

Sample Approaches that Support Character and Citizenship Education

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Caring Relationships (Noddings)

Dr. Nel Noddings is a professor of educational psychology who believes that developing caring relationships will support classroom, curriculum and school organization. She defines a caring relation as a connection or encounter between two human beings in which both parties must contribute something to the relationship.

Noddings argues that the first job of the schools is to care for our children. Our aim should be to encourage the growth of competent, caring, loving and lovable people. Moral education allows students to develop the attitudes and skills required to sustain caring relationships.

Noddings believes that caring is the basis on which all moral education should take place. She believes it is important that schools create learning environments which teach students to care for all that they see around them.

According to Noddings, there are four components to moral education:

- modelling (demonstrating caring in our relations with others)
- dialogue (open-ended dialogue which connects us and helps maintain caring relations)
- practice (finding experiences for students to care as much as possible)
- confirmation (the act of confirming and encouraging the best in others).

Related Web site

www.tc.columbia.edu/centers/mssc/neloddings.htm

Related publications

Noddings, Nel. *Educating Moral People: A Caring Alternative to Character Education*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press, 2002.

Noddings, Nel. *Happiness and Education*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2003.

Noddings, Nel, Michael S. Katz and Kenneth A. Strike (eds.). *Justice and Caring: The Search for Common Ground in Education*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press, 1999.



Center for the 4th and 5th Rs (Lickona)

Dr. Thomas Lickona is a developmental psychologist and professor at the State University of New York at Cortland. He is a frequent consultant to schools on character education and is on the board of directors of the Character Education Partnership. He is widely quoted on the subject of character education.

He currently directs the Center for the 4th and 5th Rs (respect and responsibility). The Center believes that character education is essential to the task of building a moral society and developing schools which are civil and caring communities. They provide parents and teachers with a variety of tools and strategies that promote the development of raising responsible, conscientious and compassionate children.

The Center promotes a 12-point comprehensive approach to character education that uses all aspects of school life as opportunities for building character. The inner part of the wheel shows nine character building strategies for the classroom and the outer rim outlines three schoolwide strategies.



Lickona believes that there is no such thing as “value-free” education and that character development is as necessary as academic achievement. According to Lickona, two specific values, respect and responsibility, should be the cornerstone of a school’s moral agenda.

Lickona promotes a comprehensive approach to character education in which schools consider how everything that occurs there impacts the values and character of students. With this approach, the teacher needs to:

- act as a caregiver, model and mentor
- create a moral community in the classroom
- practise moral discipline
- create a democratic classroom environment
- teach values through the curriculum
- use cooperative learning
- develop the “conscience of craft”
- encourage moral reflection
- teach conflict resolution.

In addition to building moral classrooms, the school needs to:

- foster caring beyond the classroom
- create a positive moral culture in the school
- recruit parents and community as partners in character education.

Related Web site

www.cortland.edu/character/index.asp (Center for the 4th and 5th Rs)

Related publications

Lickona, Thomas. *Educating for Character: How Our Schools Can Teach Respect and Responsibility*. New York, NY: Bantam Dell Publishing Group, 1991.

Lickona, Thomas. *Character Matters: How to Help Our Children Develop Good Judgment, Integrity, and Other Essential Virtues*. New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, 2004.



Circles of Courage (Reclaiming Youth at Risk—Brendtro, Brokenleg and Van Bockern)

The Circle of Courage philosophy is a model of youth empowerment based on a Native American approach toward life, which has been adopted by hundreds of schools in Canada, the United States and around the world. The model is composed of four core values, including the following.

- Belonging (a need to feel valued and important)
- Mastery (developing competence)
- Independence (responsibility for oneself)
- Generosity (genuine desire to help others)

This model is a way of explaining why people do what they do and also describes how we should treat others.

All four parts of an individual's circle of courage need to be strong, otherwise an individual is at risk of emotional and behavioural difficulties. This model can be used in schools to identify causes of misbehaviours among students and then as a guide towards improving behaviour, especially for at-risk students. School communities can be “reclaiming environments” that provide a sense of belonging by listening to, interacting with and respecting youth. A sense of mastery is developed when teachers, counsellors and other caring adults help students identify their strengths and build on them. School staff need to create opportunities for students to demonstrate giving and contributing and promote generosity. Focusing on these four core values helps students build character and develop citizenship skills.

Contact information

Reclaiming Youth International
P.O. Box 57
104 North Main Street
Lennox, South Dakota, U.S.A. 57039



Related Web site

www.reclaiming.com



Related publication

Brendtro, Larry, Martin Brokenleg and Steve Van Bockern. *Reclaiming Youth at Risk: Our Hope for the Future*. Bloomington, IL: National Educational Service, 1992.

Community of Caring (Kennedy Foundation)

“The success of this program within our school district has spread to many areas in the province of Alberta ... Records of school suspensions, bullying and other violent behaviours have decreased in one year. The amount of parental involvement, student attendance in school and the number of service learning experiences has all increased. Academically, students improved in the areas of social studies and language arts. We feel that providing students with the opportunity to discuss values in the classroom, particularly how they relate to the curriculum and practising these values on a daily basis has had a profound positive impact on the school culture and its climate.”

