The Effectiveness of Experience-based Moral Education (VLF: Voices of Love and Freedom) on Social Skills and Empathy

Yayoi Watanabe

Abstract

The purpose of study is to examine the effectiveness of the VLF program on social competence. To investigate the effectiveness of the VLF (Voices of Love and Freedom) program on social skills, 72 third-grade participants of the elementary school participated in this study, 36 of whom had participated in the VLF program and 36 of whom had only the traditional moral education. The students completed the Social Skills Scale both prior to and subsequent to the VLF program or the traditional educational program. The traditional program tried to make students understand the feelings of the main characters by reading a short story, while the VLF program required students to understand the different points of views of characters in a story and to engage in role-playing based on the characters. A one-way analysis of variance on the scores of social skills revealed a significant main effect for the classes. The increase in social skills scores from pre-test to post-test in the VLF class was significantly higher than that of the traditional class.

This result showed that the VLF program had a positive impact on the cognitive aspects of students’ social competence. This program stimulated the curiosity of children who participated and enhanced their skills in perspective-taking. The VLF exercises such as role-playing or partner interviews were very effective at improving the students’ abilities to understand each other and to resolve interpersonal conflicts.

Keywords: Elementary school students, Social skills, VLF program, Empathy