

Guide for using the Commitment to Ethical Goodness scale

*For Elementary and Secondary
School Students*

VERSION 2.0

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Purpose of the Commitment to Ethical Goodness Scale

The Commitment to Ethical Goodness Scale (CEG) is a 15-item, 3-factor self-report scale developed for use in measuring the effectiveness of moral character education programs in increasing ethical focus and motivation. Ethical focus is one of four psychological factors involved in moral functioning identified by Rest (1983; Narvaez & Rest, 1995).

Construction of the Ethical Identity Scale

Initially tested as part of a battery of items examining ethical identity, duty and citizenship in elementary school students, fifteen items hung together as one factor we termed “ethical identity” at first, and now “commitment to ethical goodness.” For most items, respondents complete a 5-point Likert-type scale (always agree to never agree). Two items, from an original duty scale, have their own response choices.

Description

The 15-item scale (formerly called “**Ethical Identity;**” Anderson et al., 2003; Narvaez et al., 2004) measures three sub-factors: moral locus of control, ethical goodness, and ethical self-regulation. Items include “It doesn’t matter whether you are good or bad” and “Being a good person at school is important to me.” Participants respond using a Likert-type scale (1=Always agree, 5= Never agree). Item scores may be added, forming summary scores which range from 15 to 75. Alternatively, mean scores may also be used when item data are missing (computing appropriate means for subjects with missing item data). One may also use the subscales as separate scores (used in Mullen et al., 2005)

Reliability and Findings

Pilot studies with middle school students in Minnesota obtained Cronbach alphas of .83 ($n = 73$), .87 ($n = 412$). The pretest data from Minnesota Community Voices and Character Education project (when it was called Ethical Identity; $\alpha = .86$; Anderson, Narvaez, Bock, Endicott, & Lies, 2004; Narvaez, Bock, Endicott, & Lies, 2004) Commitment to Ethical Goodness was correlated with Concern for others (.39), Community Bonding (.44), Citizenship (.67), Ethical Assertiveness (.59). In subsequent analyses, school climate was positively related to Ethical Goodness ($F(1, 278) = 53.44, p < .001, \eta^2 = .16$).

In another study (Narvaez, Turner, Khmelkov, Vaydich, & Mullen, 2008), there were two samples. The first sample included 806 students, grades 6-8, from a public middle school in a middle-sized Midwestern metropolitan area ($\alpha = .86$) The second sample included 370 students, grades 5-8, from six Catholic schools in the same middle-sized Midwestern metropolitan area ($\alpha = .82$). Contrary to expectations, there was no difference in mean scores for the public and Catholic school samples. See Table 1 for means and standard deviations.

In the public school sample, CEG was correlated with empathy ($r = .32$), not cheating (.26), perception of mastery goal structure (.51), perception of performance goal structure (.16), student bonding to school (.57) and perception of climate (.51). In the Catholic school sample, CEG was

correlated with empathy (.48), not cheating (.43), perception of mastery goal structure (.40), student bonding to school (.63) and perception of climate (.43).

The hierarchical regressions for Commitment to Ethical Goodness (Model 1: demographic variables; Model 2: add learning climate variables; model 3: add social climate variables) indicated that it was predicted in both samples by student bonding to school. In the public school sample, being female, being younger, perception of mastery goal structure and more positive views of teacher-created climate were also predictive. In the Catholic sample, only bonding to school was a predictor.

Table 1. Commitment to Ethical Goodness Means and Standard Deviations by School Sample (Public, Catholic) from Narvaez et al. (2008)

Public			Catholic		
Overall	Males	Females	Overall	Males	Females
(n=802)	(n=375)	(n=427)	(n=370)	(n=190)	(n=180)
3.95 (.47)	3.86(.48)	4.02 (.43)	3.99 (.41)	3.92 (.43)	4.05 (.38)

Permission and Publishing

NOTE: When you publish any reference to this scale, please cite this guide.