– Cheryl McInnes
Consultant, Community of Caring
Calgary Catholic Separate School District

The Community of Caring is a program developed by the Joseph P. Kennedy, Jr. Foundation under the direction of Eunice Kennedy Shriver. The program is a values-based approach to positive decision making. It has been adopted by almost 1,000 schools in the United States and Canada. Based on the core values of caring, respect, responsibility, trust and family, the Community of Caring school framework provides strategies for creating a caring and respectful inclusive school environment. Students learn to avoid risk-taking behaviour through responsible decision making and thoughtful planning for the future. Students observe caring and responsible behaviours modelled by parents, teachers, school staff and community leaders involved in the program. The goal of the program is to create an inclusive school culture whereby all school community members feel safe and cared for. This will reduce destructive behaviours including teen pregnancy, drug and alcohol abuse, use of violence, vandalism, early school-leaving and truancy.

In a Community of Caring school, academics, athletics and the fine arts are not all that is important. Equally important are the relationships that take place within the school community. The components of a Community of Caring school include a comprehensive action plan developed by a coordinating committee and lead teacher/site facilitator. Following a needs assessment of its school culture, each school develops its initiatives by:

- modelling and integrating the five core values in regular classroom learning activities and into the life of the school as a whole

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- providing opportunities for student leadership through forums, cross-grade groups, learning circles, class meetings and opportunities to help one another
- building relationships through family and community involvement
- using service learning and community service to help students grow and strengthen their character
- supporting teachers through staff development and ongoing support.

A Community of Caring school clearly articulates the essence of Catholic education—“What make the Catholic school distinctive is its attempt to generate a community climate in the school that is permeated by the Gospel spirit of freedom and love” (Vatican Council II 1965). This spiritual process also enhances and supports the two fundamental objectives of humanizing education and professionalizing the teaching role.



Related Web site

www.communityofcaring.org

Comprehensive School Health Approach

Comprehensive School Health (CSH) is an integrated approach to helping students enhance their health, develop to their fullest potential, and build productive and satisfying relationships. The goals of this approach are to:

- promote health and wellness
- prevent specific diseases, disorders and injuries
- intervene to assist children and youth in need or at risk
- help support those individuals already experiencing poor health.

The Comprehensive School Health approach is described in both the Kindergarten to Grade 9 Health and Life Skills, and Senior High School Career and Life Management programs of study and their related guides to implementation.

This approach encourages people to work together so that students can make positive choices to enhance their own health and that of the communities in which they live.

There are four main elements of a Comprehensive School Health framework including:

- instruction (health and physical education programs that promote commitment to healthy choices and behaviours)
- support networks (such as peer support and community agencies)
- preventative health services (such as counselling and public health services)
- healthy physical environments (which are clean, safe, and promote and support behaviours which enhance the health of students).

Schools can use the Comprehensive School Health approach to reinforce health-promoting behaviours and to help students develop the skills they need to avoid negative health practices. Activities used in this approach could include teaching students to express feelings appropriately, to resolve conflicts nonviolently and to be involved in more physical activity. This approach can reduce absenteeism and improve student achievement. It can also assist teachers in maximizing instructional time. The overall purpose of the Comprehensive School Health approach is to provide students with a good education, improve their health and foster healthy attitudes and behaviours.



Related Web sites

Health Canada

www.hc-sc.gc.ca/dca-dea/7-18yrs-ans/comphealth_e.html

Canadian Association of School Health

www.schoolfile.com/cash/consensus.htm

Alberta Coalition for Healthy School Communities

www.achsc.org/index.html

www.safehealthyschools.org/personal_family_social_development.htm



Related publications

Alberta Heart Health Project. *Creating Healthy School Communities through Comprehensive School Health: An Implementation Guide for Education/Health Systems and School Communities*. Edmonton, AB: Alberta Health and Wellness, 2000.

Marx, Eva and Susan Frelick Wooley (eds.). *Health is Academic: A Guide to Coordinated School Health Programs*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press, 1998.

Meek, Linda, Philip Heit and Randy Page. *Comprehensive School Health Education: Totally Awesome Strategies for Teaching Health*. Blacklick, OH: Meeks Heit Publishing Co. Inc., 1996.

Developmental Assets (Search Institute)

Developmental assets are critical factors which are positive building blocks for young people's growth and development. The Search Institute identifies 40 developmental assets and groups them into two categories, each with four subcategories:

- external assets (positive experiences young people receive from the world around them)
 - support
 - boundaries and expectations
 - empowerment
 - constructive use of time
- internal assets (characteristics and behaviours that reflect positive internal growth and guide choices of young people)
 - commitment to learning
 - social competencies
 - positive values
 - positive identity.

These assets can influence the choices students make and also help them to becoming caring, competent and responsible individuals.

Schools can consider the concept of developmental assets as they plan for the creation of a positive and supportive environment to support learning. Teachers can incorporate various developmental assets into learning activities across the subject areas. Research indicates that assets serve as protective factors critical to student's resiliency, health and overall life success.

Related Web site

www.search-institute.org/assets/

Related publications

Gemelke, Tenessa and Rita Welch. *Building Assets is Elementary—Group Activities for Helping Kids Ages 8–12 Succeed*. Minneapolis, MN: Search Institute, 2004.

Grothe, Rebecca. *More Building Assets Together: 130 Group Activities for Helping Youth Succeed*. Minneapolis, MN: Search Institute, 2002.

Taccogna, Judy (ed.). *Powerful Teaching: Developmental Assets in Curriculum and Instruction*. Minneapolis, MN: Search Institute, 2003.



