

excellence & ethics



CONTENTS

- 1 Power2 Programs:
Feedback From the Field
- 4 Using the CREE for School
Improvement
- 6 Building Character on
the Gridiron
- 8 Performance Character/
Moral Character Ball

The Education Letter of the Smart & Good Schools Initiative

Power2™ Programming: Feedback From the Field-Testing

by Tom Lickona

Kate Erickson bantered with students in her multicultural freshman communications class in Junction City High School, Kansas, then settled them down with a community-building ritual, their class handshake.

When the buzz subsided, she said, "Okay, guys, today we're continuing with our Power2Learn unit on managing stress. We've all got stress in our lives, right? One of the stressors in my life right now is a graduate course. My final exam is tonight!

"Today's lesson focuses on 'turn-around' stories—responding to stress by changing the direction of your life. We're

going to look at a video showing one young woman's turn-around story, but first I'd like to ask Marcus [name changed here] if he'd be willing to share his story. Marcus is one of the most mild-mannered students I know." (Later she told us she knew he'd be willing to tell his story because he had done so in another class.)

With all eyes on him, Marcus, about 6'4" and 250 muscular pounds, spoke softly:

When I was younger, I was part of a gang. We beat up some boys pretty bad and put them in the hospital. I went to jail, a juvenile detention center, for 13 months.

"What did that teach you?" Mrs. Erickson asked.

"To control my anger."

Erickson asked the class, "Marcus is an example of what?" "A turn-around story," a boy said.

It was a moving moment. The stage was set for the rest of the lesson.

She then showed a You-Tube video, "Homeless to Harvard." In that story, college student Liz Murray tells how she grew up with parents who were drug addicts, lost her mother to AIDS at age 15, and soon found herself living on the streets wondering, "Am I going to end up

like my mother or do something different with my life?"

She decided to go back to high school and persevere no matter what—and ended up getting accepted into Harvard University. Students in Power2Learn classes say they find videos like this "inspirational." One boy said:

"Homeless to Harvard" showed someone who didn't seem to have a future but worked really hard to get to where she wanted to be. If she could get into a good college in spite of all her problems, then with all the support I have from my parents, I should be able to do it, no problem.

Program Feedback

We were in Kansas, Iowa, and New Jersey observing Kate Erickson and other teachers to gather feedback on the field-testing of two new programs that are the leading edge of our Smart & Good Schools Initiative: **Power2Learn** for students and **Power2Teach** for faculty.

Power2Learn is a high school curriculum (7 units, four lessons each; see box, p. 2) designed to develop academic and social competencies within a classroom and school culture of excellence and ethics. It can be implemented in one grade level (e.g., 9 grade or, if a school prefers,



Tom Lickona with a faculty focus group at Junction City HS, Kansas

Photo by Sue Kidd



Power2Learn Tower Activity: Urbandale High School students (Des Moines, Iowa) go for height.



Jerry Wilson, principal of Ogden High School (Iowa), leading a Power2Teach session for his faculty

grade 8), or in heterogeneously-grouped classes.

Lessons are structured to be teacher-taught with the aid of a teacher script and multi-media slides and, in version 2.0 of the program (to be called Power2Achieve), will include greater use of authentic assessment approaches and some form of accountability/acknowledgment for the work accomplished.

Based on the conceptual framework presented in our 2005 *Smart & Good High Schools* report (www.cortland.edu/character), Power2Learn seeks to help students acquire:

- **performance character competencies** such as work ethic, organization, and perseverance and **moral character competencies** such as honesty, respect, and justice (see p. 8 for a graphic showing this vision of character);

- **practical tools** (life map, effort and attitude rubric, integrity-in-action checklist, etc.) that help students actually *use* their performance and moral competencies in their academic classes and other areas of

Excellence & Ethics is published by the Center for the 4th and 5th Rs and the Institute for Excellence & Ethics, with support from the **John Templeton Foundation** and the **Sanford N. McDonnell Foundation**.

Editor: **Dr. Tom Lickona**
Co-Editor: **Marthe Seales**

Center for the 4th & 5th Rs
SUNY Cortland
School of Education
Cortland, NY 13045
Ph. (607) 753-2455
Respect & Responsibility

Email: character@cortland.edu
www.cortland.edu/character

iee Institute for Excellence & Ethics
P.O. Box 185
LaFayette, NY 13084
Ph. (315) 677-8114
Email: info@excellenceandethics.com
www.excellenceandethics.com

their lives.

