

Teacher Mini Toolkit

Be the Boss of Your Thoughts

Character



Gretchen Burman
Character U
Teacher Mini Toolkit



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Author Gretchen Burman and founder of Character U is on a mission to empower children with the social emotional learning skills to thrive in today's complex world. In a day and age where there is so much negativity and pressure from social media and outside influences, children need these skills so they can confidently navigate life's ups and downs.

Through her book, *The Adventures of Ooga and Zeeta*, workshops and assemblies, children are introduced to the power of positive self-talk, mindset and twelve social emotional learning skills empowering them to feel and do their best.

The Teacher Mini-Toolkit offers resources reinforcing the lessons learned during Be the Boss of Your Thoughts assembly.

Definition of concepts:

Green Glory and Red Rant

Characters from *The Adventures of Ooga and Zeeta* book that offer a fun, engaging and age-appropriate way for children to understand the power of positive self-talk and mindset skills so they can Be the Boss of Their Thoughts.

The 12 Cs

Common language of social-emotional and character development skills fostering conversations about emotions and behaviors improving children's:

- Self-esteem
- Self-regulation
- Resilience
- Communication skills
- Respect and kindness for themselves and each other

The Adventures of Ooga and Zeeta

The book is a compilation of 12 stories, tips and activities that bring The 12 Cs, Green Glory and Red Rant to life.



School implementation ideas:

- Dedicated 60 seconds every day for “Green Glory Time” where students reflect on one of The 12 Cs or think Green Glory positive thoughts.
- Use The 12 Cs, Green Glory and Red Rant as the consistent vocabulary for proactively and reactively teaching social and emotional skills.
- Hang Character U’s poster in the classroom.
 - Identify which “C” is represented during reading, writing, social studies or other opportunities throughout the day.
 - Remind students to change to Green Glory when they hear/see Red Rant.
- Have students draw or discuss what each C looks like.
- Put up a chart where students can recognize other students who represent The 12 Cs and/or change from Red Rant to Green Glory.
- Teachers recognize and praise students who demonstrate The 12 Cs and/or change from Red Rant to Green Glory.
- During morning announcement Principal announces “The C” for the day, week or month.
 - During morning meeting, class discusses “The C” of the day, week or month and how they can incorporate it into their day.
 - At the end of the day, week or month have the class share how they demonstrated “The C.”
- Teachers/students lead social emotional and character development lessons using [The Adventures of Ooga and Zeeta](#) book.
 - Read a story and complete the Tips for Kids and Activities during morning meeting.
 - Students share their own examples.
- Students create their own Green Glory and Red Rant.
- Review the assembly concepts with parents so everyone can speak this consistent vocabulary.
- One student from each class brings home *The Adventures of Ooga and Zeeta*.
 - Students are encouraged to read the book and do the activities together with their family.
 - Students share examples of how they used The 12 Cs, Green Glory and/or Red Rant over the weekend.

Lessons and activities:

Reinforcing the consistent vocabulary and modeling the concepts throughout the day will help ensure these social emotional skills become infused in their lives. Below are six of The 12 Cs reviewed during the assembly.

1. Cognitive

- Use the characters Green Glory and Red Rant at home to help your children become more aware of their self-talk and mindset. The first step to changing from negative to



- positive is to be aware of it. Then we can change to think more positively and strengthen our positive neural pathways.
- Activity: have children complete the [Train Your Brain activities](#) and have it visible so they can continue practicing changing from negative to positive.
 - When children hear their Red Rant, they write a check mark on the Red Rant side of the chart. Then the child should think of something positive to say to themselves and write a check mark on the Green Glory side of the chart. Teachers are encouraged to participate as well. This will help strengthen everyone's Green Glory power.
- Keep the Green Glory positive affirmations visible and read a few every day.

2. Choices:

- When you witness children making responsible choices, recognize their positive choice.
- When you witness children making an irresponsible choice, ask them if there is a better choice they could make. Encourage them to stop and think before they make the choice.
- When they do make a mistake or make an irresponsible choice encourage them to reflect and learn from it so they can make a different choice next time. Explain that mistakes are part of learning and growing.

3. Communication:

- When you hear children using kind words, compliment them on using Green Glory kind words.
- When you hear children using unkind words, ask them if those words are Red Rant or Green Glory words. If it's Red Rant words, ask them to change their words to Green Glory kind words.

