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Abstract

Phronesis —the Aristotelian virtue of practical wisdom— can be interpreted along several dimensions: thought versus action; self versus community; universalist versus relativist. In our approach, Mastering Our Skills and Inspiring Character (MOSAIC), currently being implemented in culturally diverse and socioeconomically disadvantaged middle schools (ages 11-14), it is our goal to move students toward *phronesis* by balancing each of these dimensions. The MOSAIC approach to building the capacity for *phronesis* in middle school students is based on a spiral developmental model of social-emotional and character development (SECD).

While character educators often utilize a universal set of virtues, these virtues have different meanings and applications depending on context and culture, an issue that is particularly relevant for schools serving diverse student bodies. Furthermore, it is not only the meaning of a virtue that is variable across contexts, but it is also the emphasis given to each virtue that differs. Thus, instead of stipulating a course of virtuous action, the MOSAIC approach employs pedagogical strategies to enhance students' abilities to engage in decision-making and reflection, skills that are necessary for developing *phronesis*. We hope that the MOSAIC approach can serve as an example for character educators aiming to build *phronesis* in students from culturally diverse backgrounds.

Phronesis in Culturally Diverse Middle Schools

There is growing appreciation of the need to support virtuous action and flourishing among primary and secondary school students. The variety of character education initiatives that aim to meet this goal are often based on differing assumptions about how virtuous action is cultivated. While many approaches to character education focus on inspiring the adoption of specific virtues (e.g., compassion, gratitude, or grit), few approaches explicitly take into account the need to weigh competing virtues to be able to act virtuously in our increasingly complex world.

The Aristotelian virtue ethics approach to character education offers a unique solution to this gap. The Aristotelian approach is distinct from other character education programs that rely on inculcating students with a specific virtue without emphasizing reasoning or deliberation. The highest form of virtuous behavior in the Aristotelian approach involves practical wisdom, or *phronesis,* that allows an individual to act in the right way about the right things for the right reason at the right time while feeling the right way (Arthur, Kristjansson, Harrison, Sanderse, & Wright, 2017, p. 80). In their recent book detailing the Aristotelian approach to teaching character in schools, James Arthur and colleagues describe the meta-virtue of *phronesis* as "an overall quality of judgment" and the ability to engage in "considered deliberation, well-founded judgment, and vigorous enactment of decisions" (Arthur et al., 2017, p. 11).

Aristotle was not the first to notice that some individuals possessed certain social gifts that made them exemplary. The authors of the Old Testament, for example, attributed to God the requirement that the individual charged with creating the Ark to hold the tablets containing the 10 commandments possessed "chochmat lev"—wisdom of

the heart. There is a similar attribution made in the Old Testament to Moses' father-in-law, Jethro, who recognized that Moses was running himself ragged trying to meet the needs of all of his people and suggested Moses create a council to handle some of his more routine duties. This invocation of distributed leadership was the most explicit instance, but there are implications that Moses came to rely on Jethro's wise counsel in other situations. Our point is simply that *phronesis* has been a valued quality, likely as long as there have been populations of human beings living together.

We have used the Arthur et al. (2017) model for developing character virtue to refine our understanding of character development in our work in culturally diverse middle schools (ages 11 to 14) in the United States. Our experience has taught us that developing *phronesis* can be challenging, as students experience alternate models of what is interpersonally valued as well as expectations that they are unlikely to be contributors to social and community well-being.

Thus, in adapting the concept of *phronesis* to the setting of culturally diverse and socioeconomically disadvantaged schools we have made adjustments to the Arthur et al. (2017) framework. First, we have integrated the role of positive purpose and identified what we believe are necessary building blocks for the development of *phronesis*. Second, in order to guide our efforts toward helping students develop *phronesis*, we have interpreted *phronesis* along the following dimensions: universalist versus relativist; thought versus action; and self versus community. We also have conceptualized *phronesis* as developing in a spiral pattern rather than as a hierarchical series of stages. Thus, in our approach, Mastering Our Skills and Inspiring Character (MOSAIC), it is our goal to move students toward *phronesis* by balancing each of these dimensions in the

service of a positive purpose aimed at promoting individual and community flourishing. In this paper, we suggest how *phronesis* might be cultivated in our setting, describe the pedagogical tools we use to build *phronesis*, and put forth remaining questions we have about how to integrate the concept of *phronesis* in our work.

