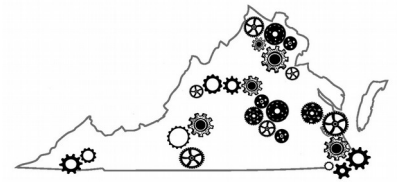




Sharpening Our Perspective

Brought to you by: The Cultivating Character Committee



State Operated Programs of Virginia

Citizenship, Service, Cooperation, and Responsibility

May 2016

Words of Wisdom

Do April showers bring May flowers? Ask that question to a few 2nd graders and you might leave convinced that an absence of rain in April voids the presence of flowers in May. The reality for most plant species is that flowering occurs as a result of temperature, not rain.

Why flowering? The process of flowering is simply nature's work in progress. Nature never complains or asks, "Why me?" It just works in harmony to provide you and me with landscapes of elegance.

We (SOP) can function similarly; but first, we have to prune poor practices from our centers, develop an "I will" attitude and quickly water those thirsting for character education. Citizenship is about performing works without recognition or praise, yet wanting to make a difference.

So, do April showers bring May flowers? It depends on your climate. A better question might be, "Can SOP remain in full bloom year round by cultivating character education?" Without a doubt, yes!

-Daniel Woodard

Ready Resources

Click on the links below for:

[Responsibility Quotes](#)

[Service Learning Ideas](#)

[Lesson Plan for Taking Responsibility Rather Than Making Excuses](#)

[Lesson Plan for Civic Responsibility](#)

[Citizenship Quotes](#)

[Cooperation Quotes](#)

Videos

[Citizenship in Six Words](#)

[Kid President: How to Change the World](#)

The Vision Statement of the Cultivating Character Committee:

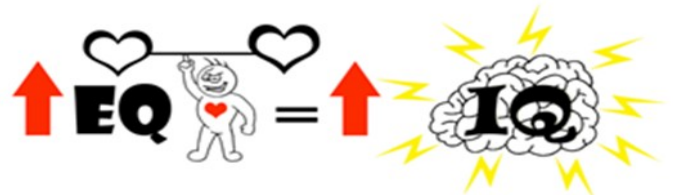
Empowering SOP educators to cultivate social emotional intelligence and excellence of character.

"The final forming of a person's character lies in their own hands."

-Anne Frank

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- Center Spotlight
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Center Spotlight