Effective Behaviour Supports

Phase 2 of the Safe and Caring Schools (SACS) initiative, Effective Behaviour Supports (EBS), began in the 2001–2002 school year. It includes the following key components:

- a discipline data collection system that clearly measures the present status of the school with respect to inappropriate behaviours, outlines and identifies areas where improvement is needed, and measures progress over time
- a list of schoolwide expectations (e.g., responsibility, respect, safety) that are consistently reinforced in all areas of the school at all times
- the teaching of social skills and positive behaviours that specifically demonstrate those schoolwide expectations (10 to 15 percent of at-risk students require this more explicit support and instruction, and will, in the right environment, migrate to join the large cooperative student group rather than the most challenging group)
- reinforcements and rewards for individuals and groups who consistently demonstrate the expected behaviours (typically 85 percent of students consistently comply with school expectations)
- thorough assessments of some individuals' behaviours to help plan interventions for students presenting with the most challenging behaviours (typically one to seven percent of the school population).

The strength of Effective Behaviour Supports is the systematic inclusion of all of these components consistently and simultaneously. The foundation of the system is the teaching of positive behaviours. The school team use their teaching skills to set students up for academic and social success.

Currently, 249 Alberta school teams have participated in the Effective Behaviour Supports implementation workshops and 180 trained coaches are available to assist schools with implementation. Alberta Education provides workshops, consultation and materials, and collects annual data. The following results have been reported by school teams submitting both baseline and post-intervention data:

- a 70 percent decrease in office referrals for problem behaviours
- a 40 percent decrease in out-of-school suspensions
- a 37 percent decrease in expulsions.

For more information, contact Alberta Education, 780–427–5394.



Related Web site

www.education.gov.ab.ca/safeschools/supports.asp

Emotional Intelligence (Goleman)

Emotional Intelligence, a term coined by author Daniel Goleman, is knowing what your feelings are and being able to use them to make good decisions. Emotional Intelligence (EI) combines both intrapersonal and interpersonal intelligence. The term emotional intelligence relates to the following five characteristics and abilities:

- self-awareness of emotions
- mood management
- self-motivation
- empathy
- managing relationships.

The term “EQ” is often used to represent a relative measure of a person’s healthy or unhealthy development of their innate emotional intelligence.

Goleman believes we must teach children how to recognize and manage their emotions. Educators can model Emotional Intelligence through caring and respectful interactions with children.

Schools can help children develop the ability to manage their emotions and rationality which in turn nurtures their emotional intelligence. Within the classroom, there are many opportunities to teach emotional literacy (ability to experience and manage emotions) which can improve children’s achievement scores and overall performance. Essential life skills related to emotional intelligence include the following:

- knowing, accepting and managing oneself
- connecting, communicating and cooperating with others
- dealing with conflicts.

The Emotional Intelligence approach can be integrated across subject areas and can support cooperative learning. Traits of students who are emotionally competent include: confidence, curiosity, self-control, cooperation and responsibility.

Related Web sites

<http://ei.haygroup.com/default.asp>

www.eiconsortium.org





Related publications

Brearley, Michael. *Emotional Intelligence in the Classroom: Creative Learning Strategies for 11–18 Year Olds*. New York, NY: Crown House Publishing, 2001.

Doty, Gwen. *Fostering Emotional Intelligence in K–8 Students: Simple Strategies and Ready to Use Activities*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press, 2001.

Goleman, Daniel. *Emotional Intelligence: Why it Can Matter More Than IQ*. New York, NY: Bantam, 1997.

Goleman, Daniel. *Working with Emotional Intelligence*. New York, NY: Bantam, 2000.

Mapes, Katta. *Stop! Think! Choose! Building Emotional Intelligence in Young People*. Tucson, AZ: Zephyr Press, 2000.

Habits of Mind (Costa)

A habit is a discipline of the mind that is practised so that it becomes a routine way of working toward a more thoughtful, intelligent action. Costa defines habits of mind as characteristics of what intelligent people do when they are confronted with problems, the resolutions to which are not immediately apparent. Costa and Kallick have identified sixteen habits of mind, including the following:

- persisting
- listening to others—with understanding and empathy
- thinking about our thinking (metacognition)
- questioning and posing problems
- thinking and communicating with clarity and precision
- creating, imagining, innovating
- taking responsible risks
- thinking interdependently.
- managing impulsivity
- thinking flexibly
- striving for accuracy and precision
- applying past knowledge to new situations
- gathering data through all senses
- responding with wonderment and awe
- finding humour
- learning continuously

Costa and Kallick feel that habits of mind are the foundation for building thoughtful learning communities. By routinely practising these habits, students are better equipped to think clearly, confront problems intelligently and make wise decisions.

Many schools in Canada and other countries are infusing this concept of Habits of Mind into instruction by creating a variety of learning opportunities in which students can use and practise these habits.

Related Web site

www.habits-of-mind.net/home.htm

Related publications

Costa, Arthur (ed.). *Developing Minds: Resource Book for Teaching Thinking, 3rd edition*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 2001.

Costa, Arthur L. and Bena Kallick. *Habits of Mind: A Developmental Series*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 2000.

