

PROJECT WISDOM EDUCATOR RESOURCE SITE PROGRAM EVALUATION 2008



Helping Students Make Wiser ChoicesSince 1992

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I have been using Words of Wisdom for the last 7 years. In all schools that I have worked, the teachers and students have enjoyed the program and the messages.

Joseph L. Salley, Elementary Principal, Villa Rica, GA

Executive Summary

Since 1992, Project Wisdom has been providing schools with character education materials that encourage students to reflect upon the meaning of civic and personal values and the application of those values in their daily lives. The centerpiece of the program is a collection of thought-provoking messages designed to be read over the PA or in-house television system.

In August of 2005, after a one-year pilot, the company launched a subscription-based online service called the Project Wisdom Educator Resource Site (ERS). It was created in response to feedback from educators. Client schools were requesting more materials to supplement their Project Wisdom libraries. Specifically, they requested more broadcast messages and classroom materials such as lesson plans. Problems with low teacher morale prompted a decision to also include a weekly morale booster titled "Just For You." These morale boosters are delivered weekly during the school year by email to all registered users. To further encourage educators, a feature called "Teacher Story" was incorporated. Registered users submit personal stories to support and uplift other teachers. These stories are published on the site during the school year.

As part of our commitment to understanding the effectiveness of our program, we continue to engage in a scientifically based evaluation process. This particular evaluation examines the effectiveness of the Educator Resource Site, and supplements a previous evaluation completed in 2004 which examined the Project Wisdom library of broadcast messages and reproducible components. The entire 2004 evaluation can be found at www.projectwisdom.com.

To evaluate the effectiveness of the Educator Resource Site, Project Wisdom engaged the services of an independent program evaluator. Dr. Manke is a professor at California State University, Long Beach, and has over 16 years of evaluation experience with organizations serving children and families. (See Appendix A.)

We deployed a Web-based survey during the spring of 2008. This Web-based survey tapped a variety of issues, including effectiveness of the Just For You morale boosters, program implementation, and satisfaction with the features of the site as well as the site itself. In total, there were 22 questions on the survey; most were designed to be rated on a five-point scale (1 = not at all, 2 = a little bit, 3 = somewhat, 4 = quite a bit, 5 = very much).

Approximately 25,000 registered users of the Project Wisdom Educator Resource Site were invited to participate. The respondents totaled 1,860. More than half were teachers (64%) followed by counselors (7%) and principals (6%). The majority of people who responded had been using the ERS for one year or less. School types included elementary (56%), middle/junior (30%), high (11%), and other (3%). The remainder of respondents (23%) included assistant principals, administrative personal, librarians, and others. It is important to remember that there are actually fewer senior high schools across the country, as compared to middle and elementary schools.

Key Findings from Evaluation

- 99% indicate they enjoy receiving the weekly morale boosters.
- 92% indicate they enjoy reading the Teacher Story.
- 91% indicate they enjoy the special-topic ERS broadcast messages.
- 97% indicate an overall satisfaction with this online service.
- 96% of all principals indicated they would recommend this site.
- Materials offered on the ERS are being used in advisory, homeroom, and character education classes; in the discipline process; during counseling sessions and other academic classes.



There's no better way to start off your day than with some good "Words of Wisdom."

> Mary Ellen Hay, Middle School Teacher, Miller Place, NY

Introduction to Findings

The following sections outline the results of the 2008 survey. First, we present findings as to how the Educator Resource Site (ERS) materials are being used on school campuses. Second, we look at client satisfaction with these materials, and more specifically with the Just For You morale boosters delivered by email weekly to all registered users. Third, we present findings with regard to overall satisfaction with the Educator Resource site, as well as site navigation and customer service. Finally, we discuss future plans for program evaluation.

Description of Findings

Before delineating the findings, it is important to clarify that:

- Throughout the various sections of this report we provide direct quotes from school officials regarding the implementation and impact of the program. Space for making comments was provided, but not required. Permission was granted to use these quotes. We believe these qualitative data concerning the Educator Resource Site help illustrate and complement the quantitative findings obtained with the Web-based survey.
- Relevant data from all survey respondents were used in the analyses. In no
 case were "outliers," or persons with extreme scores, omitted from the
 analyses. Only those respondents who indicated that they were not using
 Project Wisdom materials were omitted from the analyses.
- All analyses were conducted using the 9.1 version of SAS, a widely used statistical package in the social sciences.
- Use of words that connote difference (e.g., greater than, less than, etc.) reflect statistically significant differences.



