky in her book *The How of Happiness*, and this “fosters a heightened sense of interdependence and cooperation in your social community.”

Giving evokes gratitude.

Whether you're on the giving or receiving end of a gift, that gift can elicit feelings of gratitude—it can be a way of expressing gratitude or instilling gratitude in the recipient. And research has found that gratitude is integral to happiness, health, and social bonds.

Robert Emmons and Michael McCullough, co-directors of the Research Project on Gratitude and Thankfulness, found that teaching college students to “count their blessings” and cultivate gratitude caused them to exercise more, be more optimistic, and feel better about their lives overall. A recent study led by Nathaniel Lambert at Florida State University found that expressing gratitude to a close friend or romantic partner strengthens our sense of connection to that person.

Barbara Fredrickson, a pioneering happiness researcher, suggests that cultivating gratitude in everyday life is one of the keys to increasing personal happiness. “When you express your gratitude in words or actions, you not only boost your own positivity but [other people's] as well,” she writes in her book *Positivity*. “And in the process you reinforce their kindness and strengthen your bond to one another.”

Giving is contagious.

When we give, we don't only help the immediate recipient of our gift. We also spur a ripple effect of generosity through our community.

A study by James Fowler of the University of California, San Diego, and Nicholas Christakis of Harvard, published in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Science, shows that when one person behaves generously, it inspires observers to behave generously later, toward different people. In fact, the researchers found that altruism could spread by three degrees—from person to person to person to person. “As a result,” they write, “each person in a network can influence dozens or even hundreds of people, some of whom he or she does not know and has not met.”

Read or Watch:

1. The End of Empathy – Empathy is on the decline

<http://www.foxnews.com/story/2010/06/01/end-empathy.html>

2. A TED talk everyone should watch:

Michael Norton shares fascinating research on how money can indeed buy happiness -- when you don't spend it on yourself. Listen for surprising data on the many ways pro-social spending can benefit you, your work, and (of course) other people.

https://www.ted.com/talks/michael_norton_how_to_buy_happiness

3. Why is narcissism increasing among young Americans?

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/freedom-learn/201401/why-is-narcissism-increasing-among-young-americans>

4. The World Happiness Report for 2018

Countries are given a happiness ranking every year by the United Nations. Income, healthy life expectancy, social support, freedom, trust and generosity are factors that are considered.

In the United States income is associated with happiness but even though GDP has been rising and unemployment rates have been falling the levels of happiness in the US have been falling – there has also been a decline in interpersonal trust and trust toward institutions. United States was once ranked third and is now ranked 18th.

Suicide is also on the rise in the United States-- Nationwide the suicide rate has increased by more than 30 percent since 1999, rising from 10.5 suicides per 100,000 to 13.9 per 100,000 in 2016

Read About the 2018 Happiness Report and see the rankings;

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_Happiness_Report#See_also

5. America's Insensitive Children? Jane Alexander

<https://www.theatlantic.com/education/archive/2016/08/the-us-empathy-gap/494975/>

6. The Case for Empathy

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/ashoka/2012/09/26/why-we-should-teach-empathy-to-improve-education-and-test-scores/#4548bb8627c4>

7. Watch the Movie Where to Invade Next by Michael Moore, available on Amazon Prime.

A1 Do you agree with these articles in relation to your school or community? If you agree that empathy and/or compassion is on the decline or lacking in your school or community, why do you think that is? If people don't care or care enough, why don't they? What's changed or changing? What was your reaction to the differences in policies portrayed in the movie? What do you think the reactions would be for most Americans?

Place your response in the correct Submit Assignment A1 Section

It Takes a Village



Parents certainly have the primary responsibility and right to raise their children. Some may argue that teachers should be limited to teaching the three R's. Teachers may also not welcome being burdened with additional responsibilities.

If you or "the system" allocates more class time to character development, your challenge will include responding to concerned parents satisfied and supportive of the status quo. I purposely included links to articles, talks and videos in this course that should be helpful in addressing their concerns.

As the saying goes, the apple doesn't fall far from the tree.

Consequently, educating parents is as important as educating children. There are thousands of books and articles on parenting. I highly recommend one, *The Danish Way of Parenting* by Jessica Joelle Alexander and Iben Dissing Sandahl.

I discovered this book after reading that the happiest people in the world live in Scandinavian countries, Denmark in particular. Danes have, according to the United Nations, been the happiest people on Earth every year except 2017, when Norwegians came in first. During the same period happiness in the United States declined. In 2007 the USA ranked 3rd among the OECD countries. In 2016 we ranked 19th.

In my community a study is conducted every two years at Acalanes High School. The most recent was in 2016. In 2016, sixteen percent of the ninth and eleventh graders answered yes to the question "Have you seriously considered committing suicide during the past twelve months". We seem to be raising significant numbers of "stressed out" children who are less compassionate and empathetic. The Danes on the other hand are raising the happiest people in the world. They must be doing something right.

There are several observations and recommendations in the book. Since it's required reading, I've copied and pasted a few that resonated with me for those not taking this course;

1. Empathy is taught in the schools!!

“In the Danish school system there is a mandatory national program implemented as early as preschool called Step by Step. The children are shown pictures of kids, each exhibiting a different emotion; sadness, fear, anger frustration, happiness and so on. The kids talk about these cards and put into words what the child is sensing, learning to conceptualize their and other's feelings. They learn empathy, problem solving, self-control, and how to read facial expressions. An essential part of the program is that the facilitators and children aren't judgmental of the emotions they see. Instead they simply recognize and respect them.

