MINNESOTA'S COMMUNITY VOICES AND CHARACTER EDUCATION PROJECT

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The Minnesota *Community Voices and Character Education Project* (CVCE) was a collaborative project among researchers and educators that provided both a systematic and holistic view of character as a set of skills, in accordance with ancient and modern views, and a novice-to-expert view of character cultivation. The model provided maximum flexibility for local implementation while using rigorous evaluation methods in measuring effects. An overview of the project is presented, including the research-based framework and the evaluation of program outcomes. Multivariate analysis of variance was conducted on gain scores from pre-post student assessments of climate and individual variables, comparing program schools with a comparison school. Results were significant for program schools who implemented with more breadth and focus.

The *Community Voices and Character Education Project* (CVCE)[1] was a federally funded project sponsored by the Minnesota Department of Education (formerly the Department of Children, Families, and Learning) and designed by a team of researchers at the University of Minnesota in collaboration with educators across Minnesota. The project was funded to develop an approach to character education at the middle school level. We dis-

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cuss the research framework and the collaborative model and then present evidence for the model's effectiveness.

THE GOALS OF THE CVCE PROJECT

In response to perceived needs in the field, there were four overarching goals that drove the CVCE project design. One was to provide an integrative view of character formation that crossed traditions, finding resonance between ancient views and contemporary perspectives, traditional character education and Kohlberg's rational moral education. Although there are other integrative approaches (e.g., Lickona, 2004; Solomon, Watson, Schaps, Battistich, & Solomon, 1990), the CVCE approach is more thorough and systematic in its content recommendations and more prescriptive in its pedagogical approach, both of which are addressed in the subsequent goals for the project. Second, CVCE attempted to provide a holistic, process view of moral character, in light of the fact that there are many formulations of virtuous character and few criteria against which to judge them. Whereas most character education programs tacitly endorse a trait understanding of character, the CVCE model was formulated from well-attested literatures in social science. Character development is, according to this view, not a matter of developing traits of character, bur rather developing a set of inter and intrapersonal skills that one hones towards expertise. Third, CVCE sought to integrate up-to-date pedagogy into a general approach to cultivating character. The CVCE model steers a middle course between traditionalists who urge a model-centered instructional approach and progressivists who advocate a student-centered approach. Instead of one or the other, the CVCE model uses a relationship-centered, apprenticeship approach. The adult models, guides and sets up appropriate environments while the student discovers, constructs and builds intuitions. Fourth, CVCE was designed as a collaborative project between middle school educators and researchers that sought to integrate character education into standards-driven instruction with maximum flexibility for educators. Rather than approach teachers with a ready-made curriculum, CVCE provided flexible guidelines for modifying regular instruction so that it fosters ethical skill development while meeting academic standards. Although CVCE was funded to address middle school primarily, the framework and materials were versatile enough to be used by K-12 teachers. Project goals are described in more detail below. The theoretical underpinnings are more extensively discussed in Narvaez (2005, see also Narvaez, Bock, & Endicott, 2003.)

Goal 1: To Provide an Integrative, Community-based View of Character and Its Formation

In *The Republic*, Plato repeatedly draws an analogy between the practice of professional skills and the practices of a just person. A professional, such as an expert craftsman, is one who has particular, highly-cultivated skills. Similarly, Plato describes the just person as knowledgeable and effective in ethical "know-how." The ancient notions of expert know-how resonate with recent research in cognitive science which finds that expertise is distinctive in particular ways. Expert performance differs from that of the novice in declarative knowledge (what), procedural knowledge (how) and conditional knowledge (when and how much). In other words, experts know what knowledge to access, how to access it, and when and how to apply the knowledge (Alexander, 1992). Experts develop this rich store of declarative, procedural and conditional knowledge from extensive, coached practice (Ericsson, & Charness, 1994; Hogarth, 2001).

CVCE adopts an expertise view of *ethical know-how*. Accordingly, the fully developed ethical person shows expertise in multiple skill areas that comprise "virtue in action." These skills are not technical competence or intellec-

tual acuity, nor are they traits that one carries like blue or brown eyes. Instead, expert skills entail a holistic embodied cognition comprised of deliberative and intuitive capacities that are expressed in action (Varela, 1999). As Hursthouse (2003) points out, "to possess a virtue is to be a certain sort of person with a certain complex mindset" that includes values, perceptions, reactions, attitudes, expectations, interests and choices (p. 2). The moral expert displays practical and moral wisdom in finding Aristotle's golden mean for action in each situation.

The CVCE model was also built on notions of excellence and flourishing. Aristotle emphasized the notion of *eudaimonia* or human flourishing within the community (*polis*) as integral to a good life. Ethical development, by its very nature, is relational. Virtue develops within a community and is shared in community. The individual is embedded in a community that offers support and encouragement in the process of becoming a person of character. This is the essence of *eudaimonia.* "The conception of the *polis*, then, is that of an institutionalized social organization designed to afford maximum realization of values by individuals, as well as optimal utilization of the values realized" (Norton, 1991, p. 14). In this Aristotelian view, every individual actualizes virtues in self with the support necessary from friends, associates, and the society as a whole. Thus, community is indispensable for human virtue and human thriving. Through guided participation from more skilled persons in the community (Rogoff, 1990), the child learns to value and know what it means to be good. CVCE emphasized the importance of involving families and community members in local implementation plans and in character skill cultivation generally.

One of the most important community influences on students' prosocial-moral development is the proximal community, particularly mediated by the climate of the school and classroom which builds a sense of belonging to the community (Solomon, Watson, & Battistich, 2002). In an environment that is nurturing, children build a sense of trust and feel encouraged to self-actualize (Fiske, 2004). For optimal flourishing and motivation, children not only need a sense of trust, but also competence (promoted by skill development), autonomy (promoted by self-regulation tools), and understanding of the world around them (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Fiske, 2004). When these needs are met in the classroom and school, children develop a sense of commitment to the values of the community (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). Developmental discipline that addresses student needs for autonomy, competence and belonging successfully promotes social, academic and ethical development (Watson, 2003).

Ultimately ethical character is nurtured through apprenticeship to one's community. Plato and Aristotle both agreed that a good person is above all a good citizen. It is in the community that each of us moves, lives, and has our being. It is in the community that students learn, apply, and hone their ethical competencies.

Goal 2: To Provide a Systematic, Holistic, and Process View of Moral Character

When a teacher is instructed to "teach character," what does this mean? The answer usually includes a list of traits or virtues that the teacher is to instill in students. Yet the list changes according to the preferences of the respondent or the particular character education curriculum employed. For example, most curricula prioritize a particular subset of skills over others such as the "six pillars" of *Character Counts*, resolving conflict peacefully (Lantieri & Patti, 1996), or socioemotional skills (Kusche & Greenberg, 1998). Instead of focusing on a specific subset of skills, the CVCE framework provides a process model that encompasses all skills required to carry out ethical behavior.[2]

In order to design a more systematic view of character, we adopted and adapted Rest's Four-Component Model, an empiri-

cally-derived process model of ethical behavior (Narvaez & Rest, 1995; Rest, 1983). The model describes the psychological processes—based on social information processing, cognitive, emotional, and action capacities—that must take place in order for ethical behavior to ensue: ethical sensitivity, ethical judgment, ethical focus, and ethical action. The first step in moving toward ethical action is noticing and interpreting the situation, which includes empathizing with victims and engaging moral imagination for envisioning possibilities (ethical sensitivity). For example, experts in the skills of ethical sensitivity, like Eleanor Roosevelt, have built schemas that enable them to more easily take the perspectives of others, accurately "read" a situation and determine what role they might play. Second, the person must determine the best, most moral, course of action through adept reasoning and the consideration of ethical codes accompanied by adequate reflection (ethical judgment). Experts in the skills of ethical judgment, like Thomas Jefferson, have detailed schemas for solving complex moral problems. Third, the individual must focus on the ethical choice, tap into an ethical identity (i.e., a sense of moral responsibility), and prioritize the ethical action (ethical focus or motivation). Experts in the skills of ethical focus, like Albert Schweitzer, cultivate an ethical identity that leads them to set aside other goals and keep their eye on the prize. Fourth, the person must create and carry out a plan, persevering until it is completed (ethical action). Experts in the skills of ethical action, like Florence Nightingale, have schemas about how to be courageous and persevere for others, enabling them to stay on task and take the necessary steps to get the ethical job done.

