AMERICAN COLLEGE of EDUCATION®

Name	Annie Kim Sytsma
Artifact Title	"Implementation of Character Education"
Program Outcome #	2. Ensure actions are justifiable based upon theory, standards, and frameworks by analyzing and evaluating programs using principles of instructional design to address improvement issues and relevance in the field.
Required Key Assessment	DL5703 (Instructional Design Fundamentals - Module 4)
Degree Program	M. Ed. in Instructional Design and Technology

A course design for an instructional designer takes the consideration of various components. An instructional designer must know and understand his target audience, the context, the learning environment as well as the methods of design that will be the most suitable for the course and its learners. This course design considered all of the factors necessary in order to blueprint and storyboard a course design for character education (blueprint and storyboard can be found at http://bit.ly/2pweex9). "We may exhibit an admirable command of content, and possess a dazzling variety of pedagogical skills, but without knowing what's going on in our students' heads, that knowledge may be presented and that skill exercised in a vacuum of misunderstanding" (Brookfield, 2006). Researchers strongly advise educators and learners to move beyond the false security that comes from learning styles: "Teachers are urged to offer classroom material in many different ways so that each student can take it in in the way he or she is best equipped to learn it [; however,] the wrongheadedness of this conclusion is manifold…While it's true that most all of us have a decided preference for how we like to learn new material, the premise behind learning styles is …not supported by science, and it instills a corrosive, misguided sense of diminished potential" (Brown, Roediger, & McDaniel, 2014). These are also words that an instructional designers must heed to. Instructional designers need to understand that, unlike previous understandings, their target population does not learn best according to their *preferred* methods of instruction. There is false security in this thinking. Easier isn't better. It is essential that the target audience and context is evaluated properly in order to ensure that the focus of the course design is the learners.

Implementation of Character Education

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Abstract

Choosing the right instructional design model is necessary in order to ensure meaningful learning experiences for students, whether the learning is directed by content instruction or character instruction. Recent studies have demonstrated that incorporating character education in schools naturally results in the success of students. This paper compares two instructional design models as it relates to teaching character strengths with the expectation that students demonstrate their understanding by exhibiting the following seven traits as outlined in Paul Tough's book *How Children Succeed*: (1) grit (2) curiosity (3) self-control (4) social intelligence (5) zest (6) optimism and (7) gratitude. This paper explains and describes the context of character education, the learners served by this instructional model, and the criteria used to determine the context and learners for this model.

Advanced Design of Instructional Media

Psychologists have studied and determined that an individual's character can predict not only academic success, but future success as well. American psychologist Angela Duckworth has been conducting groundbreaking studies on the characteristic of grit, the quality that enables individuals to work hard and commit to their short and long terms goals, and self-control, the ability to refrain from impulsivity (Popova, 2015). Duckworth is not the only one behind this focus on character education. Paul Tough, a writer for the *New York Times Magazine*, has written extensively on the topic of education, parenting, poverty, and has come to be known as the man behind the book *How Children Succeed: Grit, curiosity, and the hidden power of character*.

The Context

Character education has grown into a notable topic and teachers have been trying to find the best instructional design model which would lead them to be successful in their pursuit to help students develop their character in addition to their emphasis on teaching to their curricular standards. Character education is not the same as teaching in the content areas and therefore an instructional design model for the workplace might prove to be more beneficial than an instructional design model for education.

The Learner and the Learning Environment

The learners for this character education instruction model will be the students enrolled in Cedar Springs High School English 10 in Cedar Springs, Michigan. Cedar Springs is a small, rural town with a population of 3,561 according to City Data. Most of the students from this town are born and raised in Cedar Springs and have had little to no experience outside their hometown. According to Michigan Demographics, the largest ethnic group represented in Cedar

Springs is white, non-hispanic, which makes up 93.2% of the population. This has been changing in recent years as new families have moved into the district because of the recognition of the school district in comparison to its surrounding districts.