Another program, which is increasingly popular is called CAT-kit. This program is used to improve emotional awareness and empathy and focuses on how to articulate experiences, thoughts, feelings and senses” (page 86)

Danish teachers read stories to students that encompass all emotions, including negative and uncomfortable ones. Apparently stories read to children in our schools have happy endings. I personally prefer happy endings myself. I do understand the decision to read stories with more complex endings, not all of which are happy. This is one topic that's likely to evoke considerable debate.

2. “They mix children of different strengths and weaknesses together.

“The teacher gets to know the students with time and seats them accordingly. The goal is for the students to see that everyone has positive qualities and to try and help each other reach the next level...This system fosters collaboration, teamwork, and respect.

Studies show that there is a huge learning curve in teaching others. Students who teach others work harder to understand the material, recall it more precisely, and use it more effectively. But they also have to try to understand the perspective of other students in order to help them where they are having trouble.” (page 86).

3. Children make the rules

“One of the ways Danish schools promote democracy is by allowing students to create the rules with their teacher every year. At the beginning of school, teachers talk with their students at length about what it means to have a good class and what values and behaviors they think they should implement. And they do this every year because the students are older and more mature and have different senses of responsibility than in previous years” (page 107)

4. Structured vs Unstructured Play



I coached almost every sport my son participated in; soccer, baseball, basketball, tennis, and roller blade hockey. When I was in school, I played every one of these sports with my friends without adult supervision. We had “pick up” games. We have gone from uncontrolled to controlled play and in the process injected more stress into our children's playtime.

I don't remember caring that much about the outcome of pick-up games. There would always be another day and the composition of the teams changed from day

to day. No one ever asked me whether my side won. And, there were no trophies. It took me awhile as a coach to understand that too many parents, including me, were overly concerned about winning. Once I realized there were twelve vulnerable children in the dugout, entrusted to me for a few hours a day by their parents, my orientation changed. For the less skilled players my job became improving their athletic skills and raising their confidence in themselves. The exceptional athletes, who numbered less than twenty percent, needed more leadership skills and empathy and compassion for players who weren't athletic.

Danish children apparently have much more time to play with friends, without an adult being involved. They decide on the games they play and make the rules. They must resolve conflicts and learn how to play with one another. If they fail to learn how to get along, their friends won't play with them.

I'm not proposing that organized teams with adult coaches be abandoned. But, I do understand how social and leadership skills are more likely to develop if children play a greater role in managing their teams. I do know from personal experience that they would be less focused on winning and more concerned about allocating playing time and assigning positions fairly.

Read:

1. **“The Danish Way of Parenting”** -- An American woman, married to a Dane, compares and contrasts how we and the happiest people in the world raise their children. Teachers, without the support and involvement of parents cannot instill empathy and compassion on their own. It will require a village. I'm encouraging every parent, grandparent and educator to read this book. I'm also providing copies in school and local libraries making it possible for teachers and parents to check them out. Everyone who has read the book is sharing it with others.

A2 Compare & Contrast the Danish Parenting & School System with what you've experienced as a child, a student and a teacher (and possibly a parent).

Place your response in the correct Submit Assignment A2 Section

2. Eleven ways to raise a child who cares about others;

<http://www.parents.com/kids/development/social/raise-a-compassionate-child/>

3. Eight Ways to Teach Compassion;

https://www.huffingtonpost.com/signer-whitson/8-ways-to-teach-compassion_b_5568451.html

A3 What would you like parents to know about the challenges faced in your classroom bearing on your students' empathy and compassion for others. What can parents do that they aren't already? Given an opportunity to discuss this topic what would you say to parents and what are you saying already.

Place your response in the correct Submit Assignment A3 Section

Fundraising Drives

I have over the years learned a great deal about fundraising, particularly in schools. Most decide to conduct at least two fundraising drives a year, one for the school and one for a local charity. I have, as a result of my experience in Afghanistan, become a proponent of also helping families living outside the United States. Natural disaster and special circumstance fundraising is also embraced in most schools.

Fundraising by and for a school's needs are the easiest to fund. Supporting a local charity enables students to observe the impact of their fundraising. It also satisfies the view, held by many, that local problems should be prioritized over those that aren't. I have been admonished on more than one occasion when promoting aid for Afghans that "we have problems here at home". We do. But, there is no reason to limit our compassion to those who live nearby. After all,

the difference between "us and them" is where we were born.

Supporting families beyond our borders is, in my view, important. First, the disparity of wealth and income in the world is shocking. One-half of the world's population survive on less than \$2.50 per day, a fact I regret not learning earlier in life. International fundraising efforts most often provide funds or donations for life's basic needs. In learning about the world beyond their "bubble" our children can't help but "feel lucky" and empathize with children who don't have food to eat, clothes to wear, or a place to live.

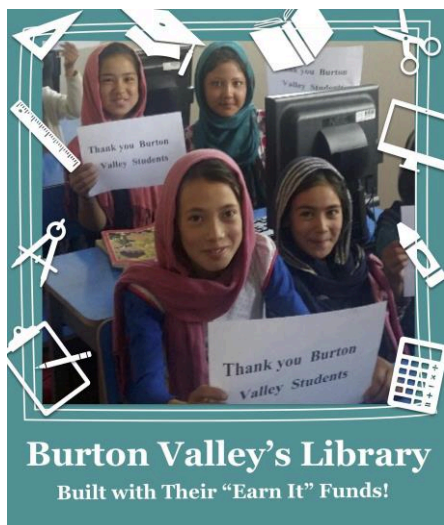
The "feel good" or reward factor from helping the poorest of the poor is greater, at least it is for me. Finally, as a friend once said to me, "we need to be better global citizens."

