

CHARACTER EDUCATION:
EXAMINING THE PERCEPTIONS OF ELEMENTARY, MIDDLE, AND HIGH
SCHOOL TEACHERS IN A CENTRAL FLORIDA SCHOOL DISTRICT

by
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ABSTRACT

While schools are academic institutions to prepare our country's youth for their future, developing a child's character and civic responsibilities is necessary and is often deleted from the explicit curriculum set forth in most school districts throughout the country. This study investigated the perception of character education of teachers in a Central Florida school district, as it related to teacher importance, teacher efficacy, and teacher practice of character education. This study investigated the responses of 497 classroom teachers surveyed within one Central Florida school district.

The questionnaire used in this study was designed to illuminate teacher perceptions of character education, by examining a teacher's level of importance, efficacy, and practice of character education in their classrooms and schools. The three areas of importance, efficacy, and practice were examined to determine whether there was a statistically significant difference among Central Florida educators based upon demographic variables of a) grades level taught, b) years of experience, c) highest degree attained, d) gender, and e) National Board Certification.

The results of this survey, in combination with existing research findings, proved to be beneficial in revealing the ideals and explicit actions that need to be prevalent in public schools today to insure a balance between academics and the development of civic behaviors and positive character values. This study was a step in an effort to depict the voices of all teachers as stakeholders in one Central Florida School district.

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CHAPTER 1 RATIONALE

Background

Character education has an extensive history in the United States. From colonial times until the late nineteenth century, when academic, technical, and social goals began to rival moral goals for primary importance in the school curriculum, the transmission and development of moral values dominated as the central purpose of education (Laud, 1997). Schools existed as an environment where moral concepts, via the Bible's moral precepts, were disseminated to the county's youth. Moral behavior was seen as a route to divinity (Laud, 1997). It was not until the early twentieth century that character education hastily dissipated because of the emphasis on memorizing facts, religious undertones, and recitation of religious based sayings. The building of a young learner's character and virtue in public schools lay dormant through much of the mid-twentieth century, but quickly reignited in the 1980s with the massive reintroduction of character education by individuals as Thomas Lickona (1991), Kevin Ryan (1986), William Kilpatrick (1992), and Amitai Etzioni (1997). With their extensive amount of research and dedication to the field, these researchers are known as some of the pioneers of a new era of character education in the United States.

Lickona (1991) defined character education as the deliberate, proactive effort to develop good character in students—or, more simply, to teach children right from wrong. It presumed that right and wrong do exist, that there are objective moral standards that transcend individual choice—standards as respect, responsibility, honesty, and fairness—

that we should teach to young people. The foundation needs to be set for consistent school settings across all states that foster a balance of a positive environment, elevate student attitudes, and positive student behavior. Through evaluation studies, the impact of character education can be seen through changes in school climate, student attitudes, and behavior (Lickona, Shaps & Lewis, 2007).

In 1997, the United States Department of Education funded a pilot character education program for the state of South Carolina. The program emphasized the following measures: 1) local control of character education, 2) youth participation in all aspects of character development, 3) community ownership and leadership at all levels, 4) trained school personnel in the area of character education and 5) supportive infrastructure for collaboration statewide and beyond (U.S Department of Education, 2000). After the fourth year of this initiative, an evaluation of the program took place. The 2000 evaluation of South Carolina's four-year character education initiative reported dramatic improvements among both students and adults (U.S Department of Education, 2000). This character education program provided students with the opportunities to achieve to their highest potential. In surveys of South Carolina administrators, the study found that 91% reported improvement in student attitudes, 89% reported improvement in student behavior, 60% reported improvement in academic performance, and more than 65% reported improvement in teacher and staff attitudes, since implementing character education. The program set the stage for a positive school culture and climate (U.S Department of Education, 2000).

While the teaching of values are deemed as an imperative item on the agenda of public schools in the United States, more often than not, this item on the agenda is pushed

aside and dealt with on an implicit manner. Schools do incorporate values that cover the ideologies behind character education, but they are in the structure of rules, policies, and procedures of the school. Much research invited the discussion that has been a drastic moral decline in today's society. Teachers, administrators, and even parents resonate to the idea of teaching students the core values deemed essential for cultural survival (Lasley II, 1997), but some concern has been over "whose " values should be taught. Character education works best when local schools and communities work together to identify the core values to be taught in their schools as well as the particular approaches to teaching those character traits (U.S Department of Education, 2000).

This study examined the perceptions and views of character education, as reported by the teachers of a Central Florida school district. The questionnaire used in this study was designed to illuminate teacher perceptions of character education, by examining their levels of importance, efficacy, and practice of character education in their school. The results of this survey, in amalgamation with existing research findings, may be beneficial in revealing the ideals and explicit actions that need to be prevalent in public schools today to ensure a balance between academics and the development of civic behaviors and positive character values. The current shift stimulated by No Child Left Behind legislation has limited the schools' influence of character development, which in the current societal environment is important. This study was a step in an effort to depict the voices of all teachers as stakeholders in a Central Florida School District to provide the necessary data, knowledge, and tools to suggest the building of a successful and sustainable character education program. The voice of the teachers as stakeholders has demonstrated the need for change.

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to investigate the perceptions of character education at the hands of teachers, as it relates to teacher importance, teacher efficacy, and teacher practice. Previous research confirmed that schools, which adopt principles of character education, as a formal curriculum or just as an advisory program, showed higher levels of behavioral, social, and academic success. Poliner and Lieber (2003) stated that if we create safe, supportive, respectful learning environments, personalize young peoples' learning experiences, help them develop social and emotional competencies, and provide opportunities to practice these skills, they will grow more attached to school, avoid risky behavior, and achieve more academic success.

As one of Character Education Partnership's (CEP) Eleven Principles to Effective Character Education (2007), power of the staff and community, is listed as a main objective of a successful character education program. This study was a step in an effort to depict the voices of all teachers as stakeholders in a Central Florida School District to provide the necessary data, knowledge, and tools to suggest the building of a successful and sustainable character education program. This study also signified an effort among all teachers as stakeholders in expressing the perceptions of character education. Research indicated that character education is something that is missing from the mainstream of our state's schools and is directly inhibiting students from being as successful as they can be. For some students, school is the only place they come to during the day that is supposed to be a safe and positive environment that promotes unity and community. When we taint it with poor

character values, this “safe” place turns it into another unenthusiastic environment in their daily routine.

Research Questions

1. Is there a statistical significant difference in the perceptions of character education, as measured by importance, efficacy, and practice between elementary, middle, and high school teachers?
2. Is there a statistical significant difference in the perceptions of character education, as measured by importance, efficacy, and practice of teachers based on years of experience?
3. Is there a statistical significant difference in the perceptions of character education, as measured by importance, efficacy, and practice of teachers based on their highest degree attained?
4. Is there a statistical significant difference in the perceptions of character education, as measured by importance, efficacy, and practice of teachers based on gender?
5. Is there a statistical significant difference in the perceptions of character education, as measured by importance, efficacy, and practice of teachers based on being Nationally Board Certified?

Definitions

For the purpose of this study, the following terms are defined.

Character Education - A term that will be used to describe a prescribed formal curriculum that teaches, discusses, and inquires about developing a form of good character and moral traits in all students.

Character - Defined as the level of one's morals and abilities to act and behave in a manner that is expected for any given environment. Traits in a person press them to accomplish good deeds, actions, and words.

Civic - The responsibility of a person to act accordingly and make good decisions in society. It is the act of doing the right things and striving to make society a better place for all.

Values - Characteristics of an individual that are taught and modeled throughout life. They are held personally and help shape the actions of that person throughout life.

Morals – This is defined as the action of an individual being able to distinguish between right and wrong.

Hidden Curriculum - A term used to define the lessons and ideas that are taught implicitly in school. Teachers do not verbally teach them, but they are implied as being lessons learned.

Stakeholder - A term within the field of education that defines any person that has any stake in the success or failure of schools and education (e.g., teacher, administrator, parent, staff member, school board member, superintendent).

Importance – A term that was used within this study to describe a teacher’s level of significance, as it pertains to character education in school.

Efficacy – A term that was used in this study to describe a teacher’s level of efficiency or confidence, as it pertains to teaching character education in school.

Practice – A term used in this study to describe a teacher’s intensity of practice of character education in school.

Assumptions

Assumptions are sometimes a base for our preconceived notions on topics and issues. The following are assumptions of this study:

1. All teachers within this Central Florida school district were going to be 100% behind a formally taught curriculum of character education. Schools have goals and teachers have benchmark standards. Teachers are held accountable for increasing scores on the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT).
2. All teachers answered the questionnaire truthfully.

Limitations

The current standards-based environment poses particular threats and challenges to character education (Howard, Berkowitz, & Schaffer, 2004). The overwhelming restriction of accountability within school environments can influence the perceptions and importance of character education in schools. Due to the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (1998) and No Child Left Behind (2001), educators within the state of

Florida are feeling pressure in all subjects, about the need for specific academic improvement. The following are the limitations to this study:

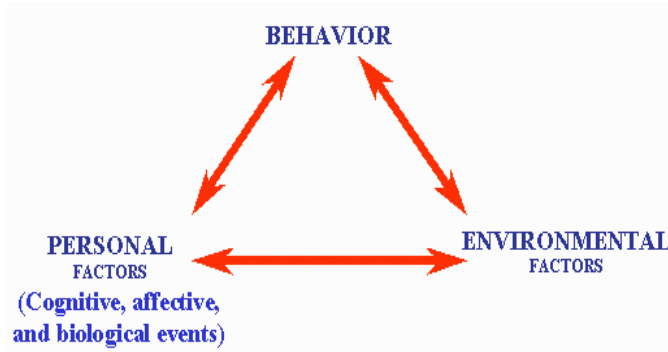
1. Some teachers might believe that there is no room for this in the curriculum, because they have been programmed and inundated with FCAT and accountability rhetoric.
2. This questionnaire went out to the teachers of one school district within the Central Florida area, which is the home to 55 schools (Florida Department of Education, 2008). It has focused on one county of sixty-seven in the state of Florida.
3. Not only was this study focused on one county of sixty-seven, it is also described as being a rural county in Florida. Perceptions might differ between rural and urban teachers.
4. Teachers answered the items on the questionnaire based on what the researcher is looking for, than their own true feelings.

Theoretical Framework

Kerlinger (1973) defined a theory as a set of interrelated constructs (concepts), definitions, and propositions that present a systematic view of phenomena by specifying relations between variables, with the purpose of explaining and predicting phenomena. This study focused on the level of perception of teachers, by examining their levels of importance, efficacy, and practice of character education. Perception levels were additionally examined between teachers at different grade levels, different levels of degrees attained, different levels of experience, and the label of being National Board Certified (NBCT).

There is much written in the field about the various interrelated concepts that come together to debate the ideologies behind the field of character education. The vast differences, mixed in with the absence of a set character education curriculum, have created an environment of implicit values that not all stakeholders have, or model within the school setting. People evaluate their own abilities and opinions through comparisons with others. When students note progress, this in turn enhances their own self-efficacy and social motivation. When students gain a positive judgment of his or her own abilities to do the objective at hand, they look around their environment to compare their own actions to the learners around them. Bandura's *Social Cognitive Theory* (1963) symbolized the use of "modeling" as a tool. The *Social Cognitive Theory* explained how people acquire and maintain certain behavioral patterns, while also providing the basis for intervention strategies (Bandura, 1997). In order to understand the level of character development of students in the schools, it is imperative to determine how teachers view and implement character education behaviors into the curriculum.

One of the main assumptions of Bandura's *Social Cognitive Theory* (1986) was that learning is a triadic reciprocity between the environment, personal factors, and behavior. Figure 1 shows a physical representation of the triadic reciprocity, as explained by Bandura.



(Pajares, 2002)

Figure 1 Cycle of Social Cognitive Theory

The environment provides a model for behavior. With respect to the school environment, the way kids act and the way they receive reinforcements for their academic endeavors influences them. Student's model what they have learned, then their own practiced abilities and assumptions are compared consistently to others around them. Individuals also learn from models, the usefulness and appropriateness for behaviors and the consequences of modeled behaviors, and they act in accordance with beliefs about their capabilities and the expected outcomes of their actions (Schunk, 2004). This triadic reciprocity reinforces that the student must know what the proper behavior is, in order to have the skills to perform it. Bandura's *Social Cognitive Theory* (1963) symbolized the use of "modeling" as the tool for overall success. Students express the actions that were taught to them, infuse their own assumptions, and then compare themselves to others around them to gain acceptance and motivation. It can be a cyclical pattern, but awareness and construction must come first, and the construction must be a collaborative effort among stakeholders, especially teachers as stakeholders.

This type of existence can be exemplified by a character education program implemented in a high school in Arizona. Kiltz (2003) discussed how the implementation of a character education program within the entire curriculum gives the students the opportunity to improve their own self-image, self-esteem, and pro-social attitudes. This high school focused the curriculum on the four main concepts of: 1) social and emotional development, 2) a reflection on core values, 3) teaching about decision-making, and 4) continuous experience with community service projects. Students at this school created personal portfolios, experienced writing opportunities for self-reflection, and learned lessons focusing on various character traits. By the 12th grade, students were more likely to view the school setting as an environment where they had opportunities for pro-social involvement and where they received awards for this pro-social involvement (Arizona Criminal Justice Commission, 2002). Students expressed the actions that were taught to them, infused their own assumptions, and then compared themselves to others around them to gain acceptance and motivation. This type of program fueled the cyclical pattern that existed within Bandura's *Social Cognitive Theory*.

Methodology

This study consisted of a questionnaire of 50 items (See Appendix A) on the perception of character education from the point of view of teachers. The items on the questionnaire covered three distinct areas labeled as: 1) importance of character education, 2) teacher efficacy of character education, and 3) the practice of character education techniques. These areas serve as the blueprint for this study. Items 1-13, and 25-27 referred to the topic of importance. Items 14-24 covered teacher efficacy. Items 29-50

referred to the topic of practice of character education in school. These three areas served as different angles of research and, in combination, served as a collaborative and navigational tool to measure the levels of perception of character education of teachers.

Questions 6-14 on the questionnaire consisted of demographic questions. This demographic portion of the questionnaire was used to gather data for the independent variables examined in the study (grade level taught, years of experience, degree attained, gender, and NBCT status). The last question, question 15, was an open-ended question posed to obtain respondent information on how character education was implemented in their own individual classroom situations. This data has been used to support recommendations made in chapter five of this study.

The questionnaire was placed on line, via [surveymonkey.com](https://www.surveymonkey.com) and the link, along with a description of the study, was sent to all individuals listed on the distribution list for this Central Florida school district. Using the county's email distribution list ensured that all 2,703 teachers would be surveyed.

Upon completion of data gathering, the data was used to examine how perceptions change, according to the three areas of 1) importance of character education, 2) teacher efficacy of character education, and 3) the practice of character education techniques throughout demographic variables as grade level taught, level of education, years of experience, and distinction of being a National Board Certified Teacher (NCBT). The statistical analysis was conducted via SPSS. Since this study tested hypotheses to determine the effect of one or more independent variables on two or more dependent variables, several one-way multivariate analysis of variances (MANOVA) were conducted on each research question to examine if the independent variables of a) grade level taught

(elementary, middle, and high school), b) years of experience, c) highest degree attained, d) gender, and e) National Board Certified had an effect on the dependent variables of teacher perception as labeled by a) importance of character education, b) efficacy of teaching character education, and c) practice of character education in their Central Florida School.

Population & Demographics

The population for this study comprised of employees of a Central Florida School District who were classified as an Instructional Employees. This included all classroom teachers, including Exceptional Education teachers. This population drew from a Central Florida school district that is home to 55 schools. The questionnaire went out to the population of this study, via the county's email distribution list, which totaled 2,703 teachers. This researcher contacted the Network Administrator for all email addresses and a final count of all the total number of email addresses given to Instructional Employees. According to the Florida Department of Education (2008), the Education Information & Accountability Service School District Data (2007) reports there are twenty-six elementary schools, nine middle schools, thirteen high schools, six combination schools, and one adult school. Table 1 represents the layout of full-time staff by gender within racial/ethnic categories.

This Central Florida County was created in 1887 from portions of Sumter County, Florida and Orange County, Florida. It was given its name because of the over 1,400 named lakes that exist throughout its territory. Considered by some as a rural community, the Central Florida school district in this study is home to 55 schools. Every year this county is adding news schools and residential communities. The population density is on a

continual rise. Table 1 represents the layout of full-time staff by gender within racial/ethnic categories.

Table 1 Full-Time Staff by Gender within Racial/Ethnic Category

Full-Time Staff by Gender With in Racial/Ethnic Category Fall 2007		
Racial/Ethnic Category	Male	Female
White, Non-Hispanic	951	3,381
Black, Non-Hispanic	192	530
Hispanic	62	324
Asian/Pacific Islander	8	48
American Indian/Alaskan Native	2	7
Total	1,215	4,290
Total Full-Time Staff		5,505

Survey 2 demographic data, October 8-12, 2007, as of February 7, 2008.

(Florida Department of Education , 2008)

While gender is one focal point of the research questions, experience and degree level were also key factors of the research. Out of the 5,505 full time staff members, 2,703 teachers have attained various degrees ranging from Bachelor's to Doctorate. Table 2 displays the average years of experience, average salary, and various degree levels of Instructional employees within the county as of June 8, 2007:

Table 2 Average Teacher Years of Experience by Degree Level as of 2008

Degree	Amount	Average Years of Experience
Bachelor's	1,791	11.64
Master's	888	14.67
Specialist	0	0
Doctorate	29	19.35
All Degrees	2,703	12.91

(www.fldoe.org, 2008)

Another independent variable of this study was the perceptions of National Board Certified Teachers (NBCT). Founded in 1987, the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards is a private organization of educators that has set itself two principal tasks: first, to articulate standards for accomplished teaching, defining what good teachers should know and be able to do; second, based on these standards, to recognize accomplished teachers through certification (Ballou, 2003). Awarded with financial incentives, National Board Teachers are represented throughout the entire country. According to the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (2008), Florida currently houses 12, 670 National Board Certified Teachers. The Central Florida School District in this study consists of 187 of the 12, 670 National Board Certified Teachers.

CHAPTER 2 REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

Lickona (1991) defined character education as the deliberate, proactive effort to develop good character in kids—or, more simply, to teach children right from wrong. It presumes that right and wrong do exist, that there are objective moral standards that transcend individual choice—standards as respect, responsibility, honesty, and fairness—and that we should teach these to young people. The stage needs to be set for consistent school settings across all states that foster a balance of a positive learning environment, elevated student attitudes, and positive student behavior.

