

THESIS

EVALUATION OF FAIR IN A RESIDENTIAL TREATMENT FACILITY THROUGH
CHARACTER EDUCATION LENSES

Submitted by

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In partial of the requirements

For the Degree of Master of Science

Colorado State University

Fort Collins, Colorado

Summer 2010

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COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY

March 31, 2010

WE HEREBY RECOMMEND THAT THE THESIS PREPARED UNDER OUR SUPERVISION BY CHRISTINE MARY HELFRICH ENTITLED EVALUATION OF FAIR IN A RESIDENTAL TREATMENT FACILITY THROUGH A CHARACTER EDUCATION LENS BE ACCEPTED AS FULFILLING IN PART REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF SCIENCE.

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ABSTRACT OF THESIS

EVALUATION OF FAIR IN A RESIDENTIAL TREATMENT FACILITY THROUGH CHARACTER EDUCATION LENSES

The increasing ethnic, cultural, language, and class diversity in the U.S. calls for a proactive approach in helping young people develop into socially competent adults.

FAIR: Fairness for All Individuals through Respect is an experiential multicultural education program that addresses fairness in social interactions. The purpose of this study was to evaluate the effectiveness of FAIR for at-risk youth in treatment facilities in Northern Colorado. In order to identify change in participants' level of respect, responsibility, and fairness, two measures, the Role Model Inventory and the Character Development Survey, were administered before and after FAIR. Results revealed that individuals who participated in FAIR curriculum versus individuals who were wait-listed did not differ significantly in their levels of respect, responsibility, and fairness. Although results were not statistically significant, the study provides a valuable framework for conducting future research in the field of character education with at-risk youth.

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Acknowledgements

As I begin to see the door to this chapter of my life close, I cannot imagine not thanking the individuals that have helped me through this unique chapter. I would first like to thank my friends and family back home for lending me to Colorado for a couple of years so I could complete this difficult, but so worthwhile journey. Their support has been what has helped me to complete this program.

When first considering the research I would like to do for my thesis, I was completely lost. I knew I wanted to work with at-risk youth, but I was so unsure about how to make this happen. Through course work and down time in the office, I was lucky enough to find someone who shared similar interests to me. Lindsey Weiler and I began on the journey of working with at-risk youth in December 2008. The journey has been exciting, challenging, and has forced us to learn so much about each other and ourselves. I am so grateful to have had Lindsey at my side for this entire process, and look forward to the work we will continue to do in the future. A faculty member who has been an intricate part of this thesis is Dr. Toni Zimmerman. Dr. Zimmerman shared her FAIR curriculum with Lindsey and me. She went above and beyond what a student could ask for by helping us establish relationships with our facilities, training our facilitators', and even leading the FAIR curriculum at our first facility. Without Dr. Zimmerman, the hope to work with at-risk of youth may have never happened, and her dedication to me as a student and a researcher is so appreciated.

Another intricate part of my thesis has been my committee, Dr. Francisco Palermo, Dr. Thao Le, and Dr. Jim Banning. Dr. Palermo has been such a wonderful support through the ups and downs of the entire process of completing my thesis. He has not only read draft after draft of my thesis (even the terrible ones that I am sure were hard to get through), but has also been a place I can voice my concerns, disappoints, and excitements too. I am so blessed to have an advisor who cared so deeply about my ability to succeed both in and outside of the Human Development and Family Studies Masters Program. Dr. Thao Le has also been a great motivator through this process, encouraging me to do things that I did not even know I could do (for example, submitting a poster presentation for a national conference). As a co-advisor, Dr. Le has given sound advice that improved our overall study. Dr. Banning has been a great resource in areas where I needed guidance, and I thank him that direction.

There are so many Human Development Family Studies faculty members, graduate, and undergraduate students who have helped me through the process. From the graduate students who helped to facilitate FAIR in the facilities, to the undergraduate research assistants who have taken interest in my research and helped with so many tasks in the thesis process, and lastly the wonderful faculty who were willing to read initial drafts of my thesis and facilitated the FAIR curriculum, there are not words for how you have helped to shape my experience here at Colorado State University. Lastly, I would like to give one very big thank you to my Marriage and Family cohort. These two years have been a combination of so many things and I will never forget this experience that we have all gone through together.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, character education programs have emerged in schools and communities as a way to address a variety of adolescent problem behaviors such as hate crimes, self-destructive behaviors, peer cruelty, and disrespect for parents, teachers, and other authority figures (Lickona, 1996). Character education programs aim to enhance various aspects of character development such as respect, responsibility, and fairness (Otten, 2000). Character education has been defined as a deliberate effort by schools, families, and the community help young people understand, care about, and act upon core values (Lickona, 1996). Character has been generally defined in many ways. Terms such as ethics, ideals, morals, principles, values, and virtues are all words that have been used interchangeably with character (Hall, 2000). In general, good character is comprised of three aspects, including cognitive, affective, and behavioral aspects. The cognitive aspect of character includes rationality and reasoning as well as an individual's ability to understand virtues and what they require from us in different situations. The affective or emotional side of character acts as a bridge judgment and action. It specifically includes components such as respect and empathy. It also includes behavioral aspects, such as skills competence (e.g. learning to cooperate with others and decision making), will, and habit (Lickona, 1988).

Researchers have identified six important aspects that are believed to comprise one's character, including trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, and citizenship. In the past decade, The U.S. Congress has begun the process of approving funds for character education materials and programs that are aimed at teaching these six core pillars in public schools around the country (Lickona, 1996). More recently, some states have supplied funding for juvenile detention and correctional facilities to implement character education programming (Martinez, 2008). These aspects of character transcend differences in religions, ethnicities, genders, and socioeconomic levels. The values character education promotes are able to bring all types of individuals from all types of backgrounds together on a fundamental level (Kinnamon, 2003).

There are three interrelated areas that constitute "good" character, and these three areas focus on how individuals relate to self, others, and the community (Pearson & Nicholson, 2000). Focus on self includes positive personal qualities such as responsibility and self-respect. Focus on others consists of an individual's relationships with peers and friends with traits such as respect, kindness, and empathy. Characteristics such as fairness, justice, and civic virtue are also important when considering the community at large (Pearson & Nicholson, 2000).

