

INTERNALIZATION OF CHARACTER TRAITS BY THOSE WHO TEACH CHARACTER COUNTS!

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Figure 1. Kohlberg's Six Stages of Moral Reasoning.

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to determine if the act of teaching character education programs, such as Character Counts!, affected the internalization of taught ethical values. Fifty-three Cooperative Extension personnel completed a web-based survey analyzing Character Counts! impact on Cooperative Extension, the personal life of Extension educators and assistants, and society. Results demonstrated that Extension educators and assistants were more likely to make ethical decisions in the areas of Cooperative Extension, personal life, and society as a result of teaching Character Counts!. Collected data also suggested the need for increased implementation of Character Counts! principles in Cooperative Extension programming, broader networking between character education supporters, and increased program evaluation, additional reinforcement, and results analysis.

INTRODUCTION

Throughout a lifetime, there are numerous opportunities to experience character development. Through successes and failures, a moralistic foundation is then created. As one continues to experience life, additional values and character traits are implemented to strengthen this foundation. In many instances, this foundation is continually relied upon as a background for important decision-making processes. As a result of the current ethical trend of society, these processes warp due to outside, unethical influences.

Increased character education is one alternative available to help remedy the mayhem of moral decline in America. Research suggests a correlation between the teaching of character education of youth and its positive ethical results throughout the United States. While these findings demonstrate positive changes experienced by youth audiences, no research to date has been conducted on the effects that teaching Character

Counts! has on those teaching the program. In essence, is the act of teaching character education programs, such as Character Counts!, an element of internalizing taught ethical values? Specifically, this research project examined Character Counts! impact on Cooperative Extension, the personal life of Extension educators and assistants, and society. This project also analyzed the following hypothesis and demonstrated how it applies to modern-day character education:

Extension educators and assistants internalize the ethical concepts that they teach via Character Counts!. Their workplace, personal life, and societal life are all affected by this increased character education instruction. Their direct experiences through Character Counts! instruction assist them in applying ethical principles in their everyday lives.

In a recent survey of 20,829 high school and middle school students conducted by the Josephson Institute of Ethics (1997):

- 47% of all high school students said they had stolen something from a store in the past year.
- 70% of the high school students confessed to cheating at least once in the past year.
- 91% said they were “satisfied with my own ethics and character.”
- 97% said “it is important for me to be a person with good character!”

At the same time, throughout 1995, one out of three students surveyed stole something from a store one or more times (Dougherty, 1996). According to a survey done by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 45% of students surveyed agreed that cheating is a serious problem in their schools, while 38% agreed that stealing

was a serious problem (Boyer, 1995).

These statistics are not restricted to the young. According to a recent survey of the Josephson Institute of Ethics (1997), one in five American workers admitted they lied to a superior in the last year. In fact, roughly 25% have lied to a subordinate or a customer. One in three admits that when competitive pressures hit at work, they resort to cheating or lying to make things easier. The honesty quotient does not improve on the home front. Twenty-five percent of adult children lied to their own parent in the past twelve months. One-third lied to their spouse, while one in four lied to their own children (Josephson, 1997).

Crime and violence are also on the rise. For example, in 1960, the total crime rate per 100,000 Americans was 1,890; in 1998, the crime rate increased to 4,620. In addition, the violent crime rate nearly quadrupled between 1960 and 1998. These statistics are not restricted to adults. In 1970, arrest rates for violent offenses of 15-17 year olds were 380 per 100,000 Americans; in 1998, the arrest rates for violent offenses of this same age category were 670 (United States Department of Justice, 1998).

THE NEED FOR CHARACTER EDUCATION

The picture painted by these findings suggests the need for a commitment toward enhancing the value individuals place on traits such as trustworthiness and respect. It also suggests the need for an increased emphasis on character training. No longer can we rely on families to be the only, or even the primary, force in shaping the character of children. In the 1995 Survey on the Advancement of Teaching sponsored by the Carnegie Foundation, 70% of the U.S. parents questioned agreed that the family has the primary responsibility for developing values in children (Boyer, 1995). While U.S. families may strongly believe character education should occur at home, given the crime, violence and deception statistics, it is evidence that this "in home" approach needs support from other entities.