- Book I: *Discovering and Exploring Habits of Mind*
- Book II: *Activating and Engaging Habits of Mind*
- Book III: *Assessing and Reporting on Habits of Mind*
- Book IV: *Integrating and Sustaining Habits of Mind*



Hope Research (Hope Foundation of Alberta)

Ongoing work at the Hope Foundation, a research institute located at the University of Alberta, demonstrates that hope is a multidimensional concept that enables individuals to envision and actively move toward a more positive future. Hope is the motivating factor behind resilience. Higher hope correlates positively with greater sense of self-worth, academic success, social competence and creativity. Students who have a high degree of hope tend to have strong problem-solving abilities and engage in wellness-enhancing activities. On the other hand, hopelessness is the greatest predictor of suicide.

Hope is enhanced, sustained and learned in trusting relationships with significant others. It is about goal setting and attainment; therefore it is both a process and an outcome. Hope is a crucial therapeutic factor that encourages possibility thinking and creative problem solving. This attitude and way of thinking can help individuals take more positive actions during times of adversity.

Schools can help students develop a stronger understanding and sense of hope by:

- integrating hope-focused strategies into learning activities, e.g., developing personal Hope Kits that represent a student's ongoing hopes
- using hopeful words and phrases such as "What is the smallest thing we can do ...?" or "What would a hopeful person do in this situation?"
- providing opportunities for reflection
- implementing assessment and evaluation strategies that encourage students and promote feelings of hopefulness
- increasing service learning opportunities that incorporate hope-focused activities, e.g., HOPE KIDS™
- incorporating story and writing themes that provide opportunities for students to explore and reflect on hopeful ways of thinking and acting.

Contact information

Hope Foundation of Alberta
11032 – 89 Avenue
Edmonton, Alberta T6G 0Z6
Telephone: 780-492-1222
Web site: www.ualberta.ca/hope



Related publications

Jevne, R. F. and J. E. Miller. *Finding Hope: Ways to See Life in a Brighter Light*. Fort Wayne, IN: Willowgreen Publishing, 1999.

Hope Foundation of Alberta. *Hope Tool Kit: Hopeful Strategies and Practices* (to be published in fall 2005).

Lions-Quest Canada/Thrive!

Lions-Quest is a nonprofit international organization with a mission to “provide leadership, knowledge, and resources to develop healthy, capable young people of strong character.”

Lions-Quest programs are based on the theory that children must develop healthy behaviours, communication and decision-making skills, and strong attachments in order to become capable adults. The programs are designed to teach young people life and citizenship skills within a caring and consistent environment.

Lions-Quest programs promote core values such as trustworthiness, respect, responsibility and getting along with others. The aim of the program is to help students discover the positive roles they can play in society while reinforcing positive social behaviour and developing essential citizenship skills. The program offers a two-day teacher inservice and program binders for teachers plus supplementary materials. The learning activities described in the program binders can be integrated into the school day and are often taught within the context of the health and life skills, and language arts programs.

Lions-Quest Skills for Growing program

This program is available for students in Kindergarten through Grade 5. The program focuses on skills in four main areas including responsibility, good judgement, self-discipline and respect for others. The six thematic units are:

- Building A School Community
- Growing as a Group
- Making Positive Decisions
- Setting Goals for Service
- Growing Up Drug-Free
- Celebrating You and Me.

Lions-Quest Skills for Adolescence program

This program is targeted for students in grades 6 through 8. The program works toward establishing a supportive partnership between parents, the school and the community, and includes nine units including the following:

- Entering the Teen Years – The Journey of Adolescence
- Building Self-confidence and Communication Skills
- Service Learning
- Managing Emotions in Positive Ways
- Improving Peer Relationships
- Strengthening Family Relationships
- Making Healthy Choices
- Setting Goals for Healthy Living
- Summing Up: Developing Your Potential.

Lions-Quest Skills for Action program

This program is designed for students in grades 9 through 12 and is based on the theory that young people can take active and meaningful roles in dealing with issues that affect their lives. It builds essential life and citizenship skills by moving beyond the classroom into school-based service learning. The program has four components:

- Building a Learning Community
- Exploring Personal and Social Responsibility
- Project or Placement?
- Evaluating and Sharing Service Expectations.

Contact information

Thrive!
1C – 180 Frobisher Drive
Waterloo, Ontario N2V 2A2
Telephone: 1-800-265-2680
Fax: (519) 725-3118



Related Web site

www.thrivecanada.ca



Related publications

Skills for Action. Newark, OH: Quest International, 1995.

Skills for Adolescence, Fourth Edition. Newark, OH: Quest International, 2001.

Skills for Growing, Second Edition. Newark, OH: Quest International, 1998.

Moral Intelligence (Borba)

Dr. Michele Borba is an educator who promotes practical, solution-based parenting and instructional strategies to strengthen a child's behaviour, sense of self-worth and moral development, and build strong families. Her work revolves around shaping the character and moral destinies of youth with a specific emphasis on moral intelligence. Her wish is that all children are raised with solid character, strong minds and caring hearts.

According to Borba, moral intelligence is the capacity to understand right from wrong; to have strong ethical convictions and to act on them so that one behaves in an honourable way. Moral intelligence consists of seven essential virtues including: empathy, conscience, self-control, respect, kindness, tolerance and fairness. These virtues become a child's moral compass and enable a child to deal with the challenges of everyday life. The foundation of a person's moral intelligence is made up of empathy, conscience and self-control. This is known as the moral core which gives individuals the power to do what's right. Once this foundation is laid, respect (valuing all life) and kindness (sense of decency and compassion in relationships) can be added. Tolerance and fairness are the remaining virtues which are the cornerstones to integrity, justice and citizenship.

