The Effects of a Character Education Program on Elementary Students' Prosocial Competence

Mary Knapp Chandler
Lynn University

Follow this and additional works at: http://spiral.lynn.edu/etds
Part of the Education Commons

Recommended Citation
http://spiral.lynn.edu/etds/196

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by SPIRAL. It has been accepted for inclusion in Student Theses, Dissertations and Projects by an authorized administrator of SPIRAL. For more information, please contact liadarola@lynn.edu.
The Effects of a Character Education Program on Elementary Students' Prosocial Competence

Dissertation

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Lynn University

By

Mary Knapp Chandler

March, 2005
The Effects of a Character Education Program on Elementary Students’ Prosocial Competence

Chandler, Mary Knapp, Ph.D.

Lynn University, 2005

Copyright 2005 by Chandler, Mary Knapp. All Rights Reserved.

U.M.I.
300 N. Zeeb Road
Ann Arbor, MI 48106
LYNN UNIVERSITY
PH.D. PROGRAM IN GLOBAL LEADERSHIP

DISSESSATION PROPOSAL TRANSMITTAL FORM

The dissertation proposal submitted by:

Student Name: Mary K. Chandler

Entitled:
The effects of a character education program of fifth grade students' pro social competence.

Has been read and approved by the undersigned. It is recommended for acceptance to the University in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. The student may proceed with the conduct of the dissertation research process.

William [Signature]
Dissertation Committee Chair

[Signature]
Dissertation Committee Member

Adela [Signature]
Dissertation Committee Member

[Signature]
Graduate Faculty Reader

Recommended by the Director of the PH.D. In Global Leadership

[Signature]
PH.D. Program Director

Cc. PH.D. PROGRAM DIRECTOR
STUDENT
Dedication

This work is dedicated in loving memory to my mother Anna M. Knapp, and to my father Edward C. Knapp, the most wonderful parents in the world. Mom, your continued support and love for me were unwavering to the day you departed this earth. Dad, like Mom, you have loved and supported me all of my life and continue to do so now that it's the two of us. I owe everything in my life to the both of you. Thank you for providing me with the motivation to be a lifelong learner.
Acknowledgments

Heartfelt thanks go to so many people for their various roles in supporting me through this process. First and foremost, I thank my wonderful parents, Edward and Anna Knapp, for all the love and support you’ve given me over the years. If it weren’t for your unconditional love, this dissertation and degree would never have been possible. I love you both!

To my committee chair Dr. William Leary, thank you for believing in me and motivating me through all of the “obstacles” that I met along the way. Your guidance and wisdom helped me more than you will ever know! To my committee member Dr. Cheryl Serrano, the encouragement and knowledge that you provided me with were truly appreciated. To my committee member Dr. Adria Karle, you should have been a cheerleader! I appreciated your positive outlook and the encouraging words and guidance that you provided to me on all levels. To Dr. Noelle Sterne and Tony, the faith that you have had in me is phenomenal, and you have touched my life in ways that I cannot express--thanks.

To all of my loving family members who stood beside me through all of the trials and tribulations that I encountered, I love each and every one of you. I would like to acknowledge especially my godmother, Rose Murad, and my godfather, Peter Murad, for being major influences throughout my life. You guys are the best! To my godson, Frankie, who entered my life at a time when I needed to be inspired: I love you, kiddo.

To all of my friends (and there are a lot of you)-- “who would have thought?” You guys have all been such a large part of my life, and I thank you for that. You are the brothers and sisters that I never had. Thanks for listening to all my griping and putting up
with my “emotional roller-coaster rides.” You have helped me through good times and bad times, and you have never given up on me. You believed in me when I wasn’t sure that I believed in myself. Root beer floats for everyone! To my Alabama friends: Roll Tide! (p.s. I got er’ dun). To my pool teammates, you guys are the best! I promise I’ll get better and pull my weight! To my roommate who put up with the “broom,” thanks for being so patient with me during my “swings.” To my dog that got hit by multiple wads of papers throughout this ordeal, sorry Toby!

To my coworkers and bosses, thanks for the understanding that you all displayed throughout this endeavor. To my cohort members, thanks for the sense of “family” that you provided in this process. It was a pleasure getting to know all of you. To the school district, principal, guidance counselor, teachers, students, and parents who made this study possible, thank you.

Finally, I would like to thank God for giving me the strength and desire to complete this dissertation and surrounding me with all the wonderful people along the way. Thank you for the countless blessings in my life!
Abstract

The Florida state legislature has mandated that all elementary school students receive character education instruction as part of the regular curriculum. In accordance with this requirement, the purpose of this study was to investigate the effectiveness of a character education program on fifth-grade students' prosocial competence.

Three hypotheses governed this study: (a) There is a statistically significant difference in fifth-grade students' prosocial competence as a result of participation in a character education program. (b) There is a statistically significant relationship between gender and students' prosocial competence after participation in a character education program. (c) There is a statistically significant relationship between ethnicity and students' prosocial competence after participation in a character education program.

A program in character education was implemented over 18 weeks to 116 fifth-grade students in a middle-class public elementary school. A social competence survey instrument measuring social competence and antisocial behaviors, the School Social Behavior Scales (SSBS), was administered to students and rated by teachers as pretests and posttests. Data analysis was conducted by descriptive statistics, t tests, and Pearson's correlations.

Results showed that Hypotheses 1 and 2 were accepted: a statistically significant difference was found after students' participation in a character education program, and between students' gender and posttest scores. Moreover, female students scored significantly higher than males on both pretests and posttests. Hypothesis 3 was rejected: no statistically significant difference was found between students' ethnicity and posttest scores.
These results can help school administrators recognize the importance of character education in the schools and its capability to reduce behavioral disruptions and disciplinary referrals. Results can also aid schools leaders in the design of character education programs to meet the special needs of male and female students and multicultural student populations.

Recommendations for further research included replication of the study with a larger and more heterogeneous sample, socioeconomically, ethnically, and geographically. Additional studies also could include replication with middle- and high-school students and program implementation and assessment of the same students through different grade levels.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dedication</td>
<td>i</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledgments</td>
<td>ii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abstract</td>
<td>iv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List of Tables</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Background</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statement of the Problem</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Need for This Study</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purpose of the Study</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Significance of the Study</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Questions</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delimitations and Limitations</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Definitions and Operational Terms</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outline of the Study</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theory of Character Education</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History of Character Education</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recent Trends in the Character Education Movement</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benefits of Prosocial Behavior</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studies of Prosocial Behavior Programs</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Studies of Gender and Prosocial Competence ................................................................. 21
Studies of Ethnicity and Prosocial Competence ............................................................. 21
Summary .......................................................................................................................... 24

CHAPTER III. METHODOLOGY .................................................................................. 26

Introduction .................................................................................................................. 26
Hypotheses .................................................................................................................... 26
Research Design .......................................................................................................... 27
Research Setting .......................................................................................................... 27
Intervention ................................................................................................................... 28
Population and Sample ................................................................................................. 29
Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria .................................................................................... 29
Implementation ............................................................................................................. 30
Instrument ..................................................................................................................... 32
  Reliability ...................................................................................................................... 33
  Validity .......................................................................................................................... 33
Data Collection ............................................................................................................. 34
Data Analysis ............................................................................................................... 34

CHAPTER IV. RESULTS .............................................................................................. 36

Introduction .................................................................................................................. 36
Demographic Characteristics of Sample ......................................................................... 37
Descriptive Statistics for the SSBS ................................................................................. 38
Hypothesis 1: Prosocial Competence and Participation in a Character Education

Program .................................................................................................................. 41

Hypothesis 2: Prosocial Competence and Gender .................................................... 42

Hypothesis 3: Prosocial Competence and Ethnicity ................................................ 45

Summary .................................................................................................................. 46

CHAPTER V. DISCUSSIONS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS ............ 46

Overview of Study .................................................................................................... 46

Discussion ................................................................................................................. 47

Conclusions ............................................................................................................... 51

Implications .............................................................................................................. 52

Limitations ................................................................................................................ 54

Recommendations for Further Research ................................................................. 54

Summary .................................................................................................................. 55

REFERENCES ......................................................................................................... 58

APPENDIXES ........................................................................................................... 64

A. Implementation of Character Education ............................................................... 64

B. Memorandum From Florida Department of Education to School District

Superintendents ......................................................................................................... 66

C. District Permission to Conduct Study: Department of Safe Schools ..................... 69

D. District Permission to Conduct Study: Research, Evaluation, and

Accountability ........................................................................................................... 70

E. Approval to Conduct Study at New Horizons Elementary School ......................... 71

F. Parental Permission for Students to Participate in Study ......................................... 72
G. Child Assent for Student to Participate in Study ......................................................74
H. Introduction to Study and Informed Consent for Teachers........................................76
I. Permission to Use the School Social Behavior Scale (SSBS).......................................77
J. Instrument: The School Social Behavior Scale (SSBS).............................................78
LIST OF TABLES

Table Page

1. Demographic Characteristics of the Sample.........................................................38
2. Descriptive Statistics: Total SSBS........................................................................39
3. Descriptive Statistics for Total Sample: SSBS Subscales A and B......................40
4. Descriptive Statistics for Experimental and Control Groups: Total SSBS and Subscales A and B ........................................................................................................41
5. Prosocial Competence as a Result of Participation in a Character Education Program..............................................................................................................43
6. Correlation Between Gender and Prosocial Competence....................................44
7. Comparison of Total SSBS Scores by Gender.........................................................45
8. Correlation Between Ethnicity and Prosocial Competence ..................................46
Chapter I

Introduction

Background

Over 2000 years ago, in writing about education, Aristotle observed that it was unclear whether education was for understanding or for the development of moral character (Kliebard, 1998, as cited in Oliva, 2001). As a present-day educator observes, “Down through history, in countries all over the world, education has had two great goals: to help young people become smart and to help them become good” (Lickona, 1991, p. 6). Western traditional classical education has stressed not only intellectual but moral and spiritual development (Finkelstein, 1997). Professors and tutors were expected to advise students of the pitfalls of evil and virtues of moral conduct as well as to be models of morality themselves (Church & Sedlak, 1997).

The founders of America extended this emphasis. Thomas Jefferson wrote that moral education is essential for the success of a democratic society. Government by the people means that the people are responsible for ensuring a free and just society. This responsibility requires grounding in moral principles, which Jefferson believed must be instilled at an early age (Lickona, 1991).

Statement of the Problem

However, educators, parents, and leaders today are concerned with the lack of moral education in today’s schools (Huffman, 1994). As Lickona (1991) and others point out, today’s young people are faced with a host of challenges that they may be unprepared for. The escalating moral problems of society, including violent crimes and
self-destructive behaviors such as suicide and drug abuse, are bringing about a new consensus. There is agreement by educators and psychologists on the crucial difference between declarative knowledge, knowing a concept and its technical details, and procedural knowledge, being able to put those concepts and details into action. Mere knowing does not result in doing, and this gap is a critical factor in today’s societal problems (Goleman, 1998).

It is estimated that the typical elementary student watches television 30 hours a week and by age 16 has witnessed an estimated 200,000 violent acts (Hutchinson, 1989; Lickona, 1991). Many studies have shown the link between young people watching television shows that emphasize and even exalt violence and later juvenile delinquency (Avakame, 1997; Derksen & Strasburger, 1996; Jarvik, 1997; Wekesser, 1995; Zuckerman, 1997). Youth violence is unequivocally on the rise, as attested by certain recent frightening and tragic events. For example, in 2002, under the headline, “In the Fray: Juvenile Rampages: Small, Ugly Stories, Not Lofty Lessons,” the Wall Street Journal reported that Columbine High School shootings by two students had left 15 students and teachers dead and 23 wounded (Shriver, 2002, p. D8). Also in 2002, a headline in the New York Times attested similar violence by youths in Florida: “Florida Boys Convicted in Father’s Death; Family Friend Is Acquitted in Separate Trial” (Canedy, 2002, p. B1).