Models for Developing Phronesis

The Development of *Phronesis*

When cultivating *phronesis* in the context of primary and secondary schools, we must first determine whether children can be expected to exhibit the attributes of practical wisdom. Arthur and colleagues (2017) imply that children cannot exhibit *phronesis* because they have not had enough life experience to develop wisdom. However, from our perspective, *phronesis* can be seen as a harmonizing, guiding force toward human flourishing that is always present in some form. We agree with Lerner (2008), who suggested that although popular beliefs about human development imply that wisdom is reserved for the aged, wisdom can certainly be cultivated during adolescence. In our view, even if children cannot exhibit the highest degree of *phronesis*, children can learn components of *phronesis*, such as moral reasoning, decision-making, knowledge of virtues, and skills and habits for enacting virtues, and exhibit *phronesis* to the extent developmentally and contextually possible.

Models of Character Development and Flourishing

In our conceptualization of enhancing *phronesis* in culturally diverse middle schools, we have defined *phronesis* as the ability to resolve competing virtues in complex contexts in the direction of human flourishing (which we, following Arthur et al., define at both individual and communal levels). To understand the requisite structures for

developing *phronesis*, we have relied on several theories of moral and character development.

Character Development Ladder. Arthur et al. (2017) describe a "Character Development Ladder," which is a stage theory based on Aristotelian virtue ethics that includes four stages of development. In this model, individuals move from moral indifference (Stage 1), to emerging self-control (Stage 2) and self-control (Stage 3), to the final stage: virtue (Stage 4). Individuals are considered to have achieved the "Virtue" stage when they demonstrate deliberation and consistency in carrying out virtuous action. Virtuous action alone is not sufficient to achieve Virtue; individuals must also carry out virtuous action for the right reasons and feel fulfilled and satisfied with their actions.

Precursors to Virtue Development. Before individuals are considered on the Character Development Ladder, they may not be ready to work toward being a virtuous person or they may be unwilling to lead a life of virtue (Arthur et al., 2017).

Stage 1: Moral Indifference. When individuals are morally indifferent, they are not motivated to act in a virtuous way (Arthur et al., 2017). Thus, at Stage 1, individuals do not have the desire, knowledge, or skills to act as a virtuous person. What separates the morally indifferent person from those who are unready or unwilling to engage in virtuous action is that the morally indifferent individual is open to the idea of acting virtuously even if they are not motivated to do so.

Stage 2: Emerging Self-Control. Individuals at Stage 2 understand what constitutes virtuous action but they are unable to act on it. At this stage, individuals have knowledge of virtue but their desire to be virtuous is inconsistent and they have not yet mastered skills for enacting virtuous action.

Stage 3: Self Control. Individuals at Stage 3 have the knowledge and skills to act with virtue but they do not do so with deliberation or consistency. When they do act with virtue, they may do so reluctantly and they may not understand why an action is considered virtuous. They likely rely on external indicators for virtuous behavior, such as rules or others providing instruction. At this stage, individuals have the knowledge and skills to behave in a virtuous manner. As Arthur et al. (2017) point out, many models of character development treat this stage as the final stage. However, because these individuals may act virtuously based primarily on external indicators, they cannot be considered to be exhibiting the highest level of *phronesis*.

Stage 4: Virtue. Only in acting deliberately and consistently with "good sense," or *phronesis,* can individuals achieve the final stage of "Virtue" (Arthur et al., 2017, p. 66). To be considered truly virtuous, these individuals must also feel the right way about the right actions and understand why an action is considered virtuous. Acting deliberately refers to the act of considering all options and then selecting a way to act that is virtuous. *Phronesis* allows individuals to act virtuously through deliberation across all contexts and settings they encounter.