Juvenile detention centers and correctional facilities have begun incorporating character education programs into their facilities. In 2001, Arizona became the first state to integrate character education into juvenile detention centers as well as correctional facilities with the overall goal of improving behavior among detainees (Martinez, 2008). However, administering educational curricula to juvenile delinquents can be challenging

due to the fact that security and safety must take priority over programming and juveniles often spend a limited amount of time in these settings. Additionally, some facilities house youth who have psychological, behavioral, or attitudinal issues. Although delinquent adolescents may be at similar psychological, behavioral, and attitudinal levels, not all delinquents have equal capabilities of accepting programming. The main determinant is an adolescent's willingness to receive programming (Martinez, 2008). Thus, the goal of this study was to administer an intervention that focuses not only on character education but also diversity to at-risk adolescents.

Residential treatment centers serve youth who experience serious psychological problems such as externalizing and internalizing disorders. Residential treatment is often viewed as a last resort. Adolescents in residential placements have often been unsuccessful in less limiting therapeutic settings (Nickerson et al., 2007). In recent years, the number of adolescents entering residential treatment has increased. The daily number of committed youth into public and private facilities increased 28% between 1991 and 2003 (Snyder & Sickmund, 2006). Despite the increase, research on how to treat such clients is limited. Residential treatment centers are among the most costly placements for adolescents (Barth, 2002). Grietens and Hellinckx (2004) performed a review of five studies to identify the best treatments that are effective for adolescents in residential care. In the U.S., there is often a "nothing works" attitude attached to the different treatments used to rehabilitate youth removed from their biological families (Grietens & Heelinckx, 2004). Grietens and Hellinckx found that if attitudes could be more open then reoccurring placement could be reduced.

Character education has been used with juvenile delinquents because skills acquired through programming are likely provide adolescents with the tools they need to be successful and act responsibly. Through education and application, the pillars of character can be developed in juvenile delinquents (Martinez, 2008). While character education is not seen as universal remedy for acts of delinquency in youth, it can be used as stepping stone. It can provide a compass for juvenile delinquents who have not been exposed to such values, and reinforce structure for those who may have learned these values at home (Martinez, 2008).

FAIR: Fairness for all Individuals Through Respect (FAIR), is an experiential multicultural education program that addresses fairness in social interactions. FAIR aims to help youth recognize social injustice that occurs within society. The FAIR curriculum gives youth an opportunity to explore their own thoughts, feelings, and behaviors towards and about people who are similar and different from them (Zimmerman, Aberle, & Krafchick, 2005). Teaching tolerance and acceptance to youth is essential in fostering children's ability to believe that groups of people are as valuable as others, and incorporating this idea into their own perspectives (Pang, 2004). If this perception is addressed early, children and adolescents can learn to think critically about prejudice and justice. Youth develop their beliefs and values through a process of attitude crystallization (Isaacs & Bearison, 1986).

The purpose of this study was to evaluate FAIR in a residential treatment facility. Although FAIR has been used to teach youth in public schools in Northern Colorado about racism, sexism, and classism, it has not been used in any other contexts. Several

studies highlight the effectiveness of FAIR in the traditional school setting; however, it is unclear if the curriculum can be equally successful in alternative settings, such as in residential treatment centers (Krafchick, 2005; Aberle, 2005, 2005; Brinkman, 2007). Thus, the current study examined the effectiveness of FAIR by administering it to juvenile delinquents in residential treatment facilities located in Northern Colorado. The program evaluation will include studying if adolescents' level of respect, responsibility, and fairness increase as a result of participating in FAIR. Respect, responsibility, and fairness are the pillars of character that have been selected because these are the aspects of character that juvenile delinquents have difficulty fostering (Martinez, 2008).

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

As the U.S. increases in diversity, questions about the best way to educate youth for effective citizenship arise. The increasing ethnic, cultural, language, and class diversity in the U.S. calls for a proactive approach in helping young people develop into healthy, socially. Character education is a growing approach that is meant to develop good character among youth. Public school settings have paid an increasing amount of attention to the importance of character education. The growing interest of character education programs is related to reports that irresponsible and destructive behavior such as cheating, stealing and lying (Ryan, 2003; Williams, Yanchar, Jensen, & Lewis, 2003) . The rise in programming may also be attributed to the decline of the family and a recovery of shared important ethical values (Lickona, 1993).

The following review of relevant literature is organized as follows. First, an overview of the theoretical frameworks that guided this study are reviewed, including social identity theory, cross-cultural continuum, and positive action theory. Next, character education is defined and research involving character education in a public high school setting is discussed. In addition, the definitions of respect, responsibility, and fairness are outlined. Lastly, the FAIR curriculum and the five experiential activities included in the FAIR program are outlined.

Theoretical Frameworks

Theories of character education are based on cognitive, social, emotional theories of development. The theories are often seen as complex and comprehensive because they cover several aspects of development (Ji, Segawa, Burns, Campbell, Allred, & Flay, 2005). The present study was guided by three separate (but related) theoretical frameworks, including social identity theory, the cross-cultural continuum, and positive action theory. These theories are relevant in that they place a strong emphasis on diversity, social justice, and character education. Social identity theory was used to describe the process by which individuals are likely to classify themselves into various social groups (Hogg & Abrams, 1988; Worell and Remer, 2003). The cross-cultural continuum describes how individuals become more sensitive to other cultures (Locke, 1998). Finally, Positive Action theory is used to describe how “good” character is likely to prevent problem behaviors and improves achievement (Ji et. al, 2005).

Social Identity Theory

According to Social Identity Theory (SIT), individuals classify themselves into various social groups (Ashforth & Mael, 1989). A social group consists of individuals who view themselves as members of the same social status. This process is called self-categorization. Social identity theory states that an individual’s identity is partly comprised of an awareness that they belong to a particular social group (Hogg & Abrams, 1988). There are two processes involved in forming social identity – self- categorization and social comparison. Self categorization allows an individual to be in tune with other

members of their group and allows them to see differences between their group and out-group members. Being a part of an in-group means an individual has certain characteristics that allow him or her to feel privileged (e.g. being white or male). A member of the out-group may feel oppressed because of the social identity group with whom they identify. Differences may occur in domains such as attitudes, values, behavioral norms, or any property that tends to be important to the in-group.