It is the daily dose of Character Education over time that makes the difference ... we don't have a reason NOT to use this program ... it's all there.

Leslie Stein, Elementary Instructional Interventionist/Reading Specialist, San Antonio, TX

Chapter 1: How ERS Materials Are Used

To examine the use of and satisfaction with the Educator Resource Site, we asked survey respondents to indicate *how or when* respondents use ERS materials. On the surveys people could indicate that they used the materials in multiple contexts. People who responded to the 2008 survey were most likely to report that they used ERS materials in their homerooms.

Location	
Homeroom We have homeroom once a week and I mainly use it within my homeroom, which is a great time to teach character education. Lisa Applegate, High School Teacher, Maysville, KY	468 (30%)
Character Education Class I do a Project Wisdom lesson during my Health/Character Ed time once a month, however, broadcast messages are read at my school daily. I follow-up briefly in discussion with my first graders when I hear one that we can really relate to, or that has a really good quote. Patricia Schoenholtz, Grade One Teacher, Phillipsburg, NJ This is an excellent resource for our character education program. The entire school has benefited from it. Amy Spangler, Elementary Counselor, Chesapeake, VA	310 (20%)
Language Arts or Other Academic Classroom Teachers are able to implement the words of wisdom into their curriculum especially writing. Nora Lamas, Elementary Assistant Principal, La Feria, TX I find it has a positive effect on my students, and I enjoy the daily readings myself. Jacquie Tosspon, 7th & 8th Language Arts, Unionville, MO	268 (17%)
Advisory Project Wisdom is a fabulous character education program. We not only begin out day with the Words of Wisdom, but we also use your special materials in our advisory sessions. Thank you for making this valuable tool so easy to use in our high school. Cathy T. Kirkland, High School Assistant Principal, Columbus, GA	246 (16%)



Last year after one year of using Project Wisdom, we ran a query of our discipline records and found a significant decrease in office referrals.

Lea Lightsey, Elementary Counselor, Laurel, MS

Discipline I use some of the messages as topics when dealing with discipline issues in the office. Philis A. Muth, Elementary Principal, Lakewood, OH	215 (14%)
They are excellent plans and have provided a good foundation for developing my personal lesson plans. Carol Szabo, High School In-School Suspension Teacher, Forsyth, MO	
Counseling Project Wisdom is one of the best resources I have used on a regular basis in my school counseling program. It is thought provoking material for our students and faculty and very useful for small group work that I do. Thanks for all you do. Dawn Wolfe, Elementary Counselor, Homewood, AL	211 (13%)
It is so easy to implement into our busy curriculum. I enjoy the material. Norma Hiatt, Elementary Counselor/Nurse, Arma, KS	200
Other* Project Wisdom allows me to use very specific information when working with emotionally disabled students. I don't have to create lessons and activities to work with them on social, motivational or character education you've done the work for me! Thank you! Kenyatta McLeod, Middle School Special Education Teacher (Emotionally Disabled), Blythewood, SC	268 (17%)
Thanks - very helpful and motivating to my class and also personally. The quotes and topics seemed to be right on target with the pace of the school year. Great timing. Jodi Notarnicola, Middle School Health Teacher, Stuart, FL	
* Included a wide variety of responses, including but not limited to staff meetings, individual groups, leadership programs, flex-time classes, gifted classes, special education, health, and small groups.	



I have used the program in elementary and middle school, and I definitely see results from using the program.

Jennie Adams, Elementary Assistant Principal, Ocala, FL

Chapter 2: Satisfaction with ERS Materials

Respondents also reported great satisfaction with the ERS materials. Over 90% of respondents are satisfied with the Just For You (morale booster), the teacher's story, and the special-topic broadcast messages. Over 80% of respondents are satisfied with the follow-up discussion generators and the follow-up activities.

