Community Voices and Character Education: A Skills-based Approach to Character Education

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A New Approach to Character Education

Once you've decided to do character education, how do you select an approach from the hundreds available?

- Use professional networks and internet resources to hear about other teachers' and administrators' experiences

- Try to find well-evaluated programs with research on student outcomes.

- Ask a CVCE consultant.

CVCE is simply a framework to help you implement whatever programs or curricula you choose.

- CVCE helps you choose target areas within two dimensions: student skill development and school climate.

- The next few slides show some different configurations that are possible.

One possible approach to multidimensional character education:

Community Voices & Character Education

School climate
Student initiated service learning project
Peer mediation program
Performing arts benefit with a humanitarian theme

Individual students' development:
Building Ethical Sensitivity in Literature
Building Ethical Judgment in Nature Conservation

Another possible approach to multidimensional character education:

Community Voices & Character Education

School climate
Proactive behavior management
Tolerance education

Individual students' development:
Integrating Ethical Judgment across subject areas
Implement Lion's Quest Skills for Adolescents

And one more possible approach to multidimensional character education:

Community Voices & Character Education

School climate

Assemblies recognize service learning
Use democratic procedures to set policies
Implement honor code using student input

Individual students' development:

Interdisciplinary projects in ethical sensitivity
Decision-making curriculum in health/FACS

Save your time and resources for approaches that work! Watch out for these weaknesses in published programs:

1. Weak psychology base (such an oversimplified trait approach that doesn't address skills)

2. Weak pedagogy base (such as heavy reliance on worksheets)

3. Lack of classroom testing and evaluation of outcomes

4. Add-ons that teachers won't stick with

5. Rigidly defined values that don't leave room for pluralism

Community Voices and Character Education attempts to help you avoid those common pitfalls.

1. CVCE uses current developmental and psychological research

-We acknowledge that teachers can't change personalities, but they can build ethical and prosocial skills.

2. CVCE uses constructivist models of learning

-students play an active role in learning

-students learn from peers as well as teacher

3. CVCE is based on what has been PROVEN to work

-experiential learning, not a worksheet approach

-building caring relationships

-positive school climate

4. Implementation design of CVCE

-meets students' needs by integrating character into school climate and daily academics

-meets teachers' needs by avoiding another "add-on"

5. CVCE is community specific, not one-size-fit-all

-embedded in academic instruction

-adapted to and integrated in local community

Reviewing CVCE's constructivist, community-based approach

1. Skills not traits

2. Construction not exhortation

3. Empirical foundation

4. Integration into regular instruction

5. Specification to Local Community

CVCE starts with the evidence regarding the components of character education:

- What is *character* education?

- What is character *education*?

First we dicuss "character."

What is distinctive about persons who act with good character?

- More Ethically Sensitive

- Better at Ethical Judgment

- More Ethically Motivated

- Better at Taking Ethical Action

There are 7 Skills outlined for each ethical domain.

- Teachable in a public school setting

- Not an exhaustive list, but links with most other character education reviewed.

CVCE

What does good character look like?

4 Processes

28 Skills Total

Ethical Sensitivity Skills

- ES-1: Reading and Expressing Emotion

- ES-2: Taking the Perspectives of Others

- ES-3: Caring by Connecting to Others

- ES-4: Working with Group & Individual Differences

- ES-5: Controlling Social Bias

- ES-6: Identifying Optional Actions

- ES-7: Identifying Consequences of Actions & Options

Ethical Judgment Skills

- EJ-1: Understanding Ethical Problems
- EJ-2: Using Codes & Identifying Judgment Criteria
- EJ-3: Developing General Reasoning Skills
- EJ-4: Developing Ethical Reasoning Skills
- EJ-5: Reflecting On The Process And Outcome
- EJ-6: Planning To Implement Decisions
- EJ-7: Developing Optimism

Ethical Motivation Skills

- EM-1: Respecting Others

- EM-2: Developing Conscience

- EM-3: Acting Responsibly

- EM-4: Helping Others

- EM-5: Making Peace and Cooperating

- EM-6: Valuing Social Structures

- EM-7: Developing Ethical Identity And Integrity

Ethical Action Skills

- EA-1: Communicating Well

- EA-2: Resolving Conflicts and Problems

- EA-3: Identifying Needs and Acting Assertively

- EA-4: Taking Initiative as a Leader

- EA-5: Developing Courage

- EA-6: Developing Perseverance

- EA-7: Working Hard

Now we discuss the education component of character education.