Borba says that it is crucial to build children's moral intelligence so they have a deeply developed sense of right and wrong, and can use it to stand up to outside influences. She believes that building children's moral IQ has many benefits, including the following:

- nurturing good character
- getting children on the right course by teaching them how to think and act morally
- teaching critical life skills such as resolving conflict, empathizing and decision making
- promoting a strong sense of citizenship
- inspiring good behaviour and allowing children to become decent, caring and respectful.

Borba believes that all children are born with the capacity of moral intelligence and that since character traits are learned, they can be taught. She asserts that teachers have the power to teach critical character traits and there are many opportunities for them to be woven into learning through the school day and across the subject areas. Borba offers the following five steps to teaching a character trait.

1. Accentuate a character trait.
2. Tell the value and meaning of the trait.
3. Teach what the trait looks and sounds like.
4. Provide opportunities to practise the trait.
5. Provide effective feedback.



Related Web site

www.moralintelligence.com



Related publications

Borba, Michele. *Character Builders: Respect for Self and Others—A K–6 Character Education Program*. Torrance, CA: Jalmar Press, 2000.

Borba, Michele. *Character Builders: Responsibility and Trustworthiness—A K–4 Character Education Program*. Torrance, CA: Jalmar Press, 2000.

Borba, Michele. *Building Moral Intelligence: The Seven Essential Virtues That Teach Kids to Do the Right Thing*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2001.

Borba, Michele. *Character Builders: Positive Attitudes and Peacemaking for Primary Children—A Program to Enhance Positive Attitudes and Peacemaking Skills, Preschool through Third Grade*. Torrance, CA: Jalmar Press, 2001.

Borba, Michele. *Fairness and Cooperation: A K–8 Program to Develop the Skills of Fairness and Cooperation in Students*. Torrance, CA: Jalmar Press, 2003.

Borba, Michele. *Nobody Likes Me, Everybody Hates Me: The Top 25 Friendship Problems and How to Solve Them*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2005.

Professional Learning Communities (DuFour et al.)

In professional learning communities, teachers and school administrators continuously seek and share learning and then act on what they learn. The goal is high achievement and continuous improvement for all students, no matter what their individual circumstances. The objective is to enhance their effectiveness as professionals and improve their students' learning. Key questions that can guide the development of a professional learning community are:

1. What do we expect students to learn?
2. How will we know if students have learned it?
3. What will we do if students have not learned it?

Key ingredients for a successful learning community include the following:

- supportive leadership from principals who share authority, empower, and facilitate the work of their staff
- a shared vision that is focused on student learning and reflects the staff's commitment to students' learning
- collaboration among teachers in planning instruction, observing each other's classrooms, sharing feedback, and applying what they have learned to new solutions to address students' needs
- capacity to analyze data and use it to guide decisions
- a supportive environment including adequate resources and policies that foster collaboration, effective communication and staff development
- shared accountability for the achievement of students
- above all, time—structured time to allow teachers to work together, assess their students' learning, adjust practices, and continuously improve their students' results.

Research on professional learning communities suggests that there are clear benefits.

The benefits for staff include:

- reduced isolation of teachers
- increased commitment to the mission and goals of the school
- shared responsibility for the development and success of students
- powerful learning that defines good teaching and classroom practice
- better understanding of the content teachers teach and the roles they play in helping students meet expectations
- significant advances in adapting teaching to the students
- more satisfaction and higher morale
- lower rates of absenteeism.

The benefits for students include:

- decreased drop-outs
- lower rates of absenteeism
- enhanced learning and critical thinking
- greater academic gains
- smaller achievement gaps among students from different backgrounds.

A number of schools in the province have taken steps to become professional learning communities, often through the support of the Alberta Initiative for School Improvement. The Alberta Teachers' Association has also been actively working with schools to implement the professional learning communities model within the Alberta context. A series of interactive workshops that draw heavily on the literature from authors such as Richard DuFour, Linda Lambert, Peter Senge and Michael Fullan has been designed to develop the school's capacity to function as a professional learning community. Because there is no set formula for becoming a learning community, each school must consider its culture of learning and determine those structures that will lead to the best course of action. These workshops focus on supporting teaching to enhance student learning while providing opportunities for participants to reflect on the unique needs of their school and community.



Related Web sites

www.nationaleducationalservice.com/Public/prof.asp
(click on Professional Learning Communities)

www.teachers.ab.ca



Related publications

DuFour, Richard et al. *Whatever It Takes: How Professional Learning Communities Respond When Kids Don't Learn*. Bloomington, IN: National Educational Service, 2004.

Eaker, Robert, Richard DuFour and Rebecca Burnette. *Getting Started: Reculturing Schools to Become Professional Learning Communities*. Bloomington, IN: National Educational Service, 2002.

Hord, Shirley M. *Professional Learning Communities: Communities of Continuous Inquiry and Improvement*. Austin, TX: Southwest Educational Development Laboratory, 1997.

Resiliency Research

Resiliency can be described as the ability to bounce back and cope effectively with life's difficulties. Resilient individuals tend to be academically and socially successful, have effective relationships and be goal oriented. They also possess many positive qualities, including the following:

- ability to control their own behaviour
- expectations for a healthy lifestyle
- service orientated (give to others)
- optimism
- sense of humour
- morality (sense of right and wrong)
- strong problem-solving skills
- perceptiveness
- independence
- self-motivation
- creativity
- empathetic.