Such headlines are daily reminders of the faulty moral decisions made by youth in today’s society. Rosemond (1995) cites teachers’ report that the most serious problems among students of all ages are drug and alcohol use, robbery, and assault. Throughout the nation, juvenile crime has increased. Between 1991 and 2000, there was a 145%
increases in juvenile arrests for drug abuse violations (Office of Juvenile Justice Delinquency Prevention [OJJDP], 2002). In Florida, the incidence of juvenile arrests rose from 39,084 in 1984 to 64,596 in 1994 (Florida Department of Law Enforcement, 2002). In 1998, an estimated 1.9 million arrests were made of persons under the age of 18, compared to 2.4 million in 2000 (OJJDP, 2002).

Although it has been argued that the family should be the first teachers of moral behavior (Rosemond, 1995), some educators, as well as other concerned citizens, blame the schools. Kilpatrick (1992) believes that some of the problems are a direct result of school experiments with curricula and adoption of programs that allow children to choose their own values; these experiments have left students confused and groundless in moral values. Although some individuals in highly religious-oriented segments of society disagree, Lickona (as cited in Akin, Dunne, Palomares, & Schilling, 1995) recognizes the dire consequences of the lack of values education:

A society needs values education both to survive and to thrive- to keep itself intact, and to keep itself growing toward the conditions that support the full human development of all its members. These days, when schools don’t “do” moral education, influences hostile to good character rush in to fill the values vacuum (p. iv).

At the same time, educators stress that the remedy may be in the school. Kilpatrick (1992) declares, “The core problem facing our schools is a moral one. All other problems derive from it. Even academic reform depends on putting character first” (p. 225). Cassel (2002) asserts that decision-making is the most important skill a student can learn and is the best way to reduce delinquency and crime. McDonnell (2002) points
out that crime and violence permeate our society and pose a possible crisis of character that is threatening to destroy the goodness at the foundation of our country’s greatness. McDonnell further states that the schools appear to have the greatest potential for dealing with and overcoming the crisis of character. A study reported in the *U.S. News and World Report* found that “teaching children values and discipline ranked among the top issues that Americans consider most important for school reformation” (Nielson, 1998, p. 11). Roth (2002) recognizes that moral education leads to maturity, long-lasting and enriching relationships, and contributions to the community and society.

Moral education, the teaching of right and wrong ways of thinking and behavior (Devries & Zan, 1994; Jackson, Boostrom, & Hansen, 1993), has been alternatively called values education and ethics education. Currently it is more often referred to as character education. In recent years, character education has received support by the federal government and throughout the nation. In 2001, President Bush announced triple funding for character education (see Appendix A). Professional organizations, state governments, and school districts have joined to produce a nationwide movement to call attention to the necessity for character education in the schools (Lickona, Schaps, & Lewis, 1991).

As a result of this growing recognition, many states have mandated character education in the school system. As of 1998, of the 50 states, 48 had completed or were in the process of completing state educational standards which addressed character education (Nielson, 1998). According to the CWK Network (2002), as of 2002, 29 states “either mandate or encourage character education through legislation” (p. 5) (see Appendix A).
In Florida, the 1999 Legislature addressed character education in the passage of House Bill 365, amending Section 233.061 of the Florida Statutes. This bill requires that a character development program, secular in nature, be provided in the elementary schools. The program should address such character qualities as attentiveness, initiative, responsibility, honesty, self-control, and cooperation (1999 Florida Statutes, 1999). In addition, Section 233.061 of the Florida Statutes was amended, adding ethics to the list of authorized subjects a school district may teach (Florida Department of Education, 1999). In July 1999, all districts school superintendents were sent a memorandum summarizing these requirements (Florida Department of Education, 1999) (see Appendix B).

In 2002, the Florida Senate passed Bill 20E, which broadened the 1999 House Bill requiring character development programs as a part of all elementary school curricula. The Senate bill stipulates that, beginning in the school year 2003-2004, character development programs shall be required in all public schools from kindergarten through twelfth grade. These programs should stress and teach patriotism, responsibility, citizenship, kindness, respect, honesty, self-control, tolerance, and cooperation, and each district board must develop programs to be submitted to the state Department of Education for approval (Florida Legislature, 2002).

Such a state mandate creates several challenges for educators and school districts (Milson, 2000). In Florida, for example, the state mandate does not specify the specific programs to be utilized, the length of student exposure, frequency of exposure, time allocated, or individuals responsible for delivering the instruction. In addition, the state offers no monetary aid; funding and materials for implementation of the programs are the responsibilities of individual districts.
Need for This Study

Nevertheless, the nationwide trend toward provision of character education in the schools provides hope for reversal of the current increase in youthful violence and delinquency. In Florida, in compliance with the state statutes, a very few character education programs have been implemented in different school districts at the elementary level (kindergarten through fifth grade). In the South Florida county that was the site of the research, trial character education programs have been conducted in seven schools on the middle and high school levels. Although favorable results were reported by principals, no quantitative data were collected.

Despite the state mandates, to date no character education programs have been formally implemented in the elementary grades. Moreover, in Florida no studies have been conducted on the effectiveness of the character education programs in terms of positive changes in student behavior. Thus far, according to the Director of the Department of Safe Schools, no reasons have been given for this lack (A. Adler, personal communication, February 5, 2003).

Purpose of the Study

In view of this lack, this study was developed to investigate the effectiveness of an 18-week character education intervention on the prosocial competence of fifth-grade students in a public elementary school. Effectiveness was measured by teachers’ pretest and posttest ratings of their students with a social competence survey instrument. Prosocial competence is the capability that one has to demonstrate positive traits that lead to informed decision making and productive behaviors in accordance with acceptable societal values (Lickona, 1991).
There were three purposes for this research. The first was to demonstrate the
effectiveness of a character education program on the prosocial competence of
fifth-grade students in a public elementary school. The second purpose was to determine
whether there was a significant relationship between students’ gender and their prosocial
competence. The third purpose was to determine whether there was a significant
relationship between students’ ethnicity and their prosocial competence.

Significance of the Study

Results of this research provided evidence for the effects of a character education
program on fifth-grade elementary students’ social skills, as assessed by their teachers.
The findings showed that students significantly improved their prosocial competence.
Thus, the intervention can be recommended for implementation in other elementary
grades at the study-site school, as well as other elementary schools in the county and
state.

In addition, significant relationships were found between students’ gender and
ethnicity and their prosocial competence. These findings are important for alerting
teachers of character education to possible special needs of either male or female students
or those of certain ethnicities in implementation of character education programs. No
significant relationships were found for gender and ethnicity. Therefore, further research
can be recommended for the developers of character education programs, who may then
be impelled to tailor particular programs for students of diverse ethnicities. In any case,
results of this study should help to provide a foundation for much-needed further
research.
Research Questions

Three research questions were examined. These were as follows:

1. Is there a statistically significant difference in fifth-grade students’ prosocial competence as a result of participation in a character education program?

2. Is there a statistically significant relationship between gender and students’ prosocial competence after participation in a character education program?

3. Is there a statistically significant relationship between ethnicity and students’ prosocial competence after participation in a character education program?

Delimitations and Limitations

Three delimitations were present in this study. First, it was conducted in one elementary school in a county in South Florida. Second, the subjects were fifth-grade students only. Third, the teachers involved in the assessment were those of fifth-grade students only.

Three limitations were present in this study. First, the school site was located in a predominantly middle-class neighborhood with residents of incomes between approximately $42,000 and $65,000 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2001). Therefore, the socioeconomic status of most students was middle class. Second, because of the lack of ethnic diversity at this site, a large number of the students were White. Third, because of these drawbacks, generalizability of results to other elementary schools in the district may be limited and should be made with caution.
Character. This term refers to the qualities individuals possess that comprise their virtues and set their patterns of behavior. This term can also be understood as the display of desirable traits based on a set of values that drives individuals’ actions relating to ethical social competence in decision-making (Tucker, 1999).

Character education. This term is used for the teaching of desirable character traits, such as honesty, responsibility, and trustworthiness (Lickona, Schaps, & Lewis, 1998).

*Connect! For Elementary Grades.* This term refers to the reality-based character education curriculum used as the intervention in this study. This 18-week intervention includes multiple components and teaching strategies, such as videos, individual and group activities, and discussion questions (CWK Network, 2002). In the study, this curriculum may also be referred to as “*Connect!*”

Middle-class residents. This term defines residents by income range. According to the U.S. Census Bureau (2001), the mean middle-class household income is between $42,359 and $65,727 annually.

Moral. This term refers to the principle of right and wrong behavior, as viewed by Western societal standards (Devries & Zan, 1994).

Moral education. This term refers to the systematic, purposeful teaching of core values that lead to habits of good character (DeRoche, 1998). Moral education consists of teaching the principles of character traits, the practices that involve translating these principles into habits of good character, and the process that provides the individual with the skills necessary for making ethical decisions (Brooks, 2002). Moral education is very
similar to character education, and the terms are often used interchangeably (Lickona et al., 1998; Milson, 2000; Tucker, 1999).

**Prosocial competence.** This term refers to the capability of an individual to demonstrate positive traits leading to informed decision-making and productive behaviors in accordance with acceptable societal values (Lickona, 1991).

*Outline of the Study*

Chapter II presents a review of literature related to character education, including a historical perspective, students’ social skills, controversies on what constitutes character education, and studies of effectiveness of character education programs. Chapter III describes the methodology of the current study. Chapter IV reports the study results, with appropriate tables. Chapter V discusses the results in terms of the literature reviewed and implications for the field. Finally, recommendations for further research are offered.
Chapter II
Review of Literature

Introduction

This chapter reviews literature pertinent to character education in relation to the study research questions. Seven subject areas are reviewed: (a) theory of character education, (b) history of character education, (c) recent trends in the character education movement, (d) benefits of prosocial behavior, (e) studies of prosocial behavior, (f) studies of gender and prosocial competence, and (g) studies of race and prosocial competence.

Theory of Character Education

Awareness of and learning central aspects of character education have been postulated to start early in the child’s life. Researchers and psychologists, such as Piaget (1970), Berndt (1981), and Damon (1989), have suggested that warm and supportive adult-child and child-child relationships are central to the child’s development of concern for others. Piaget (1965) is credited with initiating the modern study of childhood development recognizing that the child is puzzled by the basic questions of life. Piaget found that if an adult listens to and asks a child philosophic questions, the child answers them in a very different way from adults.

The child’s way of answering is so different from that of adults that Piaget (1965) called the difference one of stage or quality of thinking, rather than a difference in the amount of knowledge or accuracy of thinking. For example, Piaget believes that through playing children attempt to learn the roles of others as well as understand themselves through another’s eyes. In games also, they learn respect for rules and authority. Such
observations pioneered the effort to apply a structural approach to moral development (Kohlberg, 1971).

According to Kohlberg (1972), moral education should be called “socialization” (p.482). Sociologists have sometimes claimed that moral education to maintain classroom management of the school as a social system encompasses a hidden curriculum to help children adapt to society. This agenda has been referred to as the “Children’s Morality Code” by Leming (as cited in Kirschenbaum, 1995, p. 4). Although Leming was very influential during the 1970s and 1980s and remains so today, he has been strongly challenged. Gilligan (1982), for example, states that more moral lessons appear to be more inherent in girls’ play than in boys’. On the other hand, Kohlberg (1972) posits that although values are regarded as arbitrary and relative, there may be universal, rational strategies for making decisions which maximize these values, such as childrens’ socialization for society’s benefit.

