

State Operated Programs of Virginia

Sharpening Our Perspective

Brought to you by: The Cultivating Character Committee

Hope, Optimism, Grit, Perseverance, Persistence, and Resilience

August and September 2016

Words of Wisdom

It's the **Social and Emotional Learning** kickoff! That's right! We have officially begun our journey into what will surely be another rewarding and exciting year for SOP! In this edition of *Sharpening Our Perspective*, we set out to establish this newsletter as well as the Cultivating Character page on our SOP website (www.stateoperatedprograms.org) as practical and easy-to-use resources right at your fingertips. In fact, we want you to be so successful in implementing social and emotional learning that you can access these resources from anywhere via the Internet. Why reinvent the wheel when you can just click and download helpful tools with ease? These two powerful resources are for all of SOP (and possibly the rest of the world) to grow SEL!

Now, we would be remiss if we didn't clearly state that we want to hear from you! No one person or center can do it alone. So, be encouraged to drop us a few lines and share what is working well in your center, and we will be sure to highlight it in our Center Spotlight. Furthermore, communicating our ideas will continue to enhance the work we have committed to during the 2016-2017 school year. That said, we are excited for all the possibilities SEL will grant us to enhance our relationships with students and residents!

- Daniel Woodard

Ready Resources

Click on the links below for:

[Lesson Plan on Building Resilience and Teaching Optimism](#)

[Optimism Website and Presentation for Teachers](#)

[Hope and Optimism: The Other 21st Century Skills](#)

[Character Lab Optimism Resources](#)

[Author Gretchen Rubin's Blog and Podcasts on *The Happiness Project*](#)

Videos

[Michael Jordan's 2009 NBA Hall of Fame Speech](#)

[Motivational Video on Hope](#)

[Micro-Class: What is Hope and Why Does it Matter?](#)

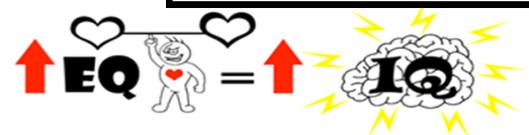
[Inspirational Quotes: Hope and Healing](#)

The Vision Statement of the Cultivating Character Committee:
Empowering SOP educators to cultivate social and emotional intelligence and excellence of character.

In this issue:

- ◆ Words of Wisdom
- ◆ Ready Resources
- ◆ Enriching Character
- ◆ YA Books of the Month

"A river cuts through a rock not because of its power but its persistence."
- Jim Watkins



Enriching Character

As a teacher new to the detention setting, I was slightly confounded by the concept of “Summer Enrichment” and what to do with the students during this found block of time. As the Cultivating Character Liaison in my center, I should be modeling and infusing Character Education into my curriculum throughout the year. What better time to spotlight Character Ed than during Summer Enrichment? And what better way to do it than through movies?

Someone passed the “Social/Emotional Learning Resources” packet from SOP along to me, and I used this as my starting point. I poured over the “Character Education Movies” pages in the back of it and got to work. Based on the suggestions of my Dean, I chose to begin my “Character Education Through the Movies” unit with *Life of Pi*. I used the suggested “Cultivating Character Traits” of *hope*, self-discipline, *grit*, tolerance, *perseverance*, acceptance, cooperation, and courage and created a graphic organizer for the students to use to record examples of specific character traits as they watched. The students were allowed to choose which four character traits to look for and record. Though many of them had seen the movie before, they were watching it through the new lens of looking for self-chosen character traits, giving them both “choice and voice”.

To my surprise, this first movie study went very well! Each day, I would stop the movie with 10 or so minutes left of class to record examples and share them as a group. This activity inspired a lot of meaningful and even poignant conversation at the end of each class period. I completed the movie study with a *Kahoot* game that I made to review the eight character traits on which we focused.

Some additional benefits followed this first movie study. For one, I was thrilled when students began asking about the book *Life of Pi*, on which the movie is based. Two students have read it in its entirety so far: one of them even in Spanish! Additionally, watching the movie together has given us the common language of personal character development. When I tell a student that he or she needs to be more tolerant of others, they know exactly what I mean. They have also begun to self-regulate and share examples of when they demonstrate positive character traits that we have studied.

Upon completion of *Life of Pi*, the second movie we watched was *42: The Jackie Robinson Story*, which went even better (in my opinion) than *LOP*. The students knew what to expect and were challenged with a few more character traits such as *optimism* to look for and record. Here in our week three, we are watching *Rudy*, which just happens to be one of my favorite movies of all time and an excellent example of both *persistence* and *resilience*.

All in all, the summer movie study has been a great experience for both them as students and me as a teacher. I have thoroughly enjoyed creating new materials, finding new resources, and connecting with the students on another level. Since it has been so successful, I plan to continue movie studies throughout the school year this year. I hope you find some of my materials and resources below to be helpful as you possibly consider conducting your own!

- Kristin Sheetz

***Life of Pi* Resources**

[Character Traits in Life of Pi](#)
[Graphic Organizer](#)

[Character Traits in Life of Pi](#)

Kahoot!

[Psychology Today Article:](#)
[“Meaning, Faith, and the Life of Pi”](#)

[You Tube Video: Life of Pi](#)
[Analysis Part One](#)

[You Tube Video: Life of Pi](#)
[Analysis Part Two](#)

***42: The Jackie Robinson* Story Resources**

[Jackie Robinson: Influence, Actions, And Impact Graphic Organizer](#)

[Character Traits in 42: The Jackie Robinson Story](#)

Kahoot!