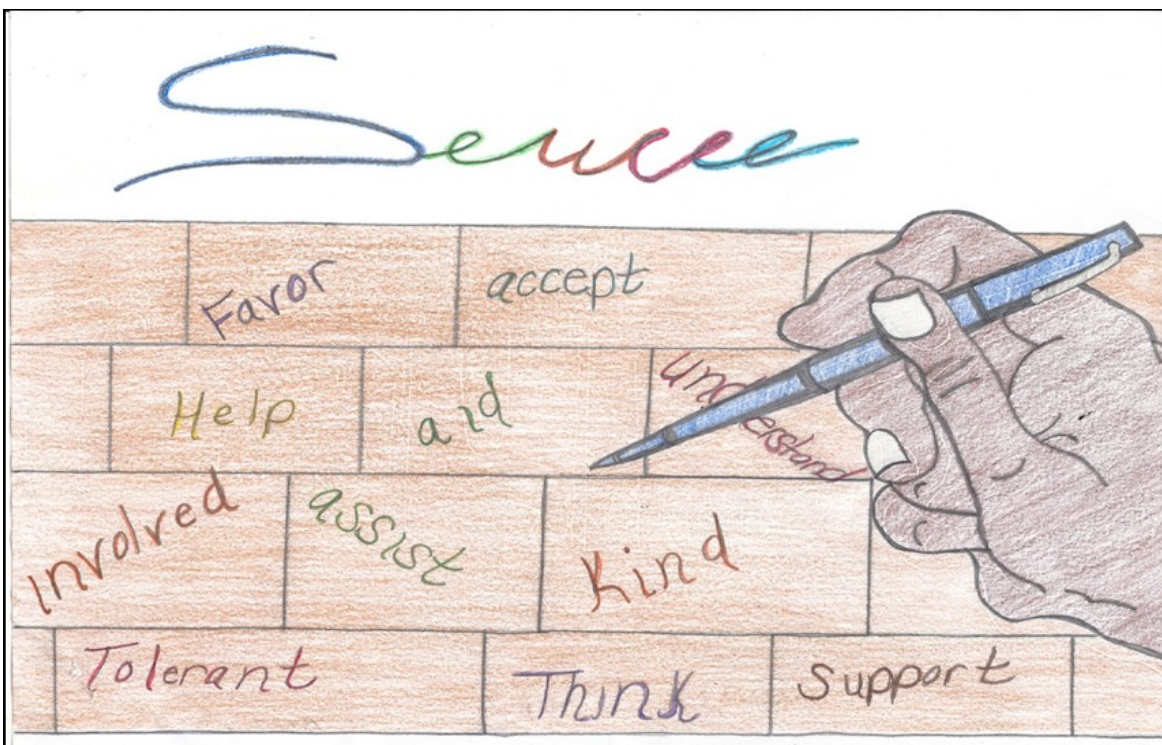
Oh, where art thou goodness exemplars? Tim Copeland, Shenandoah Valley Juvenile Detention Center (SVJC) Social Studies teacher, has found (lots of) them. Mr. Copeland is no stranger to threading character traits into the classroom. For example, when teaching a unit on civil rights, you will hear him and his students discussing courage and respect. Daily, his classes open with dynamic exchanges between teacher and student and peer to peer, all driven by Smart Board lessons created by Copeland himself. He believes character education "is a chance to help students see what good character traits are and instill within them the confidence that they can have the same traits learned."

Finding comfort in teaching character education can appear to be a challenging task. Educators, like Copeland, are determined to find creative solutions that bond character through the content. For him, it is not unusual to host roundtable discussions on politics or character analysis of notable men and women. Taking this approach has given voice to several students who normally would not express opinions to any audience.

Still, Copeland remembers a time when his attitude did not align well with character education. He says, "I didn't know how to do it and wasn't sure how to show students in a natural way...It felt like one more thing to do, an add-on." After rethinking his approach, Copeland created a simple and engaging plan that encourages students to learn the importance of character education while working to improve personal flaws.

Mr. Copeland recommends starting with just one trait in your lessons and building from that point. He says, "I finally realized that it did not have to be an add-on, and now it's easy." Yes, incorporating character education into the curriculum can be easy and simple, but some educators are fearful that character education will become too cumbersome with work. Rest assured, once character education is present in your classroom, you will wonder how you ever lived without it.

- Daniel Woodard



YA Books of the Month

These Young Adult novels feature

Citizenship, Responsibility, & Cooperation:



Scat
by
Carl Hiaasen

[Click for Summary and Review](#)



No Place
by
Todd Strasser

[Click for Summary and Review](#)

Content Connections

Social Studies: Prepare Index cards with a specific situation that calls for immediate action by the leader of a country or war being studied. Distribute cards to each student who describes briefly what he/she determines to be the most responsible action. Divide into small groups for discussion of each response. The group must come to consensus as to the most responsible course of action and explain why this choice was selected over other alternatives.

Language Arts: Conduct a newspaper character trait search. Choose a trait (such as citizenship or responsibility) and have the students look through the newspaper for stories that reflect that particular quality. Students each choose a favorite story, summarize for the rest of the class, and explain how it demonstrates the characteristic.

Science: Learn how pollution and trash affect the environment, including animals and plants. Discuss how applying different character traits toward our environment could help humans, animals, and plants.

Math: Conduct a study to see how much aluminum, paper, and other recyclable materials are currently being thrown away in your center or your community. Calculate how much space they would take up in a landfill.

Taken and adapted from learnnc.org

Ideas for our next month's newsletter? Have a resource or teaching tip 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.