

ABSTRACT

VALUES-BASED CHARACTER EDUCATION: A META-ANALYSIS OF PROGRAM EFFECTS ON STUDENT KNOWLEDGE, ATTITUDES, AND BEHAVIORS

The purpose of this study was to investigate the effectiveness of character education on student knowledge, attitudes, and behavior. The Internet, ERIC, and PsycInfo databases were searched to obtain studies published between the years of 1990 and 2002 (including dissertation abstracts, journal articles, and unpublished manuscripts) involving U.S. public school children in grades K-12. The obtained studies were organized according to characteristics of the intervention, student population, dependent variables, and methodology. A meta-analysis was conducted to determine overall effect size (r), which was found to be small but significant (.10). Average effect sizes for overall behaviors (.14) and knowledge (.20) were also small but significant. The overall effect found for attitudes was not significant (.07), however. The highest effects were found for attitudes to verbal aggression (.56), and knowledge of the risks of cigarettes (.44) and alcohol (.39).

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