

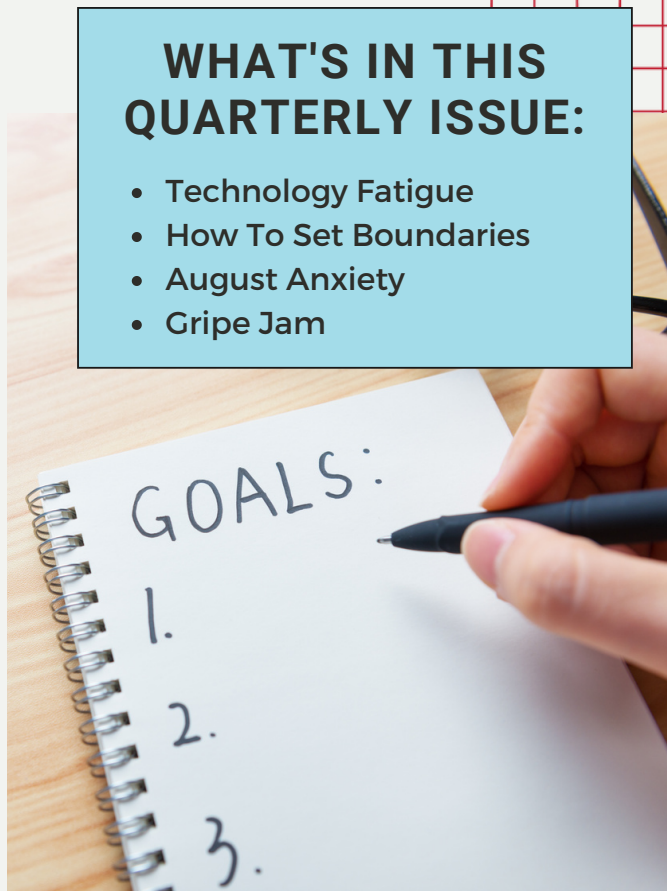
Character Education

QUARTERLY THEME

As the summer comes to an end, preparing for the next school year can be stressful and time-consuming to do on your own. This quarterly theme will focus on topics such as self-care, overcoming august teacher anxiety, how to set boundaries or goals in the classroom, and help put a spotlight on emerging topics in the education system.

WHAT'S IN THIS QUARTERLY ISSUE:

- Technology Fatigue
- How To Set Boundaries
- August Anxiety
- Gripe Jam



SPECIAL THANKS

Before we dive into the quarterly content, we would like to give special thanks to Anne Kasa, Instructional Technology Coach and our Character Certificate Facilitator, as well as to all the online resources that have helped provide knowledge and information about our selected topics. References include Modern Therapy Online, EdWeek, Learners Edge, NextGen Learning, Mindful Practices, Resilient Educator, and McKinsey & Company.

Non-Endorsement. Reference to any specific company, program or website does not necessarily constitute or imply its endorsement by North Central College.



NEWSLETTER OUTLINE

Self-Care Corner	2	Goals & Opportunities	10
Technology Fatigue	4	Unfinished Learning	11
Teachers Get Anxiety Too	5	Resources	12
"Why I Teach"	6	Announcements	16
Gripe Jam	8	Contact Us	17
What Boundaries?	9		

What's the difference between Self-Care & Self-Soothing?

Let's revisit the topic of self-care. Self-care, especially for teachers, can help prevent burnout.

According to [Modern Therapy Online](#), **self-care** focuses on building **resilience** and addressing **basic needs** such as eating healthy foods, exercising, or personal hygiene. It focuses on the act of taking time and space to keep yourself healthy. In contrast, **self-soothing** focuses on backup skills for use in a crisis or when needing support to resist some type of negative urge. This may create instant gratification to help us in one given moment in time.



In general, self-care makes self-soothing more accessible. If you regularly teach yourself that you are a priority, self-soothing will become necessary. Both are skills to be **learned** and **practiced**, requiring time and space to feel the difference. Look below to view the differences between self-care and self-soothing:

Self-Care

- ✓ *Maintenance*
- ✓ *Ongoing practice*
- ✓ *Prevention for distress*
- ✓ *Determines need for self-soothing*

Self-Soothing

- ✓ *Reactive*
- ✓ *In the moment, as needed*
- ✓ *Intervention for distress*
- ✓ *Depends on self-care*

Self-Care Resources



Mindful Practices

- Innovative EdTech resources
- Personalized professional learning
- SEL experiences fueled by **student's voice**
- **Meaningful connections** with educators.

