



The promising association between intellectual virtues and civic goods

Tenelle Porter and Shelby Clark

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Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues

University of Birmingham, Edgbaston, Birmingham, B15 2TT United Kingdom

T: +44 (0) 121 414 3602 F: +44 (0) 121 414 4865

E: jubileecentre@contacts.bham.ac.uk W: www.jubileecentre.ac.uk



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¹Tenelle Porter, ²Shelby Clark

¹University of California, Davis

²Boston University

Author Note

Correspondence concerning this abstract can be addressed to Tenelle Porter, Department of Human Ecology, University of California, Davis, 1309 Hart Hall, Davis, CA 95616. E-mail: tjporter@ucdavis.edu or tenelle.porter@gmail.com

Abstract

Today's political discourse is characterized by strong disagreements, but too often lacks self-scrutiny and respect for other positions. In the following studies we investigate the role of intellectual virtue in fostering civic goods such as respectfulness, and openness to opposing perspectives. In Studies 1 and 2 we test the empirical associations between intellectual humility and openness to learning about the opposing view, and in Study 3 we examine how one school's focus on intellectual character may help foster respectful discourse, and civic friendship.

“I confess that there are several parts of this Constitution which I do not at present approve, but ...I cannot help expressing a wish that every member of the Convention who may still have objections to it, would with me, on this occasion doubt a little of his own infallibility – and, to make manifest our unanimity, put his name to this instrument.”

—Benjamin Franklin

In 1787, delegates gathered in Philadelphia to reach consensus on a United States Constitution. Although many issues deeply divided them, Benjamin Franklin, in the speech cited above, asked his fellow delegates to accept the fallibility of their own opinions, and to reach an agreement for the greater good (Webb, 2012). Today’s political discourse is characterized by similarly strong disagreements, but too often lacks the self-scrutiny and respect for other positions that Franklin sought to foster. What role, if any, might intellectual virtues play in ameliorating the destructiveness of much of our socio-political discourse? In the following three studies we investigate this question in two ways: 1) by testing the empirical association between intellectual humility and openness to the opposing view (Studies 1 and 2) and 2) by examining how educating for the intellectual virtues of open-mindedness and intellectual humility may foster students’ civic development by enhancing their ability to engage in respectful discourse, and to form civic friendships with others (Study 3).

Intellectual Humility and Civility during Socio-Political Disagreements

In the first two studies we ask whether intellectual humility is associated with openness to learning about the opposing view. Research suggests that when confronted with an intellectual disagreement about ideas, socio-political issues, or otherwise, people are motivated to see themselves as knowledgeable and their point of view as “the right one” (Ross & Ward, 1996; Taber & Lodge, 2006). This motivation can lead people to attribute disagreements to a dissenter’s stupidity or misunderstanding, rather than to the potential legitimacy of their opposing views (Ross & Ward, 1996). Unfortunately, this undermines the value of opposing

perspectives and closes people off to learning about them. For example, people who feel a strong need to defend their intellectual competence or superiority derogate opposing perspectives (and the people holding them) and exhibit greater closed-mindedness to these contrasting views (Tjosvold, et al., 1980; Vaknin, 2001).

We propose that people who are high in intellectual humility, which we define as a willingness to recognize the limits of one's knowledge and appreciate others' intellectual strengths, might be less closed off to opposing perspectives because they are more willing to admit their intellectual fallibility and see intellectual merit in others' ideas. Compared to those who are low in intellectual humility, we anticipate that those higher in intellectual humility will make more respectful attributions for why someone holds opposing views (e.g., because the issues being discussed are complex), and will be more open to learning about the perspectives of others, even if those perspectives are in direct opposition to their own.

Empirical research on intellectual humility is just emerging, but past work suggests that it might be associated with openness to respecting an opposing perspective. *Wise reasoning*—a composite of researcher-coded intellectual humility and dialectical thinking—was associated with partisan undergraduates' interest in joining a bipartisan political group (Kross & Grossmann, 2012), and those with higher intellectual humility appear more accepting of those with different religious beliefs, and of politicians who change their views – sometimes called “flip-flopping” (Leary et al., 2017). Yet, we know of no empirical research that directly examines the relation between intellectual humility and openness to opposing views.

There is also empirical research that suggests we might *not* observe this association. Disagreements, especially when they involve near and dear sociopolitical issues, arouse strong emotions and defenses, making people more motivated to confirm their own opinions than to

learn about the other side (Taber & Lodge, 2006). Strong polarization and partisanship make it even more difficult to open oneself to the opposing socio-political position. If intellectual humility allowed individuals to overcome these strong forces pulling them towards close-mindedness, the results would be striking, and contrary to how people typically respond to opposing socio-political views according to the research literature. We therefore designed Studies 1 and 2 to investigate this potential link.

Can Educating for Intellectual Virtues foster Civic Goods?