[History vs. Hollywood Article: 42 Movie vs. 42 True Story](#)

[Movie Leadership Article:](#)
[“42: Five Lessons About Change”](#)

[Timeline of First African-American Professional Athletes Power Point](#)

***Rudy* Resources**

[Character Traits in Rudy](#)
[Graphic Organizer](#)

[Character Traits in Rudy](#)

Kahoot!

[True. Sports. Movies. Article on Rudy](#)

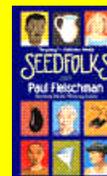
[Two Lessons in the Movie Rudy That Can Change Your Life](#)

YA Books of the Month

These Young Adult novels

feature:

**Hope, Optimism,
Persistence, and Resilience**

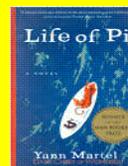


Seedfolks by Paul Fleischman

[Click for Summary and Review](#)

Life of Pi by Yann Matel

[Click for Summary and Review](#)



The Happiness Project by Gretchen Rubin

[Click Here for Summary and Review](#)

Additional Resources for Using Movies in the Classroom

1. www.teachwithmovies.org

Teach with Movies features lesson plans and learning guides based on more than 425 feature films. The site also features a specific page of movies and lesson plans exploring character education, ethics, and morality. [Click here to access the Character Education page.](#)

2. <http://www.movieleadership.com>

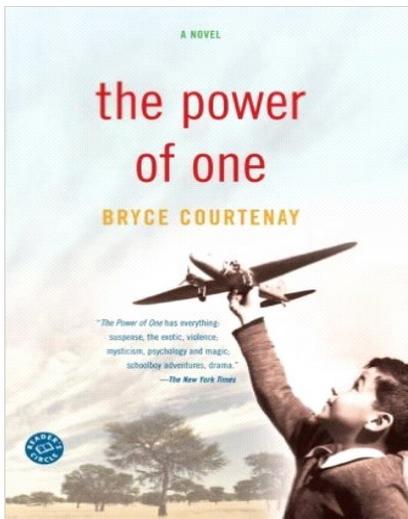
The **Movie Leadership** site aims to use inspiration from the movies to promote better leadership – providing ideas and source material for learning and development professionals, students and anyone wanting to become a more effective leader.

3. www.historyvshollywood.com

[Featured Review: The Power of One by Bryce Courtenay](#)

The Power of One is a book born from the single desire to hope even when hope seems impossible. This theme not only is relevant for the main character, Peekay, but also for the entire world in which Bryce Courtney uses as a backdrop for his tale. Set in South Africa during World War II, every character is faced with the tumultuous and uncertain times of Hitler's rampage. Two European societies are living together who find themselves on different sides of the war, and the children must learn to navigate the political and social influences of their parents and what this means for their daily lives. Not only are they faced with Nazi propaganda and beliefs, but each character must also face the wretchedness of racism inherent in colonialism oppression of the indigenous majority.

Peekay is a scrawny, smart British boy who is taught early on by his friend, an elderly German professor, to think logically and to use his brain in all things. He endures torture from his schoolmates, who are supporters of Hitler, but is able to maintain hope that his life will get better. Throughout the novel, Peekay gets help and maintains his optimism from sources that are widely considered inferior by society: an African witch doctor, a Jewish friend, a German professor, and an African prisoner. Each of these people gives Peekay the hope and optimism that the world is not full of hateful people who prey on the weak. From an African prisoner and one of his jailers, Peekay learns how to box, and throughout his journey, he gives hope to the oppressed African population who rally to his charisma and power as an unexpected champion. In the end, Peekay's journey through life is difficult, but with the help of his unlikely friends, he keeps not only his hope and optimism alive but the hope and optimism of thousands of other people.



- Gordon Blair
Newport News Juvenile Detention

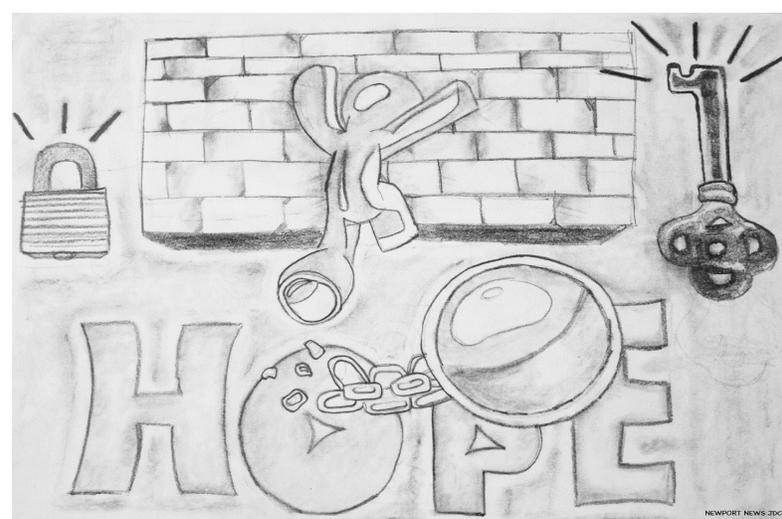
Even More Ready Resources

[Edutopia's Teaching Grit Cultivates Resilience and Perseverance](#)

[30 Inspiring Quotes to Help You Develop More Perseverance and Persistence](#)

Ted Talks Education Video:

[Grit: The Power of Passion of Perseverance](#)



Ideas for our October newsletter? Have a resource, teaching tip, or book review to share? Is your center doing something with Character Education you want the rest of the state to know about? Please submit them to Kristin.Sheetz@lcps.org.