Before publishing test items, you must have a permission letter from us describing your study and where it will be published.

So we can collect a database of the scale, we would appreciate a copy of your data, whether or not you publish it. We will credit you with your work in this guide.

References

- Anderson, C., Narvaez, D., Bock, T., Endicott, L., & Lies, J. (2004). *Minnesota Community Voices and Character Education: Final Report and Evaluation*. Roseville, MN: Minnesota Department of Children, Families and Learning.
- Mullen, G., Turner, J., & Narvaez, D. (April, 2005). Student Perceptions of Climate Influence Character and Motivation. American Educational Research Association, Montreal.
- Narvaez, D., Bock, T., Endicott, L., & Lies, J. (2004). Minnesota's Community Voices and Character Education Project. *Journal of Research in Character Education*, 2, 89-112.
- Narvaez, D. & Rest, J. (1995). The four components of acting morally. In W. Kurtines & J. Gewirtz (Eds.), *Moral behavior and moral development: An introduction* (pp. 385-400). New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Narvaez, D., Turner, J., Khmelkov, V., Vaydich, J. L., & Mullen, G. (final revisions). The Relation of Learning Climate and Social Climate to Ethical Character in Catholic and Public Schools.
- Rest, J. (1983). Morality. In P.H. Mussen (Series Ed.) & J. Flavell & E. Markman (Vol. Eds.), *Handbook of Child Psychology* (Vol. 3, Cognitive Development) (4th ed.) (pp. 556-629). New York, Wiley.

15-item Ethical Goodness Scale (N=15)

R=Reverse Coded in bold

Being a good person at school is important to me.

People at school think I'm a good person.

Being a good person at home is important to me.

People at home think I am a good person.

I know what it means to be a good person at home.

I am a good person at home.

I am a good person with my friends.

I agree with most of my friends on what it is to be a good person.

R It doesn't matter whether you are good or bad.

R I do what my friends do.

I have rules for myself that I follow.

R I behave badly.

R When things go wrong, it's other people's fault.

How often do you do a good job on your homework?

How often do you tell the truth?

EGS

1. Being a good person at school is important to me.

Always agree	Usually agree	Agree half the time	Rarely agree	Never agree
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2. People at school think I'm a good person.

Always agree	Usually agree	Agree half the time	Rarely agree	Never agree
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3. Being a good person at home is important to me.

Always agree	Usually agree	Agree half the time	Rarely agree	Never agree
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4. People at home think I am a good person.

Always agree	Usually agree	Agree half the time	Rarely agree	Never agree
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5. I know what it means to be a good person at home.

Always agree	Usually agree	Agree half the time	Rarely agree	Never agree
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6. I am a good person at home.

Always agree	Usually agree	Agree half the time	Rarely agree	Never agree
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7. I am a good person with my friends.

Always agree	Usually agree	Agree half the time	Rarely agree	Never agree
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8. I agree with most of my friends on what it is to be a good person.

Always agree	Usually agree	Agree half the time	Rarely agree	Never agree
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9. It doesn't matter whether you are good or bad.

Always agree	Usually agree	Agree half the time	Rarely agree	Never agree
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10. I do what my friends do.

Always agree	Usually agree	Agree half the time	Rarely agree	Never agree
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11. I have rules for myself that I follow.

Always agree	Usually agree	Agree half the time	Rarely agree	Never agree
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12. I behave badly.

Always agree	Usually agree	Agree half the time	Rarely agree	Never agree
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13. When things go wrong, it's other people's fault.

Always agree	Usually agree	Agree half the time	Rarely agree	Never agree
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14. How often do you do a good job on your homework?

Always	Usually	Half the time	Rarely	Never
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15. How often do you tell the truth?

Always	Usually	Half the time	Rarely	Never
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Ethical Identity Scale (n=9)

I am a good person at home.

I am a good person with my friends.