The four-component model provides a general framework for determining what should be taught. However, it is not specified enough for instruction. Hence, CVCE proposed an empirically derived set of skills with suggested subskills. The skills are listed in Table 1.[3] The skills include classic virtues, such as courage, and modern virtues, such as resiliency. They also include virtues identified by positive psychology (Peterson & Seligman, 2004), those that promote flourishing of self and other, as well as those related to supporting universal human rights and global citizenship. For example, we incorporated citizenship characteristics that experts in the Citizenship Education Policy Study Project (Cogan, 1997) identified were necessary in the twenty-first century: (1) Approaches problems as member of a global society; (2) Works cooperatively with others and takes responsibility for one's

TABLE 1
The Four Processes and Related Skill Categories

ETHICAL SENSITIVITY	**ETHICAL FOCUS (MOTIVATION)**
Understand Emotional Expression	Respecting Others
Take the Perspectives of Others	Develop Conscience
Connecting to Others	Act Responsibly
Responding to Diversity	Be Community Member
Controlling Social Bias	Finding Meaning in Life
Interpreting Situations	Valuing Traditions and Institutions
Communicating Effectively	Developing Ethical Identity and Integrity
ETHICAL JUDGMENT	**ETHICAL ACTION**
Understanding Ethical Problems	Resolving Conflicts and Problems
Using Codes and Identifying Judgment Criteria	Assert Respectfully
Reasoning Generally	Taking Initiative as a Leader
Reasoning Ethically	Implementing Decisions
Understand Consequences	Cultivate Courage
Reflect on the Process and Outcome	Persevering
Coping and Resiliency	Work Hard

roles and responsibilities in society; (3) Understands, accepts, and tolerates cultural differences; (4) Thinks in a critical and systematic way; (5) Resolves conflict in a nonviolent manner; (6) Adopts a way of life that protects the environment; (7) Respects and defends human rights; (8) Participates in public life at all levels of civic discourse. In its model of character and character formation, CVCE integrates classical notions of good character (e.g., those of Plato and Aristotle) with modern formulations (e.g., modern citizenship skills) within a process model for moral action.

Goal 3: To Suggest a Pedagogy Based on Current Research and Best Practice

In keeping with current perspectives on learning, CVCE recognized learning as an active process whereby individuals construct understanding by integrating new information into what they already know (Piaget, 1952). Interaction with the world stimulates change in conceptual structures such as schemas. Schemas are generalized knowledge structures built from prior experience which increase in complexity with further experience (Rumelhart, 1980). Learning involves an active transformation of schemas during cognitive activities such as "processing material through active, selective attention, relating new information to prior knowledge and forming new knowledge" as well as monitoring understanding in order to know when to ask for help or when understanding is complete (Anderson, 1989). CVCE integrates the constructivist perspective with more recent perspectives in cognitive psychology, specifically, expertise development.

In every domain, learners move along a continuum from novice understanding toward expert understanding (Sternberg, 1998, 1999). Experts have larger, richer, better-organized networks of schemas than do novices based on extensive, coached practice (Ericsson & Charness, 1994; Ericsson & Smith, 1991). When a novice-to-expert perspective is drawn into constructivism, it provides a clearer and more systematic framework for mapping instruction and delineates an active role for the instructor. To help students build expertise, the teacher models, coaches, and provides opportunities for extensive practice. In this way, children build a repertoire of action schemas that are honed with practice. Practical skills are built in incremental steps using such approaches as guided participation and scaffolding. From this extended practice, individuals construct a contextualized intelligence or situated cognition for each skill (e.g., Rogoff, 1990; Rogoff & Lave, 1984). Students who learn how to show respect to others, for example, in the context of the classroom will likely need to learn it for each new context they face (e.g., at the mall, at the stadium, on the street). Expert knowledge requires extensive practice across many contexts and situations.

For CVCE, four levels of expertise were identified along which instruction should proceed (based on Marshall, 1995). Teachers select the level(s) of instruction based on student needs. The four levels are the following.

Level One: Immersion in Examples and Opportunities. Students are immersed in examples and opportunities to get a sense of the *big picture* of the domain. Students learn to recognize the basic patterns through engagement in play, observation, and experience with methods and problems in the domain. Students build identification or recognition knowledge, eventually being able to notice the critical information in dynamic context.

Level Two: Attention to Facts and Skills. Teachers draw student attention to the facts and skills in the domain to build elaborative knowledge. Students focus on domain narratives, classification, causal relations, rules, goal attainment, and other key elements of the domain. Students build mental models of specific problems from prototypic examples.

Level Three: Practice Procedures. Students practice procedures to build understanding of how to solve problems in the domain. Through problem-based learning, students set goals, select steps, monitor progress, and develop tools and strategies in the domain. Through

extensive practice with mental models, students build planning knowledge and skills.

Level Four: Integrate Across Contexts. Students integrate knowledge and procedures by solving real-life problems in multiple contexts. They learn to adapt to new situations and changing conditions, create new responses, and identify problems to solve in the domain. Students build execution knowledge which enables them to solve problems step by step.

Teachers determine the level of instruction their students require. For example, if a teacher were focusing on the skill "Developing Conscience" and specifically on the subskill, "Self Command," he or she might do the following. At Level 1, the teacher provides lots of examples of self-command, demonstrating its helpfulness in different situations. At Level 2, students gather and read historical or literary accounts of self command. They gather personal stories from elders about their own successes or challenges in maintaining self-control. At Level 3, students research techniques people use to help control their impulses and select one to practice. At Level 4, the teacher might ask students to identify areas where they need to practice self-command. Students practice these techniques over a week or a month, perhaps working with a mentor, reflecting on the experience along the way.

Expert learning also involves metacognitive development, that is, self-monitoring and self-regulation of skill learning and application. Self-regulation of learning and development is one of the best tools for maintaining progress in a domain (Zimmerman, Bonner, & Kovach, 2002). In CVCE, the central question for the students is "Who should I be?" (a question put on the project's classroom posters, bookmarks, and bookcovers), echoed in the words of Christine McKinnon (1999) who wrote that individuals must "do the work necessary for constructing a character" (p. 42). Humans are "the kinds of beings who invest their lives with meaning by creating a self which identifies them as the kind of person they are and which provides a unifying link to the various facets of their lives" (p. 42). As students consider their life choices, the school's focus on nurturing character helps them develop moral inclinations and self-regulation to cultivate these inclinations. Moreover, as students progress in learning a skill, CVCE provides self-monitoring tools to put students at the center of determining "who should I be" and "how am I doing?" For example, when cultivating self-command, students can evaluate themselves on such sample statements as "I take charge of my own feelings and don't blame them on others" or "I know what to do to cheer myself up when I am down."

