

Carolyn Lewis

Region VIII Teacher of the Year

Being part of a profession that can guide and instruct young minds as future trustees of our world both humbles and motivates me. Yearly instruction from state mandated standards should ultimately prepare students to become self supporting young adults. How wonderful that teachers additionally focus on elements of character development which encourage these knowledgeable, self supporting adults to also become stewards of the Earth and caretakers of living things. This importance of caring for Earth and its inhabitants has roots in character development. Character building should be part of students' early educational experiences, and, in my classroom, it begins with an emphasis on kindness and thoughtfulness to all living things. My students respond proactively to the plight of homeless shelter animals by donating food items in a yearly drive. Classroom discussions encourage concern for groups (human or animal) negatively affected by human decisions. Publications that raise awareness of environmental issues and/or people helping others in need offer my students a springboard for discussions and questions. Our students of today are the decision makers of tomorrow. I blend these caring aspects of human nature with instruction of content because I passionately believe that this approach can positively impact our world, beginning with students from one small county, in one great state, of one amazing country.



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