Kohlberg’s (1972) cognitive-moral reasoning approach is rooted in Dewey’s (1965) view of social, moral, and personal development as the aim of education. Kohlberg (1981) advocates development of students’ powers of moral reasoning so they may judge which values are best. Kohlberg’s aim was to enable children to become moral thinkers, to teach them a valid process of moral reasoning. Children would make their own decisions, but their decisions would be based on reason (Kohlberg, as cited in Kilpatrick, 1992). Kohlberg’s curriculum was based on discussions of ethical dilemmas led by teachers who suppressed their personal views, thereby encouraging the students’ free exchange of ideas. Lickona (1993) echoes this philosophy: “Don’t impose values; help students choose their values freely” (p. 7).
One of the ways children learn about socialization is through modeling. Modeling is the demonstration of specific desired behaviors to one or more observers (Rivera & Smith, 1997). The belief that children learn by watching others stems from social learning theory (Bandura, 1977), in which the importance of modeling is emphasized in relation to social behaviors. Bandura’s (1986) research indicates the importance of individuals’ understanding their core beliefs and the personal power they produce through actions relevant to their decision-making processes. Bandura maintains that several variables influence the selection of which behaviors to accept and enact. These are enunciated in his theory of self-efficacy and include drawing on prior knowledge and experience and understanding the possible threats or rewards. Bandura further maintains that individuals develop their own assumptions, values, and beliefs about themselves and society based on the social and cognitive factors modeled and reinforced by their parents, families, teachers, peers and other members of the community.

History of Character Education

From colonial times, American educational institutions have been infused with the teaching of “common sense” values, such as honesty, respect, compassion, and responsibility (Demmon, T., Rice, J., & Warble, D. 1997). The teaching of moral education, then called “character education,” became widely prevalent in the 1920s and 1930s (Kohlberg, 1971, p. 281).

At the same time, a movement began to revitalize the strength of character education. According to Leming (1993), increasing industrialization and urbanization,
immigration, World War I, and the spirit of the “Roaring 20s” were all blamed for the loosening of moral righteousness among the nation’s youth. As a result, during these decades virtually every school in America reacted by addressing character development (Yulish, 1980).

In 1928, Hartshorne and May concluded that “the mere urging of honest behavior by teachers or the discussion of standards and ideals . . . has no necessary relation to the control of conduct” (p. 413). They advocated teaching the traits of honesty, service (willingness to sacrifice something for a group of charitable goal), and self-control. Hartshorne and May (1927) also suggest that current practice simply needed to be improved somewhat by focusing less on direct methods of instruction (i.e., lecture) and more on direct methods (i.e., the creation of a positive school climate). Of such suggestions, Kohlberg (1971) observes, “The educators and psychologists who developed these approaches defined character as the sum total of a set of those traits of personality which are subject to the moral sanctions of society” (p. 288).

During the post-World War II era the concept arose that the individual was not guilty of anything; rather, society was responsible for all of the demoralizing acts that occurred. Rosemond (1995) dated the decline of the effective moral education of children as stemming from this time. According to Rosemond, the view of the individual as victim was accepted as more people turned to helping professionals, such as psychologists, rather than to traditional childrearing experts, such as grandparents.

During the 1950s, with the invention of television, viewing television rapidly became a popular pastime in households throughout the United States. Kilpatrick (1992) asserts that growth of television watching was the reason for the “cultural vacuum” in
many homes (p. 264). For example, whereas families used to have dinner around the kitchen or dining room table together, with the invention of television, it has become the focus of attention, and communication among family members is no longer a priority or even prevalent. Television began to define what was and was not important, as shaping Americans' sense of reality and dictating morals. As Kilpatrick describes, television began to define reality and the additional moral problems people face by witnessing episodes of violence while growing up in a media culture. He further maintains that the television-watching society became inundated by materialism and greed, with these values elevated above all others.

In the 1960s and 1970s, people began to question the traditional roles and values of American society. This era saw one of the most dramatic and swift social revolutions in human history (Kirschenbaum, 1992). The "spirit of the sixties" emphasized "spontaneity, self-expression, rejection of authority, and emotionalism" (p. 42). These qualities were reflected in the programs for moral development that developed in this era. The programs were modeled after Piaget's (1965) concept of quality thinking, in which people look at themselves through the eyes of others. Kohlberg's (1981) curriculum, which was also prevalent during this time, advocates independent thinking of students through teacher-facilitated ethical discussions.

Since the 1970s, the character education movement has proceeded in a more enlightened and progressive direction. For example, states have begun to mandate character education as part of the required curriculum. Programs have been developed that incorporate character traits in to core subject areas; therefore, integration across the curriculum is highly probable. Federal and state grants have become increasingly
available for research in this area, as legislators recognize that character education in the early grades may well help solve many of the ills of present society (Brooks, 2002).

**Recent Trends in the Character Education Movement**

Recent thought on character education emphasizes its benefit to both the individual student and society. According to DeRoach and Williams (1998), cognitive-academic and character development prepare students for the world of work, further education, lifelong learning, and citizenship. These authors and others assert that educators need to address the crucial area of character education and return it to the schools to ensure the future of a healthy society. The issue of character education is considered by some to be identical to religious education. According to Wright (1999), highly religious people would like to see moral education taught in religious terms even in public schools; however, the national separation of church and state has prohibited such a combination.

The development of effective character education programs must go beyond explicit curricula and include classroom and school atmosphere as a major focus (Leming, 1996). Sergiovanni (2000) promotes the concept that positive school climate and good leadership come from administrators and teachers, and these models are fundamental to developing good character in students. Lickona (1998) points out that effective character education requires an intentional, proactive, and comprehensive approach that promotes core values in all phases of life. The goal of the character education program, according to Strein (2002), should be the creation of a caring community that fosters student character development in numerous ways. This theme should be consistent and permeate the school and community.
As noted in Chapter I, as of 1998, 48 of the 50 states had completed or were completing state educational standards which included character education (Nielson, 1998). In 2002, the CWK Network reported that 29 states “either mandate or encourage character education through legislation” (p. 5) (see Appendix A). Partly because of these mandates, character education has been implemented in many schools across the country, and the trend continues. As Lickona (1998), DeRoach and Williams (1998), and Knight (2002) maintain and encourage, the current view of character education treats morality and moral education as a comprehensive subject to be applied throughout life rather than a curriculum subject applicable only in school.

Benefits of Prosocial Behavior

Every classroom constitutes a small society that possess a complex web of laws and traditions (Jackson et. al., 1993). Therefore, teaching character education in this “mini society” will help students develop and assimilate their prosocial skills in the “larger society” (p. 12). Formal schooling generally does not include education in interpersonal and intrapersonal skills, although Gardner (1993) describes these skills as necessary for social interaction and the understanding of one’s own emotions and behaviors. “Emotional intelligence,” as described by Goleman (1995), includes qualities associated with intrapersonal and interpersonal intelligences (p. 106). Emotional intelligence includes self-awareness, impulse control, persistence, and self-motivation. It also involves a high level of empathetic and social deftness (O’Neil, 1996). Young people can develop an awareness of human connectedness when they learn self-respect as well as respect for others (Cole, 1997).
It has been shown that young people who lack social and emotional competence frequently cause discipline problems and are unsuccessful in their academic pursuits (Richardson, 2000). Children with poor social skills are at risk for a variety of negative social outcomes later in life, such as juvenile delinquency and mental health problems (Merrell, 2001).

As established in social learning theory (Bandura, 1977), most social behavior is learned by observations of others and the consequences generated as a result of the observed behavior. A person who observes another individual behaving prosocially is more apt to behave in a prosocial manner (Rushton, 1982). Adolescents with disruptive behavior disorders are exposed to prosocial behaviors less often than adolescents without disruptive behavior disorders (Goldstein & McGinnis, 1997). By exposing students to prosocial behaviors, parents, teachers, and other influential adults in children’s lives can decrease the opportunities for children to learn antisocial behaviors and increase their opportunities to learn prosocial behavior.

According to Cartledge (1978), the most effective setting for teaching social skills is the classroom. Kilpatrick (1992) points out that educators are using the latest developments and techniques in moral development in the classrooms. However, the school environment alone is not sufficient to reinforce moral behavior. “Children need the help of adults for more than food and shelter. They need adult tutelage not simply in algebra but they especially need it to understand and acquire strong habits that contribute to good character” (Ryan & Bohlin, 1999, p. 13). Thus, if schools improve students’ conduct while they are in school, the likelihood of lasting impact on their character is diminished if the school’s values are not supported at home (Lickona, 1991).
Studies of Prosocial Behavior Programs

According to Hirschi (2002), a relatively small number of studies have been conducted on current character education programs. Nevertheless, research has shown that social skills are critical prerequisites to academic and interpersonal success (Elliot, 1987). Students with deficient social skills have high incidences of dropping out of school (Ullman, 1957), school maladjustment (Gronlund & Anderson, 1963), and juvenile delinquency (Roff, Sells, & Golden, 1972). Social skill deficits have also been related to students' numerous problems in adjusting to the normal classroom environment (Stumme, Gresham, & Scott, 1983).

Weber (2002) conducted a study on the effects of social skills education on fifth graders. Implementation took place during the school year 2001. The total sample was comprised of 120 students, 58 in the experimental group and 62 in the control group. The experimental group participated in a social skills education program in addition to regular classes, and the control group attended only regular classes. When these students were in the sixth grade, Weber administered the Walker-McConnell Scale of Social Competence and School Adjustment.

Weber (2002) found that no statistically significant difference existed between the social skills of the sixth graders who had participated in the program in fifth grade and those who had not participated in the program in fifth grade. Although expecting a significant difference, Weber conjectured that nonsignificance stemmed from the limited length of exposure of the experimental group students to the program. As a result of the findings, Weber recommended that social skills education programs be implemented for
longer than one school year and that empirical testing be conducted to include both the
program used and other social skills curricula.

Hirschi (2002) conducted a study that critically analyzed how a particular
character education program was implemented and received by teachers, parents, and
students in one elementary school. It was reported that over 80% of the teachers chose to
engage in professional development that used a variety of teaching strategies concerning
character education. These strategies included teacher in-service, supplemental resources,
and parent and student assemblies. The school principal demonstrated clear support for
the program, as did the parents. Support included compensation for the participating
teacher training, monies for purchasing resources, and flexibility in the curriculum and
schedule. Hirschi concluded that this program helped decrease the number of discipline
referrals due to “bad behavior” and that the teachers used various teaching strategies that
were recommended throughout the program (p. 213).

In 2002, Strein conducted a study of a school-initiated character education
program at a small suburban elementary school. The study was conducted to increase the
knowledge base for effective practices and supply credence for character education
programming. Implementation took place through coordinated efforts by various groups
within the school, such as teachers, custodial staff, and cafeteria workers. Some of the
activities were supervised by a character education planning committee.

Strein’s (2002) results were measured through interviews and questionnaires.
However, implementation varied and treatment integrity or consistency of program
instruction at the classroom level was low. Nevertheless, teachers consistently reported
positive feedback and positive behavioral change, although the results were not
consistent. Given the program’s low treatment integrity within classrooms, Strein pointed out that the nonsignificant outcome data should not be considered a reflection of the character education program’s effectiveness.

Studies of Gender and Prosocial Competence

In comprehensive database searches, the writer located only one study which considered gender and prosocial competence. Richards (2002) conducted an evaluation of the efficacy of the Advanced Via Individual Determination Program (AVID). This program examined social competence and its behavioral manifestations in at-risk young people. Twenty-one students participated in the study: 3 girls and 12 boys who were in the AVID program as the treatment group, and 2 girls and 4 boys who were not in the program as the control group. For assessment of students’ social competence and classroom deportment, all students were administered the Social Skills Rating System (SSRS) Questionnaire and rated by teachers. Data were also collected on students’ academic achievement.

No significant differences were found between gender groups overall. However, in both treatment and control groups, girls scored significantly higher on the empathy scales. Richards (2002) suggests that these findings may have resulted from the small size of the sample. He further recommends that research be conducted over a longer time period with more participants, as well as with implementation of a more comprehensive pre-post research design.

Studies of Ethnicity and Prosocial Competence

A number of recent studies have been conducted on the relationship between ethnicity and prosocial competence. Recognizing that culture is integral to every aspect
of being, Cartledge and Feng (1996) examined social behaviors from several cultural perspectives. The authors note that culture influences to varying degrees one’s thinking and acting, interpersonal relations, and social competence. They studied urban at-risk African American and Hispanic/Latino youth and the relationship between their cultural influences and multicultural perspectives infused to increase school success and life choices.

