

Learning to Give

FINAL EVALUATION REPORT
Overview & Recommendations

2004-2005



MICHIGAN STATE
UNIVERSITY

Learning to Give

EVALUATION REPORT 2004-2005

Overview and Recommendations

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LEARNING TO GIVE EVALUATION REPORT 2004-2005

Overview and Recommendations

Robert L. Church

with Robert E. Floden and Diane L. Zimmerman

The Learning to Give project has evolved considerably from its inception nearly a decade ago. From an almost exclusive concern with helping children understand philanthropy and their potential role in it, the project has broadened its focus to include helping children learn how to contribute positively across all aspects of civil society. The earlier years were necessarily focused on creating and testing curricular lessons; more recently the emphasis has fallen on disseminating those tested materials and encouraging their adoption in more schools. In the last two years the project has begun to expand beyond Michigan and currently is establishing itself as a national resource for promoting learning in philanthropy and civic participation.

The Michigan State University evaluation team's focus has changed over the decade along with the changed focus of the LTG project. Initially the team was involved in formative monitoring of the stakeholders' satisfaction with the project and with the attitudes toward teaching philanthropy and toward the project of those teachers who volunteered to create lessons. Since teachers were seen as the vehicle for taking the lessons into classrooms, the evaluation team sought to assess their motivations for joining in the effort as an indication of their likely perseverance in the project, their assessment of the appropriateness and value of the lessons, their facility with E-mail and the Internet as a means of communication among project participants and dissemination of information beyond the initial group of teachers, and the kind and amount of support they felt they needed. The evaluators have continued to assess teachers who use the curricular materials as the project has diversified its methods of recruiting and supporting teachers. While assessment of Internet skills has become a moot issue, use of the LTG Web site and other Internet resources has implications for ongoing use and classroom implementation of the lessons. The team continues to ask teachers about the value and appropriateness of the lessons and has in the last two iterations asked teachers whether they believe that the lessons positively affect students' school behavior. As the project has matured, the evaluation team has focused more on assessing the degree to which participating in the Learning to Give lessons has affected student learning, behavior, and attitudes.

The long-term goal of the project, of course, is to affect the school children's patterns of behavior as adults—to help them become future contributors to maintaining our civil society. It was not feasible to undertake a ten- to twenty-year longitudinal study following LTG students into their adulthood; nor is it likely that research could successfully tease out the influence of a relatively modest intervention such as LTG relative to all the other school work and life experiences in a young adult's youth. The evaluation team developed several alternate strategies for determining the effects of participation in the LTG lessons. The team surveyed middle and high school students to compare their participation in community- or school-based service to a national sample of

school children. It reviewed actual work that students performed in conjunction with the lessons to get a sense of students' level of understanding of the material and, more important, their ability to apply those concepts to situations beyond the classroom. The team surveyed students, teachers, and administrators in schools new to the LTG program on issues related to school climate and will resurvey those same schools next year to see if any changes in perceptions of climate occurred after the LTG material was adopted. Finally the team developed a set of standardized tests relating to the important concepts that the LTG curriculum wanted students to master. The LTG team conducted the first large scale administration of these tests during the 2004-2005 school year; since the MSU evaluation team handled the scoring of those tests, we report the findings here.

The outcomes of these assessments have been uniformly positive. Although the researchers would have liked to have had more responses to the student surveys, more opportunities for classroom observation, and more data from high schools during the earlier years of the evaluation, it is clear from the data collected that teachers remain enthusiastic about using the LTG lessons and believe that they do affect student behavior positively. Their responses indicate their deep commitment to having their students learn about how to contribute to community and their belief that the LTG materials offer an effective way of fostering that learning. High proportions of students display mastery of the LTG concepts; students in classrooms using those lessons tend to be more involved in service to their school or community and in giving of their time, talent, and treasures to others than is true of students in the national sample. They also appear more committed to continuing those patterns into adulthood.

We discuss in detail first, student learning—findings derived from assessment of class work, student surveys, and standardized tests; second, findings at the classroom and school levels; and third, conclusions from the two teacher surveys. This overview ends with overall comments and recommendations as well as a brief review of the strategies that will be employed in the final year of the evaluation team's work.

Student Learning

Assessment of LTG Student Classwork

As in the three prior years, the evaluation team, with Leah Kirell and Professor Robert E. Floden taking the lead, examined students' written and sometimes artistic work generated during LTG lessons. The reviewers assessed files of student work, mostly writing and worksheet answers, produced in 141 LTG lessons (a lesson is a component of an LTG "unit"). Nine files came from grades K-2, 74 from grades 3-5, 22 from grades 6-8, and 36 from grades 9-12.¹ This represents the largest number of files from high school students ever collected for the LTG evaluation. Files were classified according to whether the students (1) applied LTG concepts appropriately beyond the classroom context, (2) applied them appropriately within the classroom context, (3) had limited understanding of the concepts, or (4) did not understand them.