Power2Teach is a companion professional development program for a school's full faculty aimed at developing a strong Professional Ethical Learning Community that supports Power2Learn.

What Are the Conditions for Success?

As part of the field-testing, we've observed lessons being taught, conducted student and faculty focus groups on Power2Learn and Power2Teach, and solicited anonymous online lesson feedback (see box p.3) from teachers and students. Our goal is to identify "conditions for success," factors that significantly influence program effectiveness, including:

- **programmatic features:** design features of the lessons we provide, teacher training to prepare faculty to teach them, and guidance from us during the pilot-testing;

- **implementation approaches:** strategies teachers and schools have used to maximize success of the programs.

Feedback from schools is helping our design team strengthen the programmatic features as we create version 2.0 of this programming. The focus of this article is to share some of the implementation approaches that pilot schools have used to enhance effectiveness.

Feedback from schools is helping our design team strengthen the programmatic features as we create version 2.0 of this programming. The focus of this article is to share some of the implementation approaches that pilot schools have used to enhance effectiveness.

1. TEACHER LEADERSHIP. Students say they prefer it when teachers actively teach a Power2Learn lesson by asking questions and explaining the ideas; sharing personal stories and inviting students to share their experiences; and muting the PowerPoint voice-over for some or all of the lesson. One teacher said:

My Power2Learn class participated much better today because I did more

to direct their activities and facilitate the discussion.

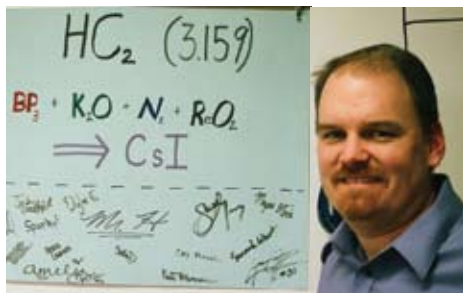
2. CHOICE OF VENUE. Context matters. In schools where advisory period is now used for Power2Learn, some students have objected to losing what was a time for talking with friends. They've also asked, "Why do we have to do work when we're not getting any credit?" Other schools have solved the credit problem by teaching Power2Learn within a regular academic course (e.g., freshman English) or within the school's for-credit seminar class.

3. EXPLAINING THE PROGRAM'S PURPOSE. Students find it helpful when teachers take time to explain how the program will help them. One girl said:

Throughout a lesson, our teacher talks about how these ideas will help us in school and in life and how they're still relevant to her as an adult—because all through life you have to manage your time and deal with stress.

4. ACTIVE LEARNING. Some teachers have devised strategies for increasing students' active involvement. One teacher, after his class watched a clip from the movie "Drumline," made a masking tape "continuum" on the floor and told his students:

Power2Learn™ UNITS AND SAMPLE LESSONS		
UNIT	TITLE	SAMPLE LESSON
1	MAXIMIZING THE POWER OF CHARACTER TO ACHIEVE YOUR GOALS	<i>The 4 KEYS to Success</i>
2	MANAGING YOUR TIME AND STRESS	<i>Organizing Your Workload</i>
3	WORKING HARDER AND SMARTER	<i>Capitalizing On Your Opportunities</i>
4	PURSUE YOUR GOALS WITH INTEGRITY	<i>Developing and Defending Your Conscience</i>
5	WORKING WITH OTHERS	<i>Communicating For Mutual Understanding</i>
6	MAXIMIZING YOUR POTENTIAL FOR EXCELLENCE	<i>Having the Will to Keep Trying</i>
7	CREATING A BLUEPRINT FOR ACHIEVING YOUR GOALS	<i>Finding Your Inspiration</i>



Urbandale H.S. chemistry teacher Marc Hermon with a Compact for Excellence that his Power2Learn class wrote with chemical symbols, and signed.

I want you to stand on the point that represents your opinion. This end of the continuum is VERY FAIR; the other end is ABSOLUTELY UNFAIR. My first question: "Was the band leader's decision to discipline the whole band because of the actions of some, fair or unfair? Okay—now move!

"Even my stick-in-the-mud students had to get involved," this teacher said.

5. EFFECTIVE DISCUSSIONS. How much students get out of any lesson depends to a considerable extent on what the teacher does to draw out the learnings and help students apply them in other contexts. One teacher describes how, after a Power2Learn tower-building activity (see photo, p. 1), she guided a class discussion to help students generalize their learnings:

At the beginning of the activity, students complained about the building constraints imposed by the instructions. In our discussion, I asked them for examples from life where they put more energy into complaining about a problem than into coming up with a solution.