The Learner

Cedar Springs High School currently created a team of students, parents and teachers to help define and implement programs that will help the students in the community be College and Career Ready (CCR). In addition to having the academic skills necessary to be CCR, the team established that character skills is also required for the students of Cedar Springs to be successful in their near and far futures.

Students have three options as sophomores for their English requirement. Students who took Honors English 9 will advance to American Literature, students who took English 9 will advance to English 10, and students who took English 9 Academy, will advance to English 10 Academy. The majority of sophomore students will take English 10 and as the only teacher of English 10 in the 2015-2016 school year, I will have these students all year.

Sophomore year is a challenge for many reasons and student performance is below average due to their character. While students have the ability to perform at or beyond expectation level, students lack in character traits that will push them to succeed in or out of the classroom. Having worked with this age group and course for the past four years, there is a noticeable cycle of students lacking the character traits of grit, curiosity, self-control, social intelligence, zest, optimism and gratitude. These traits are essential for the success of these students and therefore the learners chosen for this instructional model are the majority of the sophomore class at Cedar Springs High School.

The Learning Environment

The learning environment is classroom E210 at Cedar Springs High School. The classroom is painted in shades of blue and green to create an environment of creativity. Instead of using the fluorescent lights of the classroom, there are lamps and lights strung across the ceilings. The learning environment was transformed to remove the negative institutional element of the traditional classroom and replace it with a warm environment where students are invited to and encouraged to learn. The classroom is one where students are excited to walk into and students readily say that they love walking the room.

The teacher creates a sense of inquiry among students and creates a safe environment for all to participate. Students are called on using popsicle sticks with students names written on each stick. The teacher incorporates Article of the Week to have students know what is going on in current events, but to also provide knowledge about character and its importance. Students are invited to participate in a debate/discussion where they practice listening to each other as they acknowledge, support, and even disagree with one another in a civilized manner following the debate norms of the classroom. The learning environment offers a balance of collaboration and individual work.

<center>**Comparing Instructional Design Models for Character Instruction**</center>

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Gagne's Nine Events of Instruction

Robert Gagne is an education psychologist best known for his work called "The Conditions of Learning", which provides a behaviorist framework while also drawing from the cognitive approach. His approach is broken up into nine instructional events and therefore his instructional design model is called *Gagne's Nine Events of Instruction* ("Gagne's Nine"). Table 1 explains each of the nine instructional events, provides an explanation and presents various instructional strategies. Gagne's events are sequentially outlined and intended to be followed as such.

Gagne saw the importance of first identifying the goal, the learning outcome, and then constructing the framework for achieving the learning outcome. Essential to Gagne's ideas of instruction are what he calls *conditions of learning* ("Gagne's Nine"). He breaks these down into internal and external conditions. "The internal conditions deal with previously learned capabilities of the learner. Or in other words, what the learner knows prior to instruction. The external conditions deal with the stimuli (a purely behaviorist term) that is presented externally to the learner. For example, what instruction is provided to the learner" (Cory, 1996).

Kirkpatrick's Four Levels of Training Evaluation

Unlike Gagne, Donald Kirkpatrick created an instructional design model created for the evaluation of training programs. Kirkpatrick's approach to training evaluation is by far the most popular approach in organizations today (Bates, 2004). While the idea behind Kirkpatrick's

model is for organizations to have meaningful evaluation of learning, Bates (2004) states that the popularity of this approach comes from it being the most straightforward system for talking about training outcomes and the kinds of information that can be provided to assess the extent to which training programs have achieved certain objectives.

Table 2 shows the four different levels of outcome, its definition, and a couple evaluation methods and strategies. The first level of Kirkpatrick's model measures reaction, which is evaluated through surveys or questionnaires. The second level measures learning by means of interviews or even observations. The third level measures behavior through observation over time to assess change as well as sustainability of change. And the final level measures results. While this model might be the most suitable model for organizations, this model requires much time and seems much too simplified for measuring student's growth of character strengths.