4. Compassion:

- When you witness children helping others, compliment them on being Compassionate.
- Vice versa, when you see children not helping others or not being kind, challenge them to rethink their behavior and how they can turn it around to be Green Glory behavior and show their Compassion.
- Discuss hurtful words and what words to avoid.
- Read books focused on empathy to help children understand how others may be feeling.
- Children complete the [Compassion Word Search activity](#).

5. Confident:

- When children are feeling insecure about doing a challenging task, remind them of a time they accomplished a difficult task. Encourage them to pull from past successes to give them the confidence that they can do the next hard thing.
- When you hear your child comparing themselves to others, remind them to focus on what they CAN do and...



- They have their own special qualities they bring to the world.
- They are great just the way they are.
- They decide what is right for them.
- Remind them of their Green Glory who says, “I can do it,” or “I’m stronger than I think I am,” or “I am ok just the way I am.”
- Comparing yourself to others can lead to lower self-esteem.

6. **Centered**

- When your child is feeling anxiety or extra worrying, remind them to ask themselves the following questions:
 - Is there proof that this worry is true or will definitely happen?
 - What would I tell a friend if he/she had the same worry? What advice would I give them? Then, say it to yourself.
- Practice centering exercises. For example:
 - Deep breathing...imagine breathing in a flower and blowing out a candle. Breath in Green Glory, breath out Red Rant.
- Have kids make a bookmark listing/drawing different coping skills.
- Make a “Centering Corner” where children can go when they need a break or time to reflect. Have paper and pens there so kids can write/draw what is upsetting them.

Growth Mindset vs. Fixed Mindset Responses:

(Carol Dweck)

Growth Mindset (Green Glory)

“In a growth mindset, people believe that their most basic abilities can be developed through dedication and hard work—brains and talent are just the starting point. This view creates a love of learning and a resilience that is essential for great accomplishment.”

Fixed Mindset (Red Rant)

“In a fixed mindset, people believe their basic qualities, like their intelligence or talent, are simply **fixed** traits. They spend their time documenting their intelligence or talent instead of developing them. They also believe that talent alone creates success—without effort.”

Fixed Mindset/Red Rant responses:

- You learned that so quickly! You’re so smart!
- Look at that drawing. You’re the next Picasso!
- You’re so brilliant, you got an A without even studying!

Growth Mindset/Green Glory responses:

- Wow, you really practiced that, and look how you've improved.
- You studied more and your grade on this test is higher.
- You tried different strategies and you figured out how to solve the problem.
- You stuck to this and now you really understand it.



Role playing is a great way to practice and reinforce social emotional learning skills to ensure long-lasting learning. Research shows that role plays not only increase student engagement; it also increases knowledge retention (Westrup & Planander, 2013). Using role-play as a training tool helps students change behaviors and use best practices in real-world settings (Beard, et. al., 1995).

Below are a few role play examples showing children how to change from negative Red Rant to positive Green Glory for six of The 12 Cs. Feel free to make up your own role-plays.

Role Plays Examples

Centered:

Scene: I'm upset that I can't jump rope.

Red Rant: I'm so angry and am going to throw my jump rope in the trash.

Green Glory: I'm upset so I'm going to take a break, take a few deep breaths and then I'll try again.

Choices:

Scene: My friend told me to ignore Becky. I see Becky and ignore her and then I feel terrible.

Red Rant: My friend told me to do it so it's not my fault.

Green Glory: Next time someone asks me to do something I don't want to do, I'm going to say no!

Choices:

Scene: I'm soooo mad that we lost our soccer game.

Red Rant: I don't want to talk to anyone. I just want to go in my room and be miserable.

Green Glory: I'm disappointed I lost the game but I know I tried my best. I can't change what happened but I can choose how I handle the loss. One loss won't ruin the season.

Communication:

Scene: I asked my friend to wait for me so we could go to lunch together but she ran off with another friend.

Red Rant: I'm so mad at you and don't want to be your friend anymore.

Green Glory: I felt hurt when you didn't wait for me. Can you wait for me after lunch so we can walk back to class together?

Compassion:

Scene: A friend asks to play the game but she's not part of "The Group."

Red Rant: You can't play with us because you're not part of "The Group."

Green Glory: Sure! Let's all play together.