Protective factors are those characteristics and experiences that help individuals develop a personal resiliency and be more able to overcome difficulties. Research identifies the following protective factors:

- high behaviour expectations
- strong social skills
- positive bonding with at least one significant adult
- meaningful participation at home, in school and/or in the community.

Schools can foster resiliency by:

- creating a positive school climate
- setting high standards for learning and behaviour
- providing opportunities for students to develop and demonstrate responsibility and decision making
- encouraging students to develop and maintain friendships
- mentoring of students by adults and peers
- providing opportunities for students to participate in activities that create opportunities to contribute to others.

Schools can help students build internal protective factors by encouraging creativity, fostering a love for learning, teaching prosocial skills and providing opportunities for students to become more independent. These factors help students overcome setbacks, and maintain strength and balance in their lives. Increasing the protective factors in children's lives can help them become more caring, confident and competent members of society.



Related Web sites

Resiliency in Action
www.resiliency.com

AADAC
<http://teacher.aadac.com>

Health Canada
www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hecs-sesc/cds/publications/#public_resiliency



Related publications

Henderson, Nan and Mike Milstein. *Resiliency in Schools: Making it Happen for Students and Educators*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press, 2002.

Henderson, Nan, Bonnie Bernard and Nancy Sharp Light (eds.). *Schoolwide Approaches to Fostering Resiliency*. San Diego, CA: Resiliency in Action Inc., 2000.

Krovetz, Martin. *Fostering Resiliency: Expecting All Students to Use their Minds and Hearts Well*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press, 1998.

Milstein, Mike and Doris Annie Henry. *Spreading Resiliency: Making It Happen for Schools and Communities*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press, 1999.

Thomsen, Kate. *Building Resilient Students: Integrating Resiliency Into What You Already Know and Do*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press, 2002.

Safe and Caring Schools Initiative

The Safe and Caring Schools (SACS) Initiative was introduced in 1996 throughout Alberta. The goal of this provincial government-funded initiative was to provide a collaborative and integrated approach to reducing violence in schools. It was launched in response to the perception that standards of student conduct were declining and violence in schools was increasing.

Although the conduct of a small minority of students in our schools today is challenging to educators and parents, Alberta schools continue to be a safe place for the vast majority of students. Therefore, from its inception, the SACS Initiative concentrated on providing information and resources addressing the needs of students whose behaviour is negatively affecting the learning and teaching environments. Rather than simply identifying what is wrong with our schools or focusing on the number of violent incidents in schools, the various projects within the SACS Initiative work toward positive outcomes.

Safe and Caring Schools is more a concept than a package of materials or a program; it is a comprehensive framework that assists schools in developing their capacity to provide safe and caring environments by promoting respectful and responsible behaviours.

The mission of SACS is to encourage and assist members of the school community in developing the knowledge, skills and supports to ensure that all schools are safe and caring. The goals are to:

- identify and promote effective practices, programs and policies to prevent, respond to and correct any behaviour that is disruptive to teaching and learning
- ensure that all schools are safe and caring
- develop strategies and programs for prevention, intervention and continuous evaluation
- have schools play a leadership role because of their tremendous potential to positively influence the lives of young people
- promote the development of responsible, caring and respectful members of a democratic society
- combine the efforts of government, school boards, schools, students, parents, police and community members to ensure that all Alberta school staff are safe and caring as they strive toward academic excellence
- provide opportunities for active participation by all partners to ensure that schools and communities are safe and caring.

Section 28(7) of the Alberta *School Act* placed a specific duty on school boards to ensure that all students are provided with a safe and caring environment that fosters and maintains respectful and responsible behaviours. School boards are required to report efforts and activities undertaken to ensure that their schools are safe and caring.

The building and sustaining of safe and caring schools included the following projects.

- The Faculties of Education at the Universities of Alberta, Calgary and Lethbridge published a number of articles on the collaborative research conducted to build insight into the understanding of the social, psychological, historical and personal dimensions of serious disruptive behaviour and violence in Alberta schools. Results of this research and its implications for practice at the school level have been published in *Building Foundations for Safe and Caring Schools: Research on Disruptive Behaviour and Violence* (1999) by Grace Malicky, Bonnie Shapiro and Kas Mazurek.
- The Alberta Teachers' Association (ATA) developed research-based bullying and violence prevention programs and resources for students, teachers and parents that focus on the following five topics:
 - living respectfully/building a safe and caring classroom (developing positive classroom climate and an understanding of and commitment to respect and responsibility)
 - developing self-esteem (exploring individual strengths and weaknesses, and our relationships with others)
 - respecting diversity and preventing prejudice (learning about and appreciating multiple perspectives)
 - managing anger, and dealing with bullying and harassment (addressing bullying and anger in self and others)
 - resolving conflicts peacefully/working it out together (using skills and courteous behaviours to resolve conflicts and solve problems).

In 2004, the ATA's SACS Project was incorporated as The Society for Safe and Caring Schools and Communities (SACSC). The Society is governed by a board of directors with representation from the Alberta Schools Boards Association, the College of Alberta School Superintendents, the Alberta Teachers' Association, parents, police, Aboriginal communities, universities, service clubs and a number of members-at-large. The Society has charitable status.