The Selection Process

Identifying and prioritizing the "wishlist" of a school is best achieved by consulting with parents, teachers, administrators and students. Students involved in the deliberative process will understand the rationale behind prioritizing one funding request over another.

I recommend choosing at least one funding request that comes from the students, even though it may be less important in the eyes of adults. Students will then know they are being heard and be more inclined to become involved.

Selecting which local and international charities to support is generally accomplished by teachers, students and their principal working together. A list of possible recipients is generated through a collaborative process. Student representatives are often given the final say and rightly so. They are more often than not called upon to plan, promote and conduct the fundraising drives. They do the work and they raise the money. Shouldn't what they raise be theirs to spend? Moreover, it has been my experience that the amount of money students raise for local and international charities isn't worth controlling.



How Should Money be Raised?

I remember as a high school student being called upon to sell chocolate bars that I didn't like and often melted before being sold. Students were given and expected to sell at least one box, twenty bars in all. Prizes were awarded for reaching certain plateaus and to individuals who sold the most.

I was unwilling to sell something I wouldn't eat and don't enjoy selling anything to friends or strangers. The winners generally came from families whose parents were very involved in selling. My parents paid for my box and I gave the bars away. The same was true for most of my friends.

When Trust in Education first began participating in school fundraising efforts, I had heard about "Pennies for Peace" drives conducted by Central Asia Institute. Ten thousand pennies equals one hundred dollars. Try lugging tense of thousands of pennies into the bank, or better yet, rolling them into fifty-cent rolls. I chose the phrase "Change for Change," subliminally suggesting they also collect nickels, dimes, and quarters.

A few years and "Change for Change" drives later, it became evident that, notwithstanding how inspired students were during assemblies, most were simply asking their parents and others for change. What they collected went into the change jars located in their classrooms, and that was the extent of their commitment, not a big deal except to the students who had earned what they contributed.

I then adopted the slogan, "The buck stops here," affording me an opportunity to provide a brief history lesson on Harry Truman, explain the meaning of double entendre, and urge students to accept personal responsibility for helping others. I also didn't mind suggesting that the drive included bucks. Someday, I hope to have the courage to conduct a "Keep your Change" drive.

The slogan worked! Soon after the first drive began, I received an e-mail from a mother informing me that her daughter had been so inspired during the assembly that day, she insisted on making and selling baked goods with a friend that weekend. They earned eighty-seven dollars in two days! The daughter and mother were thrilled.

Encouraged by the impact the "buck stops here" slogan was having, I raised the bar. I began telling students they were not allowed to ask for money from their parents. When I said that not one penny could come from their parents, one young boy stood and asked, "Can I use my allowance?" I asked, "Do you earn it?" He lowered and shrugged his shoulders disappointed to learn that his unearned allowance didn't qualify. He'd have to earn what he gave.

I later introduced the parent-disqualification rule to Corte Madera elementary school in Portola Valley. Portola Valley is a very affluent community in what is referred to as "Silicon Valley". I ruled out parents as a source for student donations, not knowing what impact it would have on fundraising. Truth is, I didn't and don't care how much is raised. It's more important that students take personal responsibility and earn what they contribute. Fundraising drives are not about raising money: they are but one small aspect of raising children. To simplify the message our fundraising drives became "Earn It" drives

Three months after the first Earn It drive began in Corte Madera, I was invited back to report on my most recent trip to Afghanistan. At the end of my talk, three students came to the front of the



room. One proudly announced, “Mr. MacKenzie, when you came here last time, you said we couldn’t go to our parents for money.” The three then explained how they had earned money.

One taught friends how to play lacrosse for a small fee. His mother emailed me video clips of his lessons. Others prepared and served food at dinner parties they held, played an instrument in public, baked and sold bakery goods, walked dogs, mowed lawns, washed cars, and earned money babysitting.

Several parents had helped their children make signs, taught their children how to bake, and set up tables and booths. One parent was told she could not be near the table where her daughter was selling the cupcakes she’d baked. The mother stood far enough away to not be noticed by customers.

Corte Madera sponsored four Afghan street children. The first Earn It year, students did the math. They each needed to earn thirty-two dollars to reach the amount required to support all four children. They presented me with a check for \$2,512.57, \$512.57 more than was needed and over twice what had been collected during previous Change for Change drives.

The next year, Corte Madera students presented me with a check in an amount over four thousand five hundred dollars. The extra money was used to purchase desks for a girls’ school. During a presentation at Corte Madera, I showed photos of Afghan children sitting at the desks the Corte Madera students had earned. At the receiving end, hundreds of Afghans know that American children earned money to support them. The irony is not lost, that children who needn’t work are working for children who must.

I’ve received several Earn It stories—two of which are my favorites. A Corte Madera student informed his teacher that his mother had asked if she could just write a check for fifty dollars. He told his teacher, “Don’t worry, I took care of it.” He had explained to his mother why it was important for him to take personal responsibility for “his” donation.

Another Corte Madera student earned and saved a hundred dollars over a one-year period. He had a hundred-dollar bill in his wallet that he lost on his way to school. His wallet was found, but the bill was gone. Upon learning of his loss, several parents stepped forward and replaced what he’d lost.

What’s most encouraging about this story is that he earned one hundred dollars between the first and second drives, which were held a year apart. He had accepted personal responsibility for helping Afghan children throughout the year, not just during a fundraising drive. In my world this is equivalent to a home run with bases loaded, in the bottom of the ninth during the last game of a world series.

Prizes and Awards – Should there Be?

Educators and I have wrestled with whether prizes or awards should be given to the individuals, class and grade that raise the most money or achieve certain plateaus. We’re accustomed to rewarding and recognizing students who perform better than their peers in almost everything else. We have grades to measure academic achievement, trophies and medals for the best athletes, placement recognitions for musicians and artists. Why shouldn’t the most productive fundraisers be recognized and rewarded? In all likelihood more money will be raised if there are prizes and awards.

