What works in character education:

A research-driven guide for educators

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Over the past few decades, educators have become increasingly interested in implementing character education in their districts, schools, and classrooms, and the pace of this expansion seems to be accelerating. There is a rapidly growing, but still quite inadequate, level of funding available for both practice and research in character education. There are also a bewildering variety of programs, vendors, consultants, and concepts for educators to choose from in their search to improve their schools and positively impact the development and learning of their students.

Nevertheless, there is relatively little in the way of systematic scientific guidance to aid in navigating this morass of options vying for the educator's attention and limited resources. For this reason, the Character Education Partnership (CEP) has joined with the John Templeton Foundation to review the existing research base on character education in order to determine what we know about what really works. Thus, the central goal of this project, funded by the Templeton Foundation and implemented by CEP under the guidance of the two authors, is to derive practical conclusions about character education implementation from the existing research literature. We are grateful to the 3M Foundation and Procter & Gamble for their continued support of CEP and its research initiatives.

This document is intended for educators. It is not meant to be an exhaustive report on the methods we employed to reach our conclusions nor an extensive detailing of the different research studies from which our conclusions were drawn. Rather it is intended to provide practical advice derived from our review of the research. Subsequent reports will more fully chronicle the scientific journey we have taken to reach these conclusions. What follows then is a brief overview of the "What Works in Character Education" (WWCE) project, a description of the main findings, and a set of guidelines on effective character education practice, along with some caveats regarding how to interpret these findings.

Before we turn to the nature and conclusions of the project, we must begin with one important caveat: due to the nature of this project, we are only able to reach conclusions about that which has been studied. Given the relatively nascent nature of research in character education, there is much that has not yet been studied. Our task in this project

was to discover and report what the existing research tells us. We need to remind the reader that there is much conventional wisdom out there about effective character education -- common sense and traditional notions of effective practice. Some of that has been studied and will be discussed here. Much has not been studied. This does not mean that such programs and/or strategies are not effective. Nor does it mean that they *are* effective. It simply means that we do not know scientifically if they are effective or not. *We derive our conclusions from only those school-based programs with scientifically demonstrated positive student outcomes.*

Now we are ready to describe the "What Works in Character Education" project and then to discuss our findings and conclusions.

The "What Works in Character Education" Project

As mentioned above, with funding from the John Templeton Foundation, the CEP commissioned this project as a review of the research literature on character education for the purpose of generating (1) research-driven guidelines for character educators and (2) recommendations for needed future research in character education (this report for practitioners focuses only on the first goal). Dr. Marvin W. Berkowitz was enlisted as the Principal Investigator of the project and Dr. Melinda Bier as the Project Director. Working closely with Esther Schaeffer, former CEP Executive Director and CEO, and the CEP staff, we employed a three-stage strategy.

Stage One: Defining the Domain. Recognizing that terminology would be a problem because many different labels are applied to similar endeavors, we examined an extensive list of definitions of character education; e.g.,

- Character education is a national movement creating schools that foster ethical, responsible, and caring young people by modeling and teaching good character through emphasis on universal values that we all share. It is the intentional, proactive effort by schools, districts, and

states to instill in their students important core, ethical values such as caring, honesty, fairness, responsibility, and respect for self and others (Character Education Partnership)

- Teaching children about basic human values, including honesty, kindness, generosity, courage, freedom, equality, and respect. The goal is to raise children to become morally responsible, self-disciplined citizens. (Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development)

- Character education is the deliberate effort to develop good character based on core virtues that are good for the individual and good for society. (Thomas Lickona)

- Any deliberate approach by which school personnel, often in conjunction with parents and community members, help children and youth become caring, principled, and responsible. (National Commission on Character Education)

In order to identify our domain, we generated a conceptual model to guide us.

- Character is a psychological construct. That is, the outcome of effective character education is the psychological development of students.

- Character education targets a particular subset of child development, which we call character. Character is the composite of those psychological characteristics that impact the child's capacity and tendency to be an effective moral agent, i.e. to be socially and personally responsible, ethical, and self-managed.

- Character education then ought to be most effective if it relies predominantly on those social, education, and contextual processes that are known to significantly impact the psychological development of such characteristics.

We therefore included as character education *any school-based K-12 initiatives either intended to promote the development of some aspect of student character or for which some aspect of student character was measured as a relevant outcome variable*. This allowed us to include areas such as drug and alcohol prevention, violence prevention, service learning, and social emotional learning, all of which included initiatives that fit some or all of the above

definitions. This also allowed us to establish an expert panel that was comprised of Dr. Roger Weissberg (social emotional learning), Dr. Nancy Guerra (violence prevention), Dr. Susan Anderson (service learning), Dr. William Hansen (drug and alcohol prevention), and Dr. Jere Brophy (teacher impact on student development).

An important result of this broad definition of character education is that much of the research included in "What Works in Character Education" does not use the term "character" to describe either its purview or its intended outcomes. Those who define character education (or character, for that matter) more narrowly may balk at this strategy. However, in reviewing this literature, we have found that, regardless of what one labels the enterprise (character education, social-emotional learning, school-based prevention, citizenship education, etc.), the methods employed, the undergirding theoretical justifications, and the outcomes assessed are remarkably similar. After all, they are all school-based endeavors designed to help foster the positive, pro-social, moral, and/or civic development of youth.

Stage Two: Collecting and Reviewing the Research. Many different strategies were employed here, including electronic searches and referrals from our expert panel. Details will be available in a subsequent scientific report.

Stage Three: Drawing Conclusions. We identified 109 research studies concerning character education outcomes (this does not include the studies of cooperative learning and moral dilemma discussion included in four meta-analyses reviewed for this report, which taken together account for over 200 additional studies; they are included in most cases in summary, as that is how they are presented in the meta-analyses). To be included in this list, a study had to examine school-based outcomes of an initiative intended, at least in part, to promote student character development. In order to decide which of these studies would be helpful in reaching conclusions about the effects of character education, inclusion criteria had to be created. We evaluated each study for the scientific rigor of its research design (see Table 1). This resulted in a final set of 78 studies (plus those summarized in the four meta-analyses) representing 39 different character education programs/methods. We then evaluated each study to see if it demonstrated program effectiveness. Only the 33 programs

that were deemed effective, based on the related research studies, were included in the analysis of what works in character education (see Table 2), including their 69 scientifically acceptable studies. Finally, we drew conclusions from those 69 studies of the 33 effective programs.

Effective Character Education Guidelines

There are numerous ways to approach the task of reaching conclusions about what works in character education from the evidence we have gathered from the included studies.

- One way, and probably the easiest (although by no means actually easy), is to look at which programs have research that demonstrates their effectiveness. In other words, *which programs can we conclude actually work*, based on existing sound research?
- A second way is to *identify characteristics of effective character education programs*. What elements of practice do effective programs tend to share?
- A third way is to look at character education that is generic (home-grown, not based on a commercially available program) and examine if such programs are effective in such cases. *What do schools generally do that is effective* in promoting character development?
- Yet a fourth way is to look at research into specific practices, rather than as parts of full character education programs. *What are the effects of specific character education practices?*

Unfortunately, while the first question is relatively easy to answer as there are many studies of specific character education programs, the other three questions are much more difficult to answer. Nonetheless we will take each question in turn, and then, based on the answers to each question, attempt to distill some common conclusions.