The proportion of files that fell into each category did not differ substantially from the distribution in prior years. What was different in this year's assessment was the increased

¹ Forty-one other files were received but not scored because they were unreadable, were focused on content outside the LTG areas, or contained only pictures that could not be interpreted precisely.

sophistication of the lesson assignments and the students' responses to those assignments. Where in prior years heavy emphasis fell on teaching the basic definition of philanthropy as the giving of time, talent, and treasure, in the 2005 lessons students were being asked to explicate more complex issues. The LTG concepts were more closely interwoven with content from history, government, and literature than in prior years, suggesting that the teachers were more comfortable with the LTG material, seeing it less as an "add on" and more as an integral part of their curricular goals. This in part reflects the fact that many of the teachers submitting files had worked with LTG for several years, as had their students. In many cases teachers submitted student work from a sequence of lessons within a single unit, providing the reviewers an opportunity to "read across" a set of files and watch students move from some confusion about concepts to a more complete and fairly sophisticated view. Although there were too few of those cases to provide for a systematic study of student growth across a unit, there were enough to demonstrate the effectiveness of the unit and the teacher in developing deeper understanding in the students.

Instead of the focus on defining philanthropy which had been such an important aspect of the student work from prior years, this year's files demonstrated instructional concentration on defining differences between selfishness and selflessness, on community and the individual's responsibilities toward it, on the lives and accomplishments of philanthropists and civic leaders, on tolerance and prejudice and race. Running through all the students' writing on these subjects was the importance of giving, of taking responsibility for the well-being of others, and of accepting others.

I feel like I care more and I want to share more. I want to help my family more now. I feel like I am acting more like a philanthopist. Now that I know more about this kind of stuff.

- LTG student

One lesson asked students to compose a letter to the philanthropist or civic leader whom they had researched as part of their assignment. These letters typically included comments indicating the students' admiration of and respect for the person's work and their own desire to help others as well:

Your life has been a model of self-sacrifice and generosity, and your leadership has set an example for all to follow.

One student's letter to Bill Gates asked for advice about how the student could act philanthropically even though he would never be a millionaire. Thus, although the lessons did not specifically target the concepts of sacrifice and leadership and contributing to the community, the students made the connection between their research on a specific individual and the broader LTG topics and goals.

Community and the role of individuals in strengthening it received a great deal of attention. An eighth grader defined community as

A town or city where people live and help each other and love each other. It is a fun place where kids can play and grown ups know their kids are safe. There are businesses where people work and there are many places people can volunteer to make the town a better place.

This typical definition is one of many that make it clear that the students understand the meaning of philanthropy, community, and responsibility and are making direct, clear connections between these terms and their own daily actions.

Many students were able to explain how community involvement and activity could create more tolerant people. As one student, upon studying Jane Addams and Hull House, wrote:

One problem in [our town] that we face today is extreme social conservatism. People are not accepting of others' beliefs or feelings. I believe that maybe volunteerism would help these people to sympathize with the people who have opposing beliefs.

Student Survey of Philanthropic and Civic Activities and Attitudes

In the spring of 2005 middle and high school students who had studied LTG materials during the 2004-2005 academic year were surveyed to get a sense of their participation in and attitude toward philanthropic and civic activities. The survey, developed and administered under Professor Robert Floden's leadership, was quite similar to those administered in the spring of 2002 and the spring of 2003. In line with the LTG project's growing interest in directing more effort toward increasing young people's commitment to maintaining a "civil" society, the 2005 survey added a few questions on civic participation. In order to establish a basis for comparison between LTG students and others, most of the questions on the survey were drawn from earlier, national surveys about service learning and volunteerism—the U.S. Department of Education's National Household Education Survey (1999), Independent Sector's "Measuring Volunteering Toolkit (2000)," and (added to this administration of the survey) the National Civic and Political Engagement Survey that has been conducted by the Center for Information and Research on Civil Learning and Engagement (CIRCLE, 2002). It should be noted that although this survey has been administered three times, it is not strictly longitudinal; because of changes in the list of schools participating in the project, not all the schools surveyed in 2005 were part of the survey in prior years. Furthermore, even in schools that had participated in the project over all the years of the survey, students responding to the 2005 survey may not have had experience with the LTG curriculum before 2005 while others will have experienced it over several years. Three hundred seventy students responded to the survey, representing 11 schools and 25 different teachers. High school and middle school students were represented about equally; high schools students have much better represented this year than in prior administrations of the survey.

Civic Participation

The three CIRCLE questions that were asked for the first time this year elicited very encouraging responses. The responses indicated that LTG students were more likely than the national sample to have "ever written a letter to a newspaper or government official," to have "worked together informally with some one or group to solve a problem in the community where they live," and almost as likely to believe that they "would be comfortable making a comment or statement in a meeting where people were standing up to make comments and statements."

That the LTG students exhibited such a strong commitment to civic participation on these three indicators compared to the older group (aged 15-25) responding to the CIRCLE survey is very encouraging and surely in part relates to the students' LTG participation.