Six different schools were looked at according to the number of nondominant cultures present, and schoolwide strategies were implemented at three schools. Interventions included social skills instruction, cooperative learning, and class-wide peer tutoring. Shared dialogue and agreement among school personnel about school and classroom norms promoted a school culture in which opportunities for success were created and flourished within the schools. Learning strategies known as positive behavior support (PBS) that promote healthy, prosocial behaviors were combined with multicultural strategies to examine the trends in racial disparity. These strategies were practiced throughout the three schools across the curriculum.

The researchers found a significant relationship between ethnicity and social competence for their subjects and reported distinct culturally influenced social behaviors in multicultural children. The data showed a decline in discipline referrals for the schools that used PBS. Based on these results, Cartledge and Feng (1996) suggest implementation of a multicultural curriculum and strategies with more traditional strategies for educating multicultural students.

In a discussion of ethnicity and prosocial competence, Utley (2002) emphasizes the use of culturally appropriate interventions, such as Positive Behavior Support. The
social behaviors of urban at-risk African American and Hispanic youth are culturally influenced (Shade, 1997). Because of this influence, Utley (2002) points out that it is critical for PBS and multicultural perspectives to become infused into education to increase school success and life choices, academically and socially, for these students.

In 1991, Ogbu studied minorities in low-performing, secondary schools in California. He examined students in 18 schools over a 5-year time period. In this comparative study of immigrant and involuntary minorities, the students were predominantly African American and from low socioeconomic backgrounds. The purpose of the study was to compare the results of standardized achievement tests given in grades one, three, six, and ten to determine the differences in school performance between Blacks and Whites. The district average was used as the target for the state-mandated achievement tests. For comparison, the schools were divided into White schools (where White students constituted 50% or more of the student population) and minority schools (where minority students constitute 50% or more of the student population). The minority schools had several “remedial” classes initiated for the students throughout the year.

Ogbu’s (1991) reports repeatedly stated that there was a correlation between the average student test scores and the average income and median years of schooling completed by adults in the neighborhood in which the school was located. Low performance was also reported associated with traits relating to the students’ backgrounds, ranging from limited English proficiency to poor home environments in which a tradition existed of school failure. These factors resulted in frequent absence from school, excessive mobility from school to school, and students’ negative attitudes.
towards school. Thus, Ogbu suggested that specific social placement of a cultural group within the broader society will directly affect the minority group’s values, perceptions, and social behaviors.

Linkowski (2002) conducted a study to evaluate the effectiveness of prosocial training on a selected number of African American students in a District of Columbia elementary public school. Thirty students were randomly assigned to an experimental group and 30 to a control group. All students were African American boys who came from disadvantaged backgrounds. Pretests were given, and the experimental group received biweekly prosocial training skills sessions twice weekly for 2 months. The control group received no prosocial training during this period.

Results showed that prosocial skills training decreased the problem behaviors of African American students in this particular elementary school. The findings also showed that prosocial skills training reduced the suspension rates of African American students. Linkowski concluded that prosocial skills training appeared to be an effective intervention in reducing the problem behaviors and suspension rates among African American students in one elementary school. The researcher recommended that this intervention be considered in other schools with African American at-risk students.

Summary

Educators and researchers such as Piaget (1965), Kohlberg (1972), and others have understood the importance of applying a structural approach to moral development. As character education developed, the teaching of morals and values evolved from an “unspoken” part of schools’ curricula to specialized instruction. Many educators and legislators have come to recognize that society will reap the benefits of citizens who
develop strong character and an awareness of human connectedness. Studies have shown that social and emotional competence are prerequisites to interpersonal success and reduce disruptive and antisocial behavior in children and adolescents. But classroom teaching of social skills and character education must be supported by parental collaboration.

Studies on gender and ethnicity also show that these demographic characteristics play an important role in the types of strategies used in implementation. Educators tailoring implementations to specific at-risk student populations and recognizing the need for multicultural strategies will promote more effective learning in these students. They will then gain more opportunities for socialization, more harmonious interpersonal interactions, and greater academic success.
Chapter III
Methodology

Introduction

The Florida state legislature has mandated that all elementary school students should receive character education instruction as part of the regular curriculum (Florida House Bill 365, Section 233.061, Florida Department of Education, 1999). In accordance with this requirement, the purpose of this study was to investigate the effectiveness of an 18-week character education intervention on the prosocial competence of fifth graders in a public elementary school, as indicated by teachers’ pretest and posttest ratings of their students with a social competence survey instrument.

Hypotheses

Based on the research questions, the following null hypotheses were formulated:

1. There is no statistically significant difference in fifth-grade students’ prosocial competence as a result of participation in a character education program.
2. There is no statistically significant relationship between gender and students’ prosocial competence after participation in a character education program.
3. There is no statistically significant relationship between ethnicity and students’ prosocial competence after participation in a character education program.

The following alternative hypotheses were formulated:

1. There is a statistically significant difference in fifth-grade students’ prosocial competence as a result of participation in a character education program.
2. There is a statistically significant relationship between gender and students’ prosocial competence after participation in a character education program.

3. There is a statistically significant relationship between ethnicity and students’ prosocial competence after participation in a character education program.

Research Design

The design of this study was a quasi-experimental, two-group pretest/posttest design. In a quasi-experimental design, random assignments of subjects to groups is not possible (Fraenkel, 1996). Approval has already been given by the chair of the Lynn University IRB committee and the dissertation chair for the researcher to begin implementation (K. Casey-Acevado, IRB Chair, personal communication, January 6, 2003).

The students who were the subjects of this study were assigned to a control group and an experimental group based on their current classroom placements. All teachers completed the pretest for their students, and implementation began in January 2003 of the 18-week character education curriculum, Connect! For Elementary Grades (CWK Network, 2002). This curriculum was approved by the Safe Schools Center of the Palm Beach County School District (see Appendix C). After the intervention was completed, the students’ teachers completed the posttests for each student.

Research Setting

The targeted elementary school was in Wellington, Florida, located in Palm Beach County. This suburban, middle-income city has a population of approximately
40,750 (Village of Wellington, 2002). Wellington has 7 public schools that house 9,893 students, with 470 teachers and 146 support staff.

New Horizons Elementary School is a public school in the Palm Beach County School District, located in area IV, in the western part of the county. The school services students from kindergarten through fifth grade, and students are drawn from a six-mile radius. This research site was chosen because the school guidance counselor demonstrated strong interest in the character education curriculum, Connect! For Elementary Grades (CWK Network, 2002).

To avoid researcher bias, permission was given by the Safe Schools Director for this guidance counselor to conduct the program implementation at New Horizons rather than implementation by the researcher at her current school site (see Appendix C). In addition, the Executive Director of Research, Evaluation, and Accountability of the Palm Beach County School District granted permission to conduct this study (Appendix D). Permission was also given by the principal of New Horizons Elementary School for implementation at this school (see Appendix E).

**Intervention**

The intervention chosen was Connect! For Elementary Grades (CWK Network, 2002). This curriculum was developed by Connect with Kids Network, Inc., a leading creator and distributor of reality-based broadcast programming and educational products. This particular curriculum was chosen because the school district had implemented its middle school curriculum with very positive results (K. Williams, Director of Palm Beach County School District Prevention Center, personal communication, September 4, 2002). In this curriculum, each week in a
1-hour class period 1 of 18 character traits was taught. These include perseverence, helpfulness, courage, self-control, honesty, courtesy, trustworthiness, and cooperation. Activities for each segment were based on Bloom’s Taxonomy (Bloom & Krathwohl, 1956), and unit goals were provided for each trait. A variety of teaching strategies were used, such as videos of real-life scenarios, segment summaries, vocabulary exercises, discussion questions, and student reports. Students were evaluated through authentic assessment rubrics and checklists, which were provided (CWK Network, 2002).

Population and Sample

At the time of the study, New Horizons Elementary School had a total population of 812 students, served by 41 teachers and 25 support staff members. According to the district records and designations, the majority of the students were White, 61%; with 20% Hispanic; 10% Black; and 9% Other, such as Asian, Native American, and Multiracial. Approximately 53% of the students were male and 47% were female (Palm Beach County School District, 2002).

A total of 116 fifth-grade students comprised the sample for this study. Of these students, 60% were White, 21% were Hispanic, 11% were Black, and 8% were other ethnicities. Approximately 53% were male and 47% were female. There were four classes in the fifth grade, with class sizes as follows: Teacher A, 33 students; Teacher B, 27 students; Teacher C, 31 students; and Teacher D, 25 students.

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

There was one inclusion criterion for student participation in this study. This was a signed written consent form from parents, which was placed on file by the researcher
This consent form was sent home with students prior to implementation, with ample time given for return of the form to the teachers.

There were two exclusion criteria. The first was the failure of the student to return the parental consent form. The second was the parent’s refusal for his or her child to participate in the study.

Implementation

A total of 10 steps were necessary for implementation of this study. These steps were as follows:

1. In January 2003, the guidance counselor was trained for eight hours by the researcher in implementation of the Connect! For Elementary Grades (CWK Network, 2002) curriculum.

2. In January 2003, students were introduced to the study. Parental consent forms and child assent forms were distributed to all fifth-grade students (see Appendices F, G), with instructions for return. On return, the signed forms were collected by the teachers and given to the researcher.

3. At a special after-school meeting in January 2003, the researcher introduced the fifth-grade teachers to the study and distributed the letter of informed consent (see Appendix H). The teachers signed the consents and were instructed by the researcher how to complete the pretest and posttest for students. Teachers had ample time to ask questions.

4. At the start of the spring term 2003, the four fifth-grade classes were divided into the experimental and control groups, with two classes in the experimental and two classes in the control group. The division of classes was based on
two teachers' willingness to allocate 1 hour a week during class time for the
guidance counselor to conduct the implementation. Because the four classes
have approximately the same number of students, it was expected that the
experimental and control groups would be of equal size. Upon return of the
parental permission slips, it was found that there were 60 students in the
experimental group and 56 students in the control group.

5. In January 2003, the teachers in both groups completed the pretests, which
were collected by the guidance counselor and delivered to the researcher.

6. In January 2003, a schedule of implementation for the experimental group was
devised by the researcher with input from the guidance counselor and
experimental group teachers. This schedule was approved by the school
administrator.

The implementation took place once a week for 1 hour during the social
studies period.

8. The curriculum was implemented for 18 weeks, with the approximate
completion date near the end of the spring term 2003 during the first week of
May.

9. Upon completion of the implementation, in May 2003, the teachers completed
the posttest.

10. In May 2003, the guidance counselor delivered the completed posttests
to the researcher for data analysis.
Instrument

The *School Social Behavior Scales* (SSBS) (Merrell, 2001) was the measurement tool used in this study. Permission was granted to the researcher by the developer of the *School Social Behavior Scales* (SSBS) for use in this study (see Appendix I).

The SSBS was developed to evaluate the social competence and antisocial behavior patterns of elementary and secondary age students. This is a 65-item instrument comprised of two subscales, Social Competence and Antisocial Behavior (see Appendix J). The Social Competence subscale contains 32 positively worded items describing adaptive or positive social behaviors that are likely to lead to positive social outcomes. A sample item follows: “1. Cooperates with other students in a variety of situations.” The Social Competence subscale has three domains, Interpersonal Skills, Self-management Skills, and Academic Skills.

The Antisocial Behavior subscale contains 33 items describing problem behaviors that are either other-directed in nature or are likely to lead to negative social consequences. A sample item follows: “1. Blames other students for problems.” The Antisocial Behavior subscale also has three domains: Hostile-Irritable, Antisocial-Aggressive, and Demanding-Disruptive.

The SSBS is scored on a 5-point Likert-type scale from 1 = Never to 5 = Frequently. The total range is 65-325, with 32-160 for the Social Competence subscale and 33-165 for the Antisocial Behavior subscale. For the Social Competence subscale, higher scores indicate greater levels of social behavioral adjustment. For the Antisocial Behavior subscale, higher scores indicate greater levels of social behavior problems (Merrell, 2001).
After the final development of the instrument scales and items, normative data were obtained from a sample of 1,858 students in grades K-12 from 22 different public school districts throughout the United States. The sample consisted of 1,025 males and 833 females, and 688 different teachers completed the ratings (Merrell, 2001).

