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## **PERSPECTIVES CHARTER SCHOOLS**

### **The Design and Implementation of an Effective Character Education Program**

June 2007

## **INFORMATION ABOUT THIS TOOL**

This case study was prepared by FSG Social Impact Advisors. FSG is a nonprofit consulting firm that provides guidance to foundations, corporations, nonprofits, and other public sector entities on issues of strategy, evaluation, and operations. FSG was commissioned by NewSchools Venture Fund to document “promising practices” of portfolio ventures in a format that could be shared across the NewSchools portfolio. To complete this case study, FSG conducted background research on Perspectives Charter Schools and interviewed Kim Day, Perspectives’ CEO and Co-Founder, as well as several Perspectives central office staff, teachers, and principals. Jim Peyser of NewSchools Venture Fund provided additional context on Perspectives.

## **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

We hope that reading this case study sparks conversations about how the practices highlighted here relate to your own organization. We have developed the questions below to help guide these discussions. We encourage you to keep them in mind as you read through the case study and to refer back to them as you reflect on the case study’s implications for your own organization.

1. What curricular choices have you made that are a fundamental component of your school, in the way that this character education program is for Perspectives? How do these programs affect school culture and performance?
2. Do your students share a common understanding of behavioral expectations and cultural norms within your school(s)? If so, how has this understanding been cultivated and how is it reinforced? If not, would a character education program be useful?
3. Would your staff be excited about this type of character education program? Would your students? How would you weigh the benefits and tradeoffs of implementing such a program?
4. If you wanted to engage in this type of effort, would your organization have the capacity to design its own character education curriculum? How would you determine which principles ought to drive character education? Would you consider using an off-the-shelf program?

## INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

Schools want to produce students who can achieve in higher education and become productive citizens. However, many schools are realizing that academic skills alone are not enough to ensure success in today’s world. Research shows that developing social and emotional skills improves students’ grades, attendance, behavior, and attitudes towards school and reduces the likelihood of dropping out.<sup>1</sup> Stephen Elliot, professor of educational psychology at the University of Wisconsin-Madison states that, “As you facilitate social development, you are concurrently, for many kids, advancing their academic function.”<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, students who feel emotionally safe in school are less likely to exhibit problem behaviors.<sup>3</sup>

*We really believe character education is the nuts and bolts of who we are. You can educate someone’s mind, but if you aren’t raising good ethical people, then it doesn’t really matter.*  
- Principal, Perspectives

It would seem that implementing a character education program would be a critical component of ensuring student success. However, in this era of standardized testing and accountability, many schools are grappling with how to prioritize character education or fit it into the school day. Furthermore, with hundreds of character education programs available<sup>4</sup>, schools might feel overwhelmed when trying to design and implement an effective character education curriculum.

This case study focuses on one organization, Perspectives Charter Schools, which developed its own character education curriculum that has become a fundamental component of its schools.

### Perspectives Charter Schools Background

Perspectives Charter Schools (Perspectives) is a Chicago-based charter management organization (CMO) with a mission to “provide students with a rigorous and relevant education that prepares them for life in a changing world and helps them further become intellectually reflective, caring, and ethical people engaged in a meaningful life.”<sup>5</sup> Character education is an integral factor that helps Perspectives achieve this mission. Perspectives’ unique character building curriculum, A Disciplined Life™, is infused throughout the school. It has become “the language of the Perspectives Charter Schools family and serves as [its] code of living.”<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Perspectives Charter Schools

<sup>2</sup> Education Week Research Center, “Character Education”

<sup>3</sup> Perspectives Charter Schools

<sup>4</sup> Education Week Research Brief on Character Education mentions a study conducted on 242 positive youth development programs.

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.perspectivescs.org/>

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.perspectivescs.org/>

Perspectives opened its first school in 1997, followed by two additional schools in 2006. When it opens its fourth campus in 2007, Perspectives will serve a total of 1200 students in grades 6–12. Perspectives has the second-highest advancement rate among non-selective Chicago Public Schools. In its first school over 90 percent of students in its five senior classes have graduated, with 100 percent of those graduating receiving college acceptances.

Perspectives’ experience is relevant to other charter schools interested in designing and implementing a character education program for middle and high school students.

## THE PERSPECTIVES MODEL

### Development of the Curriculum

When founding Perspectives in 1997, Kim Day and Diana Shulla-Cose asked, *“How are we going to know if our students are prepared to succeed after graduation?”* The two were concerned that the measures of success traditionally used by schools, like test scores and college enrollment, were limited. They felt that academic rigor alone would not create *“the kinds of people we want to be leaders in our world.”*

Furthermore, as a former teacher, Kim had learned how to establish an achievement-oriented classroom environment and realized the difficulties of running an effective classroom in a school that did not share the same norms. Thus, based on their teaching experience and what they saw in friends, colleagues, and role models they admired and considered successful, the two developed a list of principles. The list included things like *“be reliable, seek wisdom, and support each other.”* If students could show growth along this continuum of principles, they would be more prepared for success in higher education and beyond.