The Society for Safe and Caring Schools and Communities seeks to prevent bullying and violence by educating children and youth and the adults in their lives in a way that promotes positive social interaction among all human beings. The programs of this nonprofit organization aim to prevent violence and bullying in schools and communities through character education, conflict-management training and building respect for diversity. They promote a problem-solving approach to discipline that encourages positive social behaviour by helping young people learn from their mistakes and understand why certain behaviour is inappropriate.

SACSC uses a comprehensive approach that includes components for students, teachers, support staff, parents and other members of the community. The Society for SACSC has no religious affiliations. The values promoted through SACSC character education, such as respect, responsibility, inclusiveness, caring and compassion, are acceptable among all cultural and religious groups.

SACSC curriculum resources, for early childhood to Grade 12, integrate knowledge, skills and attitudes related to the five safe and caring topics into all grades and across subject areas. The Kindergarten to Grade 6 resources, *Toward a Safe and Caring Curriculum*, include sample learning activities, teacher tips and learning strategies. The learning activities can be used across subject areas and the resource is an authorized teaching resource for the Kindergarten to Grade 6 health and life skills program. These resources are available for purchase from the Learning Resources Centre.

Toward a Safe and Caring Curriculum at the secondary level integrates violence prevention, and safe and caring skills and attitudes across the subject areas. Unit and lesson plans, as well as instructional strategies, are available on the SACSC Web site, www.sacsc.ca.

A SACSC professional development program helps teachers integrate safe and caring principles into their teaching practice by using three approaches:

- modelling safe and caring behaviour in teacher–student relationships and discipline practices
- integrating safe and caring knowledge, skills and attitudes into prescribed curriculum by linking outcomes
- using instructional methods that help students develop safe and caring knowledge, skills and attitudes through active classroom participation.

The professional development program includes a number of workshops for teachers and other school staff. In addition, teachers can participate in Web-based micro-workshops on topics such as School Climate, Responding to Inappropriate Behaviour and Brain Research. Curriculum, school leadership and facilitator training programs are also offered. Post-secondary credit is available for completion of these programs.

A student survey titled *Supporting a Safe and Caring School: What Students Say* helps assess school climate and identify the amount of bullying in the school. The survey instrument is available on the SACSC Web site. It is also included in Appendix B of this resource.

Over 28 research-based resource booklets have been written for teachers, students and parents on topics including bullying, media violence, peer support, diversity issues, brain research and complexity theory to name a few. Scripts for student assemblies are available for school administrators to use to introduce the safe and caring topics. A complete list of these resources is available on the SACSC Web site.

A series of workshops for parents and other adults in the community has been developed to help adults become better role models of safe and caring behaviour, and to help parents reinforce what the students are learning through the SACSC resources and other school programs. The series includes 25 hours of instruction based on the five safe and caring school topics. A certificate and post-secondary credit is available for completion of this workshop series. Additional post-secondary credit is available for completion of the facilitator training program that prepares instructors to deliver the workshop series in their communities.

- Alberta Education has developed resources to help school staff, working in collaboration with parents and community members, in planning and implementing effective policies, programs and practices that are legally, educationally and professionally sound. The resources are:
 - *Supporting Safe, Secure and Caring Schools in Alberta* (1999)
 - *Supporting the Social Dimension: A Resource Guide for Teachers, Grades 7–12* (2002)
 - *Working Together for Safe and Caring Schools, Grades 7–12: Resource Manual for Students, Staff and Parents* (2003).

Contact information

The Society for Safe and Caring Schools and Communities (SACSC)
Office
Barnett House, 11010 – 142 Street
Edmonton, Alberta T5N 2R1
Telephone: 1–800–232–7208

Education Manager
Safe and Caring Schools
Special Programs Branch
Alberta Education
8th Floor, 44 Capital Boulevard
10044 – 108 Street
Edmonton, Alberta T5J 5E6
Telephone: 780–422–6326
Fax: 780–422–2039

Related Web sites

The Society for Safe and Caring Schools and Communities
www.sacsc.ca

Toward a Safe and Caring Secondary Curriculum
www.sacsc.ca/resources.htm

Related publications

Alberta Learning. *Supporting Safe, Secure and Caring Schools in Alberta*.
Edmonton, AB: Alberta Learning, 1999.

Alberta Learning. *Supporting the Social Dimension: A Resource Guide for
Teachers, Grades 7–12*. Edmonton, AB: Alberta Learning, 2002.

Alberta Learning. *Working Together for Safe and Caring Schools, Grades
7–12: Resource Manual for Students, Staff and Parents*. Edmonton,
AB: Alberta Learning, 2003.

Alberta Teachers' Association. *Toward a Safe and Caring Curriculum:
Resources for Integration (K–6)*. Edmonton, AB: Alberta Teachers'
Association's Safe and Caring Schools Project, 1998.



Skillstreaming: New Strategies and Perspectives for Teaching Prosocial Skills (Goldstein and McGinnis)

Developed by Dr. Arnold P. Goldstein and Dr. Ellen McGinnis, the Skillstreaming resources address the social skill needs of students who display aggression, immaturity, withdrawal and other problem behaviours. The Skillstreaming approach has four components:

- modelling (learning by imitation)
- role-playing (enacting a role helps individuals change their behaviour or attitudes)
- performance feedback (offering constructive suggestions, encouragement and approval)
- transfer of training and homework (students use a particular skill in a real-life setting).