Reliability. Two measures of internal reliability were obtained on the SBSS norm sample: coefficient alpha and the Spearman-Brown split-half coefficient (Merrell, 2001). Each of these produced high internal consistency reliability coefficients on the two scales. The range of reliabilities for the Social Competence subscale was .94 to .96; the range of reliability for the Antisocial Behavior subscale was .91 to .98. These results suggest that the SSBS has strong internal consistency.

Test-retest reliability was also conducted over 3-week intervals with Pearson product-moment correlations. The results show adequate stability over short time periods, with reliability coefficients for the Social Competence subscale from .76 to .83 and for the Antisocial Behavior subscale from .60 to .73 ($p < .001$) (Merrell, 2001).

The standard error of measurement ($SEM$), a measure that helps determine the level of confidence in test scores, was also calculated. The range of $SEM$ for the Social Competence subscale was 1.88 to 4.24, and the range for the Antisocial Behavior subscale was 1.88 to 3.81 ($p < .001$). These figures suggest that the range of error was quite small, therefore indicating a high level of confidence in the test scores (Merrell, 2001).

Validity. Content validity was determined by several means, including examination by teachers, graduate students, and parents; and correlations between individual items and scale totals to assess how well each item fit in its designated domain.
Results for the item-to-total Social Competence subscale ranged from .62 to .82, and for the Antisocial Behavior subscale from .58 to .86. These correlations strongly substantiate the content validity of the individual scale items (Merrell, 2001).

Merrell (2001) suggests that further research be conducted on the validity of the SSBS. Nevertheless, the studies reported on its reliability and validity show that it is reliable and valid for the purposes stated.

Data Collection

For demographic data, with permission from the New Horizons administration, each student’s gender and race were obtained from the school records. The researcher noted this information on each survey.

For the SSBS, after training by the researcher, the teachers in both the experimental and control groups completed the instrument as a pretest. The completed pretest instruments were delivered to the researcher by the guidance counselor who conducted the implementation, and the researcher scored the completed pretests. At the conclusion of implementation, the teachers completed the SSBS as a posttest, and these instruments were delivered to the researcher by the guidance counselor. The researcher then scored the completed posttests.

Data Analysis

The SPSS statistical package was used for all data analysis. The researcher converted the nominal demographic data on gender and race to interval data (e.g., male = 1; female = 2) and entered this information into the computer. The researcher scored each pretest according to the procedures in the SSBS manual (Merrell, 2001) and entered these data into the computer. The same procedure was followed for the posttests.
Descriptive statistics were calculated for the students’ demographic characteristics, including frequencies and percentages. Descriptive statistics were also used to obtain the means, standard deviations, and ranges of the total SSBS and the two subscale scores.

Inferential statistics were used to test the three hypotheses. For Hypothesis 1, a two-tailed t test was calculated to ascertain whether a character education program made a statistically significant difference in the fifth-grade students’ prosocial competence. For Hypothesis 2, Pearson’s correlations were used to test whether a statistically significant relationship existed between gender and prosocial competence, as measured by students’ scores on the SSBS. For Hypothesis 3, Pearson’s correlation was again used to test whether a statistically significant relationship existed between ethnicity and prosocial competence, as measured by students’ scores on the SSBS. All results for both descriptive and inferential analyses were reported in appropriate tables and summarized in the text.
Chapter IV

Results

Introduction

This study investigated the effectiveness of a character education intervention on the prosocial competence of fifth-grade students in a public elementary school. Effectiveness was measured by administration of the SSBS, a social competence survey instrument, before and after the intervention. Three hypotheses were formulated for this study, examining the effectiveness of a character education program on the prosocial competence of fifth graders, the relationship between students' gender and their prosocial competence, and the relationship between students' ethnicity and their prosocial competence.

The study was conducted with a quasi-experimental two-group pretest/posttest design. A total of 116 students participated, and they were assigned to control and experimental groups based on their current classroom placements. The implementation was conducted over 18 weeks and teachers completed the SSBS as both pretest and posttest. The researcher collected and scored all pretests and posttests and performed data analysis with the SPSS statistical package.

First, the results of the descriptive statistics are reported: the sample demographic characteristics and descriptive statistics for the SSBS. Second, results of the inferential statistics for each hypothesis are reported.
Demographic Characteristics of the Sample

All of the 116 subjects were between 10 and 12 years of age, appropriate for fifth-grade students. As Table 1 shows, 52.6% (n = 61) of the total sample were in the experimental group and 47.4% (n = 55) were in the control group. With regard to gender, of the total, 53.4% (n = 62) were male and 46.6% (n = 54) were female. Within the experimental group, 55.7% (n = 34) were male and 44.3% (n = 27) were female. Within the control group, 50.9% (n = 28) were male and 49.1% (n = 27) were female.

Table 1

Demographic Characteristics of the Sample

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>Total Sample</th>
<th>Experimental Group</th>
<th>Control Group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(N = 116)</td>
<td>(n = 61)</td>
<td>(n = 55)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>%  n</td>
<td>%  n</td>
<td>%  n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>53.4 62</td>
<td>55.7 34</td>
<td>50.9 28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>46.6 54</td>
<td>44.3 27</td>
<td>49.1 27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity</td>
<td>%  n</td>
<td>%  n</td>
<td>%  n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>60.3 70</td>
<td>57.4 35</td>
<td>63.6 35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>20.7 24</td>
<td>19.7 12</td>
<td>21.8 12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>11.2 13</td>
<td>13.1 8</td>
<td>9.1 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>7.8 9</td>
<td>9.8 6</td>
<td>5.5 3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

With regard to ethnicity, overall 60.3% (n = 70) were White, with 57.4% (n = 35) in the experimental group and 63.6% (n = 35) in the control group. Of the total, 20.7% (n = 24) were Hispanic, with 19.7% (n = 12) in the experimental group and 21.8% (n = 12) in the control group. A total of 11.2% (n = 13) were Black, with 13.1% (n = 8) in
the experimental group and 9.1% \((n = 5)\) in the control group. Other ethnicities (Asian, Native American, Multiracial) comprised a total of 7.8% \((n = 9)\), with 9.8% \((n = 6)\) in the experimental group and 5.5% \((n = 3)\) in the control group.

**Descriptive Statistics for the SSBS**

The descriptive statistics for the SSBS overall are shown in Table 2. As displayed in this table, for the pretest, the total mean was 172.10 \((SD = 20.6)\), with a range of 98-206. For the posttest, the total mean was 182.60 \((SD = 16.3)\), with a range of 116-210.

**Table 2**

**Descriptive Statistics: Total SSBS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
<th>Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pretest</td>
<td>172.10</td>
<td>20.6</td>
<td>98-206</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Posttest</td>
<td>182.60</td>
<td>16.3</td>
<td>116-210</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* All items are scored on a 5-point Likert-type scale, from 1 = Never, to 5 = Frequently. Total possible range is 65-325.

The descriptive statistics for the two subscales of the SSBS, Scale A, Social Competence, and Scale B, Antisocial Behavior, are shown in Table 3. As displayed in this table, for the pretest of Subscale A, the total mean was 128.60 \((SD = 25.9)\), with a range of 49-160. For the posttest of Subscale A, the total mean was 140.20 \((SD = 26.1)\), with a range of 52-160. For the pretest of Subscale B, the total mean was 43.50 \((SD = 17.7)\), with a range of 33-138. For the posttest of Subscale B, the total mean was 42.40 \((SD = 19.1)\), with a range of 33-146.
Table 3

**Descriptive Statistics for Total Sample: SSBS Subscales A and B**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subscale A: Social Competence</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
<th>Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pretest</td>
<td>128.60</td>
<td>25.9</td>
<td>49-160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Posttest</td>
<td>140.20</td>
<td>26.1</td>
<td>52-160</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subscale B: Antisocial Behavior</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
<th>Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pretest</td>
<td>43.50</td>
<td>17.7</td>
<td>33-138</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Posttest</td>
<td>42.40</td>
<td>19.1</td>
<td>33-146</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* All items are scored on a 5-point Likert-type scale, from 1 = Never, to 5 = Frequently. Total possible range for Subscale A is 32-160 and for Subscale B is 33-165. For Subscale A, higher scores indicate greater levels of social behavioral adjustment. For Subscale B, higher scores indicate greater levels of social behavior problems.

Descriptive statistics for the SSBS were also calculated for the experimental and control groups, as shown in Table 4. As this table displays, for the experimental group, the total pretest mean was 177.90 (SD 14.68) and the total posttest mean was 186.77 (SD 10.18). For Subscale A, the pretest mean was 132.80 (SD 23.02) and the posttest mean was 145.90 (SD 21.80). For Subscale B, the pretest mean was 45.10 (SD 21.26) and the posttest mean was 40.87 (SD 17.34).

For the control group, the total pretest mean was 165.58 (SD 24.09) and the total posttest mean was 177.95 (SD 20.17). For Subscale A, the pretest mean was 123.95 (SD 20.17) and the posttest mean was 137.35 (SD 20.98). For Subscale B, the pretest mean was 44.20 (SD 22.50) and the posttest mean was 40.70 (SD 17.30).
Table 4

Descriptive Statistics for Experimental and Control Groups: Total SSBS and Subscales A and B

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pretest/Posttest</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
<th>St. Error Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Experimental Group</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pretest</td>
<td>177.90</td>
<td>14.68</td>
<td>1.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Posttest</td>
<td>186.77</td>
<td>10.18</td>
<td>1.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subscale A: Social Competence</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pretest</td>
<td>132.80</td>
<td>23.02</td>
<td>2.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Posttest</td>
<td>145.90</td>
<td>21.80</td>
<td>2.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subscale B: Antisocial Behavior</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pretest</td>
<td>45.10</td>
<td>21.26</td>
<td>2.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Posttest</td>
<td>40.87</td>
<td>17.34</td>
<td>2.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Control Group</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total:</td>
<td>165.58</td>
<td>24.09</td>
<td>3.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pretest</td>
<td>177.95</td>
<td>20.17</td>
<td>2.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subscale A: Social Competence</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pretest</td>
<td>123.95</td>
<td>28.17</td>
<td>3.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Posttest</td>
<td>133.95</td>
<td>29.12</td>
<td>3.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subscale B: Antisocial Behavior</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pretest</td>
<td>41.64</td>
<td>12.54</td>
<td>1.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Posttest</td>
<td>44.00</td>
<td>20.85</td>
<td>2.81</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

28.17) and the posttest mean was 133.95 (SD 29.12). For Subscale B, the pretest mean was 41.64 (SD 12.54) and the posttest mean was 44.00 (SD 20.85).
For the control group, the total pretest mean was 165.58 (SD 24.09) and the total posttest mean was 177.95 (SD 20.17). For Subscale A, the pretest mean was 123.95 (SD 23.17) and the posttest mean was 133.95 (SD 29.12). For Subscale B, the pretest mean was 41.64 (SD 12.54) and the posttest mean was 44.00 (SD 20.85). In addition, the total means for the experimental group were higher than those for the control group for both pretest and posttest. The differences between the means were 12.32 and 8.82, respectively.

*Hypothesis 1: Prosocial Competence and Participation in a Character Education Program*

Null Hypothesis 1 stated that there is no statistically significant difference in fifth-grade students' prosocial competence as a result of participation in a character education program. This hypothesis was tested by calculation of a *t* test between independent samples, comparing the experimental and control groups' posttests. Table 5 shows the results.

Table 5 shows the experimental posttest mean of 186.77 (SD 10.18) and the control group mean of 177.95 (SD 20.17). Comparison of the two groups yielded a *t* statistic of 3.02 (df 114), *p* = .003. The *p* value is lower than the established value of significance, *p* < .05, and thus the difference is statistically significant.

Therefore, null Hypothesis 1 was rejected and alternative Hypothesis 1 was accepted. There is a statistically significant difference in fifth-grade students' prosocial competence as a result of participation in a character education program.
Table 5

**Prosocial Competence as a Result of Participation in a Character Education Program**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>St. Error Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Experimental Group</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Posttest</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>186.77</td>
<td>10.18</td>
<td>1.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Control Group</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Posttest</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>177.95</td>
<td>20.17</td>
<td>2.72</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>t Test for Equality of Means&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>t</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.02</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*<sup>p</sup> < .05.

