



The TEACHER CENTER of Broome County
Teacher Study Group Grant Award
2001-2002

FINAL REPORT
DOCUMENT PROCESSES AND OUTCOMES

Describe the initial goal of the group noting any adjustments that had to be made as time passed.

The initial goal of the study group was to discover possible ways in which character education might be used in Deposit Elementary School to improve the overall school social climate, as well as the individual classroom environment. Although the goal remained the same, the way the goal might be achieved changed. We were originally going to compile a checklist of ideas and resources for teachers to use, but felt it might wind up being shelved and not be incorporated into the curriculum. (Although we will certainly make our colleagues aware of the resources we discovered). We decided instead to make a few carefully selected recommendations on alternative ways to implement character education in our school, then work to make one or more of them become a reality.

Describe the ACTION PLAN that the group followed.

The study group used a variety of means to discover how character education might be implemented. We consulted with educators within our school, as well as made visits to character education leaders in other districts. We also investigated resources in our school library, explored the internet, viewed videotapes, read books, and looked through catalogs pertaining to character education.

Describe how the action plan was implemented.

We gathered information from a colleague at our school who is on the Character Education Committee, and who had attended a summer workshop at SUNY Cortland. We also received material from a staff member who had taken a character education course recently at SUNY Cortland. We read a newspaper article about character education in the Press & Sun Bulletin, which led us to visit character education leaders at area schools:

-Charles F. Johnson Elementary School, Endicott- Mrs. Jennings-Laskowski, 3rd Gr. Teacher

-Floyd Bell Elementary School, Windsor- Mrs. Fran Kennedy, Administrative Inter; Head of Character Education Program.

-John Harshaw Elementary School, Chenango Forks – Mrs. Shelia Dalke, Enrichment Teacher; Character Education Program Chairperson

Each consultant discussed the existing program at her school and gave us information and literature used at the school, as well as other helpful character education resources. We saw videotapes of the Afternoon Program in Windsor and the Morning Program in Chenango Forks. Both schools claimed that these programs had a very positive impact on student behavior.

We became aware of the invaluable resources about character education, not only from our visitations, but also from exploring websites on the internet, such as “Character Education Partnership”, “Young People’s Press”, and “Character Education.net”. In addition, we looked at resources in our school’s professional library, and learned how to use the computerized system, PAC (Public Access Catalog) to locate information concerning character education.

Examples of books worth reading that we discovered are “Starting Small: Teaching Tolerance in Pre-School and Early Grades”, by the Teaching Tolerance Project, and, “Developing a Character Education Program” by Henry Huffman.

Throughout the course of our meetings, much discussion took place concerning the ideas presented to us and the resources we kept discovering. Our goal was to determine which ideas might most effectively impact our character education program and recommend those ideas to the Character Education Committee and Administration for implementation in our school.

Some of the recommendations will be a Morning Program for primary grades (K-3), and possibly a monthly program for the entire school. Awards would be presented at these sessions. Establishment of a character education library for children, and programs for parents are other suggestions.

Evaluation of the impact of the study group effort on teacher/student performance.

- What evidence is there that teaching practices have changed?
- What evidence is there that student achievement is improving?
- What evidence is there that the goals of the study group has/has not been met?

The study group will be recommending alternative approaches to character education to the school’s Character Education Committee, and the administration. We are both motivated and encouraged by the fact that other schools have noticed a positive change in student behavior as a result of implementing the ideas we will be presenting. As a result of this grant, all three of us are considering joining the Character Education Committee next year, to work toward change we feel are worthy of adopting.

Since our superintendent, Mr. William Congdon, will be leaving the district in June, and our elementary school principal, Mr. Paul Kazak, has been on sick leave since the end of March, and most likely will not be returning in the fall, the situation presents both a challenge and an opportunity to promote change. For one, a new principal strongly committed to a character education program is essential.

Although our goal is to make recommendations, our ultimate goal is to make one or more of the recommendations a reality, leading to a positive change in the social climate of the school as a whole, as well as in the classroom.

We realize that this is a goal that can only be achieved over a period of time. Gathering support of the ideas is a first priority, followed by commitment from the staff and community to make the changes happen.

Comment on the value of the study group process? Did it work for you?

The group study process was an invaluable experience for us, giving us a chance to work as a collegial team on an important educational issue. It made us take time to explore an aspect of education that we know is vital, but may have been put off indefinitely.

As a result of the process, we became aware of the volumes of information and resources that exist on character education. The grant also enabled us to network with other schools and learn about their character education programs, as well as share ideas.

We realized as we went along that we were only uncovering “the tip of the iceberg” on the issue. We wished we had had more time to read the materials and to visit more schools to learn about their programs. For one, we’d like to learn about the “Second Step Program” in Chenango Forks, which is geared to the upper elementary grades. In general, this type of grant truly makes the Teacher Center a partner in education, helping us to work toward fulfilling a need in our school.

Respectfully Submitted by,

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On May 16, 2002