Social comparison allows an individual to compare their in-group to the out-group. Social comparison consists of a process of identifying those who are similar and categorizing them into the in-group, and those who are different and categorizing them into the out-group. This comparison can lead to a positive judgment of the in-group and negative judgment of the out-group. Social identity theory is concerned with intergroup relations or how an individual comes to see himself or herself as part of the in-group and not the out-group (Stets & Burke, 2000). Although SIT makes a clear difference between an in and out group, Worell and Remer (2003) developed a social identity model that applies to all social groups or categories. This model includes identifying in and out groups; however, it goes a step further by describing pathways individuals may go through to accept a social group outside of his or her own.

Worell and Remer's (2003) social identity model consists of four levels that move from a level of non-awareness through integration and activism. In Level one, an individual moves from a pre-awareness to awareness social group status. For a member of the in-group this may include conforming to majority norms, accepting stereotypes of the out-group, and believing that an individual's group is better than others. For a

member of the out-group this could include accepting negative stereotypes about their own group and having little access to societal resources. Level two, encounter, consists of individuals becoming aware of their status within the in-group or out-group. During this level, an internal conflict may arise in the individual due to the feeling related to self and other. Level three, immersion, symbolizes rejection of the in-group. A member of the in-group may begin to understand the impact of discrimination on the out-group, appreciate qualities of the out-group, and increase personal awareness as an individual who may oppress those who are not a part of his or her own group. A member of the out-group will begin to appreciate his or her individual and group activities, and increase knowledge about his or her own group. Level four, integration and activism, requires individuals to appreciate positive qualities about their own group as well as other groups. In this level individuals make a commitment to reduce societal oppressions. Individuals in this level are able to feel more comfortable between the worlds of their own group and other groups, appreciate values and qualities of both groups, and reject negative stereotypes and discrimination against other groups (Worell & Remer, 2003)

The Cross-Cultural Continuum

The second theoretical framework that guides the present study is Locke's (1986) Cross-Cultural Continuum. Social identity theory identifies how individuals classify themselves into particular social groups. The cross-cultural continuum goes on to discuss the developmental pathways an individual may follow to become more aware. SIT describes the processes that occur when an individual develops an awareness of the social group they identify with; however, the cross-cultural continuum posits that being

culturally aware is a life-long process that begins with a general self-awareness and ending with teaching effectiveness. Although Locke's continuum focuses on teachers, the continuum can be translated to any individual wanting to become more culturally sensitive. Locke describes levels an individual must move through in order to be more aware. The levels are developmental, with each level building on the previous.

Self-awareness is an understanding of oneself that is necessary to acquire before trying to understand others. The dynamics of self-awareness include values, opinions, attitudes and beliefs. Awareness of one's own culture includes an exploration of values, opinions, attitudes, and beliefs in terms of an individual's own culture. During this stage, an individual becomes aware of his or her perceptions regarding individuals of another culture group. Awareness of racism, sexism, and poverty requires an individual to acknowledge that these three aspects are a part of the larger culture in which one functions. Although these aspects may not have a direct impact on the individual, he or she must be able to consider how these powerful terms may impact others. Awareness of individual differences requires that individuals honor that although someone may identify as part of a group or culture, he or she still has unique or individualistic aspects. Recognizing that identify as part of a particular group is important to an individual, may help he or she maintain individuality. Awareness of other cultures includes exploring other cultures and gaining knowledge about groups that may be outside of the individuals. Along with the understanding of other cultures, individuals must understand that members of out-groups may be expected to give up some of their own culture in order to blend in to the dominate culture (Locke, 1998).

Positive Action Theory

The final theoretical framework that guides the present study is Positive Action (PA) theory (Ji et al., 2005). PA has been empirically tested with character education programs. While SIT and Cross-Cultural Continuum describe how an individual identifies with a particular a social group and develop awareness and acceptance for members of other groups, PA focuses on an individual's self-concept and character. PA suggests that individuals are impacted by how they behave as well as by how they feel about their behaviors. Making positive behavior choices can result in a feeling of self-worth. PA theory posits that students can be taught to identify positive behaviors that may occur through a physical, intellectual, social, or emotional realm. The theory can be divided into sections including self-concept, self-management, being a good friend, and self-improvement. Each section represents ways in which individuals can change behaviors to increase feelings of self-worth.

Self-concept creates a connection between an individual's thoughts, actions, and feelings. PA theory posits that thought can lead to behaviors and behaviors lead to the development of feelings. Positive and negative words are used to introduce the idea of values. When an individual acts positively, it is thought that they may value the behavior. The PA theory involves developing good character and making a link between character and feelings about one's self (Ji et al., 2005). Through actions, people determine their self-concept, and making positive and healthy behavioral choices results in positive feelings of self-worth. Recent literature suggests that when children feel positive they engage in more positive behavior (Flay & Allred, 2003).

Self-management teaches individuals about responsibility and control. Responsibility is embodied by the idea of managing time, energy, talents, and possessions. Control is related to managing thoughts, actions, and feelings. Being a good friend involves maintaining respect for others by treating them the way you would like to be treated. People want to be treated with respect, fairness, kindness, empathy, and care. Positive action theory posits being a good friend takes the emphasis away from self and moves it to another individual. In addition, being a good friend includes positive communication, forming relationships, working cooperatively, conflict resolution, and community service (Ji, et al., 2005). Self-improvement focuses on the idea that positive actions help improve an individual. In the theory self-improvement encourages students to set goals for themselves, and achieve these goals through trying new things, continuing even if they encounter difficulties, believing in their own potential, and broadening their horizons.

Character Education

The idea of character education can be traced back to the colonial period in America (Mulkey, 1997). How to nurture character development in youth has been a struggle for educators and philosophers for centuries (Pearson & Nicholson, 2000). During the 20th century, character education began to dwindle due to lack of financial support. During this time, focus was placed on teaching facts, which can be scientifically shown, rather than values, which were seen as subjective expressions. By the mid 1960's, there was movement towards supporting autonomy and freedom; however, the 1990s brought the beginnings of a new character education movement (Lickona, 1993). Society

began to demand that public schools teach students character (Ryan 1986; Vessels & Boyd, 1996). According to Ryan (1986), the challenge for public schools is to not only educate youth to be smart but also to be “good”. Youth need help acquiring skills, attitudes, and character that will enable the common good to prosper (Ryan, 1986).