Respondents' Participation In Letter Writing²

Have you ever written a letter to a newspaper or government official?	Percentage of Students Selecting each Option		
	LTG HS	LTG MS	CIRCLE
Yes, within the past 12 months	9%	18%	6%
Yes, but not within past 12 months	20%	17%	16%
No, haven't done	57%	47%	72%
I don't know or can't remember	14%	18%	5%

Respondents' Participation in Working Informally with an Individual/Group to Solve a Local Problem²

Have you ever worked together informally with someone or group to solve a problem in the community where you live?	Percentage of Students Selecting Each Option	
	LTG	CIRCLE
Yes, within the past 12 months	26%	7%
Yes, but not within past 12 months	21%	14%
No, haven't done	34%	71%
I don't know or can't remember	18%	7%

Respondents' Comfort Level in Making a Statement at a Public Meeting²

Imagine you went to a community meeting and people were standing up to make comments and statements. Do you think you could make a comment or a statement at a public meeting?	Percentage of Students Selecting Each Option	
	LTG	CIRCLE
Yes—would be comfortable	29%	41%
Yes—but would be uncomfortable	30%	28%
No—would not want to make a statement	19%	17%
I don't know	21%	14%

Giving

Among all the respondents to the LTG 2005 survey, 53% indicated that they had given money or objects to a charity within the month preceding the survey. This was down from 66% in 2003 and 64% in 2002. Only 9% of the total LTG 2005 sample said they had not given in the past year. The survey asked students whether they thought they would like to volunteer or donate money to a charity in the future; 87% indicated they would (94% in 2003; 89% in 2002). When asked to indicate who they would most like to help, this year's survey respondents showed less interest in animals and the environment than in prior years and substantially more in people and organizations.

Motivation

The 2005 survey modified a question about motivation for engaging in school and community service activities so that it was directly comparable to a question on the CIRCLE survey: "Why did you first start to work with the volunteer activity that you have been involved in this year?" While respondents to the CIRCLE survey emphasized

² Tables reprinted from Floden, R. E. (2005). Student survey of philanthropic and civic activities and attitudes. In *Learning to Give Evaluation Report 2005*. East Lansing: Michigan State University.

the role of family (36%), friends (42%), and their own deep concern about an issue (24%) as the primary motivators,³ 60% of the LTG sample of those participating in service indicated “it was required in school.” The effect of the LTG service learning expectation is clear. Only 9% of the LTG students marked “I was deeply concerned about the issue” as a motivator. It should be noted that the CIRCLE survey was administered to those aged 15 to 25, a substantially older group than the LTG sample and one far less likely to be responding to school requirements.

Community Service

The survey asked respondents to indicate whether they had participated in any community service or volunteer work in their school or community in the past twelve months. Eighty one percent indicated that they had (down somewhat from 87% and 89% in 2003 and 2002). This is a much higher percentage than the NHES and CIRCLE figures (52% and 44%), probably reflecting the project’s expectation that teachers using the LTG materials engage their students in a service-learning activity. Seeking to understand why the figure in the LTG sample was not 100%, given the expectation, we found that most of the students who indicated that they had not engaged in any community service or volunteer work were in classes with three of the 22 teachers. Since at least half of those students did report engaging in service activities, it is likely that these teachers made the service experience optional. LTG students were more likely to have their participation in service activities count in course grades than were those in the national sample. About half of LTG middle school students and one-third of high school students reported that their service contributed to a course grade; only 24% of the national sample did so.

Regularity of Service

The survey also probed the amount or intensity of the students’ participation, in terms of the length in weeks of their activity and in terms of the number of hours per week spent on it. More than two-thirds of those respondents who said they had participated in service or volunteer work (68% of the 81%) indicated that they did so on a regular basis rather than once or twice. This figure represents a dramatic rise from prior administrations of the survey (35% in 2003, 47% in 2002) and a similarly dramatic difference from the national NHES which found that only 44% of those participating in service activities (that is, 44% of 52%) did so on a regular basis. As Professor Floden writes: “Thus the proportion of students in the pilot school sample who participated in service or volunteer activities on a regular basis is much higher in the LTG pilot schools than in schools nationwide.”

Length of Service

In comparison to the national sample of those participating in service activities, LTG students engaged in service activities tended to spend fewer weeks in service but a slightly greater number of hours per week on those activities. Given the higher proportion of students in the LTG sample who did participate in service, it is to be expected that more would be engaged in short term, probably school-related projects than would be the case with the smaller proportion of those engaged from the national sample. In the 2005 survey, 11% of the LTG respondents who had participated in service activities had done so for more than 12 weeks, indicating service participation well beyond school-related projects. This figure represents a substantial increase from the 5% and 6% so reporting in

³ Percentages sum to greater than 100% because respondents were asked to indicate all the choices that applied.

2002 and 2003 and a figure approaching the 16% of participants in service reporting more than 12 weeks of activity in the NHES survey. Five per cent of the LTG sample who had participated in service activities had done so for the whole year.