For the third study we explore how educating for intellectual virtue may foster civic outcomes. Intellectual character, the dispositions that “animate, motivate, and direct abilities toward good and productive thinking” (Ritchhart, 2001), are empirically and conceptually distinct from other assets, including moral, civic, and performance character (Park, Tsukayama, Goodwin, Patrick, & Duckworth, 2017). Yet, several philosophers and psychologists acknowledge overlap between the virtues (Baehr, 2017; Paul, 2000;). For example, Baehr (2017) suggested that open-mindedness, intellectual honesty, intellectual humility, and intellectual courage, while key intellectual virtues, are also critical to participating in public discourse in a democracy, making them important facets of civic character as well. Given this overlap between the intellectual and civic virtues, we suspect that educating for intellectual character has the potential to promote students’ civic development.

Some of the “best practices” in civic education, like setting aside time for students to discuss controversial issues, are designed to help cultivate students’ open-mindedness to opposing positions, with the ultimate goal of preparing them to participate in civil democratic discourse (Hess & McAvoy, 2014). This raises the possibility that civic education may also have the potential to foster intellectual virtues. Indeed, there is consensus that fostering open-

mindedness to diverse perspectives is an important aim of civic education (Flanagan, 2013).

Yet, to our knowledge neither civic education scholars nor intellectual character scholars have empirically explored how educating for intellectual virtues – without also having an explicit civic education component – might enhance civic development. Thus, in the current study, we investigate how a school that is focused on cultivating students’ intellectual character may also be contributing to their civic development.

Overview of Studies

We conducted three studies to test whether fostering intellectual might enhance positive civic outcomes. In Study 1 we tested whether intellectual humility, assessed by our self-report questionnaire, was associated with adults’ willingness to learn about the opposing socio-political perspective in an imagined scenario. In Study 2, we tested whether intellectual humility was associated with adults’ willingness to read reasons supporting the opposing vs. matching socio-political view on an important issue. In Study 3, we examined how educating for intellectual virtues may also be fostering students’ civic development, particularly their ability to engage in respectful dialogue, and to form civic friendships.

Study 1

It is not uncommon to discover in conversation that a relative, colleague, or even romantic partner has a view that is opposite to ours on an important issue. How do we respond in this situation? Do we listen to this person and try to learn about their perspective? Or do we ignore, ridicule, or attack them? Here, participants selected a sociopolitical topic they were passionate about and then indicated how they would respond to a person who disagreed with them on this issue. We predicted that intellectual humility would be associated with openness to

learning about the opposition's perspective, even here when the disagreement was over an important, emotionally evocative topic.

Method

Participants. We recruited 188 American adults ($M_{\text{age}} = 32.84$, $SD = 11.65$, range = 18-69; 109 women and 78 men, 1 unspecified) from the online panel Amazon Mechanical Turk (Buhrmester, Kwang, & Gosling, 2011; Paolacci & Chandler, 2014). Participants received a small monetary compensation for participating.

Materials and procedure.

IH and personality measures. To assess intellectual humility, we developed a 9-item self-report scale that included six positively-worded (e.g., "I am willing to admit it if I don't know something") and three negatively-worded (e.g., "I feel uncomfortable when someone points out one of my intellectual shortcomings") items (see Table 1). The IH scale had a 1 factor structure when we modeled method effects of the negatively worded items (Porter & Schumann, 2017). Thus, we averaged the 9 items in the IH scale (reverse-scoring the three negatively-worded items) to create a unidimensional scale of IH ($\alpha = .74$). Participants also completed measures of personality constructs (see Table 2) so that we could test whether IH predicted openness to learning about the opposing view over and above these other factors. We also assessed Self-Esteem (10 items; $\alpha = .91$; Rosenberg, 1965), and Confidence in Intelligence (3 items; $\alpha = .77$; Dweck, Chiu, & Hong, 1995) to ensure that the IH scale wasn't tapping a low self-esteem, or low confidence.

Responses to disagreement. Next, participants read about five contentious issues (e.g., gun control; same-sex marriage) and indicated their position on the issue (pro or anti). After choosing a position on each issue, they rated four attributions for why someone might disagree

with them about that issue (e.g., because the issue is complex and warrants different opinions). Attributions across issues were combined to create a respectful attribution composite, $\alpha = .81$. Participants also rated how personally important each issue was to them (1 = *not at all*, 7 = *extremely*).

Participants then chose the one issue out of the five provided that was most important to them. They were asked to imagine discussing this issue with a person who endorsed the opposite view, and rated how likely they would be to respond with openness on 8 items (e.g., “I would try to understand their perspective about the issue”, “I would listen to their reasoning for why they hold their opinion”; 1 = *extremely unlikely* to 7 = *extremely likely*), $\alpha = .64$. Finally, participants answered demographic questions.

