I. Citation Info

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Cultivating the Academic Integrity of Urban Adolescents with Ethical Philosophy Programming

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Abstract
This mixed-methods study considered the effects of ethical philosophy programming at a high-performing, high-poverty urban high school upon the academic integrity of participating adolescents (n = 279). Analyses of pre-post survey data revealed that participating adolescents reported significantly higher levels of academic integrity than their peers at a matched comparison school. Field notes from observations of ethical philosophy
lessons and qualitative interviews with participating students revealed that this programming offered students frequent opportunities to practice moral reasoning and introduced philosophical perspectives that influenced students’ conception of and commitment to academic integrity.

II. Study Description

Intervention Description
Name of the program/study condition: Classical Academy’s ethical philosophy programming

- Main purpose or general description:
  - The Classical Academy’s ethical philosophy programming seeks “to help students understand their role in society and share their own moral principles” (p. 146).

- Theoretical background:
  - Adolescent identity development (Erickson, 1965, 1968)

- Components:
  - Weekly lessons about ethical philosophy.
  - Students at all levels explore writings of classical philosophers such as Aristotle and Epictetus, and contemporary thinkers such as Mahatma Gandhi and W.E.B. DuBois.

- Previous studies / evaluations: N/A

Implementation Elements
Content elements:
- Ethical philosophy

Pedagogical strategies:
- Discussions
- Debates
- Reflection

Research Question(s) / Hypotheses
- “What is the effect of Classical Academy’s ethical philosophy programming on participating students’ commitment to academic integrity in comparison to their peers at a matched comparison school?” (p. 145)
- “How do Classical Academy students describe and understand the impact of the school’s ethical philosophy programming on their commitment to acting with integrity?” (p. 145)

Research Methods
Sample Description:
- Total N final sample: n = 283 at pre-test and 226 at post-test; final n = 279.
  - Control school: 157 at pre-test (92% of the total number of students in the school) and 120 at post-test
• Intervention school: 126 at pre-test (94% of the total number of students in the school) and 106 at post-test

• Composition:
  o Gender:
    ▪ Intervention school: 49% female.
    ▪ Comparison school: 51% female.
  o Location: charter schools at a large northeastern city in the United States.
  o Ages: 9th to 12th grades (ages not specified).
  o Ethnicity:
    ▪ Intervention school: 59% African American, 13% Latino, 9% White, 20% Multiracial.
    ▪ Comparison school: 57% African American, 6% Latino, 25% White, 11% Multiracial.
  o SES:
    ▪ Intervention school: 73% qualified for free or reduced lunch.
    ▪ Comparison school: 54% qualified for free or reduced lunch.
  o Special education: N/A
  o Family composition: N/A
  o Other:
    ▪ Intervention school: on the 2011 high-stakes state tests, 100% of the 10th grade students scored advanced or proficient on the math assessment and 98% scored advanced or proficient on the English assessment.
    ▪ Comparison school: on the 2011 high-stakes state tests, 91% of the 10th grade students scored advanced or proficient on the math assessment and 97% scored advanced or proficient on the English assessment.

Measures:
• Academic Integrity (adapted from Academic Motivation and Integrity Survey; Stephens, Young, & Calabrese, 2007):
  o Assesses students’ willingness to engage in cheating behaviors under specific circumstances (e.g., when other peers are cheating).
• Interview protocol about students’ experiences within the ethical philosophy courses.
• Field notes from classroom and school activities’ observations.

Procedures:
• Design:
  o Quasi-experimental
• Times of assessment:
  o Pre-test: opening week of academic school year 2010-2011
  o Post-test: June 2011
• Assignment method:
Level of assignment: schools.

A comparison schools with similar characteristics than the intervention school was (not randomly) assigned.

Research results*
* Only results related to intervention effectiveness (quantitative measures) are reported here.

Intervention effectiveness:
• Multilevel regression model: when compared to the comparison school, students in the intervention school demonstrated a significantly higher commitment to academic integrity over the course of the academic year.
• The effect of attending the intervention school upon the academic integrity of the participants is relatively small (Cohens d = .27).
• The “random effects for this model suggest that the particular cohort in which students were embedded for their ethical philosophy courses did not have a significant effect upon students’ integrity scores” (p. 150).
• Ninth graders at both schools demonstrated higher commitment to academic integrity than their peers in 10th, 11th, and 12th grades.
• There was a tendency of a negative cross-level interaction between being in the 9th grade and attending the intervention school. “This interaction suggests that attending Classical Academy had a weaker effect upon the academic integrity scores of ninth-grade students than upon the school’s upperclassmen” (p. 149).

Summary of results
“Analyses of pre-post survey data revealed that participating adolescents reported significantly higher levels of academic integrity than their peers at a matched comparison school” (p. 142).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OUTCOME VARIABLE</th>
<th>DIRECTION (positive, neutral, iatrogenic)</th>
<th>SIGNIFICANCE</th>
<th>P VALUE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academic integrity</td>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>Significant</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Study limitations
• Intervention and comparison schools represent high performing urban public schools (not representative of other public schools).
• Lack of true experimental design.

Outcome Variables Taxonomy
• Academic integrity
Program Association
Classical Academy’s ethical philosophy programming