Goal 4: To Collaborate with Teachers in Designing a Usable Framework that can be Adapted Locally

CVCE was a collaborative project among state agency leaders, researchers, school administrators and teachers. The research-based framework was revised multiple times to meet the needs of educators. The intent was to create a practical framework that provided necessary scaffolding for teachers on what and how to teach character. At the same time, it was essential to allow maximum flexibility of its use to meet the expectation of local control of curricula. As a result, the CVCE framework balanced two formative components critical to its implementation, *top-down* principles for implementation and *bottom-up* fidelity to the needs of the community. The top-down portion is the set of guidelines for optimal functioning (28 skills with subskills) and the novice-to-expert pedagogy (four levels). At the behest of the teachers, we went further and provided guidelines and activity suggestions for how teachers could incorporate ethical skill development at different expertise levels into all teacher-led activities of the school, including standards-driven instruction. This allowed the teachers more flexibility in how they cultivated character, whether in their academic lessons, in homeroom/advisory, and/or in school-wide projects. Table 2 shows the contents of the skill sections in the activity booklets. Table 3 provides examples of Ethical

TABLE 2
Activity Booklet: Skill Section Contents

Activity Booklet
Skill Section Contents
What the skill is
Why the skill is important
What students should know first
Overview of three suggested subskills
Sections on each of three subskills
Exemplar
Ideas for developing skills by level of expertise
Immersion
Attention
Practice
Integrate
Assessment hints
How to creating a classroom climate to foster the skill
Sample student self-monitoring items
Selections to post in the classroom (to foster the skill)

TABLE 3
Sample Activities for the Skill, "Connecting to Others" for the Subskill "Relating to Others" from Ethical Sensitivity

Level 1: Immersion in Examples and Opportunities

The Power of One. Show a film that portrays the interdependence of human beings, such as *Recycle More,* or the influence one person can have on a community, such as *Ryan's Well* (about a boy who raises money to buy a well for his pen-pal's village in Africa). (Both films are for young people and are available from Videoproject.com.)

Level 2: Attention to Facts and Skills

Community Interdependence. Students interview community members, including family members to help them complete one or both of the following activities. (1) Students complete the sentence: "I'm important to this class because ..." or "I'm important to my family/school/community, because ..." (2) Students draw a diagram, putting themselves in the middle, of all the people they come in contact with regularly. They can add to the diagram the strangers who support their lifestyle (farmers, grocers, movie producers, candy manufacturers, etc.). Have students also draw in connections between community members. Discuss what would happen if the student did not have the hidden support of these various people.

Level 3: Practice Procedures

Ecological Footprints. Have students study the environmental or ecological footprint their school/family leaves on the world and write a report to the school/family. There are tools on the Web for calculating this (use a search engine to find current tools to use). Students should involve family members in calculating their family footprint.

Level 4: Integrate Across Contexts

Shrinking Footprints. After taking a measure of the ecological footprint, have students develop and carry out, with their families, a plan to lower the ecological price their family or school is costing the community.

Sensitivity activities at each expertise level for the subskill, "Relating to Others," in the skill, "Connecting to Others." Each activity was linked to particular Minnesota academic standards.

The set of guidelines and activity booklets were offered to the local teachers and community members who represented the bottom-up portion of the model, the necessary local adaptation of the framework of skills to the commu-

nity context. Each community discussed the framework in terms of specific community perspectives, needs, and opportunities. As a critical bottom-up feature, the skill categories were to be expressed according to the cultural context where they were taught. For example, self-command is understood differently in different cultures (e.g., "don't make too much noise or bring notice to yourself" vs. "show that you have style and verve"). To some degree, each community was expected to have its own understanding of the skills and where best to teach them.

Thus in the CVCE model, a "common morality" approach (Beauchamp & Childress, 1994) was employed in which universal principles and skills meet local particularities and are knit together by the community itself for a unique implementation. This top-down and bottom-up combination allows each community to have its mark on the set of guidelines but within certain parameters, those of optimal functioning within a pluralistic democracy and a global community.

Next, we describe an evaluation of the model over 1 year's time. We report on three research questions that were part of the final CVCE evaluation report (Anderson, Narvaez, Endicott, Bock, & Lies, 2003). First, did the program schools show any measurable improvements? Second, were there differences between schools that implemented the CVCE model broadly and deeply (high commitment) as compared to those whose implementation was not as strong (low commitment)? And last, how did the most successful schools implement the CVCE model and what were their specific outcomes?

METHOD

Participants

Staff and students at five schools participated in an evaluation of the model over 1 school year. Table 4 gives information about the five schools and their implementation approaches. Although the CVCE project was funded to focus on middle schools, a level where few programs were available at the time, teachers from across K-12 were interested in the project and one of the program schools during the evaluation year was a high school.

Prior to the beginning of the evaluation year, each site designed its own method and style of implementation. Implementation was possible in three ways that could occur in any combination: (1) Advisory/homeroom implementation, in which the local team developed character education lesson and unit plans for use by teachers during the advisory-homeroom period; (2) School-wide projects, in which the school site mounted a character education-related school-wide project that promoted one or more character skills (e.g., fund-raising for a local nonprofit organization to promote skills of helping others); (3) Curricular infusion, in which the local team teachers integrated character education into regular academic curriculum and, over time, encouraged others to do the same.

Each school was categorized as high or low in commitment implementation based on information gathered from local leaders and surveys of teachers. A high score meant that the intervention was implemented in all three areas (homeroom-advisory, school-wide projects, curricular infusion) and the majority of teachers at the school were involved. A low score meant that implementation involved only one or two areas and fewer than half the teachers were engaged. Three schools were high in commitment implementation (Schools A, C, D) and two were low (Schools B and E).

Expecting better results for high commitment, we look more closely at the two with high commitment implementation (A and C) who implemented broadly (curriculum, school-wide projects, advisory/homeroom) and deeply (almost all if not every teacher). We discuss them as case studies, describing each one's context and approach to implementation. Although they were very different from one another, they both focused on ethical sensitivity and both were successful in doing so.

TABLE 4
Descriptions of Participating Schools

Variables	*School A: High Commitment Implementation*	*School B: Medium Commitment Implementation*	*School C: High Commitment Implementation*	*School D: High Commitment Implementation*	*School E: Low Commitment Implementation*
Type of School	Rural middle school	Rural middle school	Alternative urban middle school	Rural middle school	Urban high school
Implementation	All advisory, curricular infusion in 7 subjects, school-wide service projects	Grades 7-8 advisory, some infusion in 2 subjects	All classrooms (self-contained), breakout sessions, school-wide service project	All advisory, some curricular infusion, school-wide projects	Some curricular infusion
Who implemented	All teachers	Some teachers	All teachers	Many teachers	Some teachers
Focus of implementation	All skills, emphasis on ethical sensitivity	All skills	Ethical sensitivity	All skills	All skills
Number of staff survey respondents	6	14	N/A	28	12
Number of student participants	250	290	75	N/A	400
Number of student survey respondents	125	69	18	110	60
Grade-levels of respondents	6, 7, 8	7, 8, 9	7, 8	8	6, 7, 8

School A. School A was located in a rural community, from a town of less than 5,000. The community consisted largely of Euro-American low- to middle-class families and was largely agrarian. The school was a Grade 5-12 building. School A's implementation was broad, using a combination of core team academic implementation, advisory group implementation, and school-wide projects. The core team of teachers grew to 15, all of whom implemented within their respective classrooms and subject areas. There was a high level of support from the administration and the K-12 staff, including social workers, counselors, and those who worked with students with special needs.