Effective character education programs.

We identified 54 character education programs that had research. We then created a system for scoring the research designs and reports so we could identify only those studies that were scientifically acceptable for providing "possible" evidence of effectiveness in accordance with the standards for research in No Child Left Behind (i.e. a *program* is a system for implementing character education; a *study* is a research project evaluating a program; some programs only have one such study, while other programs have been evaluated multiple times with many studies). This left us with 78 studies that we considered scientifically acceptable. Looking only at those studies, we had a pool of 39 programs with at least one adequate research study evaluating it. Finally, we examined the results of each study to see if they supported the effectiveness of the program. In other words, first we selected programs with well-designed research, and then we looked to see what that research revealed about the effectiveness of the program under study. In the end we identified 33 programs with scientific evidence supporting their effectiveness in promoting character development in students. It is worth repeating that there are likely many more effective character education programs that do not yet have scientific research to demonstrate that effectiveness.

Table 2 lists the 33 scientifically supported character education programs that we analyze in this report. The range is quite large, in terms of amount of research, type of program, implementation elements, age/grade levels targeted, and outcomes affected. It is important to note that we have identified the grade levels for demonstrated effectiveness for each program. In most cases, however, a program may apply to a wider range of grade levels but only have research for a subset. For example, Learning for Life has elementary, middle, and high school components but research has only examined the elementary version. We therefore are only reaching conclusions about the grade levels that have been studied for such programs. Table 2 indicates which grade levels (elementary, middle, high school) each program covers and which levels they have scientific evidence to support.

Overall, this review of programs with scientific evidence of their effectiveness was helpful. As Table 2 demonstrates, practitioners in search of effective character education programs, whether at the elementary, middle, or high school level, have a large and diverse

set of options from which to select. Program developers have the same set to use as models for effective practice. Our goal was not to chronicle the implementation characteristics of each program, which is beyond the scope of this report. However, this list overlaps significantly with the programs reviewed by the Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL) in their *Safe and Sound* program review (www.casel.org). That review may be a helpful resource to garner more information on the implementation characteristics of the programs we have identified. The program synopses we will list on the CEP website will also contain some of those implementation characteristics, as well as other important information, such as how to contact program representatives (e.g., publishers, authors). We do not assume nor mean to suggest that schools need to adopt an existing program. In fact, most educators do not utilize existing programs, but rather create their own character education programs. Let's now turn to an examination of the strategies commonly used by effective programs.

<u>Common Practices of Effective Programs</u>

Having identified which programs appear to be effective, we were interested in what implementation strategies those programs utilized. This is a bit tricky for two reasons: (1) many of the research reports did not sufficiently elaborate on the content and pedagogical strategies of the program methods (and we were not involved in an implementation review -- again, see the CASEL review *Safe and Sound* for supplemental implementation information); (2) most programs employ many strategies and it is impossible to determine which ones account for the effectiveness of the programs, because they have not been tested independently. So what we present here is simply a description of the implementation strategies that were most prevalent among the effective programs we have identified. Furthermore, in many cases we did not have enough information to be sure if an implementation strategy was really a substantial part of the program, or, if it was, what specific form it took and how extensively it was incorporated. For example, many programs claim to integrate character education into the curriculum. However, few document how they do it, which subjects are included, and how extensively it is done. Therefore the conclusions in this section are best understood as a general picture of the tendencies of the 33 effective programs.

In order to paint this general picture, we generated a list of prevalent program elements based both upon our knowledge of the field and the programs and corresponding research studies we examined. This list includes 11 major elements. Three of the elements concern the content of character education implementation and eight concern the pedagogical strategies for implementing character education. The major elements are presented in Table 3. Below, we provide examples of the most prevalent implementation strategies.

Content areas. Of the three content areas, the most common was *Social-Emotional Curricula*, with 27 of the 33 programs including some form of social-emotional curriculum. These curricula most often included lessons in:

- Social skills and awareness (e.g., communications skills, active listening, relationship skills, assertiveness, social awareness)
- Personal improvement/Self-management and awareness (e.g., self-control, goal setting, relaxation techniques, self-awareness, emotional awareness)
- Problem-solving/Decision-making

While all programs addressed some aspect of character development, 18 programs self identified as character education, were grounded in core/universal values, or explicitly targeted the moral/ethical development of students. In addition, 14 programs integrate character education into the core academic curriculum to some extent. This was an especially tricky variable, as most programs claim and have the potential to do this, but closer inspection reveals that many are actually merely teaching character education during the regular school day, and not actually integrating it into academics. Of the 14 that do, the most common academic subject areas are language arts and social studies.

In order to better understand the nature of these program components, representative examples follow below:

Social skills and awareness. Sensitivity to and recognition of social cues and the requisite skills to deal with social situations are an important part of character. The fostering

of social skills and awareness takes a variety of forms. The largest component of the Life Skills Training Program covers social skills, including using verbal and non-verbal communication cues to avoid misunderstandings. Students are taught strategies to overcome shyness including how to initiate social contacts, give and receive compliments, and to begin, maintain and end conversations.

Personal improvement/Self-management and awareness. This category included programs that focused on the development of student competence in areas such as self-discipline, goal setting, stress management and achievement motivation. For instance, one of the basic principles of Project Essential is to strive to fulfill the obligations for which one is responsible; thus, learning to distinguish between those things that are one's responsibilities and those that are not, is crucial. Students are taught self-discipline through the application of rational, objective thought. In Social Decision Making/ Problem Solving's unit on self control, students are taught how to set appropriate goals, generate alternative strategies for achieving stated goals, and skills for monitoring performance toward achieving one's goal. In the Peaceful Schools Project students are taught relaxation exercises to help manage stress and anger.

Problem Solving/Decision-making: Many programs respond to the need for students to learn methods and strategies for effective problem-solving and decision-making. In the 6th-grade curriculum for the Responding in Peaceful and Positive Ways program, a social-cognitive problem-solving model is used in which the following steps are emphasized: Stop; Calm Down; Identify the problem and your feelings about it; Decide among your options; Do it; Look back; and, Evaluate. Each week, one of the topics is discussed in detail. Stop and Calm Down sessions, for example, teach students about the relationship between physiology and emotions. Students are taught to identify physical manifestations of anger and anxiety and then how to calm down in various ways, including breathing techniques.

Self-identified as character education. Several of the programs for which we reviewed evaluation reports and supporting literature left no doubt that they not only addressed

character development but identified themselves explicitly as character education programs. For example, Positive Action identifies itself as *Positive Action: The Key to Character*.

Explicit focus on values or ethics. Other programs did not necessarily self identify as character education and yet were grounded in the language of core values such as the 12 core values that are the framework of The Great Body Shop. Still other programs explicitly included goals related to student's ethical and or moral development such as Building Decision Skills, which provides an interactive model for teaching ethics in the classroom.