This review of literature focused on four areas: research and ideology behind teacher perceptions and their relationship to character education; ideas behind teacher efficacy within the public schools; research about teacher attitude and beliefs in school; overview of the existence of various character education programs in elementary, middle and high schools.

Character Education and the Teacher

In a report for policy makers and the media, Berkowitz and Bier (2006) discussed how educators have a false perception on how character education fits into the public school curriculum. Many educators think of character education as an "add-on" to a school's curriculum; however, Berkowitz and Bier (2006) argued that character education is foundational, rather than an add on, it is a different way to manage the classroom, to lead

class discussions, to deal with matters of discipline, to hold staff meetings, to run student government, to involve parents, to hire, and so on. There is much debate and controversy over the goals of a purposeful character education program and this directly effects the perception held by teachers.

Over the past 32 years, Americans have said the single most vital purpose of (public) schooling is to prepare people to become responsible and caring citizens or members of our communities (Phi Delta Kappa/Gallup Poll, 2000). This is the perception of the public. What about the teacher? While all schools have this type of ideology in the form of a mission statement or vision statement, teachers might have an alternate perception. The following is a mission statement for one of the middle schools within the Central Florida School District in this study,

"In the pursuit of excellence in education, it is the mission of _____ to provide all students with a safe environment that provides the academic, social, and physical skills to be successful in middle school while preparing the students for their secondary education. Our vision is that these skills will also serve our students to become successful in the adult workplace and become life-long learners in the 21st century." (Central Florida School, 2008)

The main objective of any mission statement is to explain the purpose and/or goal of a school. It is meant to speak to all stakeholders in the community, including teachers. The example above listed many great attributes of an educational environment, but do all facets get accomplished? In the spring of 1999, under the governor leadership of Jeb Bush, the Florida Comprehensive Achievement Test (FCAT) was introduced in the state's schools. This mandate drastically increased the level of accountability at the hands of all educators throughout the state. The FCAT (1998), in conjunction with the A+ Program (1999), has served as a catalyst for many disgruntled teachers throughout the state of

Florida. Studies have shown that teachers have many concerns about high-stakes testing, it 1) narrowed the curriculum, 2) caused teachers to teach to the test, 3) dampened student and teacher motivation, and 4) has an overall negative effect on public education (Jones & Egley, 2006). Increasing levels of accountability and pressures to teach to the test, pulled class time away from providing lesson and activities involving character education.

Since student achievement is focused primarily on standardized tests scores within the state of Florida, as exemplified by the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test, and Florida's A+ Plan, extensive time and energy is spent in the field of reading and math. The stakes are high for teachers. Enacted in 1999, the A+ Plan for Education substantially improved upon earlier reforms, primarily through three new principles: 1) every student should gain a year's worth of knowledge in a year's time, 2) all schools should be graded, and 3) toughening school grading standards will increase school performance (Green, 2001). The increasing level of accountability and assessment moves an educator's perception and goals of education towards what is being evaluated by their own administration. In American K-12 education, what is measured is what "counts" (Cohen, 2006).

A growing body of longitudinal research has underscored the fact that social competencies and ethical dispositions provide the optimal foundation for K-12 students' ability to learn and resolve conflicts non-violently (Cohen, 2006). Berkowitz (2008) discussed perceptions of teacher acknowledgement of character education in school. As the interest in the field continues to ascend, teachers faced quandaries when considering how to put into action character education in their classrooms, schools, and districts. Berkowitz (2008) laid out three key questions when considering implementation; 1) is

character education a priority? 2) Can they (dare they?) spare time and resources from high stakes testing preparation to focus on character education? 3) How do they know what is effective practice in character education; i.e., what works in implementing character education?

Milson (2003) indicated that high school teachers who have only had character education pedagogy during their pre-service training, or who only have university-delivered character education training, feel less confident about being able to teach character development. If teachers are given the improper training during their educational profession, the perception will continue to be that character education has no room within the accountability schemes of public school education within the state of Florida, as well as the rest of the United States. Without training, levels of importance, efficacy, and practice diminish.

In his book titled, *Character Matters: How to help our children develop good judgment, integrity, and other essential virtues*, Lickona (2004) stated, " 1) the school's character education program improved the quality of human relationships between adults and kids and kids and each other, thereby improving the environment for teaching and learning and 2) the character education effort included a strong academic program that teaches students the skills and habits of working hard and making the most of their education (pg.122)."

Teachers, for the most part, value ideologies behind character education in the classroom and its importance within the grand scheme of public school education within the United States. The issue is not necessarily that it does not belong in the class, the issue is that if taught formally it will take away from the "FCAT" teaching that exists within all

classroom environments, no matter what subject. In a descriptive study about how teachers feel about character education, Carla Mathison (1998) involved 150 participants from four large metropolitan areas schools within the state of California that were culturally diverse encircling K-12 and 137 student teachers from San Diego State University. The study utilized two questionnaires, one for experienced teachers and one for student teachers. Seventy-five percent thought that character education should be an intrical part of public school education and that 90% of them believed that teachers play an important role in the character education of young people. Eighty-one percent felt that character education should still be a priority regardless of the other pressures in public education.

Romanowski (2005) conducted a qualitative study at one high school in west central Ohio. This study explored the concerns, understandings, and suggestions about character education, as a program was implementing at their school. This qualitative study focused on 16 of the 32 teachers' experiences and perspectives regarding the Character Education Program (CEP) that has been implemented for six years at their high school. As schools implement and incorporate character education into the schools, the classroom teacher generally bared the responsibility of whether it is implemented effectively or not or at all. This insight into the perception of the classroom teacher is essential for schools looking to implement character education. It highlighted the immense role that teachers had in the implementation of a character education program. It also demonstrated the immense role that teachers had as stakeholders in character education. It presented knowledgeable high school teachers' understandings, concerns, and suggestions on the subject of character education.

Understanding the educator's perception of implementation and incorporation of character education is imperative in designing a potentially successful program that educators will value. In a quantitative study out of the University of North Alabama, Davidson and Stokes (2001) sent out a questionnaire to 249 educators in elementary, middle and high schools about their perceptions of character education. Of the 249 contacted, 210 responded. Not only did the study reveal that a majority of teachers believed character education should be taught in school, their perceptions were not affected by the level at which they worked. The research pointed out that character education, as perceived by teachers, was seen as an important part within the educational process of public schools in the United States. Schools that scored higher on implementation of a variety of character education aspects also have higher state achievement scores (Berkowitz and Brier, 2006, pg.10). They established that elevated scores were strongly correlated to the subsequent four aspects of character education: parent and teacher modeling, quality opportunities for students to engage in service learning, promoting a caring community and positive social relationships and ensuring a clean and safe physical environment.

Teacher Efficacy and Character Education

Teacher efficacy, which refers to the extent to which teachers feel capable to help students learn, can affect teachers' instructional efforts in areas such as choice of activities, level of effort, and persistence with students (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001). Do teachers feel comfortable and capable of teaching/modeling a positive character education program and/or ideology? Schools across the United States exemplify a slight form of

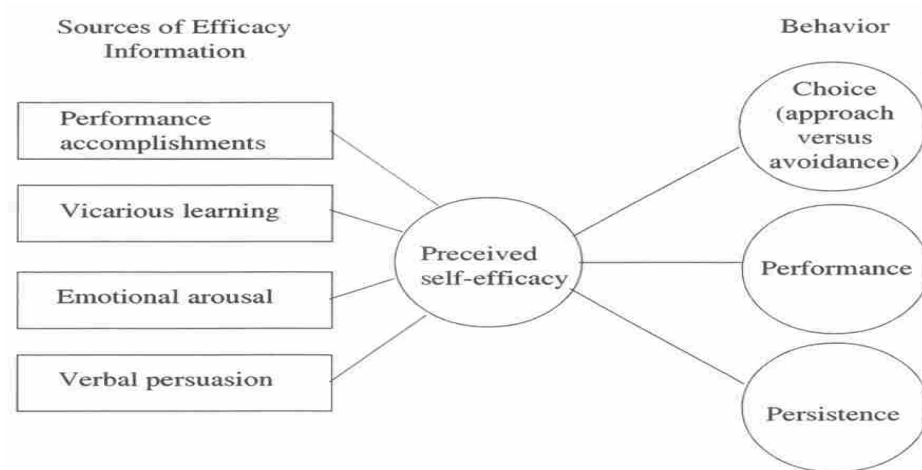
character education, in one way or another, but the responsibility of any form of character education ultimately falls into the hands of the educator. They must be cognizant of it. Teachers must make a commitment, not just as an educator, but also as a part of the school community, to give each individual the maximum potential for growth in character (Jewell, 2002).

When teachers get practical information on how to incorporate character education into what they already do, they will become more confident about following through and reaping the benefits of character education (Etzel, 2008). While mission statements of schools and objectives of educators across the country are to mold students into productive citizens in society, teachers are focused too much on the academic spectrum and not on the development of the long-term individual. In order to achieve this goal, educational institutions must overcome their fear of and bias against character education and place it back in the formal curriculum without apology (Jewel, 2002). Romanowski (1996) discussed his three-step plan to prepare a school for character education. His primary step is that all schools must first correct their bias against religion and morals and add to the curriculum moral values such as justice, equality, hope, caring, compassion and self-control. The following step was that schools should coach the skills students need to transfer moral values from the classroom into their daily lives. Step 3 is that teacher education programs should expand their emphasis beyond pedagogical methods to include social and cultural analysis. (Romanowski, 1996, pg.49)

People evaluate their own abilities and opinions through comparisons with others. When students note progress, this in turn enhances their own self-efficacy and social motivation. When students achieve a positive judgment of their own abilities to do the

objective at hand, they gaze around their environment to compare their actions to those of the learners around them. The theoretical framework of Bandura's *Social Cognitive Theory* (1963) symbolized the use of "modeling" as a tool. The *Social Cognitive Theory* explained how people acquire and sustain certain behavioral patterns, while also providing the basis for intervention strategies (Bandura, 1997). The school setting represents a consistent environment of behavioral patterns, some good and bad, where appropriate guidance and modeling is mandatory for student success. While we are the "modelers" for our students, we are also "modelers" for our colleagues as well.

Bandura (1977) defines self-efficacy as a cognitive motivational construct that involves two components, outcome expectancy and self-efficacy. He described outcome expectancy as the belief that an individual has for himself/herself that they are conscientious for the results of a particular action. The second component, self-efficacy, pertains to the effect that that individual thinks himself/herself has on the situation. In order to enhance teacher efficacy, teachers must believe that their behaviors can affect the education of their students (Enderlin-Lampe, 2002). Figure 2 displays a visual representation of Bandura's Model of Perceived Self-Efficacy.



(Enderlin-Lampe, 2002)

Figure 2 Model of Perceived Self-Efficacy

Bandura's (1977) depiction of his model of perceived self-efficacy demonstrated a visual of how a teacher's level of "perceived self-efficacy" greatly influenced their own perceptions and realities surrounding them. In order to enhance teacher efficacy, teachers must believe that their behaviors can affect the education of their students (Enderlin-Lampe, 2002). A person's self-efficacy beliefs are characterized as the chief mediators for our behavior, and more significantly our behavioral change educators needs to know that what they are doing in the classroom/school is having a direct impact on their kids, as well as witnessing support and clarification from fellow teachers.

Denham and Michael (1981) illustrated teacher efficacy as an ecologically unwavering condition that results from the merging of an assortment of sources including: past training, administration, peers, and the community characteristics. Denham and Michael (1981) proposed that teacher perceptions have been shaped, molded, and formatted based on the environment in which they exist. Just by preaching

character education and having good intentions, like a mission statement, will not solely bring character education to fruition. The theory's triadic reciprocity would mutually influence all of its participants (i.e.; students, teachers, staff), determines what we come to believe about ourselves, and affects the choices we make and actions we take. A successful character education program is all about building that environment. Teacher attitudes and beliefs need to be kept in mind. Sturdy teacher efficacy may affect teachers' perceived organizational support and commitment to the school and the profession (Coladarci, 1992).

Attitudes and Beliefs of Teachers on Education

The tragic murders at Columbine High School merely underscore what most educators already recognize, our schools are not adequately serving the moral development needs of our society and citizens (Berkowitz & Fekula, 1999). While Columbine occurred ten years ago, instances similar to that have occurred on smaller levels across the United States. The acts of a few young students demonstrated the results of a possible absence of character development in schools across the United States.

Effective attitudes and actions employed by teachers ultimately can make a positive difference on the lives of their students (Gourneau, 2005). Gourneau conducted a three-year study at the University of South Dakota where, as a professor, she conducted a qualitative study following 210 undergraduate students. Students had to write an essay about a teacher who had made a positive or negative impression on their lives, and then in small groups, students generated a list and decided which five attitudes and actions were the most desirable of teachers. According to her study, without fail, every

discussion came out with several attitudes and actions that were consistent throughout the study. The five frequently discussed attitudes and actions include: a genuine caring and kindness of the teacher; a willingness to share the responsibility involved in the classroom; a sincere sensitivity to the students' diversity, a motivation to provide meaningful learning experiences for all students; and an enthusiasm for stimulating the students' creativity (Gourneau, 2005).

In October of 1999, Phi Delta Kappa distributed a questionnaire to a random sample of 2,000 public school teachers throughout the United States. In an article titled, "Sixth Poll of Teachers' Attitudes Toward the Public Schools," Langdon (2000) explores various examples of statistical evidence covering the attitudes of teachers when they were asked questions about public school. Some results were compared with similar questions asked of the public as well. Eighteen percent of the sample of teachers responded, which represented each region of the United States, as well as grade level, with an estimated margin of error of 5%. The teacher respondents identified four of the biggest areas of concerns that face public schools: parents' lack of interest (18%); students' lack of interest or attitude (13%); lack of financial support (9%); and lack of discipline (7%). Ninety percent or more of teachers believed that following values should be taught: acceptance of people of different races and ethnic backgrounds, honesty, democracy, and patriotism.

Teacher's attitudes, like any human being, change over time. One of the questions asked in the Phi Delta Kappa Poll (1999) was, "What do you think are the biggest problems with which the public schools of this community must deal?" Table 3.0 below

is a statistical representation of the response to this question in the Sixth Phi Delta Kappa Poll of Teachers' Attitudes Toward the Public Schools (1999).

Table 3 What are the biggest problems with which the public schools of this community must deal with?

	1999 Teachers %	1996 Teachers %	1999 Public %
Parents' lack of support/interest	18	22 (1T)	4 (6T)
Pupils' lack of interest/attitudes/truancy	13	16 (3)	2 (7T)
Lack of financial support/funding/money	9	22 (1T)	9 (3)
Lack of discipline/more control	7	20 (2)	18 (1)
Lack of family structure/problems of home life (one-parent households)	6	15 (4)	
Overcrowded schools	4	7 (5T)	8 (4T)
Use of drugs/dope	2	7 (5T)	8 (4T)
Fighting/violence/gangs	1	7 (5T)	11 (2)
Moral standards/dress code/sex/pregnancy	*	7	2 (7T)

*Less than one-half of 1%. Figures add to more than 100% because of multiple answers except 1999 figures for teachers, which add to less than 100% because all answers are not reported.) Rankings for the 1996 teacher surveys and for the 1999 public survey appear in parentheses. "T" means that a response tied for a given rank.

(Langdon, 2000)

According to Table 3, when comparing teacher and parent responses in the 1996 teacher questionnaire and the 1999 public questionnaire, one interesting statistic stands out. When asked the question, teachers ranked the response "Pupils' lack of interest/attitudes/truancy" as the third highest concern, while the public ranked it as a tied for seventh in the 1999 public poll. There was a big discrepancy between what teachers deem as important and relevant and what the public did. A similar comparison can go for the category of "parents' lack of support/interest" where in the 1996 questionnaire teachers ranked this item as first, while the public ranked it as sixth in the 1999

questionnaire. This can be seen as a small opening in the window of understanding why character should be infused as a formal part of the educational process in public schools in the United States. The attitude of teachers differed greatly with that of the public, according to this nationwide poll conducted by Phi Delta Kappa (1999).

Calderhead (1996), Pianta (1999), and Watson (2003) described teaching as an intensely psychological process and believe a teacher's abilities to maintain productive classroom environments, motivate students, and make decisions depends on their personal qualities and the ability to create personal relationships with their students. Teacher attitudes have an immense impact on their teaching and student achievement. Richardson (1996) states, "Attitudes and beliefs are a subset of a group of constructs that name, define, and describe the structures and content of mental states that are thought to drive a person's actions" (pg.102). Relationships of mutual trust and respect must be created. Effective teachers generally care, like, accept, and value their students (Gourneau, 2005).

Since the 1960s, teacher education has downplayed the teacher's role as a transmitter of social and personal values and emphasized other areas such as teaching techniques, strategies, models, and skills (Nucci, 1986). The apparition of a high-quality teacher is as the first-rate technician, the trained craftsman, who has learned those behavioral skills and strategies that the "effective teacher" research states are correlated to achievement. The fact that "effective" is defined as the students' scores on standardized tests of basic skills, but without reference to higher-order intellectual processes or concern about the students' morals, is of concern to many parents and educators (Huitt, 2004). This framework for success, as played out by teacher education

programs, provides verification to the state of teacher beliefs in education today. As exemplified by Gorneau's study (2005), pre-service teachers do possess a certain belief set about their goals/objectives for a successful and "effective" educational environment. Unfortunately these pre-determined set of goals can be swayed, due to the increasing levels of accountability and testing, because of such mandates as FCAT (1999), NCLB (2001), and Florida's A+ Plan (1999).

Overview of Character Education in Elementary, Middle, and High Schools

The growth of character education programs in the United States has coincided with the rise in high stakes testing of student achievement. The No Child Left Behind Act (2001) asked schools to contribute not only to students' academic performance, but also to their character (Benninga, Berkowitz, Kuehn, & Smith, 2006). Benninga, Berkowitz, Kuehn, & Smith discussed how student character is a "bipartisan mandate" (pg.448) which is a part of the very center of public education in the U.S. If it could be demonstrated that implementing character education programs is compatible with efforts to improve school achievement, then perhaps more schools would accept the challenge of doing both (Benninga, Berkowitz, Kuehn, & Smith, 2006). While it is from time to time a difficult task to accomplish, there have been enormous amounts of implementation of character education programs across the United States, on all grade levels.

