



Charlie, Science Teacher/Learner Mentor



Meet Charlie. Charlie is City View’s science and math teacher. Charlie is in his early 30’s and has been teaching for 10 years. Charlie’s own high school experience was a mixed bag. Schoolwork came easily to him and he was often bored. Being quite bright, he entertained himself by getting into arguments with his teachers and seeing if he could fluster them.

In college, Charlie initially struggled as he discovered the work more difficult and the professors more than capable of the intellectual challenges he threw at them. He took an initial education class where he learned about “learner-centered education.” At first skeptical, Charlie began to explore more about the system of education, deciding he wanted to teach science and math by his second year in college. In the ten years since starting teaching, Charlie has been quite outspoken about education and has constantly innovated around standards, assessment, and finding ways to make things relevant for kids. He joined City View three years ago and has really flourished. He has a great way with kids and they enjoy his almost childlike approach to

learning and discovery.

Monday

Charlie rolls into the parking lot and badges into the school at about 7:30. Charlie likes to arrive well ahead of the team planning time as he needs the time to get refocused. He meditates for about 10 minutes, reviews his purpose, and identifies the 2-3 key things he needs to focus on today. One of them is to continue to be a visible presence with a learner named Brooks. He’s

come a long way but he still has this edge, a bit of a chip on his shoulder and Charlie has been building trust with him.

At 8:00 he is joined by the 22 teachers, the counselor, principal and the 6 associates - the entire City View team. Dan, the school's principal, greets everyone. "Good morning, team. Good to see everyone! I hope you all had a nice weekend, it was good to get outside a bit." As is usual, the meeting starts with a reading of the schools Vision and Mission statements. This is done to ensure that these things stay at the forefront for every staff member.

"Before we head off to our teams, let's preview the week. Remember that next week we will have our second series of 1:1 conversations with our advisees. Each team will need to provide a schedule by Thursday with your plan. Friday afternoon we have Steve Shriver for our Community Conversation. Mark, let any of us know if you need any help prepping for that. I got a call from Mrs. Edwards. She said Elle had a rough weekend at her Dad's. Dee, I think she's in your advisory group. Please try to connect with her this am to just do a quick check. I think that's it for now. Have a great week everyone!"

Charlie joins Dennis, Ann, Dee, and Mark in their designated conference room. This is Charlie's team. While they work with other staff members, this team works to develop discoveries together and are responsible for about 125 learners. They spend their time today discussing 1:1's and decide that that format and schedule from last time worked really well. They would offer times throughout the week and give learners the choice to sign up for the time they wanted. They pull out the question set from last time and review them. They decide to add a question about the kids' "growth edge" and help them identify some stretch work to do. Most of the kids seem ready for it.

Charlie and the team adjourn and enter the main space to visit with kids. Mark, ever the popular one, is immediately surrounded by kids wanting to tell him about their weekend and hoping he would have a new joke or funny story. Charlie spots Brooks and some other kids and saunters over. "Hey Q, hey Brooks. Jorel. Katy. Bryce. Good to see you all. What's the story today?"

"Not much," says Quincy. "We beat City High on Saturday. That was a big win."

"Yeah," says Charlie. "I saw it on 9.2! It was great. I loved that baseline pass you made to Vaske. That was sweet!" Quincy smiles and nods like it's no big deal.

"How about the rest of you?" Brooks, Jorel, Katy and Bryce all share something as the time to begin community rolls around. Brooks seems in a pretty good mood and Charlie relaxes a bit.

In Community, Dan welcomes everyone after receiving the obligatory standing ovation. "Silly," thinks Charlie, "and yet it really does work to drive up the energy." Dan quickly turns it over to Chantel and Stacey, who are leading this session and, again, the standing ovation.

Charlie heads to one of the conference rooms for his “Humanity and the Pursuit of Selflessness” discovery course he is teaching with Ann. It is an exploration of what makes people selfish and unselfish and about human motivation. This one has really pushed Ann and him. Lots of psychology, lots of chemistry, lots of new learning for them both.

The kids have been very focused on climate change and why we are so divided about it. It gives Ann, the psychology teacher, the opportunity to talk about risk/reward and how the brain isn’t wired to seek out distant goals and objectives as much as near-term ones. Charlie uses the opportunity to talk a bit more about global warming to hit on some earth science standards. The kids are really into a new idea Ann shares about living “above” and “below” the “line” from Jim Dettmer who works to advance consciousness and conscious leadership.