I challenged them to use what they learned from this to better focus their energies in my regular classes. To me, that's the real benefit of these lessons—developing a common vocabulary and set of understandings that can be transferred.

6. A CLASSROOM COMMUNITY THAT SUPPORTS AND CHALLENGES. To help build a community that supports and challenges, each Power2Learn class had to create a Compact for Excellence—rules for best work and respectful behavior. However, whether the Compact really influences behavior depends on what the teacher does with it. Many students said their Compact was just "words on the wall." Said one girl: "We never talk about it. We've got kids in our class who call other people 'stupid.'" But in other classes, the Compact was a living document because of the teacher:

Our class really got involved in discussing how we treat each other. Our teacher sometimes reviews our Compact at the start of class and points to it when somebody isn't following it.

7. GREATER ACCOUNTABILITY FOR APPLICATION. Students said they are learning practical tools such as goal-setting and time and stress management but need reminders from their teachers to use them ("Let's hear how you're doing with the time management plan you made last week"). One boy commented:

It feels like we're writing all these goals and things we should do, but then you walk out of class and forget about it. If we kept coming back to them in later lessons, it would help us use them more.

Students also felt they should *take with them* something from their Power2Learn folders (now collected at the end of class) that would remind them of their goals. Finally, they proposed having a "goal partner" because "you wouldn't want to let yourself or that person down." One school did this by creating "accountability buddies," as a girl explained:

I'm Andrea's accountability buddy. Her goal is to not get any referrals. Sometimes in class I'll whisper, "Andrea, you're about to get a referral . . ."

Power2Teach

Power2Teach was designed to involve the full faculty (not just those teaching Power2Learn) in monthly, 90-minute "essential conversations." Teachers discuss issues such as collegiality and student effort, examine relevant school data, and learn instructional tools.

In the feedback on Power2Teach, some schools have said they want the program to be more closely correlated with the student Power2Learn curriculum, to give them the skills they need to teach that pro-

gram well. (An online support program is being designed to do that.) Finding time for Power2Teach has also been an issue. Both the benefits and challenges of Power2Teach are reflected in one principal's comments:

To strengthen the connection between Power2Teach and Power2Learn, we post the weekly student Power2Learn lesson right above the copy machine for all faculty to see. At the beginning of each Power2Teach session, we also present an abridged Power2Learn lesson and video clip so the faculty can experience what the students are experiencing. This is powerful—our teachers say they really appreciate it.

She concluded: "Our biggest challenge has been keeping Power2Teach a priority when faculty time is so limited for discussing curriculum matters, scheduling issues, and needs of our students and parents that arise throughout the year. Despite this, Power2Teach has helped us implement our core values and improve our school culture."



Meg Wilson, principal of Rawlins County H.S. (KS) says that Power2Teach "has helped us improve our school culture."

In response to school feedback about time constraints, Power2Teach is being redesigned for 2010-2011 as Power2Achieve Toolkits, independent programming modules from which schools can choose according to their needs and available time. ■

Dr. Tom Lickona (lickona@cortland.edu) co-directs the Smart & Good Schools Initiative (www.cortland.edu/character).

For information on Power2 programming, go to www.excellenceandethics.com.

Sample Online Student Feedback (anonymous) on Power2Learn Lessons

"As a result of this lesson, I plan to . . ."

"Stop bullying."

"Not put down my teammates."

"Set goals for myself."

"Do my best in band and schoolwork."

"Not have a baby."

"Be a leader."

"Support my friends."

"Push myself to do better in school."

"Do my homework."

"Make a plan for my life."

"Stay positive in volleyball practice."

"Get my family to talk more."

"Pursue my goals & never back down."

"Overcome my shyness."

"Not flip out so much on people."

"Never drink underage."

"Follow my dream."

"Treat people with more respect."

Using the CREE to Make School Improvements

by Mary Guilfoile and Dr. Patrick Queenan



Mary Guilfoile (third from right) with colleagues and students

The Glenholme School, a therapeutic boarding school in Washington, Connecticut, serves middle and high school students who have been unsuccessful in other settings because of emotional, learning, or behavioral challenges. The Smart & Good Schools approach has added strength and rigor to our efforts to help these students become healthy, moral, and resilient people.