There is a need for character development in our schools today (Lickona, 1991). Lickona (1991) listed ten reasons why character education should be included in all schools. These reasons are:

1. There is a clear and urgent need, as young people increasingly hurt themselves and others because of unawareness of and/or indifference to moral values.
2. Transmitting moral values to the next generation has always been one of the most important functions of a civilization.
3. The school's role as character educator is even more vital when millions of children get little moral teaching from their parents, communities, or religious institutions.
4. Common ground exists on core moral values although there may be significant disagreement on the application of some of these values to certain controversial issues.
5. Democracies have a special need for moral education, because democracy is government of and by the people themselves.
6. There is no such thing as value-free education. Schools teach values every day by design or default.
7. Moral questions are among the great questions facing the individual person and the human race.
8. There is broad-based and growing support for character education in the schools.
9. An unabashed commitment to character education is essential if we are to attract and keep good teachers.
10. Effective character education is a do-able job that improves student behavior, makes schools more civil communities, and leads to improved academic performance.

Lickona (1996) also listed seven key moral attributes for all objectives relevant to character building: respect, responsibility, honesty, caring, kindness, fairness, and self-control. A school with a successful character education program will exhibit existence of all seven of these moral attributes. Benninga, Berkowitz, Kuehn, & Smith (2006) listed four characteristics of what good character education programs did: 1) good schools ensured a clean and secure physical environment, 2) good schools promoted and model fairness, equity, caring, and respect, 3) good schools students contributed in meaningful ways, and 4) good schools promoted a caring community and positive social relationships. Educators have been inundated over the past several decades with the swiftly mounting spotlight on character education and the array of programs and concepts to choose from in their “search to improve their schools and positively impact the development and learning of their students” (Berkowitz and Brier, 2006, pg. iv) and controversy swirls around the varied approaches to implementing character education e.g. experiential learning, peer debate, indoctrinative teaching, community service, participatory governance, reading about character, etc.

In 1997, the United States Department of Education funded a pilot character education program for the state of South Carolina. The program emphasized the following measures: 1) local control of character education, 2) youth participation in all aspects of character development, 3) community ownership and leadership at all levels, 4) trained school personnel in the area of character education and 5) supportive infrastructure for collaboration statewide and beyond (Department of Education, 2000). After the fourth year of this initiative, the administrators within the schools reported dramatic improvements among both students and adults (Department of Education,

2000). In surveys of South Carolina administrators, the study found that 91% reported improvement in student attitudes, 89 %reported improvement in student behavior, 60 % reported improvement in academic performance, and more than 65% reported improvement in teacher and staff attitudes, since implementing character education (Department of Education, 2000). The program set the stage for a positive school culture and climate. This character education program provided students with the opportunities to achieve to their highest potential.

The stated intention of many Character Education and Citizenship Education programs was to encourage children to appreciate, and sympathize with, a common approach to values (Revell, 2002). An elementary school in Jacksonville, Florida had a character education program that was based on the premise that children acquire good character by being participants in character building activities. Stone and Dyal (1997) described that the character education program moves beyond the rhetoric of "doing good" by providing children with the opportunities to experience altruism, responsibility, diligence, and excellence. Certain character traits are emphasized each month; there are monthly newsletters, and a public service facet that gives students an opportunity to apply what they are learning. Students were exposed to a systematic character education program with the intent of teaching them to sow acts, reap habits, and reap character (Stone & Dyal, 1997).

Leming (1997) conducted a review of various character education programs throughout the United States. One program, *Acquiring Ethical Guidelines for Individual Development* (AEGID), was implemented to assist elementary level students in learning the basic principles and ethical standards that young learners need to understand in order

to become caring, understanding, and responsible citizens. This program consisted of a five step teaching model that infused different ideologies and teaching strategies within each subject throughout the entire curriculum. The program focused on six fundamental and universal ethical standards: worth and dignity, rights and responsibilities, fairness and justice, effort and excellence, care and consideration, and personal integrity and social responsibility (Leming, 1997). Teachers in the program classrooms reported a two-and-one-half time's reduction in problem behaviors.

The Mendez Foundation, a not-for-profit organization nationally recognized as a leader in prevention education and wellness training since 1978, created the *Too Good for Violence* program, which has been used nationwide. This program promoted character values, social emotional skills, and benefits primarily elementary and middle schools students. According to a What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) Intervention Report (2006) put out by the U.S Department of Education (2007), the *Too Good for Violence* program has been implemented in schools in more than 2,500 districts across 48 states. It consists of a series of scripted lessons, taught by trained teachers, about peaceful conflict resolution strategies and pro-social development in such areas as goal setting, decision-making, healthy relationships, stress management, coping, communication, peer resistance, and interpersonal skills. Similar to Lickona's (1996) seven moral attributes of a character education program, *Too Good for Violence* incorporated the eight character values of caring, cooperation, courage, fairness, honesty, respect, responsibility, and self-discipline (Institute of Education Sciences, 2006). The WWC actually reviewed one study that tested this program within schools, with the program implemented within various classrooms versus school-wide implementation. Hall and Bacon (2005)

demonstrated that there was a statistically significant difference favoring the classes that received the program after 20 weeks of installation. The study included 999 third grade students from 10 elementary schools in one of Florida's 67 school districts.

Heartwood Institute's creation of "An Ethics Curriculum for Children" (1992) is a read-aloud, multicultural, literature-based approach to teaching children ethical values (attributes of character) in grades one to six. The curriculum was structured around a set of seven common ethical values such as courage, loyalty, justice, respect, hope, honesty and love. The goals of the curriculum are stated only in general terms with a primary focus on helping students develop a structured system of values, ethics and morals; helping students develop ethical standards based on multicultural understanding; providing reference points for common cultural and ethical choices; and providing an "anchor" for children in universally common virtues (Leming, 2000). Leming (2000) conducted a series of quantitative research studies comparing groups of students, on all grades, and found students within the Heartwood program, at all grades, demonstrated higher levels of ethical understanding than comparison students do.

A school district in Pennsylvania wanted to teach their students the skills necessary to be successful in a diverse world. O'Rourke, Knoster, Sabatine, Smith, Horvath, and Llewellyn (2000) conducted a study on how a community wanted their schools to be more than a place where reading, writing, and math were taught. The Bangor school district had two of its five schools participate, one elementary and one middle school. While different in ages, each school contained the same basic core elements of team planning, data based decision-making, teaching of school rules, recognition and reinforcement of appropriate behavior, and development and communication of a school-wide policy (O'Rourke et al.,

2000, pg.238). These basic core elements proved to create a stronger sense of community and a safer learning environment.

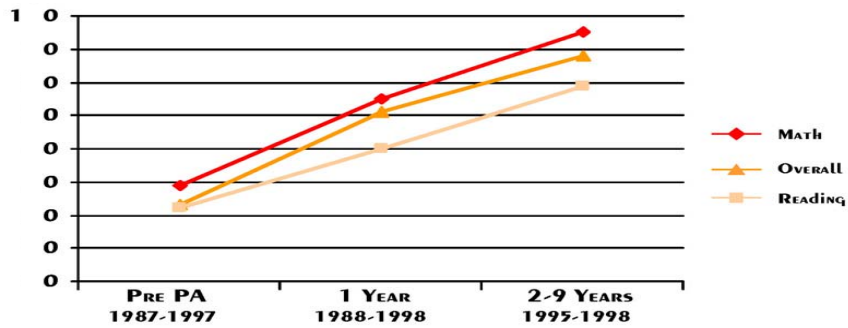
The state of California has incorporated character education criteria into the application process for its statewide-distinguished school recognition program and, in the process, has created its own definition of character education. Each definition directs the practice of character education somewhat differently, so that programs calling themselves "character education" vary in purpose and scope. (Benninga, Berkowitz, Kuehn, and Smith, 2006) Such programs as *Peaceful Schools Project* and the *Responsive Classroom* have been implemented throughout California, and research has shown that students in schools that implemented these programs had greater gains on standardized test scores than did students in comparison schools student achievement (Twemlow et al., 2001).

In their study sample of 120 elementary schools in California, Benninga, Berkowitz, Kuehn, and Smith (2006) discovered that elementary schools with concrete character education programs demonstrated positive associations between the degree of character education implementation and academic achievement not simply in a single year but also transversely over two academic years. Over a multi-year period from 1999 to 2002, higher rankings on the API (Academic Performance Index) and higher scores on the SAT-9 (State Achievement Test) were significantly and positively correlated with four of our character education indicators: a school's ability to ensure a clean and safe physical environment; evidence that a school's parents and teachers modeled and promoted good character; high-quality opportunities at the school for students to contribute in meaningful ways to the school and its community; and promoting a caring community and positive social relationships (Benninga, Berkowitz, Kuehn, and Smith, 2006).

Created in 1977, the *Positive Action* program is another nation-wide program, which met the NCLB (2001) requirements for a school-wide improvement plan. Created by Carol Allred, this program consisted of a K-12 curriculum, site-wide climate development, drug education, conflict resolution, family, counselor, and community components. Since then, more than 11,000 schools in 2,500 school districts and 2,000 community groups and agencies in all 50 states have adopted the program (U.S Department of Education, 2007). The mission of the *Positive Action* program (*PA*) was to transform individuals, schools, families, and communities by teaching and reinforcing positive actions for a lifetime of health, happiness, and success. According to a summary of evaluations report (2005), multiple studies have consistently found the *Positive Action* program (*PA*) to be effective for improving achievement scores, attendance, and self-concept, and for reducing drug, alcohol, and tobacco use, violence, and other problem behaviors. Relative to elementary schools without *PA*, schools with *PA* reported:

- Up to 105% improvements on standardized achievement scores,
- Many schools reported moving from one of the lowest scoring to one of the highest scoring in their district or state (see figure 3),
- Up to 60% reductions of absenteeism,
- Up to 13% lower rates of chronic absenteeism. (Flay, Alfred, & Ordway, 2001)

Effect of Positive Action Program in Improving
Percentile Rankings in Math and Reading
Multiple Schools, 1987-1998



(Alfred, & Ordway, 2001)

Figure 3 Academic Achievement: School Level Percentile Ranks

In a *What Works Clearinghouse* report (2007), Flay and Allred (2003) conducted a study that included 36 elementary schools in a large Florida School district. This was a comparison study of students in schools that implemented the *Positive Action* curriculum and those who did not. Flay and Allred (2003) reported a statistically significant difference favoring the groups of students that experienced the program with the group's total scores on the Florida Comprehensive Achievement Tests (FCAT).

The public school curriculum should have a set track of character building courses, or at least strands of this evident in each subject matter. Its multi-faceted composition makes character education a difficult concept to address in schools (Otten, 2000). As a bridge connecting student growth from elementary school to high school, the middle school experience is one that should build knowledge and character. The students are reaching that all important development stage in which self-esteem and efficacy are key

components. Morals and character are important traits that need to be introduced, taught, and reinforced explicitly at the middle school stage. One of the pioneers in the field, Ryan (1986), affirmed that character education needs to be something that is taught explicitly. It needs not to be part of the “hidden curriculum.” Students on the middle school level, while they are still at the developmental stages of education and growth that causes uncertainty and self-esteem building, do not possess many of the traits that should be cultivated because of the association with others.

Milson (2000) conducted a case study on a middle school near Atlanta, Georgia. In 1997, parents and teachers, concerned about the typically harsh transition that students faced as they moved from generally caring elementary school communities to the often intimidating and less friendly middle school, developed a character education program in hopes of creating a more cautious and caring community of students at the middle school. This "home grown" (pg.90) program consisted of three objectives:

1. Conceptual orientation from the work of Thomas Lickona
2. Neighboring character education program served as model
3. The teachers developed the program

The use of a “home grown” program appeared to be one of the strengths and a factor in the support that character education has received at Craven Middle School.

According to Milson (2000) the four elements of success were: 1) flexibility, 2) compactness, 3) usability, and 4) desire of faculty. Such a model appears to increase the

likelihood that teachers and staff will support the program; it is also more authentic because it can be tailored to suit local issues and exemplars (Milson, 2000).

All forms of character education, in order to be successful like any other program, must provide a sense of appeal for the teachers to buy-in. Stott and Jackson (2005) discussed how service-learning classes taught by middle school counselors and teachers could assist middle school students meet certain character development goals as life development, personal/social development, and multicultural/global citizenship. In their study, Stott and Jackson (2005) investigated how middle school students received a service learning class where students received a "comprehensive guidance curriculum" and then taught the curriculum to the neighboring elementary students. Results from a phenomenological evaluation describe yielded five major themes pertinent to middle school student development and demonstrate comprehensive guidance goal achievement: personal awareness, social skills, learning skills, career interests and character education (Stott & Jackson, 2005).

In a study of 1,153 middle school students across three states, Scales, Blyth, Berkas, and Kielsmeier (2000) found that a student's concern for the welfare of others and ability to help others increased among students who were a part of a service learning program. Because learning has been found to be a social awareness as well as a cognitive process, increases in social responsibility create social awareness that facilitates academic learning (Stott & Jackson, 2005).

Helping others has shown social and academic improvement in middle schools. The National Middle School Association (2003) offers six elements that need to be present for successful middle schools:

1. A curriculum that is relevant, challenging, integrative, and exploratory.
2. Multiple learning and teaching approaches that respond to diversity.
3. Assessment and evaluation programs that promote quality learning.
4. Organizational structures that support meaningful relationships and learning.
5. School wide efforts and policies that foster health, wellness, and safety.
6. A multifaceted guidance and support service.

The research on service learning programs covered all of the above-mentioned attributes of a successful middle school according to the National Middle School Association (2003).

Experienced by more than one million students both nationally and internationally, *Facing History and Ourselves* is a character education program, which was developed with federal funds from 1997 to 1981. The semester long curriculum encouraged the teacher to engage students in discussions about how individual and group identities are formed and the social and cultural factors that influence individual decisions (Institute of Education Sciences, 2006). *Facing History and Ourselves* helps educators across the USA to take on students of diverse backgrounds in an assessment of forms of inter-group conflict (racism, prejudice, anti-Semitism, etc.) in order to cultivate perspective-taking, critical thinking and moral decision-making and to assist students to grow up into humane and responsible citizens (Strom & Parsons, 1982). The course examined the Nazi rise to power and the Holocaust as a case study of the escalating events that led to a democracy to erode in to genocide (Schultz, Barr, & Selman, 2001). While *Facing History and Ourselves* can be considered a subject orientated attempt to infuse a form of character education into a school curriculum, it did follow suit with

ideologies behind the before-mentioned works of Thomas Lickona (1991) and Edward Wynne and Kevin Ryan (1997), that each school should build a caring and challenging learning environment for students that not only prepares them academically, but teaches them to know, love, and do good.

The previous programs and curricula s focused primarily on elementary and middle school environments. The high school learning environment housed various examples of character education programs throughout the United States. Romanowski (2003) studied the perceptions of students who experienced a character education program within Edwardsville High School in the Northwest region of the Ohio public school system. This high school educated 575 students and implemented a form of character education following the tragic disaster that occurred at Columbine High School back in 1999. Romowski (2003) discussed how a character education committee was created consisting of administrators, teachers, parents, selected students, community members, and local business leaders. The purpose of the committee was to provide funding and support. The following is a brief description, as played out by Romanowski:

The CEP (Character Education Program) consisted of a formal 30 minute class called Team Time for all students every Tuesday and Thursday. Students were assigned to Team Times based on grade levels. The first year lessons were designed to develop the knowing of character. The second year emphasized the desiring of character including conflict resolution and perspective, while the third and fourth years provided students with opportunities to apply various character traits. These lessons used a variety of teaching strategies including reflective questions, short stories, literature, and videotapes. Each team was encouraged to have an ongoing service project. In addition to Team Times, students we presented with words of the week and various messages on the particular theme of the month. Guest speakers addressed topics such as conflict resolution, anger management, investments, nutrition, and environmental stewardship. The school was filled with posters announcing the trait of the month, the mission statement, and monthly character themes.(pg. 5)

At an alternative high school in the Phoenix metropolitan area, character education was critical in order to foster students' personal growth, improvement, including social and emotional growth (Kiltz, 2003). Kiltz discussed how the implementation of a character education program within the entire curriculum gave the students the opportunity to improve their own self-image, self-esteem, and pro-social attitudes. This high school focused the curriculum on the four main concepts of: 1) social and emotional development, 2) a reflection on core values, 3) teaching about decision-making, and 4) continuous experience with community service projects. Students at this school created personal portfolios, experience writing opportunities for self-reflection, and learn lessons focusing on various character traits. By the 12th grade, students were more likely to view the school setting as an environment where they had opportunities for pro-social involvement and where they received awards for this pro-social involvement (Arizona Criminal Justice Commission, 2002). This curriculum created an environment that fosters situations to internalize their thinking about their own ethics and begin to behave in ways that display "strength of mind, heart, and will" (Lickona, 1996, pg. 93).

As today's society provides more and tougher challenges to raising ethical, responsible children, increasingly, parents and communities are looking to schools for assistance. All environments that surround a child must consist of individuals who model appropriate behavior. Lickona, Schaps, and Lewis (2007) authored a report titled, "The Eleven Principles of Effective Character Education." This report provided further evidence to support the *Social Cognitive Theory* as a guiding framework for the construction of a successful character education program and exemplified the various

program labeled throughout this literature review. The following are the principles that guide effective programs:

1. Promoted core ethical values and supportive performance values as the foundation of good character.
2. Defined "character" comprehensively to include thinking, feeling, and behavior.
3. Used a comprehensive, intentional, and proactive approach to character development.
4. Created a caring school community.
5. Provided students with opportunities for moral action.
6. Included a meaningful and challenging academic curriculum that respects all learners, develops their character, and helps them to succeed.
7. Strived to foster student self-motivation.
8. Engaged the school staff as a learning and moral community that shares responsibility for character education.
9. Fostered shared moral leadership and long-range support of the character education initiative.
10. Engaged families and community members as partners in the character education process.
11. Assessed the character of the school, the school staff's functioning as character educators and the extent to which the students manifest good character. (Lickona, Schaps, & Lewis, 2007)

Summary

While the teaching of values are deemed as an important item on the agenda of public schools in the United States, and the research has demonstrated its appearance, more often than not this item on the agenda is pushed aside and dealt with on an implicit manner. Since high stakes tests, standards, and accountability have inundated school systems throughout the United States, a child's growth of character has been placed second to academics. While schools are academic institutions to prepare our country's youth for their future, developing a child's morals and civic responsibilities is necessary and is often deleted from the explicit curriculum set forth in most school districts throughout the country. There is a growing disconnect between the individual growth of a child and academics. Healthy relationships between teachers and students appear to facilitate academic achievement (Makkonen, 2004).

Since student achievement is focused primarily on standardized tests scores within the state of Florida, as exemplified by the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test, and Florida's A+ Plan, an immense amount of time and energy is spent in the field of reading and math. The increasing level of accountability and assessment has moved an educator's perception and goals of education towards what is being evaluated by their own administration. In American K-12 education, what is measured is what "counts" (Cohen, 2006).

