

Goal Four: Content Knowledge

“Goal 4: Educators possess current academic content knowledge.” ~ UAS School of Education

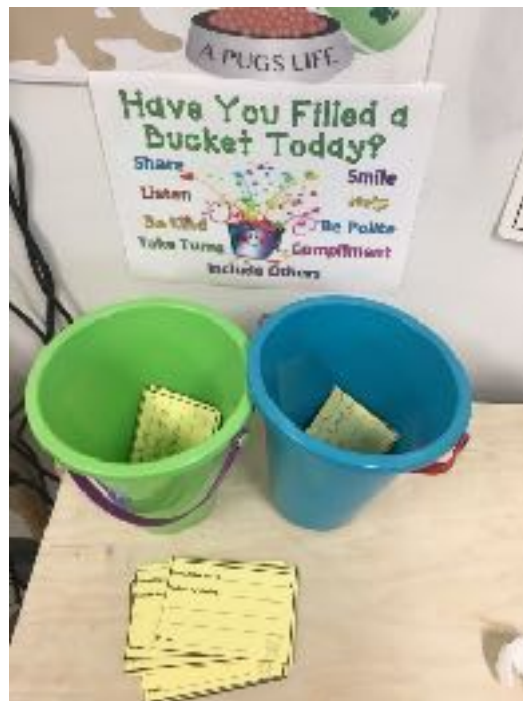
I have chosen the [backwards design unit on character](#) that I created and taught during my student teaching practicum to demonstrate my proficiency in understanding and teaching curriculum. I created this unit for my student teaching semester to cover district and state health standards in the area of social and behavioral health ([Alaska Health Education Standards](#)). This unit is designed to teach growth mindset and character strengths using literature, literacy circles (Atwell, 2015), social interactions, videos, and discussion throughout the semester.

I created bulletin boards in my host classroom for reference during lessons. I introduced the class to growth mindset and character at the onset of the semester. For the class reading lessons, I chose books with themes of growth mindset and character (e.g. *Bud Not Buddy* by Christopher Paul Curtis, *Number the Stars* by Lois Lowry, and *Wonder*, by R.J. Palacio.). As we studied these books, I incorporated questioning strategies that prompted my class to view the characters in the context of growth mindset and character (Tough, 2014; Weaver, 2009). The trade books used in this unit also promote diversity and multiculturalism (e.g. *Bud Not Buddy*, . *A Boy Called Slow* by Josephe Bruchac, illustrated by Rocco Baviera, *The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind*, by William Kamkwamba and Brian Mealer, pictures by Elizabeth Zunon, *Harvesting Hope, the Story of Cesar Chavez* by Kathleen Krull, illustrated by Yuyi Morales). Student artifacts from the literacy circle lesson and the writing assignment illustrate the effectiveness of the unit on student understanding, thought process, and self reflection regarding character.

I continue to do all of these things in my own classroom each year. Students are very engaged in the “Bucket Filler” activities which promote positive social interactions. This

ongoing activity helps students practice gratitude by expressing their appreciation for others' kindness ("Science of Character"). Recognizing and acknowledging character traits in others is how students strengthen their own character traits (Tough, 2014). When I notice students demonstrating any of the character traits or growth mindset, I call it out and recognize the behavior to reinforce it (Johnston, 2004; Slavin, 2012).

This is an important unit to implement because it teaches students foundational skills that they need to be successful in school and in life (Tough, 2014). Teaching a growth mindset can help students persevere in the face of an academic challenge. Teaching character can help students learn together in harmony as well as ensure academic and life success ("Science of Character"). These skills contribute to students leaving school as well-rounded, critical thinking citizens (Tough, 2014).



My 3rd grade classroom, 2018 - 2019 school year. (Character posters behind the read-aloud chair and Bucket Fillers).

References

Alaska standards for health education retrieved from: https://education.alaska.gov/akstandards/standards/AKStandards_SkillsforaHealthyLife.pdf

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