School C. School C was an alternative middle school (Grades 7 and 8) in an urban environment and students came from a variety of neighborhoods. Eighty-two percent of students were students of color (44% African American, 21% Asian American, 10% Latino, 7% Native American). All students were on free/reduced lunch. All classrooms were self-contained. School C was our only full faculty implementation because of the remarkably small teaching staff they had (n = 5). Since students were drawn together from throughout an urban area, building a sense of community was the largest challenge for School C.

Comparison Group. The group that was used for comparisons of student data was a middle school from a small, rural town comprised of 93% Caucasian, largely lower middle class families with 26% reduced lunch participants. The comparison group, which was largely one of convenience, was fairly well matched with the rural schools participating in

the CVCE project but not necessarily the participating urban schools. The comparison group did not use the CVCE materials/framework before or during data collection ($N = 125$, grades 6, 7, 8). Pre-post test gain scores on student measures were compared against those of the program schools.

Measures

Staff Variables. At the end of the school year, we gave staff surveys to gauge perceptions of the effects on student behavior and climate at the implementing schools. We did not survey the comparison school staff. We used Likert-type scales (1-5) to assess perceptions of improvement on variables that included school climate, overall student behavior, and specific student behaviors (e.g., detentions, suspensions, student misbehavior in class, student absenteeism, and student volunteerism). Participants included program and nonprogram teachers.

Student Variables. Although we were interested in measuring the skills we identified for the Four Component Model (Rest, 1983; Narvaez & Rest, 1995), we opted to use more broad and global measures of the processes rather than address specific skills or subskills. We conducted a thorough review of the literature at the start of the project and included all applicable measures, creating new ones only when necessary.

Effects on students were measured using self-report questionnaires of perceptions, attitudes and behaviors of students at program and comparison schools. Students were given surveys at the beginning and end of the evaluation year. We compared gain scores (posttest minus pretest scores) between program and comparison groups. For student pre-post testing, we put together two sets of general tools. One set measured climate and the other measured general orientation to the processes of ethical sensitivity, judgment, focus/motivation and action.

Climate Measures

There were four measures of climate: perceptions of school staff tolerance toward differences, perceptions of student tolerance toward differences, student feelings toward teachers and school, and student perceptions of other students' behavior. Each measure used a Likert-type scale. These are described below. The pretest correlations among these measures are listed in Table 5.

Perceived Tolerance of Staff. This 8-item scale measured how fairly the students thought the staff at their school treated the following groups of people: (a) boys, (b) girls, (c) different races, (d) different cultures, (e) students with disabilities, (f) students from different religions, (g) students who are overweight, and (h) students who look different. Pretest and posttest scores ranged from 8 to 24. Gain scores ranged from −16 to 16. Higher scores indicated student perception of greater fairness in how groups of students were treated by school staff. A separate data set from students not used in the pre-post analysis indicated a

TABLE 5
Correlations among School Climate Variables from Pretest Data ($N = 500$)

	Staff Tolerance	*Student Tolerance*	*Observed Ethical Behavior*	*Student Feelings*
Staff tolerance	1.000	.473*	.242*	.272*
Student tolerance		1.000	.313*	.180*
Observed ethical behavior			1.000	.383*
Student feelings				1.000

*Correlation is significant at the $p < .01$ level (2-tailed).

Cronbach alpha of .91 ($n = 412$). Pretest Cronbach alpha was .92.

Perceived Tolerance of Students. This 8-item scale measured how fairly the students thought other students at their school treated the same groups of people as described above. Pretest and posttest scores ranged from 8 to 24. Gain scores ranged from −16 to 16. Higher scores indicated student perception of greater fairness in how groups of students were treated by other students. A separate data set from students not used in the pre-post analysis indicated a Cronbach alpha of .89 ($n = 412$). Pretest Cronbach alpha was .88.

Student Feelings toward and Perceptions of Teachers and School. This was a 15-item scale derived from an original 33 items through two factor analyses (principal axis extraction and promax rotation) with two separate data sets ($n = 564$, $n = 162$) from students in the program in earlier years. It measured a student's perception of and feelings toward the teacher's behavior in the classroom. Pretest and posttest scores ranged from 15 to 75. Gain scores ranged from −60 to 60. Higher scores indicated a greater perception of an ethical classroom according to our criteria. A separate data set from students not used in the pre-post analysis indicated a Cronbach alpha of .88 ($n = 412$). Cronbach's alpha on the pretest was .88. Questions on the scale asked about four general areas: (a) teacher expectations for student behavior (e.g., "The teacher has high expectations for student behavior"); (b) student-centered teaching ("The teacher lets students choose projects that interest them"); (c) student connectedness to school ("I care about my school"); (d) student perceptions of teacher's connectedness to student ("The teacher cares about me as a person").

Observed Ethical Behavior in Peers. This scale measured student perceptions of their peers' ethical behaviors. Pretest and posttest scores ranged from 40 to 200. Gain scores ranged from −160 to 160. Higher scores indicated that students were observing more ethical behaviors in their peers. A separate data set from students not used in the pre-post analysis indicated a Cronbach alpha of .95 ($n = 412$). The pretest data indicated a Cronbach alpha of .95. There were four general areas of ethical behaviors. In a factor analysis that included all test items, these four areas clustered together as one factor: (a) Sensitivity behaviors (11 items); (b) Judgment behaviors (8 items); (c) Focus/Motivation behaviors (12 items); (d) Action behaviors (9 items).

Individual Student Measures

The second set of assessment tools measured student self-perceptions of character. These measures assessed global effects of the implementation on individual students. The scales reported here are the concern for others scale, citizenship scale, community bonding scale, ethical identity scale, and the ethical assertiveness scale. The correlations among these scales in the pretest are listed in Table 6.

Concern for Others (Ethical Sensitivity). This 10-item scale adapted from the Child

TABLE 6
Correlations among the Individual Student Variables from Pretest Data ($N = 470$)

	Concern for Others	*Community Bonding*	*Citizenship*	*Assertiveness*	*Ethical Identity*
Concern for others	1.00	.27*	.37*	.34*	.39*
Community bonding		1.00	.49*	.28*	.44*
Citizenship			1.00	.51*	.67*
Ethical assertiveness				1.00	.59*
Ethical identity					1.00

*Correlation is significant at the $p < .01$ level (2-tailed).

Development Project (1996) measured student caring for others and their desire to help others. Items included "When I see someone having a problem, I want to help" and "When I hear about people who are sad and lonely, I want to do something to help." Pretest and posttest scores ranged from 10 to 50. Gain scores ranged from −40 to 40. A separate data set from students not used in the pre-post analysis indicated a Cronbach alpha of .81 (n = 412). Cronbach's alpha for the pretest was .83.

Citizenship Scale (Ethical Focus/Motivation). This 12-item scale measured one factor we called citizenship. It was a student self-report on issues of honesty, trustworthiness, rule following, and conscientiousness. Items included "You should be on time to school or appointments" and "It is important to support those who are following the rules." Pretest and posttest scores ranged from 12 to 60. Gain scores ranged from −48 to 48. Pilot research with high school and college students found a reliability of .93. In a pilot study with middle school students (n = 78), we found a Cronbach alpha of .89. A separate data set from middle school students not used in the pre-post analysis indicated a Cronbach alpha of .92 (n = 412). The pretest Cronbach alpha was .92.