<sup>a</sup>Equal variances assumed.

**Hypothesis 2: Prosocial Competence and Gender**

Null Hypothesis 2 stated that there is no statistically significant relationship between gender and students’ prosocial competence after participation in a character education program. This hypothesis was tested by calculation of Pearson’s correlation. Table 6 shows the results.
Table 6

Correlation Between Gender and Prosocial Competence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total SSBS Posttest</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total SSBS Posttest</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>.28</td>
<td>.002*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>.28</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p < .05 (2-tailed).

Note. Correlation is significant at the .01 level.

Table 6 shows that when Pearson correlation was conducted, the total SSBS posttest correlated significantly with gender, $r = .28$, $p = .002$. That is, there was a more than chance relationship between students’ gender and their posttest scores. The $p$ value is lower than the established value of significance, $p < .05$, and in fact is lower than a stronger value of significance, .01. Thus, the correlation between gender and prosocial competence after participation in a character education program is statistically significant.

Therefore, null Hypothesis 2 was rejected and alternative Hypothesis 2 was accepted. There is a statistically significant relationship between gender and students’ prosocial competence after participation in a character education program.

An addition analysis was made for gender based on the literature (Richards, 2002). These were $t$ tests comparing the means of males and females on both the pretests and posttests. Table 7 shows the results.
Table 7

Comparison of Total SSBS Scores by Gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>St. Error Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total SBSS Pretest</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>167.47</td>
<td>22.68</td>
<td>2.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>177.33</td>
<td>16.53</td>
<td>2.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total SBSS Posttest</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>178.37</td>
<td>19.14</td>
<td>2.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>187.43</td>
<td>10.39</td>
<td>1.41</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*t Test for Equality of Means*ª

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>St. Error</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Diff.</td>
<td>Diff.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total SBSS Pretest</td>
<td>-9.87</td>
<td>3.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total SBSS Posttest</td>
<td>-9.05</td>
<td>2.92</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ª*p < .05.

ªEqual variances assumed.

Table 7 shows that females scored consistently higher on both pretests and posttests (female pretest mean 177.33, male pretest mean 167.47; female posttest mean 187.43, male posttest mean 178.37). When the two groups were compared, the *p* statistic
yielded .009 for the pretest and .002 for the posttest, both lower values than the established value, \( p < .05 \). Therefore, females overall scored significantly higher on the SSBS on both the pretests and posttests.

**Hypothesis 3: Prosocial Competence and Ethnicity**

Null Hypothesis 3 stated that there is no statistically significant relationship between ethnicity and students’ prosocial competence after participation in a character education program. This hypothesis was tested by calculation of Pearson’s correlation. Table 8 shows the results.

Table 8

*Correlation Between Ethnicity and Prosocial Competence*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total SSBS Posttest</th>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>( p )</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total SSBS Posttest</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>-0.002</td>
<td>.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity</td>
<td>-0.002</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\*\( p < .05 \) (2-tailed).

Table 8 shows that when Pearson correlation was conducted, the total SSBS posttest did not correlate significantly with ethnicity, \( r = -0.002, p = .98 \). That is, there no relationship between students’ ethnicity and their posttest scores. The \( p \) value is higher than the established value of significance, \( p < .05 \). Thus, the correlation between ethnicity and prosocial competence after participation in a character education program is not statistically significant.
Summary

This chapter reported the results, with accompanying tables, of the data analysis based on the three null hypotheses. Null Hypothesis 1 was rejected and alternative Hypothesis 1 was accepted. There is a statistically significant difference in fifth-grade students' prosocial competence as a result of participation in a character education program.

Null Hypothesis 2 was rejected and alternative Hypothesis 2 was accepted. There is a statistically significant relationship between gender and students' prosocial competence after participation in a character education program. Moreover, females' average scores were significantly higher than males on both the SSBS pretest and posttest.

Null Hypothesis 3 was accepted and alternative Hypothesis 3 was accepted. There is no statistically significant relationship between ethnicity and students' prosocial competence after participation in a character education program.

The following chapter presents a discussion of these results, with reference to previous studies. In addition, conclusions and recommendations are offered.
Chapter V

Discussions, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Overview of Study

This study was developed to investigate the effectiveness of an 18-week character education intervention on the prosocial competence of fifth-grade students in a public elementary school. Effectiveness was measured by analysis of teachers’ pretest and posttest ratings of their students with a social competence survey instrument, the SSBS. Three hypotheses were formulated for this research. The first examined the effectiveness of a character education program on the prosocial competence of fifth-grade students. The second determined whether there was a significant relationship between students’ gender and their prosocial competence. The third determined whether there was a significant relationship between students’ ethnicity and their prosocial competence.

This study was conducted with quasi-experimental, two-group pretest/posttest design. Students were assigned to a control group and an experimental group based on their current classroom placements. A total of 116 fifth-grade students comprised the sample, with approximately 53% males and 47% females. Regarding ethnicity, 61% of the students were White, 20% were Hispanic, 10% were Black, and 9% were other ethnicities such as Asian, Native American, and Multiracial.

After implementation, the researcher collected all instruments, scored pretests and posttests, and conducted data analysis, using the SPSS statistical package.
Descriptive statistics were calculated for student demographic characteristics and the SSBS. Inferential statistics were used to test the three hypotheses.

**Discussion**

Results of the present study showed that alternative Hypothesis 1 was accepted. A statistically significant difference was found in fifth-grade students’ prosocial competence as a result of participation in a character education program (see Table 5).

Both groups overall and in Subscale A, Social Competence, and Subscale B, Antisocial Behavior, scored in the average social functioning level. Lower scores in social competence indicate at-risk and high risk, and higher scores in antisocial behavior indicate at-risk and high risk (Merrell, 2001). When the pretests and posttests of Subscale A and Subscale B are examined, it can be seen that the experimental group increased in social competence and decreased in antisocial behavior (see Table 4). According to Merrell’s (2001) scale of social functioning levels that correspond to raw scores for grades K-6, the designated range of 87-146 equals average functioning, with higher scores indicating greater competence (p. 10). In social competence, the experimental group went from fairly high (132.80) to high average (145.90). According to Merrell’s scale, for antisocial behavior the designated range of 33-79 equals average functioning, with lower scores indicating fewer behavior problems (p. 12). In antisocial behavior, the experimental group went from average (45.10) to low average (40.87).

Correspondingly, the control group mean increased in social competence and increased in antisocial behavior (see Table 4). In social competence, the control group
increased only slightly, although still in the average range (123.95 to 133.95), and in fact the posttest mean was almost equivalent to the pretest mean of the experimental group. In antisocial behavior, the control group increased in problems, although still in the average range (41.64 to 44.00).

The results of Hypothesis 1 corroborate those of Hirschi (2002) with 102 elementary school students. In the current study, extensive training of the implementer was provided by the researcher, whereas in Hirschi no formal training was provided to implementers.

Two other previous studies in character education of elementary students do not support the present results of Hypothesis 1. Strein’s (2002) statistical results were nonsignificant, although during interviews teachers reported positive changes in students. In contrast to the present implementation, Strein’s program consistency was low. In the current study, the implementation was delivered by a skilled and experienced guidance counselor who was trained by the researcher. In light of Strein’s program’s low treatment integrity within classrooms, Strein noted that the nonsignificant outcome data should not reflect adversely on the character education program’s effectiveness.

In addition, Weber’s (2002) study on the effects of social skills education on fifth graders showed no statistically significant difference between students who had and had not participated. Weber’s design was similar to the present one in grade level, fifth grade; total sample, 120; and number of students in the experimental and control groups, 58 and 62, respectively. The present implementation was 18 weeks, half a school year, in contrast to Weber’s implementation of a school year. Nevertheless, he
conjectured that the nonsignificant findings may have resulted from the experimental group's limited exposure to the program.

Results of the present study showed that alternative Hypothesis 2 was accepted. A statistically significant relationship was found between fifth-grade students' gender and prosocial competence after participation in a character education program (see Table 6). This was a strong correlation, in which $p < .01$, and these results contradict that of Richards (2002), who found no significant differences between gender groups after students participated in a social competence program. However, Richard's sample was 21 at-risk students, of which only approximately a third were girls. In contrast, the present study used 116 non-at-risk students, in which approximately half were girls.

Further, Richards' (2002) students were high school age and represented a very small proportion of the student population. In the present study, students were elementary-school age and the entire grade level was used. Richards recognized that his small, unrepresentative sample may have skewed his results with regard to gender.

Interestingly, Richards (2002) found that in both treatment and control groups girls scored significantly higher on the empathy scales. In the present study, girls scored significantly higher on the SSBS overall in both pretests and posttests (see Table 7). Moreover, the SSBS developer, Merrell (2001), points out that in the norm sample, gender had relatively high association with SSBS score and that females as a group had "significantly greater levels of social competence" and "significantly lower levels of antisocial behavior" than males (p. 23). Although analysis of gender in relation to each subscale was not made for the present study, the significant
association of gender with prosocial competence, and the higher scores of females, bear out both Merrell’s and Richards’ findings concerning gender.

Results of the present study showed that alternative Hypothesis 3 was rejected. No statistically significant relationship was found between fifth-grade students’ ethnicity and prosocial competence after participation in a character education program (see Table 8). These results contradict those of Cartledge and Feng (1996), who studied a social competence program administered to urban, at-risk Hispanic and Black youth in six schools. A significant difference was found between ethnicity and social competence, as well as a decline in discipline referrals for the schools implementing the program. However, Cartledge and Feng (1996) studied a sample of only multicultural students, and the present study used both mainstream and multicultural students, with the majority, approximately 50%, White (see Table 1).

A similar parallel exists between the results of Linkowski (2002) and the present study. Both of Linkowski’s experimental and control groups were comprised of elementary school at-risk Black students from disadvantaged backgrounds. Results of prosocial training for the experimental group showed reductions in suspensions and behavior problems. However, the relationship of ethnicity to prosocial training was a given—all subjects were of the same ethnicity. In the present study, Black students comprised 11% of the sample.

Finally, the present results corroborate those of Merrell (2001) with the norm sample for the SSBS. Although the norm sample was predominantly White, “there is evidence indicating that ethnicity is not a critical factor in influencing scores on
behavior rating scales” (p. 21). However, Merrell does admit to a scarcity of research on this issue.

Conclusions

As a result of the data analyses, three conclusions were reached. These are reported in relation to each hypothesis.

Null Hypothesis 1 stated that there is no statistically significant difference in fifth-grade students’ prosocial competence as a result of participation in a character education program. As Table 5 shows, null Hypothesis 1 was rejected and alternative Hypothesis 1 was accepted: a statistically significant difference was found in students’ prosocial competence as a result of participation in a character education program. Thus, it can be concluded that a character education program increases fifth-grade student’s prosocial competence and will help students make more informed decisions about behavior and respond in appropriate ways that decrease fights and altercations.

Null Hypothesis 2 stated that there is no statistically significant relationship between gender and students’ prosocial competence after participation in a character education program. As Table 6 shows, null Hypothesis 2 was rejected and alternative Hypothesis 2 was accepted: a statistically significant difference was found between gender and student’s prosocial competence. Thus, it can be concluded that gender of students affects students’ prosocial competence after participation in a character education program.
Null Hypothesis 3 stated that there is no statistically significant relationship between ethnicity and students’ prosocial competence after participation in a character education program. Table 8 shows that null Hypothesis 3 was accepted and alternative Hypothesis 3 was rejected: no statistically significant difference was found between ethnicity and prosocial competence. Thus, it can be concluded that ethnicity of students does not affect students’ prosocial competence after participation in a character education program.

Implications

Given the results of the present study, several implications may be drawn. First, an intervention in character education has positive ramifications for students’ prosocial competence. Thus, administrators and school boards can institute such interventions to help create a “community-friendly” school environment. Such an environment is more conductive to learning than in many schools because it encourages students to make more informed decisions about their behavior and responses, to understand the outcomes of their choices, and to enhance their motivation to learn and make better decisions.