- Utilize **remote** and **in-person** learning
- Specialists guide *educators and students*, toward developing their own social-emotional competence.

Breathe For Change

- Movement enhances the **health** and **well-being** of *educators, students, and entire communities*.
- Offers the **world's only** 200-hour Wellness, SEL, and Yoga Teacher training
- Designed for educators and community leaders
- Uses wellness as a vehicle for healing and social change.



Technology Fatigue

It has been a long two years and we are all hoping for a new normal. There's been triumphs and failures, and an all-around struggle to learn and adjust. New modes of teaching, and online platforms, have also been thrown into our ever-changing learning environment in schools.

It is okay to admit fear, despair, or even trauma from pandemic life; this could also be triggered by the use of technology. Yes, you read that correctly, trauma from technology.

Most educators are tired of using technology, and according to **EdWeek** (www.edweek.org), nearly two-thirds of teachers, principals, and district leaders are experiencing technology fatigue. Over-stimulation with online platforms and changing technological advances have created a hard field for educators to navigate. This long two-year period of over-stimulation has created trauma, and that's okay. As colleagues, **we hear you** and are **here to help**. Our biggest question is how do we move forward with technology?

Teaching with Tech Tips:

1. Create a Dedicated Space for Online Teaching

Educators need a designated space to work. This is ideally a space at home with clean walls, a desk, a chair, and a door that cuts off the rest of the house from your work.

2. Delegate Tasks to Teaching Assistants or Students
3. To Prevent Burnout, Resist the Urge to Over Commit
4. Schedule Time for Self-Care and Self-Soothing
5. Cut Yourself Some Slack During Online Teaching

Everyone makes mistakes, everyone has bad days. If you find yourself where you can't deliver something that's your best, don't fret.

Teachers Get Anxiety Too

"It's August, teachers"

Three words that can summon fear for many educators, faculty, and staff. August can perfectly roll out the red carpet for August educator anxiety. These thoughts disturb summer slumber and self-care activities. Educators are starting to become well-trained to identify student anxiety, however, sometimes we forget that anxiety targets teachers too.

We know there can be a lot to think about causing you to get overly engulfed in work. In order to combat this human condition, please remember to use these tips to ease into August from **Learners Edge** (from education and mental health experts).

Breathe better - intentional deep breaths

Buddy up - connect with someone, be social

Exercise - keep a move on

Nature breaks - visit Mother Earth often

Sleep priority - include nice little naps

Social media break - hours or days, start small

Laugh out loud - look for humor & fun

Use lists only as working documents

Visit Mindful Practices' Wellness Blog for more tips on Start-of-the-School Year tips!

Why I Teach

Teacher burnout is real. Teachers who were once energized, loved what they did, and built meaningful relationships are now dreading going to work and have increased levels of stress and mental health problems. **Stress** and **burnout** are also key reasons for teachers leaving the profession within *5 years of their start date*.

The **Gates Foundation** found that 85% of teachers enter a classroom with the intention to make a positive impact on young people's lives. However, with the constant pressure of meeting standards, those dreams eventually fade away. **Project Wayfinder** has dedicated its organization to finding ways for teachers to develop purpose in their professional careers.

Step One: Reconnect with Your Why

By constantly asking ourselves "why" a goal is important, we can begin to unearth the **deeper intentions** we have to drive our daily actions and behaviors. Reconnecting to the vision/values can remind us why we got into the profession in the first place.

Step Two: Craft Your How

Review a list of character strengths and **choose 3-4** to use in the classroom. Now consider: How could you use your strengths to make the impact you want? How might you design a project to match? Craft your role in the classroom and what the students' roles may be as well.