HISTORY OF CHARACTER EDUCATION

Early Teaching of Ethics . The teaching of ethics and moral development has long been an interest of educators. Character education was often associated with education in general. Throughout history, the two goals of education were to help people become smart and to help them become good (Lickona, 1991). Acting on that belief, schools tackled character education through discipline, the teacher's example, and the daily school curriculum. The Bible was the public school's sourcebook for both moral and religious instruction. When struggles eventually arose over whose Bible to use and which doctrines to teach, William McGuffey, in 1836, offered the McGuffey Readers. McGuffey retained many favorite Biblical stories but added poems, exhortations and heroic tales. While children practiced their reading or arithmetic, they also learned lessons about honesty, love of neighbor, hard work, thriftiness, and courage (Lickona, 1991).

Kantian Theory. Another major force in the field of character education was the 18th century philosopher, Immanuel Kant. Kant wrote about the duties and obligations of moral people. Kant believed that people should act in such a way that their actions become moral law. Kantian theory, later known as the Kantian Categorical Imperative, stated that each situation should be approached in the same manner, which would result in identical results, regardless of individual circumstances (Benninga, 1997).

Logical Positivism. In the 20th century, the consensus supporting character education began to crumble. Darwin's introduction of evolution led people to see ideas, including morality, as being in discord with real-life issues and situations. No longer did


society see issues as being black and white. Long-held beliefs about the real meaning of "truth" were questioned (Kohlberg, 1976).

The philosophy of logical positivism, transmitting from Europe to American colleges and universities, asserted a basic distinction from facts (which could be scientifically proven) and values (which positivism held were mere expressions of feeling, not objective truth). As a result of positivism, morality was relativized and privatized, becoming a subject unfit for public debate or transmission through the schools.


In the 1960s, a worldwide rise in personalism celebrated the worth, autonomy and distinctiveness of the person, emphasizing individual rights and freedom over responsibility. Personalism rightly protested societal oppression and injustice, but also depressed moral authority and weakened social commitments. In addition, the rapidly intensifying pluralism of American society (Whose values should we teach?) and the increasing secularization of the public arena (Does moral education violate the separation of church and state?) became two more barriers to achieving the moral consensus for character education in public schools. Public schools retreated from their once central role as moral and character educators.

Values Clarification and Kohlberg's Theory. The 1970s saw a return of value-laden education, but in new forms: values clarification and Kohlberg's (1976) moral dilemma discussions. Values clarification stressed not imposing values, but rather helping students choose their values freely. Kohlberg's theory helped develop students' powers of moral reasoning so they could judge which values were superior to others.

Values clarification, though rich in methodology, failed to distinguish between personal preferences (a matter of free choice) and moral reasoning (a matter of obligation). The proponents of values clarification interpreted the dramatic changes in youth behaviors as a direct result of adolescent confusion in values. The proposed

 Text Box:
PRECONVENTIONAL
LEVEL Stage 1
PUNISHMENT AND
OBEDIENCE Sticking
to rules backed by
punishment of superior
authority. □ Stage 2
INSTRUMENTAL
EXCHANGE Following
rules when in one's
best interest, avoiding
punishment,
bargaining with
authority. □
CONVENTIONAL

solution was not to ingrain traditional values into the minds of youth but rather to assist them in clarifying their current values. This method of values clarification involved the instructor merely helping students focus on their own life issues and situations, as well as the surrounding possibilities and solutions (Leming, 1997). The teacher was urged to be only a facilitator of the process and, for fear of influencing students, was to withhold his or her own personal viewpoints. Whatever values the students

 Text Box:
PRECONVENTIONAL LEVEL Stage 1
PUNISHMENT AND OBEDIENCE Sticking to rules backed by punishment of superior authority. □ Stage 2
INSTRUMENTAL EXCHANGE Following rules when in one's best interest, avoiding punishment, bargaining with authority. □
CONVENTIONAL LEVEL Stage 3
INTERPERSONAL CONFORMITY Seeking approval of friends and family and small social groups, the need to be good in your own eyes. □ Stage 4
LAW AND ORDER Obedience to law and order, fulfilling the expectations of larger social groups, avoiding

determined were to be respected by the teacher and society.