This initial list of principles, called *A Disciplined Life™ (ADL)*, has expanded and evolved over the past ten years as students, parents, and teachers have made refinements.

Illinois has state standards for Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) and, although Perspectives’ founders did not intentionally

### The 26 Principles of A Disciplined Life™

#### PRODUCTIVITY

1. Demonstrate a strong work ethic
2. Use your time wisely
3. Listen actively
4. Be punctual and prepared
5. Be organized
6. Be reflective
7. Be reliable
8. Take the initiative
9. Demonstrate perseverance

#### COMMUNICATION

10. Communicate effectively
11. Challenge your peers intellectually
12. Show gratitude
13. Solve conflicts peacefully
14. Respect others’ differences
15. Be positive and supportive
16. Show compassion

#### SELF-PERCEPTION

17. Accept only quality work from yourself
18. Take responsibility for your actions
19. Seek wisdom
20. Be open-minded
21. Think critically and be inquisitive
22. Love who you are
23. Demonstrate honesty, integrity, decency
24. Be generous
25. Be a life long learner
26. Live a healthy lifestyle

### Illinois State Social & Emotional Learning Standards for Grades K–12:

1. Develop self-awareness and self-management skills to achieve school and life success
2. Use social-awareness and interpersonal skills to establish and maintain positive relationships
3. Demonstrate decision-making skills and responsible behaviors in personal, school, and community contexts

develop the principles to align with these standards, they were fortunate in that their list of principles did ultimately overlap with the state’s goals (see sidebar for list of Illinois SEL Goals).<sup>7</sup>

*Our schools have an exceptional feel to them because we have this curriculum. To me, it is the bridge between being ethical and intellectual people.*

- Kim Day,  
Perspectives CEO

In the early years, teachers wrote the *ADL* curriculum, working together to brainstorm guiding questions, lesson plans, and lists of resources. However, not all teachers felt comfortable teaching these principles without a formal curriculum. Thus, in 2006 Perspectives teachers, instructional leaders, the chief academic officer, and founders worked to develop a more formal curriculum with clear objectives and lesson plans.

Perspectives’ co-founders decided to develop their own curriculum rather than use an existing character education program because they believed that, *“At the point when we were creating Perspectives, the character education curriculum that existed had a lot of activities, but with no ultimate goal defined. So we approached this with the end in mind, with the principles we wanted our seniors to embody. Then, we backed out how to get there.”* However, Perspectives does use some activities from pre-developed programs. *“We have piecemealed lots of resources to create lessons that teach the principles we want. We definitely have picked some activities from these programs, but we don’t start from these programs.”*

When they were writing curriculum, Perspectives staff *“worked to develop a formal, deliberate curriculum so people would feel equipped to teach this — so they could have specific lesson plans for each grade level with clear themes and objectives.”*

*A Disciplined Life*<sup>™</sup> uses all positive language, focusing on the “dos” rather than the “don’ts.” Perspectives staff emphasize that the principles are relevant to all students and do not impose values. In fact, 80 percent of teachers surveyed agreed or strongly agreed that the *ADL* lessons were free of racial, religious, and gender bias. Many teachers assess students at the beginning of the year to see what they want to gain from character education, what they need to work on, and what they don’t understand. The curriculum then enables teachers to determine the needs of each individual student.

*What’s important is that you create something that is tailored to the needs of your school, your students, and your staff. You can’t necessarily use what is used elsewhere. It really needs to be your own and come from the people who will be using it.*

- Teacher, Perspectives

## HOW IT WORKS

### Dedicated Class Time

The 26 principles of *A Disciplined Life*<sup>™</sup> are integrated into all aspects of the school, and students are expected to make progress along each of the principles. Students take a 45-minute *ADL* class 2–3 times per week. Each course focuses on a larger theme, such as communication or diversity, rather than an individual behavior, such as being reliable. The focus on themes makes classes more engaging and relevant to students. As one staff member noted, *“Most character education classes will take one principle and teach it for a month, but for high school students, that is just too boring. We come up with themes, and the principles get played out in the themes.”* Courses use tools such as articles, movies, and songs to engage students. Students might listen to music they bring in and

<sup>7</sup> [http://www.isbe.net/ils/social\\_emotional/standards.htm](http://www.isbe.net/ils/social_emotional/standards.htm)

discuss and debate the themes in class. Perspectives mandates that students participate in field studies, such as visiting social justice and political groups and participating in community service (see Toolkit for *A Disciplined Life™ Courses: 9-12 Grade* and *Sample 7th Grade 1st Quarter A Disciplined Life™ Lessons*).