The majority of programs are not geared towards secondary education. Lockwood (1997) reported that although 80% of character education programs focus on elementary education, only 5% are geared towards youth in high school. Researchers support character education beginning in early childhood. However, due to the prevalence of antisocial behavior in adolescents it is critical for these ideas to be reinforced during the teenage years (Williams et al., 2003). Modeling character with adolescents can be done most effectively by using a variety of experiences to help youth learn in an experiential manner (Williams et al., 2003).

In 2003, Williams et al. tested the effectiveness of a character education program in public high schools over several years. Although the authors supported character education programming in early childhood and elementary school settings, they recognized the importance of extending such programming through the teenage years. The study was a multi-year participant observation case study that described how learning character can be incorporated into a high school setting. Approximately 350 high school students, 34 student teachers, and 2 teachers were observed. The study was qualitative in nature using interviews to evaluate student’s experiences in classes that included character education. Williams et al. found that an experiential high school curriculum that included character education was likely to help students make positive

changes such as becoming more responsible, having higher self-expectations, and appreciating other individual as well as the environment.

A separate study conducted by Kokolis (2005) that also focused on character education in a high school setting found that the implementation of character education curricula reduced the number of behavioral referrals of students. Kokolis explored the effect character education has on high school students decision making as it relates to behavior. For the study, two high schools were compared. One high school integrated a character education program, and the comparison high school did not use any programming. Kokolis found similar findings to past research in the decrease of disciplinary referrals in the school that implemented character education. In 1999, Battistich conducted a study of middle school students who received programming. Battishich found that schools that utilized character education were likely to report fewer acts of misconduct than schools that did not utilize such programming. Additionally, Kokolis found that students at the high school that implemented the character education programming demonstrated improved respectful relationships among classmates. Thus, character education can help students modify their decisions and improve their behavior.

Teaching positive character traits can be done a variety of different ways. Programs focused on character education often emphasize pro-social behavior and civic development (Hall, 2000). For the purpose of this study, character education will be defined as a deliberate effort by schools, families, and the community help young people understand, care about, and act upon core values (Lickona, 1996). Although there are six pillars of character identified by research, for the current study the pillars of respect,

responsibility, and fairness was explored through a character education program that emphasizes diversity.

Respect

Respect was conceptually defined as the ability of an individual to display tolerance and acceptance. Tolerance and acceptance are comprised of one's ability to judge others on their character without regard to race, religion, gender, where they live, how they dress, or the amount of money they have. To be tolerant is to be accepting of individuals that differ from one's own social group. Additionally, an individual who demonstrates good character is likely to treat others as they would like to be treated, to accept the privacy and freedom of their peers, to value and honor other individuals, and to consider the autonomy of other individuals (Christopher, Nelson, & Nelson, 2003). Respect for others is based upon the ability to honor oneself, and individuals who are able to honor themselves are able to respect others (U.S. Department of Education, 2003). Respect can be demonstrated by speaking and acting civilly, avoiding cruel or rude language, and caring about the rights and beliefs of family members or peers. An individual who has respect for others would be tolerant of others who do not share the same personal beliefs (U.S. Department of Education, 2003).

Responsibility

Responsibility was conceptually defined as being accountable for one's actions and setting a good example. Being accountable can include accepting the consequences of actions as well as being able to consider the consequences for the individual as well as others before committing an act. Responsibility also includes being rational (Christopher

et al., 2003). An individual demonstrating good character through responsibility is not likely to make excuses or blame others for their actions. The responsible individual is resilient in finding ways to overcome adversity, and when making decisions they take their obligations to their peers, family, and community into account (U.S. Department of Education, 2003).

Fairness

Fairness can be seen as a product of judgment, including the process by which people determine what is right and wrong. Being fair consists of a commitment in ones social relationships as well as being sensitive to issues of social injustice. Fairness also includes compassion and caring for others. An individual who demonstrates good character through fairness may endorse statements such as: “Everyone deserves to be respected,” “No one deserves to be discriminated against because of the color of his skin,” or “We are responsible for our own behavior “(Peterson & Seligman, 2004, p. 392). Being fair means playing by the rules, and standing up for the rights of others to be treated equally and honestly (U.S. Department of Education, 2003).

What Makes Character Education Programs Effective?

Character education curriculums are effective when key criteria in developing and implementing a program are met. Criteria of an effective character education curriculum include direct instruction, visual reinforcement, content and process, student participation and evaluation (Brooks & Kann, 1993). One of the missing links in character education literature is evaluating if these criteria are used, and if the criteria are used correctly. Each of the criteria will be described as well as how to ensure effective incorporation.

Direct Instruction. Strong character education programs are intentional and proactive (Lickona, 1996). Programs should not assume that language, concepts, and skills of good character are learned only at home, from television, or peers. Teaching virtues such as respect, responsibility, and fairness must be a direct and purposeful process. Participants in character education programs should not only see and hear the words, but also learn their meanings identify appropriate behaviors, and practice and apply these virtues (Brooks & Kann, 1993).

Content and process. Character programs should not only teach the content of consensus and civic values, but also provide participants an outlet for implementing the values when making decisions. Students should be able to evaluate a situation, consider alternatives or consequences and then conclude whether their decision brings them closer to their goal of respect, responsibility, or fairness (Brooks & Kann, 1993).

Visual Reinforcement. Visual displays can illustrate and reinforce what individuals need to have good character. The media presents conflicting messages to individuals about what is desirable behavior. Effective programs will not encourage participants to continue the behaviors beyond the scope of the class and into additional areas such as the home and neighborhood (Brooks & Kann, 1993).

Student Participation. In order for character education program to be most effective, participants should feel a sense of ownership. Students should not merely be told how to behave; they must also be able to participate in generating their goals in order to feel as though they can achieve them. It is important for individuals to identify his or her own goals, as well as a plan for how to meet these goals (Brooks & Kann, 1993).