Trust in Education does not offer prizes, leaving the decision entirely to the schools. In an ideal world, students would fundraise because they care about the cause, without needing to be motivated by competition. I am not, however, troubled by rewarding a class or grade level with a

pizza or root beer float day. Rewarding teams who work together to achieve a common goal, is, all things considered, a plus.

Selecting a Local or International Organization to Support

I am an advocate for supporting smaller grass roots organizations that can and do report to students how the money they raise is spent. Small organizations are able to draw upon local volunteers willing to work for free. The money they raise goes further as a result.

Most donors prefer to donate to specific undertakings rather than make general contributions. Studies have been conducted comparing general to specific purpose contributions with predictable results. People give more to specific projects than they do to general appeals for funds.

Heifer International enables donors to earmark their donations for specific programs, one of which is buying a milking cow for a family that is obligated to give the cow's first born to another family and so on and so on. Photos are available of cows and families that have received a cow.

Imagine the impact if students were provided with a photo of the cow purchased with their money and information about the family who received it. That level of reporting can only be done by smaller organizations. I know how powerful it can be for American students to have a direct connection with what and who they support. In June 2017, Burton Valley elementary students earned enough money to purchase and install twenty computers for a new computer library. When they returned to school in August they were shown photos of Afghan children using the computers purchased with their "earn it" dollars. The computers were "theirs".

Recommendations from Kim Isaacs

I've had the pleasure of working with Kim Isaacs, a teacher at Burton Valley Elementary School in Lafayette, California for more years than I can remember. She has been in the trenches on the front line of all the school's Trust in Education fundraising drives beginning with "Change for Change". Her recommendations are:

1. Plan far in advance, particularly when students are expected to play a major role. They need time to decide how to promote the drive and to execute.
2. Consider adding another student government elected officer, someone in charge of service projects.
3. Two weeks is the amount of time established for earn it drives at Burton Valley elementary school with "flexibility at the end". Enable students to have three weekends to earn.

It's not easy but try to find a parent or parents willing to help. Teachers are already burdened with responsibilities before and after school and justifiably not anxious to take on more.

The Earn It approach to fundraising has been, in my experience, an unqualified success. Students establish personal goals, often work in groups, devise and execute plans of action, and experience the joy and pride of having personally made a difference.

For “Ten Cool Ways for Schools to Raise Cash”, other than Earn It visit <http://www.familycircle.com/family-fun/volunteering/cool-ways-for-schools-to-raise-cash/>.

Fundraising Events and Activities

I found these on the internet. Note: all of these involve children working together, develop a sense of community and are fun.

Events Kid Compassion Project has held:

https://www.kidscompassionproject.org/events/list/?tribe_paged=1&tribe_event_display=past

1. [Anchor Center Fall Fundraiser: Cherrity Pie Festival](#)

Cherrity Pie Festival, is pie themed and will include pie walks, a pie eating contest, pizza pie, inflatable games, a silent auction, face painting and more! Tickets are \$10 for adults/teens and kids 12 and under are free.

2. [Hands Up For the Children – KCP Spotlight Event](#)

We will purchase the supplies for the homeless care kits with your registration fees and donations. Participants will come together to pack supply bags with much needed food and essentials to serve hungry children in Denver.

3. [Jack O Lantern Contest Registration](#)

Enjoy a fun evening for a great cause...Bring completed Jack O' Lanterns to the event .

This event filled to 100 kids within 3 hours of opening, but we do have a waiting list. Participants will come together to pack backpacks with much-needed essentials and a few comfort items for the homeless and poverty stricken children...



4. [Miscellaneous Activities](#)

One of our goals at Kids' Compassion Project is to foster compassion and respect for our elders. Our next event will give your child an opportunity to visit the residents at The Colorado Veterans Home and spend time building new friendships, playing games and delivering cookies to the residents who would welcome a friendly visit.

Join us for our next spotlight event. Participants will be assisting in gathering needed supplies then assembling backpacks for abused and neglected children in the Denver Juvenile Court system.

Freedom Service Dogs: 35 kids came together to learn about service animals and their owners. The participants created 97 tug ropes, which are used in training.

Project Worthmore: 60 kids came together to wrap 363 donated new toys for children of refugee families in the Denver area. The older participants took part in an immersive refugee simulation run.

A4 What have been your most successful fundraising drives and events? What have been your most successful school projects that don't involve fundraising. What advice and recommendations would you give to others?

Post your response to the A4 Forum Location

Consider Implementing in your Class and School

This “best practices” list will grow over time as you and others send recommendations of what has proven successful. *Last Updated October 2018*

I learned about circle time from, Deborah Hungerford, a fifth grade teacher at Springhill Elementary School in Lafayette. She starts every class with circle time and has for twenty-eight years. Of all the tools available to a teacher, circle time seems to me to be the one with the greatest potential impact on a student’s compassion and empathy, particularly the way Deborah conducts hers.



Deborah shared her advice and recommendations;

“At the beginning of the school year in addition to setting goals, rules and expectations for my class I also begin preparing my students for daily Circle. This practice is modeled after the TRIBES Program, by Jeanne Gibbs. I received training in Tribes and Circle at the beginning of my teaching career and I have continued to incorporate Circle Time into my daily routine for the past twenty-eight years. I feel it is singularly the most beneficial aspect in creating a community of caring, empathetic people.