When we read the *Smart & Good High Schools* report (www.cortland.edu/character), we realized that attention to performance values (positive attitude, best effort, perseverance, etc.) and collecting reliable data to assess our program had been missing pieces in our approach. We chose two of the Smart & Good report's 8 Strengths of Character to focus on: "diligent and capable performer" and "socially and emotionally skilled person."

First Steps

First, the faculty met in small groups to look at these two strengths of character and decide what Smart & Good practices we were already using and what new practices we should adopt or adapt. We agreed we needed to expand opportu-

nities for student leadership; involve students more in decision-making; and include more rituals in the life of the school. We then invited Dr. Matt Davidson from the Institute for Excellence & Ethics (IEE) to observe our program and make suggestions. He recommended that we collect data on our school climate and culture using the CREE (Collective Responsibility for Excellence & Ethics), an instrument developed by IEE.

Measuring the Climate and Culture

We decided that a longitudinal study of climate and culture was important for our school's growth. Then, in November 2007, Dr. Vlad Khmelkov from IEE showed us how to administer the CREE in a confidential manner. We assigned a number to

each student and employee so that future CREE administrations could track changes in attitude and behavior. Teachers used a class period to conduct the survey with their students. In February 2009, we added the parent version of the CREE.

Sharing the Results

We devoted a lot of time to sharing and discussing the CREE results with the full staff. Using the *Keys to Reports* guide provided by IEE, we identified:

- ✓ what there was to celebrate
- ✓ what we could improve
- ✓ questions we still had.

The summary and the full reports were also loaded onto the school intranet. All homeroom teachers taught their students a lesson on interpreting survey findings. Homeroom groups then examined the student data and chose what to focus on during the coming year. Students overwhelmingly agreed that they wanted to:

- improve student-to-student interactions
- increase student involvement in bringing about positive change in the school.

Improving the Climate and Culture Through Leadership

To help the students achieve these goals, 28 were chosen to participate in a week-long, summer Student Leadership Conference. Students explored leadership and teamwork concepts, practiced leading various group activities, and identified areas of school life that students could impact. Helping new students feel comfortable and welcomed was a project the group wanted to undertake.

They therefore developed a new Glenholme ritual, *Getting to Know You*. For an afternoon in September, the school hallways were lined with booths that described different aspects of school life; student leaders escorted new students as they explored the booths and met the staff; and the rest of the student body participated in activities led by other student leaders.

Many of the students who participated in these activities went on to run for student council. We found these students

Items from CREE (Collective Responsibility for Excellence & Ethics)			
Ratings of 3 or above are desirable.	2007	2009	Change
1. When I see someone having a problem, I offer to help.	3.46	3.55	↑.09
2. I speak up when someone is bullied or harassed.	3.26	3.41	↑.18
3. Someone verbally abuses or harasses another person (reverse-scored).	2.09	2.37	↑.28
4. Someone steals from another person (reverse-scored).	2.51	2.82	↑.31
5. Someone physically assaults another person (reverse-scored).	3.10	3.14	↑.04
6. Someone uses email, text messaging, or websites to bully or harass others (reverse-scored).	4.28	4.25	↓.07
7. Students here do not talk to or include those who are different (reverse-scored).	3.48	3.55	↑.07
8. Students who are not part of the popular groups get picked on or excluded (reverse-scored).	2.36	2.66	↑.30
9. Students here only care about themselves. (reverse-scored)	3.15	3.07	↓.08
10. Students take an active role in helping solve school problems.	3.18	3.02	↓.06
11. When students see someone being picked on, they try to stop it.	2.67	2.92	↑.25
12. Students would try to stop their friends from spreading rumors or gossip about others.	2.36	2.38	↑.02
13. Students believe that working together, they can bring about change in the school.	2.76	3.04	↑.28

The scale of the CREE survey is 1 to 5. Negatively worded items are reverse-scored for the analysis, so that a higher score on an item always indicates a more positive behavior or perception.

Student Commitments

- I will not tease anyone who is different in looks or beliefs.
- I will try to look more on the positive side and influence others to do the same.
- I will be kind to others.
- I will stand up for people who won't stand up for themselves.

much more ready for their leadership roles than past students who had not been part of a student leadership conference. We hoped this group's willingness to be involved in improving the school would have a ripple effect on the whole student body and school culture.