The Arthur et al. model provides a useful organizing framework for developing virtue but leaves out several essential components of *phronesis*. First, Arthur et al. (2017) do not outline clear determinants for which guiding principles should be used to enact *phronesis*. According to which guidelines should an individual make decisions about virtuous action in particular situations? In our experience working with youth, there must be a clear framework used for making virtuous decisions. In addition, the Arthur et al. (2017) model does not provide clear developmental precursors to *phronesis*

in the early stages of the model, which suggests that *phronesis* suddenly appears in full form at the final stage. However (and we are sure Arthur et al. would agree), there must be developmental precursors to possessing a high capacity for *phronesis*, such as moral reasoning, decision-making, knowledge of virtues, and skills and habits for enacting virtues. A further limitation of the Aristotelian-based model is the assumption of a desire to act virtuously. In our work, we have found that the motivation and support for acting as a virtuous person cannot be taken for granted.

Practical Intelligence. Sternberg's concept of practical intelligence is closely related to the concept of *phronesis*. It is the ability to "adapt to, shape, and select everyday environments" (Sternberg et al., 2000, p. 1). Practical intelligence can be understood as developing a specific type of expertise, which means that its development can be viewed from the psychological framework of requiring a combination of talent and deliberate practice (Sternberg et al., 2000). From this perspective, *phronesis,* would be considered a specific kind of expertise in acting virtuously.

Interpersonal and Intrapersonal Intelligence. Howard Gardner's influential theory of multiple intelligences incorporates personal forms intelligence that reflect the ability to balance competing constraints between the self and others. He points out that cultures differ greatly in their relative emphasis on the interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligences but that all cultures have social roles that require a balance of understanding the self and other (Gardner, 2011). While the nature of what might be considered optimal harmonizing might vary in different cultures, there is little doubt that the ability to do that harmonizing has strong parallels to *phronesis*.

"Common Sense" in Various Cultures. The Jewish concept of "sechel" is similar to *phronesis*, but goes further in highlighting that this is an ability one can attribute to an adult of any age and that it is something one expects to develop (Johnson, 2013). While often translated as common sense, the term is best understood as implying a certain wisdom that goes beyond the moment, beyond the immediate, and beyond the individual. We cannot say if every culture has an equivalent term, but, Brother David Steindl-Rast (2002) identifies many that do.

Flourishing Life. The positive psychology movement has popularized the idea of "flourishing" as the ultimate goal for leading a fulfilling life. Seligman (2012) conceptualizes "flourishing" as comprised of positive emotion, engagement, relationships, meaning, and accomplishment. This conceptualization of human flourishing emphasizes the role of individual attributes and experiences that promote flourishing. While positive psychology does not deny that people can flourish through civic virtues and contributing to something larger than themselves, it does not suggest that civic virtues are required for individuals to flourish (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). However, in line with Arthur et al. (2017), we view civic virtues as essential components of leading a flourishing life.

Development of a Moral Agent. Ryan and Lickona (1992) include the role of motivation in their formulation of the person as a moral agent. Ryan and Lickona (1992) consider a moral agent to include knowledge (moral knowledge and reasoning), affect (care and commitment for beliefs), and action (the will, competence, and habit to act). In this model, the motivation for acting as moral agent comes from an emotional commitment to beliefs as well as the will to mobilize energy in service of these beliefs.

Positive Purpose. In our approach to cultivating *phronesis*, we highlight "Positive Purpose" as a guiding force that provides a commitment to individualized goals and beliefs and helps individuals overcome barriers to act in ways that are virtuous. Our understanding of purpose has been informed by Damon, Menon, and Bronk (2003), who describe purpose as a "stable and generalized intention to accomplish something that is at once meaningful to the self and of consequence to the world beyond the self" (p.121). We believe that without a sense of transcendent positive purpose to provide direction, individuals may not have the motivation or courage to act wisely, congruently, and virtuously under challenging circumstances.

