



USE WITH:

n/a



GRADE LEVEL:

Upper elementary, middle school, or high school



CONTEXT:

Remote friendly

EDUCATOR PRACTICE

Start Staff Meetings With a Gratitude Circle

Boost morale and unity by encouraging staff to express gratitude.

Created by [Greater Good Science Center at UC Berkeley](#)

Description:

This activity builds on research suggesting that when we express gratitude at work, we experience more positive emotions, less stress, a greater sense that our team can achieve its goals, fewer sick days, and higher job satisfaction.

Est. time to complete:
10 minutes

Steps:

1. At the beginning or end of a staff, content team, or grade level meeting, have people take a moment to think about their interactions during the last week and identify a time when another staff member did them a favor or a small kindness that may have gone unnoticed or unacknowledged. It could be something as simple as holding open a door when they had a pile of papers in their hands, sharing an article they thought they might enjoy, or covering a recess duty for them.
2. One at a time, as people feel so moved (“popcorn style,” rather than going around in a circle), encourage them to speak directly and specifically to the person they are thanking—for example, “Thank you, Sam, for that cup of tea on Thursday morning. It was such a nice surprise on a morning when I had so much on my mind.” Sam’s response can be a simple, “You’re welcome.”

3. When silence seems to indicate that people are finished, say, “We’ll wait a couple more moments to see if there are any more sharers before we close the gratitude circle for today.” Often someone has been getting up the courage to speak and may come forward at this time.
4. Note that it isn’t necessary that everyone participate every time that you have a gratitude circle, or that everyone receives acknowledgement every time.
5. Close the practice by mentioning that we seldom get to know about these little kindnesses because of the busyness of school, but they are going on around us all the time. Acknowledging them helps us to remember to make time to offer our gratitude to each other.

Tips for Educators:

- Learning to share gratitude with coworkers can help educators, and the entire adult school community, become more comfortable sharing gratitude with students as well.
- While 10–15 minutes can be spent on this practice, shorter versions are also powerful. Consider doing this practice for 5–10 minutes regularly at meetings.
- If it feels right to you and your coworkers, this gratitude circle can be done at the end of meetings as well.



Inspired by:

1. Kaplan, S., Bradley-Geist, J. C., Ahmad, A., Anderson, A., Hargrove, A. K., & Lindsey, A. (2014). A test of two positive psychology interventions to increase employee well-being. *Journal of Business and Psychology*, 29(3), 367-380. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10869-013-9319-4>