Evaluation. Character education programs should include a pre-assessment and post evaluation (Brooks & Kann, 1993). Programming should be evaluated on several levels including the participants, the facilitators, and the climate of the location where the program is being administered. Researchers should evaluate participants by assessing the extent that participants gained an understanding the core values. Facilitators should be evaluated to determine the extent to which they personally understand character development. Additionally, the facilitator should be evaluated on extent to which they are actually implements a character education program. Finally, the change in the climate of the facility should be administered (Lickona, 1996).

The Present Study

FAIR: Fairness for All Individuals through Respect

Social justice and diversity related issues affect youth's development and social health by creating positive self-images, forming strong relationships with others, and learning how to contribute fairness to society. FAIR, Fairness for All Individuals through Respect, is a multicultural education program that addresses issues of fairness in social interactions. It is an experientially based curriculum that teaches individuals about social injustices in areas such as sexism, racism, and classism. FAIR's goal is to help youth be able to recognize social injustices in society that are related to race, gender, and class, and to empower them to be fair in their everyday lives. Fairness may be developed through having respect for themselves as well as others. The FAIR curriculum gives youth the opportunity to explore their thoughts, feelings, and behaviors towards and about people who are similar and different from them (Zimmerman et al., 2005). The FAIR

curriculum consists of five activities that address social justice through race, gender, and socioeconomic status.

Activity One: Images in Our Minds. Images in Our Minds focuses on stereotypes that are often held based on gender, race, and class. Several short stories with different roles and responsibilities are read. At the end of the story, participants are asked to consider what images come to their minds regarding the various people in the stories. The goal of this activity is to have the group discover that is common to associate a particular gender, race, and class with certain roles and responsibilities; however, it encourages participants to expand their images and challenge stereotypes (Zimmerman et al., 2005).

Activity Two: Toy Sorting. The toy sorting activity teaches students how gender is a major sorting force, and that this force can lead to rigid gender roles that could discourage the development of an individual. Participants are presented with toys, including domestic, scientific, nursery, athletic toys as well as board and computer games. Participants were asked to sort the toys and place them into one of two boxes, one pink and one blue. The goal of the toy sorting activity is to encourage students to use all the toys regardless of how they have been socialized with them (Zimmerman et al., 2005).

Activity Three: Image Collage. In the image collage activity participants were asked to go through magazine to identify “in-the-box” and “out-of-the box” images. “In-the-box” is a metaphor for rigid messages that are around us and limited free expression to be an individual. The pictures are then pasted “in-the-box” and “out-of-the-box”, respectively, to reflect such qualities as they learn to recognize the limitations of these messages. The group discovers that they often give an early message about what girls and boys should

“do.” The activity is meant to promote a message to “be” themselves with less gender rigidity (Zimmerman et al., 2005).

Activity Four: Build a House. For the build a house activity, participants are asked to reflect on how society sets expectations of individuals to have the same outcome in life regardless of the resources with which they begin. Students are divided into groups and given different amounts and kinds of materials to construct a house. One group may receive the best and most abundant building supply while another may have limited supplies. Participants talk about the process of building the house in order to dispel socioeconomic stereotypes. The activity stresses that it is impossible to make assumptions about people based on people (Zimmerman et al., 2005).

Activity Five: The Marine Life Story. Parts of the Marine Life Story Activity were adapted from a management book entitled: *Strategy of the Dolphins, Scoring a Win in a Chaotic World* by Dudley Lynch and Paul Kordis. The marine life story has four animal creatures: a shark, a carp, a crab, and a dolphin. Participants will learn about each creature and what it does. After hearing the story, students are asked to discuss times when they have acted like each of these creatures. The goal of this activity is to help students realize that the creatures reside in all of us, but a commitment should be made to work towards social justice every day (Zimmerman et al., 2005).

The purpose of the current study was to evaluate FAIR in a residential youth facility. Respect, responsibility, and fairness was measured over the course of the study in order to evaluate if FAIR has an impact on these characteristics among adolescents currently living in residential treatment.

Study Hypotheses

Hypotheses One. FAIR participants will increase in their level of respect for themselves as well as toward peers as compared to wait-listed participants. The first hypothesis is supported by the Kokolis study (2005) in which high school students who received character education programming demonstrated improved respectful relationships among classmates.

Hypotheses Two. FAIR participants will increase in the level of responsibility for their own actions as compared to wait-listed participants. The second hypothesis is also supported by the Kokolis (2005) study. This study suggests that character education can help students to modify their decisions thus improving their behavior (Kokolis, 2005).

Hypotheses Three. FAIR participants will increase in their level of fairness toward peers as compared to wait-listed participants. The third hypothesis is supported by the Williams et al., (2003) study in which Williams et al. found that an experiential high school curriculum that included character education was likely to help students make positive changes in their lives and appreciate other individual as well as the environment (Williams et al., 2003)

CHAPTER III

METHODS

Participants

Participants were 75 adolescent youth in day treatment and residential treatment facilities. Participants receiving services from the day treatment centers and the residential treatment facilities attended group therapy, individual therapy, and education and programming to enhance pro-social skills; however, individuals in the day treatment program did not reside in the facility. The majorities of participants from the day centers were used as the control group and received FAIR at a later date, whereas participants at the residential facility constituted the experimental group. Participants at both facilities were not excluded based on gender, race, ethnicity, religious affiliation, or socioeconomic status, but were selected to participate in the study based on the following criteria: adolescents living in a long-term, unlocked residential treatment facility that offers services to males and females or participating in day treatment programs affiliated with the residential treatment facility. Individuals in both the day treatment programs and residential treatment programs were similar in mental health issues including substance abuse and mood disorders. In addition, individuals at both the facilities were similar on delinquent backgrounds, such as acting out, involvement in the criminal justice system

and or the Department of Human services. All residents at the residential facilities were offered the FAIR curriculum.

The control group ($N=12$) was composed of 9 males and 2 females. Their ages ranged from 14 to 18 years of age ($M=16$, $SD=1.44$). The majority of the participants were European American and the remainders were non European American.

The experimental group ($N=63$) was composed of participants from two residential treatment facilities and one day treatment center. There were 39 males and 23 females, with ages ranging between 11 to 19 years old ($M=16$, $SD=1.70$). The majority of the participants were European American and the remainders were non European American.