Spiral SECD Model of Developing *Phronesis*

In considering the theoretical principles outlined above, in combination with our own experiences of working in culturally diverse middle schools, we propose a spiral model of social-emotional and character development (SECD). We have observed that the development of social-emotional skills and character virtues does not align with a stage model, in which attaining a specific skill lays an inexorable foundation for the subsequent skill to be developed. Instead, in the realm of social-emotional and character development, all virtues and skills are interdependent; the development of generosity necessitates the development of empathy and vice versa. Further, situational context is influential on the expression of competency, such that some situations will evoke a higher level of virtue application than others. Thus, we have adopted the framework of a spiral, rather than a ladder, to signify that all virtues and skills for social-emotional and character development must be repeatedly taught, reinforced, and reviewed across multiple situations in order to cultivate *phronesis*.

We view the development of positive purpose as the force that guides the spiral cultivation of character virtues and social-emotional skills. When pre-adolescent students are first exposed to the concept of a positive purpose, they likely focus first on identifying a purpose that is most aligned with the goals of caregivers or teachers. As students transition into adolescence, they develop the capacity for meta-cognition, self-evaluation, and empathy (Allemand, Steiger & Fend, 2015). These cognitive changes promote students' abilities to consider a positive purpose beyond the self, which allows virtues and skills to be applied toward universal flourishing. As students transition from adolescence into emerging adulthood, they begin to understand the interplay of opportunities and abilities, which may lead to a coalescence or diffusion of purpose. Successful achievement and commitment to a positive purpose serves as the guiding force for engaging in the deliberate practice of virtuous decision-making that is required for *phronesis*. Virtues and skills are thus most directly relevant to the individual needs and desires of the student, which change as frames of reference change, cognitive developmental capacities change, situational awareness and experiences change, and relationships change. Individual flourishing is promoted as *phronesis* develops in accordance with expanding awareness of ethical continuities and a transcendent sense of purpose.

The MOSAIC Approach to Cultivating *Phronesis*

MOSAIC Approach

The MOSAIC (Mastering Our Skills and Inspiring Character) approach to social-emotional and character development (SECD) is a comprehensive school-wide model that emphasizes the cultivation of positive purpose in middle school youth. Social-

emotional and character development (SECD) brings together two historically separate fields in order to help students feel inspired to act virtuously while also providing the skills needed to act in accordance with their values (Elias, 2009). The current iteration of MOSAIC is the culmination of decades of action-research in diverse schools in the Mid-Atlantic United States (Hatchimonji, Linsky, & Elias, 2016). The MOSAIC approach includes a classroom-based curriculum led in daily 15-minute segments by teachers in advisory classrooms. The curriculum focuses on building positive purpose through a supporting constellation of character virtues, social-emotional learning (SEL) skills, and action-focused pedagogy. Across the school, educators are encouraged to incorporate MOSAIC skills and virtues throughout the school day and in after-school activities.

The MOSAIC approach uses the Social-Emotional and Character Development model described above to help students enhance their capacity for *phronesis* over the three years of middle school. Based on the spiral developmental model, MOSAIC challenges students to develop virtues and skills along several dimensions repeatedly throughout each month and school year, with increasing levels of complexity and changing contexts. Through the MOSAIC approach, students develop knowledge of specific virtues and are encouraged to explore a positive purpose. Building knowledge and purpose requires careful consideration of the universal and relative aspects of *phronesis*. In tandem, students are provided with opportunities to develop and practice skills for enacting virtues, which requires integrating the thought and action components of *phronesis*. As the MOSAIC curriculum increases in complexity over the middle school years, ,students are able employ their knowledge and skills toward deliberation of virtuous action that balances the needs of the self and community.

