

Systems Concepts and Tools Used in Teaching Character Education

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This presentation is geared toward teachers/guidance counselors at the elementary school (possibly middle school could apply the principles too). Facilitators will discuss several kindergarten through fifth grade guidance units and how to apply system concepts and tools to enhance student learning. They will also show how these tools can be applied in working individually and in small groups with children. In looking to help students make changes and see the bigger picture, these tools help students see cause and effect in a better light.

The systems concepts used in the Catalina Foothills School District K-5 guidance program are:

- cause and effect
- change over time
- interdependencies
- patterns and trends
- reinforcing relationship
- mental models
- short and long term consequences
- trade offs
- leverage

The units* and systems tools that are highlighted in the various grade levels are:

Kindergarten: Learning Friendship Skills/Accepting Others

- Stock/Flow (S/F) mapping using blocks
- Behavior Over Time Graph (BOTG)

First Grade: Feelings Unit/Identify and express feelings and how they change over time

- BOTG
- S/F mapping
- Cause and effect/future choices

Second Grade: Friendship Unit

- (warm fuzzies) / BOTG
- Causal Loop Diagram (CLD)
- S/F diagram

Third Grade: Communication Skills

- BOTG
- Chevrue's Pendulum (from System's Playbook by Linda Booth Sweeny)

- Anger Flood

Fourth Grade: Making Good Choices

- BOTG
- S/F diagram
- Trade offs/t-chart

Fifth Grade: Personal Power

- Ladder of Influence
- BOTG
- Iceberg

Small Groups/Individual Sessions with Students

Some of the system concepts and tools used in small counseling groups and/or individually with students are:

- Rush Hour, an anger management game developed by Bari Ross and Sandy Arlt
- Trade offs
- S/F maps
- BOTGs
- Circles in the Air (from *The System's Thinking Playbook*, by Linda Booth Sweeny)
- Chevruel's Pendulum (from *The System's Thinking Playbook*, by Linda Booth Sweeny)
- "Anger Flood"

These tools/activities have been used in counseling groups such as anger management, stress management, friendship skills, changing families, children of alcoholics, etc.

*Many of these units are available through Creative Learning Exchange/CLE