Materials	Satisfied (combination of somewhat, quite a bit and very much satisfied) ^a
Just For You (morale booster) It really brightens my week and helps me maintain a positive focus. Angie Huckabee, Jr/Sr High School Counselor, Forsan, TX I love the Just for You piece. It is a wonderful and refreshing perspective into some of the most challenging elements of teaching. Shaheem Williams, High School Mathematics Teacher, Plainfield, NJ The morale boosters come at the right time. They are always uplifting. Brenda Smith, Elementary Reading Specialist, Kings Mills, OH	1435 (96%)
Teacher's story The Just for You and the Teacher's Story are morale boosters for me when I wonder if I am making a difference. They also remind me to try a bit harder. Carrie Garner, High School Teacher, Rigby, ID	1256 (92%)
Special-topic broadcast messages The weekly messages are very uplifting and I look forward to receiving them. I walked into a teacher's room and she was telling one of the stories. The students gave her their full attention. Lucy E. Pettway, Middle School Counselor, Montgomery, AL	1109 (91%)
Follow-up discussion generators We get into some great discussions with the discussion generators. The students don't seem to run out of ideas and comments. Paula Edmonson, 1st Grade Teacher, Flippin, AR	967 (86%)



I love pulling from the journals to get the children to write what they think and this helps them and myself to understand what they think about each topic.

> Audrey Allison-Maddox, Middle School TA, Ashburn, VA

Worksheets Sometimes you forget about teaching the character values and this resource makes it easy to look up and get ideas for a quick lesson or review. Brad Hoffmann, Middle School Associate Principal, Sussex, WI	444 (77%)
Follow-up activities Excellent lesson plans with support materials that you can use as is or use as a building block. Carol Szabo, High School ISS Teacher, Forsyth, MO Love the Lesson Plan! Alexandra Wallace, High School Science Teacher, Gallup, NM	738 (82%)

^a These percentages omit those respondents who reported that they do not read or use the resource.

It is interesting to note that satisfaction with the ERS materials does not vary by respondent. That is, principals, teachers, and counselors did not differ in their reported satisfaction with the various ERS materials — all were equally likely to report that they were satisfied. Likewise, satisfaction did not vary as a function of how long respondents had been using the ERS resources. Those who had only been using the resources for a couple of months were as likely to report being satisfied with the ERS materials as compared to those respondents who had been using ERS for longer.

Chapter 3: How Respondents Feel about the Weekly Emails

Each week during the school year all registered users receive a weekly email that features a morale booster titled Just For You. These are written with the sole intention of uplifting and encouraging educators. These messages are brief, with an average word count of only 125 words. Also included is a feature titled "Don't Forget to Take Care of Yourself," a tip that ties into the content of the booster. A character-building lesson plan is also featured.

We believe qualitative data concerning the Educator Resource Site help illustrate and complement the quantitative findings obtained with the Web-based survey. The following comments were taken directly from the 2008 survey.

Very inspirational - I look forward to the e-mails. They always make me think and reflect. Elizabeth Morris, Junior High Spanish Teacher, Riverside, IL

This is so wonderful to get something that does not require me to respond and makes me feel happier. Linda Walker, Middle School Art Teacher, Stafford County, VA



This site is an amazing resource for creating classroom culture and handling tolerance issues.

Alexandra Wallace, High School Science Teacher, Gallup, NM I love getting these! It's wonderful to get something that is uplifting to faculty members, too. Cathy T. Kirkland, High School Assistant Principal, Columbus, GA

Great morale booster, I love it. Pedro Ibarra, 2nd Grade Bilingual, Dallas, TX

They always seem to be so timely for what's going on in my life. Mary Ellen Hay, Middle School Teacher, Miller Place, NY

The e-mails give me a weekly surge of energy. Bill Wilmsen, Middle School Principal, LaPorte, IN

If I am uplifted, I feel more empowered to help my students feel uplifted. Angela Ritter, 6th Grade Teacher, Pearland, TX

Even if I'm feeling overwhelmed by the "to-do" list compounded by the in box in my e-mail, I take the time to read the Project Wisdom [message] & it picks me up. Stacey Sass, High School Art Teacher, Annapolis, MD

These have been so very important to me ... Your words have a positive ripple effect on the world. Susan Wery, Primary Classroom Teacher, Milwaukee, WI

Many times it brightens my day. Carol Szabo, High School ISS teacher, Forsyth, MO

These really picked up my spirits and kept me on track. Craig Lee Loy, High School Principal, Smithers, WV



I teach a Special Education class and we use information from this web site all the time.