Being a good person at school is important to me.

People at home think I am a good person.

I agree with most of my friends on what it is to be a good person.

Being a good person at home is important to me.

I behave badly.

People at school think I'm a good person.

I know what it means to be a good person at home.

Moral Locus of Control (n=3)

It doesn't matter whether you are good or bad.

I do what my friends do.

When things go wrong, it's other people's fault.

Ethical Self-Regulation (n=3)

I have rules for myself that I follow.

How often do you do a good job on your homework?

How often do you tell the truth?

TOOLS FOR Researchers, Educators and Parents

Most of these you can download from:

<http://www.nd.edu/~dnarvaez/> Or from <http://cee.nd.edu>

TOOLS FOR TEACHERS: ETHICAL SKILL INSTRUCTION

Free from cee.nd.edu/curriculum

Narvaez, D. with Endicott, L., Bock, T., & Mitchell, C. (2001). *Nurturing character in the middle school classroom: Ethical Action*. St. Paul: Minnesota Department of Children, Families and Learning.

Narvaez, D. & Bock, T., with Endicott, L., & Mitchell, C. (2001). *Nurturing character in the middle school classroom: Ethical Judgment*. St. Paul: Minnesota Department of Children, Families and Learning.

Narvaez, D., & Endicott, L., with Bock, T., & Mitchell, C. (2001). *Nurturing character in the middle school classroom: Ethical Sensitivity*. St. Paul: Minnesota Department of Children, Families & Learning.

Narvaez, D. & Lies, J. with Endicott, L., Bock, T., & Mitchell, C. (2001). *Nurturing character in the middle school classroom: Ethical Motivation*. St. Paul: Minnesota Department of Children, Families and Learning.

Updated versions for purchase (each \$10 or all four for \$30):

Nurturing character in the classroom, EthEx Series, Book 4: Ethical Action. (Narvaez) Notre Dame, IN: ACE Press.

Nurturing character in the classroom, EthEx Series, Book 2: Ethical Judgment. (Narvaez & Bock) Notre Dame, IN: ACE Press.

Nurturing character in the classroom, EthEx Series, Book 1: Ethical Sensitivity. (Narvaez & Endicott) Notre Dame, IN: ACE Press.

Nurturing character in the classroom, EthEx Series, Book 3: Ethical Motivation. (Narvaez & Lies) Notre Dame, IN: ACE Press.

Integrative Ethical Education: Guide (Narvaez)

TOOLS FOR RESEARCH AND ASSESSMENT

Citizenship Scale *For Elementary and Secondary School Students: Guide*. Laboratory for Ethical Development and Education, University of Notre Dame

Ethical Goodness Scale *For Elementary and Secondary School Students: Guide*. (Narvaez, Bock & Vaydich) Laboratory for Ethical Development and Education, University of Notre Dame

Community Bonding Scale: Guide. (Narvaez) University of Notre Dame: Center for Ethical Education.

Attitudes Towards Human Rights Inventory: Guide. (Narvaez, Thoma, Getz) University of Notre Dame: Center for Ethical Education.

Positivity Scale: Guide. (Narvaez) University of Notre Dame: Center for Ethical Education.

Moral Theme Inventory (MTI): Guide. (Narvaez & Bock) South Bend, IN: Notre Dame University.

Assessing Ethical Skills: Guide (Narvaez)

Checklist for an Ethical Classroom: Guide (Narvaez)

Checklist for an Achieving and Ethical Classroom: Guide (Narvaez)

Tuning into Ethical Behavior: Guide (Narvaez)

Multicultural Experiences Questionnaire (MEQ) (Narvaez, Endicott, & Hill)

Rating Ethical Content System (RECS) for children's media (Narvaez)

TOOLS FOR PARENTS

Tuning into Ethical Behavior: Guide (Narvaez)

Nurturing a Peaceable Child (Warren, Vaydich & Narvaez)