To make time for the ADL classes, Perspectives does not have study hall and has a longer school day, running from 8:30 a.m.–3:30 p.m., whereas the standard Chicago public school day is 9:00 a.m.–2:30 p.m. The staff is committed to finding the time for ADL. As Principal Glennese Ray points out, “*We’re going to teach ADL one way or another. It is important to weigh character education as highly as the core academics.*” In fact, Perspectives would like to change the 2007 school schedule to be able to offer a daily ADL course. However, scheduling is an ongoing challenge and Principal Ray notes, “*We are trying to figure out where to cut corners so we don’t have to extend the school day further.*”

Because the curriculum aligns with state standards, Perspectives staff can teach ADL without feeling like it is time off task. As Kim Day notes, “*It is comforting that the principles of ADL are also state standards. That way schools aren’t faced with competing priorities.*”

### School-Wide Integration and Constant Reinforcement

Perspectives staff emphasizes that *A Disciplined Life™* is much more than just a class. Its language and principles are reinforced from a myriad of angles. As one staff member remarked, “*ADL provides a common language for all teachers to use with students, whether it is in ADL class, in the hall, or another class.*” Teachers use *ADL* in the core subject classes, analyzing current events or novels based on how they fit with the principles, or using *ADL*’s teachings about communication styles when conducting an investigation for a science class. Seamlessly integrated into school culture, the principles are posted in the hallways, adults use the language and model the behaviors, and awards are given each month for students who are living a disciplined life.

*Universal implementation is critical. It is hard to run an effective classroom in a school that doesn’t share the same norms. You can’t have inconsistencies.*

- Kim Day, Perspectives CEO

*ADL* is also connected to behavioral expectations. If a student receives disciplinary action, school staff uses *ADL* language to discuss and resolve the problem. Kim Day notes “*We have less discipline problems resulting from bad behavior, like fights and violence, because we have high expectations for behavior communicated across our culture. However, we might have more infractions because we give suspensions for things other schools might not that are related to the character standard.*”

*One year, as a joke, I told our seniors we would be getting rid of ADL. I expected them to say “Great! I’m tired of this!” but instead there was a spontaneous uproar. “You can’t get rid of ADL. That is what makes Perspectives work. That is why Perspectives is Perspectives.”*

- Kim Day, Perspectives CEO

Perspectives tries to immerse parents in the language as well. Parents are informed about *ADL* at the beginning-of-the-year orientation, discuss it at 3-way conferences with teachers and their child, and hear the language used if a student ever receives disciplinary action. Perspectives sends the 26 principles home, and many parents post them on their refrigerators.

Since Perspectives does not enroll students after the 9<sup>th</sup> grade, by the time seniors graduate, they have had at least four years of continuous *ADL*. All new students must go through a summer orientation on the principles before school begins.

### All Teachers Teach and Model *ADL*

Every teacher teaches an *ADL* course and integrates it into their subject area course. Teachers are all expected to live by and model the principles. Perspectives trains all teachers in *ADL* to ensure they are prepared to teach the content and are equipped to handle the difficult conversations and situations that can result when discussing complex issues such as race, class, and conflict resolution. Before the school year begins, all teachers attend “core and camp,” a three-week long professional development camp. Two days are devoted to *ADL* training, where teachers learn about the curriculum, model lessons, reflect how the principles apply to their lives, brainstorm teaching ideas, and discuss how to handle difficult situations. New hires receive additional professional development days on the curriculum and principles.

Teachers are provided ongoing support and professional development on *ADL* throughout the year. During regular *ADL* planning meetings and staff development meetings, teachers talk about strategies and brainstorm how they might address an issue that comes up in a class. Teachers constantly share lessons and best practices.

*It's counterproductive for a teacher not to teach ADL — they would feel removed from the entire culture if all they were teaching was English or math. Teaching ADL is a way to connect with students because you are talking about deep issues and trying to figure out some of the world's biggest challenges as a team.*

- Kim Day, Perspectives CEO

### Accountability

All students receive a grade in *A Disciplined Life*<sup>™</sup>, which is based not only on success in *ADL* class, but also on how well they exhibit the principles in the hall, in their field studies, in their academic classes, and in all of their other school activities. Grades are based on continuous improvement, which means that students receive bad grades if they do not show growth on certain principles. Teachers keep track of student behaviors and discuss each student with other teachers at the end of the marking period. Regardless of their GPA, if students earn a grade lower than a B in an *ADL* course, they cannot make honor roll. Furthermore, “*it is definitely possible for a student not to pass ADL. This will happen if they are not showing any growth in the principles.*”