After the Discovery, Charlie assembles the group heading to the coffee shop and escorts them around the corner to Craft’d as part of the structured break. Learners placed their orders before Community this morning so there’s no waiting. Charlie visits with Chantel on the walk there and back. “She’s ready for the next step in life,” Charlie thinks to himself. They have plans to talk with Chantel in the coming weeks about beginning the transition to her “what’s next.” It will be bittersweet to see her leave.

Project Food is next up for Charlie. He’s been teaching kids chemistry through cooking. It has been a lot of fun. They’re busy curing bacon and tracking the salinization through the slab. They’ve been experimenting with heat and a variety of approaches to creating reductions. He’s never experienced kids so engaged. They’ve even reached out to a local chef who invited them to his restaurant on Wednesday where they are going to cook together. He’s even advertised it and will ask his guests to provide feedback for the kids.

As lunch wraps up, Charlie finds his “Splinters” project team. They’ve been working feverishly to create an event where local chainsaw artists make art out of the damaged trees from the horrible Derecho wind storm last summer. As he enters the conference room the kids are excitedly talking about the radio and TV interviews they secured last night. Sophie, a 3rd year on the team, called Charlie last night to tell him the good news. He’d called Dee, an English teacher, right after. He knew she had an afternoon team that was pretty self-sufficient and asked if she would come in and help them prep.

“Hey, guys! Super exciting!” Dee says as she enters the room.

“Dee has agreed to spend some time with us this afternoon to prep you for these interviews, says Charlie”

“Hi everyone! This is amazing! How cool! Let’s talk about how these interviews typically go and how you can get your message across. These interviews are typically pretty short so you need to be on-point. The good news in all of this is the reporters and deejays really do want you to look good so they won’t be throwing you any questions you can’t handle if you’re prepared.”

The kids spend a few minutes deciding they want to go in pairs and assign themselves to the various upcoming interviews. Dee is ready and pulls out her phone. “I’m going to interview each pair and we’re going to record it. The other two pairs, simply sit back and listen and think about how you might answer the questions. Let’s see how close we all are in our information. We’ll then listen to them and I can give you pointers and tips.”

They spend the next hour working through the simulations. Charlie listens intently and takes notes. He wants to be able to support kids in things like this in the future so he is a learner as well. He focuses on both the content and the approach Dee uses to prepare the kids. The next time this opportunity arises, he wants to lead it and have Dee there to coach him after.

At break Charlie sits on one of the couches, throws his feet on the coffee table and drinks some water. Brooks walks up and plops down next to him. “What’s up Brooks?”

“Nothing. You said you played college basketball, right?” asks Brooks.

“Yep, I played at Simpson near Des Moines. Why?”

“I really would like to play college baseball. Do you have any pointers or things I should be doing now?”

“That’s fantastic, Brooks. What a great goal! Absolutely. I can’t really help you with baseball specific skills since I didn’t play much baseball but I think I can help in a lot of other ways. Mainly, nutrition and strength training. Most high school kids think it is all about talent - hitting, throwing, fielding. While of course these things are critical, it’s often the other things that make or break your chances. The way you fuel your body, the way you train both your body and your mind, the mindset you approach the game with, your ability to be coached. These are the game-changers,” Charlie tells him.

“Okay. Well, I do think I’m coachable. How do I start on that other stuff?”

“I agree, Brooks. Just the fact that you came over here to ask the question tells me you’re coachable. Break is about over but I’d have time this Wednesday during your Individual Exploration time. Do you want to calendar that?”

“Sounds good! I’ll make an event and invite you through Google calendar.”

“Perfect, thanks buddy!” says Charlie.

Charlie hurriedly heads for the front entrance where he is to meet his “Willis Dady” team. They are headed to a home owned by the Willis Dady group, a non-profit who refurbishes old homes and offers them to low-income families and helps them to build equity and eventually purchase

the home. This team's project is to assess, design, and implement their designs for getting this old home ready to live in.

Charlie takes three younger students with him and the upperclassmen want to drive themselves. They all meet up at the house.

