

Below is an email I sent to colleagues regarding a personal health unit in October, 2017.

Hi Liz and Corinne,

I have been thinking quite a bit lately about the first grade and their struggles with whining, tears, and negativity in general. I am also taking a graduate course at the moment and specifically studying the field of positive psychology, which has a lot to say about how gratitude and optimism can improve both physical and mental health.

In light of that, I would like to add in a health unit about positivity once we complete our work on safety issues. My plan is to focus on two things: cultivating gratitude and developing skills for "positive self-talk" (that help students say things like "how can I break this problem down?" rather than "I can't do it!") Right now I have in mind a craft project creating a 1st grade "garden of gratitude" (perhaps on a bulletin board) as well as a lot of skills practice relating to positive self talk.

I would love your input on what you think I ought to emphasize in this unit or any concerns you may have. Liz, at some point it would be helpful to run through the class list together so that I can get a handle on writing abilities. This will allow me to adjust the work expectations accordingly for each student. Corinne, perhaps we could check in at some point to see how this fits with guidance. Depending on your upcoming plans, there may be ways for us to design and implement this unit together.

This unit is quite different from what I usually do in health but I'm excited by the possibilities! When you have a moment, I would really appreciate your input by email or face-to-face.

Thanks so much,
Laurie