Evaluating Impact

In February 2009, we conducted the CREE survey for a second time to see if there were any changes in ratings of those items dealing with student-to-student interactions. The first column in the table (p. 4) lists the items students felt were most important to target. The next two columns list the mean scores for the items in the two administrations of the CREE. The "change" column indicates the difference between the two means. We considered any change of + or - .25 large enough to be substantively important. Using this standard, we determined that there had been substantive improvement in perceptions of:

- **Safety:** less verbal abuse, harassment, and theft (Items 3 & 4).
- **Acceptance:** less popular students being picked on less often (Item 8).
- **Prosocial action:** trying to stop students from being picked on (Item 11).
- **Students believing that they can bring about school change** (Item 13).

To test the effects of the leadership conference, we analyzed the data from the 2007 and 2009 CREE surveys for the

student leadership group alone. The rating for the item, "When I see someone having a problem, I offer to help," was higher for the leaders on the second administration compared to the rating for the whole student body (4.06 vs. 3.30). When we analyzed only the ratings for the newest students, the results indicated that they perceived the environment more positively than those who had been students longer. We hope we can attribute this result to our new *Getting to Know You* ritual.

Students Examine the 2009 Data

After the 2009 administration of the CREE, we once more made sure the student body had a chance to examine the data in focused class discussions. Students posted every school change that had taken place in the previous year that was the result of a student idea or action and discussed how the change had benefited the school.

All students also wrote about what they would commit to do in the coming year to continue to improve school culture. Sample commitment statements (see box) were shared with the student body and faculty.

The leadership conference experience was repeated in the summer of 2009.

Returning student leaders shared the ways they had implemented leadership lessons in the past year. They explored the question, "How do you get individuals who have their own agenda to cooperate for the greater good?" The group interviewed school and community leaders, such as the mayor of Torrington, to get their perspectives.

Glenholme has found the Smart and Good approach helpful in generating and documenting our outcomes. More longitudinal data will help us make further improvements. We will administer the CREE to students and staff for the third time in 2010. A parent leadership group will also be sending the survey to all parents. ■

Mary Guilfoie (mguilfoi@devereux.org) is director of faculty learning at The Glenholme School. Dr. Patrick Queenan (pqueenan@devereux.org) is Glenholme's assistant executive director.

The Glenholme School, a Center of the Devereux Foundation, is a therapeutic boarding program and exceptional learning environment to address varying levels of academic, social, and emotional development in boys and girls ages 9-18. The goal is to prepare our graduates for continued education in traditional schools, boarding schools, and colleges and universities.

THE CREE PROCESS

by Vlad Khmelkov



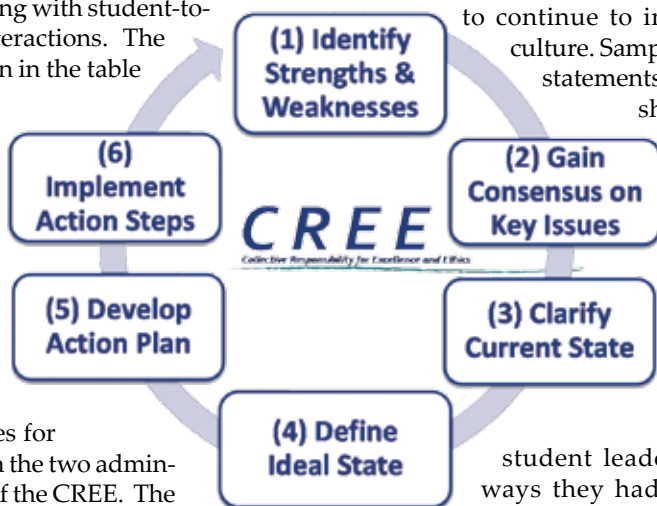
The story of how the Glenholme school worked with CREE data to inform and enhance their improvement efforts is a compelling real-world example of the steps that constitute what we call the "CREE Process" to support data-driven school improvement (see graphic).

The Smart & Good Schools Initiative views assessment not just as a way to check on one's progress. We believe that working with CREE data is a fundamental approach to helping staff and students practice in a natural way the principles of ELC (Ethical Learning Community) and PELC (Professional Ethical Learning Community), such as developing shared purpose and identity, aligning practices with desired outcomes, strengthening everyone's voice, and exercising personal and collective responsibility for excellence and ethics.

The Glenholme School started by identifying strengths and weaknesses in their existing practices (step 1 in the graphic), and gained consensus on which issues were the most important at the moment (step 2). Then, they explored ways to clarify the current state and selected the CREE as a tool to use in their longitudinal study (step 3). The results from the baseline data collection allowed setting specific goals for improvement (step 4) and a concrete action plan for how to reach those goals (step 5). After a year of implementation (step 6), the cycle repeated itself, but did so at the deeper level of understanding of the existing state and desired state, stronger commitment to fidelity of the process, and broader involvement of the stakeholders.