Before our first circle time I discuss and explain the following Tribes agreements:

➤ Attentive Listening

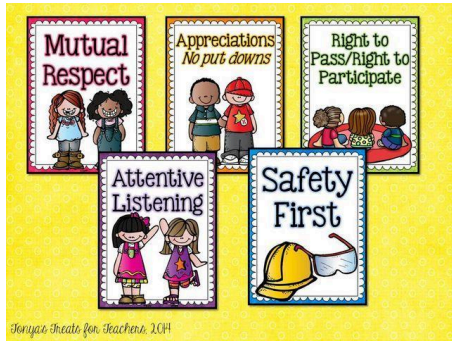
. We will listen with our eyes, ears, and heart. This is the most important social skill of all to be taught and practiced.

➤ Appreciation/No put-downs. We will speak kindly to others and think of other people’s feelings.

➤ Right to pass

. We have the right to pass in certain activities and know that the more we participate the more we gain.

➤ Confidentiality/Respect. We will treat people the way we want to be treated and keep what was shared in circle contained to our class.



Tribes Process <http://tribes.com/about>

Thousands of schools throughout the United States, Canada, Australia and other countries have become Tribes Learning Communities, safe and caring environments in which students can thrive.

Tips for teaching the Tribe Agreements:

I have found it to be very beneficial to have the class play-act both positive listening skills and also negative listening skills. I emphasize 'listening with the heart'. In other words, listening with empathy. This social skill is an on-going practice and it takes a lot of time for students to incorporate this trait into circle and their daily lives.

It is essential to create a safe classroom environment in order to have a genuine daily community circle time. I model positive character traits and behaviors, and over time I expect the class to develop these skills and exhibit them both in circle and in class. Circle Time provides the perfect opportunity for practice and reinforcement.

I have created a space in my room large enough for us all to sit on a carpet in a circle. In past years I have used a talking stick as it is important to have the students hold something to help ground them while talking. This year I have switched to a microphone as it has the added benefit of amplifying their soft quiet voices.

I have also started incorporating a silent mindfulness exercise time at the start of Circle. I ask the class to sit in silence and notice their breathing, their bodies, their feelings and what they are grateful for in their lives. I am gradually increasing the time and their endurance for this group silence. I have found it to be very effective in grounding the class and giving them time to consider what they are feeling and experiencing.

My Circle time incorporates these three components:

A. "All students must share what they are feeling (this is not optional). The important lesson with this daily activity is to build their vocabulary of feeling words. Some students are not in touch with their feelings, but over the course of the school year, they begin to recognize their feelings and articulate what they are feeling with appropriate words.

B. After all students have shared their feeling they may ask questions of each other based on what has been shared (students have the option at this point to use their right to pass).

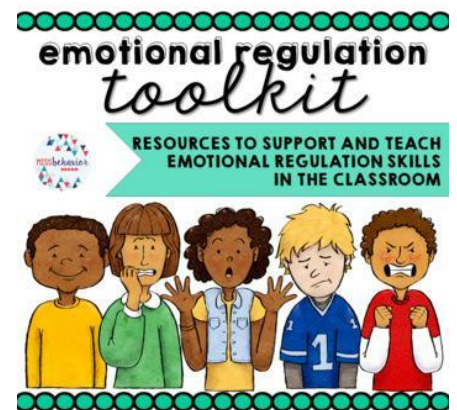
C. The third essential part of our circle time is to give appreciations. I call it ‘acts of kindness’ (This is optional but highly encouraged). We start with ‘in class’ acts of kindness and I stress that it is not appreciating friendships, but actively appreciating those little things students do for each other in the course of the school day. It could be as simple as sharing markers. It takes time for students to recognize the many simple acts they do for each other, and when they say them out loud, it is a positive and empowering experience for the both parties. I then give time for them to appreciate someone outside our classroom community. This often includes parents or coaches or others in their daily lives."

I was particularly impressed by Deborah’s requirement that students share how they are feeling every morning. I was in school for twenty years. I recall being asked my grades, my score on a test, whether my team won, whether I had scored any goals and what college I would be attending. In hindsight I was being judged and judged myself by how well I did in competing with my classmates. Not once was I ever asked how I was feeling nor do I recall asking the question myself.

I now realize how important sharing feelings among classmates is. Having feelings out in the open rather than stored inside can’t help but trigger empathy and compassion. Won’t students discover they share more in common than not and therefore be more likely to come to the aid of those in need? Looking back I realize that the greatest rewards in life come from the impact we have on the lives of others. The sooner children learn this lesson the happier and more rewarding their lives will be.

Their “toolkit” is described as follows;

“The Start Empathy Toolkit is the product of interviews with more than 60 educators and leading social entrepreneurs. We asked quite simply, “What works?” We wanted to know what it would take to create a classroom where kids’ social and emotional needs are met and how to cultivate the kinds of skills that are critical for success in today’s (and tomorrow’s) world. The result is not a prescription or a formula, or a silver-bullet fix. Consider this a living set of tools: tools that will grow and evolve over time, as each of us adds our own. We encourage you to think beyond your classroom walls to what it takes to mobilize your entire school community. Together, let’s creatively reimagine what change making education can look like.



The toolkit contains the combined wisdom of dozens of teachers, organizations, and people who live this everyday: tips and tools, lesson plans and examples, and, most importantly, insights that can help inform everything from how you design your classroom to your daily interactions with students and colleagues. Some exercises can be done in as little as two minutes, while others can take the form of months-long class projects, applied to a range of subjects. Others simply offer a strategy you can adapt to your existing lesson plans, and tips that are proven to improve teacher and

student performance alike. Some you may be familiar with, and others may be new. We invite you to test these in your classroom, and use them to generate ideas of your own.”

