

Character Education Resource Center News You Can Use

June 2019

Using Character Quotes in the Classroom

Quotations are often a time-effective instructional strategy to engage your students to "think about thinking" (meta-cognition). Quotes lend themselves to critical thinking, application to lessons in life, a conversation starter for home and classrooms, and a character/behavior guide.

In addition, quotes meet Common Core State Standards for ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R2, CCRA.R8, CCRA.R9 (Mensa Education & Research Foundation) To You Their Teacher: It's up to YOU to answer four questions about this lesson: (1) Do you want to use it? (2) If so, do you need to modify it? (3) How much time will you give it? (4) How will it be extended?

Objectives: After this lesson students will be able to:

- Compare and contrast quotations
- Find information about the author of each quote
- Determine the meaning and implication of each quote
- Write/draw how the quote may apply to what they do and say
- Discuss the meaning of the quotes with their classmates, friends, family.

The meaning of life is to find your gift. The purpose of life is to give it away.

- Pablo Picasso

If you want to make a difference in someone's life, you don't need to be gorgeous, rich, famous, brilliant, or perfect. You just have to care.

- Karen Salmansohn

Nothing is impossible, the word itself says 'I'm possible'!

- Audrey Hepburn

You'll never find a rainbow if you're looking down. Charlie Chaplin

The most important trip you may take in life is meeting people halfway.

- Henry Boye

How Can You Transform Literacy? Let's Count the Ways

To be clear, books face more competition than any point in history. For better or worse the smartphone has become the teenager's go-to source for entertainment and connection. When you add in traditional teenage responsibilities like sports, band, clubs, jobs and sibling duty, to name a few, reading often becomes an afterthought. Consider a survey I administered to 50 of my current freshmen at the beginning of the school year:

- 14 reported that they read zero books last year. Another 15 read just one or two.
- 35 said they rarely or never read outside of school.
- 27 literally could not name the best book they read in middle school, responding with "I don't remember," "No idea," "None," or the teacher favorite, "IDK."
- 32 reported a neutral or negative attitude toward reading.

Did You Know?

Despite generations of well-intentioned interventions, two-thirds of middle school students in the United States are not proficient in reading, and approximately half of those students do not have the basic skills they were expected to learn in elementary school. The stakes couldn't be higher. Those who don't learn to become proficient readers are less likely to graduate high school, more likely to live in poverty, and less prepared to compete in the 21st century workplace.

10 ways to combat middle-school reading failure, Brown and Jerry Zimmermann, February 20, 2019 https://www.smartbrief.com/originals/education

Be Willing to Ask "What if?"

- What if all students could see themselves in books?
- What if we celebrated and cheered on readers the same way we champion our athletes?
- What if we flooded all schools and communities with great books?
- What if we truly trusted and empowered our teachers? Our students?
- What if we stopped policing kids' reading?
- What if we acknowledged that just because a certain book "worked" for you, or for me, it doesn't mean that it needs to be read by ALL?
- What if we recognized that a text is not rigorous if no one reads it?
- What if every school made their love of reading visible to students and families?
- What if all children in K-12 received a brand new book of their choice every single month?
- What if the books on our shelves were as diverse as the students in our classrooms?
- And what if teachers didn't have to buy those books?

13 WAYS EDUCATORS CAN TRANSFORM LITERACY
Jarred Amarto, March 18. 2019
https://www.educationdive.com

An Interview with Lisa Scherff

Lisa is a high school English teacher and researcher:

Honestly, some of the things I'm being told to-do are educational malpractice. For example, in my district (like others in the state I've heard about) we're not suppose to teach any novels until after the high-stakes graduation exam. Since students take the graduation exam at the beginning of May, it means that, technically, I 'm prohibited from teaching a novel until the last three weeks of the school year. That's the absolute truth. As an English teacher, I'm not supposed to assign my students to read a full-length novel (I teach one anyway, but in the old days I would teach two or three per year.) I know teachers who are not teaching a novel at all this year, or who are only teaching excerpts from a Shakespeare play instead of the whole thing. (My classes are reading a full play.)