Results

As expected, IH was positively associated with personality measures tapping an openness to thinking and learning, including Need for Cognition, and Openness to Experience, and negatively associated with Need for Closure and Narcissism (see Table 3). IH was positively associated with Modesty and Self-Esteem, but was not significantly related to Confidence in Intelligence, demonstrating again that the IH scale did not assess a low self-concept.

Participants rated their most important issue as being very important to them, $M = 5.98$, $SD = 1.27$. Yet, although these issues were of great importance, IH was still associated with more respectful attributions for the disagreement, $r = .34$, $p < .01$, and greater openness to learning about the opposing perspective, $r = .33$, $p < .01$. Responses to disagreement were also associated with some of the personality constructs that we assessed. Thus, we conducted regression analyses to test whether IH explained variance in the dependent variables over and above the other factors. Controlling for all of the personality measures weakened the association between

IH and respectful attributions, $B = .13$, $SE = .08$, $t(174) = 1.67$, $p = .097$, 95% CI [-.02, .29], but this association remained significant when controlling for each personality construct independently, all $ps < .05$ (see Table 5 in the Supplementary Materials for partial correlations). IH predicted openness over and above all of the validation variables, $B = .21$, $SE = .09$, $t(173) = 2.29$, $p = .023$, 95% CI [.03, .39].

Discussion

Study 1 provides a glimpse into how those higher in intellectual humility might react to a disagreement about a personally important sociopolitical issue. Far from being defensive, dismissive, or derogatory, those higher in intellectual humility reported being more interested in learning about the other side's perspective. These findings were robust, remaining significant when controlling for a number of related personality constructs, suggesting the unique value of intellectual humility in predicting individuals' responses to intellectual disagreements. These findings are also notable given how important the issues addressed in this study were to participants. They suggest that intellectual humility is associated with civic goods such as respectfulness, and openness to opposing perspectives.

Given the results from Studies 1, we wondered whether the behavior of those high in intellectual humility would mirror their questionnaire responses. Thus, in Study 2 we examined participants' actual behavior when they were given the opportunity to learn about opposing opinions.

Study 2

The internet, television, and social media have made a multitude of perspectives accessible. Greater access offers an opportunity to think more critically about our own views by

allowing us, if we choose, to learn about the views of those who disagree with us. In Study 2, we tested whether those higher in intellectual humility would take greater advantage of an opportunity to learn about the opposing perspective. We gave participants a chance to read other people's reasons for holding a position that was the same as or opposite to their own on a sociopolitical issue. We predicted that those higher in intellectual humility would seek information about the opposing view to a greater extent than those lower in intellectual humility.

Method

Participants. We recruited 169 American adults from Amazon Mechanical Turk ($M_{age} = 33.14$, $SD = 11.71$, Range 18 – 72; 74 women, 88 men, 7 unspecified). Participants were compensated a small monetary amount for participating.

Materials and procedure.

IH and other predictor measures. Participants completed measures of IH, $\alpha = .74$, Growth Mindset of Intelligence (4 items; $\alpha = .92$; (Dweck, 2000), and Learning Goals (3 items; $\alpha = .91$; (Grant & Dweck, 2003).

Behavioral measure of openness to learning about opposing view. Participants then read reasons about either gun control or capital punishment. We counterbalanced assignment to issues to ensure that results were not driven by a specific issue (Hoyle, et al., 2016).

Participants indicated a pro or anti stance on the issue. Participants then rated how much they favored capital punishment [or more gun control] (0 = *completely oppose* to 100 = *completely favor*); this item was recoded so that higher values indicated stronger attitudes. Participants also reported how much they knew about the issue (0 = *nothing* to 100 = *everything*).

Next, participants were given an opportunity to read reasons supporting their own view and the opposing view that had ostensibly been written by a sample of participants who were US citizens. Participants were told they could read as many reasons as they wanted, and that each link would lead to a unique reason. Links to various reasons were presented on one webpage, counterbalanced so that half of the participants saw the 7 “pro” links on top, followed by the 7 “anti” links, and the other half of participants saw the reverse order. When a link was clicked, participants saw a reason for a particular position. Reasons were written by us and were matched for length. Throughout, participants could either advance to the next part of the study or read more reasons. Participants were only advanced to the next part of the study when they chose to move on or when all 14 reasons had been read.

Next, participants rated their interest in learning more about the issue. They also rated their attitude strength, and their issue knowledge a second time. At the end of the study, participants reported their level of political engagement, political ideology, and answered demographic questions.

Results

As in Study 2, IH was positively associated with having more of a growth mindset of intelligence, $r = .42, p < .01$. Consistent with their general propensity for thinking and learning, IH was also associated with having stronger learning goals, $r = .44, p < .01$ (see Table 4).