Academic Curriculum Integration. Programs were integrated into the academic curriculum to varying degrees. The secondary program, Facing History and Ourselves, involves substantive courses through which students examine particular moments in history, such as the years that led up to WWII in Germany or the civil rights movement in the United States. Intense study of history as a moral enterprise helps students to understand the legacies of prejudice and discrimination, resilience and courage. A different example comes from the elementary program Peacemakers, which is most often incorporated into Language Arts. This program includes specially written stories and writing activities including fictional characters that are learning the same skills as the students.

Pedagogical strategies. Of the eight pedagogical elements, the most prevalent (at least 50% of the programs incorporate them) were:
- Professional development for implementation (33)
- Interactive teaching strategies (33)
- Direct teaching strategies (28)
- Family/community participation (26)
- Modeling/Mentoring (16)

Professional development. Professional development for those implementing the character education initiative may be critical. While professional development is not often thought of as a pedagogical strategy, it is essential for effective pedagogy PeaceBuilders offers a strong example of one end of the professional development activities spectrum.

There are six phases to the intervention training for **PeaceBuilders**. A pre-intervention orientation exposed faculty to the program followed by a training workshop in which three to four hours of training were provided on the basic PeaceBuilders model. Then during the first 8-12 weeks of program implementation, each school received at least two hours per week of coaching in program implementation. Throughout the course of the program, study sessions were provided for faculty on specific issues of concern to their schools, such as cafeteria behaviors, integration of geography studies for PeaceBuilders, and management of difficult classrooms. Additionally, two-hour periodic forums and one-day institutes were offered during which successes, challenges and new materials and new interventions were discussed.

Interactive teaching/learning strategies. The three most common forms of interactive strategies are peer discussions, role-playing opportunities, and cooperative learning.

Historically, much of education has focused on teachers telling students what they need to know. Based on psychological research, it has become clear that peer interaction is a powerful means to promote student learning and development. Peer discussions were used in a variety of forms in the effective programs. The **Open Circle** curriculum, for example, calls for 15-30 minute meetings twice a week during which students move their chairs into an "open circle" that leaves one chair empty symbolizing that there is always room for one more person. Teachers in **Roots of Empathy** use intrinsic motivation when students engaged in peer discussions by thanking students for their contributions to the talk. Discussion activities are designed to help children work on consensus building and collaboration, and students are able to contribute regardless of such things as their reading or math skills. Likewise, the **Child Development Project** uses class meetings to build a sense of community. They provide students with opportunities to contribute and take responsibility for the way their classrooms operate and how they feel as a place to learn. Students use the meetings to discuss issues, plan classroom activities, problem-solve and set classroom goals. Discussions of moral dilemmas are widely used both alone (**Moral Dilemma Discussions**) and in programs such as the **Just Community Schools**. In such discussions, teachers facilitate whole classroom peer discussions of moral and ethical dilemmas and other ethical issues. To teach awareness of pro-social norms, the **All Stars**

program includes a session called "the Great Debate" during which students vote on how they feel about a particular position statement. For example, a statement might suggest, "If a boy pays for a date, the girl should be romantic." Students then stand in separate sections of the classroom that represent their opinions: "agree," "disagree," or "not sure." Students engage in debate about why they took the position they did, and are allowed, after the debate, to change their positions. Because a majority of students stand in a position representing a pro-social norm, the program seeks to show students that others share their beliefs.

Another powerful interactive strategy for helping students understand the complexity of social and moral issues is through taking the role of others different from themselves, or through generally taking many different perspectives. **Life Skills Training** uses role-play techniques to help students overcome shyness by encouraging them to "act" the part of someone who is self-confident. Students write "scripts" for various social situations and then rehearse them in pairs in class. They are taught to gradually advance by practicing first in easy situations and then working up to more difficult ones. A common curriculum-based form is to have students write (e.g., in journals) from the perspective of a character in literature or history.

Many effective programs incorporated cooperative learning techniques. To foster individual accountability and equal opportunity for success, the **Seattle Social Development Project** groups students with different abilities and social backgrounds into teams that then work together and are graded as a group. The teams' scores, however, are based on individual students' academic improvement over past performance. In the **Child Development Project**, cooperative learning techniques are used to teach students to work with partners in fair, considerate and responsible ways. Teachers are instructed in the general principles of collaborative learning techniques and student activities are chosen that are inherently challenging and interesting so that no rewards for group participation or performance are required (thus maximizing the intrinsic and minimizing the extrinsic motivations for participation and effort). To help students resolve conflicts constructively, **Teaching Students to be Peacemakers** focuses on creating a cooperative context in which

all participants seek mutual goals. Students are taught to be cooperators rather than competitors and are instructed to recognize the legitimacy of each other's interests and to search for resolutions to conflicts that accommodate the needs of both sides. One way the program implements a form of cooperative learning is through the use of "academic controversy." In this exercise, students (1) prepare scholarly positions on an academic issue, (2) advocate their position, (3) refute the opposing position while rebutting criticism of their position, (4) view the issue from both perspectives, and (5) come to a consensus about their "best reasoned judgment" based on a synthesis of the two positions. Students thus learn to prepare, present and defend a position; take an opposing perspective; make decisions based on the best information and reasoning from both sides; and, engage in a set of social skills such as criticizing ideas without criticizing people.

Direct teaching strategies. In addition to interactive learning activities, many programs included a significant amount of direct teaching strategies. The most prevalent being whole class instruction/demonstration/speakers. Whole class instruction might take the form of classroom lectures given by the program facilitator, or demonstration of technical skills or first hand accounts of various historical events. In **Responding in Peaceful and Positive Ways** facilitators are provided with sample lectures introducing each curriculum lesson.

Family/Community Participation.   Family and/or community participation forms were equally divided among three strategies: Active Family or Community Involvement, Parent Training, and Informing Family and/or Community.

Educators often lament the fact that the academic and character lessons from school are not reinforced at home. Parent training is a common element in character education that can address this concern. To facilitate the program's focus on promoting the development of strong family and school bonds, the **Seattle Social Development Project** provides optional parental training. Seven sessions are offered to parents of students in 1st and 2nd grades on family management including appropriate forms of discipline. Families of 3rd and 4th grade students are offered four sessions about creating positive home learning environments,

helping their children develop math and reading skills, supporting their children academically and communicating effectively with their children and their children's teachers. Families of 5th and 6th grade students are offered five sessions on enforcing drug resistance skills. Similarly, the **Second Step** program offers a six-lesson, video-based program for families who are taught the same skills that their children are being taught including empathy, impulse control, problem-solving and anger management. The family guide includes an overview video, three skills-training videos and 25 sets of problem-solving and anger-management skill-step magnets. The parental component of the **Linking the Interests of Families and Teachers** (LIFT) program focuses on helping create a home environment that fosters healthy discipline and supervision, especially for at-risk youth. In addition to basic parenting skills, parents are instructed how to help their children develop positive peer relationships, trouble-shooting, planning, negotiation and problem-solving skills. Parents meet once per week for six weeks, with meetings held every weekday evening and one weekday afternoon to accommodate different family schedules. The meetings were held in the student's school to familiarize parents with the facility and free childcare was provided. The meetings included presentations, videotaped scenarios to illustrate new skills, role-play, supplemental reading and home practice activities. In addition, each parent was called once per week to check on the progress of the home practice activities and to answer any of the parent's questions.