Instructional Design Model for Character Education

While both Gagne and Kirkpatrick's instructional design model will be adequate for character education, Gagne's model will work the best for the purpose and time. The behaviorist framework connected with the cognitivist approach seems like the perfect mix when teaching character and measuring behavior. While Kirkpatrick's model essentially performs in a similar way, the feedback of the reaction level is comprised of a larger audience than the classroom is able to provide.

Gagne's instructional design is broken up into nine tangible events that integrate well into my personal style of teaching, which is based from Douglas Fisher and Nancy Frey's Gradual Release Model going in and out of focus lesson, guided instruction, collaborative work, and

individual work. The presentation of information and focus on feedback in Gagne's model seems natural to my style of teaching.

Timeline for Character Education

In order to effectively teach students, a presentation needs to be made to get their attention. Rather than try and teach all seven traits all at once, the idea is to use Gagne's instructional design model for each of the seven traits. A number of means could be used to gain student attention to the necessity of character education, such as in the form of an article of the week, which is given to my students to bring awareness of other topics, or a TedTalk video of Angela Duckworth or Paul Tough. The importance in the first event is to evoke curiosity and help students see the need for an implementation of character education. The second event is to explain the purpose of the trait and to present objectives so that students can have a success indicator for each trait. This can be presented as a checklist for students to use as an assessment tool as they move into the remaining events. In order to be successful in teaching, teachers need to assess what prior knowledge learners have prior to presenting new material. This is the theory of scaffolding, which is readily used in teaching. The third event is where students will explain their current knowledge. This event makes the objective in event two not only accessible, but serves to bridge the gap of knowledge among the community of learners. After assessing prior knowledge in event three, event four is where the teacher will present new knowledge. This will take place in a slideshow presentation to define each of the seven traits and to provide tangible means for learners to apply this new knowledge in the near future. Transitioning from event four to event five will require the instructor to represent learners with guidelines, which can happen in

class discussions and can also take form in creating a checklist together as a class. In order to assess whether learners understand the new knowledge given, instructors can present a dilemma or a situation where students can collaborate in groups to show that they can apply their new knowledge into practice. This collaborative exercise is in the sixth event as instructors can provide feedbacks to students as they work through a low risk exercise with their peers. Then students will be asked to practice and apply the new knowledge in the classroom community in event seven. Event seven is important and requires immediate feedback. This may take form in the teacher providing learners with reinforcements for application or guide students to reflect about how they could have changed their response to demonstrate their understanding of the new knowledge. Event seven will take the most time and will provide to prepare learners for event eight, which is where teachers will assess the performance. Assessing performance can happen in various ways. Assessment can be in the form of quizzes or papers, but in the English Language Arts course, the assessment will be in applying the specific character trait to characters in novels read by the students. Event eight will occur as students learn the rest of the traits and students will add to their learning and application in better understanding the characters in their readings. Event nine will commence after events one through eight for each trait occurs. Event nine will be an encompassing reflection for students to demonstrate the necessity for each trait and to internalize how each trait can be practiced in each of their unique lives. The milestones for this sequence will occur after each of the seven traits have been assimilated into the learner's lives. Figure 1 provides a timeline of the sequence of teaching one of the character traits. Figure 2 provides a time frame for the semester.

<p style="text-align:center">The Need for Character Education</p>

While much instruction time is allocated to ensuring that students are receiving curricular instruction on content, character education is just as essential for students to be successful in the classroom, in their personal lives, and in achieving their future goals. Teachers need to find a way to integrate character education into curriculum so that students are aware of the traits that will help them be successful citizens. The teaching of character education will demonstrate significant growth in students in the classroom and utilizing Gagne's Nine Events of Instruction will help teachers in teaching the seven character traits as outlined by Paul Tough's bestselling book *How Children Succeed: Grit, curiosity, and the hidden power of character*.

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