Community Bonding Scale (Ethical Focus/Motivation). This 14-item scale measured one factor we called community bonding. It was a student self-report on issues of feeling care from and feeling close to political-social groups such as the city and neighborhood (not family or friends). Items included "People in my city care about me" and "I feel close to people in my country." Pretest and posttest scores ranged from 14 to 70. Gain scores ranged from −56 to 56. In previous research, students with high scores were less likely to engage in risky behaviors (Narvaez, Gardner, & Mitchell, 2001). Pilot research found a reliability of .93 with high school and college students. A separate data set from middle school students not used in the pre-post analysis indicated a Cronbach alpha of .91 (n = 412). Pretest Cronbach alpha was .92.

Ethical Identity Scale (Ethical Focus/Motivation). This 15-item scale measured two factors, responsibility and commitment to goodness. It was a student self-report on issues of being a good person and taking responsibility. Items included "It doesn't matter whether you are good or bad" and "Being a good person at school is important to me." Pretest and posttest scores ranged from 15 to 75. Gain scores ranged from −60 to 60. Pilot research found an alpha reliability of .95 with high school and college students. In our pilot study with middle school students (n = 73), we found a Cronbach alpha of .83. A separate data set from middle school students not used in the pre-post analysis indicated a Cronbach alpha of .87 (n = 412). The pretest data showed Cronbach alpha to be .86.

Ethical Assertiveness (Ethical Action). This scale consisted of 10 items that measured assertive behaviors that the student engaged in. Items included "For the good of the group I speak up" and "When friends ask me to do something wrong, I say no." Pretest and posttest scores ranged from 10 to 50. Gain scores ranged from −40 to 40. A separate data set from students not used in the pre-post analysis indicated a Cronbach alpha of .75 (n = 412). Pretest Cronbach alpha was .75.

Scoring

We tested for baseline differences among our program and comparison sites on student measures and found that the pretest scores differed significantly by school for climate variables, F (20, 2561) = 4.39, $p < .001$, *partial* η^2 = .03, and for individual student variables, F (25, 2865) = 4.31, $p < .001$, *partial* η^2 = .03. (See pretest and posttest descriptive statistics in Tables 7 and 8). Multiple comparisons indicate that School C's pretest scores were significantly lower than those of other schools for general climate, citizenship, concern for others, community bonding, and ethical identity while School E's pretest scores were significantly higher than those of other schools for student tolerance.

TABLE 7
Descriptive Statistics for Climate Variables by School

		Student Perception of Staff Tolerance		*Student Perception of Student Tolerance*		*Climate General*		*Observed Ethical Behavior in Peers*	
School		*Pre*	*Post*	*Pre*	*Post*	*Pre*	*Post*	*Pre*	*Post*
A	*Mean*	19.9	19.3	17.3	16.7	49.9	56.7	152.4	155.8
$N = 74$	*SD*	3.6	3.7	3.9	3.6	11.8	13.9	24.7	24.6
B	*Mean*	20.5	19.8	16.6	16.2	54.3	55.7	140.2	146.3
$N = 121$	*SD*	3.6	3.9	3.8	3.8	10.3	12.4	23.5	27.5
C	*Mean*	19.1	19.1	17.7	14.8	47.2	53.3	135.3	129.0
$N = 18$	*SD*	4.6	3.5	4.6	3.7	12.8	11.8	31.2	22.8
D	*Mean*	20.6	19.4	18.0	16.3	54.4	54.2	138.1	139.1
$N = 59$	*SD*	3.8	3.9	3.8	3.5	11.6	10.2	25.1	24.0
E	*Mean*	20.8	20.3	18.8	17.9	50.8	48.9	133.7	136.5
$N = 19$	*SD*	3.5	4.9	3.9	4.8	8.6	8.5	14.7	15.3
Comparison	*Mean*	20.5	20.4	17.1	17.2	52.2	55.5	140.2	140.8
$N = 125$	*SD*	3.8	3.2	4.2	3.2	12.0	9.6	25.1	23.8
Total	*Mean*	20.2	19.7	17.0	16.5	52.1	54.6	140.3	143.4
$N = 459$	*SD*	3.8	3.7	4.0	3.6	11.2	11.4	24.5	25.1

TABLE 8
Descriptive Statistics for Individual Student Variables by School

		Concern for Others		*Community Bonding*		*Citizenship*		*Assertiveness*		*Ethical Identity*	
School		*Pre*	*Post*	*Pre*	*Post*	*Pre*	*Post*	*Pre*	*Post*	*Pre*	*Post*
A	*Mean*	32.7	34.3	43.6	46.4	44.9	45.8	38.1	36.1	55.1	55.3
$N = 74$	*SD*	6.6	5.4	10.6	9.9	9.8	8.2	7.1	5.5	11.3	8.1
B	*Mean*	33.8	30.1	46.4	54.1	49.3	47.0	38.5	33.9	56.9	53.0
$N = 121$	*SD*	7.0	7.1	10.1	7.1	8.9	10.2	5.8	6.5	8.5	10.2
C	*Mean*	28	31.0	34.3	54.6	42.8	44.6	36.2	38.2	52.4	53.2
$N = 18$	*SD*	6.2	5.1	8.4	5.1	9.9	8.7	6.9	5.6	14.8	10.8
D	*Mean*	33.3	31.2	46.5	55.2	51.3	48.6	39.5	36.7	59.4	54.3
$N = 59$	*SD*	6.6	6.5	11.1	6.5	8.2	8.4	5.1	5.8	10.7	11.2
E	*Mean*	35.6	33.8	42.7	43.2	49.9	48.8	39.7	37.6	59.0	57.3
$N = 19$	*SD*	7.9	7.8	9.0	10.8	6.1	8.1	4.2	6.3	6.3	8.3
Comparison	*Mean*	34.1	31.3	45.8	55.3	49.7	48.4	39.3	37.3	57.3	55.7
$N = 125$	*SD*	7.4	7.4	11.5	7.4	8.5	8.4	7.1	6.5	10.1	8.6
Total	*Mean*	33.4	31.8	44.4	55.8	48.5	47.3	38.8	36.1	56.9	54.7
$N = 459$	*SD*	7.0	6.8	10.8	6.8	8.8	8.9	6.2	6.2	9.9	9.3

For quasi-experimental designs such as ours, Weinfurt (2000) recommends using the more powerful ANCOVA procedure on post-test scores when baseline scores are equivalent across groups but advises using MANOVA on gain scores when baseline group differences are significant. Since this dataset matches the latter description, we used MANOVA to

examine differences in student gain scores between the program and comparison groups. MANOVA has two advantages. First, it takes into account correlations among the school variables. See Tables 5 and 6, which indicate that significant correlations are indeed present among many of the variables. Second, multivariate analyses control for Type I error when there is no significant multivariate effect present (Weinfurt, 1995). Gain scores were computed by subtracting the pretest scores from the posttest scores. Positive scores indicate a gain in the dependent measure, and negative scores indicate a decrease in the dependent measure.

Testing Procedure

The local team administered the surveys to students in classroom groups at the beginning and at the end of the evaluation year. Surveys were distributed to staff at implementing schools at the end of the year only.

RESULTS

The pre- and posttest scores for student variables are listed in Tables 7 and 8.

The results are organized by the three evaluation questions. Two MANOVAs were conducted for each question using student data. One MANOVA included the school climate variables: perceived tolerance of staff, perceived tolerance of students, observed ethical behavior in peers, and student feelings toward and perceptions of teachers and students. The second MANOVA included the individual student variables: concern for others, community bonding, citizenship, ethical assertiveness, and ethical identity. All schools, program and comparison, were included in the MANOVA analyses.