Hours per Week

The figures related to intensity measured in terms of hours per week spent in service activities indicate both that a somewhat higher proportion of the LTG sample from 2005 is engaged more intensely than prior LTG samples and that the LTG 2005 sample is engaged even more intensely than the national NHES sample. In 2005, for instance, 28% of those reporting that they participated in service activities indicated that they did so for more than five hours a week (the figures were 22% in the 2003 survey, 12% in 2002) while only 19% of the national sample reporting participation indicated that they spent more than five hours per week doing so.

Understanding the Impact of Service

As Professor Floden suggests, service and volunteer activities are more likely to have a long-term effect on students if they are connected to other activities that give the student a chance to reflect and thus provide incentives for learning. Therefore, the survey asked students about opportunities to discuss their participation with others and to learn about the impact of their service. As in prior years, over two thirds of the respondents who took part in service activities discussed that participation with family, with friends, and/or in class. The percentage indicating classroom discussion increased somewhat over the prior years' figures (from 54% and 57% to 64%). Answers to an open-ended question regarding respondents' learning about effects of their service elicited few indications of contact with any systematic attempts to gauge the impact of the work, even though attention to the results of philanthropic activity is one objective of the LTG curriculum.

Standardized Tests of Philanthropic Knowledge

The 2004-2005 school year saw the evaluation team, under the leadership of Associate Professor Edward Wolfe (now at the School of Education at Virginia Tech), complete the development and validation of the standardized measures to be used in assessing student progress in mastering the concepts of the LTG curriculum. At the beginning of the school year field test forms were administered and at the end of the year operational test forms were administered to students at the Michigan Community – Higher Education School Partnership (CHESP) schools, i.e., schools that had received federal money through the state to initiate or expand their service learning programs and that had agreed to implement the LTG curriculum in coordination with that effort. In most of the schools the project was able to administer the test twice, thus providing some pre-test/post-test data on student gains in understanding during a year in which they studied the LTG materials for the first time.

Test Development

Professor Wolfe's report describes in detail the several steps that went into the development of the tests and the technical findings regarding the quality of the individual questions and of the different versions of the test as a whole. Professor Wolfe created six operational versions of the test, two each for elementary, middle, and high school classrooms. Each version contains between 25 and 30 questions, two or three of which

are open-ended. The LTG team, project staff, and volunteer teachers spent considerable effort: first, to develop an array of questions that probed the most important teaching objectives of the LTG curriculum; and second, to insure that those questions used appropriate vocabulary, were worded clearly, and were sensitive to cultural differences. As questions and versions of the instrument were field tested in classrooms, additional adjustments were made in language, in degree of difficulty, and in the overall difficulty and length of the forms. At that time Professor Wolfe began to apply the psychometrician's tools to assess the quality (that is, do students' scores on a particular item generally follow their pattern of achievement on other items and will students generally answer the same question the same way each time they encounter it), reliability, and precision of the measures and to group them into test forms. This statistical analysis indicates that the test, in its various versions, is a high quality one—not in all aspects as reliable as those used in “high stakes” testing, such as those used to determine who qualifies for a high school diploma, but a strong instrument for evaluating the curriculum, measuring student progress, and comparing groups.

Pre- and Post-test Results

Comparison of student scores on the tests given at the beginning of the year with those coming from the tests given at the end of the school year show a large gain among elementary students and no gain among middle and high school students. Elementary students gained about seven raw score points, meaning that their percentage-correct scores increased from about 23% to about 73% on the end-of-year test. That gain represents a one standard deviation increase. No such differences appeared at the higher grade levels. In very preliminary pre- and post-testing during the 2003-04 school year, elementary and high school students showed statistically significant gains while middle school students did not.

Gain Score Summary⁴

<i>Level</i>	<i>Statistic</i>	<i>Pretest</i>	<i>Posttest</i>	<i>Gains</i>
Elementary	Mean Scaled Score	42.94	52.09	9.15
	SD Scaled Score	8.86	11.46	9.18
	Form A Score Equivalent	14	21	7
	Form B Score Equivalent	16	23	7
	N	71	71	71
	T Statistic d effect size			8.40* 1.00
Middle	Mean Scaled Score	52.68	53.61	0.78
	SD Scaled Score	10.06	10.54	13.11
	Form A Score Equivalent	17	17	0
	Form B Score Equivalent	17	18	1
	N	172	172	172
	T Statistic d effect size			0.57 0.06
Secondary	Mean Scaled Score	53.58	51.63	-1.94
	SD Scaled Score	10.04	10.90	9.97
	Form A Score Equivalent	18	17	-1
	Form B Score Equivalent	19	18	-1
	N	101	101	101
	T Statistic d effect size			2.02* 0.19

*This difference is statistically significant.

⁴ Table reprinted from Wolfe, E. W. (2005). Standardized tests of philanthropic knowledge. In *Learning to Give Evaluation Report 2005*. East Lansing: Michigan State University.