2. Buddy Stops

An increasing number of schools are providing “Buddy Stops”, a bench or place on their campus where students can sit who need a friend. Harton Primary School in the UK selects students to serve as “playground Buddies” who are responsible for making certain that whoever goes to the Buddy Stop will have a friend. Having the students make, decorate and maintain a Buddy Stop bench would be a project they’d likely enjoy. There are also Boy or Girl Scouts who are likely to be willing to make a Buddy Stop or bench to earn a merit badge.

My father was a colonel in the United States Air Force. We moved every three or four years. Finding and establishing friends at new schools would have been much easier if all I had to do was sit on a Buddy bench.

3. Acts of Kindness Walls

Students are encouraged to observe others doing random acts of kindness and to write them on the board, or if someone is kind to them they can write the act of kindness on the board. At the end of each week someone reads a kindness note from each grade over the intercom and a student from each grade is honored for his/her act of kindness.

4. Teaching Children about Life in Other Countries

"One of my most powerful lessons is a lesson I teach about children in Guatemala that live in trash dumps. I am able to show my students pictures of families in Guatemala and how their lives are changed with the help of others. We compare how children live in other countries with how children live in the United States. We talk about how it might feel to go a whole day without food, or what it might feel like to not be able to go to school but instead stay home while your parents go to work, or what it might feel like to have to work at age seven or eight. Young children are very capable of putting themselves in the shoes of others and expressing how it might feel to live like them".

5. Slam Poetry

"This year we did Slam Poetry" and it was a huge success. Students had to write a slam poem and perform it in front of the class about something that is important to them. They had to spill their guts on stage. One student brought the whole class to tears with her tragic story of foster care. The next time she needed a pencil, ten students were begging to give her one. Another shared why she isn't in school everyday. Her anxiety keeps her home. A boy wrote about how he is "haunted by trouble" given that he is known as a trouble maker. These assignments lead to students showing compassion on a daily basis. The advice I would give to other teachers would be to incorporate empathy into your curriculum and find places that compassion is present and use those as teaching moments."

6. Peer Mediations

"There are often conflicts that arise among my students over various dramas around social media, bullying, feeling left out, etc. One of the techniques I use that does work for the most part is peer mediation. While I often lead the meditations, I utilize peers that have been trained in mediation to help facilitate the mediations. Peers often have more respect and empathy for each other than an older educator. During the meditations which we sometimes call "circles" students are encouraged to talk about the harm that was caused to them and how it made them feel. Students are encouraged to repair the harm and help move the situation forward so that everyone involved can feel heard and empathized with. The technique used to work better before social media began to dominate their social culture. Recently I find that as soon as a "circle" or "peer mediation" is complete, the students are back on social media talking about it. Until the school bans the use of phones in school, this is a major issue we will combat."

7. Restorative Justice Circles

"Restorative justice takes more than two parties into account. Restorative justice does exactly that; it works with all parties involved in a harm caused. It is a specially designed program that has a training program for educators that I went to. Information about it can be found at www.restorativejustice.org. The training equips educators with notecards with questions on them to ask the parties involved. The training is extensive and allows educators to feel comfortable enough to run a circle that will have a positive outcome.

These restorative justice circles can also be used when the community suffers. For example, I had a ninth grader that was shot and killed this year and the students obviously had a really hard time with it. Having a "circle" was a helpful way to allow students an opportunity to express how they felt while hearing from others and encouraging empathy. The advice I would give others around teaching empathy is to not push too hard and allow students to have open forums to discuss emotions. It is also imperative to model good empathetic behavior. Telling them that "everything will be ok" when a friend has been killed or their parent disowns them is not helpful to their situation. I find that showing empathy and asking how I can help is the most useful way to model empathy. Students learn to do the same with each other. We as educators cannot always fix every situation, but sometimes showing empathy and being supportive are the most helpful things we can do".

8. Issue Bins or Boxes

"Our principal encourages teachers to conduct classroom meetings at least once a week to give students time to discuss issues or problems they are having. The topic discussed may be identified by the student, teacher, principal, playground supervisor, lunchroom aide, or other school staff. For example, if a student is having trouble finding someone to play with on the playground, the student would either tell a teacher or playground supervisor or write it on a note and deposit it into the "Issue Bin" in the classroom. The next time a meeting is held, the issue would be brought up and discussed. If the issue is pressing, the teacher may hold an impromptu meeting rather than waiting for the regularly scheduled meeting. If there is an issue in the lunchroom, such as students throwing food, the classroom meeting may address why this is problematic for students and the lunchroom

staff. This helps students see issues/problems from another person's perspective and to think about ways to solve these problems themselves.



9. Monthly Meetings with Guidance Counselors

"We also have monthly lessons with the school guidance counsellor. Usually the topic of these lessons is decided by the counsellor, but if a class is having a particular problem, the counsellor may create a lesson specific to the issue. Teachers are required to stay in the classroom during the counsellor's lesson, rather than using the time for planning or lesson preparation. Listening to the guidance counsellor's lesson is very helpful because it gives everyone (students and teachers) the same language to use to discuss or address issues.

One lesson our guidance counsellor shared with our students was the concept of "warm fuzzies" and "cold pricklies." The former are things people say that make us feel good and the latter are things people say that make us feel bad. Students practiced giving each other "warm fuzzies." They traced their hand on construction paper and then went around the room asking five people to write a warm fuzzy or compliment on each of the paper fingers. Throughout the year, teachers could use the concept of warm fuzzies and cold pricklies to help students think about how their words or actions made others feel."

10. Games Students Can Play

While surfing the web I stumbled upon an organization, Playworks, devoted to evaluating, improving and creating games that students can play. Its services include advising individual schools and coaches on what games are best under different circumstances and to achieve prescribed objectives.