Before entering, Charlie stops the group. "Remember that today is the day you share your plans with Sandy regarding the dining room area. Are you ready to roll?"

"We are, we made a few tiny adjustments from what we talked about last week and we're excited about sharing it with Sandy," says Nia.

As they enter Sandy, the Willis Dady partner, greets them and lets them in. "Okay team. I understand you have some plans drawn for the dining room. Let's move to that room and you can share what you've got."

Nia unrolls a scaled drawing of the dining room they built on Google SketchUp while Reagan and Dionte pull out their color swatches and floor covering samples. Josh has photos of the dining room table and other furnishings. Each person plays a role in walking Sandy through their plan, the research they've done, etc. Sandy asks them several questions and then gives them feedback.

"Really well done, team. You took my suggestions and concerns into consideration and I think the plan you have now is really, really good. This is going to be a beautiful dining room! I only have one question for you, Josh. I love the furniture you've chosen and I only wonder one thing. Do we know how well built they are? This is going to be a busy room with young children and they can be very hard on chairs and things."

"Yeah, I thought about that Sandy. Given our budget I spent the most of it on the chairs, trying to get the highest quality I could. I also didn't choose ones with fabric seats as I know how much kids spill. The table is the only question but I'm not sure I can do better unless I break the budget," says Josh.

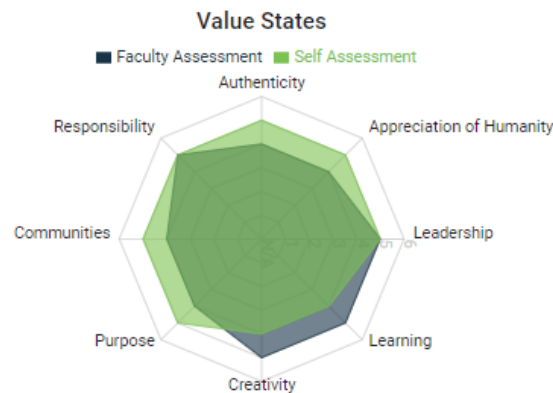
"Wonderful," says Sandy. "Can you check and see what a more sturdy table might cost? If we realize savings from other rooms this might be one area we want to splurge a bit."

Charlie doesn't say more than a few sentences. He spends his time observing and listening to the learners. He is constantly assessing. Today he's focusing on their presentation skills and taking both notes and short videos. The videos will be used by the kids when they defend their attainment of the presentation standards in English, supported by Charlie's notes and observations. Charlie enjoys exploring the science behind colors and patterns and the paint VOC's with the kids, helping them hit on some psychology and chemistry standards as well.

Charlie heads back to school and arrives around 3:00. He spends his last hour preparing some things to share with Brooks on Wednesday and reviewing the Kanban board for his LimoLink team, who meet tomorrow.

Tuesday

During team planning, the team finalizes their 1:1 questions and continue their discussion-based assessment on the school's values. Four times each year the teacher team sits down to assess each learner on the 8 values. This week the learners are doing the same as part of their self-assessment. The result is a spider diagram that looks something like this:



They are able to get through about 12 learners and agree that, tomorrow, they will come with the next 20 learners and their rating. This pattern will allow them to get to the remaining learners by Friday. He pauses to listen to AM 600 when his Splinters team is interviewed. He tapes it for them. He can't help but smile. He's so proud of these young people.

Charlie then meets with his Local Water Quality Analysis team where one of the city's water quality chemists walk them through some of the tests they run and the protocols for them. He uses his personal planning time today to think about those 20 learners and where he has observed them in terms of the values. He wants to be prepared tomorrow so the team can be productive. His afternoon LimoLink team has asked for some help with data analysis and Dennis, the math teacher, helps them work through and learn the formulas they need to execute their Excel file.

The Splinters team arrive fired up about their first interview. They all listen to the interview together and discuss any tweaks for the upcoming ones. Dee pops in for a few minutes to listen to the interview and give them feedback, specifically pointing out the English standards they demonstrated through the interview.

Sadly, Charlie hears that Brooks said something inappropriate and hurtful to Nia today. He agreed to take this one on and will talk to Brooks first thing tomorrow.

