

Listen to Professor Bill Lucas

talk about character education at an interactive workshop aimed at educators

This was an interactive session which allowed discussion and the opportunity to ask questions to Bill Lucas



- How does one narrow down such a large area? Don't try to tackle everything! Start with what the school is already doing well. Don't intimidate people with big concepts but focus on their daily, lived experience and look at what character traits are already being taught and work from there.
- How does one deal with colleagues who are sceptical? As above. Use language they are already familiar with. Stress that this is not a fad – much of it is traditional. Start where they are. Some people respond to novelty, others to tradition – this topic can be approached both ways.
- What about colleagues who think character is all about sport? This is how it has been viewed for a long time. The research supports the teaching of character across the curriculum and co-curriculum. Once you start to look at what a school is already teaching re character in different areas that opens up a debate about its application in multiple areas.
- The benefits of character education are not just on academic performance but much wider. However, they are not easily measurable and they may be long-term – coming to fruition may years later. How does one argue for their value with sceptics who want immediate, provable outcomes? Their longevity is central to their value. We went into teaching because we care about people and their happiness. We need to see how character education feeds into that.
- The Gordonstoun report on the impact of their character programme is available freely online and is worth looking up.
- A teacher from an independent school in Somerset recommended 'Believe in You' – a set of videos from Varsity Brands in the USA, for character ed: <https://www.varsitybrands.com/believe-in-you> and using the Centre for Curriculum Design's research model on character.
- A teacher at an IB School in London mentioned the benefits of the IB for fostering character ed (since the development and assessment of civic virtues is built into the IB Diploma). She also raised some reservations with the ways in which the IB assesses character.
- It is worth using some very explicit language around character in the school. Before an activity, for example, ask students what character skill they believe they will develop.
- It is important to stress out the tangible manifestations of character as students can become frustrated with only intellectualising it.
- For primary schools, it is important to develop student individuality which can lead to character development.