The numerous examples of how the implementation of various Character Education Programs has increased academic achievement across the United States, adds support to the argument. Many of our nation's schools might have character education

traits infused into policies, procedures, and classes, but a standard curriculum is non-existent in most. To have a meaningful impact, character education must reflect the ethos and daily life of the school, and the staff must treat character development and academic development as equally important (North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, 2008).

CHAPTER 3 METHODOLOGY

Introduction

Lickona (1991) defined character education as the deliberate, proactive effort to develop good character in kids—or, more simply, to teach children right from wrong. The stage needs to be set for consistent school settings across all states that foster a balance of a positive environment, elevate student attitudes, and positive student behavior. Through evaluation studies, the impact of character education has been seen through changes in school climate, student attitudes, and behavior (U.S Department of Education, 2000). This study was conducted to examine the perceptions of teachers in a Central Florida School District when asked about infusing character education into the curriculum, the extent to which they feel capable in helping students learn about character, and how much they have learned and actually apply to their classrooms on a consistent basis. These results were also utilized to conduct several statistical analyses to determine if perceptions changes with reference to such demographical factors as grade level taught, teaching experience, degree attained, gender, and NBCT certified.

Research Questions

1. Is there a statistical significant difference in the perceptions of character education, as measured by importance, efficacy, and practice between elementary, middle, and high school teachers?

2. Is there a statistical significant difference in the perceptions of character education, as measured by importance, efficacy, and practice of teachers based on years of experience?
3. Is there a statistical significant difference in the perceptions of character education, as measured by importance, efficacy, and practice of teachers based on their highest degree attained?
4. Is there a statistical significant difference in the perceptions of character education, as measured by importance, efficacy, and practice of teachers based on gender?
5. Is there a statistical significant difference in the perceptions of character education, as measured by importance, efficacy, and practice of teachers based on being Nationally Board Certified?

Selection of Population

The population for this study comprised of employees of a Central Florida School District who were classified as teachers. This included all classroom teachers, as well as Exceptional Education teachers. This population drew from a Central Florida school district that is home to 55 schools. The questionnaire was sent to the population of this study via the country's email distribution list, which totaled 2,703 teachers. This researcher contacted the Network Administrator for all email addresses and a final count of all the total number of email addresses given to county employees. According to the Florida Department of Education, Education Information & Accountability Service School District Data (2007), there are twenty-six elementary schools, nine middle schools, thirteen high schools, six combination schools, and one adult school.

Data Collection

The *Character Education Questionnaire* used in this study was an instrument used in a previous study by Dykes (2007), where was titled, the *Character Education Survey* (Appendix A). It was utilized to "elicit the perceptions of educators regarding character education" and contained "Likert-type scales following statements/questions concerning educators' perceptions of importance, efficacy, and practices relating to character education" (Dykes, 2007, pg. 65). Permission was granted from Dykes (Appendix B). A demographic portion of the questionnaire was also used to gather data for the independent variables examined in the study (grade level, years of experience, degree attained, gender, and NBCT status). The email distribution of the recruitment letter, with survey monkey link, was sent out two times for this study. The first email distribution occurred on November 17, 2008 and the second distribution occurred on January 6, 2009.

Each respondent answered the questionnaire by following the link provided on the recruitment letter. This link brought respondents to surveymonkey.com where all of their responses were obtained electronically. Survey Monkey is an online survey instrument system, which was started in 1999. It took respondents an average of 5-7 minutes to complete. Respondents also received an informed consent form as an attachment (Appendix C). This study was approved by the Institutional Review Boards at the University of Central Florida (Appendix D) and by the Central Florida School District (Appendix E).

Instrumentation

Dykes (2007) developed this survey to obtain the perceptions of educators regarding character education within their school district. The survey included 50 short behavioral statements regarding educator perceptions, feelings, and actions regarding character education in their classroom, as well as in the field of education as a whole. The 50 items in the survey constructed by Dykes (2007) were grouped into five small questions, numbered one through five. Questions one through five each contained 10 statements that required a rating, which resulted in a total point score for each respondent. The following is the rating scale and corresponding point value for each response:

- *Strongly Disagree* with the statement equated with a point value of "1".
- *Disagree* with the statement equated with a point value of "2".
- *Mixed Feelings* with the statement equated with a point value of "3".
- *Agree* with the statement equated with a point value of "4".
- *Strongly Agree* with the statement equated with a point value of "5".

Dykes (2007) addressed three distinct topics for her statements on the instrument. The three topics of questioning included importance of character education, efficacy, and practice. Items 1-13, and 25-27 referred to the topic of importance. Items 14-24 covered efficacy. Items 28-50 referred to the topic of practice of character education in school.

Questions 6-14 on the questionnaire consist of demographic questions. This demographic portion of the questionnaire was used to gather data for the independent

variables examined in the study (years of experience, degree attained, gender, and NBCT status). The last question, question 15, was an open-ended question posed to obtain respondent information on how character education was implemented in their own individual classroom situations. The questions stated, "If you are a classroom teacher, please list any ways you have incorporated lessons concerning character education traits/morals." This question was labeled as optional. All previous questions had to be completed in order to move on to the next question

Reliability

Whenever a survey or measure is administered, the administrator of the measure would like some assurance that the survey or measure results could be replicated if the same individuals were measured again under the same circumstances (Dillman, 1999). According to Dillman (1999) the consistency, or reproducibility, of a measure's scores are expected to occur when the same people; 1) are reexamined with the same measure on different occasions, 2) receive two different forms of the measure on the same occasion, or 3) receive one form of a measure on the same occasion. This study fell into Dillman's (1999) third situation of all respondents receiving one form of a measure. Since all respondents had received the same questionnaire, it was necessary to examine how consistent all respondents were in responding across similar items on the questionnaire. It was necessary to test item homogeneity. The theory behind this is that the more consistent the respondents are in responding across items, the more consistent their performance is likely to be with future administrations of the questionnaire (Dillman, 1999), thus increasing reliability.

Dykes (2007) used this instrument and analyzed the results of 309 surveys collected. Statistical analyses were conducted via SPSS and a reliability coefficient for the instrument was introduced by running a Cronbach Coefficient Alpha, which yielded a highly reliable coefficient of 0.95. Each topic within the instrument (importance, efficacy, and practice) also withstood an analysis for reliability by using SPSS to run a Cronbach Coefficient Alpha. Dykes (2007) addressed three distinct topics for her statements on the instrument. The three topics of questioning included importance of character education, efficacy, and practice. Items 1-13, and 25-27 referred to the topic of importance. Items 14-24 covered efficacy. Items 28-50 referred to the topic of practice of character education in school. Table 4 represents the reliability of each topic within the character education survey, as reported by Dykes (2007).

Table 4 Reliability of the Educators Perceptions of Character Education Subscales

Survey scales	Alpha	Reliability
Importance	0.85	High
Efficacy	0.76	High
Practice	0.95	High

(Dykes, 2007)

Validity

Validity of an instrument is related to the extent the instrument measures what it intends to measure (Gall, Borg, and Gall, 1996). Burns (1996) discussed, "Validity is the most important consideration in test evaluation. The concept refers to the appropriateness,

meaningfulness, and usefulness of the specific inferences from the test scores. Test validation is the process of accumulating evidence to support such inferences “(p. 9). With regards to the *Character Education Questionnaire* used in this study, the results of the questionnaire are appropriate, meaningful, and useful. Higher total scores from teachers on the 5 point Likert Scale in this study, demonstrated teachers who had increased levels of importance, practice, and demonstrated increasing efficacy when desiring, implementing, and understanding character education in the classroom.

When researchers examined levels of validity in any type of measurement, the most common assessment of that instruments validity is determining its face validity. Anastasi (1988) discussed face validity as, "Content validity should not be confused with face validity. The latter is not validity in the technical sense; it refers, not to what the test actually measures, but to what it appears superficially to measure. Face validity pertains to whether the test "looks valid" to the examinees who take it. and the administrative personnel who decide on its use, and other technically untrained observers" (pg. 144). Given that the statements on the questionnaire in this study are clearly correlated to the ideologies behind the literature/research of character education programs, it can be said that this instrument has exceptional face validity.

In order to measure this instruments validity, Dykes (2007) tested this instrument as it pertained to her study. According to her study, a panel of eight experts convened to determine the face and content validity of this instrument. The eight experts included in the study compiled by Dykes (2007) were; 1) a County Coordinator for Partnerships in Character Education Grant, 2) a County Coordinator for the Foundations for Life Grant, 3) a member of the Task Force for the Alabama State Department of Education Character

Education Program, 4) a former Principal and Character Education Coach, 5) a counselor and chairmen of a Character education Team at a County High School, 6) a County Research Consultant who served as a principal Investigator for school improvement Projects for the County, 7) County Coordinator for the *Alabama Partnerships in Character Education Grant*, and 8) a Principal from Georgia who sat in on legislation for the passing of character education laws.

The expert panel in the Dykes (2007) study completed a *Character Education Traits Matrix* (Appendix F). This matrix served as a tool to align the teacher statements within the survey to the established character education traits. The researcher aligned the expert responses, with those of the listed character traits on the Matrix. The expert had to either agree or disagree with the character education statement. Dykes (2007) determined that if an expert disagreed, the he/she has to replace the statement with one that they deemed more relevant. The experts agreed with all revised statements.

Data Analysis

Data from 497 respondents of the *Character Education Questionnaire* used in this study were generated and inferential statistics were produced to investigate if there were any statically significant responses based on the research questions. This study looked at interval data and nominal data. The interval data consisted of the total scores from the questionnaires and the nominal data consisted of the 5 independent variables that were examined.

Questions 1-5 of the questionnaire consisted of 50 items that provided data on the perception of character education from the point of view of teachers. The items on this

portion of the questionnaire produced total scores for each of the three distinct areas labeled as: 1) importance of character education, 2) teacher efficacy of character education, and 3) the practice of character education techniques. These areas served as the blueprint for this study. Items 1-13, and 25-27 referred to the topic of importance. Items 14-24 covered teacher efficacy. Items 28-50 referred to the topic of practice of character education in school. These three areas served as different angles of research and, in combination, served as a collaborative and navigational tool to measure the levels of perception of character education of teachers. These three areas served as the dependent variables for this study.

Questions 6-14 on the questionnaire, which served as nominal data for the independent variables (Appendix A), were also utilized to collect information about the independent variables for this study (years of experience, degree attained, gender, and NBCT status). Question 15 consisted of an open-ended question. These responses were also downloaded (Appendix G). After some teachers responded to the instrument, under their own devices, they sent the researcher additional thoughts, via email, with additional comments that they felt necessary to portray (Appendix H).

Once the *Character Education Questionnaire* was distributed via the county's email system and respondents completed the questionnaire on Survey Monkey, the website allows the data to be compiled into an excel file. This file was then downloaded into SPSS to calculate the inferential statistic necessary to complete this study. Upon completion of data gathering, the data was used to examine how perceptions change, according to the three areas of 1) importance of character education, 2) teacher efficacy of character education, and 3) the practice of character education techniques throughout

demographic variables as grade level taught, level of education, years of experience, and distinction of being a National Board Certified Teacher (NCBT).

Since this study tested hypotheses to determine the effect of one or more independent variables on two or more dependent variables, a one-way multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was conducted on each research question to examine if the independent variables of a) grade level taught (elementary, middle, and high school), b) years of experience, c) highest degree attained, d) gender, and e) National Board Certified had displayed a statistical significance ($\alpha=.05$) on the dependent variables of teacher perception as labeled by a) importance of character education, b) efficacy of teaching character education, and c) practice of character education in their Central Florida School. This resulted in five different conduction of a one-way multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA).

Summary

This study used a quantitative methodology in order to investigate the perception levels of teachers within a Central Florida School District, in regards to character education. The Character Education Survey created by Dykes (2007) was administered in this study and utilized as the main instrument. The teacher survey addressed three distinct topics within the instrument. The three topics of questioning included importance of character education, teacher efficacy, and teacher practice. A demographic portion of the questionnaire was used to gather data for the independent variables examined in the study (years of experience, degree attained, gender, and NBCT status). The last question, question 15, was an open-ended question posed to obtain respondent

information on how character education was implemented in their own individual classroom situations.

CHAPTER 4 FINDINGS

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to explore the perceptions of character education, as seen through the eyes of teachers within a Central Florida school district, as it related to teacher importance, teacher efficacy, and teacher practice of character education. These three areas of importance, efficacy, and practice were examined to determine whether there was a statistically significant difference among Central Florida educators based upon the demographic variables of a) grades level taught, b) years of experience, c) highest degree attained, d) gender, and e) National Board Certification.

This chapter is divided into seven sections. The first section consisted of an overview of the descriptive data generated from the *Character Education Questionnaire*. Section two is an explanation of the demographics of the participants and independent variables that were utilized in this study. Section three examined the dynamics of the instrumentation used in this study. Section four described the statistical analysis used to answer the research questions. Section five will examine the results of the open-ended question at the end of the questionnaire. The sixth section reported the findings of the study by providing a summary of the data analysis. Section seven discussed how the results of the study compared to those of the study done by Barbara Ann Dykes (2007), the original author of the questionnaire.

Descriptive Data

The participants in this study were educators from one Central Florida School District, consisting of 55 schools. According to the Florida Department of Education, Education Information & Accountability Service School District Data (2007), there were 26 elementary schools, 9 middle schools, 13 high schools, 6 combination schools, and one adult school. The Florida Department of Education (2008) reported that there are a total of 2,703 teachers in the school district represented in this study. Of these teachers, percentages of respondents were evenly distributed between middle and high school respondents, but were nearly doubled within the elementary level. Forty-five percent of the respondents were teachers on the elementary level (n=221), 23% on the middle school level (n=113), and 32% on the high school level (n=160). The questionnaire used in this study was sent using the county's email distribution system and the email addresses for the participants were provided to the researcher by the county's Network Administrator.

Study Participants

This study included the responses of 497 classroom teachers. Eighty two percent of the teachers who responded to this questionnaire were regular education teachers (n=405), while the rest of the teacher respondents were classified as exceptional education teachers (n=92). Eighty-one percent of the participants were female (n=402), while 19% were male (n=95). Percentages of respondents were evenly distributed between middle and high school respondents, but were nearly doubled within the elementary level. Forty-five percent of the respondents were teachers on the elementary

level (n=221), 23% on the middle school level (n=113), and 32% on the high school level (n=160). Only 2% of respondents were first year teachers (n=11), 13% were teachers who have taught 1-3 years (n=63), 24% were teachers who have taught 4-7 years (n=120), and 51% were teachers who have taught 10 or more years (n=253). When examining the types of schooling each teacher had obtained, 26% of respondents acquired a degree from a four year private university (n=131), 72% acquired a degree from a four year public university (n=359), less than 1% acquired a degree from a 2 Year Community College (n=1), less than 1% acquired a degree from a Vocational/Technical School (n=2), and less than 1% responded as N/A (n=1). The distribution was uneven when investigating National Board Certified Teachers, with 10% of the teachers being a NBCT (n=47), 88% not being a NCBT (n=436), and 2% being in process for becoming a NBCT (n=11). Table 5 displays the frequencies and percentages of the various independent variables of this study.

Table 5 Teacher Demographic Data

Independent Variables	N	Quantity of N	Percentage of N
Education Role	497		
Regular Education Teacher		405	81.5
Exceptional Education Teacher		92	18.5
Gender	497		
Female		402	80.9
Male		95	19.1
Grade Level Taught	497		
Elementary School (K-5)		221	44.7
Middle School (6-8)		113	22.9
High School (9-12)		160	32.4
Teaching Experience	497		
First Year Teacher		11	2.2
1-3 Years		63	12.7
4-7 Years		120	24.1
8-10 Years		50	10.1
10+ Years		253	50.9
Degree Attained	497		
4 Year Private University		131	26.5
4 Year Public University		359	72.2
2 Year Community College		1	0.2
Vocational/Technical School		2	0.4
N/A		1	0.2
National Board Certification			
Yes	497		
No		47	9.5
In Progress		436	88.3
		11	2.2

Instrumentation

Dykes (2007) developed the survey used in this study to elicit the perceptions of educators regarding character education within their school district. The questionnaire administered in this study included 50 short behavioral statements regarding educator perceptions, feelings, and actions regarding character education in their classroom, as well as in the field of education as a whole. Questions one through five each contained 10 statements that required a rating, which resulted in a total point score for each

respondent. The following is the rating scale and corresponding point value for each response:

- *Strongly Disagree* with the statement equated with a point value of "1".
- *Disagree* with the statement equated with a point value of "2".
- *Mixed Feelings* with the statement equated with a point value of "3".
- *Agree* with the statement equated with a point value of "4".
- *Strongly Agree* with the statement equated with a point value of "5".

Dykes (2007) addressed three distinct areas of perception for her statements on the instrument. The three areas of questioning included importance of character education, teacher efficacy of character education, and teacher practice of character education. Items 1-13, and 25-27 referred to the topic of importance. Items 14-24 covered efficacy. Items 28-50 referred to the topic of practice of character education in school.

Since this questionnaire had been examined for reliability and validity in previous studies, reliability and validity examinations were not needed for this study. In this study there was a return rate of 18.4% for the online questionnaires. There is no standard response rate for surveys, but low response rates do introduce a possible element of bias into a study (Powell & Hermann, 2000). While the 497 teacher respondents in this study were 18.4% of the entire teacher population, according to Wimmer and Dominick (2009) this study needed a teacher sample size of 337 at a confidence level of 95%, margin of error at 5%, for a population size of 2,706.

Research Questions and Results

Research Question 1

Is there a statistically significant difference in the perceptions of character education, as measured by importance, efficacy, and practice between elementary, middle, and high school teachers?

A one-way MANOVA was used to analyze to determine the effect of grade level taught on the dependent variables of importance, efficacy, and practice of character education. The *Character Education Questionnaire* measured a teacher's level of perception of character education by provided items that cover the three areas of importance, efficacy, and practice of character education in the classroom. Means and standard deviations are represented in Table 6.

Table 6 Descriptive Statistics of Grade Level Taught

Grade Level Taught		AOFIMP	AOFEFF	AOFPRACT
K-5	Mean	61.85	37.57	101.21
	Std. Deviation	9.952	5.858	10.184
6-8	Mean	62.07	36.82	99.59
	Std. Deviation	9.852	5.581	9.766
9-12	Mean	62.29	37.81	101.61
	Std. Deviation	8.718	5.392	9.903
Total	Mean	62.04	37.47	100.96
	Std. Deviation	9.529	5.648	10.007

A one-way between MANOVA was performed to investigate grade level taught differences in a teacher's perception of character education. Three dependent variables were used: teacher importance, teacher efficacy, and teacher practice. The independent

variable was the teacher's grade level taught. Preliminary assumption testing was conducted to check for normality, linearity, univariate and multivariate outliers, homogeneity of variance-covariance matrices, and multicollinearity, with no serious violations noted. Box's Test of Equality of Covariance Matrices requires a significance level higher than .001 to not violate the assumption (Pallant, 2005, pg. 258). In this case, the significance level was .485 meeting the necessary requirements.