Kohlberg posited that individuals proceed through a sequence of six distinct stages of moral reasoning (Kohlberg, 1976). Each stage expands ethically in an attempt to reach a final, altruistic way of life. (These stages are outlined in Figure 1.)

According to Kohlberg, as individuals moved through the sequence of moral reasoning, they become more apt to exhibit ethical behaviors in everyday life. By systematically exposing students to moral conflict accompanied by the presentation of moral reasoning one stage above their own, researchers believed that students would be attracted to that reasoning and adopt it as their own (Leming, 1997).

Character Education in the 1990's. In the 1990's a new character education movement developed, one that restored "good character" to its historical place as the central desirable outcome of the school's moral involvement.

Thomas Lickona, noted educational psychologist and director for the Center of the 4th and 5th R's, defined character education as "the deliberate effort to help people understand, care about, and act upon core ethical values" (Leming, 1997). Based on this definition, character education programs continued to develop.

CHARACTER COUNTS!

In 1992, the Josephson Institute of Ethics called together more than 30 educational leaders representing state school boards, teachers' unions, universities, ethnic centers, youth organizations and religious groups. The diverse group discussed how organizations might work together to help young people grow strong ethically. They agreed that a

common language of values, used pervasively and consistently throughout a community, would be the most effective means of reaching young people. They found unanimous consensus in six essential ethical values (now known as the “Six Pillars of Character”) that could be taught by public and private institutions without risk of socioeconomic, ethnic, political, gender or religious offense. These pillars are: trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring and citizenship.

Based on these pillars, Character Counts! became an important part of many communities. For example, in Gaithersburg, Maryland, trainers introduced the program into the curricula of 21 public schools and integrated it into various city and community programs and special events (Josephson Institute, 1998). The mayor decreed that “the City of Gaithersburg logo will not appear without the Character Counts! logo alongside” (Josephson Institute, 1998). The business community started sponsoring various character education projects, and the religious community agreed to stress character development using the language of shared values. The city’s “Vision Statement” was revised to read: “In the 21st century, Gaithersburg will be a city that lives by the Six Pillars of Character Counts!” (Josephson Institute, 1998).

In Bridgeport, Connecticut, nearly 6,000 youth experienced Character Counts! education in the classroom. Bi-monthly program newsletters were sent to area citizens to emphasize the important impact Character Counts! had on society. Corporate sponsorship also came into play as McDonald’s, in cooperation with the City of Bridgeport, presented Character Counts! sessions to children in the surrounding area. Contests and community service activities also stressed the importance of the program in Bridgeport (Gaithersburg City Council, 1998).

In Nebraska, Character Counts! has been a prominent tool in shaping the moral development of youth, families, and their communities. To date:

- 1,900 youth and adults have been trained, equipping them to teach Character Counts! to others.

- 20,000 youth have been reached through Character Counts! programs involving at least 15 hours of programming.
- 123,000 youth have been reached through other Character Counts! programs including day camps, one-on-one contact with Kiwanis members, Family Community Education clubs, religious school classes, employees participating in workforce training programs, etc.
- Over 700,000 have been reached indirectly with information about character education through television and radio broadcasts; newspapers; newsletters provided to child care providers, 4-H members and parents of school children; and other media.

Outcomes of CHARACTER COUNTS! Preliminary studies of the effectiveness of Character Counts! programming on young people showed significant, positive behavior change. For example, at a West Des Moines pilot school, teachers using Character Counts! reported:

- 26% reduction in time-outs
- 17% reduction in detentions
- 91% reduction of discipline write-ups on buses

A recent survey of Nebraska educators demonstrated that Character Counts! made a difference in the lives of students. Of those who responded:

- 85% reported an overall positive difference in the children they teach,
- 73% reported students using the language of the six pillars (trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring and citizenship), and
- 75% reported changing their own behavior as a result of teaching

Character Counts!

Behaviors most frequently seen as changed due to using Character Counts!
included:

- Helping each other (61% reported increased frequency)
- Blaming others (55% reported decreased frequency)
- Being truthful (50% reported increased frequency) (Nebraska State 4-H Department, 1999).