What is particularly impressive about this organization is that it offers a "Playbook" that can be downloaded without charge and has offices located throughout the country enabling it to service many schools and school districts. The Playbook is 347 pages and includes an index of games at the end.

Any teacher involved in supervising or organizing recess or who includes games in his/her classroom will benefit from the advice provided on its website.

<https://www.playworks.org/about/what-we-do/>

11. Let them eat cake

"In the Danish education system empathy is considered as important as teaching math and literature, and it is woven into the school's curriculum from pre-school through high school. Included within their curriculum is Klassen Time ("Class Time"). Klassen time is described by Jessica Alexander, author of "The Danish way of Parenting";

"The Class's Hour" is set for a special time once a week, and it is a core part of the curriculum. The purpose is for all the students to come together in a comfortable setting to talk about any problems

they may be having. Together, the class tries to find a solution. This could be an issue between two students or a group, or even something unrelated to school at all. If there are no problems to be discussed, then they simply come together to relax and hygge — or cozy around together.

This is where the “Klassen Time kage,” or “the Class Hour cake,” comes in. It’s a simple cake that students take turns baking every week for the occasion. If they don’t want to bake, they can bring in any kind of hyggelige (cozy) snack to enjoy together after the talk. The “Class Hour cake” is such an integral part of Danish culture that it even has its own recipe.

During the Class’s Hour, the teacher brings up any issues they may have observed, in addition to what the students themselves mention.

You can read the entire article <https://www.salon.com/2016/08/09/teaching-kids-empathy-in-danish-schools-its-well-its-a-piece-of-cake/>

12. Have a conversation with someone you don’t know.

Have students pair up with a student they don’t know and provide the pairs with five questions to ask each other. Each student introduces their partner to the class, speaking as if they were their partner, while the rest of the class looks at the student being introduced. This exercise “helps students to see each other more deeply.”

13. Alliteration Nicknames

- a. Ask students what characteristics or words describe a person of good character. Brainstorm ideas and write them on the board.
- b. Tell students to think of a word that matches a character attribute and that begins with the same letter as their first name. This can be done individually, in pairs, or in groups with others whose first names begin with the same letter. Share an example using your own name. For example: Patient (Miss) Penny. Circulate the room and help students or groups as necessary.
- c. Once students have chosen their attribute, have students say the word and their name together. For example, student Allie may choose the word altruistic. She would say aloud, “altruistic Allie.”
- d. Tell students they just created alliteration. Explain that alliteration is what you get when a group of words begins with the same letter, (e.g., funny Frida; slow, silly snail).
- e. Tell students that one of the best ways to develop a habit or practice a behavior regularly is to be reminded of it often. To remind each other to be more like their chosen attribute, the students and teacher should call each other by their alliteration nicknames.
- f. To remember everyone’s new nicknames, tell students they will create nameplates.
- g. Distribute a sheet of heavy stock paper and coloring utensils to each child and have the students create nameplates to place on their desk.
- h. Call students by their nicknames for the day (or the week, month, or school year) and remind them to think about living up to their chosen nicknames.

Recommended by Character Counts for grades k – 5 – For this and more recommendations for elementary lessons

<https://s3.amazonaws.com/ccsc/CCWEEK/2016+CC!+Elementary+Lesson+Plan.pdf>

14. Use one another’s name in conversation and debate.

“Change can begin with a simple modification of daily routine. At Brooklyn’s High School of Telecommunication Arts and Technology, every teacher and student is required to use each other’s name in conversation and debate. “Kindness is the operating order for our school,” says assistant principal Jeffrey Osler. “All interaction should reflect that. When you use a person’s name, it shows respect to them and their ideas, no matter the context.”

15. A day in their shoes - literally

Education expert Molly Barker created an easy tool for younger kids to learn about empathy and compassion: Simply take a few pairs of shoes and label them. “Poor,” “rich,” “boy,” “girl,” “homeless,” “physically disabled,” “old,” “young,” “sick,” “from a different country,” “different religion,” “different ethnicity,” and “different political beliefs.” She then asks the child to “walk” in another person’s shoes.

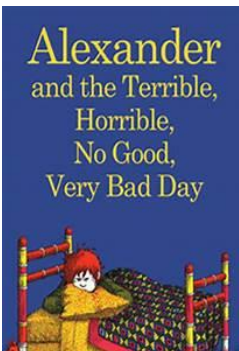
16. Replace detention with meditation. www.dailygood.org/story/1703/genius-school-replaces-detention-with-meditation-isabelle-khoo/

17. Mindfulness

I’m just learning about mindfulness. A considerable number of teachers and others swear by it. Deborah Hungerford notes that she is devoting more time to mindfulness during circle time. It has been suggested that circle times begin with mindfulness as a means of quieting students and getting them to focus.

James Butler, Austin Independent School District Teacher of the Year and Pre-K teacher at Gullett Elementary School, is bringing mindfulness into all Austin classrooms with his Mindful Classrooms Curriculum. He has 16 years teaching experience, including teaching abroad for a year in rural Namibia. Early childhood education is his passion, and seven years ago he helped establish the Pre-K program at Gullett Elementary. Overseas, he used mindfulness as a way to relieve stress and bond with his students. Back in Austin, he started incorporating mindfulness into his daily teaching routine. In the summer of 2015, AISD Superintendent Paul Cruz learned of Butler’s Mindful

Classrooms curriculum and immediately helped to get it into more classrooms in the school district. Today, Mindful Classrooms is in 45 Austin area elementary schools. That’s 250 classrooms and counting.