Perspectives evaluates the effectiveness of its character education in multiple ways. Teachers are evaluated twice a year on both how well they teach *A Disciplined Life*<sup>™</sup> and on how well they model it and use its language (see Toolkit for *Teacher Evaluation Rubric* and *Teacher ADL Feedback Form*). Additionally, the school administers student, teacher, and parent surveys twice a year that ask a wide variety of questions about *A Disciplined Life*<sup>™</sup> and school culture. Students are asked if they feel supported and if teachers model *ADL*. Teachers are asked if they feel effective and supported teaching *ADL*. Parents are asked if they have heard about *ADL* at their house and if their child exhibits the principles. These survey results are reported to individual schools and Perspectives’ central office. Student survey results are also included on the External Scorecard, which is shown to board members, potential donors, and anyone else inquiring about Perspectives

(see Toolkit for *Student Satisfaction Survey*, *Parent Satisfaction Survey*, *Teacher Satisfaction Survey*, and *External Scorecard*).

Chicago Public Schools (CPS) conducts an annual survey of all students on their perceptions of safety, educational expectations, school support, and social and emotional skills. Perspectives’ *ADL* principles are spread across these four categories. According to the results of the 2006 survey, Perspectives outperformed the district on all measures (see sidebar for full results).

**Results of the 2006 CPS Student Connection Survey**  
*Note: ADL principles are spread evenly across these categories and are not all concentrated in the social and emotional skills questions*

*Students were asked to rate their school as Needs Improvement, Adequate, or Excellent.*

	% Adequate or Above	
	Perspectives	CPS
<b>Safe &amp; Respectful Climate:</b> How physically safe and emotionally safe students feel	92%	71%
<b>High Expectations:</b> How much students perceive teachers encourage them to think, work hard, do their best, and connect what they learn in school to life outside of school	86%	76%
<b>Student Support:</b> How much students feel listened to, cared about, and helped by teachers/adults in the school	84%	75%
<b>Social &amp; Emotional Skills:</b> Students’ perceptions of their social and problem-solving skills.	75%	74%

*For full survey results see: [http://www.perspectivescs.org/documents/Student\\_Connection\\_Survey.pdf](http://www.perspectivescs.org/documents/Student_Connection_Survey.pdf)*

## HOW TO IMPLEMENT CHARTER EDUCATION IN YOUR SCHOOL

- **Develop principles.** Develop a list of behaviors you want students and staff to exhibit. Keep it simple. Make sure the principles do not impose values and are applicable across gender, race, religion, and subject matter. If your state has standards for social and emotional learning or character education, try to align your school’s principles with those standards.
- **Develop a curriculum.** Your school can choose to adopt an existing program or develop a curriculum of its own. If you decide to create your own curriculum, work with teachers to develop a common definition of what these principles might look like in a classroom and how they can be taught. Develop lesson plans that focus on themes and that are personally relevant and engaging for students. Identify places for field studies and resources that can be used in class.
- **Train all teachers.** All teachers will need to be able to teach the principles, as well as model and use them outside of class. The school should provide adequate training for all teachers that includes lesson plan development and role playing. As one staff member remarked, “*Advisories were initially intended to give kids time to develop behaviors for the future, but with no professional development for teachers behind that, teachers just read announcements and give kids time to do homework.*” Teaching character education is difficult and should be taken seriously.
- **Allot time for teachers to collaborate.** Make sure to provide dedicated time for teachers to collaborate with colleagues to discuss challenging issues, develop and improve lessons, and identify what students need to work on.
- **Dedicate class time to character education.** Dedicate consistent time to teaching character education. Perspectives makes character education a priority, allocating 90 minutes of class time each week to *ADL*.

- ***Start in the earliest possible grade.*** The earlier you teach students the language and expectations of the character education curriculum, the better. At Perspectives, *“Starting with high school students is more challenging. Our 7<sup>th</sup> graders are making up songs about ADL and are grasping it more quickly.”*
- ***Build in accountability.*** Hold students and adults accountable for exhibiting the principles and continuing to improve. Use frequent surveys and teacher evaluations to ensure students are learning and using the principles, teachers are teaching them, and all adults are modeling the ideal behaviors.
- ***Ensure school-wide integration.*** Character education cannot stop at the classroom door. It must be reinforced in the hallways, in conversations, in disciplinary proceedings, in conversations with parents, and in all interactions students have with adults. Students should be given character education grades based not only on their classroom performance, but also on how they exhibit the principles on an ongoing basis.
- ***Be unwavering in applying the principles.*** Be clear, deliberate, and steadfast in upholding and enforcing the principles. *“Begin teaching it on day one and don’t back down. Kids are always trying to push the envelope, but staff needs to stick to ADL and follow through on it.”*

## PERSPECTIVES CHARACTER EDUCATION TOOLKIT

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### Toolkit Contents

#### Planning Tools

- **Character Education Planning Checklist (Synthesized by FSG)**  
 Perspectives identified the elements that are key to its character education program. This checklist can help your organization think through whether you have these elements in place or whether they need to be developed.
- ***A Disciplined Life™* Courses: 9–12 grade (Synthesized by FSG)**  
 This document lists the focus of the quarterly *A Disciplined Life™* (*ADL*) course for grades 9–12. This serves as an illustrative example of possible course content and sequencing.
- **Sample 7<sup>th</sup> Grade 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter *A Disciplined Life™* Lessons (Perspectives Document)**  
 This document includes the first four lessons from the first quarter 7<sup>th</sup> grade *ADL* course.