To test whether the assumption of equality of variance for a variable has been violated, a Levene's Test of Equality of Error Variances must be conducted. This tests the normality of the data and requires a significance level for each dependent variable of importance, efficacy, and practice of .05 or greater. If this assumption is violated, a researcher must set a more conservative alpha level when looking for significance in the Tests of Between-Subjects Effects. The dependent variable of importance had a significance level of .517. The dependent variable of efficacy had a significance level of .239. The dependent variable of practice had a significance level of .813 within Levene's Test of Equality of Error Variances.

According to the sample of 497 teachers in this county, there was no significant differences between teachers who taught elementary, middle, and high school on the combined dependent variables: $F(6, 862) = .823, p = .552$; Wilks' Lambda = .99; partial eta squared = .01. Table 7 reveals the results for the MANOVA. When the results for the dependent variables were considered separately, there were no differences that reached statistical significance. The small F value and significance levels greater than .05 demonstrates that there was no statistical significant difference on the three dependent

variable scores of importance, efficacy, and practice based on the independent variable of grade level taught (K-5, 6-8, 9-12).

Table 7 MANOVA Analysis for Teachers Grade Level

	Dependent Variable	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
GRADE	Importance	48.325	2	24.163	.271	.763	.001
	Efficacy	23.331	2	11.666	.366	.694	.002
	Practice	274.246	2	137.123	1.352	.260	.006

While no statistical significance was attained for this research question, the independent variable of grade level taught accounted for .6% of the variance in the dependent variables. According to Cohen (1988) an effect size (partial eta squared) of .006 has practical significance as a small amount of the variance in the dependent variables is accounted for by the independent variable of grade level taught (see Table 8)

Table 8 Multivariate Tests of Grade Level

Effect	Wilks' Lambda	F	Hypothesis df	Error df	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Grade Level Taught	.989	.823(a)	6.000	862.000	.552	.006

When considering the dependent variables separately, Table 9 reveals there was no statistical significance for any one variable. Assuming a significance level of .05 or less, no variables revealed the necessary alpha level. Partial eta squared (effect size) ranged from .001 to .006 for importance, efficacy, and practice of character education. (See Table 9). Each of these is a relatively small effect size (Cohen, 1988).

Table 9 Tests of Between Subject Effects of Grade Level Taught

Source	Dependent Variable	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Grade	Importance	48.325	2	24.163	.271	.763	.001
	Efficacy	23.331	2	11.666	.366	.694	.002
	Practice	274.246	2	137.123	1.352	.260	.006

An inspection of the mean scores (see Table 6) indicated that teachers who taught middle school (6-8) reported slightly higher levels of importance (M=62.53, SD=8.95) than teachers who taught elementary school (M=61.70, SD=10.00) and high school teachers (M=62.14, SD=8.97). An inspection of the mean scores indicated that teachers who taught elementary school (K-15) reported slightly higher levels of efficacy of character education (M=37.64, SD 5.89) than teachers who taught high school (M=37.61, SD=5.44) and teachers who taught middle school (M=37.08, SD=5.45). A third inspection of mean scores indicated that high school teachers (9-12) reported higher levels of practice of character education (M=101.45, SD=10.08) than elementary teachers (M=101.00, SD=10.23) and middle school teachers (M=99.37, SD=9.76). Figures 4-6 provide a visual

representation of the estimated marginal means of the areas of importance, efficacy, and practice of character education.

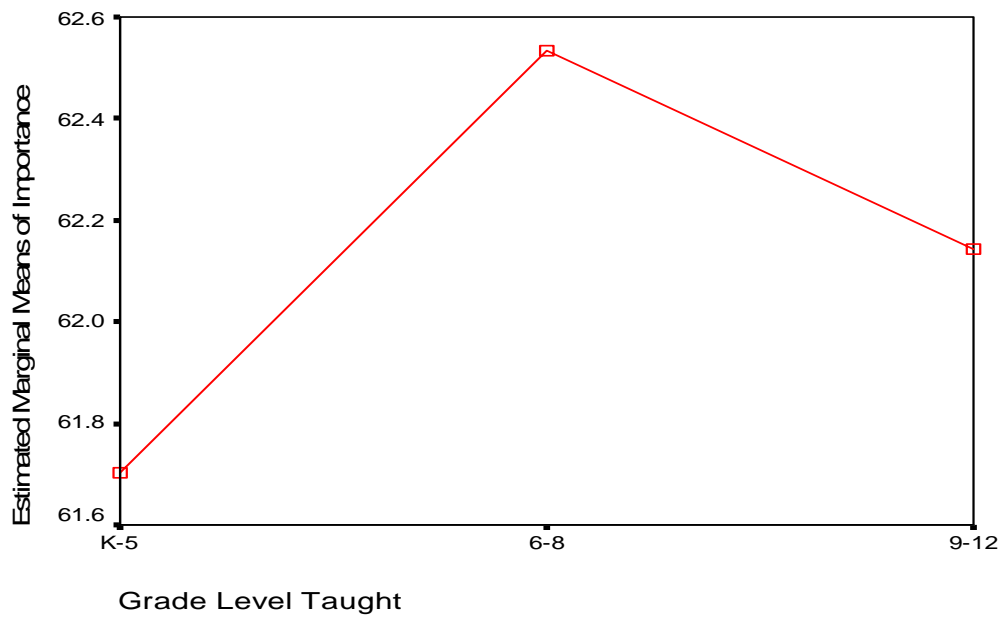


Figure 4 Estimated Marginal Means of Importance

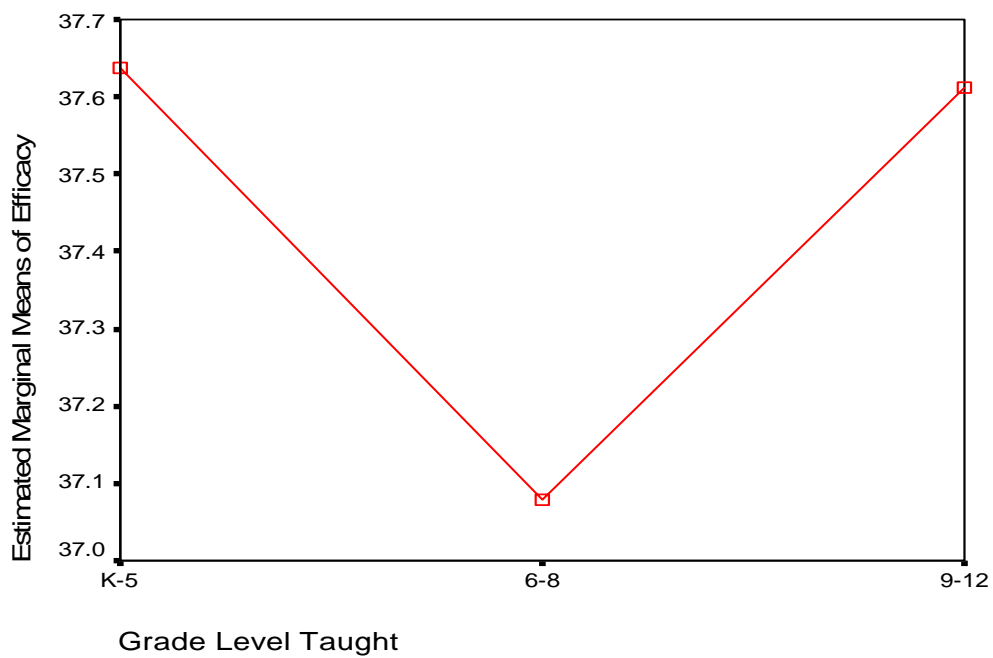


Figure 5 Estimated Marginal Means of Efficacy

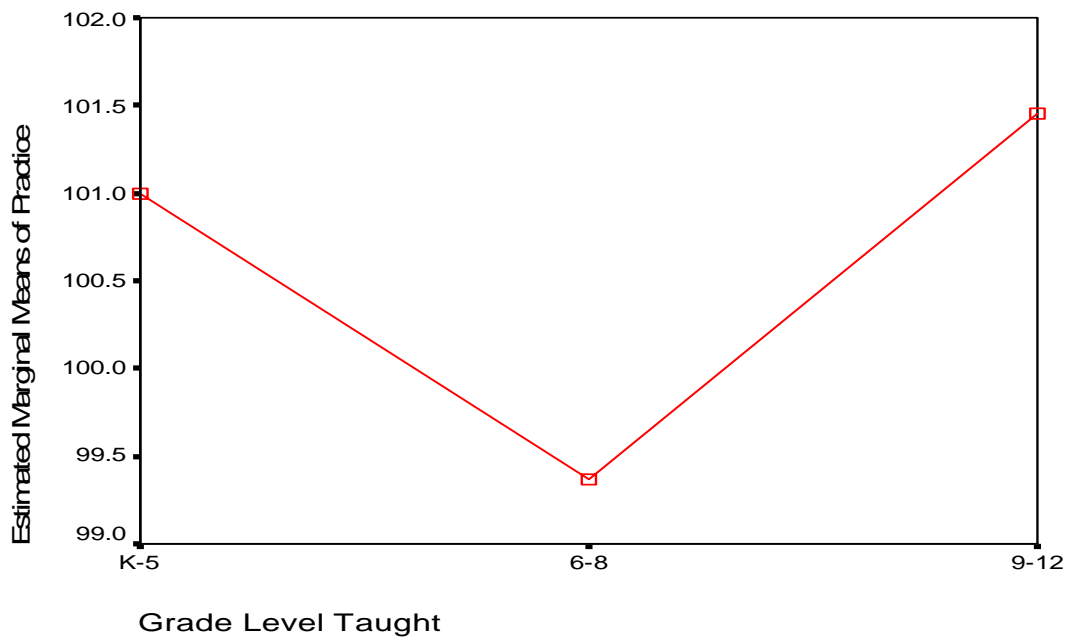


Figure 6 Estimated Marginal Means of Practice

Overview for the Data Analysis for Teacher Perceptions According To Grade Level Taught

Upon examination of the research question: “Is there a statistical significance difference in the perceptions of character education, as measured by importance, efficacy, and practice between elementary, middle, and high school teachers?” the data examined in the study proved to be inconclusive despite extraordinarily higher standard deviations and mean score differences within the areas of importance and practice, as compared to the area of efficacy. The one-way MANOVA indicated no clear differences between the total scores of teachers within each grade level taught. However, the vast difference in standard deviation score provided statistical evidence that many educators have contradictory opinions about perception, within the areas of importance of character education and the practice of character education in their classroom. When looking at the area of efficacy,

this lower standard deviation of scores relayed the fact that teachers in this school district feel adequate in teaching character education.

Research Question 2

Is there a statistical significance difference in the perceptions of character education, as measured by importance, efficacy, and practice of teachers based on years of teaching experience?

A one-way MANOVA was used to determine the effect of years of teaching experience on the dependent variables of importance, efficacy, and practice of character education. The *Character Education Questionnaire* measured a teacher's level of perception of character education by provided items that cover the three areas of importance, efficacy, and practice of character education in the classroom. Means and standard deviations are represented in Table 10.

Table 10 Descriptive Statistics for Years of Teaching Experience

	Years of Teaching Experience?	Mean	SD
Importance	First Year	67.20	10.207
	1-3 years	61.64	9.219
	4-7 years	63.10	9.891
	8-10 years	63.14	8.207
	10+ years	61.15	9.384
	Total	62.04	9.438
Efficacy	First Year	39.80	4.872
	1-3 years	37.90	5.245
	4-7 years	38.06	5.830
	8-10 years	38.37	6.831
	10+ years	36.80	5.373
	Total	37.49	5.645
Practice	First Year	102.20	11.631
	1-3 years	99.71	9.561
	4-7 years	100.83	10.226
	8-10 years	102.37	8.904
	10+ years	100.68	10.331
	Total	100.79	10.078

A one-way MANOVA was performed to investigate years of teaching experience differences in a teacher's perception of character education. Three dependent variables were used: teacher importance, teacher efficacy, and teacher practice. The independent variable was the teacher's level of experience (First year, 1-3 years, 4-7 years, 8-10 years, and 10+ years). Preliminary assumption testing was conducted to check for normality, linearity, univariate and multivariate outliers, homogeneity of variance-covariance matrices, and multicollinearity, with no serious violations noted. (See Appendix J)

According to the sample of 497 teachers in this county, there was no significant differences between teachers with all levels of experience on the combined dependent

variables: $F(12, 1141) = 1.181$, $p = .292$; Wilks' $\Lambda = .97$; partial eta squared = .011. Table 11 presents the summary data for the MANOVA. When the results for the dependent variables were considered separately, there were no differences that reached statistical significance. The small F value and significance levels greater than .05 demonstrates that there was no statistical significant difference on the three dependent variable scores of importance, efficacy, and practice based on the teacher's years of experience (First year, 1-3 years, 4-7 years, 8-10 years, and 10+ years).

Table 11 MANOVA Analysis for Years of Experience

	Dependent Variable	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Experience	Importance	622.740	4	155.685	1.760	.136	.016
	Efficacy	236.853	4	59.213	1.873	.114	.017
	Practice	198.687	4	49.672	.487	.746	.004

While no statistical significance was attained for this research question, the independent variable of experience accounted for 1.1% of the variance in the dependent variables. According to Cohen (1988) an effect size (partial eta squared) of .011 has practical significance as a small amount of the variance in the dependent variables is accounted for by the independent variable of experience (see Table 12)

Table 12 Multivariate Tests for Experience

	Wilks' Lambda	F	Df	Error Df	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Experience	.968	1.181	12	1140.61	.29	.011

When considering the dependent variables separately, Table 13 reveals there was no statistical significance for any one variable. Assuming a significance level of .05 or less, no variables revealed the necessary alpha level. Partial eta squared (effect size) ranged from .016 to .004 for importance, efficacy, and practice of character education. Each of these is a relatively small effect size, according to Cohen (1988).

Table 13 Tests of Between Subject Effects of Teaching Experience

	Dependent Variable	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Experience	AOFIMP	622.740	4	155.685	1.760	.136	.016
	AOFEFF	236.853	4	59.213	1.873	.114	.017
	AOFPRACT	198.687	4	49.672	.487	.746	.004

While there is no statistical significance and a small amount of practical significance, observations of the mean scores for teachers of the various levels of experience provided statistical evidence that perception, according to the three areas, differ vastly between teachers of various levels of experience. Table 10 displays the mean

differences between the various levels of experience. Within the area of importance, first year teachers: (M=67.20, SD=10.21) demonstrated a drastically higher mean score than all of the other groups; 1-3 years: (M=61.64, SD=9.22), 4-7 years: (M=63.10, SD=9.89), 8-10 years: (M=63.14, SD=8.21), and 10+ years: (M=61.15, SD=9.38). When inspecting the mean scores within the area of efficacy, First Year Teachers: (M=39.80, SD=4.87) demonstrated, once again, a higher mean score than all of the other groups, 1-3 years: (M=37.90, SD=5.25), 4-7 years: (M=38.06, SD=5.83), 8-10 years: (M=38.37, SD=6.83), and 10+ years: (M=36.80, SD=5.37). An examination of the mean scores within the third area of practice revealed that First Year Teachers yet again, displayed the highest mean scores: (M=102.20, SD=11.63) than all of the other groups of teachers, 1-3 years: (M=99.71, SD=9.56), 4-7 years: (M=100.83, SD=10.23), 8-10 years: (M=102.37, SD=10.33), and 10+ years: (M=100.79, SD=10.08). Figures 7-9 provide a visual representation of the estimated marginal means of the areas of importance, efficacy, and practice of character education.