A character education program should decrease students’ fights and altercations as well as teachers’ disciplinary referrals, similar to Hirschi’s (2002) findings that his program decreased the number of discipline referrals due to “bad behavior” (p. 213). With increased student awareness of good character qualities and moral behavior, incidents of insubordination to teachers and bullying of students may decrease, enhancing the learning and teaching atmosphere and promoting a milieu of friendliness, encouragement, and enjoyment for both students and staff.
Second, with regard to the finding of significance between gender and students’ prosocial competence after participation in a character education program, schools considering unisex classes may find this result important in redesign of class composition. If problem behavior is an issue among girls and utilization of unisex classes is a consideration to improve girls’ behavior, this information can be used to convince administrators and districts to allot funding for character education. With knowledge of the gender difference, especially girls’ tendencies for higher social competence and lower antisocial behavior, teachers of character education may alter programs to increase students’ functioning levels in these areas. However, as Merrell (2001) observes, teachers and administrators should guard against measuring behavior with “what is typical for males or females” (p. 25).

Third, with regard to the finding of nonsignificance between ethnicity and students’ prosocial competence after participation in a character education program, character education programs should be effective whatever the ethnic composition of the students. Both Cartledge and Feng (1996) and Linkowski (2002) found that prosocial education programs improved the behavior of at-risk students of different ethnicities. Thus, as Merrell (2001) comments, “If an assessment instrument is equally valid and reliable for members of various ethnic groups, then minor overrepresentation or underrepresentation of these groups . . . should not influence the stability or usefulness of scores” (p. 21). Nevertheless, in a school with many ethnicities, ethnically balanced groups would be optimal in a character education program for maximum usefulness to students and daily application of its principles in their school environments.
Since no relationship was found between ethnicity and prosocial competence, designers of character education programs could tailor programs to students of diverse ethnicities. For accurate assessment, as Merrell (2001) observes, standardized assessment may not be appropriate for students from specific ethnic or cultural groups who have not assimilated well into the mainstream culture. In these cases, assessment instruments should be designed to reflect particular cultural and linguistic factors inherent in a given ethnicity.

**Limitations**

With reference to the study limitations, ethnicity and socioeconomic status were predominant limitations. The sample was relatively homogeneous, with the majority of students White and middle class. These factors may have contributed to the finding of nonsignificance of the relationship between ethnicity and prosocial competence.

In addition, the subjects comprised a convenience sample, all fifth-grade students in a single elementary school in one geographic area. This nonrandom sample may have additionally affected the results.

**Recommendations for Further Research**

Based on the limitations, a number of recommendations are made for further research that would increase the generalizability of the results. First, in replication of this study, a more heterogeneous sample should be used for ethnicity and socioeconomic status. Second, rather than a convenience sample, a random sample should be drawn. Third, a larger geographical area could be included. Fourth, because the intervention took place for 18 weeks, approximately a half school year, future
studies could utilize interventions that would take place throughout the entire school year.

Fifth, to compare present results with those of future studies, matched populations of students from separate schools could be used for both experimental and control groups. Sixth, levels other than elementary school could be used, for example, middle school and high school students. Seventh, in a longitudinal study, a particular group of students who participated in character education programs could be followed from grade to grade and assessed with the same instrument. Results should indicate the degree of retention and practice of character education principles, and whether these differ by grade, gender, and ethnicity.

Summary

Results of this study provided evidence for the effects of a character education program on fifth-grade elementary students' social skills, as assessed by their teachers. The findings showed that after participation in a character education program, students significantly improved their prosocial competence. Thus, the intervention can be recommended for implementation in other elementary grades at the study-site school, as well as other elementary schools in the county and state.

In addition, study results showed a significant relationship between students' gender and their prosocial competence. This finding is important for alerting teachers of character education to possible special needs of either male or female students in implementation of character education programs.

This study is significant on several levels. It helps provide a foundation for much-needed further research in both the effectiveness of prosocial education and the
relationship of important demographic characteristics to effectiveness. Further, the study has implications for wider and more successful implementation and assessment of character education in public schools at all levels. Thus, study results can help school district leaders and administrators understand the importance of character education and its needed place in the schools.

Study results corroborate why many schools in 48 states have either completed or are in the process of mandating the incorporation of character education into the curriculum (Lickona et al., 1998). It is intended that this study will help educational leaders in schools without character education programs to recognize their value. This value applies to students, teachers, and the entire school culture with reference to increased cooperation, openness to learning, and harmonious interactions, as well as decreased conflicts, antisocial behaviors, and disciplinary referrals. Thus, school leaders should be more inclined to establish implementation and assessment of character education programs for students at the elementary, middle, and high school levels.
References


Appendix A

Implementation of Character Education

Character Education

"Values are important, so we tripled funding for character education to teach our children not only reading and writing, but right from wrong." - President George W. Bush, State of the Union Address 2001

What Is Character Education?

"What today is called Character Education (CE) is the age-old process of teaching young people to know, to love and to do what is good. This is achieved through the intentional instruction (and modeling) of virtuous habits of thought and action like respect, responsibility and honesty." - from the Georgia Center for Character Education

Character education encompasses the combined learning of the heart and mind. It incorporates moral reasoning and cognitive development; life skills education; health education; peer mediation; school violence prevention; service learning; prevention of alcohol, tobacco and substance abuse; social and emotional learning; citizenship; responsibility and more.

Why Is Character Education Important?

Sadly, it has become apparent that one of the biggest problems facing our adolescents today is a lack of character. By teaching such core traits as respect for others, kindness, virtue and compassion, we are ensuring a brighter future for today's youth.

Paducah, Columbine, Heritage, Flint, Santee ... unfortunately, the list keeps growing. Teaching prevention of school violence can no longer be a lecture in an assembly or a policy without implementation. In order to instill the values of courage, courtesy, loyalty and perseverance, we must integrate character education throughout the school year and within the curriculum. As one principal noted, "Character education is not just one more thing to add to your plate – it is the plate." 

Eleven Principles of Effective Character Education™

The Eleven Principles of Effective Character Education™ were written for the Character Education Partnership (CEP) by Tom Lickona, Eric Schaps and Catherine Lewis, leaders in bringing a national focus to character education in schools.

The Character Education Partnership (CEP) is a nonpartisan coalition of organizations (such as AASA and ASCD) and individuals dedicated to developing moral, character and civic virtue in our nation’s youth as one means of creating a more compassionate and responsible society. CEP is not affiliated with any party or creed. CEP is dedicated to the idea that character and education are natural partners in helping children become ethical, responsible adults.

Members of CEP emphasize that core ethical values, such as respect, responsibility and honesty, can be a matter of consensus and a model for our youth. They are committed to the practical implementation of character education throughout the learning process.

The following principles act as guidelines for school administrators and educators when developing and implementing quality character education programs within their communities:

1. Character education promotes core ethical values as the basis of good character.
2. "Character" must be comprehensively defined to include thinking, feeling and behavior.
3. Effective character education requires an intentional, proactive and comprehensive approach that promotes the core values in all phases of school life.
4. The school must be a caring community.
5. To develop character, students need opportunities for moral action.
6. Effective character education includes a meaningful and challenging academic curriculum that respects all learners and helps them succeed.
7. Character education should strive to develop students' intrinsic motivation.
8. The school staff must become a learning and moral community in which all share responsibility for character education and attempt to adhere to the same core values that guide the education of students.
9. Character education requires moral leadership from both staff and students.
10. The school must recruit parents and community members as full partners in the character-building effort.
11. Evaluation of character education should assess the character of the school, the school staff's functioning as character educators and the extent to which students manifest good character.

Current Status of Character Education Implementation

There is a strong trend for funding at both the federal and state levels for incorporating character education and life skills into daily curriculum programs. Former U.S. Secretary of Education Richard W. Riley announced in May 2000, upon awarding another $45 million in federal support to help schools fight drugs and make learning environments safer, "Good citizenship, compassion and respect for others are qualities just as important to learning as high standards in math, science and reading." Currently, there are over $500 million in grants and funds at the federal level for character education and life skills programs.

Currently, 29 states either mandate or encourage character education through legislation. These states include:

1. Alabama
2. Arizona
3. Arkansas
4. California
5. Colorado
6. Connecticut
7. Delaware
8. Florida
9. Georgia
10. Indiana
11. Iowa
12. Kentucky
13. Louisiana
14. Maine
15. Maryland
16. Massachusetts
17. Mississippi
18. Nebraska
19. New York
20. North Carolina
21. Ohio
22. Oklahoma
23. Oregon
24. Tennessee
25. Texas
26. Utah
27. Virginia
28. Washington
29. West Virginia

MEMORANDUM

TO: District School Superintendents

FROM: David Mosrie

SUBJECT: Character Education

The 1999 Legislature passed HB 365, amending Section 233.061, Florida Statutes, addressing required instruction, to require that a character development program be provided in the elementary schools, similar to Character First or Character Counts. Such programs must be secular in nature and must stress such character qualities as attentiveness, patience, and initiative. This legislation also amended Section 233.0612, F.S., addressing authorized instruction, to add ethics to the list of subjects a school district may teach.

The Legislature also amended Section 230.2316, Florida Statutes, Dropout Prevention Act, to require that all dropout prevention and academic intervention programs provide character development and law education as provided in Section 233.0612, F.S.

In the Appropriations Act, proviso language awarded $100,000 each to Orange, Hillsborough, Duval, Lee, Pinellas, Escambia, Palm Beach, Miami-Dade, and Leon school districts for the Learning for Life Character Education Program coordinated with the Regional Boy Scout Council. The Boy Scout Council must match each district’s allocation in cash and inkind services.

These laws take effect July 1, 1999.

The amended language reads as follows:

233.061. Required instruction. --
(2) Members of the instructional staff of the public schools, subject to the rules and
Appendix B (Continued)

regulations of the commissioner, the state board, and the school board, shall teach efficiently and faithfully, using the books and materials required, following the prescribed courses of study, and employing approved methods of instruction, the following:

(q) A character-development program in the elementary schools, similar to Character First or Character Counts. Such a program must be secular in nature and must stress such character qualities as attentiveness, patience, and initiative.

233.0612 Authorized instruction.--Each school district may provide students with programs and instruction at the appropriate grade levels in areas including, but not limited to, the following:

(1) Character development, ethics, and law education.

230.2316 Dropout Prevention.--
(3)[a]. The educational program shall provide curricula, character development and law education as provided in s.233.0612.

(3)(d)8. Students [assigned to second chance schools] who exhibit academic and social progress and who wish to return to a traditional school shall complete a character development and law education program, as provided in s.233.0612.

To assist schools with the implementation of this recent legislation, the Department of Education will convene a State Advisory Committee on Character Education. The goal of the Committee will be to examine current national and state character education efforts, identify the essential components of effective character education instruction, and list resources to support character education efforts. The committee's work will be completed during the fall of 1999.

A review of the Sunshine State Standards indicate there are a number of benchmarks in health, physical education, social studies, language arts, and science, that address the area of character education. Many districts already are providing instruction that addresses the typical components of character education, such as

District School Superintendents
July 30, 1999
Page Three

attentiveness, patience, initiative, ethics, obedience, honesty, responsibility, self-control, punctuality, tolerance, and generosity. Existing programs in conflict mediation, life skills, service learning, peace education, civics, law education and other social studies, comprehensive health education, and other programs may all have components that constitute character education.

Character education may be integrated into the curriculum, as is suggested by the Sunshine State Standards. How, when, where, and how long character education is taught in the
Appendix B (Continued)

Elementary curriculum remains a local school district decision. It is not necessary that school districts implement a packaged program in order to meet the requirements related to character education.

DM/slm  
cc: Assistant Superintendents for Instruction
Appendix C

District Permission to Conduct Study:
Department of Safe Schools

To Whom It May Concern:

The Safe Schools Center of the Palm Beach County School District hereby grants permission for Mary Chandler to oversee and conduct a doctoral research project that utilizes the Connec! For Elementary Grades curriculum.