#### Evaluation Tools

- **Teacher Evaluation Rubric (Perspectives Document)**  
 This rubric is used to evaluate teachers twice a year on teaching and learning, classroom environment, and basic duties. The teaching and reinforcement of *ADL* is one component of this evaluation.
- **Teacher *A Disciplined Life™* Feedback Form (Perspectives Document)**  
 This feedback form is used by principals and other school administrators twice a year to evaluate teachers on how well they model and use the *ADL* principles.
- **Student Satisfaction Survey (Perspectives Document)**  
 A survey is administered to students twice a year. This part of the survey asks about the impact of *ADL*. The results are reported to individual schools and Perspectives' central office.
- **Parent Satisfaction Survey (Perspectives Document)**  
 A survey is given to parents twice a year. This part of the survey focuses on *ADL*. The results are reported to individual schools, Perspectives' central office, and parents.
- **Teacher Satisfaction Survey (Perspectives Document)**  
 A survey is administered to teachers twice a year. This part of the survey asks questions related to *ADL* and school culture. Results are shared with Perspectives' central office.
- **External Scorecard (Perspectives Document)**  
 This document is shown to board members, potential donors, and anyone outside of Perspectives who is inquiring about its scores. The Scorecard ranks Perspectives on *A Disciplined Life®*, family involvement, community engagement, professional development, and academic rigor. This sample scorecard shows sample ratings for the *ADL* component.

## Character Education Planning Checklist

Perspectives identified the following elements as key to its character education program. *Does your organization have these elements in place, or are they being developed?*

Planning Checklist Items	Yes	No	In Progress	Comments
<p><b>Develop principles.</b>                      What behaviors do you want your students to exhibit?                      Can you tie these to state standards? Can you keep the list simple?</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<p><b>Develop a curriculum.</b>                      What will these principles look like in the classroom?                      How will you teach them? How will you assess them?                      What resources (field study locations, books, articles, music, etc) will you need in order to make the courses relevant and engaging for students?</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<p><b>Train all teachers.</b>                      All teachers will need to be able to teach the principles, as well as model and use them outside of class.                      How will you train all teachers? What supports will you provide?</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<p><b>Allot time for teachers to collaborate.</b>                      Can you make time in the schedule to have meetings devoted to character education? Is there ample time for teachers to discuss issues they are having and to discuss student progress and needs?</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<p><b>Dedicate class time to character education.</b>                      Where in the schedule can you make time for a specific character education course? How will you ensure this course does not migrate into study hall or advisory?</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<p><b>Start in the earliest possible grade.</b>                      Can you start teaching the curriculum in your school's earliest grade?</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<p><b>Build in accountability.</b>                      How will you measure success? How will you ensure students are making progress and teachers are modeling the ideal behaviors?</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<p><b>Ensure school-wide integration and be unwavering in applying the principles.</b>                      How will you ensure character education does not stop at the classroom door? How will you communicate with parents? How will you integrate the principles into the school culture, hallways, conversations, and disciplinary procedures?</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

## **A Disciplined Life™ Courses: 9-12 Grade**

Perspectives created the following courses as part of its character education curriculum. *What courses would you want to implement as part of a character education curriculum? How would you sequence them?*

**High School: 45 minute class, 2 days a week**

### **9<sup>th</sup> Grade:**

<b>QUARTER</b>	<b>COURSE FOCUS</b>
Quarter 1	Community Building and The Perspectives Way
Quarter 2	Transitions and Personal Growth
Quarter 3	Effective Communication
Quarter 4	Making Good Choices

### **10<sup>th</sup> Grade:**

<b>QUARTER</b>	<b>COURSE FOCUS</b>
Quarter 1	Community Building and The Perspectives Way
Quarter 2	Diversity
Quarter 3	How to Pursue and Attain Excellence
Quarter 4	The Ripple Effect

### **11<sup>th</sup> Grade:**

<b>QUARTER</b>	<b>COURSE FOCUS</b>
Quarter 1	Community Building and The Perspectives Way
Quarter 2	Independence
Quarter 3	Friendships and Relationships
Quarter 4	Planning for the Future