Step Three: Communicate Your "Why" to Students

It can be incredibly powerful for students, and teachers, to explicitly state why we're teaching them. Then continue by asking what you can do to help the students as well. This will make your role more **meaningful** and craft a sense of **seriousness** in your students while in the classroom.

ANTS vs. PATS

"Move Negative to Positive Thoughts"

Do you notice your thoughts being relatively negative, but want to change them to positive?

Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy can be used to help. **Linda Graham, MFT** uses therapy to help *identify automatic negative thoughts (ANTS) and create positive automatic thoughts (PATS)* to help rewire the habitual negative self-talk. So how does this work?



Step 1: Identify and write down 5 habitual inner messages you often hear yourself saying that are negative (ANTS).

Step 2: For each ANT, think of and write down at least one PAT as an antidote. Practice saying the PATs until they become fairly automatic.

Step 3: Pair an ANT with its PAT; say them out loud.

Step 4: Gradually reduce the number of times you say the ANT to yourself. Repeat the PAT (as many times as needed).

Step 5: Finally, the next time you hear the ANT in your mind, notice if the PAT comes into your awareness too!

ANTS

- I have to go to work, I can't stand Mondays!!!!



- I might as well not try; this is too hard.



PATs

- I get to go help people and provide for my family.

- If I break this down into smaller chunks; it will be easier.

Gripe Jam

What is something teachers around the globe have in common? A list of problems wider and deeper than the ocean itself. We talk to our partners and families about "if only" scenarios. So what if you had a magic wand and could somehow finally address one of these problems?

Anne Kasa, educator and facilitator, provided some tips and steps on how to successfully use **Gripe Jam** to **list** and **solve challenges** teachers experience. Gripe Jam helps teachers **list**, **process**, and **get out** their challenges to see physically.

Step 1: List all Challenges

What is bothering you? What do you need to get done? No problem is too big or too small. Write down all challenges you are currently facing. This process should be a "word-vomit" situation.

Step 2: Organize

What challenges are the most frustrating? Which one can be done easily? Organize your challenges from least to most frustrating to accomplish.

Step 3: Impact

To whom do these challenges impact? After organizing your challenges, determine if these challenges impact a lot of different people, or do they impact me? Write them down.

Step 4: Prioritize

After determining which challenges have the most impact and are the most frustrating, prioritize them. On your list, pick the top three you would like to work on for the year. Use the guiding goal of one challenge per quarter/semester.

What Boundaries?

In order to be the best for your students, you also need to be the best you. Unfortunately, that can't happen without setting boundaries for yourself. Teachers must find their own balance and avoid burnout, stress, and the so-called overwhelmed teacher vibe, with some time management and self-care methods. The **Resilient Educator** (<https://resilienteducator.com>) suggests starting with 5 key boundary-setting tips:

1. Stick to a finite grading time

It's very easy to lose hours to school work, however, too much time spent grading can lead to burnout faster for you and lower the quality of feedback for your students. (1) Block out a couple of hours to work, and do the work. However, (2) when time is up, wrap it up. (3) Stay on track and be **consistent**, but stay within a **time limit**.

2. Schedule student help hours

Being there for your students doesn't have to mean being there around the clock. You need to be mindful of the expectations of administrators, but determine a **set schedule** and **encourage** students to come to you during those times for help or questions. Post times and schedule them in advance.

3. Stick to the rules. No expectations

No matter how empathetic you are, or how sad your student's story is, the truth is, when you start bending rules, everyone can suffer. Set **clear** and **reasonable rules** up front and follow them in the classroom. If you don't you can fall into a cycle of constantly trying to decipher the legitimate circumstances from the excuses. As hard as it can be, set the rules. **Protect your boundaries**.

4. Take a non-negotiable break for yourself

It's easy to get lost in all you have to do on a regular basis. Find time for yourself in your day and protect that like a mama bear guarding her cubs. A **well-deserved break** will help you tackle your day. Close your door, go to the break room, or take a walk. Whatever will give you a break from the hectic nature of the day, do it.

5. Make each day a fresh start

Kids can say the darndest things -- and sometimes they are hurtful. You can't take it personally. Discipline and managing student behavior is a difficult parts of being a teacher. Holding onto negative behavior is your students drain you. Start fresh each day while holding onto your **positive attitudes** as you hold onto that first cup of coffee in the morning.

