



October 2007

Character Council Educator Quality of the Month Thoroughness

Thoroughness:

Knowing what factors will diminish the effectiveness of my work or words if neglected.

I will:

- plan my work
- pay attention to details
- make a list so I don't forget
- finish what I start
- clean up along the way

Success is in the details. Thoroughness is the awareness of even the smallest details and their relationship to the big picture. This understanding doesn't come automatically. It is learned by attention to how details have affected our past successes and failures and learning from the successes of others. Ultimately, thoroughness is getting the job done, but it doesn't stop there. The job includes cleaning up after it's finished. This month, challenge yourself not only to plan your work with thoroughness, but to work your plan as thoroughly as you created it.

☺ **Simon Says** For this activity, the class can remain seated at their desk or you can have them situated however you wish. Ask the students to perform each of the following tasks:

- Snap their fingers: count how many used their second finger or third finger. Now ask them to switch fingers.
- Fold their hands together, interlocking their fingers: count how many had their right thumb on top and then left. Now ask them to switch thumbs.
- Cross your arms under your chest: count how many have their right arm on top then left. Now ask them to switch arms.
- Cross your legs above the knee: count how many have their right leg on top, then left. Now ask them to switch arms.



In each of these situations, the students should find that it is uncomfortable to switch. Point out that there is no right or wrong way to perform any of these tasks and the positioning of right or left has no relationship to being right-handed or left-handed. The reason that one way feels normal and the other doesn't is a result of habit. The activity that is controlled by habit seems to come naturally. Developing habits that assist being thorough will make finishing tasks completely feel normal. Ask the student to list habits that can help in being thorough.

☺ **Dot to Dot** For younger students you can use any dot-to-dot picture for this exercise. When the students are done, point out the importance of every step in connecting the dots. What would the picture look like if one of the dots was missing? For older students, have them work in groups of 2 or three, creating a connect the dot picture. Provide tracing paper and old coloring books or they can trace a map or picture from a text book. Have them trade papers and see if another group can tell what the picture should be. As an added twist, collect the pictures and white out one of the numbers before making copies for the class to complete. Have them guess where the missing number should be before they finish the picture. End with a discussion about the importance of details in any project.

☺ **Lucky Penny** For this activity, each pair of students will need a pencil or pen, paper, and a coin. One student in each pair will flip a coin five times. Before each flip the other student must guess whether it will be heads or tails. They will record whether the guess was right or wrong. Repeat the exercise, with the students switching roles. Have each pair report out their results. (For a math exercise have them convert to a percentage – for older students use a number larger than 10 to make the computation a tad harder.) How lucky were the students in their guessing? Did they find it difficult to guess correctly? How successful do they think they will be if they rely on luck to achieve goals?



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