It is far too soon to draw many conclusions from these data. Additional administrations of the tests need to be targeted at different groups of students with varied experience with the LTG materials and other school-based service and engagement activities to provide a sufficient base for interpretation. A number of issues might explain this year's pattern of large gains for elementary students and essentially no gains for middle school and high school students. There were far more problems in the reporting of data from the middle and high schools, to the point that some post-test data may have been mislabeled as pre-test and vice versa. Perhaps the fact that the schools were chosen for inclusion in the CHESP program indicates that they had already involved their students in activities associated with service learning and civic responsibility and thus the students we tested were not a valid *pre-test* cohort. Experience in other testing situations suggests that older students familiar with standardized testing tend not to invest much effort into completing "low stakes" tests; perhaps that was the case with the older students at the CHESP schools. Perhaps the lessons taught at the higher grades do not target the learning objectives associated with the test questions as directly as do those taught at the lower grades; or the questions do not parallel the learning objectives closely enough; or each version of the test covers more and more diverse learning objectives than it is possible to meet in the teaching of two LTG units. More data are needed to identify the most likely explanations.

School and Classroom Instruction

Classroom Observations

One of the queries from the project's Steering Committee has been how effectively teachers have been using the LTG materials. Besides directly asking the teachers through a survey, the evaluation team observed, under the leadership of Professor Jean Baker and with the assistance of Sonia Patil, 20 LTG lessons being taught during the 2004-05 school year. Three observations occurred in high school classes, the others in K-5 classrooms. The observers were particularly concerned with the students' level of engagement with the lessons. They concluded that teachers were enthusiastic about the curriculum and the lessons were lively and infused with energy. "The typical LTG lesson was an active, meaningful, vibrant experience in which learning could occur." Professor Baker's report details the various methods that the teachers used to bring about these results. What is evident from her report is that the LTG material was especially conducive to the use of some of those strategies. For example, helping students make connections with their own experiences is one very effective strategy for eliciting active engagement from students. Because the topics and concepts upon which LTG focuses—giving, sharing, personal responsibility to the group, tolerance, etc.—apply to so many of the situations that regularly occur in a child's life, teachers had many opportunities to tie the larger concepts to the children's everyday experience. Similarly, the curriculum's emphasis on sharing and giving presented many chances for teachers to help children enact those traits with their classmates as the lesson progressed. To reinforce the curriculum's emphasis on sharing, democratic decision making, and respectfulness

After the South Asian tsunamis in December 2004, a 3rd grade class collected money for the Red Cross. Ms. M had the class write letters to send with their donation. Ideas for the letters included "how they raised their money" and "how the Red Cross might use their money."

toward others, teachers modeled those behaviors during the LTG lessons, for example, by having the students vote on whether they wished to pursue one or another activity or by being careful to use respectful language when talking with their students.

School Climate Survey

This report, under the leadership of Professor Jean Baker and with the assistance of Sonia Patil, details the results of the school climate surveys administered to students in CHESP schools that started their three-year relationship with the LTG project in the fall of 2004. School climate refers to the structural, interpersonal, and instructional variables that affect the mores and norms in a school building's social atmosphere and learning environment. Items were taken from publicly available measures, including the Opinion Survey for Students and the Vessels' School Climate Scale for Children. In addition to school climate, items from an existing School Satisfaction subscale (Huebner, 1994) were incorporated into the survey. School satisfaction refers to students' cognitive appraisal of the quality of their school experiences.

The items for the survey were selected to parallel ideas espoused by the LTG curriculum, with specific coverage of interpersonal respect, commitment to the common good, giving, and service to others. Five factors were identified for analysis: adult-student relationships, peer relationships, commitment to the common good and helping, rules and expectations, and safety and belonging.

A total of 11 schools participated (four high schools, four middle schools, and three elementary schools). The schools had just started their LTG curriculum when the surveys were completed by the students. The report provides the pre-test data. The post-test survey will be administered in spring 2006. At that time the evaluation team expects to be able to use the pre- and post-data to examine whether school climate changes as students experience increased exposure to LTG ideas.

Kids are more caring to each other. They are thinking of others outside of the school setting. We seem to have less problems with discipline. I've been in this building for some time now [and] have seen a definite change in school climate.
- LTG teacher

Teacher Experiences

Current LTG Teacher Perspectives Survey

At the end of the 2004-05 school year, the evaluation team, under the leadership of Professor Brian Silver, mailed surveys to teachers who had used the LTG curriculum materials during that year in three active groups of schools affiliated with the project. The survey solicited each respondent's understanding of and commitment to philanthropy education, their confidence that they were adequately prepared to teach the LTG materials, the utility of various teacher resources available to them, the amount of support and recognition they received from different people in their schools and from the LTG staff, and their overall assessment of the LTG material and its impact on students in their classrooms. In general the questions in this survey resembled those in the previous four versions that have been administered during the eight years the evaluation team has been involved with the project. However, as the LTG staff has reduced its face-to-face support for various groups of teachers using the materials and relied on less personal

dissemination techniques, this survey, like its immediate predecessor, sought to find out more about how teachers were learning to use and expand upon the lessons.