While many schools look for ways to involve the whole staff in discussing how to improve, centering such discussions on data makes the process less threatening, more focused, and ultimately more productive. Glenholme also found creative ways to involve students in reflecting on the CREE findings and taking action steps to improve the school culture. ■

Dr. Vlad Khmelkov (vkhmelkov@excellenceandethics.com) is vice-president for research and technology at IEE.



Our Boys: Building Character on the Plains of Kansas

by Joe Drape



We were sitting in a locker room that smelled like it had hosted a couple of generations of teenage boys, and Roger Barta was telling me about the high school football program he had built in this town that he loved: Smith Center, Kansas, pop. 1,931.

Coach Barta is 62, a gentle sort of a man with a honey baritone, and a legend in western Kansas. I was here in fall 2007 for *The New York Times* to write about his football team, the Smith Center Redmen, who had won 51 games in a row.

Inside Main Street's Second Cup Cafe, everyone seemed to have a son or nephew or grandson on the Redmen, but the tales they shared had little to do with their performance on the football field. They spoke instead about the bubble gum cards traded at the elementary school, with photos of the senior players and cheerleaders, each of whom signed a pledge to remain alcohol-, drug-, and tobacco-free. If they break that promise, they must go to the elementary school to explain to the kids why they were kicked off the team and their cards revoked.

"You ask anyone in western Kansas, and they'll tell you that they can recognize a Smith Center kid."

No one was denying that the Redmen played pretty good football. The current senior class had won three straight championships and had outscored its opponents 704-0. These seniors had never lost a game in high school and had not let a team score on them all year.

By all accounts, Coach Barta was the one who set the tone for Smith Center. In his thirty years as head coach, his teams had won 276 football games and lost only 58. He had had plenty of offers to move up and on, but instead, he stayed and watched dozens of his boys go on to play college football. The majority of his former players continued their studies and became lawyers and farmers, doctors and newspaper publishers, teachers and coaches. Four of his former players teach at Smith Center and coach alongside him.

One of Coach Barta's former players, Mark Simoneau, is a linebacker for the

New Orleans Saints. He said of Barta, "He looks and sounds like a math teacher, which he is, and is about as laid-back as they come. As good a coach as he is, he's a better guy. He treats people like gold."

"None of This Is About Football"

"What we do around here real well is raise kids," Coach Barta explained to me. "In fact, we do such a good job at it—and I'm talking about the parents and community—that they go away to school and succeed, and then pursue opportunities in the bigger cities."

"None of this is really about football," he said. "We're going to get scored on eventually and lose a game, and that doesn't mean a thing. What I hope we're doing is sending kids into life who know that every day means something."

Concerns About the 2008 Season

In 2007, Smith Center had another perfect season, 8-0. One more perfect season in 2008 meant that Smith Center would own 67 consecutive victories and five straight titles, both of which would be records for Kansas. However, Doug Boucher, the team's strength coach, was worried. Marshall McCall, one of the four senior co-captains, was the only one who showed up to lift weights a few weeks ago. Boucher pulled him into the coach's office and laid out the coaching staff's concerns:

No one here is worried about the talent you guys have, but I'm concerned about the seniors' ability to lead this team. You have been standing in the shadows of last year's seniors. You guys need to step into the sunshine and lead this team. You need to lead by your work ethic, by your example, and you need to become more verbal.

Marshall knew that he and his fellow seniors were carrying a heavy load and that it was already getting to them. The *Smith County Pioneer*, the local weekly newspaper, referred to last year's champions as "arguably the best ever in Kansas high school football." Trevor Rempe, senior co-captain and one of the team's most fearless players, had been quoted in the magazine *Kansas Pregame* that the Redmen would probably be underdogs in many of their games and that he and his teammates were ready to accept a defeat.

"We won't hang our heads, but it will hurt," Trevor had said. "But we can still win a fifth state championship even though we wouldn't be undefeated."

The Redmen's First Practice

"It's a great day to be a Redman, isn't it guys," said Coach Barta. It was 6:30 a.m., and before him were 56 bleary-eyed high school students ready for the first practice of the season, and of the day. They would be coming back at 6:00 p.m.

In the middle of the field, Coach Barta crouched like a linebacker, watching a quartet of fullbacks take handoffs. "I coach the fullbacks because they are the most important position on the team," Barta told them.