Beyond training parents in character education skills, many programs understand that families and communities represent resources to help with the school-based character education initiative. The **Child Development Project** has "Home-Side Activities" for grades K- 5. These books provide teachers with activities for children to take home and complete in collaboration with a parent or caregiver. They are designed to bring parents into their children's schoolwork through parent/child conversation. The Child Development Project also includes a component called "At Home in Our Schools". This resource suggests whole-school activities such as creating a "Family Heritage Museum". These activities are aimed at making families part of the school community. Another program, **Positive Action**, has both a family and a community kit. The family kit contains weekly lessons paralleling the school program with parent involvement activities. The community kit has manuals and materials

encouraging community involvement in schools and student/parent involvement in their community.

Many programs keep parents and community members up to date and involved in the program through informational materials like periodic newsletters. Both **Open Circle** and **Second Step** make frequent newsletters to parents a staple of their program.

Modeling/Mentoring.   Modeling and mentoring appeared in many different forms – there was no set recipe. The most common form, however, was the incorporation of adult role models or literature based heroes. Role modeling covers a range of activities including the use of both live and fictional role models. For example, **Facing History and Ourselves** uses historical examples of individuals who made positive differences in the lives of others. Students in **Teen Outreach** programs work alongside adult staff and volunteers from community social service organizations. **Learning for Life** engages community role models to help students identify and develop the skills necessary to be successful in future career choices.

Other common pedagogical strategies. Also common, although used by less than half the effective programs were the following pedagogical strategies:

- Classroom or behavior management strategies. The most common forms were reward or recognition programs, developmental discipline or positive classroom management, and monitoring systems.
- School wide strategies. The most common forms were leadership (individual or team) and school-wide character education programs.
- Community service/service learning. Of these, half were community service and half were service learning.

Common Practices of "Grass-Roots" Character Education

So far we have explored the first two questions posed above: which programs seem to be effective at promoting student character (and learning) and which strategies they employ to do so. Now we can turn to the last two but unfortunately far less studied questions,

namely, what we know about grass-roots character education and what we know about individual implementation strategies. First we will address the "grass-roots" approach.

Unfortunately there is very little information on what we are calling "generic" or "grass roots" character education. This is true despite the fact that most of character education practice is of this "home-grown" variety. Schools, teachers, and/or districts typically create their own character education programs. Indeed, many well-known character education initiatives (such as **Character Counts**, **Character*plus***, **Basic School Framework**) are really frameworks for local development of such initiatives. These initiatives ultimately take a very wide variety of forms. However, little is known about whether they are effective or what strategies they employ. The most recent round of federal funding for character education research (*Character Education Partnership grants* from the **U.S. Department of Education**) promises to rectify this gap in research; e.g., one of the current federally funded projects by the **Cooperating School Districts** of Greater St. Louis is a well-designed study of the Character*plus* program. Home grown, or "grass-roots," character education is clearly a place where more research is needed.

One model for research into generic character education is recent work by Jacques Benninga and his colleagues examining the relation of generic character education to academic achievement in California elementary schools. They found that schools that score higher on implementation of a variety of character education aspects also have higher state achievement scores. Most notably, such higher scores were most consistently and strongly related to the following four aspects of character education: (1) parent and teacher modeling of character and promotion of character education, (2) quality opportunities for students to engage in service activities, (3) promoting a caring community and positive social relationships, and (4)ensuring a clean and safe physical environment. In order to do this work, the authors had to create a rubric for coding key aspects of character education, a strategy that is generally necessary to assess generic character education initiatives. This study was reported in full in the first issue of the new CEP sponsored *Journal for Research in Character Education* (Fall, 2003). A more comprehensive but similar rubric has been created for the *Social and Character Development Research Project*, cited above.

<u>Effective Individual Practices</u>

Similar to the situation for generic or "grass-roots" character education, there is little research on individual character education practices isolated from full programmatic implementation. There are at least two exceptions to this in the character education research literature. There is extensive research demonstrating the effectiveness of two of the elements we have already identified: cooperative learning and class discussions of moral issues. Robert Slavin and David and Roger Johnson have championed cooperative learning for decades and have amassed extensive scientific research demonstrating its effectiveness in promoting both academic and character outcomes in schools. Whether assessed in isolation or as part of a character education initiative (**Teaching Students to be Peacemakers**, one of our identified effective programs), cooperative learning resulted in better conflict resolution skills, greater cooperation, and higher academic achievement, among other outcomes, findings substantiated in well over one hundred research studies.

A particular form of class discussions, **Moral Dilemma Discussions** (MDD), has been studied for over three decades and numerous meta-analyses of close to 100 studies have demonstrated its effectiveness in promoting the development of moral reasoning, its intended outcome. When students engage in facilitated peer discussions of moral dilemmas, they show accelerated development in moral reasoning capacities. We have included MDD as a program, even though it is really a single practice, because of the extensive research. We did not do this with cooperative learning because it was already included as the core of Teaching Students to be Peacemakers, one of the 33 effective programs we studied.

What Character Education Affects

Now that we have examined, in four different ways, what works in character education by exploring programs, strategies, and grass-roots character education, we can turn our attention to the effects of character education.

Character education has been considered, recommended, and/or implemented for a wide variety of reasons. Some have to do with perceptions of "the way schools simply ought to be." But all ultimately have to do with students' developmental and learning outcomes. Character education, after all, is intended to promote student character development. Even this is too vague, as character is defined in many different ways. For this project, we tried to cast a very broad net and included many different aspects of children's development and functioning. We therefore had to create a taxonomy of these variables, which emerged from our review of the research studies. We identified multiple (in this case, three) levels of specific outcomes. In the first of the three levels of the outcomes taxonomy there are four categories: (1) Risk behavior, (2) Pro-social competencies, (3) School-based outcomes, and (4) General social-emotional functioning. Each of the four broad categories has five, six, or seven second-order categories. For example, Risk Behavior is composed of (a) Knowledge and Beliefs about Risk, (b) Drug and Alcohol Use, (c) Sexual Behavior, (d) Protective Skills, (e) Violence/Aggression, and (f) General Misbehavior. A full list of all categories at all three levels is in Table 4. Each of the middle level categories is comprised of between one and 14 third-level behaviors. For example, the General Misbehavior category just listed is composed of (a) Gang activity, (b) Lying, (c) Court contacts, (d) Rude behavior, (e) Defiance of adult authority, (f) Stealing, and (g) Vandalism.

We found the first level too broad and the third level too specific (too few cases per category), and thus chose the second level for the purpose of capturing and presenting our findings here.

There is again more than one way to approach this task. One way is to simply look at the total number of significant positive impacts on the different outcome categories. The second is to look at the percentage of variables (the "hit rate") for a specific outcome category for each program that is significantly improved. We will report both here.