- Educators recognize that all learning is a process of constructing expertise.

Generally speaking, what do experts know?

- What knowledge to access

- Which procedures to apply

- How to apply the procedures

- When to apply the procedures

What do moral experts know?

- How to recognize and conceptualize moral situations

- How to reason well

- That their identity is connected to their ethics

- How to execute an ethical decision

What does good instruction look like in CVCE?

Help students construct expertise by guiding them through these levels:

- Immersion
- Attention to Facts and Skills
- Practice Procedures
- Integrate Knowledge and Procedures

Help students construct expertise

Level 1: **Immersion**

- Attend to big picture

- Learn to recognize basic patterns

CVCE

**What does
good instruction look like?**

4 Levels

Help students construct expertise

Level 2: **Attend to Facts and Skills**

- Focus on detail and prototypic examples

- Build knowledge

CVCE

**What does
good instruction look like?**

4 Levels

Help students construct expertise

Level 3: **Practice Procedures**

- Set goals

- Plan steps of problem solving

- Practice skills

CVCE

**What does
good instruction look like?**

4 Levels

Help students construct expertise

Level 4: **Integrate Knowledge and Procedures**

- Execute plans

- Solve problems

CVCE

What does good instruction look like?

4 Levels

Sample lesson for a current events unit: Taking the Perspective of Others and Controlling Social Bias

- Immersion

- Attention

- Practice

- Integration

Sample lesson for a current events unit: Taking the Perspective of Others and Controlling Social Bias

- <u>Immersion</u>: card game that simulates inter-cultural experiences with multiple frameworks

- <u>Attention</u>: skits with many perspectives to consider

- <u>Practice</u>: finding similarities and differences in essays from different perspectives

- <u>Integration</u>: current issue analysis involving recognition of social bias and multiple viewpoints

Summary of CVCE characteristics

Research Base:

-Teach 4 domains (28 skills identified)

-Help students construct expertise

Contextual Specificity:
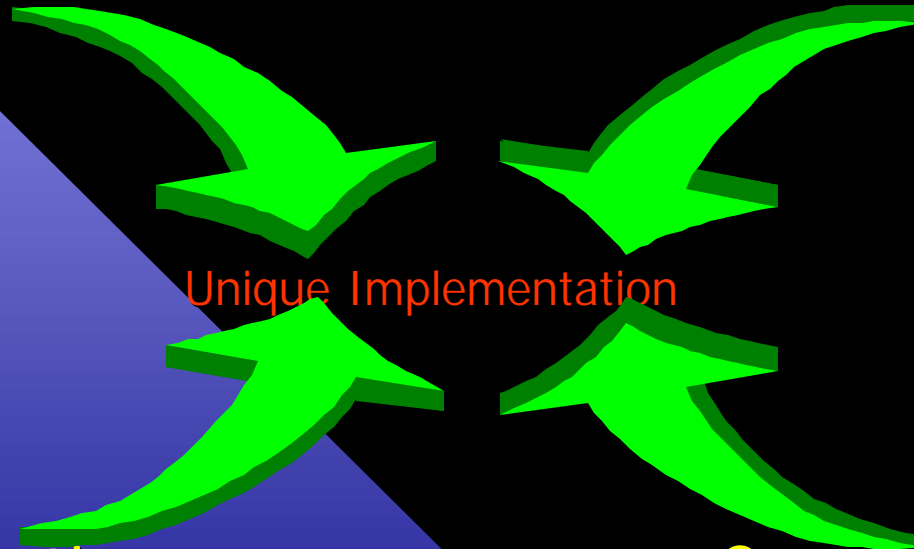
-Embed in academic instruction

-Adapt to local culture

Community Voices and Character Education

CVCE: The Full Model

Top-down (Research)

Psychology   Pedagogy

Unique Implementation

Instruction   Community

Bottom-up (Specificity)