Political issues. There were no significant differences between the issues in attitude strength, $t(163) = 1.80, p = .074$, or issue knowledge, $t(164) = 1.04, p = .30$. We therefore combined responses across issues for the remaining analyses. On average, participants held strong opinions about gun control and capital punishment, $M = 81.31, SD = 20.61$, and had a moderate amount of baseline knowledge about the issues, $M = 60.72, SD = 23.33$.

IH and reasons read. Although participants read a similar number of opposing reasons (reasons that were opposite their own view) ($M = 1.46, SD = 2.30$) and matching ones (reasons that matched their own view) ($M = 1.23, SD = 2.06$), nearly half of participants ($n = 81$) read no reasons. Because we did not know why these participants chose not to read any reasons (e.g., efficiency; not interested), we conducted analyses both including and excluding the non-readers.

To test whether those higher in IH took greater advantage of an opportunity to learn about the opposing view, we calculated the proportion of opposing reasons read for each participant by dividing the number of opposing reasons read by the total number of reasons read:

$\frac{\text{opposing reasons}}{\text{opposing reasons} + \text{matching reasons}}$. This proportion has been used in past research to assess bias in information-seeking (Taber & Lodge, 2006), and allows us to control for variability in each participant's willingness to spend time reading both types of reasons. By using this proportion, we are capturing a preference for spending more of one's time learning about the opposing view.

IH was significantly associated with a greater proportion of opposing reasons read, $r = .29, p = .007$, indicating that those higher in IH read a larger share of opposing than matching reasons relative to those lower in IH. We reasoned that individuals' baseline attitude strength, issue knowledge, political ideology and level of political engagement might have shaped their willingness to read reasons. Thus, we controlled for these covariates in a regression analysis. Controlling for these measures did not eliminate the association between IH and the proportion of opposing reasons read, $B = .11, SE = .05, t(79) = 2.16, p = .034, 95\% \text{ CI } [.01, .20]$.

Because we were not able to include those who read no reasons using the proportion score (as it is impossible to divide by zero), we also calculated a more conservative openness index that allowed us to include the non-readers in analyses. For this index we subtracted the number of matching reasons read from the number of opposing reasons read. A higher score

indicated exposing oneself to more opposing than matching positions. Again, IH was significantly associated with this openness index when including those who read no reasons, $r = .16, p = .033$, and when excluding them, $r = .25, p = .017$. These associations remained significant when controlling for the aforementioned measures both when including non-readers, $B = .33, SE = .16, t(157) = 2.07, p = .041, 95\% CI = [.02, .65]$, and when excluding them, $B = .77, SE = .34, t(806) = 2.29, p = .025, 95\% CI [.10, 1.44]$.

When we examined the bivariate correlation between IH and reasons, IH was not associated with total opposing reasons read when including non-readers, $r = .06, p = .44$, or excluding them from analyses, $r = .11, p = .29$. Thus, the effects of IH on openness only emerged when we used measures that controlled for participants' overall willingness to spend time reading reasons, be they opposing or matching.

Additional analyses. On average, attitude strength and issue knowledge did not significantly change during the study and the amount of change was not related to IH, all $ps > .30$. However, participants higher in IH were more interested in learning more about the issues at the end of the study, $r = .19, p = .017$.

Discussion

In Study 2 the results showed that those higher in intellectual humility read a greater proportion (and higher number) of opposing vs. matching reasons than those lower in intellectual humility. This effect only emerged when we controlled for participants' willingness to spend time reading reasons by calculating proportion and difference score measures, suggesting that the relation between IH and willingness to seek-out the opposing perspective may be moderated by one's attention to the particular task.

A possible alternative explanation for our primary finding is that participants higher in intellectual humility read more opposing than matching reasons to mentally derogate the opposition's perspective. Although we cannot rule out this possibility, we consider it unlikely given the findings from Study 1 where intellectual humility was correlated with greater interest in learning about the opposing view. Moreover, if participants were lambasting the opposition while reading, the high IH individuals might have developed even stronger attitudes about their own position after exposure to the opposite view, as combatting the opposition has had this effect in past research (Taber & Lodge, 2006). We did not find this effect in the current study. In fact, those higher in IH had greater interest in learning more about the issues relative to those lower in IH, which supports the notion that intellectual humility undergirds a persistent motivation to learn.

Given the findings from Studies 1 and 2 suggesting that those higher in intellectual humility are more open to learning about the opposing view, we wondered whether educating for intellectual virtue in a real school context may also foster civic goods including respectfulness and openness to learning about the opposing perspective. We examined this matter in Study 3.

Study 3

A growing body of research has confirmed that school cultures focused on cultivating students' civic virtues can increase growth in these strengths in adolescents (e.g. Seider, 2012). However, we are not aware of any empirical research that has examined how fostering intellectual virtue in schools – without a stated civic component to the curriculum – could also contribute to the civic development of students. In Study 3, we explored how educating for intellectual virtues may foster the civic goods of *respectful discourse* - discourse where opinions are listened to and valued by both students and teachers and where any instances of intolerance

or bullying in such discourse are stopped (Flanagan, 2013), and *civic friendship*, courtesy and trust towards fellow citizens (Flanagan 2015).