Most Commonly Affected Outcomes. The greatest total numbers of significant positive effects were found for
   1. Socio-moral Cognition (**82** significant positive findings out of 111 tested)

2. Pro-social Behaviors and Attitudes (**71** out of 167),

3. Problem-Solving Skills (**54** out of 84),

4. Drug Use (**51** out of 104),

5. Violence/Aggression (**50** out of 104),

6. School Behavior (**40** out of 88),

7. Knowledge/Attitudes about Risk (**35** out of 73),

8. Emotional Competency (**32** out of 50),

9. Academic Achievement (**31** out of 52)

10. Attachment to School (**19** out of 33),

11. General misbehavior (**19** out of 49)

12. Personal Morality (**16** out of 33)

13. Character knowledge (**13** out of 15)

 Most Effectively Affected Outcomes ("hit rate"). The outcomes that were positively significantly impacted at the highest percentages were:

1. Sexual Behavior (**91%**, 10 significant effects, out of 11 tested)

2. Character Knowledge (**87%**, n=13 out of 15)

3. Socio-moral Cognition (**74%**, n=82 out of 111)

4. Problem-solving Skills (**64%**, n=54 out of 84)

5. Emotional Competency (**64%**, n=31 out of 49)

6. Relationships (**62%**, 8 out of 13),

7. Attachment to School (**61%**, n=19 out of 32)

8. Academic Achievement (**59%**, n=31 out of 52)

9. Communicative competency (**50%**, n= 6 out of 12)

10. Attitudes toward teachers (**50%**, n= 2 out of 4),

11. Violence and Aggression (**48%**, n=50 out of 104),

12. Drug Use (**48%**, n=51 out of 104),

13. Personal Morality (**48%**, n=16 out of 33),

14. Knowledge/Attitudes about Risk (**47%**, n=35 out of 73),

15. School Behavior (**45%**, n=40 out of 88),

16. Pro-social Behaviors and Attitudes (**43%**, n=71 out of 167).

Based on prior work by Kevin Ryan and by Thomas Lickona, the Character Education Partnership has defined character into three broad categories: (1) understanding (the "head"); (2) caring about (the "heart"); (3) acting upon (the "hand") core ethical values. We have therefore attempted to classify each of our outcome variables as "head", "heart", or "hand." This categorization is not exact because some of the outcome categories cut across two of the dimensions of character. Nonetheless, we were able to make reasonable assignments. In doing so we discovered that most of the variables studied were "hand" (608) with "heart" second (279) followed by "head" (268). Overall, the success rate for all variables studied combined was 51%. In looking at the three categories separately, 62% of "head" outcomes tested were significantly positive compared to 45% of the "heart" and 49% of the "hand" variables. Hence it appears from these findings that it is easiest to have an impact on the understanding and knowledge of character than on the motivation to act out of character or the tendency to actually do such actions. Almost half of the "head" variables concerned the development of moral reasoning. When those were dropped, the "head" success rate dropped to 54%, still higher than that for "heart" and "hand." Nonetheless, character education programs are successful in impacting character development approximately half the time. Given that many of the variables studied were exploratory and not focal to the programs, that many of the studies did not test to see if or how well their programs were implemented, and that many of the measures used were not optimal, this is very encouraging news. It suggests that when character education is done well, and when evaluations of its effectiveness target variables of direct interest with well-designed measures, it should be effective.

Guidelines for Effective Practice

We have learned much from this review of research in character education that can help educators implement more effectively. These lessons or guidelines will now be discussed.

<u>What We Know</u>

From the research we have just reviewed, we can conclude the following:

1. **It *can* work.** Clearly there is ample evidence of effective character education. It is not particularly meaningful to state that character education works. Rather it is more appropriate to state that character education *can* work. We have found much to substantiate that claim.

2. **It varies**. Character education in general, and in particular effective character education as defined here, comes in quite varied forms. There are whole school reform models, classroom lesson-based models, target behavior models (e.g., bullying prevention), integrated component models, and so on.

3. **It affects much**. The array of outcomes of effective character education is also quite disparate. Character education affects various aspects of the "head," "heart," and "hand." The "head" seems easiest to influence.

4. **It lasts**. There is evidence of sustained and even delayed effects of character education. The **Seattle Social Development Project**, the **Child Development Project**, and **Positive Action**, for example, show long-term effects of elementary school character education through middle school and/or high school, and even, for SSDP, into early adulthood.

5. **Doing it well matters**. When studies examine level of implementation, they typically (and not surprisingly) find that character education is more effective when it is implemented fully and faithfully (accurately, with fidelity). It behooves character educators to pay heed to the need to maximize and assess implementation fidelity. To underscore this, all effective character education programs include professional development, at least as an option but often as a requirement, and often with substantive support materials and training experiences.

6. **Effective strategies**. We have listed the findings about strategies employed by effective programs. There are some general categories that these specific strategies represent (not surprisingly they are very similar to those concluded by Solomon, Battistich & Watson, 2001, in their review of the research literature):

a. **Professional development.** All effective programs build in structures for ongoing professional training experiences for those implementing the character education initiative or elements of it.

b. **Peer interaction.** Likewise, all effective programs incorporate peer interactive strategies. Certainly peer discussion (usually at the classroom or small group level) fits this bill. So do role-play and cooperative learning.

c. **Direct teaching.** It is very common to include direct instruction about character. As Thomas Lickona has long reminded the field, "Practice what you preach, but don't forget to preach what you practice."

d. **Skill training.** Many of the common strategies are forms of promoting the development of and often the direct teaching of social-emotional skills and capacities. These fall into both the categories of *intrapersonal* and *interpersonal* skills (e.g., self-management and conflict resolution, respectively).

e. **Make the agenda explicit.** More than half the programs either make it explicit that character is the focus or make a focus on morality, values, virtues, or ethics explicit.

f. **Family and/or community involvement.** This common strategy involves the inclusion of families, especially parents, and community members and organizations. This includes parents as consumers (i.e., offering training to parents) and parents and community as partners (i.e., including them in the design and delivery of the character education initiative).

g. **Providing models and mentors.** Many programs incorporate peer and adult role models (both live and literature based) and mentors to foster character development.

h. **Integration into the academic curriculum.** We often hear that it is important to integrate character education into the academic curriculum, especially in this age of *No Child Left Behind* legislation and educational accountability. We have also seen that character education does in fact promote academic learning and achievement. Nearly half of the effective programs actually do this.

i. **Multi-strategy approach.** Effective character education programs are rarely single-strategy initiatives. In fact, only Moral Dilemma Discussion, of the 33 programs studied, is a single-strategy program, and that still encompassed three of our strategy categories (explicit focus on morality, peer interaction, professional

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development). The overall average number of strategies for the 33 programs was slightly over seven.

Turbo-charging character education

Beyond these research-driven suggestions, there are numerous other things one can do to maximize the impact of a character education initiative that we have concluded from this review and our general knowledge of effective practice:

1. **Choose tested and effective implementation approaches that match your goals**. That is precisely why "What Works in Character Education" was done and why we have written this guide for practitioners. Most of character education is very well intended, but because of a lack of information character educators are not as effective as they can be and need to be. This guide should help them in the selection of effective approaches, either by giving them a list from which to select one or more programs that research has demonstrated to be effective (see Table 2) or by allowing them to incorporate effective elements of such programs into their own character education initiative.

