
Charles, C.M. Chapter 11: A Quest for Moral Learning Communities



Developing a School Wide Program

➤ Introduction

The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL, Payton, 2003) provides background and theory for social and emotional learning (SEL), key components to developing a moral learning community. They cite research that suggests that social and emotional variables have the most powerful influence over academic performance of 30 different categories that were studied (Wang et al., 1997 in Payton). Students who perceive opportunities for participation in prosocial activities and possess SEL skills develop strong bonds to school and fewer anti-social behaviors (Payton, 2003, p. 7). CASEL makes a compelling case that developing specific SEL skills is an essential component of programs that have the kind of impact described in this introduction. A WebQuest * will engage participants in developing better understanding of key components (SEL) that support moral intelligence and in designing a school wide program that connects moral development to learning and academic success.

* “A WebQuest is an inquiry-oriented activity in which most or all of the information used by learners is drawn from the Web.” Each WebQuest has a clear task or problem assigned with rich links related to the topic.

Dodge, B. (n.d.) The WebQuest Page. The Educational Technology Department, San Diego State University. Retrieved March 10, 2007 from <http://webquest.sdsu.edu/overview.htm>

➤ The Task

Imagine that you and a small group of colleagues have been asked to serve on a Leadership Team that is charged with researching, designing, implementing, and sustaining a school wide program for learning and teaching social and emotional skills (character education) with all students, teachers, and staff. The community and families will be involved with the program. Goals of this WebQuest are to investigate and design a school-wide program that will nurture a moral learning community.

➤ The Process and Resources

With a small “Leadership Team,” investigate and study the resources suggested below and/or found during this WebQuest intended to develop knowledge and understanding of school-wide moral learning communities. Answer the questions below, which will help to outline the process and content of the social and emotional learning skills program design that supports academic achievement.

1. How will current practices and potential needs of this “imaginary” public school be assessed?
2. How will the character education (SEL) program relate to the academic mission and curriculum of the school?
3. How will the character education (SEL) program help to prevent and respond to high-risk behaviors?
4. How will the character education (SEL) program relate to school-community-family partnerships?
5. What are specific goals of the program?
6. What programs exist that address the specific goals for this school? What do assessments or evaluations report about the effectiveness (advantages and disadvantages) of these programs?
7. What barriers may exist for the successful implementation of this program? What resources may be needed and available to support implementation of this program?
8. What SEL program content and processes are recommended? What is the rationale for this recommendation?

Charles, C. M. (2007). *Building classroom discipline* (9th ed.). Boston, MA: Pearson Education.

Payton, J. (2003). *Safe and sound: An educational leader's guide to evidence-based social and emotional learning (SEL) programs*. Chicago, IL: the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL).

<http://www.moralintelligence.com/> - Michele Borba's Web site has resources for learning about moral intelligence and nurturing children. (Alternate URL <http://www.micheleborba.com/>)

<http://www.realrestitution.com/> - Diane Gossen's Web site has resources for learning about and implementing Restitution Theory.

<http://www.charactered.net/> - The Character Education Network provides curriculum, activities, and resources that can be integrated into classroom experiences.

<http://www.character.org/site/c.gwKUJhNYJrF/b.993253/k.CB9C/Home.htm> - The Character Education Partnership provides resources about character education for schools.

<http://www.casel.org/home/index.php> - The Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL) in Illinois provides resources for developing social and emotional intelligence.

http://www.casel.org/projects_products/implementation.php#otherpubs - This CASEL link provides resources for implementing and sustaining Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) in Schools.

<http://www.danielgoleman.info/blog/> - Daniel Goleman has written extensively about emotional intelligence.

<http://tiger.uic.edu/~Inucci/MoralEd/overview.html> - The Office for Studies in Moral Development and Education at the University of Illinois, Chicago provides a history of moral development theory (Piaget, Kohlberg, Turiel, and Gilligan) and other resources on moral development.

➤ **Evaluation of the Content of the Moral Learning Community WebQuest**

Use the following rubric to self-evaluate the design created by your Leadership Team and the learning results of this WebQuest.

Criteria	Beginning	Developing	Competent	Proficient
The program design articulates standards and goals of a moral learning community.	Standards and goals need to address SEL skills and character more directly throughout the school.	Standards and goals develop SEL skills and character in some areas of the school.	Standards and goals develop SEL skills and character and integrate with academic curricula throughout the learning community.	Standards and goals develop SEL skills and character, integrate with academic curricula, and provide opportunities for moral actions throughout the learning community.
The program design shows evidence for social and emotional learning (SEL) program effectiveness.	Advantages or disadvantages of SEL programs need further detail. References need to be cited and listed in APA style.	Either advantages or disadvantages of SEL programs are included. Some references are cited and/or listed.	Some advantages and disadvantages of SEL programs are outlined from various perspectives. References are listed in APA style.	Advantages and disadvantages of SEL programs are specifically described from various perspectives. References are cited and listed in APA style.
School-wide projects and activities engage participants in meaningful and challenging SEL and academic curricula and practices.	There are few projects planned for use that are intended to develop safe, respectful, and caring learning environments.	There are isolated projects or activities planned for use throughout the school that focus on developing safe, respectful, and caring learning environments.	There are numerous projects and activities planned for use throughout the school that teach SEL skills to encourage safe, respectful, and caring learning environments focused on academic achievement.	School staff, students, families, and community members are partners in coordinating ongoing projects and activities that teach SEL skills to develop and nurture safe, respectful, and caring learning environments focused on academic achievement.

➤ **Conclusions**

You have had an opportunity to learn more about social and emotional learning programs and approaches that support development of moral learning communities. What do you consider to be the most critical information you discovered? How will you use what you learned?