### **12<sup>th</sup> Grade:**

<b>QUARTER</b>	<b>COURSE FOCUS</b>
Quarter 1	Community Building and The Perspectives Way
Quarter 2	Morality and Ethics
Quarter 3	Giving Back
Quarter 4	Beyond These Walls



## Sample 7<sup>th</sup> Grade 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter *A Disciplined Life*<sup>™</sup> Lessons

These are the first four lessons from the 7<sup>th</sup> grade 1<sup>st</sup> quarter ADL course. *What would you want to teach as part of your school's character education curriculum? How would you teach these lessons?*

### Lesson 1: What is a community?

**Essential Question:** How can I identify my individuality within the community?

**Theme:** 7<sup>th</sup> Grade Community and Identity of Individual

**Guiding Question:** How do we (7<sup>th</sup> grade) define community?

***A Disciplined Life Principles:*** Be open-minded, think critically and be inquisitive, listen actively, be reflective

**Objectives:** Students will draw from their previous knowledge of community and will create a unified definition of community as a community.

**Skills (Quarter 1):** Speaking, organizing, perceiving, empathizing, self advocating, decision making, prioritizing, confronting, planning, evaluating, assertiveness, negotiating, presenting, interviewing, reflection, questioning, listening, initiative, and critical thinking.

**Materials:** 3 index cards per student, container to place index cards in, Post-it Easel Pad

**Time Needed:** 45 minutes

#### Lesson:

- Step 1: Each student is given 3 index cards. On the first index card they will place 1 word that means community. On the second index card 1 word that does not mean community. On the third index card a sentence or phrase that means community.
- Step 2: Students fold the index cards in half and place them in the container. The teacher then shakes up the container.
- Step 3: On the first sheet of the Easel Pad label the top **Words That Describe Community**, the second sheet says **Words That Do Not Define Community** and the third **Phrases That Describe Community**.
- Step 4: Teacher walks around and has each student to pull 3 index cards from container. Each student will then read what is printed on each index card and say which category they would place the word or phrase in and why they would place it in that category.

**Closure:** Have students to review items that they thought defined a community or did not define a community. Discuss how we define community similarly and differently. What shapes our definition of community? Students return index cards. Teacher keeps Easel Pad Paper responses for next lesson.



## Sample 7<sup>th</sup> Grade 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter *A Disciplined Life*<sup>™</sup> Lessons

### Lesson 2: What are the guiding principles for our community?

**Essential Question:** How can I identify my individuality within the community?

**Theme:** 7<sup>th</sup> Grade Community and Identity of Individual

**Guiding Question:** How do we (7<sup>th</sup> grade) define community?

***A Disciplined Life* Principles:** Be open-minded, think critically and be inquisitive, listen actively, be reflective, communicate effectively

**Objectives:** Students will draw from their previous knowledge of community and will create as a community a unified definition of community.

**Skills (Quarter 1):** Speaking, organizing, perceiving, empathizing, self advocating, decision making, prioritizing, confronting, planning, evaluating, assertiveness, negotiating, presenting, interviewing, reflection, questioning, listening, initiative, and critical thinking.

**Materials:** *ADL* Journal

**Time Needed:** 45 minutes

#### Lesson:

- Step 1: All students are asked to answer the following questions in their journal, “What rules do you have in your community?” “Who makes the rules in your community?” “What happens when you break a rule?” “How can you create/change a rule?”
- Step 2: After discussion from previous questions teacher writes on the board, “What *ADL* rules are we going to have in our 7<sup>th</sup> grade community?” “How are we going to implement and follow these rules?” “What happens in our community when someone breaks the *ADL* community rules?”
- Step 3: Students meet in triads to discuss the questions and write down solutions.
- Step 4: Triads share with the class.

**Closure:** Students discuss the role of community members and how it is important for each community member to follow the guidelines that are set by that community. Collect sheets from triads to be used for next lesson.

## Sample 7<sup>th</sup> Grade 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter *A Disciplined Life*<sup>™</sup> Lessons

### Lesson 3 and 4: What are the guiding principles for our community?

**Essential Question:** How can I identify my individuality within the community?

**Theme:** 7<sup>th</sup> Grade Community and Identity of Individual

**Guiding Question:** How do we (7<sup>th</sup> grade) define community?

***A Disciplined Life Principles:*** Be open-minded, think critically and be inquisitive, listen actively, be reflective, communicate effectively

**Objectives:** Students will draw from their previous knowledge of community and will create as a community a unified definition of community.

**Skills (Quarter 1):** Speaking, organizing, perceiving, empathizing, self advocating, decision making, prioritizing, confronting, planning, evaluating, assertiveness, negotiating, presenting, interviewing, reflection, questioning, listening, initiative, and critical thinking.