The children’s book by Judith Viorst, “Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day,” is one of Butler’s favorites to read with his students. “Everyone has bad days and makes mistakes. But can you learn from those

mistakes?” That’s where the Mindful Classrooms curriculum really makes a difference. With five minutes of daily stretching and breathing practices, children are able to learn to be aware of what’s happening in the present moment, and thus are able to be more self-reliant and self-aware in potentially stressful moments.

In addition to national studies which confirm the mental and physical benefits of mindfulness, early AISD surveys show a 75% average improvement in the following categories: class atmosphere, students handling emotions, conflict resolution and teacher self-reflection. If that’s not enough, then just ask the students. One of Butler’s former students, now in third grade, shared: “Mindfulness helps me find peace and quiet.”

James Butler has uploaded videos to his YouTube channel and is a Free resource. It is recommended to watch the 5 Tips for Mindfulness Implementation video on his Mindful AISD YouTube playlist: <https://youtu.be/BQsnJfLFd5I> to get started.

James Butler's mindfulness blog offer tips and downloadable Free content: <https://www.smores.com/7985b-mindfulaisd>

More in his programs and workshops: <https://mindfulclassrooms.com/about-us>

18. Recommendations found in The Danish Way of Parenting:

A. “Mix children of different strengths and weaknesses and seat them accordingly. Students who are stronger academically are taught alongside those who are less strong; shier kids with more gregarious ones; and so on. This is done subtly... The goal is for students to see that everyone has positive qualities and to try to help each other reach the next level... This system fosters collaboration, teamwork, and respect.”

“Studies show that there is a huge learning curve in teaching others. Students who teach others work harder to understand the material, recall it more precisely, and use it more effectively. But they also have to try to understand the perspective of other students in order to help them where they are having trouble.”

B. Reading stories is of course a powerful means of communicating with children, enlisting emotions, feelings, observations and insights. Apparently, stories read to children in American schools are “nice stories” with happy endings while Denmark teachers read books that encompass all emotions, including negative and uncomfortable ones. Jane Alexander maintains that “dealing with reality, even at the level kids can handle, is honest and is proven to significantly improve empathy”. (page95).

C. “Children in the Danish school system participate in a mandatory national program called Step by Step as early as preschool. The children are shown pictures of kids who are each exhibiting a different emotion: sadness, fear, anger, frustration, happiness, and so on. The students talk about these cards and put into words what the child is sensing, learning to conceptualize their own and others’ feelings. They learn empathy, problem-solving, self-control, and how to read facial

expressions. An essential part of the program is that the facilitators and children aren't judgmental of the emotions they see; instead, they simply recognize and respect those sentiments."

Jessica Alexander, "America's Insensitive Children?"

<https://www.theatlantic.com/education/archive/2016/08/the-us-empathy-gap/494975/> to read article

A5 What techniques do you use in teaching empathy and compassion? What works and doesn't? What advice would you give others?

Post your response to the A5 Forum Location

A6 Assume you were in charge and could include character development in your school's curriculum (including teaching empathy and compassion), what would your curriculum include?

Post your response to the A6 Forum Location

A7 If you tried any of the techniques, projects, exercises events etc. provided in this course describe what you did, the outcome and what you would recommend to others. Are there any that you or your school decided to use that weren't being used before?

Post your response to the A7 Forum Location

Conclusion



You have perhaps learned, as I did, that empathy and compassion are not genetically determined, although some newborns seem to be more caring than others. We know these character traits can be learned and taught, as they are in Denmark.

I undertook this project for a simple reason. I came to the realization over the past fifteen years that givers are happier and lead more rewarding and fulfilling lives. The sooner children begin caring about others as much as they care about themselves the better. They'll be happier.

Bruce Wodams assures me that student performance and achievement will not decline as a result of devoting more time to character development. In fact, in his experience, both rise. A happy child performs better than one who isn't.

Bruce and I have now met with the principals of four elementary schools, one middle school and the superintendent of the Lafayette School District. Without exception they all recognize that character development is as important as learning the subjects taught. The issue is not whether to devote more time to character development. It's what should be done.

I'm well aware of the burdens and expectations placed upon teachers, particularly in light of the standardized tests students must take. The last thing teachers need or want is one more program imposed from the top.

You may have noticed that this course is not a program or curriculum. That was by design. My hope is that teachers will collaborate, experiment, and determine what works best in their rooms and schools. Over time teachers will make informed decisions as to what to incorporate in their classroom.

Finally, I suspect I'm preaching to the choir. Odds are you're a giver. What teacher isn't? You know how critical character development is and likely agree that more needs to be done. Be the catalyst in your school and enlist, if necessary, someone to inspire parents and the community to become involved. A quote, I recently found, is now posted on my refrigerator.

“Change will not come if we wait for some other person or some other time. We are the ones we've been waiting for. We are the change that we seek.”

Barak Obama

A8 *How could this course be improved? What topics weren't covered that should be? Provide links to articles and videos that you think should be included in this course. What would you delete from this course and why?*

Place your response in the correct Submit Assignment A8 Section

GOOD LUCK!!!

Course Assessment Rubric

| Exemplary: A+ to A- | Acceptable: B+ to B- | Unacceptable: |
|--|---|--|
| Reflective, thoughtful ideas relevant to the assignment are clearly stated | Satisfactorily completes all assignment | Ideas are not clear or relevant |
| Very well organized | Generally well organized | Shows little or no organization |
| Responses show that resources have been well understood | Responses show that resources were read | Few or no facts or specific details from the resources |
| Free of spelling and/or grammatical errors | Writing contains a few spelling and/or grammatical errors | Numerous spelling and/or grammatical errors make the writing difficult to read |