The 2004-05 survey was sent to teachers in three different groups of schools, each with different support from the LTG staff. Pilot schools have for the past three years committed themselves to teaching LTG materials in at least one classroom at every grade level; these schools have been the main focus of the evaluation team's work recently. Learning to Give schools (LTG schools) have a less formal and often less sustained relationship to the LTG project and generally have fewer than half their teachers involved in offering LTG lessons. The CHESP schools, recipients of Michigan Community – Higher Education School Partnership grants for 2004-05, started to use LTG materials this year as part of their grant activities (although a few of the CHESP schools had used LTG materials before receiving the state grants).

The evaluation team received 126 responses, representing 27% of the pilot school teachers, 14% of the CHESP teachers, and only 9% of the LTG school teachers. The evaluators intended to treat each group as having received a different form of introduction to the LTG materials and hoped to compare the responses from the three groups as a way of assessing the effectiveness of each treatment. However, response rates were too low, especially in the non-pilot schools, to justify drawing firm conclusions about the different methods of introducing LTG to teachers. The results did allow for useful comparisons between 25% of the respondents who were new to LTG in 2004-05 and the remainder who had used the material for more than one year. Although 75% of the responses came from elementary teachers, this year's survey elicited more and a higher percentage of responses from high school teachers than any previous survey. Although the absolute number is small (12) and thus conclusions at best tentative, the high school results are quite suggestive.

I have discovered that if you are a selfish person, you cannot teach about selflessness. Teachers, too, need to be taught about learning to give.
- LTG teacher

Student and Teacher Learning

Respondents gave high marks to the curriculum and its individual components. As in the 2002 and 2003 surveys, virtually all the teachers (98% this year) felt that the lessons enhanced the students' understanding of philanthropy, 62% marking a great deal and 37% somewhat. One teacher described how the students

...realized they could make a difference in the community as adults acknowledged & agreed to help (not do) in their efforts. This was evident in the confidence they gain in reaching out to others in the community.

Another testified that students had become

...kinder and more aware of their actions towards others

another that

Conversations between students in which they discuss the topics studied, parental feedback and...student actions all demonstrate a change in student attitudes.

One of the findings from this year's survey is the degree to which teachers using the LTG materials enhanced their own understanding of philanthropy. When asked how well they understood the concept of philanthropy when they first started working with LTG, 12% of the respondents indicated that they understood "very well," 58% "fairly well," 22%

“not very well,” and 8% “not at all.” When asked, “Since you became involved in the project, to what extent has your understanding of philanthropy changed?” 57% stated that it had been enhanced a “great deal” and 41% “somewhat.” No one indicated that his or her understanding had not been enhanced. As would be expected, those who began their work with LTG with little understanding of the concepts of philanthropy indicated that their understanding was enhanced the most, and conversely those with early understanding found their understanding generally enhanced “somewhat” rather than a “great deal.” For example, 92% of high school teachers indicated that they had understood the concepts of philanthropy very or fairly well and, not surprisingly, were less likely than elementary and middle school teachers to feel that their understanding was enhanced significantly.

When the teachers were asked whether participating in the project changed their view of their “role as a teacher,” half said yes. One wrote:

I found how important my role is in helping students to become responsible, active citizens.

Another said:

I instill more than facts and figures. I instill feelings and a desire to improve the future.

One wrote that

I've learned that when given the opportunity, elementary students are very capable of helping others. Not only are they capable but they get really excited about it. Their self-esteem skyrockets.

Preparation

The evaluation team has been concerned to monitor the feelings of successive cohorts of teachers regarding their confidence in their readiness to teach the project’s materials. In each successive survey, the evaluation team has found that new groups of teachers felt that they understood what was expected of them better than earlier groups. The responses from this survey generally supported that trend. Most pilot school and LTG school teachers indicated that they understood what was expected of them either “very well” (34%, 43%) or “fairly well” (61%, 48%). However, only 16% of the CHESP school teachers indicated “very well” and 26% responded “not very well.” Moreover, while approximately half of the pilot school and LTG school teachers felt that the project’s *background* materials prepared them “very well” to teach the LTG curriculum this year, only one third of the CHESP teachers gave that response. In commenting on the quality and quantity of the background materials provided by the project, only 40% rated them “excellent” and most of the remainder chose “good.” Among high school teachers, however, only 17% chose “excellent.” There was no difference among the groups of teachers in their rankings of the quality and quantity of the project’s *training* materials.

The CHESP teachers also stood out in expressing less confidence in their readiness to teach the LTG curriculum. It must be stressed that most of the teachers in all cohorts expressed confidence in their preparation and the adequacy of the supporting materials, with nearly half indicating that they were “completely” confident. However, in answer to the question “When teaching the LTG lessons, to what extent did you feel confident that you had the resources to acquire needed knowledge?”, 21% of the CHESP teachers responded that they were “not very much” or “not at all” confident. Only 6% of the pilot

school teachers and 5% of the LTG school teachers gave similar responses. Nearly one-third (32%) of the CHESP teachers lacked confidence that the lesson assessments would provide them with meaningful information; 14% of the pilot school and 20% of the LTG school teachers responded similarly. The lesson assessments engendered the lowest confidence rating among all the areas probed, with only 34% of all respondents expressing complete confidence. To the question about whether they were confident that they had adequate training for the task of teaching LTG materials, LTG school and CHESP teachers were more than twice as likely to express doubts than the pilot school teachers (20%, 21%, and 8%, respectively).