Compassion:

Scene: A boy in class made slime and you see him giving it to his friend. You ask if you can have some too.

Red Rant: No! It's not for you!

Green Glory: I'm sorry, I don't have enough today but I can make you slime another time. Do you want to play with mine?

Confident:

Scene: My friend makes fun of me in front of the class.

Red Rant: I'm no good. I deserved it.

Green Glory: I'm a good person who deserves to be treated with kindness and respect. I'm not going to let what they say upset me because this is their problem.

Confident:

Scene: I missed the ball and the other team scored. We lost the game.

Red Rant: I'm the worst player and I let my teammates down.

Green Glory: I made a mistake but am still a good soccer player. I'll do better next game.



Research:

Several research studies reinforce the importance of life skills and social-emotional learning at a young age for short- and long-term success.

Social Emotional Learning participants demonstrated significantly improved social and emotional skills, attitudes, behavior, and academic performance.

Better academic performance:

Achievement scores an average of 11% higher.

Improved attitudes and behaviors:

Greater motivation to learn, deeper commitment to school, increased time devoted to schoolwork, and better classroom behavior.

Reduced emotional distress:

Fewer reports of student depression, anxiety, stress, and social withdrawal.

Fewer negative behaviors:

Decreased disruptive class behavior, noncompliance, aggression, delinquent acts, and disciplinary referrals.

Durlak, Weissberg et al.'s recent meta-analysis on Social Emotional Learning



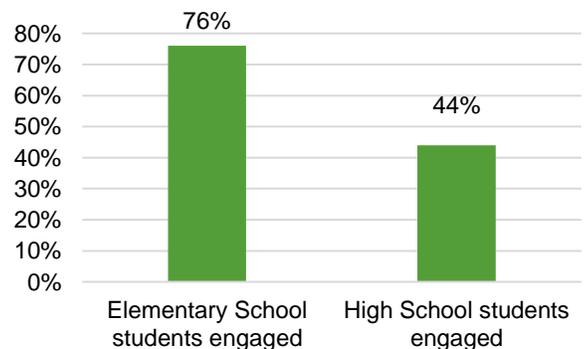
“We found that students’ mindsets—how they perceive their abilities—played a key role in their motivation and achievement, and we found that if we changed students’ mindsets, we could boost their achievement.”

Carol Dweck

High level social-emotional skills developed during childhood are correlated with a number of beneficial long-term health and well-being outcomes as adults, including lower rates of obesity, substance abuse, and criminal activity, and greater satisfaction in relationships and positive contributions to society.

[McKinsey/Microsoft](#)

PDK's 2014 Gallup Poll





The 12 Cs, Green Glory and Red Rant Definitions

CHARITY	Give to those in need without expecting anything in return.
COMEDY	To laugh and have joy in your life. Being able to laugh at yourself.
COMMITMENT	Give your best effort. When you fall down, get back up and try again (resilience). Be responsible and do what you say you're going to do.
CAREFUL	Eat mostly healthy foods and stay active. Stay away from danger.
COMPASSION	To be kind, show respect and treat others as you would like to be treated. To have empathy and imagine how someone else could feel.
COMMUNICATION	Listening, talking and using body language to share information. Relationship skills.
CONFIDENT	To believe in yourself. To believe in your abilities. To like and love yourself. To know you are great just the way you are.
CHOICES	Make the best decisions you can but when you make a mistake, learn from it and make a better future decision.
COGNITIVE	How you think (mindset) and how you talk to yourself (self-talk). Positive Green Glory and negative Red Rant.
CHERISH	Be thankful and grateful for what you have. To love, protect, and care for someone or something that is important to you.
CENTERED	Being able to relax and calm yourself. Feeling peace and balance within your mind and body.
COURAGEOUS	To be brave. To be scared but choose to push through your fears and do it anyway. Try new things.
RED RANT 	Represents our negative self-talk and mindset who tells us things like, "I can't do it, I'm not smart, I'm terrible and No one likes me." We want to recognize when we hear Red Rant so we can then change it to be more positive.
GREEN GLORY 	Represents our positive self-talk and mindset who tells us things like, "I can do it, I don't know how to do it yet but I know I'll figure it out, I am likeable, I can handle this, and I am important." Listening to Green Glory can help us quiet our inner critic, be self-compassionate and mentally strong.

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