The Redmen ran an extraordinarily simple offense: They ran the fullback up the middle and the halfbacks off the tackles. They rarely pitched out for a sweep or passed the ball. They never kicked an extra point, preferring to try for two points. Smith Center routinely averaged nine yards per carry for a season—you do the math. Field goals? They were attempted rarely and only when the Redmen were so far ahead that Coach Barta was trying not to run up the score.

The Redmen were a power football team, pure and simple. Coach Barta believed that if the Redmen ran the offense crisply, the opposing defense would have no idea who had the ball and would be forced to tackle four players on each play. It was not only frustrating for defenses, but also exhausting.

Hear Joe Drape's lunch talk on Tuesday, June 29, at our Summer Institute (www.cortland.edu/character):



"The Secret of Excellence: How the Smith Center, Kansas Football Team Won 79 Straight"

"Every Day, A Little Bit Better"

To close day one's morning practice, Coach Barta walked to the middle of the field and raised his hand, and the Redmen sprinted to him from the four corners of the field. They clapped rhythmically until Coach Barta put one finger in the air.

"Whoop," they said in unison, a muted war cry, and then snapped to attention. The Redmen were out of breath as they gathered around the coach. "That's the sound of hard work," he said. "That was a good first practice. I really believe that you can be a smart team, a fast team."

We're going to have to work at it. Our goal each day is to get just a little bit better. It's our goal as a football team, and it should be yours as a student and a son and a brother and a citizen. Every day, if you try to become a little bit better, you're going to become a better man.

"We'll see you back here tonight," he said. "Good job."

"Respect each other, love each other, and together we are champions."

At the end of that day's evening practice, Coach Barta walked into the locker room, parting the freshmen sitting on the floor. It was time for him to lay out the rules and expectations for the coming season. He did not pace or stalk, and he barely raised his voice beyond his usual conversational rumble.

Coach Barta's Two Rules

"Guys, I don't have a lot of rules. Two main ones I got, I expect you to follow year-round," he said, pausing. "Don't embarrass us. Don't embarrass yourself."

I want you to remember that I see everything, and I hear everything. We are the number-one-ranked team in Kansas and under a tremendous amount of scrutiny. Guys, understand the drinking is over. It stops right now, and so does the smoking and tobacco chewing. I saw at least one of you smoking this summer, and that is done and over.

All the players' eyes were front and center. "Now, if you're going to miss practice, I want you to call me yourself," he said. "I don't want your brother coming in here or a teammate. You'll understand this someday when you are a parent. When a kid is supposed to be at practice, and he doesn't show up, I get worried. I wonder if he is hurt, or if something has happened

to him or to his family."

Coach Barta continued: "You guys get what you deserve by earning it on the field. I don't care if your mom or dad is on the school board. Or if you have rich parents or poor parents. You earn it on the football field. I want to make sure everyone is clear on that." Each nodded.

I know there're at least two of you in here that are disappointed that you were not voted co-captains. It is the time to forget about all that. What we can do now is learn to respect each other.

When we learn to respect each other, we're going to learn to like each other. When you like each other, you learn to love each other. And then together we are champions.

Coach Barta nodded his head once, twice, as if he was listening to an internal metronome. He waded back into the middle of the room.

"There is one more thing, guys," he said. "I've been reading some of the pre-season

coverage in the media, and Lord knows, we have reporters coming in and out of here. I guess one of them asked one of you—I can't remember which one of you it was—about how it would feel if we lost a game this year."

Trevor Rempe stared straight ahead and prayed no one was looking at him. Coach Barta knew it was Trevor who had made the remarks. It surprised him because Trevor was one of his toughest kids and a natural leader.

Coach Barta decided that Trevor needed to take one for the team. He dialed his honey baritone up to a bellow, letting the words echo in the locker room:

WE DON'T TALK ABOUT WINNING AND LOSING IN SMITH CENTER, KANSAS.

Trevor shriveled up on his stool, his face turned red, his eyes shimmered with tears.

Coach Barta concluded:

WE TALK ABOUT GETTING A LITTLE BIT BETTER EACH DAY, ABOUT BEING THE BEST YOU CAN BE, ABOUT BEING A TEAM.

WHEN WE DO THOSE THINGS, WINNING AND LOSING TAKES CARE OF ITSELF. ■

From the best-seller, *Our Boys: A Perfect Season on the Plains with the Smith Center Redmen* (www.joedrape.com). Joe Drape (joe.drape@gmail.com) lives in Kansas and New York City.