Method

The present study draws upon data collected from the first and second years (2015-2016; 2016-2017) from a larger, ongoing mixed-methods longitudinal investigation of intellectual character development in adolescents at the participating school begun in the fall of 2015. Only data relevant to the current investigation will be reported. All names included are pseudonyms.

Participants. This study's participants included six adolescents at Bright Ideas Middle School (BIMS) who participated in interviews during the 2015-2016 and 2016-2017 school years. In addition, five teachers at BIMS completed interviews during the 2015-2016 school year.

Participating Schools.

Bright Ideas Middle School (BIMS). BIMS is a charter school located in a large city in the Western United States. In 2014-2015, the school population of 112 students was 38.4% White, 26.8% Hispanic or Latino, 12.5% Black/African American, 11.6% Two or more Races, 6.3% Asian, 0.9% Filipino, and 3.8% none reported. 14.3% of their population receive Free or Reduced Lunch, a proxy for low income status. BIMS focuses on fostering nine core intellectual character strengths in students: curiosity, intellectual humility, intellectual autonomy, attentiveness, intellectual carefulness, intellectual thoroughness, open-mindedness, intellectual courage, and intellectual perseverance. They note on their school website that their school model focuses on discussion and deep understanding. Students participate in advisories.

Data.

Faculty and Student Interviews. During the 2015-2016 school year our research team conducted 30 to 45-minute semi-structured interviews with five randomly selected faculty

members (2 male, 3 female) and six randomly selected sixth grade students (3 male, 3 female) at BIMS. A semi-structured interview protocol with open-ended questions was used as a guide for the interviews. A sample teacher question included, “How do you find yourself infusing intellectual character into your classroom?” A sample student question included, “How do you feel like you learn about virtues here at [BIMS]?” These same six students were then re-interviewed during spring of the 2016-2017 school year.

Field Notes. During the 2015-2016 (13 visits) and 2016-2017 (nine visits) school years our research team conducted 22 visits at BIMS, primarily focused on observing the classrooms of the 2019 cohort. During these observations, we collected comprehensive field notes dedicated to identifying the pedagogical and curricular practices utilized by BIMS to foster students’ intellectual character strengths.

Data Analysis.

All interviews with students and faculty were audiotaped and transcribed verbatim. Our analyses of the interviews and field notes primarily drew on Braun and Clarke’s (2013) Thematic Analysis approach to coding qualitative data. We began by selectively coding the data according to etic codes derived from the intellectual character literature. We then turned to un-coded areas and derived codes for these areas from the data itself, staying close to the data and using “in-vivo” codes (Charmaz, 2006) when possible. Next, data were re-coded using all available etic and emic codes. Examples of etic codes include “teacher modeling” and “noticing & naming” (e.g. Baehr, 2015; Ritchhart, 2015). Examples of emic codes include “no right answer” and “fun.” Using MAXQDA software, we observed patterns across the data using the “code relations browser” function, specifically focusing in the present study on the virtues of intellectual humility and open-mindedness.

Results

Two primary themes emerged from the field notes and student and teacher interviews. First, focusing on open-mindedness and intellectual humility helped to produce respectful discourse at BIMS. Second, focusing on intellectual humility and open-mindedness at BIMS helped to encourage students' civic friendship—their courtesy and trust towards fellow citizens (Flanagan, 2015).

Respectful Discourse. BIMS teachers agreed that teaching intellectual humility and open-mindedness in their school is a way to create a respectful environment in their classrooms wherein students are open to hearing each other's perspectives. For example, Aaliyah commented, "with [my] class, it's more about...intellectual humility...being open to a completely new way of communicating with people and interacting with people and being open to new ideas and new principles and being vulnerable and being honest..." She expanded by describing a lesson wherein students described a stereotype about themselves and biases they held about others: "the more that I model and the more that I see that I'm honest with them, the ripple effect just goes through the class and it just kind of permeates everyone, and if one student's willing to open after me, then another student will be willing and it'll just kind of trickle across..." Will similarly noted that he commends students' intellectual humility in the classroom as it helps to contribute to an open and honest classroom discourse culture; he stated, "A lot of times during our discussions, you know, a student might say something...and say something like 'I'm not sure this is the answer' ... so I might kind of applaud that student... aloud for the class like 'thank you for that, that's a great example of intellectual humility, and when you say that...in presenting your idea it's great for our class because it makes other people

feel they can contribute as well.” Ben likewise expressed that he has seen the outcomes of focusing on open-mindedness in his students’ discourse:

I do hear ... about students who are ... practicing an open mindset. When they’re outside at lunch they’re talking to each other ... I think one of them kind of identified themselves as not religious and somebody kind of identified themselves as religious, so they were kind of having this conversation...about what does that mean, or does God exist, or something like that, and both of them were very open-minded to each other ... I would not have expected middle schoolers to have that maturity in order to be accepting of someone else’s opinion even though it kind of was obviously going against what they thought ... I think they were doing that in a very respectful way.