INTERNALIZATION OF CHARACTER TRAITS BY THOSE WHO TEACH

While these findings demonstrate positive changes experienced by youth audiences, to date, no research has been conducted on the effects of teaching Character Counts! on those implementing the program. Many feel that one's character is permanently formed during childhood. However, character education is, in fact, a lifelong process (Sprinthall & Sprinthall, 1997). While one experiences real world situations, internal psychological processes are expanded, thus leading to the internalization of taught concepts. Internalization can be defined as the incorporation of values or patterns of culture within the self as conscious or subconscious guiding principles through learning or socialization (Krippendorff, 1995). According to a University of Michigan study, (Constructing knowledge) suggests that individuals create their own new understandings, based upon the interactions of what they already know and believe, and the phenomena or ideas with which they come into contact (Richardson, 1999, 146).

This implies that the internalization of concepts is a direct result of learning based on interactions and experiences. In the same sense, teaching Character Counts! (direct experience) leads to the internalization of ethical principles found directly in character

education. Internalized ethical principles result in increased moral behavior (Rest, 1997). Hence, one would assume that those teaching Character Counts! would be more likely to use the ethical principles and exhibit positive behaviors as a direct result of teaching character education.

PROBLEM STATEMENT and OBJECTIVES

In essence, is the act of teaching character education programs, such as Character Counts!, an element of internalizing taught ethical values? Specifically, this research project examined:

1. Character Counts! impact on Cooperative Extension.
2. Character Counts! impact on personal life of Extension educators and assistants.
3. Character Counts! impact on society of Extension educators and assistants.

POPULATION/SAMPLE

Since Character Counts! is a statewide character education program, all Extension educators and assistants within the state of Nebraska were given the opportunity to participate in this survey, thus creating the study population. Since not all Extension educators and assistants taught Character Counts!, not all of the expected population responded to the survey. Based on the nature of this study, the sample consisted of those educators involved with Character Counts!. Thus, a control group was not formulated, creating a limitation to this study.

INSTRUMENT

The instrument was designed to address the study question. The instrument was composed of four sections. Section one dealt with general demographic and background information pertaining to Character Counts! involvement and programming, and employment within Cooperative Extension. Section two was comprised of questions addressing the effects of Character Counts! education within Cooperative Extension. Section three addressed the impact of Character Counts! education within everyday life. Section four was composed of questions pertaining to Character Counts! impact on society. In sections two through four, participants were asked to respond to each question by rating their level of agreement on a 1-5 scale (1=strongly disagree, 5=strongly agree). Participants were also asked to address a major positive change in their lives that may be attributed to teaching Character Counts!.

INFORMED CONSENT and DISTRIBUTION

The informed consent form and survey was posted on the Internet. All Extension

educators and assistants were notified of the study via e-mail on January 14, 2000. This e-mail contained a link directing participants to the survey site. The first page of the survey site consisted of the informed consent form. Thus, participants were not able to complete the survey without first reading and agreeing to the conditions of the study set forth in the informed consent form. The second page consisted of the actual survey. By completing the survey, participants gave their consent to participate in this study.

Follow-up reminders were e-mailed to the study population on January 27, 2000, and February 15, 2000.

DATA ANALYSIS

Data was analyzed using SPSS-PC. Means, frequencies, and standard deviations for all relevant items were run, with significance set at the .05 level. ANOVA comparisons were made to determine any relationships between categorical, job position and gender respondents.

FINDINGS

The educators involved in this study were either Extension educators or Extension assistants. Of the 53 respondents, 18 were employed as Extension assistants and 31 as Extension educators. Four respondents were employed in other

positions of Cooperative Extension. Forty-two (79.2%) were female, and 11 (20.8%) were male.

OBJECTIVE ONE: Examine Character Counts! Impact on Cooperative Extension

Survey results indicated that 89% (47 respondents) agreed or strongly agreed that they were more sensitive to ethical dilemmas within Cooperative Extension, in general, and within a given county/EPU. In addition, 83% (44 respondents) agreed or strongly agreed that they were more sensitive to ethical dilemmas within a particular extension office. This suggests a relationship between teaching Character Counts! and increasing sensitivity levels to ethical dilemmas faced in all facets of Cooperative Extension.

