

Abstract of Film Clips for Character Education Program Effectiveness Study in Georgia

In the Spring of 2006, a study testing the effectiveness of the new Film Clips for Character Education curriculum was conducted in an after-school program of a rural Georgia County. The subjects were ninety three 4th, 5th and 6th grade students. These students were considered “at risk” due to their failure to pass the criterion reference tests of the State of Georgia required to be promoted to the next grade. Of the 93 subjects, 51 were male (55%) and 42 were female (45%). 70% of the participants were African-American (N=66), 25% were white (N=23), 3% Asian-American (N=3) and 1% Hispanic (N=1). The subjects were randomly assigned to two conditions, those who attended a months worth of classes (9 sessions) using the Film Clips Character Education Curriculum (N=47) and those who had no special Character Education classes, but participated in normal after school activities (N=46, 16 of these control subjects came from a second rural county in Georgia). Subjects were tested at Time 1 (before intervention began) and Time 2 (after completion of intervention) using the *Interpersonal Reactivity Index (IRI)* (Davis, 1983), *The Concern for Others Scale (COS)* (Solomon, Battistich, Watson, Schaps, & Lewis, 2000) and *The Moral Theme Inventory (MTI)* (Narvaez, Gleason, Mitchell, & Bentley, 1999). The results show that those who participated in the program significantly improved over time in the degree to which they endorsed higher moral stage reasoning compared to those who did not participate. ($M(\text{control})=1.92$, $SD=0.82$, $M(\text{experimental})=2.26$, $SD=0.64$; $F(1,93)=5.85$, $p=.017$). Endorsing higher moral stage reasoning indicates an improved ability to consider more than just one’s own self-interest in moral decision making.

Results Summary of Film Clips for Character Education Program Effectiveness Study
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The goal of the Film Clips for Character Education curriculum is to impact the moral development of children through teacher-led discussion of film clips that illustrate desirable character traits. Progress in areas of moral reasoning, behavior and character is expected because: 1) the focus of the discussions on the impact of behavior on others, and 2) attention to the feelings of others both as illustrated in the film clip and in the lives of the students. The hope is that students begin to reason with more than egocentric values in mind and begin to take into consideration the perspective of others in their moral reasoning and action.

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school activities (n=46, 16 of these control subjects came from a second rural county in Georgia).

The participants were tested at Time 1 (before intervention began) and Time 2 (after completion of intervention) on the following measures:

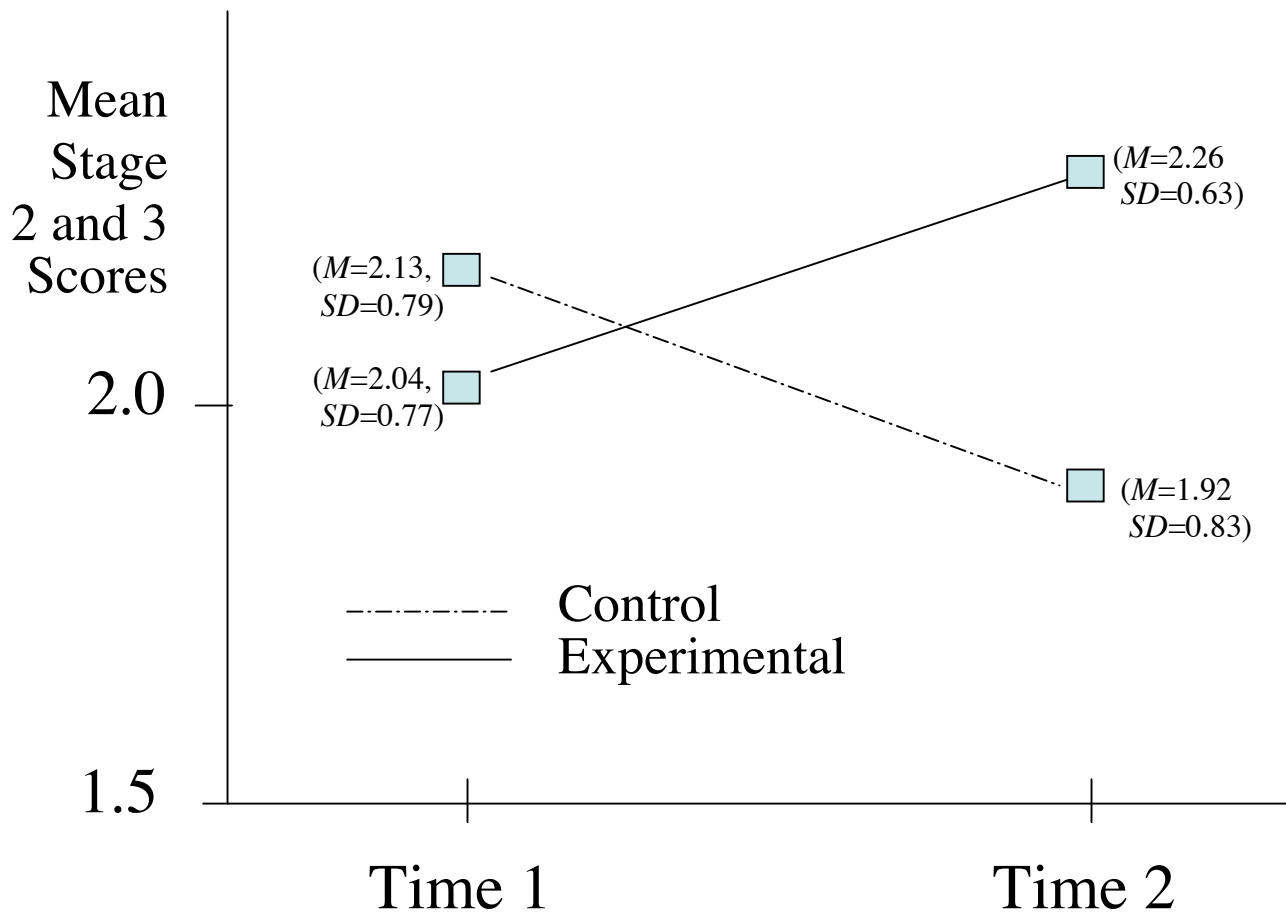
Interpersonal Reactivity Index (IRI) (Davis, 1983). The IRI is a 28-item self-report questionnaire consisting of four 7-item subscales, each assessing a specific aspect of empathy. The four subscales are: Fantasy Scale, Empathic Concern, Perspective Taking and Personal Distress.

