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Research Report #2

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Narvaez, D., Bock, T., Endicott, L., & Lies, J. (2004). Minnesota’s community voices and

character education project. *Journal of Research in Character Education*, *2* 89-112.

1. **Need.** Study was funded to examine one program as a possible method of character education in middle schools. Response to increasing desire for character education.
2. **Purpose.** Four goals: To see character and its development as a community-based enterprise; provide a wide and expansive view of moral character; recommend a method of teaching based on research and best practices; work with teachers in creating a program that could be adjusted as necessary.
3. **Sample.** Consisted of five K-12 schools. 3 were rural, 2 were urban. Total of 60 teacher participants and 1,015 student participants across grades 6-9. Teacher participation was voluntary.
4. **Methods.** Cross-sectional qualitative study. Each school chose a method of implementation: advisory/homeroom; school-wide projects; “curricular infusion” (p. 96) where character education was incorporated into the existing curriculum. Students given pre-and posttests to assess learning. Teachers surveyed to assess implementation at conclusion.
5. **Results.** Teacher survey found “some improvement”. No significant change was found in the student surveys. Teachers in those schools seen as having high implementation saw significantly larger improvement. Student surveys showed no improvement; rather showed increased peer intolerance in high implementation schools.
6. **Conclusions.** Inconsistent implementation of character education. Programs that were broad and deep yielded more improvement. Schools in which more teachers participated were more likely to see improvement.
7. **Limitations.** Difficult to assess character education changes in one year as changes can take longer to have noticeable effects. Program not implemented in the same way or to the same degree across locations. Lowers generalizability because implementation was not standard.
8. **Implications.** Other models of character education should be examined. For future research, implementations should be done on a larger number of schools and standardized across sites. Follow-up should be longitudinal to better assess change.