**Materials:** Easel Pad Responses (lesson 1), sheets from triads (lesson 2), blank sheets of Easel Pad paper.

**Time Needed:** 2 - (45 minute classes)

#### Lesson:

- Step 1: Place Easel Pad response from first lesson on the board.
- Step 2: Write the student responses collected from lesson 1 & 2 on EaselPad. Place on board/wall.
- Step 3: Have students get into triads, read the posted responses on the wall to find a common theme.
- Step 4: The students write down the common theme. In their triads create, they will a definition of community that will be used in the 7<sup>th</sup> grade classroom. Students will also include *ADL* Principles and guidelines in their definition.
- Step 5: Each triad will write their definition of Community (along with the *ADL* Principles/Guidelines) on the Easel Paper.
- Step 6: The students will create 1 definition that incorporates all the ideas that are posted.
- Step 7: Once the class has agreed on 1 definition of community that includes *ADL* Principals and guidelines the teacher will write the FINAL definition of community on the Easel Paper.
- Step 8: Teacher type copy of 7<sup>th</sup> grade def. of community. Students place a copy in *ADL* folder.
- Step 9: Students create a life-size poster with the 7<sup>th</sup> grade definition of community. Each student will sign their name to the poster as a contract with the other members of the community.

**Closure:** Students discuss the role of community members and how it is important for each community member to follow the guidelines that are set by that community. Students work together to derive a definition of community that can be appreciated by all that are in the 7<sup>th</sup> grade class. Students will discuss how they worked together and the importance of coming to an agreement and signing their finished work. Student will also discuss the process to creating a definition.



## Teacher A Disciplined Life™ Feedback Form

Perspectives teachers complete this form in April. Principals, the Chief Education Officer, the Chief Academic Officer and HR use it to evaluate staff. Some teachers have students fill them out, but Perspectives does not require it. *How would your school evaluate the degree to which teachers model and reinforce the principles of your character education curriculum?*

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_ FEEDBACK FROM: \_\_\_\_\_

SELF-PERCEPTION	Needs Improvement ← → Excellent				
	1	2	3	4	5
Accept only quality work from yourself.					
Take responsibility for your actions.					
Seek wisdom.					
Be open-minded.					
Think critically and be inquisitive.					
Demonstrate honesty, integrity, and decency.					
Be generous.					
Be a life-long learner					

List top **2 strengths** in the area of self perception:

List top **2 behaviors requiring change** in the area of self perception:

COMMUNICATION	Needs Improvement ← → Excellent				
	1	2	3	4	5
Communicate effectively.					
Challenge each other intellectually.					
Show gratitude.					
Respect each other's differences.					
Be positive and support each other.					
Show compassion.					

List top **2 strengths** in the area of communication:

List top **2 behaviors requiring change** in the area of communication:

PRODUCTIVITY	Needs Improvement ← → Excellent				
	1	2	3	4	5
Demonstrate a strong work ethic.					
Use your time wisely.					
Listen actively.					
Be punctual and prepared.					
Be organized.					
Be reflective.					
Be reliable.					
Take initiative.					
Demonstrate perseverance.					

List top **2 strengths** in the area of productivity:

List top **2 behaviors requiring change** in the area of productivity:



## Student Satisfaction Survey

Perspectives administers a student satisfaction survey twice a year. The results are reported to individual schools and Perspectives' central office. Below are questions pertaining to *A Disciplined Life™* from a recent student survey. *How would you gain insight into students' perceptions of character education and culture? How would you use these survey results to change practices?*

*Note: Starting in 2006, Perspectives replaced this survey with Chicago Public Schools' biannual Student Connection Survey, which surveys students on their perceptions on things such as safety, school support, social and emotional skills, and extracurricular participation. For a sample of last year's survey please visit:*

[http://www.perspectivescs.org/documents/Student\\_Connection\\_Survey.pdf](http://www.perspectivescs.org/documents/Student_Connection_Survey.pdf)

Please circle a number from 1 – 3, where 1 = do not agree, 2 = agree, 3 = strongly agree

1. My teachers care about me.  
1                      2                      3
2. My teachers are willing to give me extra help if I need it.  
1                      2                      3
3. My teachers expect me to work hard.  
1                      2                      3
4. My teachers believe I can do well in school.  
1                      2                      3
5. My teachers treat me with respect.  
1                      2                      3
6. My teachers grade fairly.  
1                      2                      3
8. When I am upset, there is always someone I can talk to.  
1                      2                      3
9. I feel safe inside of the school.  
1                      2                      3
10. I feel safe outside of the school.  
1                      2                      3
11. Students at this school treat each other with respect.  
1                      2                      3
12. Perspectives helps me be a better person.  
1                      2                      3
13. *ADL* is something I take seriously in my life.  
1                      2                      3
14. We have a good variety of after-school activities.  
1                      2                      3
15. The after school activities seem well organized.  
1                      2                      3

## Parent Satisfaction Survey

Perspectives administers a parent satisfaction survey twice a year. The results are reported to individual schools, Perspectives' central office, and are also included in reports to parents. Below are questions pertaining to *A Disciplined Life™* from a recent parent survey. *How would your school gain insight into parents' perceptions of character education and culture? How would you use these survey results to change practices?*

Please read each of the following questions. Circle the number that best describes your satisfaction: 1= Needs Improvement; 2= Meets Expectations; 3= Exceeds Expectations  
If you answer "needs improvement", please specify a possible solution.