The evaluation team has explored teacher use of computers throughout the project because E-mail and the Internet have been crucial components in plans for disseminating the curriculum and maintaining supportive contacts with its users. Successive surveys have shown a continued increase in competence in and use of computers to access information at remote locations. In this year's survey, 58% said they were very competent in using computers; 37%, somewhat; and only 5%, not very. Seventy-one percent used the Internet at least once a day; 17% use it several times each week; 6%, once a week; and 6%, less frequently. Despite that facility with the Internet, teachers in the survey have not used the project's Web site as intensively as might be expected. Although it contains an extensive collection of background materials, only 42% of the teachers had logged on five or more times; 7% had logged on just once; 14% had never done so. Those who had logged on gave it high marks: 45% said it was "very useful" and the same percentage "somewhat useful." Those using LTG materials for the first time in 2004-5 found the Web site more useful than did those who have been using the materials for two or more years.

Support

This year's survey confirmed findings of earlier iterations that teachers communicated about the LTG materials most frequently with their colleagues rather than with building or curriculum administrators. Communication was most frequent with fellow teachers in their school and then with LTG teachers based elsewhere. Forty-one percent indicated that they "rarely" or "never" communicated with their principal about their project activities; 54% said the same about interactions with LTG project staff. However, the respondents indicated a somewhat different pattern when assessing "how satisfied are you with the amount of support, advice, or feedback that you have received concerning your teaching of LTG lessons from each of the groups." Although only 9% of the teachers reported frequent communication with project staff, 47% reported that they were "very" satisfied with their interactions with project staff. The same percentage of teachers expressed that they were "very" satisfied with their communication with their principal and with their fellow teachers, although there was much more interaction reported with the latter. Thus it appears that teachers are about as satisfied with the support they receive from superiors as they are with that from their peers. Teachers were most satisfied with

Learning Beyond the Classroom

- Students made connections with community members and in many cases these connections will continue.
- Our unit last year involved gardening & I have had students now grow their own gardens.
- Parents are more aware. Families have returned to help some of the organizations we helped.
- Our community has really opened up and embraced the projects the kids have been involved in.

- LTG teachers

the support, advice, and feedback they receive from their students. The survey also asked teachers how satisfied they were with the amount of recognition they receive from others for their work on the LTG project. About a third indicated that they were “very satisfied” with the recognition received from their principal, their colleagues at school, the teaching profession, friends and family, and parents and the community; 54% were very satisfied with the recognition from the project leaders; and 57% with that they received from their students. Over 90% were “very” or “somewhat” satisfied with the recognition from those groups.

Service-Learning

Teachers are expected to incorporate a service-learning component into one of the LTG units they teach each year. Seventy percent of the respondents to this year’s survey were able to do so: 79% from CHESP schools, 71% from the pilot schools, and 60% from LTG schools. Teachers new to the program incorporated service-learning at a 66% rate while those who had previously used the materials did so at a 72% rate. Difficulty in implementing service-learning does not appear to be a matter of experience but rather one of lack of time, priority given to preparation for the MEAP, and sometimes funding for transportation and the like. Teachers were supportive of including a service-learning component but not enthusiastically so. Among those who did incorporate service-learning in their lessons, only 46% said that the component contributed a lot to the students’ interest and 50% that it contributed a lot to the students’ understanding of philanthropy. When asked “how useful . . . is it to include service-learning in the LTG curriculum,” 35% called it essential, 51% said that it was very useful, and 14% said that it was somewhat useful.

Teachers’ Overall Assessment of the LTG Project

Respondents were asked to rate the LTG project as a whole; this year’s results are consistent with those recorded in previous surveys. Seventy-six percent of this year’s respondents chose “very good” as their overall rating; 99% chose either “very good” or “good.” About 60% gave a “very good” rating to the LTG project directors, the resources available for the project, and the LTG lessons they used. (Only 36%, however, rated the level of support for LTG at their school as “very good,” with 22% calling it “fair,” and 4% “poor.”) Those new to the project were somewhat more reserved, with 60% of those who taught LTG materials for the first time in 2004-05 ranking the project as “very good” as opposed to 82% of the more experienced group. Similarly, 45% of the “new” teachers rated the lessons as “very good” compared to 69% of the “veteran” users of LTG materials.

They have learned to respect the rights and feeling of others. They have also come together as a group to meet community needs. They have realized that they have the power to make a difference.

- LTG teacher

The project draws consistently high marks from the teachers who use it in their classroom and thus know it intimately. Within the overall positive assessment, the evaluation team found four issues that deserve further attention:

1. Although in most areas teachers new to LTG in 2004-05 respond similarly to those with one or more years of experience with the curriculum, the “new” teachers indicate that they want more training.