For each planned analysis, the multivariate test results were examined first. If the MANOVA had a significant overall effect ($p < .05$), individual t-tests with Bonferroni corrections ($p < .10$ / [# of tests]) were employed. For all of the follow-up comparisons of the dependent variables, one-tail tests were used due to the fact that we expected only one of the groups (the program) to have increases in gain scores. Thus, a significance level of $p < .10$ was used versus the standard two-tailed significant level of $p < .05$ (except in those cases with Bonferroni corrections). Analyses of multiple measures were employed to answer each question, as described below. Effect size was estimated using partial eta squared (η^2).

Did Program Schools Show Any Measurable Improvements?

Effects on program schools were measured in two ways. First, we surveyed staff members in the program schools for their perceptions of student and climate change. Second, we surveyed students on their perceptions of the climate and on their individual attitudes and behavior.

Staff Survey Results. For this question, descriptive statistics are presented from the single testing at then at the end of the evaluation year in the spring. Teacher respondents were a mix of participating and nonparticipating teachers. Table 9 shows each school's average response and indicates some variability among the sites. Across (program) schools, most teacher respondents found improvements in one or more student behaviors. Averaging across all schools, staff perceived "a little" or "some" improvement in both the school climate ($M = 2.73$, $SD = .75$) and in student behavior ($M = 2.78$, $SD = .84$) (Likert scale 1-5; 1 = not at all; 5 = enormously). For improvement in student behavior, all schools had an average at or close to "some" improvement.

Staff perceptions of specific effects on climate and student behavior varied quite a bit. Table 9 shows the percentage of staff at each school that noted improvements on these variables. Fifty percent of staff respondents perceived improved discipline policies. Between 30% and 40% of staff respondents reported improved student and teacher attitudes toward school, increased sense of community and school pride, wider community involvement, and decreased student misbehavior in class. Twenty percent or less of staff perceived

TABLE 9
Means, Standard Deviations, and Percentages Representing Staff Perceptions from Participating Schools*

VARIABLES	*School A N = 6 (All respondents were participating teachers)*	*School B N =14 (93% of respondents were participating teachers)*	*School D N = 28 (46% of respondents were participating teachers)*	*School E N = 12 (All respondents were participating teachers)*
Staff perceptions of improvement	*5 = enormously, 4 = a lot, 3 = some, 2 = little, 1 = not at all*	*5 = enormously, 4 = a lot, 3 = some, 2 = little, 1 = not at all*	*5 = enormously, 4 = a lot, 3 = some, 2 = little, 1 = not at all*	*5 = enormously, 4 = a lot, 3 = some, 2 = little, 1 = not at all*
School climate	2.84 (.41)	2.07 (.83)	3.25 (.62)	2.67 (.58)
Student behavior	3.00 (.63)	2.50 (1.03	3.00 (.85)	2.70 (.48)
	Percentage of staff perceiving improvement			
Student attitudes	67%	36%	31%	17%
Teacher attitudes	50%	14%	54%	33%
Sense of community	83%	39%	46%	33%
School pride	17%	21%	38%	33%
Discipline policies	33%	50%	69%	42%
Student volunteerism	50%	7%	15%	0
Parent involvement	0	7%	23%	0
Community involvement	50%	21%	31%	17%
Decreased detentions	33%	29%	31%	8%
Decreased suspensions	17%	21%	23%	8%
Decreased misbehavior	17%	43%	54%	33%
Decreased student absenteeism	17%	7%	8%	17%
Decreased teacher absenteeism	0	0	0	0

*School C did not return these surveys.

decreased detentions, suspensions, student and teacher absenteeism and increased student volunteerism and parent involvement.

Student Survey Results. A multivariate analysis of gain scores was used to compare program schools with the comparison school, with Bonferroni corrections employed for follow-up comparisons (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2001; Weinfurt, 1995). The MANOVA results showed no significant effect for school climate variables ($F(4, 414) = 1.85$, $p = .12$, effect size = .02) or for individual student variables ($F(7, 354) = 1.49$, $p = .11$, effect size = .02). The lack of a significant multivariate effect for the group as a whole led us to examine the commitment to implementation as a determining factor, a factor found critical in previous research (e.g., Solomon et al., 2002).

Were There Differences Between Schools That Exhibited High Commitment to Implementation as Compared to Those with Low Commitment?

To examine differences among program schools, we compared the high commitment

implementers (Schools A, C, D) to the low commitment implementers (Schools B and E). First we discuss the staff survey results and then the student results.

Staff Survey Results. When asked about climate improvement high commitment school staff noted significantly more improvement (M = 3.11, SD = .58) than the low commitment school staff (M = 2.48, SD = .67), t (1, 39) = 10.16, $p < .01$, effect size = .21. Similarly, when asked about improvement in student behavior high commitment school staff saw more improvement (M = 3.00, SD = .77) than low commitment school staff (M = 2.71, SD = .85); however, this difference was not significant, t (1, 37) = 1.21, p = .28, effect size = .03. Percentages of staff selections for specific effects are listed in Table 10.

Student Survey Results. As shown in Table 11, the MANOVA for school climate variables indicated a significant effect: F (4, 329) = 3.89, $p < .05$, effect size = .05. Follow up univariate tests indicated significant differences for Peer Tolerance, t (1, 332) = 2.30, $p < .001$, effect size = .02, in which neither group gained on posttests and the high commitment schools scored lower than the low commitment schools. A loss indicates that there was an increase in perceived peer intolerance. This lack of gain on posttests suggests perhaps an increased sensitivity in both groups. There were also significant differences for student feelings toward and perceptions of teachers and school, t (1, 332) = –2.20, $p < .01$, effect size = .02, both groups gaining and the high commitment schools much more so. The effect sizes, however, for both of these variables were small.

The MANOVA for student variables revealed significant differences for student self-perception variables, F (7,334) = 2.05, $p <$ .05, effect size = .05. As shown in Table 12, significant univariate effects were found for concern for others (the high commitment schools showing gain and the low commitment schools showing loss) and for ethical assertiveness (neither group showed gains, and the low commitment schools showed more of a loss than the high commitment schools).

How Did the Most Successful Schools Implement the CVCE Model and What Were Their Specific Outcomes?

The comparisons between high and low commitment to implementation indicated that

TABLE 10
Staff Perceptions of Specific Effects on School Climate and Student Behavior

Specific Effects	*High Commitment Implementers (n = 19)*	*Low Commitment Implementers (n = 23)*
Improved student attitudes toward school	42%	30%
Improved teacher attitudes toward school	53%	26%
Increased sense of community	58%	35%
Increased school pride	32%	30%
Improved discipline policies	58%	52%
Decreased detentions	32%	22%
Decreased suspensions	21%	17%
Decreased student misbehavior in class	42%	43%
Decreased student absenteeism	10%	13%
Decreased teacher absenteeism	0%	0%
Increased student volunteerism	26%	13%
Increased parent involvement	16%	4%
Wider community involvement	37%	22%

TABLE 11
MANOVA and Comparison Statistics for Students at High Commitment Implementers and Low Commitment Implementers on School Climate Variables

	Gain Score Means (SD) for High Commitment Implementers (n = 151)	*Gain Score Means (SD) for Low Commitment Implementers (n = 183)*	*t (1, 332)*	η^2
School climate variables overall[a]				.05
Student perception of peer tolerance	−1.31 (4.78)	−.18 (4.22)	2.30**	.02
Student perception of staff tolerance	−.74 (4.49)	−.62 (4.51)	.25	.00
Observed ethical behavior in peers	1.26 (25.92)	6.32 (29.22)	1.66	.01
Feelings toward & perceptions of teachers & students	3.98 (14.57)	.72 (12.06)	−2.20**	.02

[a]Wilk's Lambda statistic is used for the multivariate *F*: $F(4, 329) = 3.89$**

