

## Michelle Kwan: Heart of a Champion

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| <p><b>Grade Level: 4-5</b></p> <p><b>Character Education Focus: Perseverance</b></p> <p><b>Summary</b></p> <p>Students will read “Michelle Kwan Heart of a Champion”, and identify the character trait of <i>perseverance</i>. Students discuss Michelle’s <i>perseverance</i> toward her goal of becoming a senior skater. Students identify the trait of <i>perseverance</i> in their own lives, create storyboards to illustrate the steps they took to achieve their goal, and use the storyboards to compose a personal narrative essay describing how they reached the goal.<br/>(Two 45-60 minute lessons)</p> | <p><b>Materials Needed</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Kwan, M. (2003), Michele Kwan heart of a champion. In J. Cooper &amp; J. Pikulski, <i>Houghton Mifflin Reading: A Legacy of Literacy</i> (pp. 138-151). Boston, MS: Houghton Mifflin.</li> <li>2. 12 x18 newsprint or construction paper</li> <li>3. Writing journals or notebook paper</li> </ol> |
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### Academic - Character Education Objectives

Students will:

1. Think of an example from their lives of a goal that they have already achieved, and write in their journals evidence of their *perseverance* toward the goal.
2. Identify the character trait of *perseverance* with the autobiographical character Michelle Kwan.
3. Use examples from the text to show *perseverance* in the main character and compare characteristics of Michelle's *perseverance* to their own lives.
4. Write a personal narrative essay that describes the steps they took to achieve a personal goal and how *perseverance* helped them to achieve their goal.

### California English-Language Arts Standards Addressed

Reading (5th grade)

2.0 Reading Comprehension

- 2.3 Discern main ideas and concepts presented in texts, identifying and assessing evidence that supports those ideas.
- 2.4 Draw inferences, conclusions, or generalizations about text and support them with textual evidence and prior knowledge.

3.0 Literary Response and Analysis

- 3.3 Contrast the actions, motives (e.g., loyalty, selfishness, conscientiousness,) and appearances of characters in a work of fiction and discuss the importance of the contrasts to the plot or theme.

## Writing (4th grade)

### 1.0 Writing Strategies

- 1.2 Create multiple-paragraph compositions:
  - a. Provide an introductory paragraph.
  - b. Establish and support a central idea with a topic sentence at or near the beginning of the first paragraph.
  - c. Include supporting paragraphs with simple facts, details, and explanations.
  - d. Conclude with a paragraph that summarizes the points.
  - e. Use correct indentation.
- 1.3 Use traditional structures for conveying information (e.g., chronological order, cause and effect, similarity and difference, and posing and answering a question).
- 1.4 Write fluidly and legibly in cursive or jointed italics.

### 2.0 Writing Applications

- 2.1 Write narratives
  - a. Relate ideas, observations, or recollections of an event or experience.
  - b. Provide a context to enable the reader to imagine the world of the event or experience.
  - c. Provide insight into why the selected event or experience is memorable.

## Listening and Speaking (5th grade)

### 2.0 Speaking Applications

- 2.3 Deliver oral responses to literature:
  - a. Summarize significant events and details.
  - b. Articulate an understanding of several ideas or images communicated by the literary work.
  - c. Use examples or textual evidence from the work to support conclusions.

## Lesson Procedures

### **Introduction**

1. The teacher describes the purpose of the lesson, which is to use the story to identify the character trait of *perseverance* (*working hard to set and achieve my personal goals*), and to recognize the importance of *perseverance* in reaching goals.
2. Students think about a time when they had to work hard to reach a goal. They write a sentence in their journals (or on a sheet of notebook paper) to describe the goal they have achieved. Students list several steps that they took to achieve the goal as evidence of *perseverance*.
3. Students share with a partner the ways they set and achieved their personal goals. After sufficient time for sharing, the teacher asks a few students to share their experience with the class.
4. The teacher tells students they will read a story about a famous skater who demonstrated *perseverance* and reached her goal to be a senior skater.

### **Part One**

5. The teacher defines *perseverance* using examples from the students' experiences that support the definition provided above.
6. The teacher reads the story, "Michelle Kwan Heart of a Champion", aloud, and stops at appropriate points to discuss Michelle's decisions and actions that reflect *perseverance*.

Alternately, the story may be assigned as independent reading with note taking. Students write in their journals about Michelle's goal and the steps she took to reach it.

7. Students reread the story aloud, ear-to-ear, with a partner. (Students sit side-by-side facing each other with their same shoulders touching, right-to-right or left-to-left. Each partner takes a turn reading a sentence, paragraph, or page, quietly into the other's ear.)
8. Partners discuss ways that Michelle Kwan persevered in her goal to become a senior skater.
9. After several minutes, each pair finds another pair to create a group of four and discuss ways that Michelle Kwan persevered in her goal to become a senior skater. Each small group prepares to share one way Michelle achieved her goal, providing supporting evidence from the story.
10. As a class, list the ideas from each group and discuss from the board.  
Some example discussion questions might include:
  - *How does going behind the coach's back show that Michelle is persevering in her goal to become a senior skater?*
  - *How does Michelle's perseverance affect her plan to reach her goal? Immediate effect? Long-term effect?*
  - *What concerns did the coach express that Michelle did not think about before she took her senior skating test?*
  - *How did the coach's comments make Michelle more determined to meet her goal?*
  - *What effect did Michelle's perseverance have on others? Was the effect positive or negative?*
11. Note: Stop here and bring closure to part one of the lesson. You may wish to preview part two of the lesson or continue the lesson through step 18. After the discussion, the teacher reviews what it means to persevere. Students recall their journal entry about their goal.