The goal of the lessons in the resource is to help students cope with interpersonal conflicts, develop self-control and contribute to a positive classroom atmosphere.

Skillstreaming the Elementary School Child (1997)

This resource contains 60 skill lessons and is divided into the following five skill groups:

- Classroom survival skills
- Friendship-making skills
- Dealing with feelings.
- Alternatives to aggression
- Dealing with stress

Skillstreaming the Adolescent (1997)

This resource contains 50 skill lessons and is divided into the following six skill groups:

- Beginning social skills
- Advanced social skills
- Dealing with feelings
- Alternatives to aggression
- Dealing with stress
- Planning skills.

A teacher guide, student manual, program forms and skill cards are available for both levels. The resources present practical, real-life skills for making the classroom a safe place. The skills presented in the Skillstreaming program help students develop their ability to learn from their experiences and to better deal with life's challenges.



Related Web site

www.skillstreaming.com



Related publications

Goldstein, Arnold P. and Ellen McGinnis with Robert P. Sprafkin, N. Jane Gershaw and Paul Klein. *Skillstreaming the Adolescent: New Strategies and Perspectives for Teaching Prosocial Skills*. Champaign, IL: Research Press, 1997.

McGinnis, Ellen and Arnold P. Goldstein. *Skillstreaming in Early Childhood: New Strategies and Perspectives for Teaching Prosocial Skills*. Champaign, IL: Research Press, 1997.

McGinnis, Ellen and Arnold P. Goldstein. *Skillstreaming the Elementary School Child: New Strategies and Perspectives for Teaching Prosocial Skills*. Champaign, IL: Research Press, 1997.

Virtues Project (Popov, Popov and Kavelin)

The Virtues Project, founded by Linda Kavelin Popov, Dr. Dan Popov and John Kavelin, is an initiative focused on the practice of virtues in everyday life. According to the Virtues Project, virtues are the essence of human spirit and gifts of character. The approach incorporates five strategies, including the following.

- Speak the language of the virtues (language shapes character).
- Recognize teachable moments (helps build character in ourselves and others).
- Set clear boundaries (creates a climate of peace and safety).
- Honour the spirit (expressing what is meaningful in our lives).
- Offer spiritual companionship (listening with compassion).

Many schools in Canada, the United States and other countries have adopted the Virtues Project approach to develop a culture of caring and character. The virtues can be integrated across subject areas. Teachers and administrators are encouraged to use the “language of the virtues” and encourage students to do the same. The approach also encourages “virtue of the month” as a way of focusing schools and offers strategies for recognizing students who demonstrate target virtues.

Contact information

E-mail: WesternCanada@virtuesproject.com



Related Web site

www.virtuesproject.com/index.php



Related publications

Popov, Linda Kavelin. *The Virtues Project: Simple Ways to Create a Culture of Character—Educator’s Guide*. Torrance, CA: Jalmar Press, 2000.

Popov, Linda Kavelin. *A Pace of Grace: The Virtues of a Sustainable Life*. New York, NY: Plume, 2004.

Popov, Linda Kavelin, Don Popov and John Kavelin. *The Family Virtues Guide—Simple Ways to Bring Out the Best in Our Children and Ourselves*. Toronto, ON: Penguin Books of Canada Ltd., 1997.

You Can Do It! (Bernard)

“You Can Do It” is a program founded by Dr. Michael E. Bernard and designed to help young people develop their academic, interpersonal and emotional potential. Bernard believes that there are four foundations which all children need to possess in order to achieve social-emotional-behavioural well-being including confidence, persistence, organization and getting along with others.

He also identifies eleven Positive Habits of the Mind that support and nourish these foundations, including the following:

- self-acceptance
- independence
- internal focus of control for learning (giving effort)
- time management
- reflective problem solving
- risk taking
- optimism
- high frustration tolerance
- goal setting
- tolerance of others
- tolerance of limits.

Bernard feels that we need to teach students the Habits of the Mind to give them strategies for coping with an increasingly complex curriculum and the pressures of growing up. Helping students develop these characteristics helps them believe that they can take responsibility for their own learning.

Many schools in Canada use Bernard’s ideas to:

- support developing a culture of achievement and social-emotional health
- help students become successful learners
- develop a positive mindset for achievement
- help parents support their child’s achievement at home.

Teachers can use these ideas to help students develop competencies, attitudes and behaviours for achieving their best and increasing their effectiveness as learners. These concepts can be integrated into various subjects and are effective for teaching many of the outcomes included in the health and life skills curriculum. Bernard encourages teachers, parents and the community to work together for the common good of the students by believing in the value of education and the importance of children’s efforts.

Related Web site

www.youcandoiteducation.com





Related publications

Bernard, Michael E. *You Can Do It: How to Boost Your Child's Achievement in School*. New York, NY: Warner Books, 1997.

Bernard, Michael E. *Program Achieve: A Curriculum of Lessons for Teaching Students How to Achieve Success and Develop Social-Emotional Well Being, 2nd edition*. Athens, ON: Hindle & Associates, 2001.

Bernard, Michael E. *You Can Do It: A Motivational and Personal Development Curriculum to Increase Achievement and Happiness in School and Life*. Laguna Beach, CA: You Can Do It! Education, 2003.