Civic Education and Character Education

(The) National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS, 1996) Position Statement "Fostering Civic Virtue: Character Education in the Social Studies" ... concludes with these words: *Social studies teachers have a responsibility and a duty to refocus their classrooms on the teaching of character and civic virtue. They should not be timid or hesitant about working toward these goals. The fate of the American experiment in self-government depends in no small part on the store of civic virtue that resides in the American people. The social studies profession of this nation has vital role to play in keeping this well-spring of civic virtue flowing.*

Research also tells us that the ethos or culture of the school and of the classroom exert powerful influences on what students learn about authority, responsibility, justice, civility and respect. Finally, we know that one dynamic by which individuals acquire desired traits of private and public character is through exposure to attractive models of behavior. Probably no one has explained that dynamic better than Robert Coles in *The Moral Intelligence of Children*, (Coles, 1997). Coles tells us that: *Character is ultimately who we are expressed in action, in how we live, in what we do - and so the children around us know, they absorb and take stock of what they observe, namely us-we adults living and doing things in a certain spirit, getting on with one another in our various ways. Our children add up, imitate, file away what they've observed and so very often later fall in line with the particular moral counsel we unwittingly or quite unself-consciously have offered them.*

Civic Education: Two Quotes of Note

Civics education (is the) cornerstone of everything that we are doing (so that) our students are civically minded, civically engage. Civics education both in the classroom but the approach that we use across the system is one in which we believe in student voice, student agency. Kids leave our system able to engage and participate and contribute to the outcomes and to the city that they live in.

Superintendent Cindy Marten, SDUSD (U-T 9-2-18)

A Reflection on Maya Angelou - John H. Hale, California Council for the Social Studies, News, Friday, July 25, 2014 She directly supported a project of the Center for Civic Education by contributing a powerful essay titled "I Have a Story" for the Center's anthology, Why Civic Education Matters, a collection of personal reflections on the importance of civic education. In her essay, Angelou describes a teacher who made a profound difference in her life. "Through the guise of teaching civics," Angelou writes, "she gave us our country." I also reflected on a speech she gave some years ago in a tribute to Fanny Lou Hamer and the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party. She said: "In the most private part of the heart of every American lives a burning desire to belong to a great country. To represent a noble-minded country where the mighty do not always crush the weak and the dream of democracy is not in the sole possession of the strong. It is fitting that every American, everywhere, ask herself and himself these questions: What do I think of my country? What is it in my country which elevates my shoulders and stirs my blood when I hear the words "the United States of America"? Do I praise my country enough? Do I laud my fellow citizens enough? Then there's, what is there in my country which makes me hang my head and avert my eyes when I hear the words 'the yet-to-be-United States of America'? What am I doing about it? Am I like one who sits high and looks low and pretends I see nothing? As Americans, we should not be afraid to own both the questions and the answers."



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.

What do you think of this month's NUCU? We'd love to hear your **thoughts**, **questions** and **feedback**: <u>character@sandiego.edu</u>

Enjoying this newsletter? Forward to a friend! They can sign up here.

Looking for more great content? Check out all of our past NUCU issues.



The Character Education Resource Center's "Character Matters" Conference

Theme: Lessons for Your Classroom

Friday, June 28, 2019 (8:30am -3:00pm)
University of San Diego, School of Leadership & Education Sciences, Hill Hall

SPEAKER TOPICS

Leading with Purpose Through Authentic Relationship

Multidisciplinary Approaches: Civics, Civility and Active Engagement

The Mythic Journey of Huck and Miguel

WORKSHOP TOPICS

Why the Brain Likes Character Education

Ways to Incorporate Character in Literacy Classes

Conference Cost: \$30 per individual

\$15.00 per student with a student ID

Registration Link : https://www.eventbrite.com/e/23rd-annual-character-

education-conference-tickets-62600531876



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Questions: Email us at character@sandiego.edu