Goals & Opportunities

At the start of this school year, you might feel anxious and out of your comfort zone. Maybe way out of your comfort zone! Setting goals might be the last thing on your mind, but teachers are resilient! And you likely do have goals of things you'd like to try or accomplish in your class. The **Resilient Educator** (<https://resilienteducator.com>) suggests using **SMART Goals** to help. However, we know most of you are familiar with SMART Goals, but have you thought about **micro-goals**? Even with busy schedules, setting aside 10 minutes, and pulling out that piece of paper, can help make a rhythm in the future.

(1) SMART Goals

First, think of a goal that you would like to achieve this school year. Use a SMART Goal Template to help think through the details of the goal to make it into a reality.

- Is the goal **Specific**, **Measurable**, **Attainable**, **Relevant**, and **Time-bound**?
 - Example: *I want to screencast two 30-minute lessons per week, through the end of the semester.*

See how this goal is specific, is time-bound, and can help the vision become a reality? Go ahead and fill out a template and define your SMART goal if needed.

(2) Micro-Goals

After defining your SMART goal, break down your goal into micro-goals, which are smaller, measurable steps. Think of this as a journey you are taking. What will you do or see along the way to get closer to your goal? Look at your calendar. What smaller goals are feasible to achieve, and by what dates?

For instance, with the goal, *I want to screencast two 30-minute lessons per week, through the end of the semester* one would need to block off time to **1) Learn the screencasting tool, 2) block off time to create lessons, 3) reserve time to record the lesson, 4) upload for students.**

After coming up with micro-goals, there are many ways to track them including the use of an online calendar, a goal tracking app, or paper to track these goals.

Now, does the setting and achieving of a big goal this school year seem achievable? Take a moment and think of the feelings you will have when you reach your goal - **pride, gratification, fulfillment, and delight!**

Unfinished Learning

Many have felt the impact of the pandemic, especially in K-12. **McKinsey & Company** (www.mckinsey.com) took a deep dive into COVID-19's education and the lingering effects of unfinished learning.

The analysis shows that the impact of the pandemic has left K-12 students learning, on average, **5 months behind in mathematics** and **four months behind in reading** by the end of the school year.

The term "**unfinished learning**" is used to capture the reality of students who were not able to complete all the learning they would have in a typical year.

Some students disengaged from school altogether while the majority simply learned less. This has created missed opportunities for students to develop their foundational building blocks of knowledge necessary for success in the future.

And it is not just academic knowledge that these students may miss out on.

Students are also at risk of finishing school without the **skills, behaviors, and mindsets** to succeed after graduation.

35% of parents are very or extremely concerned about their child's mental health

These cumulative effects could have a **long-term impact** on an entire generation of students. Academic achievement and attainment are linked not only to higher earnings, but also to **better health, reduced incarceration rates, and greater political participation.**

What do we do now?

Re-engage & re-enroll students in effective learning environments

Connect with parents to understand the concerns and needs they have about putting their children in school and the learning options available. Whether it's in-person, online, or remote, safety is number one.

Support students in recovering unfinished learning & broader needs

Creating programs to support students can work but may take work to get students and parents to show up. Try offering evidence-based programs such as high-dosage tutoring or vacation academies, while also ensuring that these programs are attractive to students.

Recommit & reimagine our education systems for long term

Opportunity gaps exist in our school systems. As schools build back from the pandemic, districts are also recommitting to providing an excellent education to every child. A potential starting point could be focusing on high-quality grade-level curriculum and instruction delivered by diverse and effective educators in every classroom.

See site for more information

Resources

RECOMMENDED BOOKS

How CHILDREN SUCCEED



GRIT, CURIOSITY, and the
HIDDEN POWER of CHARACTER
PAUL TOUGH

HOW CHILDREN SUCCEED

By Paul Tough

Why do some children succeed while others fail? The story we usually tell about childhood success is the one about intelligence. Paul Tough argues that the qualities that matter most have more to do with character: perseverance, curiosity, conscientiousness, optimism, & self-control.