2. **Train the implementers.** Those who will be implementing character education (most often classroom teachers) need to know what it is and how to implement it fully and faithfully. Research has shown over and over that incomplete or inaccurate implementation leads to ineffective programs. If those same implementers are also going to be writing lesson plans or in other ways designing the implementation, then it is doubly important that they receive adequate professional development. Unfortunately, professional development is expensive and the substantial time required is at a premium. Schools and districts need to make professional development a priority or it is unlikely to happen, and then so is effective character education and ongoing learning communities.

3.   **Enlist leadership support.** There is only a little research indicating the power of leadership support, but there is much anecdotal and case study information to back it up. Especially when character education is, as it ought to be optimally, a school-wide or district-wide effort, its success rises and falls on the shoulders of the administrators, especially the principal (for a school) or the superintendent (for a district). These educational leaders need the same head, heart and hand that we expect of students: they need to understand what quality character education is (the head); they need to commit to and deeply care about the character education and development of their students (the heart); they need to be model good character and practice quality character education as instructional leaders who know how to implement character education effectively (the hand), in order to inspire and model character and character education, supervise professional development, and ascertain whether the character education initiative is on course.

4.   **Assess character education and feed the data back into program improvement.** It is important to know if an initiative is working. The 11th Principle in CEP's *Eleven Principles of Effective Character Education* is "evaluate the character of the school, the school staff's functioning as character educators, and the extent to which students manifest good character." To support this CEP has published the *Primer for Evaluating a Character Education Initiative* and *Character Education Evaluation Toolkit* and included other evaluation resources on its website (www.character.org). Educators engaged in character education should assess both the outcomes and the implementation processes of their effort and in a collegial fashion consider those data as a means for improving practice. John Marshall and Sarah Caldwell have developed such a model for character education that is described in detail in *Character Evaluation Resource Guide* published by Character*Plus* (www.csd.org).

5.   **Pay attention to school culture including staff culture.** All too often educators focus immediate attention on programming for students in developing a character education initiative. However, it is difficult to substantively improve the culture of a school without first attending to the adult culture in the building. Rick DuFour and Parker Palmer have focused much attention on staff development and staff culture. Principals often report that they need

to first shape the culture among the adults in their buildings before they can effectively tackle character education and whole school culture.

6. **Build student bonding to school.** There is evidence from the pre-school level through and including high school that character education depends in a large part on the degree to which students bond to, become attached to, or feel a part of their schools. This is also seen in the research that shows that student perceptions of school as a caring community are critical to the effectiveness of character education. Schools need to intentionally foster such bonding and to monitor its development.

7. **Think long-term and sustain the commitment.** James Comer, developer of the School Development Project, claims that it takes at least three years to begin to make a positive impact on a school-wide culture, and that substantial effects are often only seen after five to seven years. In his work, Comer is trying to take very unsuccessful and challenged schools and radically improve their cultures, community relations, and student outcomes (both academic and developmental), so it makes sense that this would be a longer term project. Nonetheless, comprehensive quality character education is not much different. It aims for whole-school (or district) transformation. This takes time, and frequently schools (for many legitimate reasons) are not willing to wait for the results.

8. **Bundle programs.** Many effective character education programs are actually bundles of component programs. For example, the **Seattle Social Development Project** includes **I Can Solve a Problem**, **Catch 'Em Being Good, Preparing for the Drug Free Years,** and **How To Help Your Child Succeed In School**. It may be helpful to create a component driven initiative to be effective at promoting student character development and learning.

9. **Include parents and other community representatives.** There are many ways to do this. As we have already shown, parent training and parent involvement in school are important for both academic and character outcomes. Many programs also include other adults from the community in design, monitoring, planning, and implementation of character

education. Many helpful resources can be found at the Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL) (www.casel.org) and Developmental Studies Center (DSC) (www.devstu.org) websites.

The Caveats

The purpose of this project and this document is to cull what we can from the existing research on character education in order to help improve character education practice in schools. The limitation on this mentioned at the outset is that we can only reach conclusions about that which has been studied. So if a particular outcome has not been measured in research studies, we do not know if character education has an impact on it or not. Likewise, if a particular program or implementation strategy has not been studied, we can reach no conclusion about it either.

One interesting example of an area for which there is, as of yet, no research is the usefulness of a set of character words in a character education initiative. Traditionally, character education schools (and districts) have taken as their point of inception a particular strategy, namely a set of character words. These words are typically thought of as virtues, character traits, or values, and they serve as the centerpiece of those character education initiatives. Interestingly, only a few of the programs reviewed in this report employ such a set of character words as a central (if any) part of their implementation strategy sets, and, as for almost all the strategies highlighted here, they do not study the separate impact of such a strategy. Hence we do not have scientific evidence from which to reach conclusions about the effectiveness of using such a set of words; that is, we do not know if they are effective or not.

Such character words can also be construed as a listing of outcome variables; i.e., as descriptions of the student developmental outcomes that the initiatives are intended to foster. For example, when one adopts the **Character Counts** *Six Pillars of Character*, it is assumed that the character education initiative which is based upon it is intended to foster the

development of those same six virtues in students; i.e, they hope that students in their schools will become more caring and trustworthy, etc. Yet rarely are traditional character education words assessed as outcome variables in the research reviewed here. When such categories are assessed, they tend to be measured as students' knowledge (what we called "character knowledge" in our outcome variable taxonomy) of them. Even then, we found only 18 cases of the assessment of character knowledge out of over 1,000 tests of all the outcome variables, and not all of those 18 focused on core character words.

There are numerous reasons for this. First, some of the more prominent programs that rely on such words (e.g., Character Counts, **The Virtues Project**) either have not been researched, or the research that has been done is not scientifically rigorous. Second, these words represent abstract constructs and are therefore difficult to assess. It is far easier, for instance, to tally office referrals than to measure a student's integrity. Third, some character education models (e.g., **Character***plus*) recommend local generation of such a list of words. This leads to practical difficulty in assessing such traits because they tend to vary from site to site (district to district, or even school to school).

Ultimately we are left unable to conclude anything about whether centering a character education initiative on a set of such character words is a productive strategy or not. Nor can we conclude whether character education actually fosters such abstract character traits. Further research will be needed if we are to be able to meaningfully address these (and many other) important questions. From anecdotal experience it seems apparent, however, that positing such a list of words without modeling and fostering corresponding behaviors in the school or classroom culture is not only insufficient to produce significant character development in students, but may indeed breed cynicism in the students, who perceive the lack of integrity between the professed words and the culture of the school as they experience it from day to day and moment to moment.

A second example of as of yet unknown aspects of character education is the reliance upon literature as a means of promoting character development in students. Some programs do indeed focus predominantly on the use of literature (e.g., **Voices of Love and Freedom**,

Loving Well) but they tend not to have solid scientific research to evaluate their effectiveness. Eight programs utilize literature as one implementation strategy among many (e.g., **Child Development Project**), but do not analyze the strategies separately. So, whereas there is a long-standing belief that the study of appropriate literature is an effective means of promoting character, we still do not know if that is accurate or not.