It is understood that the school site at which the implementation will be conducted is New Horizons Elementary School and that the New Horizons guidance counselor will conduct the implementation.

This character education program is approved by the district and also meets the Florida legislative mandate for character education training at the elementary level.

Alison Adler, Ed.D.  Director, Dept. of Safe Schools  11/27/02

Signature  Title  Date

AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER
May 21, 2004

Ms. Mary Chandler

Dear Ms. Chandler:

The School District of Palm Beach County (District) procedures only require an employee to submit an application to conduct research when the data-gathering activity is outside their job function. Accordingly, as a Learning Facilitator at Lake Shore Middle School, you do not need permission from the District to conduct your research providing you obtain permission from your University’s Institutional Review Board.

If your research requires the use of additional schools in the future, you must first submit an application to conduct research and then wait for a response before proceeding.

Sincerely,

Marc Baron, Ph.D.
Executive Director
Research, Evaluation, and Accountability

MB:bls
As Principal of New Horizons Elementary School, I grant permission for the school guidance counselor, Lynn Bray, to implement the Connect! For Elementary Grades curriculum with fifth-grade students at New Horizons Elementary School. I understand that this curriculum is approved by the Safe Schools Center of the Palm Beach County School District. Connect! For Elementary Grades will meet the criterion that is mandated through Florida Statute Section 233.061, which requires instruction in a character development program in elementary schools.

Upon completion of the Connect! For Elementary Grades program, the data collected from the teachers at the school site will be submitted to Mary Chandler for dissertation research at Lynn University. It is understood that confidentiality concerning the teachers and students involved will be protected throughout this study. The information gathered will be used for informational purposes with the Safe Schools Center and Lynn University. It is also understood that parental permission must be obtained prior to any data collection.

I hereby grant permission for the above-named curriculum to be implemented at New Horizons Elementary School.

Dr. Matthew Shoemaker  
Principal

Matthew S. Shoemaker, Ph. D.  
Principal

Mickey Simmel  
Assistant Principal
Appendix F

Parental Permission for Students to Participate in Study

Dear Parent/Guardian:

New Horizons Elementary School has been provided an opportunity to pilot a new school board approved curriculum for character education. This curriculum is called Connect! For Elementary Grades. You may be familiar with the Connect With Kids program already from its inclusion in the middle school curriculum last year.

The school district and WPBF-TV 25 began partnering in 2001 to tackle the task of addressing the state-mandated character education requirements for Florida public schools. Last year, several middle schools in the district piloted the secondary curriculum. The results were overwhelmingly positive.

A public service announcement was aired to communicate each month’s featured character trait to the community. The character traits that were taught were featured weekly on the evening news.

This year a similar curriculum has been approved by the district, focusing on the elementary level. New Horizons Elementary is one of the two schools to utilize the Connect! For Elementary Grades curriculum, which will start with the fifth grade.

The school guidance counselor, Mrs. Lynn Bray, will teach the curriculum to two of the four fifth-grade classes once a week for 18 weeks in a 1-hour class period. The other two classes will receive the regular curriculum.

To ascertain the effectiveness of this program, before and after the classes are taught, the fifth-grade teachers will complete a checklist of each student’s social skills.

All students’ names will remain confidential, and they will not be identified by name in the final report. Data collected in the checklist will be reported in summary form only and not connected to any one student.

Participation is voluntary. Participation or non-participation of your child will in no way effect your child’s grade or teacher’s report, nor will your child miss any required schoolwork. No physical or psychological risks are foreseen to your child as a result of participation.

You may request that your child discontinue participation at any time. There will be no detrimental consequences to your child in either grades or other reports.
Appendix F (Continued)

For your child to participate in this program if his or her class is chosen, please sign this form and return it to school with your child to give to his or her teacher by date. If you have any questions, please contact Mrs. Bray at [Blank]

_____ YES, I give my child permission to participate in this program.

_____ NO, I do not give my child permission to participate in this program.

Parent’s/Guardian’s Signature ___________________ Date ____________

Print Student’s Name __________________________
Appendix G

Child Assent for Students to Participate in Study

Dear Student:

Our school principal and guidance counselor invite you to participate in an activity that will teach you about good ways to behave in and out of school. Some lessons are on cooperation, tolerance, and honesty.

This is a program in "character education," which will become part of the regular school activities for all students. You may have heard of similar programs in middle school last year.

During this spring term, teaching the program is a way to see how good it is in helping you learn about good character traits. Your teachers will fill out a form before and after the program about your learning.

There will be no grades and there are no right or wrong answers. This program will not influence your grades in any subjects.

The program will be taught by Mrs. Bray, our guidance counselor. It will take place over the 18 weeks of the term, for 1 hour a week instead of other social studies work. There will be videos, discussions, and many other activities.

Your participation is voluntary. If you decide to be in the program, your participation will fulfill the social studies work. If you do not participate, you will be assigned social studies work from the regular curriculum and will be allowed to complete it in the school media center.

There are no dangers to you from participating in the program. If you have questions or get upset about any of the subjects, you may speak to Mrs. Bray privately. Whether or not you participate, your grades will not be affected. You may also stop participating at any time, and your grades will not be affected.

A report will be written about the program after the term ends. Your name and any answers you give will not be used in the report. This information will remain confidential.

Your parents have also been sent a letter giving permission for you to participate. If you want to participate, both you and your parents must sign letters.
We look forward to having you in the program. You will not only learn some important things that will help you in your life, but you will also have fun.

_____ YES, I agree to participate in this program.

_____ NO, I do not agree to participate in this program.

_________________________________________
Sign here

_________________________________________
Print your name here

_________________________________________
Print the date here
Appendix H

Introduction to Study and Informed Consent for Teachers

Dear Teacher:

Thank you for participating in this research project, part of a doctoral dissertation at Lynn
University. The study is approved by your school administration and the school district, and will
help elementary teachers deliver an effective character education program for their students.

As part of the character education study, you will be asked to complete the School Social
Behavior Scales (SSBS) for each of your homeroom students before and after the 18-week
curriculum is delivered, as a pretest and posttest. The SSBS is used by the Palm Beach County
School District in many after-school programs. Each scale should take a maximum of 3-5 minutes
of your time. This instrument is a 65-item tool that lists brief statements about the students’
behavior, and you will indicate your response by circling your degree of agreement on a 5-point
scale.

You can be assured that the confidentiality of your identity and the information provided
will be protected at all times. Names will not be used, and all results are reported in aggregate
form only. Only the researcher will have access to the data and it will be kept in a locked file.
There will be NO adverse affects to you personally or professionally or to your students as a
result of participating in this study.

Your participation is voluntary and you may freely withdraw at any time, without
detriment to you personally or professionally.

In appreciation of your time and efforts, you will receive a $50.00 gift certificate to a
Publix supermarket upon completion of the SSBS pretest, and an additional $50 gift certificate to
a Publix upon completion of the SSBS posttest.

For any questions or clarification, please call me in the evenings at [number] or
email me at [email] Thank you for completing the informed consent and
participating in this study.

Mary Chandler
Researcher

I have been informed of the specifications of the study and I agree to participate.

__________________________  __________________________
Signature                  Date
Appendix I

Permission to Use the School Social Behavior Scales (SSBS)

Assessment-Intervention Resources
Professional Resources for At-Risk Children and Youth
2285 Elysium Avenue
Eugene, OR 97401

January 7, 2003

Mary Chandler

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

As author and copyright holder for the School Social Behavior Scales, I have provided my consent for Mary Chandler to use this assessment instrument for her thesis research.

Sincerely,

Kenneth W. Merrell, Ph.D.

E-Mail: [redacted] Phone & Fax: [redacted] www.assessment-intervention.com
Appendix J

Instrument: The School Social Behavior Scales (SSBS)

School Social Behavior Scales
To Be Completed By Teacher or Other School Personnel for Students in Grades K-I2

Kenneth W. Merrell, Ph.D.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Identifying Information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Name of Student:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name of Person Completing Form:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship of Rater to Student:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Sex of Student:</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>List the settings in which you observe or interact with this student:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date of Rating</th>
<th>Date of Birth</th>
<th>Age</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Directions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
After you have completed the Identifying Information Section, please rate this student's behavior using all of the items on pages 2 and 3 of this rating form.

Never  If the student does not exhibit a particular behavior, or if you have not had an opportunity to observe a particular behavior, circle 1, which indicates Never.

Frequently If the student often exhibits a particular behavior, circle 5, which indicates Frequently.

Sometimes Circle the numbers 2, 3, or 4, (which indicate Sometimes) if the student exhibits the behavior somewhere in between the two extreme rating points, based on your judgment of how frequently it occurs. The rating points after each item appear in the following format:

NEVER 1 2 3 4 5

Please complete all items, and do not circle between numbers. If you have any additional comments about this student, write them in the space provided at the top of page 4.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale A: Social Competence</th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Frequently</th>
<th>Scoring Key</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Cooperates with other students in a variety of situations</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Appropriately transitions between classroom activities</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Completes individual seatwork without being prompted</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Offers to help other students when needed</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Effectively participates in group discussions and activities</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Understands other students’ problems and needs</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Remains calm when problems arise</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Listens to and carries out directions from teacher</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Invites other students to participate in activities</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Asks for clarification of instructions in an appropriate way</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Has skills or abilities that are admired by peers</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Is accepting of other students</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Accomplishes assignments and other tasks independently</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Completes assigned activities on time</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Will give-in or compromise with peers when appropriate</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Follows classroom rules</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Behaves appropriately in a variety of school settings</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Appropriately asks for assistance as needed</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. Interacts with a wide variety of peers</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. Produces work of acceptable quality for his/her ability level</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. Is skillful at initiating or joining conversations with peers</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. Is sensitive to feelings of other students</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. Responds appropriately when corrected by teacher</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24. Controls temper when angry</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25. Appropriately enters ongoing activities with peers</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26. Has good leadership skills</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27. Adjusts to different behavioral expectations across settings</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28. Compliments others’ attributes or accomplishments</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29. Is appropriately assertive when he/she needs to be</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30. Is sought out by peers to join activities</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31. Shows self-restraint</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32. Is “looked up to” or respected by peers</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Scale B: Antisocial Behavior

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Scale B: Antisocial Behavior</th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Frequently</th>
<th>Scoring Key</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Blames other students for problems</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Takes things that are not his/hers</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Defies teacher or other school personnel</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Cheats on schoolwork or in games</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Gets into fights</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Lies to teacher or other school personnel</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Teases and makes fun of other students</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Is disrespectful or “sassy”</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Is easily provoked; has a “short fuse”</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Ignores teachers or other school personnel</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Acts as is he/she is better than others</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Destroys or damages school property</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Will not share with other students</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Has temper outbursts or tantrums</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Disregards feelings and needs of other students</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Is overly demanding of teacher’s attention</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Threatens other students; is verbally aggressive</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Swears or uses obscene language</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Is physically aggressive</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Insults peers</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Whines and complains</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Argues or quarrels with peers</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Is difficult to control</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Bothers and annoys other students</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Gets in trouble at school</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>Disrupts ongoing activities</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>Is boastful; brags</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>Cannot be depended on</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>Is cruel to other students</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Acts impulsively without thinking</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>Unproductive; achieves very little</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>Is easily irritated</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>Demands help from other students</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
SSBS

Additional Information

Please use the following space to provide any additional information about this student that you believe would be useful for understanding his or her social behavior:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SSBS Score Summary</th>
<th>Raw Score</th>
<th>Standard Score</th>
<th>Percentile Rank</th>
<th>Social Functioning Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>SSBS Score</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A1 Interpersonal Skills</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A2 Self-Management Skills</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A3 Academic Skills</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AT Social Competence Total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B1 Hostile-Irritable</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B2 Antisocial-Aggressive</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B3 Demanding-Disruptive</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BT Antisocial Behavior Total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*For Scale A (Social Competence), higher scores indicate greater levels of social adjustment; for Scale B (Antisocial Behavior), higher scores indicate greater levels of social behavior problems.*

81