Session 9A Gratitude and Growth: Positively Impacting Learning Environments

“Gratitude has been so empowering. It makes everything I do more meaningful. By choosing to be grateful, I felt so energized and loved my teaching experience”

Pre-service teacher taking part in Gratitude Study
Who are we?

About us...
- Owen Griffith
- Julie Norton

Who’s in the room...
Stand and notice...
- Instructional coach/mentor
- School leader
- District Office leader
- Pre-service supervisor
- Foundation leader
- Other?
“Gratitude is a quality similar to electricity; it must be produced and discharged and used up in order to exist at all.”

—William Faulkner
Session Plan

- Overview
- Gratitude: Experiential
  - Breathing Activity
  - Sources of Gratitude
- Gratitude Research
  - Perspective-Taking
  - Impact on Learning Environment and Community
- Gratitude: Impact on Educator Resilience
  - Gripes to Gratitude
  - Reframing Activity
- Applying Gratitude in Adversity
- Session Feedback
Gratitude: Experiential

“When I verbalize the behavior I’m thankful for, the student is more likely to participate, show effort, and stay on topic.”

Pre-service teacher taking part in Gratitude Study
Gratitude: Effort Required

Breathing Activity
Stand with a partner
Consider source of gratitude
2 minute share
Gratitude: Positive Impact on Educators and Youth

“Practicing gratitude has made me a better teacher. When I’m a better teacher, my students learn more.”

Pre-service teacher taking part in Gratitude Study
Gratitude Research

Regular gratitude for adults enables them to:

• Be more optimistic
• Experience more social satisfaction
• Exercise more frequently
• Cultivate a stronger immune system
• Feel more forgiving
• Experience more joy and pleasure
• Have less envy and depression
• Have fewer physical complaints and sleep better

Source: Dr. Robert Emmons, University of California at Davis; Dr. Jeffrey Froh, Hofstra University
Gratitude — Student Impact

Gratitude journals help students achieve:

• Higher grades
• More satisfaction with relationships and school
• Less materialism
• More helpful, generous, and compassionate behavior
• More resilience when stressed
• More joy and pleasure
• Fewer feelings of loneliness and isolation

Source: Dr. Robert Emmons, University of California at Davis; Dr. Jeffrey Froh, Hofstra University
Gratitude in Schools

Does gratitude work in a school with many challenges and even spread to the community?

Whitney Cole answers this question and is changing her students and spreading gratitude to the community. Please take notes on the T-chart handout.

youtube.com/watch?v=TxFRx-87-Qo
Video Follow-Up

Share your reaction and notes with your group.
Guiding Concepts

• Gratitude is much more than a pleasant emotion; it is a conscious choice, a way of seeing and interacting with the world.

• Educators should practice and model gratitude before introducing it to students.

• Gratitude should be authentic.
Gratitude: Impact on Educator Resilience

“Gratitude has been so empowering. It makes everything I do more meaningful. By choosing to be grateful, I felt so energized and loved my teaching experience.”

Pre-service Teacher Taking Part In Gratitude Study
Transforming Gripes to Gratitude

1. Individual Reflection and Sharing: (2 min.)
Think about a challenge you had at work in the past that eventually was solved. Reflect on what you learned from the experience, people who helped, and the strategies you used.

2. Partner Share (3 min. each)
*Did this experience help you grow? In what ways?*

3. Share with table group:
*Given the experience you shared, what are you grateful for?*
Consider This…

People who struggle with gratitude may be the ones who benefit the most, according to Dr. Emmons’ research.

“Gratitude changed my willingness to embrace difficult situations.”

“Gratitude helps me breathe in ability to focus, process, and persevere when challenged.”

Pre-service teacher taking part in Gratitude Study
Gratitude Builds Resilience

• Making gratitude a policy and a practice “builds up a sort of psychological immune system that can cushion us when we fall.”

• “There is scientific evidence that grateful people are more resilient to stress.”

• Gratitude helps educators see beyond disasters and recognize the potential gains.
Gratitude Handout
Gratitude Activities Stems

1. Gratitude Journal: I am grateful for
________________________
because ____________________.
Go deeper and make GRATITUDE STICK!

2. Gratitude Letter: Dear ____________
Deliver and read letter if possible.
Gratitude Reframes Experiences

Gratitude does not take away negative or stressful experiences but allows us to reframe and grow from them.
Reframing Gratitude Activity

Think about one of the most challenging events you have experienced in the classroom.

Then, ponder the following questions to share with partner:

1. *What lessons did the experience teach us?*
2. *Can we now find ways to be thankful for what happened to us, even though we were not at the time it happened?*
3. *What ability did the experience draw out of us that surprised us or was unexpected?*
4. *Are there ways we have become better educators because of it?*
Educators Told Researchers…

“When I verbalize the behavior I’m thankful for, the student is more likely to participate, show effort, and stay on topic.”

“I really found myself joyful and loving my job with being grateful in every experience.”

“By practicing gratitude your job feels less like an obligation and more like a passion that you are fortunate to do.”

Source: Jane Wilson, Westmont College
# Session Closure

## Optimal Learning Environments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>emotionally, intellectually, and physically safe</th>
<th>equitable and culturally responsive instruction</th>
<th>meeting needs of diverse learners</th>
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</thead>
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Equitable and Culturally Responsive Instruction

Meeting Needs of Diverse Learners
Gratitude Book Give-Away

Look under your seat.

• If you see a piece of paper taped to it, you are our lucky winner of the book, *Gratitude: A Way of Teaching* by Owen Griffith.
Session 9A
Gratitude and Growth: Positively Impacting Learning Environments

We are grateful you attended today. Make a conscious choice to spread Gratitude and help reshape education and our world!
Feedback

Please complete the session evaluation via the *Symposium 2017 Mobile* site.

Use either of the following two ways to access the evaluation directly:

Direct link: [https://goo.gl/xynmpZ](https://goo.gl/xynmpZ)

QR code:
THANK YOU!

Please provide session reflection and feedback. Session: 9A

Email with questions or success stories.
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