Peers as Partners in Learning – Middle School

Lesson Plan 3.2: Identifying and Understanding Character Traits

Approximate time to allow: 60-80 minutes

Unit

Removing Barriers and Conflicts

Lesson

Identifying and Understanding Character Traits

Standards Supported in this Lesson	Rubric Essential Concepts
ELA.K12.EE.1.1 ELA.K12.EE.4.1 ELA.8.C.5.1 ELA.8.C.5.2 ELA.8.V.1.3 HE.68.R.1.3	Belonging of Students with Disabilities Impact of Language Promoting Access, Involvement, and Progress Problem Solving Process

Essential Questions

- What are character traits?
- How can we recognize similarities and differences of character traits in ourselves and others?
- How can we use our understanding of character traits to resolve conflicts?

Learning Objectives

Students will:

- Identify character traits using a self-assessment tool.
- Recognize similarities and differences.
- Define conflict and provide examples, in relation to students with disabilities.
- Consider the role of character traits in resolving conflicts.

*Lessons 3.2, 3.3 and 3.4 are intended to be sequential, as concepts build on each other

Technology/Materials

- Character Traits
- How Strong is Your Character? – Education Planner
- Comparison Graphic Organizer
- Character Comparison Sheet
- Bulletin board paper and printed definitions for gallery walk
- Character Traits and Conflict Exemplar
- Materials for final product (digital devices, art supplies)
- MS Reflective Journal Prompts and Vocabulary

Lesson Steps

1. How Strong is Your Character?
    a. Purpose: Introduce the concept of character so students can form a better understanding of the role character plays in problem-solving.
    b. Directions:
        i. Provide students with the Character Traits Handout, listing some character traits and their definitions.
        ii. Students and their assigned peer complete the self-assessment: How Strong is Your Character?
        iii. Using the graphic organizer, students compare and contrast their character traits with one other peer support student.
        iv. Using the handout of traits, select 3-4 from both the positive and negative traits list. Create a gallery walk (write definitions on bulletin board paper or use an interactive online method, such as Poll Everywhere, Google Docs, or OneDrive) and have students generate examples of ways that they have used these traits.
        v. (Alternative activity) If the personal character traits activity is not a good fit, allow the students to make a book selection of choice (from district approved texts) illustrating characters and conflicts.

2. Introducing the Topic of Conflict.
    c. Purpose: Students can identify sources of conflict.
    d. Directions:
        i. Ask students "How would you define conflict?" Allow generated definitions, then provide the dictionary definition:
            1. To come into collision or disagreement; be contradictory, at variance, or in opposition; clash.
            2. To fight or contend; do battle.
        ii. Use a brainstorm activity, such as Think-Pair-Share, to identify different sources of conflict that they have seen related to students with disabilities at their school. Remind students to consider prior topics such as presumed competence, jagged learning profiles and learner variability, and consider how conflict relates to learning barriers.

iii. Debrief following student brainstorm, using sample question stems, such as:
    1. How could we define conflict?
    2. Does conflict have to be physical?
    3. Do conflicts always involve two or more people?
    4. What does it mean if we have a "conflict of ideas?"
    5. What about an "internal conflict?"
    6. What causes conflict?
    7. What escalates conflict?

iv. Choose a character trait from the Character Trait handout in Activity 1, and help students draw conclusions about sources of conflict that might stem from having that trait. See the Character Traits and Conflict Exemplar to provide a model.

v. Complete a few examples of Character Traits and consider conflict sources together with students.

vi. In conjunction with the reflection journal prompt, students create a product (paper, digital, 3-D, etc.) that represents their own traits and how these traits can possibly reflect sources of conflict.

Assessments

Formative:

- Graphic organizer with comparison of two people.
- Student discussion and brainstorming related to conflict.

Summative:

- Student-created products related to character traits.
- Reflection Journal prompt.

Considerations

- Digital source for final project.
- Use digital version of graphic organizer.
- Online completion of character trait analysis.