## **Part Two**

12. Through a discussion, teacher reviews what it means to persevere. Students recall their journal entries about their *perseverance* toward their own goal. Students are encouraged to share their stories and reflections during discussion. Sample questions to provoke discussion are:
  - *In what ways did you demonstrate perseverance in reaching your goal?*
  - *In what ways can perseverance be a positive character quality?*
  - *When can perseverance have a positive effect and when might it have an undesirable outcome? Explain.*
  - *Even though being perseverant can be personal to you, how can perseverance affect others around you?*
  - *How did your perseverance affect others?*
  - *How might you show more perseverance? Who can help you, or act as your coach?*
13. As a pre-write activity, the teacher instructs students to fold a 12x18 sheet of paper into 1/8's. Students write their goal in the last square and illustrate it with a picture. Working from the first square, students illustrate each step and write a brief description of how they persevered to reach their goal to create a storyboard.
14. After generating the storyboard, students write a personal narrative essay titled, "*(Their Name), Heart of a Champion*" describing the steps they took to achieve a personal goal and how *perseverance* helped them to achieve their goal. They may substitute a more appropriate word for *champion*, as needed, to reflect their personal goal.
15. The teacher reviews criteria for a multiple-paragraph personal narrative essay, which relates ideas, observations, or recollections from the students' experience. (See the assessment

section for criteria of the essay.) The students should provide a context to enable the reader to imagine the experience and gain insight into why the selected event or experience is memorable.

16. Students use class time to write their personal narrative essays.
17. With a partner, students read and use the criteria for the essay to recommend changes to improve each other's writing.
18. Students share their essays with the class or read them to each other in small groups.

### Academic – Character Education Assessment

Teacher can informally assess the students' responses in class discussion, noting students' ability to summarize significant events from the story, demonstrate an understanding of Michelle Kwan's *perseverance*, and use specific examples from the story to support their ideas during class discussions.

Using the following essay criteria the teacher and students can formally assess the writing ability to relate traits of *perseverance* to personal goals.

Criteria for final draft of essay include:

- a. An introductory paragraph.
- b. A topic sentence at or near the beginning of the first paragraph that establishes and supports the central idea of the essay.
- c. Supporting paragraphs written in chronological order with simple facts, details, and explanations.
- d. Concluding paragraph that summarizes the points.
- e. Correct indentation.
- f. Cursive writing.

Teacher can assess students' understanding of *perseverance* through discussion of the definition and examples they provide in their writing.

To process the work in partners, students can reflect on these prompts: *How did you show perseverance as you worked together with your partner? How did your partner show perseverance in completing the writing task?*

### Reflective Journaling Prompts

*Students can respond in their journals to the following quotes:*

- *"There is no try, there is only do."* –Yoda, Star Wars, Return of the Jedi
- *"You never fail until you stop trying."* –Florence Griffith Joyner
- Student may also respond to stories and articles added to the scrapbook or bulletin board (see below).

### Extensions and Variations

Students can collect stories about real people or characters that have set and reached their goals. Compile the stories or articles in a class "*Perseverance*" scrapbook or create a bulletin board to display the stories, articles, and pictures.

Students can set a new academic and/or personal goal for the school year. Examples: Get an "A" on a math test. Improve cursive writing. Participate more in class discussions. Make a new friend.

Students then discuss their plan with their parents and submit an action plan with the steps they will take to meet their goal.

The teacher can assess students' application of new understanding and insights gained as they establish an academic or personal goal for the current school year.

### Teacher Notes or References

Michelle Kwan and her older siblings, Ron and Karen, were the first members of her family to be born in the United States. Their parents, Danny and Estella Kwan, came to the U.S. from Hong Kong in the 1970s. Michelle was inspired to become a world-class skater after watching Brian Boitano win a gold medal at the 1988 Winter Olympics. Just seven years old at the time, she thought, "Okay, tomorrow I'll go to the Olympics." She quickly learned that realizing her dream would take many years of hard work! <http://www.eduplace.com/kids/hmr/mtai/kwan.html>

Additional stories with the theme of *perseverance*:

*I'm New Here*, by Bud Howlett, Houghton, 1993

A girl from El Salvador recounts her first days of school in America

*Duke Ellington*, by Andrea Davis Pinkney, Hyperion, 1998

The life of musician-composer Edward Kennedy Ellington

*Homesteading: Settling America's Heartland*, by Dorothy Hinshaw Patent, Walker, 1998

Pioneers headed west and faced many hardships as they settled what we now call "America's Heartland."

*The Real McCoy*, by Wendy Towle, Scholastic, 1995

Elijah McCoy produced more than fifty inventions and is said to be the source of the expression "the real McCoy." Source: <http://www.eduplace.com/rdg/hmr/4/2/bib.html>

Based on a lesson by Eddeane Sims

Edited by Linda Apple