Students similarly noted a connection between open-mindedness, intellectual humility, and more respectful discourse in the classroom. Molly noted that in their English Socratic seminars they get into discussion circles and “You can just share your ideas and if you disagree you can be like ‘I respectfully disagree’ and then people [are] honest about their opinions... it’s really nice.” Elisa echoed Molly’s account, noting that in English class, “usually I will have one perspective and then another person will have another perspective and we kind of talk that there’s two perspectives to everything ... you can’t just go down one road-- like other teachers who say this is the correct answer, this is what you need to do...—they actually give us the chance to, like, a class exploration... so that’s what English tries to get you to like have multiple perspectives and stuff like that.” Again, in relation to English class, Matt spoke to how the teacher has the students share their thoughts on current events yet there remains a respectful discourse in the classroom. He noted, “I mean sometimes it kind of like brings like a little bit of arguing, cause you have people have their different opinions about different things, but at the end of the day you know... we’re still like all friends and like we don’t just like push each other to the side because like we think differently ...” Summing up, Molly noted, “we have a lot of group discussions, which are really helpful, and they make us listen to other viewpoints and have open-mindedness.”

Some students specifically described how the school's focus on intellectual virtue improved their own behavior in discussions, and when working with others. Trevor, for example, described intellectual humility as "realizing that you don't have the better perspective than someone else. It's realizing that you are on the same level as them and that they have great ideas just like you." He furthermore noted that, as a result of his education at BIMS, he now feels that he does not have to take over class projects but instead "can listen to other ideas and give out my idea and...wait for an agreement rather than stepping in."

Elisa relatedly identified open-mindedness as one of the most important virtues for her, and as improving her behavior during discussions with others. She noting that before attending BIMS "if I knew that I would say the answer and dig and give the details so no one else would get to say anything." Sophie similarly noted, "I always...felt that I was right all the time, which wasn't very good, and so now here at BIMS I feel I'm open to a lot more ideas on how – yes, I could be wrong, which is kind of like intellectual humility..." Sophie gave further examples on how she's come to use her intellectual humility and open-mindedness to be a more respectful community member at BIMS, noting that "well, like, in PE, usually we come in to a problem where the kids say 'oh no I wasn't tagged' or stuff like that, and so, most of the time, we just like automatically without knowing, we use intellectual humility or open-mindedness to ...[open] up to new ideas about a tag game or intellectual humility, like 'oh yeah I did get tagged' or 'I did run out of bounds'-- even maybe without knowing we're using the virtues..."

Finally, field note observations corroborated the role of intellectual humility and open-mindedness in contributing to respectful discourse within the classroom. During one science class, students began class with a discussion about the Great Pacific Garbage Patch. One student

spoke to the possible positive aspects of the garbage patch, and a heated discussion ensued (S = student, T = teacher):

S: well I feel like this kind of garbage patch thing, in some ways a good thing because all the trash is concentrated in one area, and it helps to show look at what you're doing, stop it...

T: that's beautiful, I love it when you guys disagree but we have to make sure that we're calmly and respectfully responding to each other. What [student] said, it's a little scandalous because not too many people look at the garbage patch and think, let's look at the positive of this...that takes a lot of open-mindedness

S: props to [student]

S: I'm going to respectfully disagree with [student]...when you first show this picture and it's probably their first time seeing it, not really concentrated because there's still trash everywhere...doesn't mean there isn't anywhere else...

S: I like your idea of open-mindedness...I have to practice my intellectual autonomy and say that... this is trash in the ocean we're talking about...water spreads quickly, meaning that this trash...it will probably spread throughout the ocean, even with ...control...the waves will spread the trash throughout the ocean, possibly killing fish....

S: Ok back to what we've been saying... sorry [student] but I have to disagree with you... (Field Notes, 10-21-16)

Within this excerpt, a student is both lauded for his open-mindedness and students are demonstrating open and respectful discourse with one another, wherein they respond to each other's ideas respectfully but with divergent opinions of their own. Similar diversity of opinions and respectful discourse was seen in an art class in which students were discussing the benefits of being a "Renaissance man." Students used phrases such as "I agree, but also," "I'd like to add on to what [student] was saying," "I was thinking," "I would like to agree with [student]," and "about what she said earlier," in order to respectfully agree and disagree with each other's opinions throughout the discussion (Field Notes, 5-11-17).

Civic Friendship. A second theme that emerged within the qualitative data was that focusing on intellectual virtue at BIMS, particularly intellectual humility and open-mindedness, helped to encourage students' civic friendship—their courtesy and trust towards fellow citizens

in search of the common good (Flanagan, 2013) both by encouraging them to think about perspectives in the world more broadly as well as encouraging them to act more kindly towards fellow citizens.