Pat Johnson, High School Special Education, Gulfport, MS

Chapter 4: Satisfaction with ERS Site

We also asked respondents to rate customer service, site navigation, and the overall site. Over 98% of those who responded to the 2008 survey reported that they are satisfied with customer service; 97% reported they are satisfied with site navigation and the overall site. Follow-up analyses indicated that satisfaction with customer service and site navigation and overall satisfaction with the Educator Resource Site did not vary by respondent; principals, teachers, and counselors were equally satisfied.

ERS Site	Satisfied (combination of somewhat, quite a bit, and very much satisfied)
Customer Service I haven't had any problems with the information and haven't had to contact anyone for customer service, but if it is as good as the product, I wouldn't have a complaint at all! Terrie Cox, Teacher 1st Grade, Price, UT	858 (98%)
Site Navigation I am very satisfied with this web site and please keep it up. Taukirana Gloria Lemani, Middle School Special Education Teacher, Montgomery, AL I use your site weekly with ease! Joanne Mainberger, Elementary Guidance Counselor, Sarasota, FL Site is not at all difficult. It is definitely user-friendly. Lucy E. Pettway, Middle School Counselor, Montgomery, AL	1351 (97%)
Overall Satisfaction This site has given me helpful suggestions that were easy to implement in my daily teaching. Grace Clearman, Elementary Special Education Teacher, Ocean Springs, MS I have enjoyed every part of this Web site. It gives each teacher a site to go to and helps each one of us in a different way. Margaret Taylor, Physical Education, Smyrna, TN This is an amazing resource that is extremely helpful when it comes to character education. Kimberly Cran, Kindergarten/1st Grade Teacher, Holiday, FL	1354 (97%)



Beginning the school day with Project Wisdom places a blanket of making good choices over the entire school population. The daily reminder helps us to maintain consistency in our expectations of how to be a good citizen.

Tressie Armstrong, Elementary Principal, Carlsbad, CA

Chapter 5: Would You Recommend the Educator Resource Site?

Follow-up analyses of the survey data revealed that there were differences by type of respondent (or position) in the willingness to recommend ERS. Principals (as compared to teachers) were more likely to say that "yes" they would recommend the site, whereas teachers were more likely than principals to say "maybe." Over 85% of survey respondents would recommend the Educator Resource Site. Only 1% of any type of respondent said "no."

	Counselors	Principals	Teachers
Yes	103	96	811
	(94%)	(96%)	(84%)
Maybe	6	3	150
	(5%)	(3%)	(15%)
No	1	1	9
	(1%)	(1%)	(1%)

I find it very motivational personally and get that same feedback from students and staff. Anna L. Prevost, Principal, Panama City, FL

It is full of valuable information. The students really get into the discussions and activities. We have great talks about our character and what is right and wrong. They are very insightful on these things and bring great things to the table. Paula Edmonson, 1st Grade Teacher, Flippin, AR

Chapter 6: School Climate, Parents, and Community

When teachers, staff, and students work in a positive school climate, students learn more effectively and teacher retention improves. Effective schools create a strong sense of community, which in turn fosters higher levels of student learning.

The following were taken directly from the 2008 survey. Although questions about school climate, parents, and community were not asked on the survey, respondents volunteered these comments.

I am pleased to hear students using the words of wisdom in their discussions with each other and with their parents. Many parents have commented on the announcements and say that they like to stay to hear what words of wisdom are going to be stated on the PA. Sharon Caccimelio, Elementary Dean of Students, Pickerington, OH

Project Wisdom has helped our school's relationship with parents and community. We are only in our first year of using it, so we plan on improving that even more in the coming year(s). It helps that parents and the community see that we are addressing the issues of bullying and character at school. Jamin Barth, Elementary School Counselor, Galesville, WI

This is a fabulous program! It helps make our school a real community! Thank you! Nancy, Elementary ELL Teacher, Wayne, PA



Sometimes the stories are so inspiring that they help me remember why I chose to be a teacher.