Wednesday

Charlie starts his day in conversation with Brooks. Employing asset-based conversation and restorative justice practices, he works through the issue with Brooks and Brooks agrees to take action to make it right. Charlie hopes that Brooks will still keep his 2pm meeting today with him. With Brooks, you can never be too sure.

Charlie does meet with Brooks today and they work through a nutrition and strength training plan. Brooks tells Charlie about apologizing to Nia and seems to relax when he realizes that Charlie doesn't treat him differently because of what he did.

Brooks is excited about it and seems earnest to give it a try. His Project Food team met all morning today and they are visiting the restaurant to begin learning the equipment and planning the food they will be preparing. His Resiliency Warriors and LimoLink teams go well as both had work sessions today, where they worked on tasks together. Charlie's job was to observe, assess, and reflect. He completes his day with his team as they do more discussion-based assessment.

Thursday

It is definitely Brook's week as he meets with Brooks to go through some standards and sees what he's put together for his strength and nutrition plan and goals. He takes a moment to email Brook's Mom to tell her how pleased he is with Brooks' progress. He chooses not to mention the issue with Nia, instead talking about Brook's growth and empathy.

Charlie's favorite Community Gathering is today when learners practice storytelling. Learners interview other learners in front of the group and it's great to hear them talk of their journey and what they are working on to get better. The raucous standing ovation to start them is fun because Charlie can see the energy transfer and the confidence in the kids on the stage.

Today is more time for planning and Charlie works on many things from assessment to thinking about his teams to thinking about his next possible discoveries. He meets with his Willis Dady team and they begin planning for the painting and installation of the dining room area that was approved.

Friday

Friday's at City View are focused on community and reflection. Charlie loves ending the week this way. The Community segment is an hour long on Fridays and the entire staff meets to reconnect, reflect, celebrate, and set their intentions for the following week.

After Community, half the staff heads out to teach their day-long Discoveries. Charlie's Discovery is not this week and he remains at the school. His cohort of teachers have scheduled several 1:1's with their 4th year mentee students (at City View, the students get to choose who mentors them) who come to describe their journey through the City View with a focus on how their purpose, flight plan and vision board has morphed and changed over time. Charlie has the good fortune of having Chantel. Chantel shows her original purpose statement and the several iterations over her time here and talks about her growth. The growth of her network map is impressive. At one point she breaks down talking about how this school has impacted her and her life trajectory.

One of the other 4th year learners, Austin, tells a very personal story about how he had lost his purpose and how it led him down a negative and destructive path and what he did to get back on track. Charlie enjoys talking and coaching the students in this personal of a way.

Charlie holds special office hours on Friday's around lunch time. This is the opportunity learners have to stop in for help or to chat. Today several learners stop by who are engaged in Concentrations, tailored work tied to their desired adult profession or path. They involve some scientific concepts they are struggling with. Charlie works through these and helps them decide what they need to do next to keep moving forward.

In the afternoon, Charlie and several teachers look at the suggestion survey for discovery ideas submitted by students. He notices a few patterns in the data. First, there are many projects involving horticulture and themes around the river that runs through the middle of town. He wonders about a project around the river and the area's soil composition that might tie in and help advance some projects. He and Ann, one of the social studies teachers, pull in Cassidy, the art teacher, about possibly developing a discovery combining science, social studies, and art. They spend the rest of the afternoon creating this Discovery.

As the Discovery teachers filter back in, the staff meet again all together. Dan completes the week by having the staff find two other staff members and each shares a contribution they saw each other make this week. It's been another good and challenging week at City View.

Charlie's Semester Schedule

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Team Planning	Team Planning	Team Planning	Team Planning	Faculty Meeting
Community	Community	Community	Community	

Humanity & Pursuit of Selflessness	Local Water Quality Analysis Project	Humanity & Pursuit of Selflessness	Local Water Quality Analysis Project	Office Hours
Project Food Discovery	Online Coursework	Project Food Discovery	Online Coursework	Office Hours
Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Teacher Prep Time
Splinters Project Team	Online Coursework	Splinters Project Team	Online Coursework	Discovery Course Development
Willis Dady Project Team	Teacher Prep Time	Willis Dady Project Team	Teacher Prep Time	Faculty Wrap-Up & Celebration
Personal Planning Time	Personal Planning Time	Personal Planning Time	Personal Planning Time	