Aaliyah, a classroom teacher, spoke to the ways in which she felt focusing on open-mindedness allows BIMS students to put the actions and behaviors of others in the world in perspective: “other teens their age...don’t have the words to express what they’re thinking or to justify other people’s actions or to help them understand that you know, there is a world that is behaving and looking differently than them... and for them to understand...that’s open-mindedness...so because they have this language it helps them.” Students echoed Aaliyah’s account that learning about the virtues opened them up to broader perspectives; Sophie, for example, described how she now uses her open-mindedness “to [open] to new parts of the Bible that I didn’t know of, but I’m open to learning.”

Field observations corroborated teacher and student accounts, showing that students were challenged to open their minds towards appreciating broader aspects of the world and cultures. During Year 1 of the study the students’ English 6 class focused on the big question “should everyone be treated the same?” Within this course, their teacher encouraged them to think about holding stereotypes as the opposite of being open-minded:

Student (S): When I think of discrimination I think of like a fixed mindset. Like, they look different, and you think they’re different and bad. But people with a growth mindset will look around and try to help them and welcome them in.

Teacher (T): So if you go back to the virtues, discrimination can be related to your open-mindedness. If you use stereotypes, it can be the opposite of being open-minded. (Field Notes, 12-11-15).

Similarly, in a sixth grade history class, the teacher reminded the students about the importance of open-mindedness when studying other cultures and appreciating those countries’ perspectives:

T: guys, one thing I need to say – the various places we study – we might have people who are less or more excited about those places. I want you to keep an open mind about those places that we study. And how excited your classmates are about places. And, especially guys – make sure you guys are being respectful ... both of your classmates' thoughts and ideas and of the cultures that we're studying. Open-mindedness is such a huge part of studying history because we're studying different places, different cultures, different beliefs and it's important to be open to those. (Field Notes, 2-26-16)

Here, the teacher again reiterates the importance of openness and respect for each other's perspectives, but moves further in arguing for an openness and respect towards the perspectives of other cultures and nations.

Relatedly, teachers and students spoke to the ways in which focusing on intellectual humility and open-mindedness encouraged their kindness towards fellow citizens. Laura, a teacher, noted that focusing on intellectual virtue at the school created "this byproduct of empathy and just kindness.... Parents are like 'my child is a lot nicer to me now.'" She went on to relate an example of a schoolwide assembly where students used their open-mindedness to consider how their language might hurt those who identify differently from them in the world.

She commented:

We had the kids dig into what it means and then the open-mindedness, what might it mean to somebody else. Like, what, if you were a gay student and you heard somebody say 'That's so gay,' what would that feel like? Can you think of an example that would hurt you in that way? You know, would you ever say, 'That's so white' or 'That's so black' or 'That's so Mexican?' Like you know what would it mean to, to that person if you were a member of that group to hear somebody use that in a negative way? So asking students to be open-minded about others' perspectives, that maybe they aren't as familiar with.

Elisa, a student, was specific in noting how learning about open-mindedness and intellectual humility taught her to act more kindly and openly towards others in the world. In one example, she described falling over a person: "if you didn't have intellectual humility or open-mindedness then you'd just like go all out on them like 'why did you do that!? you're so mean!' and they're like 'I'm just sorry I'm sorry,' but if you had open-mindedness you'd be like 'oh it's ok, can you

just go get me a band aid...” In another example, she described how, in comparison to her sisters, her open-mindedness and virtues allow her to respond nicely when people make mistakes. For example, when a nail salon employee makes a mistake: “[my sister] doesn't have open-mindedness and she doesn't have anything of the virtues and growth mindset, but [compared] to ME and I have these virtues, I'm going to be like ‘Oh, it's ok, um can you just take it off?’” In Year 2, Elisa further considered the role of open-mindedness and virtue in broader society, commenting:

A good thing that could happen with people knowing virtues is that if someone made a mistake they wouldn't just be like ‘you're fired’ at jobs or stuff like that, they would actually be nicer to them.... there's some things that you need virtues, like when ... a person didn't commit a crime that they're accusing, they would need open-mindedness to see both of the possibilities ...

Again, Elisa considers open-mindedness and the virtues important for fostering kindness and, moreover, trust in a fellow citizen's potential innocence in broader society. Thus, both students and teachers felt that open-mindedness allowed students to develop increased trust, empathy, and kindness towards fellow citizens.

Discussion

In Study 3 we found that educating for intellectual humility and open-mindedness at Bright Ideas Middle School (BIMS) was associated with two primary outcomes for early adolescents. First, encouraging such virtues in students is associated with respectful, open discourse within the classroom. Second, learning about intellectual humility and open-mindedness encouraged students' civic friendship through a) helping students think about perspectives in the world more broadly and b) encouraging them to act more kindly towards fellow citizens. These findings triangulated amongst the teacher and student interviews as well as the field observations, increasing their reliability.

