



University of San Diego  
SCHOOL OF LEADERSHIP  
AND EDUCATION SCIENCES

# Character Education Resource Center

## News You Can Use

### August 2018

*Remember, growing older is mandatory, growing up is optional. We make a living by what we get, we make a life by what we give.*

-Author unknown

## Questions and Answers

### What is Character?

**Character is** learned – taught to the young by the entertainment industry, the media, the Internet, the environment they live in, their peers and role models, and hopefully by parents teachers, schools, youth agencies, and religious institutions.

**Character is** about “strengths” and virtues that guide an individual “to act in an ethical, pro-social manner.”

**Character is** about choices – the ones we make daily (good or bad, ethical or unethical). It is about decision-making: the circumstances, the risks, the chances, the consequences, and the rewards.

**Character is** about relationships and social skills – skills such as sharing, participating, following directions, and listening. It is learning how to be a friend, how to care for others, how to appreciate others, how to be polite, respectful, courteous, and how to resolve conflicts peacefully.

**Character is** about “emotional” self discipline.

### What is EQ?

Daniel Goldman, a psychologist, author of Emotional Intelligence: Why It Can Matter More Than IQ and Working with Emotional Intelligence, revealed data from studies in more than 500 organizations that proved factors such as self-confidence, self-awareness, self-control, commitment and integrity not only create more successful employees, but also more successful companies.

In discussing emotional intelligence, Daniel Goldman cites “Peter Salovey, a Yale professor who categorized components of emotional and social skills into five areas: knowing one’s emotions, managing emotions, motivating oneself, recognizing emotions in others, and handling relationships.”

## What is Service Learning?

Social and emotional learning (SEL) is the process through which children and adults acquire and effectively apply the knowledge, attitudes and skills necessary to understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions.

Research shows that students with high emotional intelligence and strong social-emotional learning skills excel in classroom and in life. Studies have found that promoting emotional and social skills correlates with improved outcomes in students' lives. A report published in the Journal of Child Development found that the participants in SEL programs demonstrated significantly improved social and emotional skills, attitudes and behavior compared with the control group.

Service-learning is an educational program that intentionally connects community service to classroom learning. Service-learning programs can have positive impacts on youth in three general areas: academic engagement and achievement; civic attitudes and behaviors; and social and personal skills.

Research shows that students gain the maximum benefit when their service-learning experience includes a direct tie to the curriculum, planning and design of service projects by students, structure reflection on the service experience in the classroom, and continuity of service for at least one semester.

## News and Quotes

### An Expanded View of Character and Character Education

Recognize the importance of **performance** character (needed for best work: creativity, curiosity, love of learning, persistence) as well as **moral** character (needed for ethical behavior: fairness, respect, care). Effective character education programs develop students' performance values such as effort, diligence, and perseverance in order to promote academic learning, foster an ethic of excellence, and develop the skills needed to act upon ethical values. A school or community of character is one that helps us "be our best" and "do our best" in all areas of our lives. Both moral and performance character are mutually supportive and are necessary to achieve the goals to which all schools of character strive.

### State of Critical Thinking – MindEdge

On a critical thinking quiz given to college students and recent graduates, 44% of those surveyed received an "F" in critical thinking in 2017; in 2018: 52% failed the quiz. Quiz takers tended to rate their own skills highly, but only noted that 25% their peers and colleagues have strong critical thinking skills.

### Development of Mindfulness and Heartfulness

The development of Mindfulness: a moment-by-moment awareness of our thoughts, emotions, sensations and surrounding environment. The development of Heartfulness: intentional nurturing of positive mind states such as kindness and compassion.

## Kindness and Gratitude

Researchers at UC Berkeley surveyed 400 students ages 12-14 in which they found that students “who were more likely to be grateful to others [I am adding kindness here] showed higher academic interest, grades, and extracurricular involvement, and had lower interest in risky behaviors.” Positive parent relationships was also associated with gratitude (and probably with many habits of the heart including “kindness”).

## Character Education

Schools that are infusing character education into their curricula and cultures are seeing dramatic transformations; pro-social behaviors are replacing negative behaviors. When you walk into a character education school, you will find an atmosphere of mutual caring and respect, where students value learning and care about their teachers, classmates, communities, and themselves.

From CERC's Pdf files  
Education Week's Spotlight on Social Emotion Learning.  
Email us if you would like a copy: <mailto:character@sandiego.edu>



We are a resource center which means that we are here to meet your needs and interests in the character education of children and youth. Please reach out to us if we can assist you in any way.

Our Motto: If we don't have it, we can get it or create it.

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