Yet another caveat concerns the fact that many programs only measure a narrow range of outcomes. The **Moral Dilemma Discussion** model, for example, has tended to only look at the development of moral reasoning, and, in a few cases, moral behavior. Similarly, the **Just Community School** approach has focused on moral reasoning and school atmosphere only. So we cannot determine if such programs affect more than what they measure.

Examples such as these are necessary to remind the reader that the conclusions of this project will only shed light on that which has already been studied. There are many other practices (e.g., developmental discipline, democratic student government) that seem promising but lack the requisite research evidence to be included in this report. We strongly caution against concluding that such practices are ineffective simply because they have not been studied and therefore are not listed here. They may be critical or may be irrelevant. We simply do not yet know. Future research will hopefully shed light on these questions.

We also can only recommend programs for which there has been adequate scientific research. Ideally we would have only included programs for which there are published, peer-reviewed studies that randomly assign subjects to treatment and comparison conditions, with adequate statistical power, and that have other features of rigorous research designs. There are simply too few of those, so we had to include studies that were missing some of those features. Nevertheless, there are many promising character education initiatives that very well may be effective, but, because they have no research at all or they only have non-scientific research or research in progress, we cannot yet conclude anything about their effectiveness. For example, a well-designed study of the Character Counts program in South Dakota suffered from such high subject attrition that it failed to produce a research sample that met our scientific criteria; future research will hopefully assess the effectiveness of

Character Counts. A promising study of the Loving Well program ended up with a comparison sample that was markedly different than the students exposed to the curriculum, so again conclusions were impossible to reach, despite a solid approach to the initial research design. Some programs have been studied but an off-shoot or new version exists that has not been directly studied; for example, the Child Development Project has been extensively studied and found effective, but its newer and more readily disseminated spin-off, **Caring School Communities**, only has some preliminary research. Currently a well-designed scientific study is in progress in St. Louis. Similarly, while the **Resolving Conflict Creatively Program** is well-researched and effective, its derivation as part of *Operation Respect*'s **Don't Laugh at Me** program only has preliminary research available. Additionally, there are many programs that look promising but for which there is simply no research available as of yet (e.g., the **Giraffe Project**, **MindOh**). Again, one should not conclude that they are ineffective simply because they have not been studied. We simply do not know if they are effective or not. It is our hope that this project will help set a research agenda and inspire future needed research studies.

One group of programs is at a particular disadvantage here. These are programs that are best understood as potential components of a comprehensive character education initiative. Such component programs (e.g., **Project Wisdom**, **Wise Skills**, the **Raoul Wallenberg Project**) would be difficult to test in the way we have required. They may not generate impressive results themselves, but as a part of a more complex set of strategies. We therefore do not want their exclusion from this report to be considered as negative evidence. Once again, we simply do not know if they are effective or not, and, for such programs, that independent effectiveness may be difficult to test.

Finally, as already noted, there is very little research on the components of character education programs. The **Seattle Social Development Project** employs ten different implementation strategies (according to our taxonomy) ranging from peer mentoring to parent training to classroom management. Without research that isolates the effects of these component strategies it is impossible to know which strategies are causing the observed outcomes and which may be ineffective or even counter-productive.

<u>Conclusions</u>

What Works in Character Education was designed to learn from scientific research on character education in order to help practitioners be more effective in fostering the development of students' character. We have demonstrated that such research exists, that character education comes in a variety of forms, and that it can be effective. We have also been able to draw conclusions about what works. We have identified 33 programs with sufficient scientific backing to demonstrate their effectiveness and numerous implementation strategies that commonly occur in such programs. We have also seen the wide range of outcomes affected by the corpus of research on character education and have identified those that are most commonly and effectively impacted by character education programs. Finally, we have derived "tips" for practitioners that should make their character education initiatives more effective.

Clearly much more research is needed to answer the many remaining questions about effective character education. In a separate report we will identify many of those questions and suggest critical areas of future research. There is much that we already know and much that we need to know. We hope this project both answers and asks many such important questions about what works in character education.

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TABLE 1

METHODOLOGICAL CRITERIA/SCIENTIFIC QUALITY INDEX

Program:_____

Study:_____

Designation: <u>Ideal ( )   Acceptable ( )   Unacceptable ( )</u>

1. Sample Size
     1. Inadequate
     2. Marginal
     3. Adequate

2. Comparison Group
     1. No comparison group
     2. No assignment method
     3. Partial or unclear basis for assignment
     4. Random or matched assignment

3. Longitudinal Change Assessment
     1. No pretest assessment
     2. Pretest/posttest design, but no delayed posttest
     3. Pretest/posttest design with delayed posttest

4. Statistical Tests of Significance
     1. No statistical tests
     2. Significance reported but statistical test not identified
     3. Statistical tests and significance reported

5. Publication
     1. Unpublished with little methodological reporting
     2. Unpublished but with complete methodological report
     3. Peer reviewed

6. Implementation
     1. Implementation unconfirmed
     2. Implementation assessed

TABLE 2

LIST OF SCIENTIFICALLY SUPPORTED PROGRAMS

1. Across Ages (elementary, **middle***)
2. All Stars (**middle**)
3. Building Decision Skills with Community Service (**middle**)
4. Child Development Project (**elementary**)
5. Facing History and Ourselves (**middle** , high)
6. Great Body Shop (**elementary**)
7. I Can Problem Solve (**elementary**)
8. Just Communities (**high**)
9. Learning for Life (**elementary**, middle, high)
10. Life Skills Training (elementary, **middle school**)
11. LIFT (Linking the Interests of Families and Teachers) (**elementary**)
12. Lions-Quest (**elementary, middle, high**)
13. Michigan Model for Comprehensive School Health Education (elementary, **middle**, high)
14. Moral Dilemma Discussion (**elementary, middle, high**)
15. Open Circle Program (Reach Out to Schools)(**elementary**)
16. PeaceBuilders (**elementary**)
17. Peaceful Schools Project (**elementary**)
18. Peacemakers (**elementary, middle**)
19. Positive Action (**elementary**, middle, high)
20. Positive Action Through Holistic Education (PATHE) (**middle, high**)
21. Positive Youth Development (**middle**)
22. Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies (PATHS) (**elementary**)
23. Raising Healthy Children (**elementary**, middle, high)
24. Resolving Conflict Creatively Program (RCCP)(**elementary**, middle)
25. Responding in Peaceful & Positive Ways (RIPP)(**middle school**)
26. Roots of Empathy (**elementary, middle**)
27. Seattle Social Development Project (**elementary**)
28. Second Step (**elementary, middle**)
29. Social Competence Promotion Program for Young Adolescence (**middle**)
30. Social Decision Making & Problem Solving (SDM/PS) (**elementary, middle, high**)
31. Teaching Students to be Peacemakers (**elementary, middle, high**)
32. Teen Outreach (**middle, high school**)
33. The ESSENTIAL Curriculum (Project ESSENTIAL) (**elementary**, middle)

* Bold text indicates the level for which we analyzed research.