Such findings align with work by Zheng (2016), which has found that even reminding individuals to be open-minded can produce more productive discourse. Accordingly, opportunities for providing feedback regarding students' intellectual humility and open-mindedness in the classroom, such as "noticing and naming" when students are exhibiting these virtues, may be useful in continuing to contribute to an honest, respectful and civil classroom climate wherein students are open to each other's perspectives (see Baehr, 2015).

Although teacher and field note observations corroborate that BIMS is encouraging students to think more broadly regarding their interdependence with other cultures and their perspectives, the interview comments regarding students' empathy and kindness were generally more interpersonally focused. Given the research by Flanagan (2013) that demonstrated that older adolescents are more able to distinguish between interpersonal and broader social trust, it is possible that our younger sample may not yet be focused on this distinction. However, it is suggestive that Elisa changed the focus of her outlook from Year 1 to Year 2 towards a broader sense of open-mindedness and collective trust, perhaps alluding to this developmental trend.

General Discussion

The current research points to the value of intellectual virtues for civic life. We found that those higher in intellectual humility were, on average, more respectful of opposing socio-political views, and more open to learning about opposing views than those lower in intellectual humility. These findings were consistent across self-report and behavioral measures of openness, and remained significant even for personally important issues, and after accounting for the significant contributions of other relevant personality traits. We also observed that educating for middle school students' intellectual humility and open-mindedness, among other intellectual

virtues, enriched students' ability to engage in respectful discourse, and to form civic friendships with others. We found consistent evidence in this real-world context, across student interviews, teacher interviews, and classroom observations, that educating for open-mindedness and intellectual humility in a school aimed at fostering intellectual virtues (and, importantly, with no explicit civic purpose) helped to cultivate students' civic development.

The current research is not without limitation. Notably, all of this research was conducted in the United States and we, therefore, do not know how results might change in different cultural and socio-political contexts. The quantitative studies assessed intellectual humility with a self-report scale, a method marked by both strengths and limitations (Duckworth & Yeager, 2015). Responses to disagreement were also assessed via self-report in Study 1, making them vulnerable to reporting biases. We note, however, that our findings replicated when using a behavioral dependent variable that was not subject to the same biases as the self-report measure, lending additional weight to the results.

Despite these limitations, the findings of this research are relevant given the polarized socio-political climate in many countries. For example, Americans from opposing political parties have fewer views in common than they used to, making disagreements all the more likely (Gentzkow, 2016). Although we do not know much about how these disagreements play out in everyday interactions, one study found that 59% of those who discussed political disagreements on Facebook thought the experiences were "stressful and frustrating" (Pew Research Center, 2016b). Further, partisanship seems to be increasingly hostile and hard to bridge, eliciting negative implicit and explicit evaluations, and low trust towards members of the opposing political party (Iyengar & Westwood, 2015).

If we hope to have cross-cutting dialogue in society, tools for managing the inevitable and increasingly hostile disagreements in a constructive way are urgently needed. Based on the current research, cultivating intellectual virtues shows promise in making such disagreements more productive. Our findings suggest that intellectual virtues increase the possibility of more engagement, respectfulness, and possibly even satisfaction with and learning from debate. Indeed, encouraging open and respectful discussion in classrooms (i.e., discussions that embody intellectual humility and open-mindedness) has been associated with increases in adolescents' civic knowledge (Flanagan, 2013).

This research also generates intriguing questions for future investigation. One important question is whether educating for intellectual virtues in adolescence has any long term effects on individuals' civic outcomes. Perhaps practicing virtues like intellectual humility and open-mindedness from an early age helps to cultivate positive civic outcomes years later. A related question is: what sorts of civic outcomes do intellectual virtues help to foster as students develop? Perhaps intellectual virtues also help to promote civic knowledge, political interest, social entrepreneurship, a sense of purpose around particular social issues, political engagement, or volunteering. A related question is to what extent civic education may promote the development of intellectual virtues, and whether such virtues would aid students' learning and thinking in academic domains outside of civics.

Conclusion

Given the polarized, hostile nature of much of the current political discourse, finding ways to encourage openness to opposing perspectives, respectful discussion, and trust of fellow community members is critically important. The studies here suggest that one promising avenue

for fostering these civic outcomes is to enhance the development of intellectual virtues. Studies 1 and 2 demonstrated a hearty link between intellectual humility and willingness to hear-out the opposing socio-political view. Study 3 showed that educating for intellectual virtues, particularly for open-mindedness and intellectual humility, provides a promising way of fostering respectful discourse and civic friendship among middle school students. Taken together, this research demonstrates the relevance of intellectual virtues to civic development and to democratic societies. These studies suggest that civic goods and intellectual virtues are very much intertwined.

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