Erin Sykes, 4th Grade Language Arts Teacher, Horn Lake. MS This program has assisted me to change the school environment to a very positive one. It has encouraged students to think before reacting and to react only in a positive manner. Craig Lee Loy, High School Principal, Smithers, WV

I love Project Wisdom! It minimizes unacceptable behavior. Nora Lamas, Elementary Assistant Principal, La Feria, TX

Chapter 7: Teacher Morale

The following comments about how the program impacts teacher morale were volunteered by survey respondents. Permission was given to use these quotes.

Teachers comment on the messages and how they are impacted by the message. Sharon Caccimelio, Elementary Dean of Students, Pickerington, OH

Project Wisdom encourages the teacher's soul. Ada Welker, Middle School Special Education, Middlebury, IN

Our principal incorporates messages into a morning message each day. These messages always seem to start the day on a more positive note. Judy Hatting, Intermediate Special Education Teacher, St. Louis Park, MN

The daily reading of the character trait sets a positive school climate/atmosphere. Also, the message(s) gives both students and teachers "something to think about" throughout the day. Stephanie Thomas, Elementary Librarian, Montgomery, AL

Thanks for the great material to enhance our school climate and the attitudes of staff and students. Norma Hiatt, Elementary Counselor/Nurse, Arma, KS

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Chapter 8: Past, Present, and Future Evaluation Efforts

In the past, Project Wisdom has repeatedly surveyed client schools through eith

The resources help me infuse character education into classroom instruction.

Anita Rainford, High School Teacher, Newark, NJ In the past, Project Wisdom has repeatedly surveyed client schools through either paper-based surveys or online surveys. The 2000, 2001, 2002, and 2007 surveys were conducted to help the content team, customer service department, and/or Web development team better serve students and educators. These particular surveys were not evaluated by a third party and were used solely for internal purposes, but the results are noteworthy and are posted at www.ProjectWisdom.com.

Project Wisdom will continue to survey schools in order to obtain feedback regarding the effects of the program. We are committed to understanding the ways in which the program enhances school environments and students' success. In addition, we believe that it is important to pinpoint how schools can maximize program effectiveness and to communicate this to our customers. Because less than 25% of those who responded to the 2008 survey had been using the program for more than two years, it is the company's intention to continue to survey schools again for the purpose of examining the effect of time on results.

Quantitative Data

Detailed finding are available at www.ProjectWisdom.com/Results.

2000: Distributed a written survey by mail to all licensed schools in order to assess effectiveness of the program.

2001: Distributed written surveys through the mail.

2002: Launched the first Web-based survey distributed to all licensed Project Wisdom schools for which we had an email address.

2003: Launched the second Web-based survey distributed to all licensed Project Wisdom schools for which we had an email address. This survey includes a third-party evaluation.

2004: Launched the third Web-based survey distributed to all licensed Project Wisdom schools for which we had an email address. This survey includes a third-party evaluation.

2007: Launched the fourth Web-based survey distributed to all Educator Resource Site registered users for which we had an email address.

2008: Launched the fifth Web-based survey to all Educator Resource Site registered users for which we had an email address. This survey includes a third-party evaluation.

Chapter 9: Conclusion

Character education helps shape the attitudes and behaviors of young people, fostering an internal motivation to make wiser choices. Evidence now indicates that good character education has a positive impact on academic performance. Project Wisdom is one of the oldest and most respected character education programs in the nation.

Project Wisdom will continue to survey licensed schools as a means of both assessing our effectiveness and providing educators with the opportunity to provide us with valuable feedback. The data we have collected over the years assures us that we are providing students and educators with a program that is affordable and that gets results.



These [Weekly Journals] allow for student reflective writing and help us to see where they are and what problems they may be having.

Carrol Callebs, Middle School Teacher/Team Leader/Reading Specialist, Lexington, KY

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Good way to start a
Monday.
Discussions
sometimes carry
over to the week.