To assess whether the participants in the control group and experimental group differed on demographic characteristics of age, gender, and ethnicity, a chi-square test was conducted. The results revealed that the groups did not differ on gender, $\chi^2(1) = 1.48$, $p > .05$ or ethnicity, $\chi^2(1) = 1.25$, $p > .05$. As such, participants in the experimental group did not differ from the participants in the control group on demographic characteristics of gender and ethnicity. To investigate whether the participants of the control group and experimental group differ on demographic characteristic of age, a t -test was performed. Results indicated that the groups did not differ on age $t(69) = .867$, $p > .05$.

Procedure

A pre-test, post-test quasi-experimental design was used. Informed consent was obtained from 75 adolescent youth (out a possible 75; participation rate = 100%). FAIR was facilitated at five different sites separately. Each site received a one day facilitation

of the FAIR program. Because the control group was wait-listed, it received the FAIR intervention within one month from the date they were wait-listed. Participants in the experimental group received FAIR on the same day that the youth were introduced to the FAIR program. Prior to administering FAIR, pre-data were collected from participants by trained facilitators. After taking the pre-assessments, the participants in the experimental group were invited to participate in FAIR. Participants in the control group took the pre-test on the same days as individuals in the experimental group and were then wait-listed and offered FAIR at a later date.

Following the completion of the FAIR curriculum, all participants in the experimental were given post-assessments by trained facilitators. Trained facilitators also returned to the day treatment program to obtain post-assessments from members of the control group. For participation in the study, participants' names were entered in a drawing for a \$10 mall gift card.

Measures

Several questionnaire measures were used to gauge adolescents' levels of respect, responsibility, and fairness. All measures were administered prior to and immediately after the facilitation of the FAIR program.

Character Development Survey. The Respect, Responsibility, and Fairness subscales of the Character Development Survey (CDS; 1998) were used to gauge each adolescent's levels of respect, responsibility, and fairness. The CDS has been successfully used in previous a study assessing the effectiveness of character education programs in elementary schools (e. g. Hirshi 2002). The measure includes 26-items measuring

respect, responsibility, and fairness. Alpha values for the scale measuring respect and responsibility, and fairness on the participants in this study were .65 and .85 respectively. The inventory is a self-reporting measure that includes scale that ranges from 1 (*hardly ever*) to 5 (*almost always*). An example of a question that measures respect or responsibility is “The students in at this school take responsibility for their actions.” An example of a question that measures fairness is, “The students at this school play fairly.”

Role Model Inventory. The Role Model Inventory (Arizona Character Education Foundation, n.d.) was developed by the Arizona Character Education Foundation to help educators, parents, and other individuals who implement character education programs to evaluate their own behaviors prior to working with youth and adolescents. The Role Model Inventory includes 31 items measuring responsibility, respect, and fairness. The inventory is a self-reporting measure that includes scale that ranges from 1(*seldom demonstrate this quality*) to 5 (*I always show this quality. No improvement needed.*) An example of a quality that measures respect is, “Demonstrating acceptance and tolerance of handicaps, and racial, ethnic and religious differences” An example of a quality that measures respect or responsibility is “Demonstrating self-discipline by doing what I should do even when it is difficult or unpleasant (Arizona Character Education Foundation, n.d.). An example of a quality that measures fairness is, “Being careful and thorough in making judgments and decisions about or affecting others” (Arizona Character Education Foundation, n.d.). Reliability coefficients for the respect, responsibility, and fairness scales were .83, .86, and .83 respectively.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

The goal of the current study was to evaluate the effectiveness of the FAIR curriculum with at-risk youth currently placed in residential treatment facilities or day treatment programs. Although FAIR has been qualitatively evaluated in other settings, such as elementary schools, early childhood centers, and at the collegiate level, it has not been previously evaluated with at risk youth in residential treatment centers. The hypotheses of the present study tested whether participation in the FAIR curriculum has an effect on delinquent adolescent's levels of respect, responsibility, and fairness.

The results section is organized as follows. Prior to hypothesis testing, preliminary analyses were conducted to examine the distribution of the study variables, identify influential outlying cases, and potential covariates. Next, the hypotheses were tested using multivariate analysis of variance with repeated measures procedures to examine whether group membership was associated with mean level changes in adolescents' levels of respect, responsibility, and fairness. A repeated measure MANOVA was performed because all the dependent variables on the Character Development survey (respect and fairness) and on the Role Model Inventory (respect, responsibility, and fairness) were significantly correlated ($p < .05$).

Preliminary Analysis

Prior to hypothesis testing, preliminary analysis were conducted to examine the normality of the variables. Additionally, preliminary analyses were performed in order to ensure that the experimental and control group were equivalent on pre-test measures and control for differences accordingly. The distribution of the study variables was assessed by examining skewness values. The study variables were reasonably well distributed (skewness values ranged from -1.17 to .009). In general, skewness values that fall within +2 and -2 are indicative of a normal distribution (Bachman, 2004). Cook's (1977) distance scores indicated no multivariate outliers. Finally, in order to identify covariates, bivariate correlations were examined to assess the relationship between the outcome variables (respect, responsibility, and fairness) and other variables that may have confounded the results (i.e., gender, length of time spent at the facility, and age). None of the potential covariates were correlated with the outcomes of interest, thus they were not included as covariates in the tests of the hypotheses, r_s ($df = 73$) ranged from -.01 to .26, $p > .05$.

To assess the equivalency of the treatment ($n = 63$) and control groups ($n = 12$) on pre-test measures, an independent samples t -test was conducted. The values for the Levene's Test for Equality of Variances were not significant ($p > .05$) (Leech, Barrett, & Morgan, 2005) which means that the two groups have approximately equal variance on the dependent variable thus an independent sample t -test can be performed. Results indicated that the control group and treatment group did not significantly differ in terms

of their pre-test scores (see Table 2). Thus, it can be concluded that the control and experimental groups were equivalent at the start of the study.

Adolescents' Results on Character Development Survey

In order to evaluate the overall effectiveness of the FAIR program, a multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) with repeated measure was conducted. The respect and fairness subscales of the Character Development Survey served as the dependent variables. A variable denoting time (e.g. pre or post) served as the within subjects factor, whereas group membership (e.g. experimental or control) served as the between subjects factor. Means and standard deviations of the scales for control and experimental groups can be found on Table 3.