**$p < .01$

TABLE 12
MANOVA and Comparison Statistics for High Commitment and Low Commitment Implementers on Student Self Perception Variables

	Gain Score Means (SD) for High Commitment Implementers (n = 151)	*Gain Score Means (SD) for Low Commitment Implementers (n = 183)*	*t (1, 322)*	η^2
Individual student variables overall[a]				.05
Concern for others	.31 (6.81)	−2.48 (7.84)	3.39**	.03
Citizenship	−.38 (10.12)	−1.84 (10.34)	1.28	.01
Community bonding	2.40 (11.69)	1.24 (10.94)	.92	.00
Ethical identity	−1.70 (14.24)	−3.11 (9.93)	1.02	.00
Ethical assertiveness	−1.85 (7.33)	−3.70 (6.62)	2.38*	.02

[a]Wilk's Lambda statistic is used for the multivariate *F*: $F(3, 334) = 2.05$*

*$p < .05$, **$p < .01$.

schools who had broader and deeper implementation of the CVCE model had more positive outcomes as reported by students and staff. Two of the high commitment schools (A and C) are discussed in order to show how two very different middle schools both successfully implemented the CVCE model. Both schools worked specifically on ethical sensitivity. Each school's implementation process is described as well as the results of student gain scores relative to the comparison school.

School A. School A focused initially on the middle level. School A used their weekly advisory periods for their all-school implementation. They used this time to address issues as simple as manners training and as complex as

ethical decision making. However, the whole school soon became enthused about the project so the intervention was extended to Grades 5-9 and eventually to K-12. The implementation of CVCE at School A required and generated a great deal of community involvement. The Systems Accountability Committee and the local school board were involved from the outset. The project itself engendered several community-school connections (e.g., several newspaper articles, student interviews of parents and community members).

School A reported fully implementing the model, that is, they had curricular infusion in seven subjects; a school-wide project; and seventh- and eighth-grade advisory groups. The seven subjects within which curricular infusion took place were the following: ninth-grade English, family and consumer science, physical education/health, Lion's Quest, science, and the social sciences. School A attempted to include all 28 ethical skills but put particular emphasis on ethical sensitivity skills. The leadership team at School A was very engaged and worked very hard and enthusiastically at implementation. They conducted their own formative evaluations of implementation strategies, demonstrating to students the importance of the activities.

We conducted a MANOVA to compare School A with the comparison school on the student variables. Means, standard deviations, and statistics are shown in Tables 13 and 14 for student climate variables and student self perception variables, respectively. Although School A showed a positive trend for gain scores on most variables in comparison to the comparison school, the results were mixed. The MANOVA revealed a significant difference in student self-perception variables, F (7, 172) = 3.16, $p < .01$, effect size = .11. However, there was no significant difference for climate, F (4, 196) = 1.48, $p = .21$, effect size = .04. Gain scores for nearly all variables were in the expected direction, although the Bonferroni correction rendered most of them insignificant. However, the key variable measuring ethical sensitivity, Concern for others, was significant, t (1, 192) = 3.79, $p < .001$, effect size = .09. Though the effect sizes for the statistically significant variables are higher for high commitment schools versus those with low commitment, effect sizes less than .2 are considered relatively small (Cohen, 1969).

School C. School C implemented at all three levels: curricular infusion in all five self-contained classrooms; a school-wide project; and break-out sessions with the school

TABLE 13
MANOVA and Comparison Statistics for School A and Comparison School Gain Scores on Student Climate Variables

	Gain Score Means for School A (n = 74)	*Comparison Gain Score Means for School (n = 125)*	*t (1, 191)*	η^2
School climate variables overall[a]				.04
Student perception of peer tolerance	−.51 (4.72)	.18 (4.28)	−1.09	.01
Student perception of staff tolerance	−.57 (4.55)	.02 (3.95)	−.99	.00
Peer ethical behavior	3.07 (25.05)	.76 (22.77)	.68	.00
Feelings toward & perceptions of teachers & students	6.91 (16.52)	3.24 (10.78)	1.77*	.02

[a]Wilk's Lambda statistic is used for the multivariate F: $F(4, 196) = 1.48$
*$p < .05$

TABLE 14
MANOVA and Comparison Statistics for School A and Comparison School Gain Scores on Student Self Perception Variables

	Gain Score Means for School A (n = 74)	*Gain Score Means for Comparison School (n = 125)*	*t (1, 192)*	η^2
Student self-perception variables overall[a]				.11
Concern for others	1.30 (7.10)	−2.65 (7.23)	3.79***	.09
Citizenship	.25 (10.48)	−1.39 (8.52)	1.21	.01
Community bonding	3.16 (11.74)	.49 (10.69)	1.66	.01
Ethical identity	.28 (13.53)	−1.62 (9.19)	1.18	.00
Ethical assertiveness	−2.00 (7.28)	−2.03 (7.89)	.029	.01

[a]Wilk's Lambda statistic is used for the multivariate *F*: $F(7, 172) = 3.16$**
**$p < .01$. ***$p < .001$.

counselor that functioned much like advisory groups. School C emphasized Ethical Sensitivity almost exclusively with some attention to school climate, largely because many student problems were related to a lack of social skills. All five teachers, the three administrators and approximately 75 students were involved. They were frustrated by the struggle to find effective links to the larger community. Although they did make some overtures to local merchants, the nature of the program, which draws students from all over a large urban center, made parent/community involvement in planning and executing the character education curriculum difficult.

Beyond using the disciplinary program, climate for learning, there were few tools in place to teach the students about appropriate behavior. Climate for learning came to be a good deal more appreciated when coupled with CVCE in that the climate for learning's 'code of conduct' was reinforced with particular lessons and unit plans in the classroom. Each local team member developed at least one unit plan in ethical sensitivity and then shared the plan with the other team members. The skills-based nature of the project made it easy to address a particular student need and address it within the curriculum. School C's resident counselor presented character education lessons in each classroom weekly. Full implementation was accomplished with a joint effort of the director, the teachers and the school counselor.

In the quantitative analyses comparing School C's student gain scores to those of the comparison school, there was a trend for greater gain scores in School C than the comparison group on most variables. The means, standard deviations, and statistics are shown in Tables 15 and 16. The MANOVA results were significant for both sets of variables: school climate variables, $F(4, 142) = 2.94$, $p < .05$, effect size = .08; individual student variables, $F(7, 129) = 2.09$, $p < .05$, effect size = .10. Two variables were significant, with perceived tolerance of students, $t(1, 147) = -2.87$, $p < .10$, effect size = .05, being one of the significant variables. As with School A, we were surprised to find the program group showing decreases in perceived tolerance of students while the comparison group showed gains. We speculate that program group students had increased sensitivity to intolerance due to the

TABLE 15
MANOVA and Comparison Statistics for School C and Comparison School Gain Scores on Student Climate Variables

	Gain Score Means for School C (n = 18)	*Gain Score Means for Comparison School (n = 125)*	*t (1, 145)*	η^2
School climate variables overall[a]				.08
Student perception of peer tolerance	−2.89 (4.91)	.18 (4.28)	−2.87#	.05
Student perception of staff tolerance	.05 (4.53)	.02 (3.95)	.04	.00
Peer ethical behavior	−6.32 (36.11)	.76 (22.77)	−1.16	.01
Feelings toward & perceptions of teachers & students	6.16 (13.01)	3.24 (10.78)	1.07	.01

[a]Wilk's Lambda statistic is used for the multivariate *F*: $F(4, 142) = 2.94$*
#$p < .10$. *$p < .05$.

