

13 October 2021

The LEV8 Blurb

Elevate classes are continuing a social-emotional learning unit on bullying this week. According to SAFE-2-TELL (a crucial resource all should be familiar with q.v., <https://safe2tell.org/>) over half of bullying episodes stop almost immediately when peers intervene on behalf of the target. But how do we do so effectively and safely? Situational awareness and taking steps to ensure personal safety are skills all can improve. We discuss scenarios and strategies, making sure that students know how to use the available resources effectively.

The maxim “*Qui tacit consentire videtur*” (s/he who is silent is taken to consent) is an important topic for discussion, especially with the proviso “*ubi loqui debuit ac potuit*” (where s/he ought to have spoken and was able to do so). In other words, if one stands by and watches bullying, what role does she or he actually play? Our learning community expects behaviors that demonstrate Grit, Respect and Responsibility. Is there neutral ground in the face of bullying? Short answer: No. We are all responsible for preventing and confronting bullying and any other affront to our class's first principles of Good Faith, Solidarity, and Comity. We are committed to consistent and intentional social and emotional development. The social/emotional learning curriculum from [ReThinkEd.com](https://rethinked.com) is a valuable tool and a means to this end.

Academically, Elevate classes are focusing on supporting literacy. We were very pleased to learn that students exceeded Achieve3000 Lexile expectations by 71% in the most recent assessment. This is really encouraging! We will continue to stress vocabulary building with weekly quizzes and to do reading and formal writing assignments every week. As it says in CEC’s *Student Bill of Rights*, we believe our students have a right to mastery of reading and

writing skills so that they are prepared to pursue college courses without remediation. Elevate is committed to making that happen!

Finally, Elevate class's main goal is to help students develop life skills such as time management, task initiation, prioritization, organization, goal setting, people skills, resilience (grit) and a growth mindset. In addition to Time Management Tuesdays and playing "Are you Organized?" on Fridays (we rate each other's backpacks and briefcases and those that need it are given time to purge and reorganize), we have been focusing on developing student strengths as identified by the Clifton Strengths assessment. This means understanding and intentionally developing what comes naturally by writing SMART Goals—something that is much easier said than done!

We are extremely fortunate to have the assistance of a generous volunteer, Mr. Ostendorf, on Tuesdays! Mr. O helps me to meet with students for the sake of working on these SMART Goals, capturing tasks to be accomplished for the week in planners, addressing any missing assignments or less-than-satisfactory grades before the situation snowballs, and just generally checking-in with students on an individual basis every week. We are very grateful for him! Thank you, Mr. O!


We are fortunate to have had Michael Brown, the Director of Strengths Initiatives, help Elevate classes to better understand and maximize strengths by being a guest speaker these past two Fridays. Thanks Mr. Brown! It is always great to have you back at West!

I strongly encourage parents to ask students about their strengths and their SMART Goals. General information on Clifton Strengths can be found here:

<https://www.gallup.com/cliftonstrengths/en/253862/cliftonstrengths-for-schools.aspx>

If your student is a little murky on the finer points of his or her strengths report, I will be happy to provide you with a copy and I will include some materials that will help you to make the most of this resource at home. This is best accomplished by sending me an email at robert.buften@coloradoearlycolleges.org. If you are interested in taking the assessment yourself, which I strongly recommend, please let me know and I will assist you with the process. My family did it and we talk about it all the time. Knowing each other's strengths gives us a language for working together and making the most of what each of us brings to the table. It is really a helpful tool.

Always feel free to reach out to me! I consider it a privilege to teach your child.

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Clifton Strengths: Strategic | Learner | Intellection | Input | Relator