MANOVAs repeated measures revealed no significant main effects for group, $F(1,54) = .697, p > .05$, no significant main effects for time, $F(1,54) = 2.75, p > .05$, and no significant main effects for the interaction between group and time, $F(1,54) = .533, p > .05$. Substantively, with respect to adolescents' levels of respect and fairness, these findings revealed no significant difference between the treatment and the control group, no difference in scores from pre-test to post-test, and no differences between the groups as a function of having participated in FAIR (i.e., the treatment group).

Adolescents' Results on Role Model Inventory

Similarly, a multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) with repeated measure was conducted with the respect, responsibility, fairness subscales of the Role Model Inventory as the dependent variables. In order to evaluate the overall effectiveness of the FAIR program, a multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) with repeated measure

was used. The respect and fairness subscales of the Character Development Survey served as the dependent variables. A variable denoting time (e.g. pre or post) served as the within subjects factor, whereas group membership (e.g. experimental or control) served as the between subjects factor. Means and standard deviations of the scales for control and experimental groups can be found on Table 3.

MANOVAs repeated measures revealed no significant main effects for group [$F(1,49) = 1.558, p > .05$]; no significant main effects for time [$F(1,49) = .389, p > .05$]; and no significant main effects for the interaction between group and time [$F(1,49) = .665, p > .05$]. Substantively, with respect to adolescents' levels of respect, responsibility, and fairness, these findings revealed no significant difference between the treatment and the control group, no difference in scores from pre-test to post-test, and no differences between the groups as a function of having participated in FAIR (i.e., the treatment group).

CHAPTER V

DISSCUSSION

The overall goal of the present study was to evaluate the FAIR curriculum with an at-risk sample of adolescents in residential care. Second, the study evaluated if at-risk youth could benefit from a pro-social curriculum while they were in residential treatment facilities and day treatment centers. Finally, it assessed whether a program that focuses on social injustices in society that are related to race, gender, and class could empower at-risk youth to be more respectful, responsible, and fair in their everyday lives.

Based on the current literature, the study hypothesized (1) that FAIR participants will increase on levels of self-respect and other-respect as compared to participants who did not receive FAIR, (2) that FAIR participants will increase on their levels of responsibility for their own actions will increase as compared to participants who did not receive FAIR (3) that FAIR participants will increase on their levels of fairness toward peers will increase as compared to participants who did not receive FAIR.

Adolescents' Levels of Respect, Responsibility, and Fairness

Results from the current study revealed that individuals who participated in FAIR curriculum versus individuals who were wait-listed did not differ significantly in their levels of respect, responsibility, and fairness from pre-test to post-test on the Character Development Survey or the Role Model Inventory. Additionally, when exploring the raw

data values, no obvious changes were observed. Thus, it is important to discuss the possible reasons for why significant effects were not found in the current study, as was expected.

FAIR has several components that are similar to other effective character education programs. For example, the curriculum is intentional and proactive and the facilitation of the FAIR program is direct and purposeful (Lickona, 1996). Although the program does incorporate these components, it does not offer participants the opportunity to directly practice and apply what they have learned. Lickona (1996) stresses the importance of individuals not only hearing or seeing the positive interaction but also identifying and engaging in this interaction during the programming. For example, through Activity Four, Build a House, participants learn the importance of not judging an individual based on their socioeconomic status; however, they do not get to practice or apply this with other individuals during the facilitation of FAIR. FAIR is experiential in nature in terms of the hands on activities the curriculum has that focus on racism, sexism, and classism. The program does not directly give the participants an opportunity to participate in experiential activities directly involving respect, responsibility, or fairness.

Another area that the studies have indicated is important in effective in character education is student participation. Effective programs encourage students to participate in generating their goals in order to feel as though they can achieve them. Individuals should identify their own goals, as well as a plan for how to meet these goals. FAIR has the objectives to teach individuals about social injustices in areas such as sexism, racism, and classism and to help youth be able to recognize social injustices in society that are

related to race, gender, and class, and to empower them to be fair in their everyday lives. FAIR does not allow participants to identify their own goals around becoming more aware about injustices in race, gender, and class. Furthermore, FAIR does not require students to assess their current levels of respect, responsibility, and fairness (as they relate to race, gender, class). Hence, FAIR does not provide students with opportunities to evaluate the extent to which they are respectful, responsible, and fair in their everyday lives, and where they would like to be in the future. In order to improve student participation, FAIR should allow participants to assess their current views on race, gender, and class and changes they hope to see happen. Additionally, FAIR should evaluate participants respect, responsibility, and fairness in relation to race, gender, and class.

Administering character education programming to juvenile delinquents is challenging task. For the current study, facilitators spent a limited amount of time with the youth. FAIR was only offered to youth over the course of one day. The limited amount of time spent with the participants may have affected the lack of change in respect, responsibility, and fairness. For future studies, the FAIR program could be instructed over the course of several weeks in order to allow students to become more familiar with facilitators and to allow them to apply what they had learned during the previous week.

Lastly, several of the character education programs reviewed earlier focus on working with individuals in early childhood (or individuals in elementary school). Lockwood (1997) reported that only 5% are geared towards youth in high school.

Researchers support character education beginning in early childhood. Studies that had significant findings with high school students included programming that lasted between one and four years and placed students into situations where they actively engaged in developing character. These programs help students develop character in “real experiences” (Williams et al., 2003). Although FAIR explores real situations of other individuals, it does not place participants into these situations where they must actively engage in respect, responsibility, and fairness. For future studies, FAIR facilitators could engage participants in how each activity applies to their own real experiences. Additionally, if FAIR could be administered over the course of several weeks, facilitators could apply begin by applying the previous activity to real experiences that occurred for participants over the past week.