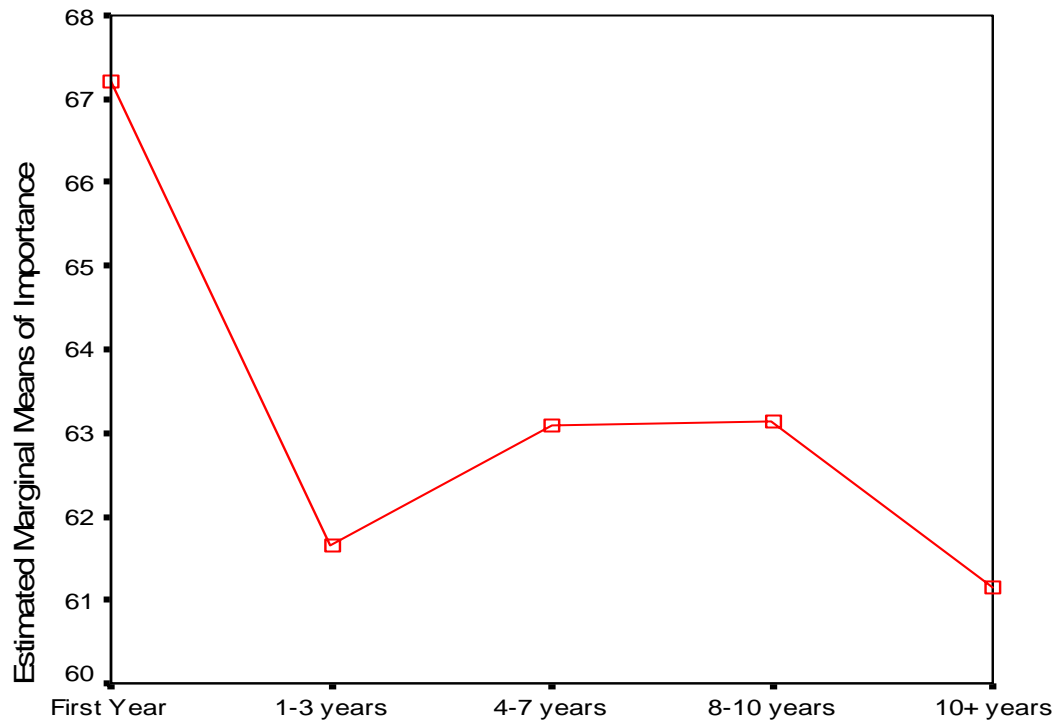


Figure 7 Estimated Margin of Means of Importance

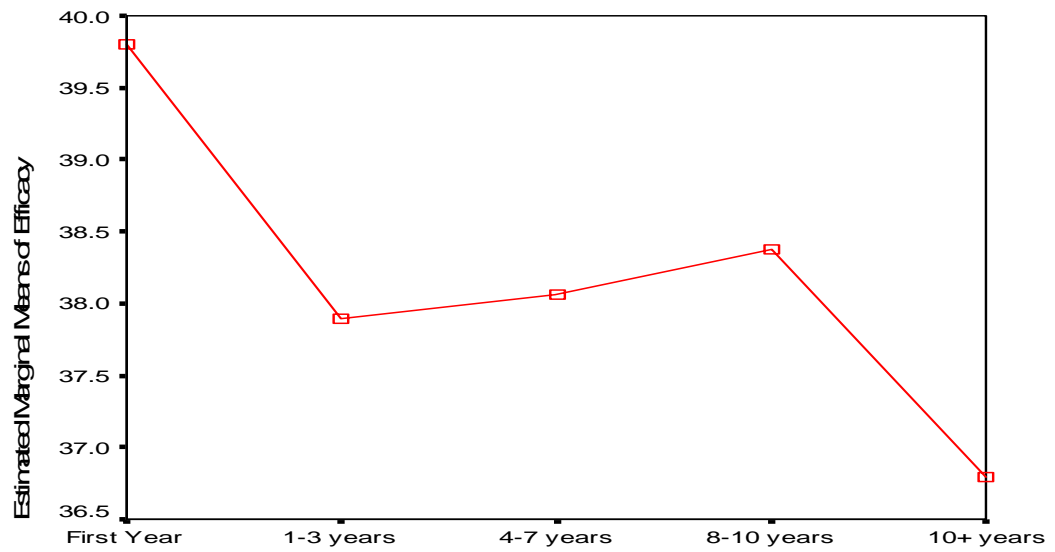


Figure 8 Estimated Marginal Means of Efficacy

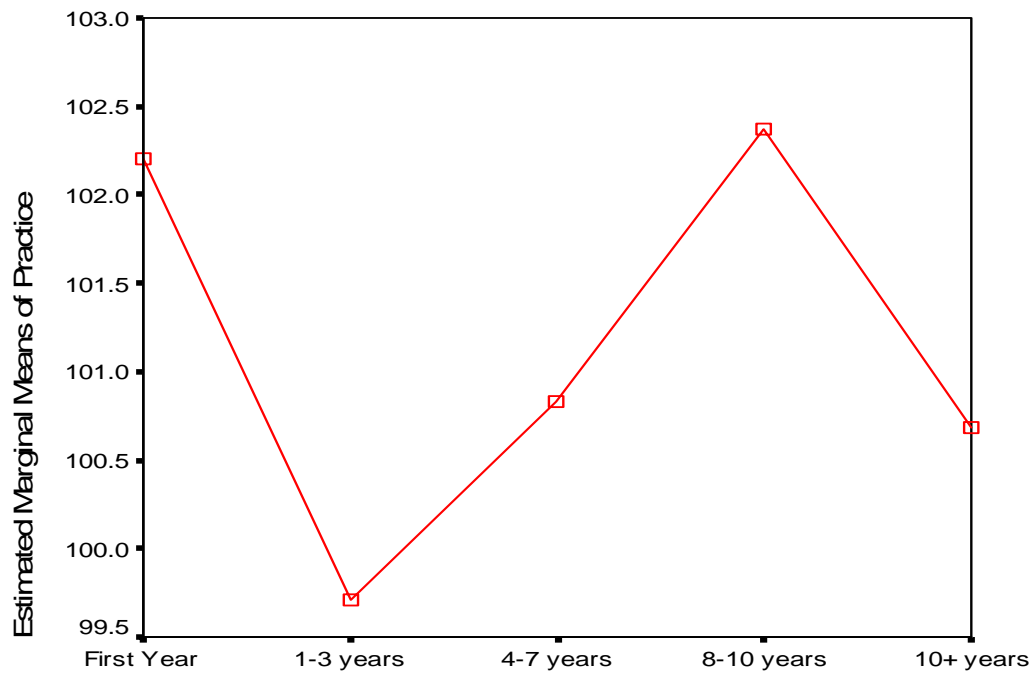


Figure 9 Estimated Marginal Means of Practice

Overview for the Data Analysis for Teacher Perceptions According To Level of Teaching Experience

Upon examination of the research question: “Is there a statistical significance difference in the perceptions of character education, as measured by importance, efficacy, and practice of teachers based on years of experience?” the data examined in the study proved to be questionable despite astonishingly higher mean scores of the First Year Teachers than all other experience groups. The one-way MANOVA indicated no clear differences between the total scores of teachers within each experience group. However, the noticeable difference in mean scores provided statistical evidence that first year teachers felt that character education is extremely important; they had the highest levels of efficacy, and practiced it the most as compared to the other experience groups.

When further examining the mean scores within these groups of experience the first year teacher and 10+ year teacher were on opposite spectrums, with first year teachers having higher mean scores on all three areas. As a teacher gained more teaching experience, within this school district, all areas of perception (importance, efficacy, and practice) decreased over time.

In addition to the major differences in mean scores, differences in standard deviation scores provided statistical evidence that many educators have contradictory opinions about perception, within the areas of importance of character education and the practice of character education in their classroom.

Research Question 3

Is there a statistical significant difference in the perceptions of character education, as measured by importance, efficacy, and practice of teachers based on their highest degree attained?

A one-way MANOVA was used to analyze to determine the effect a teacher's highest degree attained on the dependent variables of importance, efficacy, and practice of character education. The *Character Education Questionnaire* measured a teacher's level of perception of character education by provided items that cover the three areas of importance, efficacy, and practice of character education in the classroom. Means and standard deviations are represented in Table 14.

Table 14 Descriptive Statistics for Highest Degree Attained

	What is your highest degree completed?	Mean	Std. Deviation
Importance	Doctoral	59.27	10.928
	Specialist	58.40	16.471
	Masters	62.05	8.890
	Bachelors	62.23	9.600
	Total	62.04	9.438
Efficacy	Doctoral	36.82	3.920
	Specialist	36.60	7.021
	Masters	37.68	5.672
	Bachelors	37.41	5.687
	Total	37.49	5.645
Practice	Doctoral	101.73	9.056
	Specialist	99.60	15.307
	Masters	101.28	9.763
	Bachelors	100.44	10.262
	Total	100.79	10.078

A one-way MANOVA was performed to investigate a teacher's highest degree attained and differences in a teacher's perception of character education. Three dependent variables were used: teacher importance, teacher efficacy, and teacher practice. The independent variable was the teacher's highest degree attained (Doctoral, Specialist, Masters, and Bachelors). Preliminary assumption testing was conducted to check for normality, linearity, univariate and multivariate outliers, homogeneity of variance-covariance matrices, and multicollinearity, with no serious violations noted. (See Appendix K)

According to the sample of 497 teachers in this county, there was no significant differences between teachers with all levels of experience on the combined dependent variables: $F(9, 1052) = .388, p = .292$; Wilks' Lambda = .99; partial eta squared = .003. Table 15 represents the summary data for the MANOVA. When the results for the dependent variables were considered separately, there were no differences that reached statistical significance. The small F value and significance levels greater than .05 demonstrates that there was no statistical significant difference on the three dependent variable scores of importance, efficacy, and practice based on the teacher's highest degree attained (Doctoral, Specialist, Masters, Bachelors).

Table 15 MANOVA Analysis for Highest Degree Attained

	Dependent Variable	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Degree Level	Importance	159.984	3	53.328	.597	.617	.004
	Efficacy	16.500	3	5.500	.172	.916	.001
	Practice	88.740	3	29.580	.290	.833	.002

While no statistical significance was attained for this research question, the independent variable of experience accounted for 0.3% of the variance in the dependent variables. According to Cohen (1988) an effect size (partial eta squared) of .003 has practical significance as a small amount of the variance in the dependent variables is accounted for by the independent variable of experience (see Table 16).

Table 16 Multivariate Test for Degree Attained

	Wilks' Lambda	F	Hypothesis df	Error df	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Degree Attained	.992	.388	9	1051.525	.941	.003

When considering the dependent variables separately, Table 17 revealed there was no statistical significance for any one variable. Assuming a significance level of .05 or less, no variables revealed the necessary alpha level. Partial eta squared (effect size) ranged from .016 to .004 for importance, efficacy, and practice of character education. Each of these is a relatively small effect size, according to Cohen (1988).

Table 17 Tests of Between-Subject Effects of Highest Degree Attained

Source	Dependent Variable	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Degree Attained	Importance	159.984	3	53.328	.597	.617	.004
	Efficacy	16.500	3	5.500	.172	.916	.001
	Practice	88.740	3	29.580	.290	.833	.002

While there is no statistical significance and a small amount of practical significance, observations of the mean scores for teachers of various degree levels provided statistical evidence that perception, according to the three areas, differs between teachers who have attained advanced graduate degrees (Doctoral and Specialist) and those teachers

who have attained Graduate and Post-Secondary Degrees (Masters and Bachelors). Table 18 reveals the Estimated Marginal Means.

Table 18 Estimated Marginal Means of Degree Attained

	Highest Degree Attained	Mean	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval	
				Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Importance	Doctoral	59.273	2.850	53.672	64.873
	Specialist	58.400	4.227	50.093	66.707
	Masters	62.047	.725	60.622	63.472
	Bachelors	62.234	.595	61.064	63.404
Efficacy	Doctoral	36.818	1.707	33.464	40.173
	Specialist	36.600	2.532	31.624	41.576
	Masters	37.676	.434	36.823	38.530
	Bachelors	37.409	.357	36.708	38.110
Practice	Doctoral	101.727	3.046	95.740	107.714
	Specialist	99.600	4.518	90.720	108.480
	Masters	101.282	.775	99.759	102.805
	Bachelors	100.440	.636	99.190	101.691

Table 18 displays the mean differences between the various degree holders in comparison to the three areas of the questionnaire. Upon examination of these descriptive statistics, especially within the area of importance of character education, the mean scores are lower of teachers with a Doctoral Degree: (M=59.27, SE=2.85) and Specialist Degrees: (M=58.40, SE=4.23) than teachers with a Masters Degree (M=62.05, SE=0.76) and Bachelor's Degrees: (M=62.23, SE=0.60). Teachers with advanced degrees maintain, on average, a lower perception of the importance of character education in schools.

Table 18 also depicts the Standard Error of the Mean, as it relates to the Lower Bound and Upper Bounds, according to a 95% Confidence Interval. When we examine the Standard Errors of the Means, it clearly depicts that the Standard Errors are extremely higher in each area of the questionnaire with teachers who hold a Doctoral Degree: (SE=2.85, SE=1.70, SE=3.05, respectively; see table 18.0) and teachers who hold a Specialist Degree: (SE=4.23, SE=2.53, SE=4.51, respectively, see table 18.0). Since the Standard Error's of the Mean are vastly larger within these degree holders, as compared to the other degrees with the three area (Masters and Bachelors), this demonstrates the discrepancies within the perception of character education within the three areas of importance, efficacy, and practice of character education.

Figures 10-12 provide a visual representation of the Estimated Marginal Means of a teacher's highest degree attained, as reported throughout the three areas of importance, efficacy, and practice. These figures also display the large Standard of the Mean held by teachers who have attained a Doctoral Degree and a Specialist Degree, throughout each of the three areas.

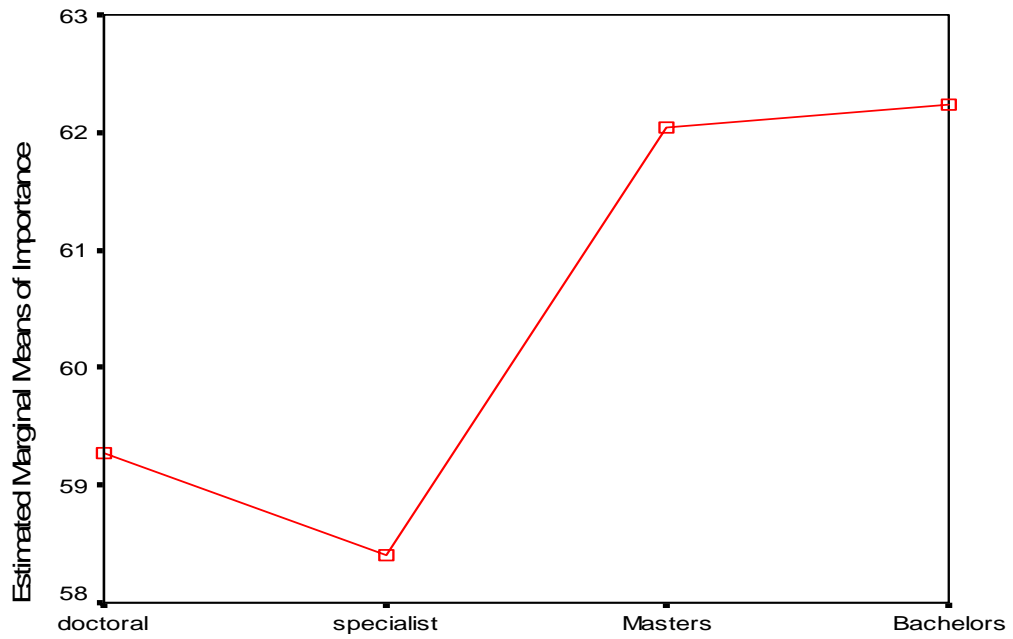


Figure 10 Estimated Marginal Means of Importance

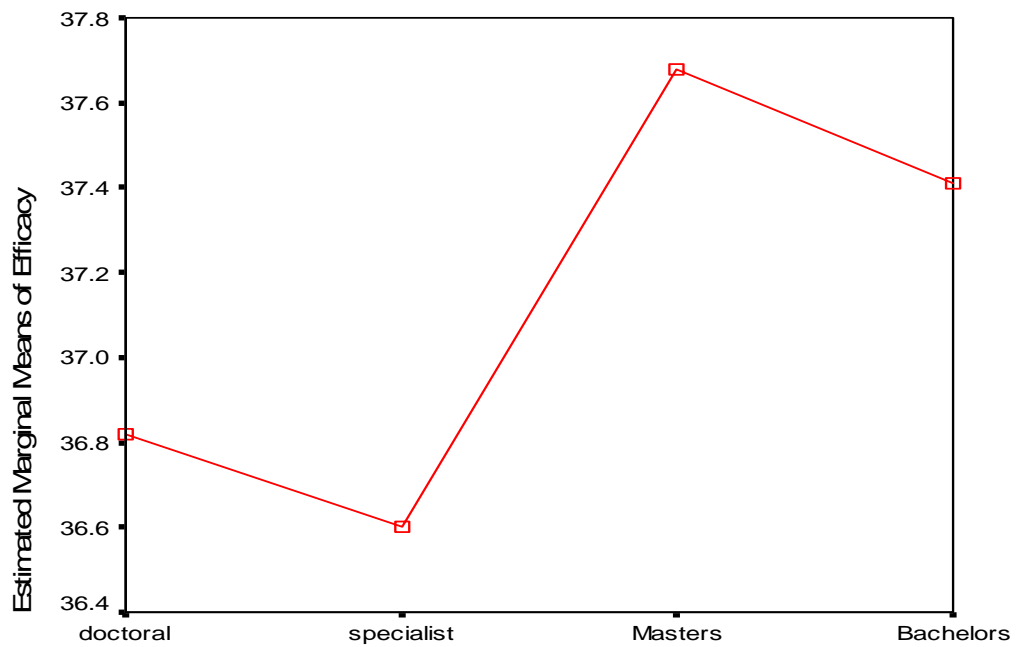


Figure 11 Estimated Marginal Means of Efficacy

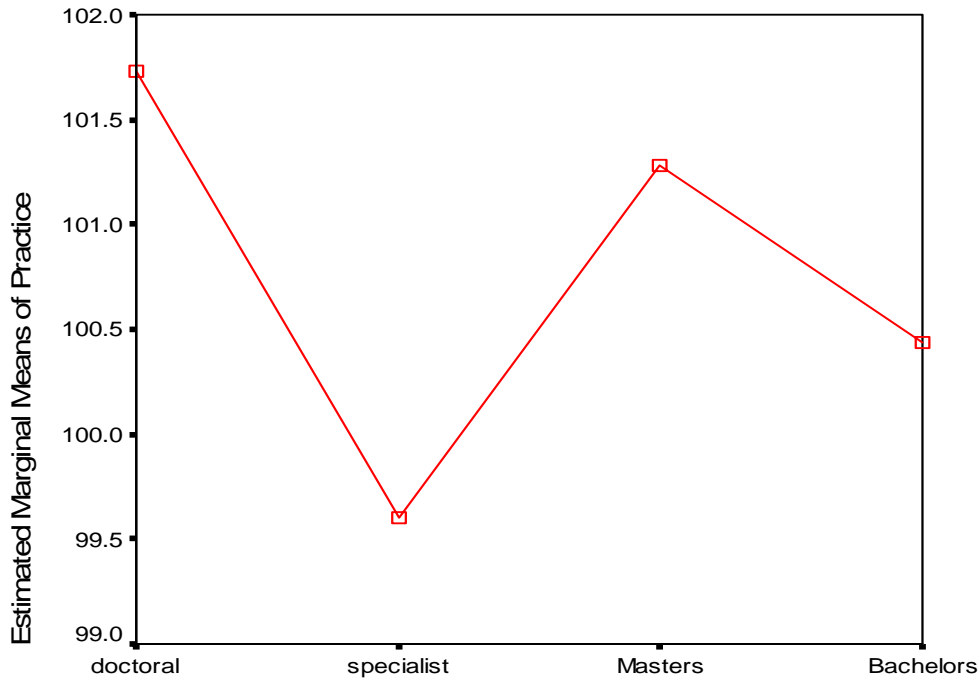


Figure 12 Estimated Marginal Means of Practice

Overview for the Data Analysis for Teacher Perceptions According To Degree Attained

Upon examination of the research question: “Is there a statistical significance difference in the perceptions of character education, as measured by importance, efficacy, and practice of teachers based on their highest degree attained?” the data examined in the study proved to be uncertain, but several descriptive statistics proved to show some classroom significance in this study. The one-way MANOVA indicated no clear differences between the total scores of teachers who hold the various degrees of Doctorate, Specialist, Masters, and Bachelor. However, teachers in this county who hold advanced degrees (Doctorate and Specialist) envisioned a lower level of importance of character education within this school district. Also, the Standard Error of the Mean of these groups, which was often double in size that teachers who hold Masters and Bachelor Degrees,

exemplified the vast conflict in ideologies that teachers who hold advance degrees have in comparison to those who do not.

Research Question 4

Is there a statistical significance difference in the perceptions of character education, as measured by importance, efficacy, and practice of teachers based on gender?