In addition, 91% (48 respondents) agreed or strongly agreed that they were more likely to stress the importance of Character Counts! with Cooperative Extension colleagues

across the state, while 93% (49 respondents) agreed or strongly agreed that they were more likely to stress the importance of Character Counts! in Cooperative Extension programs as a result of teaching Character Counts!. In addition, 77% (41 respondents) of the sample agreed or strongly agreed that they were more likely to stress the importance of Character Counts! within their particular office.

No statistical significance was found when comparing Character Counts! impact on Cooperative Extension and gender. In addition, no statistical significance was found when comparing Character Counts! impact on Cooperative Extension and position.

OBJECTIVE TWO: Character Counts! Impact on Personal Life

When analyzing Character Counts! impact on the personal lives of extension staff surveyed, 77% (41 respondents) of the 53 respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they were more aware of ethical dilemmas within their own personal lives as a result of teaching Character Counts!. One respondent stated, "(Character Counts!) has really changed the way I think about raising my children. I look differently at how my actions affect their behavior." In addition, 85% (45 respondents) agreed or strongly agreed that they were more likely to advocate ethical decision making in their circles of friends and families as a result of teaching Character Counts!. According to one respondent, "In addition to helping me be a person of better character, I try to help others learn how to do that as well."

According to survey results, 72% (38 respondents) agreed or strongly agreed to being more likely to read character education books and articles, while 70% (37 respondents) agreed or strongly agreed to being more likely to participate in character development seminars/training.

A statistically significant difference (.01) was found when comparing Character Counts! impact on personal life and gender of Extension educators and assistants. The female respondents were more likely to read character education books and articles than males. In addition, females were more likely to participate in character development seminars/training than male respondents.

No statistically significant differences were found when comparing Character Counts! impact on personal life and job position of Extension educators and assistants.

OBJECTIVE THREE: Character Counts! Impact on Society

After examining Character Counts! impact on society, results demonstrated that 83% (41 respondents) of the 53 respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they were more likely to take a stand in local, ethical situations as a result of teaching Character Counts!. When considering statewide issues, 68% (36 respondents) of the 53 respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they were more likely to take a stand in statewide, ethical situations after teaching Character Counts!. When analyzing global issues, 42% (22 respondents) of the 53 respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they were more likely to take a stand in global, ethical situations as a result of teaching Character Counts!. Based on survey respondent comments, ethical situations were defined as recycling, gun violence, resource conservation, and domestic abuse.

A statistically significant difference (.01) was found when comparing Character Counts! impact on society and position of Extension educators and assistants. Extension assistants were more likely to take a stand in local, statewide, and global ethical situations.

A statistically significant difference (.01) was also found when comparing Character Counts! impact on society and gender of Extension educators and assistants. Females were more likely to take a stand in statewide and global, ethical situations.

CONCLUSIONS and RECOMMENDATIONS

When examining Character Counts! impact on Cooperative Extension, it can be concluded that Character Counts! had a major impact on Cooperative Extension personnel. Relationships were found between teaching Character Counts! and increasing the sensitivity levels to ethical dilemmas faced in all facets of Cooperative Extension in this study. These results served as major indicators of the effects of Character Counts! on those who teach the program, suggesting the internalization of taught, ethical principles.

One may feel more sensitive towards ethical issues in Cooperative Extension as a

result of teaching Character Counts!. However, will one feel more likely to stress the importance of Character Counts! within Cooperative Extension? A link was detected between teaching Character Counts! principles and implementing them into various aspects of Cooperative Extension programming, suggesting the internalization of these ethical principles. These respondents suggested an increased amount of Character Counts! awareness within Cooperative Extension, thus increasing the amount of Character Counts! exposure and direct experience available to Extension educators and assistants within various facets of their professional lives. In addition to directly teaching Character Counts!, Michael Josephson's recent visit (April, 2000) and presentations at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln campus created a wider amount of Character Counts! exposure directly available to Cooperative Extension personnel, providing another avenue of exposure and direct experience available to Extension educators and assistants. This visitation created an increase in Character Counts! publicity and expanded the distribution of Character Counts! information across Nebraska.

