

Peshtigo third graders utilize 'brain power'

Spider web lesson focuses on teamwork

By Special to the EagleHerald

PESHTIGO—Peshtigo third-grade students participated in a lesson to emphasize character and how they are all stronger if they work together.

Students created a yarn "spider web" by throwing a ball of yarn to one another. Upon catching the yarn ball, each student tells the class about a positive character trait that makes him/her strong, before throwing the yarn to another student. Classroom teacher Alyssa Goerlinger states, "It was neat to watch the students identify their own positive character traits through Katie's web activity. The chair at the end was a big hit."

Some of the most stated traits are artistic, hard-working, patient, kind and responsible.

"Students are shocked when our yarn 'spider web' is so strong we can hold up a chair," Goerlinger said.

School counselor Katie Seidler explains that the lesson illustrates how much we can do when we work together. Seidler asks students to try to keep a mental picture of their web created as they go through the year.

"When we work together, we should focus on the positives each person brings to the team, and we will be amazed by what we can accomplish together," she said.

School counselors like Seidler work to help students learn and practice skills to get



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Guidance counselor Katie Seidler teaches Emilee Cook's third-grade class the strength of character and connecting.

along with others, manage feelings, problem solve and focus.

"I love teaching growth mindset, and have really fun lessons I teach at all grade levels," Seidler said. "Growth mindset is the belief that people can strengthen their brains and get smarter by learning challenging things."

She explains that most children, and adults too, prefer everything to be easy.

"It's uncomfortable when we don't understand a task right away. It makes us feel vulnerable," Seidler said. She

emphasizes that being willing to be vulnerable is an important part of the learning process.

Seidler encourages students to operate with a growth mindset, rather than a fixed mindset.

"This means that I encourage students to say to themselves, 'This will take time to figure out, but I can do it' as opposed to 'I'll never get this right.'"

Students are taught to think positively and learn strategies to reduce feelings of frustration. "I remind students

that the only way to grow our brains, get smarter and eventually do things better is to work hard at those challenging tasks," Seidler explained. "A lot of my lessons involve me modeling skills and having students role play. Kids love it and it helps them remember."

"When tasks are easy, our brains don't get the exercise they need to grow. Our brains need to be worked out, they need things to be difficult. We need to exercise our brains."

Seidler works with Peshtigo students from kindergarten through sixth grade, preparing

different lessons to reinforce the importance of growth mindset. Lessons vary from the spider web interconnection lesson to having students practice things outside their comfort zones, to learning new card games, or other activities designed to challenge students' brains.

"By sixth grade I'm talking with students about neuroplasticity and how to rewire our brains," she said.

This article was submitted by the Peshtigo School District.

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