TABLE 16
MANOVA and Comparison Statistics for School C and Comparison School Gain Scores on Individual Student Variables

	Gain Score Means for School C (n = 18)	*Gain Score Means for Comparison School (n = 125)*	*t (1, 147)*	η^2
Student self-perception variables overall[a]				.10
Concern for others	2.74 (5.57)	−2.65 (7.23)	3.11#	.06
Citizenship	1.78 (10.49)	−1.39 (8.52)	1.43	.03
Community bonding	5.72 (12.38)	.49 (10.69)	1.91	.01
Ethical identity	.72 (14.61)	−1.62 (9.19)	.93	.01
Ethical assertiveness	1.94 (8.97)	−2.03 (7.89)	1.96	.03

[a] Wilk's Lambda statistic is used for the multivariate *F*: $F(7, 129) = 2.09$*
#$p < .10$. * $p < .05$.

intervention, leading them to report lower levels of tolerance in the posttest than in the pretest. The second variable that was significant was concern for others, a measure of ethical sensitivity, $t(1, 145) = 3.11, p < .10$, effect size = .06. Thus, as with School A, School C's intervention was successful in increasing student ethical sensitivity; however, the effect size was small. Overall, School C showed the greatest number of scores at least trending in the right direction.

In summary, although teachers perceived some improvement in school climate and student behavior in the program schools, when

comparing all program schools with the comparison school using MANOVA, there were no significant differences in student gain scores. When comparing groups of schools according to their level of implementation commitment, teachers from high commitment schools perceived more improvement in school climate than teachers from low commitment schools. Moreover, the student gain score analyses showed differences in both climate and self-perception variables. Most notably, students from high commitment schools had a more significant gain in feelings toward and perceptions of teachers and school, a possible increased sensitivity to perceiving peers intolerance, an increase in concern for others, and less of a decrease in ethical assertiveness. In examining the outcomes of the two most successful schools, the students from both schools had positive gains in concern for others, whereas the comparison group had a loss. Students from School C also had a decrease in perceived tolerance of Students, which may indicate that they had an increased sensitivity in perceiving peer intolerance of others.

DISCUSSION

The CVCE model provides a research-based, concrete view of ethical behavior, treating character development as the cultivation of expertise in skills of ethical sensitivity, judgment, focus/motivation and action. As a collaborative project under local control, schools that used the model formulated their own approach to implementation, selecting one or more types of implementation and designing their own modifications to standards-driven academic lessons. In the final evaluation year of the project, the university researchers administered global pre- and posttests to program and comparison school students and measured staff perceptions. The following conclusions emerge from the results of our three evaluation questions.

Implementations that are Broad and Deep are More Effective

There were significant differences between high commitment and low commitment schools. High commitment schools adopted a broad scope, implementing across the areas of homeroom/advisory, school-wide projects and academic curriculum infusion. High commitment schools also had a deep scope, meaning that most if not all teachers were involved in promoting character skills and teaching them frequently. High commitment schools were the most successful in creating measurable effects over the short term. When comparing high versus low commitment schools, high commitment schools were more likely to show positive perceptions of changes in students by staff as well as gain scores in student variables.

When Measuring Over a Short Time Period, Focused Intervention Works Better

Our two case studies, Schools A and C, focused on ethical sensitivity. Both had significant positive results for the ethical sensitivity measure relative to the comparison group and had trends in the right direction for most other student variables. These findings suggest that a focused, as well as intense, intervention may be best in the short term. Once needs are identified, school administration, educators, and staff should tailor an implementation to prioritize needs, as did Schools A and C. The less intense intervention likely takes longer to have an effect.

Involving a Large Percentage of School Teachers and Staff in Implementation is Related to Greater Effectiveness

School A involved all the middle school teachers, as well as the school counselor and principal. They soon expanded implementation to the high school teachers, who were in the same building. School C involved all teachers from the start. Having a large per-

centage of teachers involved may facilitate successful implementation due to multiple factors. The teachers expressed a shared commitment to the intervention and obtaining a successful implementation. Teachers also demonstrated a shared understanding of the goals of the project which was expressed through the shaping of the local implementation plan and resulted in a shared sense of ownership. Finally, students heard the same messages from their teachers and school staff who emphasized ethical skill development throughout the curriculum and advisory periods.

Teachers from the high commitment schools met regularly to discuss character education and implementation of the model. Holding regular meetings allows teachers to share ideas, successes, and problems. By sharing with each other, teachers may be motivated to continue implementation and overcome the obstacles they encounter.

Character Skill Cultivation Can be Successfully Implemented Without a Manualized Curriculum

CVCE presented a framework for thinking about what should be taught. Educators determined what skills students needed most and oriented their intervention accordingly, creating unique approaches at each site. CVCE materials included activity booklets for each of the four components. The booklets included hundreds of ideas for ethical skill instruction at different levels of expertise. CVCE intentionally did not create a scripted or manualized curriculum in order to ensure that teachers would integrate character cultivation into their regular, standards-driven instruction through slight modification of lessons. Although such a move requires more teacher time than implementing preset lesson plan, it ensures that teachers will reuse the lessons they create rather than set aside an add-on curriculum when pressures become too great.

The Challenges of Measuring Character Development

There were two challenges to finding significant differences in pre-post student assessments. First, our knowledge of character development assessment led us to suspect that it would be a challenge to find significant pre-post differences within 1 year's time. Specific aspects of character formation occur over a longer period of time. However, staff at schools with high commitment perceived climate improvement in comparison to schools with low commitment, especially at School C.

Second, another challenge to finding cross-site differences was one of the strengths of the program—local control and local uniqueness of program implementation. As intended, each school site adapted and implemented the CVCE model in a unique fashion, making it difficult to assess effects across schools. There were no specific rules given on what to teach, how often, or how much. These were local decisions. Most of our results suggest that program school changes were occurring in the right direction, but statistical significance was difficult to establish due to small samples and our decision to use conservative Bonferroni corrections to alpha values. Nevertheless, we were able to find significant differences for relevant variables in high commitment implementing schools who used different lessons but emphasized the same process, ethical sensitivity.

CONCLUSION

In collaboration with volunteer educators from around the state, a team of researchers from the University of Minnesota developed a model for character education (now called "Integrative Ethical Education," Narvaez, 2005) that attempted to integrate a classical view of what character is with current psychological literature. The Platonic notion of *techne*, expert know-how, provides a useful framework for understanding the nature of moral character, a notion that is also compatible with a compo-

nent model of moral functioning and an expertise model of learning. According to this view, character is viewed as a set of teachable skills in ethical sensitivity, judgment, focus and action. These skills can be embedded across a standards-driven academic curriculum and be cultivated by teachers using best practice for cultivating expertise.

The Community Voices and Character Education model offered enough content and guidance to instruct teachers in the cultivation of character while at the same time supporting local control of curricular decisions. CVCE project materials provided guidance regarding the nature of character—what should be taught—as well as effective pedagogy—how it should be taught. The results suggest that the model is useful as a collaborative tool that can be adapted for local needs and be successfully implemented in a variety of forms.

NOTES

1. The research was initiated when all authors were at the University of Minnesota. From 1998-2002, the Minnesota Department of Education (formerly the Department of Children, Families, and Learning) implemented the Community Voices and Character Education Project (CVCE) with funds from the U.S. Department of Education (USDE OERI Grant # R215V980001). Project materials may be obtained from the first author.

2. To see sample lessons that teacher participants created go to Notre Dame's Center for Ethical Education Website: http://cee.nd.edu

3. Some skills fit in more than one process but the model is simplified for the sake of classroom instruction.

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