THE POWER OF CULTURE AND CHARACTER

by Matt Davidson



Joe Drape's piece from *Our Boys* demonstrates what we're trying to develop through our *Power2* programming: the culture and competencies of excellence and ethics. We look to examples of sustained excellence in order to distill the replicable elements—the secrets of success—that can be used by parents, teachers, coaches, and business leaders.

Where do winning streaks come from? First, from leadership. But as Jim Collins showed in *Good to Great*, these aren't necessarily rock star leaders who overwhelm their teams with charisma. Rather, these leaders are committed to shaping a culture of excellence. One of our core Smart & Good Schools principles is, "We shape the culture; the culture shapes the character." Coach Barta and his staff have shaped the culture that in turn shapes the performance character and moral character of the Redmen.

What shapes culture? Signature practices—ways of doing business. It's the rituals and routines, faithfully practiced, that over time develop the character NEEDED FOR the system you want to run. If you want to run a disciplined offense and instill an ethic of humility and continuous improvement, then you must shape routines and rituals that build those character muscles. In Joe's article we can see the defining elements of the "Smith Center Way" and the resulting respect, teamwork, leadership, work ethic, and humility.

When you have a culture, a shared way of doing business that seems essential to who you are, the depth of impact on individuals is extraordinary. The culture becomes an even more powerful shaper of the individuals than the leader. That's why they say, "Good coaching is what a team would do in the last three minutes if the coach wasn't there."

Coach Barta's secret? Shape a team culture dedicated to responsibility for self and others—one that challenges players to "get a little better each day." ■

Dr. Matt Davidson (mdavidson@excellenceandethics.com) is president and director of education at IEE.

CHARACTER = Performance Character + Moral Character

... for success in school, work, and beyond

PERFORMANCE COMPETENCIES

needed to pursue excellence in any area of endeavor

Adaptability Ambition
Craftsmanship Confidence
Critical Thinking Creativity
Dependability Curiosity
Diligence Drive Determination
Effort Entrepreneurship
Enthusiasm Endurance
Imagination Grit
Initiative Organization
Passion Perseverance
Positive Attitude Preparedness
Pride in Work Resilience
Resourcefulness Self-Direction
Thrift Work Ethic

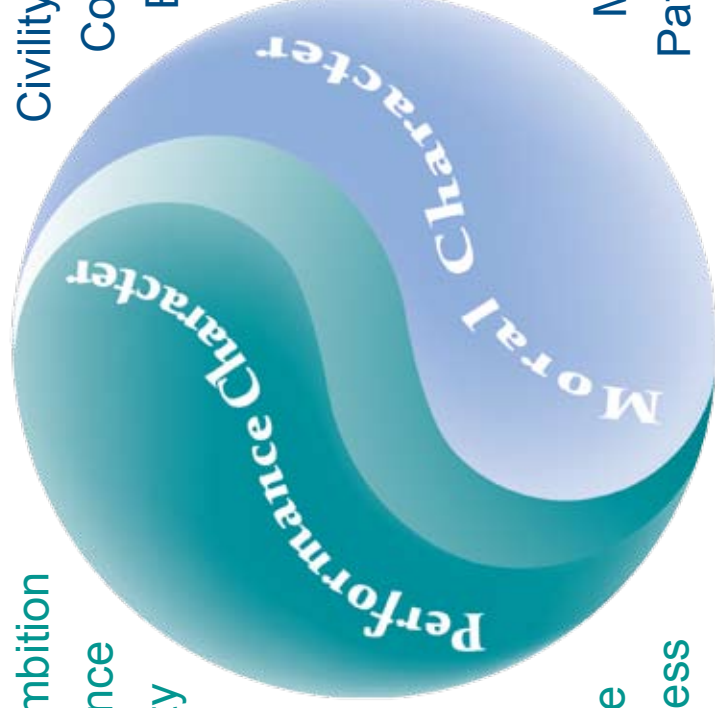
Wisdom

Responsibility

Integrity

Civility Compassion
Cooperation Courtesy
Emotional Intelligence

Empathy Forgiveness
Friendliness Graciousness
Generosity Gratitude
Honesty Honor
Humility Hope
Justice Kindness Love
Loyalty Mercy
Moderation Peacefulness
Patience Self-Awareness
Respect Sensitivity Service
Self-Control Trustworthiness
Truthfulness



MORAL COMPETENCIES needed for
*positive relationships, self-regulation,
and responsible ethical behavior*