Based on this relationship, Cooperative Extension personnel are encouraged to broaden the implementation of Character Counts! principles within Cooperative Extension programming. Without risk of socioeconomic, ethnic, political, gender or religious offense, Character Counts! can be taught to a larger spectrum of audiences, making Character Counts! principles available to a wider, more diverse audience.

When examining Character Counts! impact on the personal lives of Extension educators and assistants, it can be concluded that Character Counts! had a major impact on the personal lives of the respondents. These results suggested Extension educators and assistants are more likely to advocate ethical decision making in their personal lives and among friends and family. Extension educators and assistants have internalized a great deal of the principles they teach via the Character Counts! program. In addition to the internalization of Character Counts! principles, the increased state and national discussion levels of Character Counts! greatly impacted the results of this study objective.

Results indicated extension staff internalized Character Counts! principles following the actual teaching of the program. This internalization was manifested in their personal lives to a much greater extent than their professional lives. This incongruity suggested the gap might be related to a lack of understanding ways to integrate Character Counts! into local programming. Therefore, Nebraska Cooperative Extension staff are encouraged to develop and share strategies for local Character Counts! program integration. Possible methods of sharing Character Counts! strategies among Cooperative Extension staff include developing list serves, phone bridges, web sites, and discussion groups for those already implementing and those interested in implementing Character Counts! principles into various programmatic areas.

In addition to spreading Character Counts! values and principles among friends and family, teaching Character Counts! also led to personal character development; extension staff were more apt to consider themselves role models as a result of teaching Character Counts!. One respondent stated,

(As a result of teaching Character Counts!,) I have become much more aware of the need for character education and the critical need for adults to be good role models for youth. As such, I try much harder to be that kind of role model.

These results demonstrated an increase in the likelihood of professional and personal development as a result of teaching Character Counts!, thus strengthening the processes of internalization of Character Counts! principles. The general continuing education movement of Cooperative Extension also influenced the results of this study objective.

In addition, these results demonstrated an increase in the likelihood of female professional and personal development as a result of teaching Character Counts!. When comparing Character Counts! impact on society and gender of extension staff participating in this survey, responses also demonstrated an increased likelihood of females taking a stand in statewide and global, ethical situations. These results suggested that females are more likely to utilize Character Counts! principles on a grander scheme of events, thus,

demonstrating a stronger female internalization of Character Counts! philosophy. Based on the relational nature of character education and the socialization of females to be highly relational, survey results exhibited a significantly higher rate of internalization of Character Counts! principles among female respondents.

Based on the increased internalization of Character Counts! principles among female respondents, Cooperative Extension personnel are encouraged to seek the inclusion of more males into the instruction of character education programs such as Character Counts! and promote gender balance in character-related initiatives.

When comparing the impact of Character Counts! on society, it can be concluded that Character Counts! had an impact on the societal lives of extension staff participating in this study. However, as the societal context broadened, Character Counts! impact on the societal lives of survey participants declined. As the society level shifted from local to statewide to global, survey results displayed a decline in the willingness to take a stand in ethical situations at these various societal levels. However, overall, these results still suggested an increased application of Character Counts! principles in real-world, ethical situations.

Character Counts! training grew out of concern by Michael Josephson and others that unfortunately has been verified by negative changes in crime rates in this country. The intent of the program was to cause positive societal changes through the character education of youth. Extension staff should be encouraged to consider their local efforts part of grass roots efforts to build a positive future for society.

In the majority of Character Counts! instruction efforts, Cooperative Extension served as the nucleus to all surrounding individuals and communities. However, as Cooperative Extension positions continue to decline, Character Counts! efforts should still increase as violence continues to cripple society. To increase these local Character Counts! efforts, Cooperative Extension personnel should locate the character education catalysts in their

communities to expand the Character Counts! implementation efforts. If this is done, these catalysts will increase the amount of public exposure of Character Counts!, thus shifting the overall local impact to a much wider spectrum of audiences.