Purpose and Knowledge: Universalist versus Relativist Dimension of *Phronesis*

Working in culturally diverse contexts necessitates a discussion about the universal versus relative nature of the virtues, a topic of much controversy (Arthur et al., 2017; Kline, 2005). Whereas some scholars (e.g., MacIntyre, 2007) suggest that there is no single set of virtues that can be applied to all people, others claim that virtues transcend culture, situation, and person (e.g., Nussbaum, 1993). Arthur et al. (2017) point to emerging consensus around the universality of virtue, particularly in understanding what dimensions encompass human flourishing. However, they also acknowledge that situations and culture likely shape the nature of specific virtues. Further, they take the pragmatic position, with which we agree, that any form of character or virtues education must be selective, as there are far too many virtues to attempt to cover comprehensively. This implies that while there is a long list of universally appreciated virtues, selecting focal virtues occurs relative to local values, norms, and conditions.

In the MOSAIC approach, cultivation of students' sense of positive purpose is developmentally sequenced across the three years of the curriculum. In 6th and 7th grades, students are introduced to positive purpose exemplars, such as Malala Yousafzai. Goal-setting and career interest activities are designed to help students consider the variety of positive purposes they could define for themselves. Throughout the 6th, 7th, and 8th grade curriculum, students engage in regular reflection, including written prompts, discussions, and sharing circles. Through these pedagogical structures, students are encouraged to consider their own development and are not pressured to prematurely select a positive purpose. Rather, through a spiraled approach, interacting with purpose

repeatedly in multiple contexts and in increasingly complex ways, students develop a

sense of purpose that is at first guided by external forces (teachers, caregivers, etc.), then

rooted in internal focus (self-gain), and eventually aimed at communal pro-social growth.

Each year of the curriculum, students are also given monthly opportunities to engage in

discussions about school and community improvement that may lead to small-scale

service projects. These service projects are designed to help students appreciate the value

of serving others and provide inspiration for a pro-socially oriented positive purpose. As

Arthur et al. (2017) explain, "Stripped of its link to the moral virtues, *phronesis*

degenerates into a cunning capacity, a mere performance virtue, that Aristotle calls

'cleverness'"(p. 30). In our view, positive purpose plays a critical role in setting an

essential direction away from 'cleverness' and toward a high purpose, aspiring to change

self, school, community, and world, thus promoting flourishing.

MOSAIC cultivates both universal and relative knowledge of virtue by

introducing specific virtues while also allowing students to develop a personally

meaningful understanding of the virtues. Before learning about specific virtues, the

concept of virtuous action is introduced as being an "Upstander." Using the Upstander

language, students are encouraged to define for themselves what it means to do the right

thing. In the 6th grade, students are introduced to the Five MOSAIC Virtues that support

positive purpose (Table 1). Students are asked to select a virtue they believe to be most

worthy of their being an Upstander. In this way, the MOSAIC curriculum prescribes

universal virtues while also allowing students to consider which virtue they believe is

most important to leading a virtuous life.

The MOSAIC curriculum is organized in monthly units that each highlight a specific virtue. During the first activity of each month, students are provided several examples of that month's virtue, spiraling throughout the three years with more sophisticated and community focused examples in later years. In order to promote students' ability to define the MOSAIC virtues according to their own cultural values, the MOSAIC curriculum builds on multiple intelligences by demonstrating the virtues in a variety of modalities, including videos, stories, audio clips, and games and allowing students to demonstrate their understanding through art, role-plays, poetry, and music. Throughout the 6th and 7th grade curriculum, students are then encouraged to define the Five MOSAIC Virtues using their own frame of reference. Students are also encouraged to identify personal role models and examples of each virtue in their own community. In the final year of the MOSAIC curriculum, 8th grade students are encouraged to select their own virtues to add into the MOSAIC framework.