MINDSET

By Dr. Carol Dweck

From the renowned psychologist who introduced the world to the "growth mindset" comes this updated edition of the million-copy bestseller - featuring transformative insights into redefining success, building lifelong resilience, and supercharging self-improvement.

CAROL S. DWECK, Ph.D.

mindset

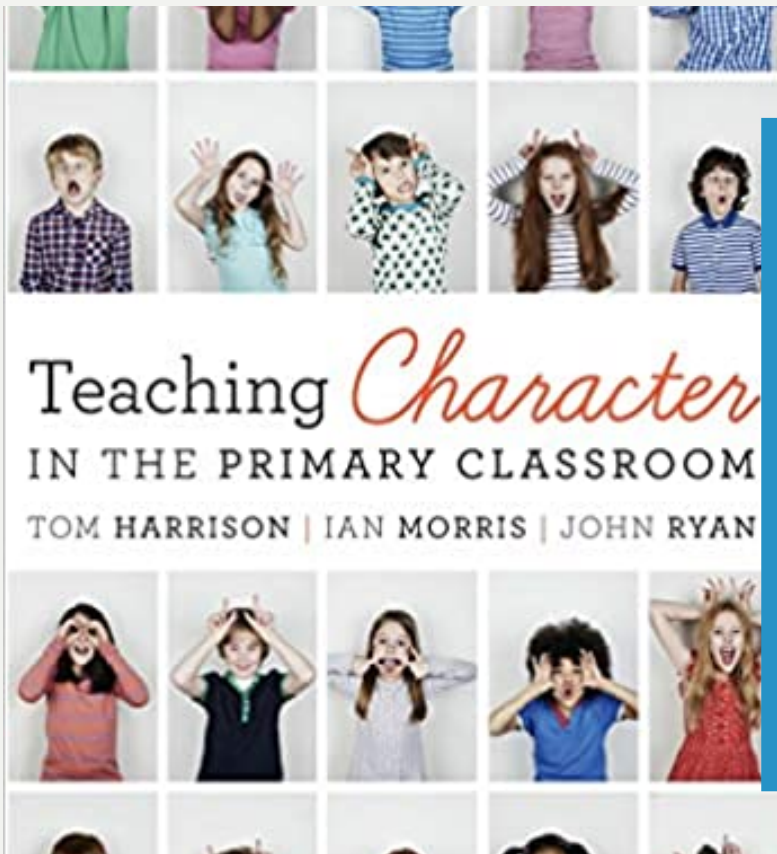
THE NEW PSYCHOLOGY OF SUCCESS

HOW WE CAN
LEARN TO FULFILL
OUR POTENTIAL

2
MILLION
COPIES
IN PRINT

*parenting
*business
*school
*relationships

RECOMMENDED BOOKS



TEACHING CHARACTER IN THE PRIMARY CLASSROOM

By Dr. Tom Harrison

".... provides an excellent and very accessible overview of the emerging field of character education. It covers, in detail, the theory of character education as well as advice and guidance about how this should be applied in practice in primary schools."

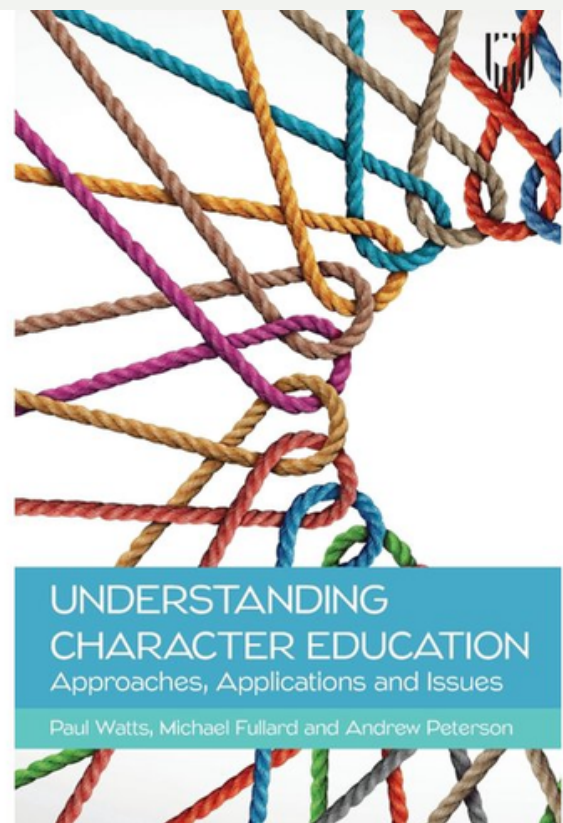
- Professor James Arthur, University of Birmingham