The Concern for Others Scale (COS). (Solomon, Battistich, Watson, Schaps, & Lewis, 2000) is a prosocial attitudes self-report instrument developed to assess the impact on the prosocial attitudes of children of the program developed by the Child Development Project for use in public grade schools in California.

The Moral Theme Inventory (MTI) (Narvaez, Gleason, Mitchell, & Bentley, 1999). The MTI consists of 4 stories about moral dilemmas (two are used at pretest, two at posttest). Each story has a complex moral message and contains a dilemma that the protagonist in the story must resolve by affirming the values of the theme of the story. The story is read out loud to the subjects via audio tape. Participants respond with two types of task with each stimulus 1) rating the closeness of the theme of the vignette (paragraph-long stories with the same or different theme), or message (brief sentence –long themes) to the original story theme and 2) selecting the vignette or message with the same theme as the original story. Embedded within the messages are distractor variables based on Rest's version of Kohlberg's moral judgment stages (stages 1-3).

To assess the attraction of the participant to higher stage reasoning, the participant's ratings to the stage 2 and stage 3 distractor messages were combined and averaged for a mean higher stage score. A two-way Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) was conducted with the mean higher stage score at posttest as the dependant variable, the mean higher stage score at pretest as the covariate and group status as the random factor. The results show that those who participated in the program significantly improved over time in the degree to which they endorsed higher moral stage reasoning compared to those who did not participate. ($M(\text{control})=1.92$, $SD=0.82$, $M(\text{experimental})=2.26$, $SD=0.64$; $F(1,93)=5.18$, $p=.025$, observed power = .615, $\alpha=.05$). A Chi-Square analysis was conducted to determine direction of the change scores for the stage 2 (change score = stage 2 rating at posttest – the stage 2 rating at pretest). Results indicate that a significant number of participants in the experimental condition increased their endorsement of stage 2 messages compared to their control counterparts ($X^2(1,93)= 5.87$, $p = .025$)

The following graph illustrates the effect of the intervention:



References:

Davis, M. H. (1983). Measuring individual differences in empathy: Evidence for a multidimensional approach. *Social Psychology, 44*, 113-126.

Narvaez, D., Gleason, T., Mitchell, C., & Bentley, J. (1999). Moral Theme comprehension in children. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 91*(3), 477-487.

Solomon, D., Battistich, V., Watson, M., Schaps, E. & Lewis, C. (2000). A six-district study of educational change: direct and mediated effects of the child development project. *Social Psychology of Education, 4*, 3-51

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47 control
 46 experimental
 21 school 1
 17 school 2
 17 school 3
 22 school 4
 16 school 5 (control only)

25 % white (23)
 70 % AA (66)
 1% Hispanic (1)
 3% Asian (3)
 10% no data

55% male (51)
 45% female (42)

control 24 males, 22 females
 exp 26 males, 19 females

Control 19 whites, 26 AA, 2 Asian
 Exp 4 whites, 40 AA, 1 Hispanic, 1 Asian

No sig difference between control groups from different counties on preSTG23mn
 Meri = 4.14 Union = 4.34

Sign difference between counties in reading preRCmti ($t = -5.97$ $p = .000$) Union county had higher scores ($m = 18$) than Meriwether ($m = 14$)