Skills or Performance Virtue: Thought versus Action Dimension of *Phronesis*

To move toward acting in virtuous ways, students must develop their ability to act on their decision to be an Upstander. Developing knowledge of virtue is necessary but not sufficient to enabling students to act virtuously. As Aristotle suggests, one important component of *phronesis* is the ability to both understand and do good (*NE* 1141b8-27). The MOSAIC approach uses an SECD framework to promote youth purpose and flourishing. In the character education sphere, the ability to act with virtue is known as "performance character." In the SECD framework, it is social-emotional skills that are considered the necessary competencies to be able to act in accordance with a specific

virtue. It must also be said that, like knowledge of virtue, skills alone are necessary but not sufficient to acting virtuously.

In the MOSAIC approach, the second activity of each month teaches social-emotional skills in service of virtuous action. This pedagogical framework stands in contrast to many social-emotional learning (SEL) curricula that teach social-emotional skills in isolation, disconnected from moral virtue. In MOSAIC, students are taught communication skills in the context of displaying helpful generosity by practicing i-Messages (statements beginning with "I") to express their decision to be an Upstander. The third activity of each month involves the small-scale service learning discussions about school and community improvement. Students are encouraged to apply their MOSAIC virtues and skills in service of improving their school and community. In this way, through applying the focal skills and virtues in service of one's purpose with increasing complexity throughout the three years of middle school, students are able to develop positive "habits", i.e. a sustainable, generalizable set of behaviors.

Deliberation: Self versus Community Dimension of *Phronesis*

To move further toward the capacity for *phronesis,* students must be able to carefully consider options for virtuous action while also achieving a sense of satisfaction and fulfillment with the virtuous action they select. As Arthur et al. (2017) imply, achieving the capacity to act with "Virtue" requires an externally taught virtue to become fully internalized virtue (an ideal that is more like a Platonic form than anything one will encounter in the human realm; still, there is value in having an aspirational target for moral development). Achieving "Virtue" requires learning "to choose the right actions and emotions from a *phronesis*-guided reflection—which eventually becomes an

internalized routine" (Arthur et al. 2017, p. 30). *Phronesis*-guided reflection thus

represents a complex schema for coordinating multiple situational, contextual, and

personal-developmental inputs in real-time, leading to behaviors and affective assessment

of authenticity and virtue-harmony.

As part of this decision-making, *phronesis* also requires the ability to discern what

action is necessary for the good of both the individual and the community (Blockley,

2014). For character educators who work with students from backgrounds that differ

significantly from their own, it is impossible to stipulate a single course of action that will

clearly benefit both self and community. For example, European American cultures

value meritocracy, hard work, and independence over interdependence and collaboration.

In contrast, many non-Western cultures do not even delineate between the self and the

community because the self *is* the community (Gardner, 2011). Many Asian cultures

value harmony within a community and interdependence over independence and

autonomy (Gardner, Gabriel & Dean, 2004). Latina/o cultures tend to prioritize the needs

of the family over both the individual and the wider community (Acevedo-Polakovich, et

al., 2007; Calzada, Tamis-LeMonda, & Yoshikawa, 2013). Native American cultures

might incorporate nature and environment into the consideration of what is good for the

community (Sutton & Broken Nose, 2005). Given this array of priorities between the self

and community, it is highly unlikely that a group of students—especially a diverse

group—can be inculcated with one "correct" course of virtuous action. Thus, developing

phronesis is particularly important in the context of culturally diverse schools.

Even if middle school students cannot be expected to exhibit fully developed *phronesis*,

they can—and must—engage in decision-making and reflection that integrates the

knowledge of virtue and skills for action described above. The processes of ethical

decision-making and reflecting on values that are related to virtuous action are thought to

be precursors to the actualization of *phronesis*. In the MOSAIC approach, students are

exposed to a variety of pedagogical structures that enhance their abilities to engage in

decision-making and reflection. Students are repeatedly asked to consider the needs of

the self and community within a decision-making framework. As an overarching

principle, students are not inculcated with a "correct" course of action. Instead, they

practice decision-making and engage in reflection activities during in-class exercises,

such as written prompts and debates. For example, students are encouraged to identify

their point of view in response to questions about virtues, skills, and ethical dilemmas.