2. With 30% of the respondents indicating that they were unable to implement the service-learning component of the curriculum, more attention to facilitating their efforts appears to be in order.
3. Given the richness of the project's Web site, the project should consider expending more effort on getting more teachers to use it, and to use it more intensively.
4. The responses to the survey from high school teachers indicate considerably less enthusiasm for and confidence in the LTG materials. The most obvious example is that while 68% of elementary teachers and 50% of middle school teachers thought that the LTG curriculum enhanced their students' understanding of philanthropy, only 33% of the high school teachers did so. The survey's sample of high school teachers was very small and thus the evaluation team does not want to make too much of results such as these. But these results when combined with the standardized test results of no pre-/post-test gain for older students suggest that further exploration of how the LTG curriculum works at the high school level is appropriate.

Long-Term Impact Survey of Former LTG Teachers

Professor Mark Wilson sought to survey teachers who had at one time or another been connected to the Learning to Give project to learn (1) if and how they remained connected to the project, (2) if the teachers continued to include philanthropy content in their classes after they ended their relationship to the project, and (3) how they thought teaching about philanthropy affected classroom behavior and atmosphere. Surveys were sent to 538 people via E-mail; only 48 usable responses were received. The low response rate is explained, Professor Wilson believes, more by the fact that many of the E-mail addresses were out of date and that spam filters blocked many of the surveys rather than by a lack of interest among those formerly associated with the project. The low response rate prevents the evaluation team from drawing any quantitative conclusions.

All the responses received were positive about the project and about teaching philanthropy, as those dissatisfied or no longer interested in the subject would be least likely to respond. Almost all of the teachers responding indicated that they were still using LTG material either in the original form or in a form they had revised; about half also indicated that they used new content that they or others had created.

Those responding generally reported that they did see changes in their students and their classrooms that they attributed, at least in part, to the introduction of instruction in philanthropy and service-learning projects. They reported that their students were growing adept at using the language of philanthropy to explain their actions and those of others. One teacher commented:

I was a second year teacher and asked to participate in the pilot program. Now I don't understand how I could have *not* taught these concepts in my classroom. They are at the very heart of what we are try to create: responsible, active citizens!

- LTG teacher

I teach 2nd grade, and am amazed to hear 2nd grade students using philanthropic vocabulary that they learn in the units. I truly believe that I have a very caring class as a result of the thread of philanthropy that I intertwine throughout every aspect of my academic curriculum.

They also saw improved behavior in the classroom as well as greater participation in community and philanthropic projects.

I saw that my students were finally able to make a connection to what we were doing in the classroom and their local community. Many of them for the first time in their lives had the feeling that they were a valued member of the community.

Respondents expressed continued interest in maintaining contact with the project (two-thirds use the LTG Web site) and indicated appreciation and enthusiasm for their experience with the Learning to Give materials and staff.

Concluding Remarks

Project Success

In summarizing the results from the last several years of assessment of the LTG project, the evaluation team concludes that incorporation of the LTG materials in classrooms has been successful along the following dimensions:

- Students demonstrate in their work samples that they understand the concepts of philanthropy, individual responsibility to the community, tolerance, and so on.
- Elementary students showed large gains in understanding of LTG concepts on the standardized achievement tests developed for the project. Older students did not show such gains.
- Students in LTG classes indicate in their responses to surveys that they are more involved in service learning, are more committed to giving and serving in the future, and are more willing to speak up in public forums than students responding to various national surveys.
- Teachers report that their students respond positively to the LTG lessons, applying the concepts in their interactions with each other and taking responsibility for maintaining a clean and happy classroom community.

Recommendations

- Work to understand differences across grade levels in learning gains
- Balance service learning and content
- Consider training and support strategies for future teacher and school adoptions
- Promote the Web site as major resource

Evaluation Strategies for 2005-2006

For the final year of the nine-year evaluation commitment, the evaluation team recommends the following strategies.

1. Broaden the base for collecting data for analyzing standardized test results. Continue the testing in the CHESP schools, but add students in the pilot schools and the LTG schools. A broader base will give more data for analysis among the several varying groups of schools in Michigan. The tests are now completed and can be used at beginning and end of semesters in order to provide pre- and post-test data for analysis. Analysis would look specifically at learning gains among elementary, middle, and high school students.
2. Conduct the follow-up (post-test) school climate survey in the CHESP schools.
3. Consider benefits of possibly conducting one conversation group among supportive principals or administrators to learn what factors in the LTG project most influenced their thinking and building results. Jointly scripted by the MSU evaluation team and the LTG project staff, it would replace the three focus groups and interviews described in the earlier work plan.
4. Convert all final versions of the evaluation tools for dissemination through the LTG Web site for use by schools or other universities as the project moves to national venues.

"I care more and I want to share more."

—Learning to Give Student



"After the South Asian tsunamis this past winter, a 3rd grade class collected money to donate to the Red Cross. The class wrote letters to the Red Cross with ideas on how they raised their money and how the Red Cross might use their money."

—Learning to Give Teacher

"I feel like I am acting more like a philanthropist."

—Learning to Give Student

"I saw that my students were finally able to make a connection to what we were doing in the classroom and their local community. Many of them for the first time in their lives had the feeling that they were a valued member of the community."

—Learning to Give Teacher

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