When comparing Character Counts! impact on society and job position of Extension educators and assistants, results exhibited the increased likelihood of Extension assistants to take a stand in local, statewide, and global, ethical situations. It can be concluded that Extension assistants were more likely to internalize Character Counts! principles by applying these values to real-life situations. With the continued evolutions of information sources available to the general public, it can also be concluded that this increased availability of information is a catalyst for the increased awareness of local, statewide, and global occurrences, thus effecting study results.

Overall, Character Counts! educators have not regularly conducted the necessary programmatic evaluations of the effectiveness of Character Counts! on the teachers and students of Character Counts!. Cooperative Extension personnel are encouraged to regularly evaluate the progress of Character Counts! educators and students in attempts to provide a more solid background on the effectiveness of Character Counts! on both the teachers and students of the program. This results analysis will provide the necessary research framework for Character Counts!.

While this study shed light on the impact of teaching Character Counts! on Nebraska Extension educators, a much clearer and scientifically stronger approach to studying the question of impact would be replication and expansion of this study using an experimental design.

Table 1
Character Counts! Impact on Cooperative Extension

Attitudinal Statement n=53	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither	Agree	Strongly Agree	M	SD
	1	2	3	4	5		
I am more sensitive to ethical dilemmas within Cooperative Extension in general.	1 (1.9%)	2 (3.8%)	3 (5.7%)	34 (64.2%)	13 (24.5%)	4.06	0.79
I am more sensitive to ethical dilemmas within my County/EPU.	1 (1.9%)	1 (1.9%)	4 (7.5%)	35 (66%)	12 (22.6%)	4.06	0.74
I am more sensitive to ethical dilemmas within my office.	1 (1.9)	4 (7.5%)	4 (7.5%)	30 (56.6%)	14 (26.4%)	3.98	0.91
I am more likely to stress the importance of Character Counts! with Cooperative Extension colleagues across the state.	0 (0%)	3 (5.7%)	2 (3.8%)	37 (69.8%)	11 (20.8%)	4.06	0.69
I am more likely to stress the importance of Character Counts! in Cooperative Extension programs.	0 (0%)	1 (1.9%)	3 (5.7%)	32 (60.4%)	17 (32.1%)	4.23	0.64
I am more likely to stress the importance of Character Counts! within my office.	0 (0%)	3 (5.7%)	9 (17.0%)	33 (62.3%)	8 (15.1%)	3.87	0.73

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Table 2

Character Counts! Impact on Personal Life

Attitudinal Statement n=53	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither	Agree	Strongly Agree	M	SD
	1	2	3	4	5		
I am more aware of ethical dilemmas within my personal life.	1 (1.9%)	3 (5.7%)	8 (15.1%)	27 (50.9%)	14 (26.4%)	3.94	0.91
I am more likely to advocate ethical decision making in my circle of friends and family.*	1 (1.9%)	2 (3.8%)	4 (7.5%)	31 (58.5%)	14 (26.4%)	3.98	0.99
I am more likely to read character education books and articles.	1 (1.9%)	4 (7.5%)	10 (18.9%)	28 (52.8%)	10 (18.9%)	3.79	0.91
I am more likely to participate in character development seminars/training.	1 (1.9%)	3 (5.7%)	12 (22.6%)	28 (52.8%)	9 (17.0%)	3.77	0.87

*Not all respondents answered this survey question (n=52).

Table 3

Character Counts! Impact on Society

Attitudinal Statement n=53	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither	Agree	Strongly Agree	M	SD
	1	2	3	4	5		
I am more likely to take a stand in global, ethical situations.	1 (1.9%)	6 (11.3%)	24 (45.3%)	18 (34.0%)	4 (7.5%)	3.34	0.85
I am more likely to take a stand in statewide, ethical situations.	1 (1.9%)	5 (9.4%)	11 (20.8%)	32 (60.4%)	4 (7.5%)	3.62	0.84
I am more likely to take a stand in local, ethical situations.	0 (0%)	4 (7.5%)	5 (9.4%)	35 (66.0%)	9 (17.0%)	3.92	0.76

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