A one-way MANOVA was used to analyze to determine the effect of gender on the dependent variables of importance, efficacy, and practice of character education. The *Character Education Questionnaire* measured a teacher’s level of perception of character education by provided items that cover the three areas of importance, efficacy, and practice of character education in the classroom. Means and standard deviations are represented in Table 19. The summary for the MANOVA is presented in Table 20.

Table 19 Descriptive Statistics of Gender

		Mean	SD
Importance	female	62.31	9.221
	male	60.95	10.278
Efficacy	female	37.70	5.653
	male	36.62	5.557
Practice	female	101.57	9.693
	male	97.54	11.020

A one-way MANOVA was performed to investigate a teacher's gender and differences in a teacher's perception of character education. Three dependent variables were used: teacher importance, teacher efficacy, and teacher practice. The independent variable was the teacher's gender. Preliminary assumption testing was conducted to check for normality, linearity, univariate and multivariate outliers, homogeneity of variance-covariance matrices, and multicollinearity, with no serious violations noted. (See Appendix L)

According to the sample of 497 teachers in this county, there was a statistical significant difference between gender on the combined dependent variables: $F(3, 434) = 3.73, p = .001$; Wilks' Lambda = .98; partial eta squared = .025. Table 20 represents the summary data for the MANOVA. When the results for the dependent variables were considered separately, the only difference to reach statistical significance, using a Bonferroni adjusted alpha of .017, was practice of character education: $F(1, 436) = 11.22, p = .001$, partial eta squared = .025. While a statistical significance was attained for this research question, the independent variable of gender accounted for 2.5% of the variance in the dependent variables. According to Cohen (1988) an effect size (partial eta squared) of .025 has practical significance as a small amount of the variance in the dependent variables is accounted for by the independent variable of gender (see Table 21).

Table 20 MANOVA Analysis of Gender

Source	Dependent Variable	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Gender	Importance	125.407	1	125.407	1.409	.236	.003
	Efficacy	78.923	1	78.923	2.486	.116	.006
	Practice	1113.162	1	1113.162	11.215	.001	.025

Table 21 Multivariate Tests of Gender

	Wilks' Lambda	F	Hypothesis df	Error df	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
GENDER	.975	3.725(a)	3.000	434.000	.011	.025

In addition to the statistical significance within the area of practice of character education, observations of the mean scores for teachers, according to gender, provided additional statistical evidence that perception, according to the three areas, differed vastly between teachers who are male and female. Female teacher's maintained higher mean scores within all three areas of the questionnaire (see table 19). Within the area of importance females (M=62.31, SD=9.22) scored higher than males (M=50.95, SD=10.28). Females scored slightly higher (M=37.70, SD=5.65) in the area of efficacy than males (M=36.62, SD=5.56). The biggest discrepancy in mean scores existed in the area of practice. Females a higher mean score (M=101.57, SD=9.69) versus the male mean score (M=97.54, SD=11.02).

Overview for the Data Analysis for Teacher Perceptions According To Gender

Upon examination of the research question: “Is there a statistical significance difference in the perceptions of character education, as measured by importance, efficacy, and practice of teachers based on gender?” the data examined in the study provided significant differences. The one-way MANOVA indicated clear differences between perception of character education, within the area of practice, and a teacher’s gender. All descriptive statistics involved with this research question all supported the fact that females, within the Central Florida School District, all displayed higher levels of perception, with the areas of importance, efficacy, and practice of character education in school than males do.

Research Question 5

Is there a statistical significance difference in the perceptions of character education, as measured by importance, efficacy, and practice of teachers based on being Nationally Board Certified?

A one-way MANOVA was used to analyze the effect of National Board Certification on the dependent variables of importance, efficacy, and practice of character education. The *Character Education Questionnaire* measured a teacher’s level of perception of character education by provided items that cover the three areas of importance, efficacy, and practice of character education in the classroom. Means and standard deviations are represented in Table 22.

Table 22 Descriptive Statistics of National Board Certification

	NBCT	Mean	Std. Deviation
Importance	Yes	60.90	9.633
	No	62.15	9.270
	In Progress	60.40	14.447
Efficacy	Yes	37.05	5.035
	No	37.52	5.732
	In Progress	37.60	5.816
Practice	Yes	101.90	9.219
	No	100.63	10.144
	In Progress	102.70	12.111

A one-way MANOVA was performed to investigate whether being a Nationally Board Certified Teacher displayed differences in a teacher's perception of character education. Three dependent variables were used: teacher importance, teacher efficacy, and teacher practice. The independent variable was the status of being a NBCT (Yes, No, or In Progress). Preliminary assumption testing was conducted to check for normality, linearity, univariate and multivariate outliers, homogeneity of variance-covariance matrices, and multicollinearity, with no serious violations noted. (See Appendix M)

According to the sample of 497 teachers in this county, there was no significant differences between teachers who were National Board Certified on the combined dependent variables: $F(6, 860) = .591, p = .737$; Wilks' Lambda = .99; partial eta squared = .004. The summary of the MANOVA is represented in Table 23. When the results for the dependent variables were considered separately, there were no differences that reached statistical significance. The small F value and significance levels greater than .05 demonstrates that there was no statistical significant difference on the three dependent

variable scores of importance, efficacy, and practice based on the National Board Certification status of a teacher (Yes, No, or In Progress).

Table 23 MANOVA Analysis for National Board Certification

	Dependent Variable	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
NBCT	AOFIMP	83.730	2	41.865	.470	.625	.002
	AOFEFF	8.322	2	4.161	.129	.879	.001
	AOFPRACT	97.334	2	48.667	.476	.621	.002

While no statistical significance was attained for this research question, the independent variable of National Board Certification accounted for .04% of the variance in the dependent variables. According to Cohen (1988) an effect size (partial eta squared) of .004 has practical significance as an extremely small amount of the variance in the dependent variables is accounted for by the independent variable of experience (Table 24)

Table 24 Multivariate Tests for NBCT

	Wilks' Lambda	F	Hypothesis df	Error df	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
NBCT	.992	.591(a)	6.000	860.000	.737	.004

When considering the dependent variables separately, Table 25 reveals there was no statistical significance for any one variable. Assuming a significance level of .05 or less, no variables revealed the necessary alpha level. Partial eta squared (effect size) ranged

from .001 to .002 for importance, efficacy, and practice of character education. Each of these is an extremely small effect size, according to Cohen (1988).

Table 25 Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Source	Dependent Variable	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
NBCT	Importance	83.730	2	41.865	.470	.625	.002
	Efficacy	8.322	2	4.161	.129	.879	.001
	Practice	97.334	2	48.667	.476	.621	.002

While there is no statistical significance and a small amount of practical significance, observations of the mean scores and Standard Error's of the Mean were looked at next for practical significance. Table 26 displays the Estimated Marginal Means for the NBCT's of this study.

Table 26 Estimated Marginal Means for NBCT's

	Nationally Board Certification	Mean	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval	
				Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Importance	Yes	60.902	1.474	58.005	63.800
	No	62.151	.482	61.204	63.098
	In Progress	60.400	2.985	54.532	66.268
Efficacy	Yes	37.049	.886	35.307	38.790
	No	37.518	.289	36.949	38.087
	In Progress	37.600	1.794	34.074	41.126
Practice	Yes	101.902	1.578	98.800	105.005
	No	100.628	.516	99.614	101.641
	In Progress	102.700	3.196	96.418	108.982

Table 26 displays the mean differences between the various levels of being Nationally Board Certified (Yes, No, In Progress) in comparison to the three areas of the questionnaire. When examining these descriptive statistics, especially within the area of importance of character education, the mean scores are slightly higher for teachers who are not Nationally Board Certified: (M=62.15, SE=.482) than teachers who are a NBCT: (M=60.90, SE=1.47), as well as teachers who are in progress of becoming a NBCT: (M=60.40, SE=2.99). When you explore deeper into Table 26, the Standard Error of the Mean is drastically higher in all three areas of the survey at the hands of teachers who are in the progress of obtaining their National Board Certification: (SE=2.99, SE=1.79, SE=3.20, respectively; see Table 26).

Since the Standard Error's of the Mean are vastly larger within teachers who are in progress of pursuing certification, as compared to other teachers who are already certified

or are not in the process, this demonstrated the huge discrepancies within the perception of character education within the three areas of importance, efficacy, and practice of character education. Figures 13-15 provides a visual representation of the Estimated Marginal Means of National Board certification, as reported throughout the three areas of importance, efficacy, and practice. These figures also display the large Standard Error of the Mean held by teachers who are in the process of obtaining certification, throughout each of the three areas.

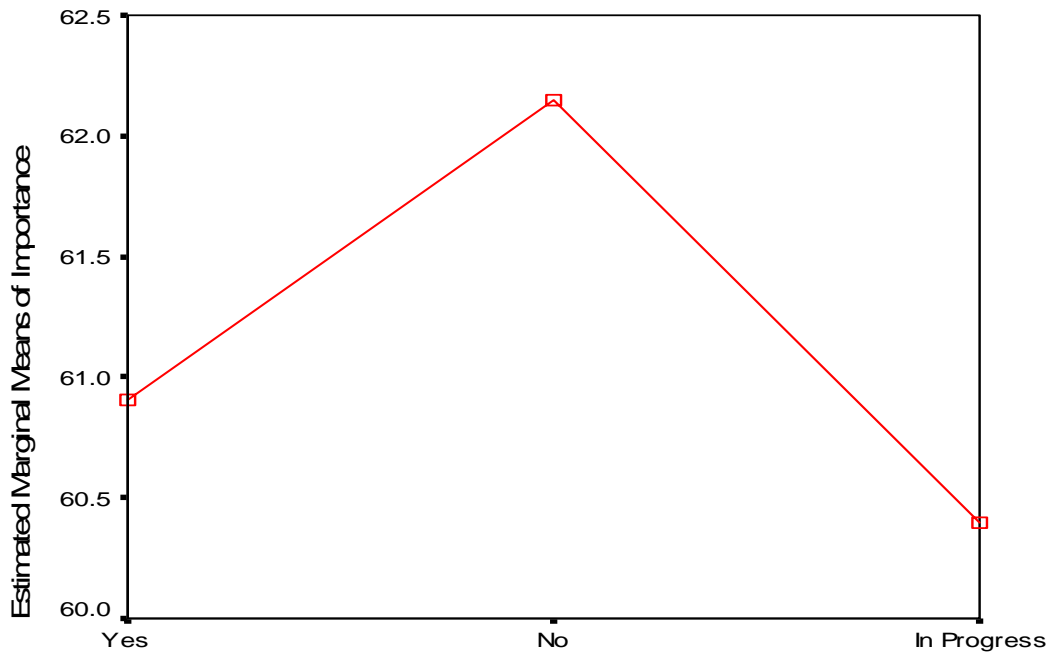


Figure 13 Estimated Marginal Means of Importance

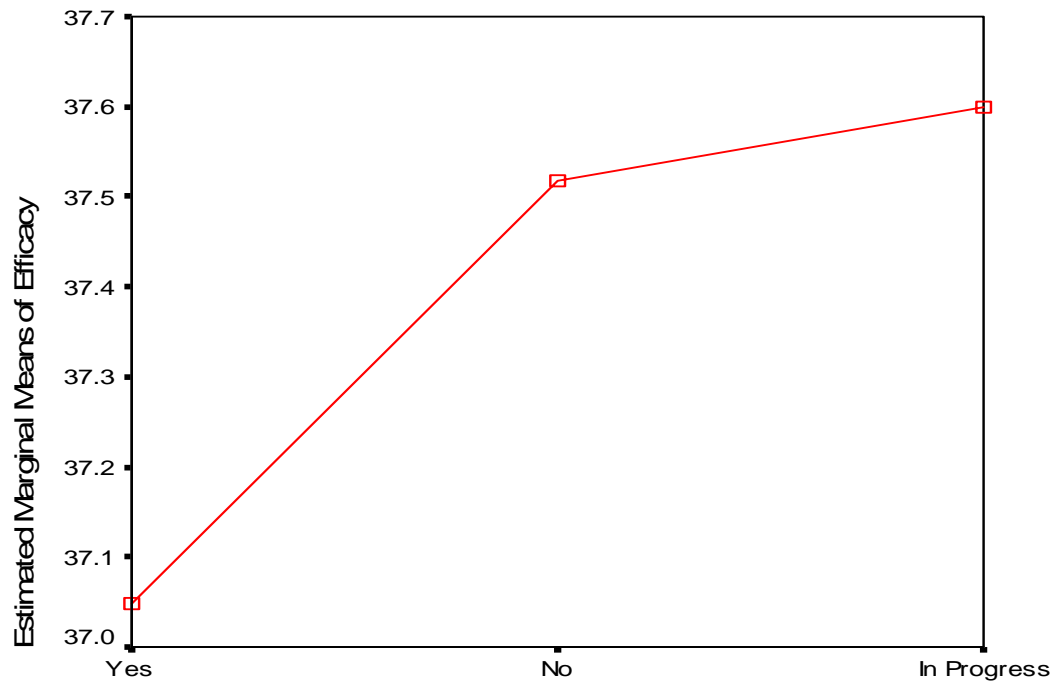


Figure 14 Estimated Marginal Means of Efficacy

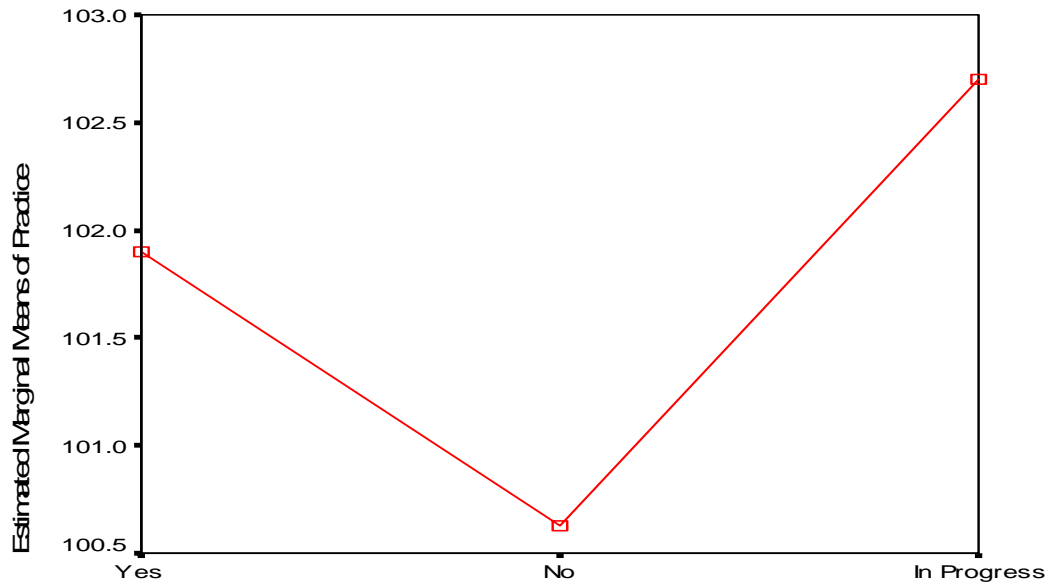


Figure 15 Estimated Marginal Means of Practice

Overview for the Data Analysis for Teacher Perceptions According National Board Certification

Upon examination of the research question: “Is there a statistical significance difference in the perceptions of character education, as measured by importance, efficacy, and practice of teachers based on being Nationally Board certified?” the data examined in the study proved to be uncertain, but several descriptive statistics proved to show some classroom significance in this study. The one-way MANOVA indicated no clear differences between the total scores of teachers who are Nationally Board Certified, not Nationally Certified, or are in the process of becoming certified. However, teachers in this county who are Nationally Board Certified had lower mean perceptions of character education, as seen through the areas of importance, efficacy, and practice. In addition to this revelation, teachers who are in the process of certification exhibited the greatest discrepancy in their scores on each of the three areas of the questionnaire, as supported by massive Standard Errors of the Means.

Analysis of Open Ended Question # 15

The questionnaire used in this study consisted of 15 questions. Question 15 was an open-ended question posed to obtain respondent information on how character education was implemented in their own individual classroom situations. The question stated, "If you are a classroom teacher, please list any ways you have incorporated lessons concerning character education traits/morals." This question was labeled as optional. Out of the 497 teachers that participated in this study, only 179 teachers answered question 15.

Since the purpose of this study was to examine perception levels of teachers within the three areas of importance, efficacy, and practice of character education, the examination of the open ended responses was imperative in understanding how teachers in this school district actually perceive and implement character education within their own classrooms. The responses were all over the board. Some were very specific and detailed about the lessons and programs they used, while others were very vague and spoke about the importance/non-importance of practicing character education in school.

In an effort to disseminate, filter, and categorize the teacher responses this researcher investigated all 179 responses and looked for themes within the responses. The research of character education programs demonstrated various goals/objectives for students. The responses within this study were color-coded and categorized into four distinct categories. The categories were labeled as citizenship, team work, behavioral, and “all of the rest”.

Implementation of character education that fell into the category of “citizenship” were examples that fostered the development of a democratic citizen. Forty-eight responses fell into this category. The lessons taught were those that emphasized the skills necessary to be a productive and active citizen as they grow up. Many of these responses were incorporated into social studies classes. They also spoke about making choices, being ethical, and not to bully other people.

Implementation of character education that fell into the category of “team work” were examples that demonstrated the use of activities/lessons that taught students how to work with others. Out of the 179 responses, 26 teachers use character education to teach about team work. They often emphasize the notion of diversity and tolerance. Some of

these responses exemplify the use of group work and service learning. They utilized lessons/programs of teamwork to teach responsibility.

Implementation of character education that fell into the category of “behavioral” were examples that demonstrated activities/lessons that emphasized rules and expectations for the class, school, and life. This category held the highest amount of responses at 56. Out of the 56 responses within this category, 15 of them listed the LEAPS program in their response.

The category labeled, “all of the rest,” included responses that did not directly answer the open ended question. They included personal views on character education, how it should be done at home, and how there is not enough time in the day to incorporate character education. While important for the argument for/against character education in school, the responses in this category did not provide specific implementation of a form of character education in the classroom.

Summary of Data Analysis

Using a variety of analytical procedures, including one-way Multivariate Analysis of Variance, analysis of descriptive statistics, and examinations of mean estimation profile plots, the perceptions of 497 teachers within this Central Florida school district were analyzed. Information yielded from this wide-ranging data analysis indicated that perceptions of teachers, within the three areas of importance, efficacy, and practice of character education differ between the various independent variables of grade level taught, levels of experience, degree attained, gender, and status of National Board Certification.