TABLE 3

CHARACTER EDUCATION PROGRAM ELEMENTS

Content Elements

1. Explicit Character Education Programs (18)

2. Social and Emotional Curriculum (27)

3. Academic Curriculum Integration (15)

Pedagogical Elements

4. Direct Teaching Strategies (28)

5. Interactive Teaching/ Learning Strategies (33)

6. Classroom / Behavior Management Strategies (15)

7. School-Wide or Institutional Organization (14)

8. Modeling / Mentoring (16)

9. Family/Community Participation (26)

10. Community Service/Service Learning (8)

11. Professional Development (33)

* Number in parentheses indicates the number of programs in which that element was included.

Table 4

VARIABLE OUTCOME TAXONOMY

1. **Risk Behavior**
    1.1. Knowledge & Beliefs Re: Risk
        1.1.1. Reactions to situations involving drug use
        1.1.2. Knowledge about substance abuse
        1.1.3. Normative beliefs about high-risk behaviors
        1.1.4. Intentions to use substances
        1.1.5. Attitudes towards use
        1.1.6. Attitudes towards guns and violence
        1.1.7. Risk-taking
    1.2. Drug Use
        1.2.1. Frequency of use
        1.2.2. Quantities used
        1.2.3. Polydrug use
    1.3. Sexual Behavior
        1.3.1. Sexual activity
    1.4. Protective Skills
        1.4.1. Refusal skills
        1.4.2. Knowledge of violence-related psychosocial skills
    1.5. Violence/Aggression
        1.5.1. Ridiculing/bullying
        1.5.2. Physical aggression and injury
        1.5.3. Name calling and verbal putdowns
        1.5.4. Threats and verbal intimidation
        1.5.5. Verbal aggression
        1.5.6. Dominance-aggression
        1.5.7. Victimization
        1.5.8. Fighting
        1.5.9. Breaking things on purpose
        1.5.10. Bringing weapons to school
        1.5.11. Non-physical aggression
        1.5.12. Self-destructive behavior
    1.6. General Misbehavior
        1.6.1. Gang activity
        1.6.2. Lying
        1.6.3. Court contacts
        1.6.4. Rude behavior
        1.6.5. Defiance of adult authority
        1.6.6. Stealing
        1.6.7. Vandalism
2. **Pro-Social Competencies**
    2.1. Socio-Moral Cognition
        2.1.1. Ethical decision-making ability
        2.1.2. Ethical understanding
        2.1.3. Understanding multiple perspectives
        2.1.4. Moral reasoning
    2.2. Personal Morality
        2.2.1. Sense of justice/fairness
        2.2.2. Other moral values
        2.2.3. Respect
        2.2.4. Honesty

2.2.5. Ethical sensibility
2.2.6. Taking responsibility for one's actions
2.2.7. Respecting the property of others
2.2.8. Leadership skills
2.2.9. Following rules
2.2.10. Self-discipline
2.3. Pro-Social Behaviors & Attitudes
2.3.1. Ethnocentrism
2.3.2. Sense of social responsibility
2.3.3. Keeping commitments
2.3.4. Getting along with others
2.3.5. Respect and tolerance
2.3.6. Caring & Concern for others
2.3.7. Teamwork and cooperation
2.3.8. Helping others
2.3.9. Including others
2.3.10. Inclination to do community service
2.3.11. Empathy
2.3.12. Sharing
2.3.13. Attitudes and knowledge about community service
2.3.14. Ethical conduct
2.3.15. Participation in positive extra-curricular activities
2.3.16. Participation in civic and social actions
2.3.17. Desire for wealth
2.4. Communicative Competency
2.4.1. Communication skills
2.4.2. Attentive listening
2.5. Character Knowledge
2.5.1. Understanding of character attributes
2.5.2. Ethical decision-making
2.6. Relationships
2.6.1. Friends, family
2.6.2. Value intimacy
2.7. Citizenship
2.7.1. Democratic values
2.7.2. Desire for influence/power

3. School-Based Outcomes

3.1. School Behavior
3.1.1. School attendance
3.1.2. Compliance with school rules and expectations
3.1.3. Detentions, suspensions and expulsions
3.1.4. Skipping school without permission
3.1.5. Overall classroom behavior
3.1.6. Participation in classroom activities
3.2. Attachment to school
3.2.1. Bonding to school
3.2.2. Sense of school as community
3.2.3. Attachment to school
3.2.4. Feeling of belonging to school community
3.2.5. Levels of classroom interest and enthusiasm
3.3. Attitudes Toward School
3.3.1. Sense of responsibility to school
3.3.2. General school climate is more positive
3.3.3. Adjustment to new school
3.3.4. Safety
3.4. Attitudes Toward teachers

3.4.1.Trust and respect for teachers

3.4.2.Feelings about whether teachers are trustworthy, supportive, fair and consistent

3.5. Academic Goals, Expectations & Motives

3.5.1.Motivation to do well in school

3.5.2.Educational expectations – how far students expect to go

3.5.3.Task mastery goals

3.5.4.Performance oriented goals

3.6. Academic Achievement

3.6.1.Academic achievement including grades, test scores

3.6.2.Promotion to the next grade

3.7. Academic skills

3.7.1.Creative learning strategies

3.7.2.Study skills

3.7.3.Ability to focus on work/stay on task

4. General Social-Emotional

4.1. Self-Concept

4.1.1.Self-perception

4.1.2.Self-esteem

4.1.3.Appreciates his/her schoolwork, work products and activities

4.1.4.Refers to himself in generally positive terms

4.2. Independence and Initiative

4.2.1.Undertakes new tasks willingly

4.2.2.Valuing independence

4.2.3.Making decisions that affect students

4.2.4.Makes good choices

4.2.5.Self-direction and independence in activities

4.2.6.Initiates new ideas relative to classroom activities and projects

4.2.7.Asks questions when he/she does not understand

4.2.8.Makes decisions regarding things that affect him/her

4.2.9.Acts as a leader in group situations with peers

4.2.10. Readily expresses opinions

4.2.11. Assertiveness

4.3. Coping

4.3.1.Adapts easily to change in procedures

4.3.2.Copes with failure by dealing with mistakes or failures easily and comfortably

4.3.3.Takes criticism or corrections in stride without overreacting

4.3.4.Self-efficacy

4.3.5.Depression

4.3.6.Negative expectations for the future

4.3.7.Coping skills

4.4. Problem Solving Skills

4.4.1.Alternative solutions

4.4.2.Consequential thinking

4.4.3.Behavioral adjustment

4.4.4.Conceptualizing cause-and-effect

4.4.5.Conflict resolution strategies

4.5. Emotional Competency

4.5.1.Ability to discuss emotional experiences

4.5.2.Recognizing emotional cues

4.5.3.Understanding how emotions change

4.5.4.Stress/anxiety reduction techniques

4.5.5.Feelings vocabulary

4.5.6.Understanding simultaneous feelings

4.5.7.Expressing emotions appropriately

4.5.8.Impatience

4.5.9.Emotionality