UNDERSTANDING CHARACTER EDUCATION

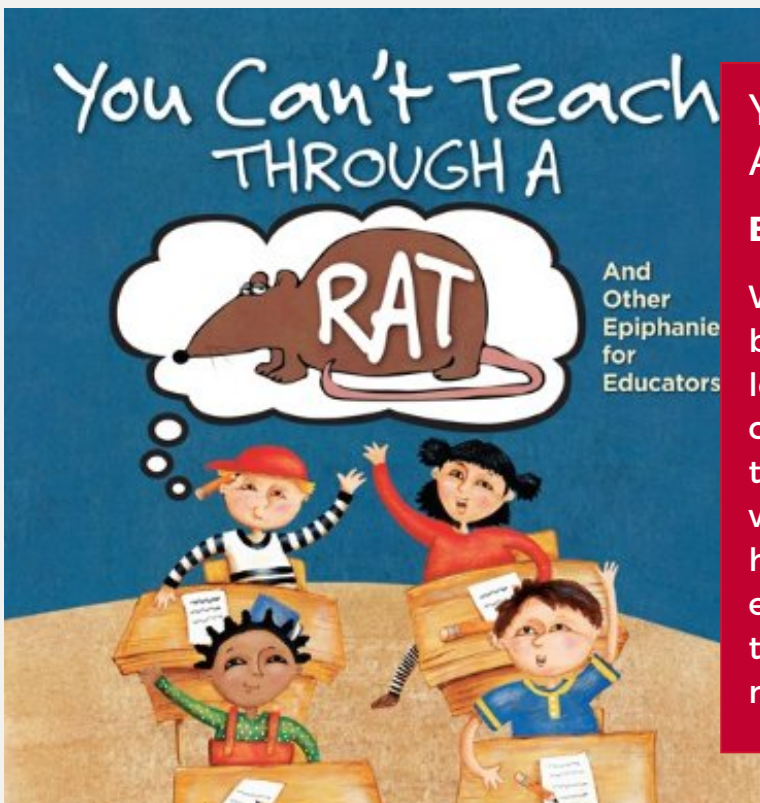
By Paul Watts, Michael Fullard, & Andrew Peterson

"....introduces readers to the key ideas, practices, and concepts shaping character education in schools today. The book explores the principles underpinning character education and the pedagogical practices which ensure it comes alive in schools. "

