



Gratitude—Not Just for November

ESPB is very thankful for teachers and the work you do with the children of North Dakota. We have a lot to be thankful for, and there are many benefits of cultivating gratitude in ourselves and our students.

Gratitude is no longer just a "soft skill," and gratitude can lead to higher grades and life satisfaction among students.

Think intentions, costs, and benefits.

Researcher Giacomo Bono suggests that when students express gratitude, educators should encourage them to notice intentions (the thought behind the gift that they received), appreciate costs (someone went out of her way or made sacrifices to help them), and recognize the benefits (someone provided them with a gift or a kind act that has personal value).

Use a gratitude journal.

This may be one of the simplest ways to increase gratitude. In a 2008 study by Bono and Jeffrey Froh, middle school students who regularly wrote about what they were thankful for reported greater optimism and a more positive outlook on their school experience.

Lead gratitude activities.

Have students write a thank-you letter to someone in their lives, participate in gratitude circles, or contribute to a gratitude wall or bulletin board.

Pair students to increase cooperation.

Gratitude can emerge organically in mixed-ability grouping that allows students to complement one another's strengths.

Use question prompts.

For example, when students come into school on Monday mornings, ask them what their favorite part of the weekend was, says Bono. Then, follow up with, *Did someone help make that happen?* Or, if they faced a particular challenge, ask, *Did someone help you overcome it?* Bono explains, "It's easy in the day-to-day conversations that you have with a child to talk about the people who were responsible [for a positive event]."

Encourage service learning.

Service learning gives students an opportunity to experience and reflect on the struggles of others. Each discipline poses opportunities for service learning around a social justice question or authentic community need.

Model it!

The key to cultivating gratitude in your classroom is to make it part of your own routine. By modeling gratitude, you encourage students to do the same, and, according to the Greater Good Science Center, teachers who practice gratitude "feel more satisfied and accomplished, and less emotionally exhausted, possibly reducing teacher burnout."

Reference:

Cultivating Gratitude in the Classroom, ASCD

<https://www.ascd.org/el/articles/tapping-into-the-power-of-gratitude>

ESPB is grateful for YOU!