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The program is very well liked by staff and students.

Norma Hiatt, Elementary Counselor/Nurse, Arma, KS Madsen, J., & Hipp, K.A. "The impact of leadership style on creating community in public and private schools." *International Journal of Education Reform*, 8(3), (July 1999): 260-273.

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Students and teachers respond favorably to the Words of Wisdom; they like the quotes and the explanation. I like the diversity within the selection.

Michaele G. Lemrow, Middle School Principal, Blythewood, SC

Delivery Method

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Appendix A: About Dr. Beth Manke

Dr. Beth Manke received her Ph.D. in Human Development and Family Studies (with a minor in statistics) in 1995 from Pennsylvania State University and is currently a professor in the Department of Human Development at California State University, Long Beach. Dr. Manke has over 16 years of program evaluation experience and is presently coordinating the evaluation efforts for several Houston and Los Angeles organizations. Dr. Manke has expertise in Web-based surveys, paper-and-pencil questionnaires, clinical interviews, and observational techniques. Dr. Manke has described her evaluation findings in written professional reports and community-wide presentations. Her results have also been featured in several newspaper articles and news programs.

In addition to conducting evaluation studies, Dr. Manke maintains an active research program focused on the interplay of children's familial relationships (parent-child and sibling), broader contextual factors, and developmental outcomes, including mental health, academic achievement, and behavior problems. Dr. Manke is currently the Principal Investigator on a National Institute of Mental Health Grant focused on how children and their families cope with childhood type 2 diabetes. Dr. Manke has coauthored over 20 empirical articles and chapters in scholarly journals and edited books. She has also presented her research findings in over 40 conference presentations and has been the invited guest speaker at several universities. Dr. Manke has received international recognition for her work. For example, she was an invited research fellow at the Institute of Psychiatry in London England; served as the guest presenter at a methodology workshop at the University of Nijmegen, The Netherlands; and was the recipient of the 1999 International Visiting Scholarship awarded by the University of Surrey, Guildford, UK.

Dr. Manke is a current member of the American Evaluation Association, the National Council on Family Relations, and the Society for Research in Child Development. Dr. Manke currently serves as an ad hoc reviewer for several scholarly journals, including Developmental Psychology, Journal of Marriage and Family, Social Development, Merill Palmer Quarterly, Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry, Family Communication, and the British Journal of Developmental Psychology.



This web site has done a lot to my teaching and changed many of my students' behaviors.

Taukirana Gloria Lemani, Middle School Special Education Teacher, Montgomery, AL As a faculty member, Dr. Manke has taught courses on child and adolescent development, research methods and design, community service learning, and program evaluation. Dr. Manke was awarded the 2004 Enhancing Educational Effectiveness Award from California State University, Long Beach. She was also the recipient of the 2008 Outstanding Achiever Award from the College of Life Sciences Alumni Association, University of Arizona. *Examples of Publications:*

Manke, B., Pike, A. (2003). Combining the social relations model and behavioral genetics to explore the etiology of familial interactions. *Marriage and Family Review*, 33, 179-204.

Skopp, N., MacDonald, R., Manke, B., & Jouriles, E. (2005). Siblings in domestically violent families: Experiences of interparent conflict and adjustment problems, *Journal of Family Psychology*, 19, 324-333.

Examples of Conference Presentations:

Manke, B., Brown, S., Moreno, J., Quintiliani, K., Cote, S., & Martinez, D. (2007). *Equal Partners: Participatory Research Involving Faculty, Students, and Community Members*. Paper presented at the annual conference of the Association of American Colleges and Universities, Long Beach, CA.

Manke, B. (2006). From researching community teaching to community needs research. Paper presented as part of the workshop, Converging operations: Combining service learning, community-based research and public service for a cohesive RTP portfolio at the CSU Conference on Community-Based Teaching and Research: Creating Knowledge and Building Community, Pomona, CA, March.

Manke, B., Ewing, A., & Corbitt-Shindler, D. (2005). *Mentors independent contributions to children's adjustment: The case of behavior problems and academic achievement.*Paper presented at the biennial meeting of the Society for Research in Child Development, Atlanta, GA, April.