### ***A Disciplined Life® and Social Development***

1. Are you satisfied with how *A Disciplined Life®* impacts your child?      1   2   3  
If answered needs improvement please indicate improvement suggestions

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2. Are you satisfied with the number and types of after-school activities? 1   2   3  
If answered needs improvement please indicate improvement suggestions

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3. Are you satisfied with how your child's unique gifts are celebrated?      1   2   3  
If answered needs improvement please indicate improvement suggestions

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### ***School Culture and Discipline***

4. Are you satisfied with how safe your child feels at school?      1   2   3  
If answered needs improvement please indicate improvement suggestions

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5. Are you satisfied with the school's expectations regarding behavior?      1   2   3  
If answered needs improvement please indicate improvement suggestions

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6. Are you satisfied with the consistency of disciplinary actions?      1   2   3  
If answered needs improvement please indicate improvement suggestions

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### ***Additional Comments***

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## Teacher Satisfaction Survey

Perspectives administers a teacher satisfaction survey twice a year. Below are questions pertaining to *A Disciplined Life™* from a recent teacher survey. *How would your school gain insight into parents' perceptions of character education and culture? How would you use these survey results to change practices?*

### Directions:

Please read each of the following questions. Circle the number that best describes your satisfaction: 1= Needs Improvement; 2= Meets Expectations; 3= Exceeds Expectations  
If you answer "needs improvement", please specify a possible solution.

### ***A Disciplined Life™ and Social Development***

- 1. Does teaching *A Disciplined Life™* help change student behavior? 1 2 3  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 2. I see evidence that *A Disciplined Life™* is supporting student growth 1 2 3  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 3. Is *A Disciplined Life™* a tool to redirect students? 1 2 3  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 4. Rate the variety of after-school activities. 1 2 3  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 5. Rate the quality of after-school activities 1 2 3  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 6. Describe how well students' unique gifts are celebrated. 1 2 3  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 7. Does teaching *A Disciplined Life™* foster an inclusive environment? 1 2 3  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 8. Do we meet the social/emotional needs of our kids through social service? 1 2 3  
\_\_\_\_\_

### ***School Culture and Discipline***

- 9. Rate the school's level of safety. 1 2 3  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 10. School clearly defines expectations regarding behavior? 1 2 3  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 11. Are disciplinary actions in the best interest of the students? 1 2 3  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 12. Are the disciplinary actions & procedures reasonably consistent? 1 2 3  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 13. Are we consistent in addressing student behavior? 1 2 3  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 14. Are expectations consistent among the staff? 1 2 3  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 15. Do kids feel safe to be intellectuals? 1 2 3  
\_\_\_\_\_



### External Scorecard

This External Scorecard is shown to anyone outside of Perspectives who is inquiring about its scores. It is also given to potential donors and to Board members. It is intended to share data, but not anything that might infringe on student privacy. The Scorecard ranks Perspectives on *A Disciplined Life™*, Family Involvement, Community Engagement, Professional Development, and Academic Rigor. The sample scorecard below only shows sample ratings for ADL. *What tool can your school develop to show external stakeholders progress made on character education? What metrics would you measure? What targets would you set?*

		School 1			
	TARGET	2005-2006	2006-2007	Meets goals? x / <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Gains ↓ / <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<i>A Disciplined Life™</i>					
Attendance Rate	96%				
Grade 6					
Grade 7					
Grade 8					
Grade 9					
Grade 10					
Grade 11					
Grade 12					
Student Retention Rate	96%				
Student Persistence	96%				
Extra Curricular Participation Rate	51%				

*Note: The scorecard also includes data from the student survey. However, Perspectives recently changed its survey and scoring process. These new survey methods have not yet been incorporated into this version of the scorecard.*

#### Scorecard Measures:

- Attendance Rate:** The average monthly attendance rate for all students. Percentage reflects the average YTD attendance rate.
- Student Retention Rate:** The average monthly retention rate for all students. Percentage reflects the average YTD retention rate.
- Student Persistence:** Students who were enrolled at the beginning of the prior school year and who still live within a reasonable commuting distance, that remain enrolled at the start of the current school year.
- Extra Curricular Participation Rate:** The percentage of students that were in at least one full quarter after school activity. Percentage reflects the average YTD participation rate.