More specific to issues to the present study that could have impacted the results were the sample size and measures. Due to the small sample size and the design of the study, results are most applicable to residents in these three facilities. The sample was comprised of 75 participants, but the number of participants in the treatment group far outnumbered that of the control group. The lack of data in the control group may have impacted the researcher’s ability to compare the control and experimental groups analytically. Thus, the results should be interpreted with caution. In addition, the measures used in the current study were adapted from two measures not intended to be paired with the FAIR curriculum. The Character Development Survey has traditionally been used in a school setting with character education programs implemented over the course of an entire school year. The Role Model Inventory had not previously been used

in any empirical studies. Although the measures were adapted for the purpose of the study in terms of the nature of the items (e.g. respect, responsibility, and fairness), for future studies measures could also be adapted to better fit the participants in terms of reading level and ability to understand what the questions were asking. Later in the chapter, the emergent need for scales that assess change that accommodate the FAIR curriculum will be addressed.

Implications

Although this study did not demonstrate significant differences in character in at-risk youth before and after the facilitation of the FAIR curriculum, the study does supply information that could aid those working with at-risk youth in several ways. First, the results of this study demonstrate the emergent need for programming that focuses on character development for youth in residential treatment facilities as well as in day treatment centers. As cited in previous literature, not all youth in facilities are receptive to programming (Martinez, 2008); however due to the lack of guidance, accountability, social skills, and responsibility in this population pro-social programming needs to be at the forefront. Additionally, this study demonstrated the emergent need for assessments that measure change due to receiving programming, such as FAIR. The majority of assessments reviewed for the purpose of this study did not directly evaluate respect, responsibility, and fairness or had not been used prior studies. Regarding the two measures administered for this study, the Character Development Survey had only been used in a school setting and the Role Model Inventory has not been empirically validated.

There is a need for the development of assessments that appropriately assess change as a result of pro-social programming.

Evaluation of Study Design

Despite the lack of significant findings in the current study, the evaluation of the FAIR programs had several noteworthy strengths. A primary strength of the study was the population that was used was novel. When researching literature on character development programs, there was a limited amount of articles with information regarding the use of character education programs with at-risk adolescents, and programming that had been evaluated with this population was facilities such as youth detention centers. Additionally, the FAIR curriculum is a novel program. Although there are programs that focus on similar topics as in the FAIR program individually, it was difficult to find empirically validated programs identical to FAIR. FAIR not only focuses on teaching greater awareness of gender, race, and class, but it also encourages students to reflect on their own feelings regarding these topics. Additionally, the FAIR curriculum has several experiential components that allow students to actively engage in activities. The last strength of the program was the support of the directors of the facilities that the study was facilitated. Many of the directors felt saw the strength of offering programs in their facilities, and also sought out ways to continue the FAIR curriculum beyond the period of the study.

The study had several noteworthy limitations as well. First, the study was a small sample size that was mainly comprised of participants in the experimental group. Secondly, the data were self-reports and therefore the validity of the responses was

dependent upon the ability, willingness, and honesty of the participants to fully complete the assessments. Third, the assessments used to evaluate the FAIR curriculum were not developed in conjunction with FAIR. The researcher adapted preexisting measures available that assessed change within character education programs; however, these assessments used for the study were no in no way affiliated to the FAIR curriculum. Another limitation of the assessments is the sequence of time in which they were administered. Participants took a pre-assessment, received FAIR, and then took the post assessment on the same day. If the study was spread out over a greater period of time participants may have been more prepared to respond to the questions. The limited amount of time spent with participants could have affected the amount of change that was able to occur. Although FAIR is a short curriculum, it may have been better to administer the program in short segments weekly rather than entire curriculum in one day. Staff at the facilities and centers staff were reluctant to participate in the administration of the FAIR curriculum or discipline of the youth while the program was being facilitated. In order to engage staff to participate in the study, researchers could have met with them separately prior to the administration of FAIR. The staff's participation could have helped disciplinary issues remained more contained.

Recommendations for Future Research

Although this study did not result in any significant findings, the FAIR curriculum still has many aspects that could lead to future research. Additional research need to be conducted to increase the awareness about the impact of programming similar to FAIR on at-risk youth placed in residential treatment facilities. Studies which include a

larger sample size, longer duration of time spent with participants, and more in depth methods of evaluations would enhance the knowledge base confirming the importance of similar programming for at-risk youth. Future research should be conducted in order to develop measures that evaluate character education programs with at-risk youth.

Conclusions

The study describes an approach to developing positive pro-social behaviors with at-risk youth in residential treatment facilities. Although the study did not result in significant findings, it contributes to the available literature by evaluating a pro-social program with at risk youth currently placed in residential or day treatment centers. The findings revealed that the FAIR curriculum was not able to change participants respect, responsibility, or fairness. However, the study did demonstrate current gaps in the available literature as well as the emergent need for empirically validated programming appropriate for individuals in residential treatment facilities as well as day treatment programs.

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Table 1 Sociodemographic Characteristics of the Control and Experimental Group

	Control Group	Experimental Group
Age	16 (1.44)	16 (1.70)
Gender		
Male	82%	63%
Female	18%	37%
Ethnicity		
European American	58%	42%
Non European American	42%	58%

Note: Standard deviations are presented in parenthesis.

Table 2

Measure	Control Group (n=12)		Experimental Group (n= 63)				
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	df	F	p
C.D.							
Respect	3.76	.74	3.34	.78	69	.068	.103
Fairness	3.84	.89	3.36	1.03	69	.052	.150
R.M.I							
Respect	4.37	.61	3.89	.91	66	1.37	.091
Responsibility	3.95	.54	3.83	.90	65	3.11	.670
Fairness	4.15	.78	3.84	.89	65	.006	.287

Table 3 Means and Standard Deviations of the Character Development Survey and the Role Model Inventory Pre and Post Control

Experimental		Control		
	pre	post	pre	post
Character Development				
Respect	3.83 (.85)	3.56 (1.07)	3.44 (.72)	3.29 (.83)
Fairness	3.97 (.96)	3.47 (1.40)	3.49 (.93)	3.33 (.98)
Role Model Inventory				
Respect	4.4 (.70)	4.25 (.70)	4.08 (.70)	4.06 (.99)
Responsibility	4.05 (.57)	4.26 (.87)	3.95 (.79)	3.91 (1.01)
Fairness	4.25 (.72)	4.15 (.86)	3.97 (.75)	3.82 (1.0)

Note: Standard deviations are presented in parenthesis