- Tom Haigh, CEO, Association for Character Education



RECOMMENDED BOOKS



YOU CAN'T TEACH THROUGH A RAT

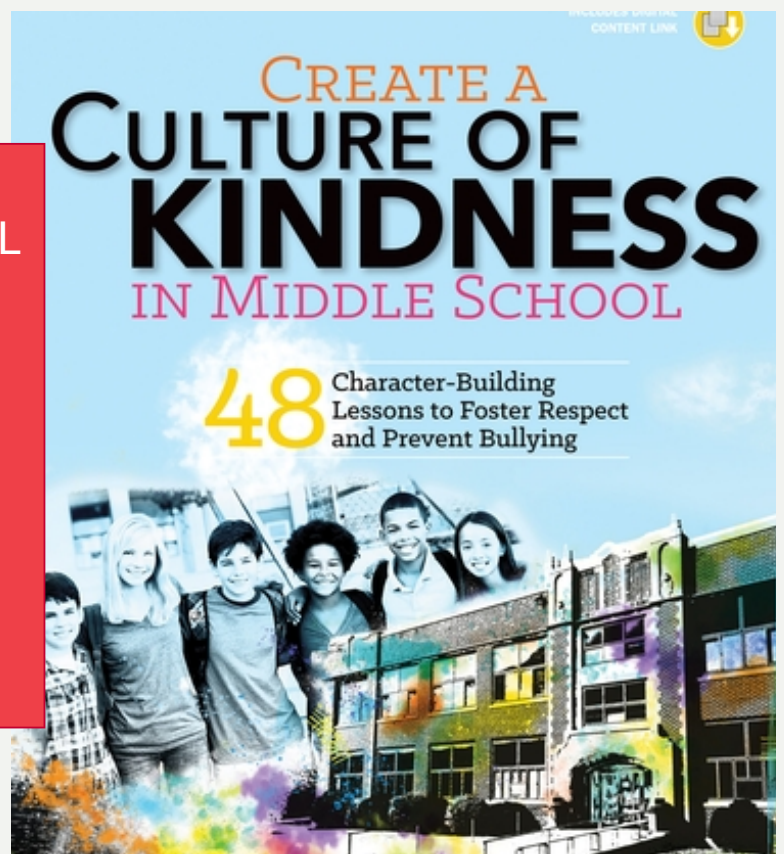
By Marvin W. Berkowitz

Whatever is on the mind of a child can be more important to the child than a lesson at school. This book is a collection of insights, designed and tested from decades of teaching, workshops, and lessons learned, to help educators stimulate their epiphanies about how best to serve the academic and developmental needs of students.

CREATE A CULTURE OF KINDNESS IN MIDDLE SCHOOL

By Naomi Drew and Christa Tinari

"... focuses on positive and prosocial attitudes and behaviors that build a respectful and compassionate school environment, while also addressing the tough issues of prejudice, anger, exclusion, and bullying."



ONLINE RESOURCES

CharacterStrong

The CharacterStrong Weekly: Every Monday morning receive 2-3 minute video with a low-burden, high-impact strategy to transform your daily work.

The CharacterStrong Podcast: Weekly conversations for anyone in education. Explore the library of Podcasts with over 275 podcasts to enjoy!

FOR MORE VISIT: www.characterstrong.com



CharacterLab

Tips: Looking for life lessons and tips for students and staff? Learn tips about self-confidence, gender bias in the classroom, goal setting, anxiety, and more!

Playbooks: Enjoy research-based guides to cultivate strengths of heart, mind, and will. Read about topics including gratitude, purpose, emotional intelligence, social intelligence, curiosity, creativity, grit, growth, and more!

FOR MORE VISIT: www.characterlab.org

Character LAB

Greater Good Magazine

Education Articles & More: Explore many topics surrounding education and your most valuable questions. Explore articles, quizzes, videos, podcasts, and books to help update and improve your classroom or school.

FOR MORE VISIT: greatergood.berkeley.edu/education

 Greater Good
Science Center

Announcements

CHARACTER CERTIFICATE PROGRAM

Do you know anyone who is interested in learning about character education?
Look ahead to **Fall 2022 Cohort Start Times!**

FALL 2022:

Cohort 1: Aug 7 - Sept 10
Sept 11 - Oct 15
Oct 16 - Nov 19

Cohort 2: Aug 28 - Oct 1
Oct 2 - Nov 5
Nov 6 - Dec 17

Cohort 3: Sept 11 - Oct 15
Oct 16 - Nov 19
Jan 15 - Feb 18

REGISTER HERE TODAY!



LAUNCHING 2023:

Micro-Credential Program

- 100% Online Curriculum
- Self-paced & Instructor-Free Learning
- Rise 360
- Available on Canvas

Complete the program and receive a **digital badge** to use on online platforms including Facebook, LinkedIn, and more!

Contact **Julie Nagashima** for more information!

THE LEADERSHIP ACADEMY

A formula for Leading a School Culture of Character! The Leadership Academy is offered in partnership with **IL ASCD**.

- Full-year of training (6 sessions)
- Special Pricing available for groups
- Speaker Series
- Professional Learning Networks
- Mini-grant opportunities

REGISTER HERE



Contact Us

LOOKING TO SHARE YOUR STORY?
HAVE QUESTIONS?

Connect with us to share your story or take on teaching ideas!

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www.northcentralcollege.edu/program/character-initiatives