Prompts for this activity increase in complexity over the three years of the curriculum,

requiring students to consider actions that are more ambiguous in their relationship to

virtuous action. Students are also consistently asked to reflect on their reasons for

selecting a course of action through pedagogies involving brief conversations, taking a

position, discussing others' views in small and large groups, and providing personal

written reflections. Through these structures, students learn to identify and communicate

their own point of view while also learning to understand the perspectives of their peers.

In the third and final year of the MOSAIC curriculum, 8th grade students are

introduced to complex ethical dilemmas. Students are expected to use their own sense of

positive purpose to apply their knowledge of virtue and social-emotional skills in service

of solving these ethical dilemmas. Students use their sense of positive purpose to act in

accordance with their own values, without succumbing to peer pressure or cultural

pressures to act differently. Students call on their gained knowledge to identify virtues

and weigh these virtues when they are in conflict. In many cases this process includes

identifying virtues that have not been introduced formally in the MOSAIC curriculum.

Additionally, the 8th grade students are expected to use social-emotional skills to guide

their decision-making. Students use emotion identification as a cue to recognize the

presence of ethical dilemmas and emotion regulation to manage these intense emotions in

order to act skillfully. They use communication to listen to the perspectives of others and

express their own viewpoints. In the context of deliberations between the needs of the

self and community, it is particularly important for students to understand the viewpoints

of all stakeholders. Students use empathy to have an emotional understanding of the

perspectives of other people. Students use problem solving to consider their options,

weigh alternatives, and consider consequences of different courses of action. Ultimately,

through the spiraled approach of MOSAIC, middle school students are moved toward the

capacity for *phronesis* through using virtuous action to operationalize social-emotional

skills in service of their positive purpose.

Conclusion

The MOSAIC approach to building capacity for *phronesis* uses a developmental

spiral to provide repeated exposure to increasingly complex applications of character

virtues and social-emotional skills. This spiral model allows students to develop the

capacity for *phronesis* by building knowledge of character, practice in skills, and

opportunities for ethical decision-making under increasingly ambiguous circumstances.

The highest level of *phronesis* results from the ability to synthesize and apply integrative

and purpose-linked principles to guide ethical decision-making across situations. This

model is in preliminary stages of development, so we expect to further refine the model and ultimately test its application in culturally diverse middle schools.

Building toward *phronesis*, regardless of whether this precise term is used, is the shared goal of all character educators. Clarifying the developmental model of *phronesis* offers the opportunity to improve existing character interventions by highlighting the developmental precursors of *phronesis* and providing clear guidelines for engaging in virtuous decision-making.

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Table 1. *MOSAIC Virtues and Skills by Month*

Month	Theme	Virtue	Skills
September	*Why Are We Here? Finding Our Positive Purpose*	Introduction to Positive Purpose	Communication & Social Problem Solving
October	*What Kind of Person Do I Want to Be?*	Overview of All Virtues	Overview of All Skills
November	*Making Ourselves, School, and World Better*	Constructive Creativity	Communication & Social Problem Solving
December	*Giving Back to Our Selves, School, and World*	Helpful Generosity	Communication & Social Problem Solving
January	*Planning for the Future*	Optimistic Future-Mindedness	Empathy & Social Problem Solving
February	*Showing Resilience and Overcoming Obstacles*	Responsible Diligence	Emotion Regulation & Social Problem Solving
March	*Appreciating Ourselves, Our School, and Our World*	Compassionate Gratitude	Communication & Empathy
April	*Connecting with Others and Being a Leader*	Compassionate Forgiveness	Emotion Regulation & Empathy
May	*Looking Forward: Next Steps on the Journey*	Positive Purpose	Communication & Social Problem Solving
June	*Looking Back: What Have I Accomplished, What Have I Learned?*	All Virtues Summary	All Skills Integrated