Although the only statistical significant difference occurred within the examination of gender and character education ($F=3.73$, $p=.001$), all of the other independent variables tested for released small effect sizes and levels of classroom significance, as demonstrated by the various mean estimated profile plots. This study had no problems with sample size and the possibility of diminishing the potential for significance in the sample. This purposeful sample of 497 teachers proved to be robust. A summary and further discussion of results, study conclusions, and recommendations for future research follow in Chapter 5

Study Comparison

Barbara Ann Dykes (2007) constructed the questionnaire utilized within this study to illustrate the perceptions of character education, as held by teachers within four school districts in the State of Alabama. According to Dykes, all of the school districts investigated within her study responded that they required character education practices consistent with Alabama's mandated "10 minutes of character education per day." Two of the four districts stated that they provide guidance to their teachers. Another district stated that this training was done at the new teacher orientations. The fourth district stated they provided a yearly character education professional development seminar. While Alabama is a state that mandates a certain level of exposure to character education, this study revealed that 77% of the educators surveyed stated that they did not receive character education training. Educators demonstrated that they incorporated forms of character education, but a majority of the educators surveyed did not follow (52%) the states mandated 10 minute a day. Dykes also looked at the independent variables of gender, grade level taught, and teacher's years of experience. While her study found statistical

significance in all of these areas, with examining the results of 279 teachers, an underlining factor of mandated character education should be taken into consideration. While her research demonstrated that 52% of the responded did not follow the “10 minutes a day” rule, the fact that it is mandated pressures teachers into covering it at some time or another.

CHAPTER 5 CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

Section one of Chapter 5 illustrates a brief synopsis of the study. Section two includes a dialogue of the conclusions related to the research questions. Section three discusses the limitations of the study followed by implications for practice in section four. The fifth section consists of recommendations for future research.

Synopsis

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to explore the perceptions of character educators at the hands of teachers within a Central Florida school district, as it related to teacher importance, teacher efficacy, and teacher practice. Previous research demonstrated that schools, which adopt principles of character education, as a formal curriculum or just as an advisory program, show higher levels of behavioral, social, and academic success. This study was a step in an effort to depict the voices of all teachers as stakeholders in a Central Florida School District to provide the necessary data, knowledge, and tools to suggest the need for building a successful and sustainable character education program.

Population and Data Collection

The population for this study comprised of employees of a Central Florida School District who were classified as teachers. This included all classroom teachers, as well as Exceptional Education teachers. This population drew from a Central Florida school district that is home to 55 schools. The questionnaire was sent to the population of this study via the country's email distribution list, which totaled 2,703 teachers.

The *Character Education Questionnaire* in this study was used to elicit the perceptions of educators regarding character education within their school district. The questionnaire included 50 short behavioral statements regarding educator perceptions of importance, efficacy, and practices regarding character education in their classroom, as well as in the field of education as a whole. The 50 items in the questionnaire constructed by Dykes (2007) were grouped into five small questions, numbered one through five. Questions one through five each contained 10 statements that required a rating, which resulted in a total point score for each respondent. The following is the Likert rating scale and corresponding point value for each response:

- *Strongly Disagree* with the statement equated with a point value of "1".
- *Disagree* with the statement equated with a point value of "2".
- *Mixed Feelings* with the statement equated with a point value of "3".
- *Agree* with the statement equated with a point value of "4".
- *Strongly Agree* with the statement equated with a point value of "5".

Dykes (2007) addressed three distinct topics for her statements on the instrument. The three topics of questioning included importance of character education, efficacy, and practice. Items 1-13, and 25-27 referred to the topic of importance. Items 14-24 covered efficacy. Items 28-50 referred to the topic of practice of character education in school.

Questions 6-14 on the questionnaire consisted of demographic questions. This demographic portion of the questionnaire was used to gather data for the independent variables examined in the study (years of experience, degree attained, gender, and NBCT status). The last question, question 15, was an open-ended question posed to obtain respondent information on how character education was implemented in their own individual classroom situations.

Discussion of Findings

Since Chapter 4 of this study reported the statistical analysis of each research question as it pertained to the study, this section summarized the findings as it related to each of the study's research questions. This section has also provided a brief overview of the demographic profile of the teachers surveyed within this study.

Demographic Profile

Personal characteristics of this study revealed that the majority of the teacher participants were female (n=402, 82%). More than half of the teacher participants were educators who have been teacher for 10 or more years (n=253, 51%). The vast majority of teachers were regular education teachers (n=405, 82%), as opposed to the exceptional education teachers in the study (n=92, 19%). This study represented a good mix of

educations from all grade levels with elementary teachers leading in representation (n=221, 45%), high school teachers taking second in numbers (n=160, 32%), and middle school possessing the lowest representation (n=113, 23%). The majority of the teacher respondents in this study obtained a degree from a 4 Year Public University (n=359, 72%).

Research Question 1

The purpose of this study was to explore the perceptions of character education at the hands of teachers within a Central Florida school district, as it relates to teacher importance, teacher efficacy, and teacher practice of character education. This research question looked at whether a teachers grade level taught effected their personal perceptions of character education, as measured by importance, efficacy, and practice.

A one-way MANOVA was used to analyze the effect of grade level taught on the dependent variables of importance, efficacy, and practice of character education. For the sample of 497 teachers there were no significant differences between teachers who taught elementary, middle, and high school on the combined dependent variables of importance, efficacy, and practice of character education. While the one-way MANOVA indicated no clear differences between the total scores of teachers within each grade level taught, the vast difference in the standard deviation score indicated that many educators have contradictory opinions about perception, within the areas of importance of character education and the practice of character education in their classroom. When looking at the area of efficacy, the lower standard deviation of scores indicates that these teachers feel adequate in teaching character education. The variations in total scores demonstrated the

teachers, throughout each grade level, are not all on the same page when it comes to character education in school. There is no common character education culture within this Central Florida school district.

To truly possess a quality consistent character education program within a school district, all teachers must be on board and possess similar perceptions on importance, efficacy, and practice of character education within their own school district. When teachers have different perceptions, there is no common character education culture. A formalized character education program can create an environment where all teachers would agree to the importance of character education, their own efficacy in teaching it, and their actual practice of it in the school and classroom environments. Regardless of the lack of a common character education culture, 338 (68%) teachers either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, "Character education is as important as an academic education," and 341 (69%) of the teachers in this study either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, "Students benefit from their teachers teaching about character."

Research Question 2

The second research question examined whether years of experience made a difference in teachers perception of character education, as measured by importance, efficacy, and practice of character education. A one-way MANOVA was used to determine the effect of years of teaching experience on the dependent variables of importance, efficacy, and practice of character education.

For the sample of 497 teachers, there were no significant differences between teachers with all levels of experience on the combined dependent variables of importance,

efficacy, and practice. While no statistical significance was attained for this research question, examinations of the mean scores for teachers at the various levels of experience provided statistical evidence that perception, according to the three areas, differed vastly between teachers of various levels of experience. Within the area of importance, first year teachers demonstrated a drastically higher mean score than all of the other groups. First year teachers also demonstrated a higher mean score than all of the other groups, with respect to efficacy and practice.

This data maintained a high level of classroom significance. The data demonstrated that teachers who are new to the profession possess high levels of perception, within the areas of importance, efficacy, and practice of character education, but this perception dwindles as they gain experience. This finding suggests that increasing standards and accountability pushes educators away from levels of pursuit of character education in the classroom. In this school district, perception levels decrease steadily over time. This type of data should be further examined to explore its relationship to the increasing issues with teacher turnover and teacher retention within the State of Florida. If teacher's perceptions of character education are decreasing with experience, they might be beginning to see a turn away from a school environment that they envision as accomplishing and motivational.

Research Question 3

The third research question investigated whether a teacher's degree made a difference on their perception of character education, as measured by importance, efficacy, and practice of character education. A one-way MANOVA was used to analyze to

determine the effect a teacher's highest degree attained on the dependent variables of importance, efficacy, and practice of character education.

For the 497 teachers of this study, there were no significant differences between teachers with all levels of degrees on the combined dependent variables of importance, efficacy, and practice of character education. While there was no statistical significance and a small amount of practical significance, examination of the mean scores for teachers of various degree levels provided some statistical evidence that perception, according to the three areas, differs between teachers who have attained advanced graduate degrees (Doctoral and Specialist) and those teachers who have attained Graduate and Post-Secondary Degrees (Masters and Bachelors). The mean scores are lower for teachers with a Doctoral Degree and Specialist Degrees than teachers with a Masters Degree and Bachelor's Degrees. Teachers in this county with advanced degrees maintain, on average, a lower perception of the importance of character education in schools.

This can open the door to many other inquiries. Teachers might have many different reasons and/or motives for obtaining advanced degrees, but most try and obtain higher degrees to make themselves a better educator and to learn additional methods, techniques, and philosophies on the educational process. Can this data provide an even closer microscope into the almighty power of standardized testing and accountability? Is job security over-running best practices and teaching ideology?

Research Question 4

The fourth research question examined whether gender plays a role in the importance, efficacy, and practice of character education of teachers in this Central Florida

school district. A one-way MANOVA was used to analyze to determine the effect of gender on the dependent variables of importance, efficacy, and practice of character education.

For the 497 teachers in this study, there was a statistical significant difference between gender on the combined dependent variables of importance, efficacy, and practice of character education. When the results for the dependent variables were considered separately, the only difference to reach statistical significance, using a Bonferroni adjusted alpha of .017, was practice of character education: $F(1, 436) = 11.22, p = .001, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .025$. The one-way MANOVA indicated clear differences between perception of character education, within the area of practice and a teacher's gender. Females practice forms of character education more than males. Upon examination of this research question one can ask the question, "Is this significance due solely to the fact that females consisted of the majority of this study ($n=402, 81\%$) or does the historical context of women in education come into play?"

Research Question 5

The final research question investigated whether National Board Certification teachers differed in their perceptions of character education, as measured by importance, efficacy, and practice of character education than regular certified teachers. A one-way MANOVA was used to determine the effect of National Board Certification on the dependent variables of importance, efficacy, and practice of character education.

Of the 497 teachers in this study, there were no significant differences between teachers who were National Board Certified on the combined dependent variables of

importance, efficacy, and practice of character education. Upon examination of the descriptive statistics, especially within the area of importance of character education, the mean scores are slightly higher for teachers who are not Nationally Board Certified than teachers who are a NBCT, as well as teachers who are in progress of becoming a NBCT.

So why did teachers who are Nationally Board Certified display lower levels of importance of character education in the school? With National Board for Professional Teaching Standards being a private organization of educators that defines what good teachers should know and be able to do, how can teachers in this county display lower level of importance of character education? While one would have to research exactly what material is not taught and expected of teachers who go through the process, this obviously can raise some additional questions to research. National Board Certified teachers are often the teacher leaders of school environments.

Does the influence and motivation of the various financial incentives influence a teacher's perception of the importance of character education in school? This research question can also be compared, in theory, to research question three. Both NBCT's and teachers with advanced degrees receive financial incentives for their accomplishments. While the amounts of these incentives vary from state to state, do they possibly influence the motives behind teachers? The data revealed in this study definitely has opened the door to numerous additional research avenues.

Limitations

There were a number of limitations within this study. The first limitation was the fact that teachers might have felt that there is no room in the curriculum for a formal form

of character education program, because they have been inundated with FCAT and accountability rhetoric. This limitation opened this study up to a possible element of bias, inaccuracy, and undependable information. Since this study was based on the opinions of teachers within the district at hand, it may have revealed the opinions of teachers who feel strongly about character education and/or have some prior knowledge on the subject. Also, this study did not reveal what subjects each teacher taught, so some teachers who teach classes labeled as "FCAT" classes (reading, math, and science) might have had stronger opinions because of the increasing pressure on them to raise school scores on achievement tests.

Another limitation was that this questionnaire only went out to teachers of one school district within the Central Florida area, which is home to 55 schools. It focuses on the perceptions of teachers of one county out of a total of 67 in the state. While all counties throughout the state are responsible for taking all of the state accountability assessments, like the FCAT, all teachers do not teach in similar counties. Florida is a large state with vast geographical, economic, and demographical differences. Teachers in the county within this study might have different views on character education than teachers in the county next to them, or than teachers in the counties furthest away. There are many variables that come into play, not just the variables examined within this study (grade level, experience, degree attained, gender, and National Board Certification). The third limitation to this study was this study not only focused on one county of sixty-seven; it is also focused on a county that is often described as being a rural county in Florida. Perceptions might differ between rural and urban teachers.

The final limitation to this study was that teachers might have answered the items on the questionnaire based on what the researcher is looking for, rather than their own true feelings. When investigating the teacher responses in the first area of the questionnaire, which was importance, very few respondents, if any, answered with "strongly disagree." Teachers who decided to take part in this study probably maintained the assumption that the researcher was a proponent of character education in the classroom.

Implication for Practice

The results of this study have implications for those involved in curriculum and instructional development at the district level. The results can also have implications at the state level. As revealed through the literature, funding is available at state and/or federal levels for character development within schools across the United States. Some studies have demonstrated that small levels of character development strategies infused throughout parts of the day provide a more positive and safer learning environment which, in turn, produces higher achievement scores of its students. Structured explicit character education programs on the school level proved to be successful and this study demonstrated that the majority of teachers who participated believe that schools have a central role in shaping character, character education should be mandated, character education is necessary in school, and it is an important as an academic education.

The *Character Education Questionnaire* used in this study revealed some very intriguing facts that were not investigated via the research questions for this study which have could possibly have implications for the district and state level. With the overwhelming understanding of the importance and ramifications of character education,

this questionnaire revealed that; 1) 52% of teacher respondents did not received character education training in college, 2) 52% have not received character education training/guidance from the school district, 3) 44% feel that the county does not provide character education curriculum materials, and 4) only 44% of this county's teachers agree that the county provides monetary support for character education activities. While most do not argue against its importance and place in all school environments, these statistics show that there is no consistent support for character education for the teachers of this county.

The findings within this study that the perceptions of importance and efficacy of character education decrease in teachers after they finish their first year of teaching might suggest a possible correlation between character education in schools and teacher turn-over rates. With enrollment increases and the recent historical rate of teacher turnover and retirements, the demand for additional teachers is expected to increase (CEPRI, 2003). Too many successful new, and academically strong teachers who have the impending ability to positively influence the nation's students leave or move away from disadvantaged classrooms every year because they lack support from other teachers and administrators to deal with the complexities of these classrooms (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2008). Could a lack of a sustainable explicitly taught character education curriculum help guide teachers and provide support to them in the classroom?

Study Summary

Character education has an extensive history in the United States. From the primary focus of training young learners to develop moral concepts based on bible concepts

to the proactive attempt to distill character education traits such as respect, responsibility, honesty, and fairness the public school system continues to struggle with a consistent implementation of a successful formal program that creates success in every school across the United States. This study has covered various successful character education programs, in all forms, across the United States and investigated the perceptions of character education of teachers in one Central Florida school district.

The programs discussed in the literature review, in combination with the results of the questionnaire used in this study, layout the importance of creating a positive common school culture of respect, responsibility, honesty, and fairness. Whether it is the elementary school in Jacksonville, Florida that has the character education program that is based on the premise that children acquire good character by being participants in character building activities or the *Too Good for Violence* program that has been implemented in schools in more than 2,500 districts across 48 states, which consists of a series of scripted lessons, taught by trained teachers, about peaceful conflict resolution strategies and pro-social development, all forms of character development depend on the level and ability of students and teachers who serve as role models to one another.

The process of molding students and teachers into role models lies heavily upon the theoretical framework of Albert Bandura's *Social Cognitive Theory* (1963). By focusing on Bandura's concept of a triadic reciprocity, all schools can create a positive environment where teachers and students model proper character virtues/processes and keep the cyclical pattern going. Positive student and teacher behavior will promote increasing levels of self-efficacy, thus relating to an ongoing positive school environment where all participants,

both teachers and students, will be happy to attend, see connectedness, and re-create an ongoing modeling of success within their respective school environments.

The various independent variables of teachers grade level taught, experience, degree attained, gender, and National Board Certification all opened the doors to a series of additional questions and concerns that can be examined further to lay a further framework for success within this school district, as well as school districts across the United States. If teachers do not possess that necessary knowledge and skills to model positive character traits, then proper environments can not be implemented in order to keep the triadic reciprocity alive. A school model of success, both socially and academically, is one that consists of a character education program/curriculum. To have a meaningful impact, character education must reflect the ethos and daily life of the school, and the staff must treat character development and academic development as equally important (North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, 2008).

While teachers are the modelers and main stakeholders on the front lines of education, the power of character education lies in the hands of awareness and construction by school districts across all fifty states. The importance is there and some teachers take it upon themselves to implement a level of character development, but teacher efficacy is lacking. If teachers are not confident in this area, a successful triadic reciprocity will cease to exist. This study was a step in an effort to depict the voices of all teachers as stakeholders in a Central Florida School District to provide the necessary data, knowledge, and tools to suggest the building of a successful and sustainable character education program. This study signified an effort among teachers as stakeholders in expressing the needs and perceptions of character education.

Recommendations for Future Research

Further research can ultimately be done with teachers and their perceptions of character education in school. Considerations on sample size, length of study, teacher demographics, and other independent variables must be considered.

1. Since this is one county out of sixty seven, it would be interesting to see a comparison of various counties across the state, both rural and urban.
2. A longitudinal study following a group of teachers over time to examine how their perceptions on character education change.
3. A comparison study between perceptions of classroom teachers and administrators of various counties throughout the state should be conducted to see if perceptions change based on the concepts of success for the whole child.
4. A study to investigate to what extent colleges and universities teach courses, or even cover material, pertaining to character education in schools needs to be done.
5. A similar study should be done in various states where character education is funded. It would be fascinating to see the differences in perception between teachers who have monetary support and those who do not.
6. A qualitative study should be done to take a deeper look at how some teachers are utilizing character education strategies in the classroom and how successful they are.

7. A qualitative study should be done in school districts across the country that use successful character education programs to see how they created and implemented them.
8. A quantitative study should be done to see if there is a relationship between high schools that have sustainable character education programs and their graduation rates versus high schools that have no such programs.
9. A quantitative study should be done to see if there is a relationship between high schools that have sustainable character education programs and the number of college bound students versus high schools who have no such programs.
10. If differences in the importance, efficacy, and practice of character education in schools continue to exist between grade levels, teacher experience, teacher degree levels, gender, and NBCT's then innovative studies should investigate the underlying factors that contributed to these results.
11. A research study should be done to investigate the perceptions of character education from the perspectives of teachers who leave the profession.
12. Since this study revealed that middle school teachers in this county maintain the highest levels of perception in the areas of importance and practice of character education, but the lowest in efficacy, there is a need to do further research into character education program at the middle school level. While middle school is the bridge between elementary school and high school, its teachers have lower levels of efficacy when it comes to character education.
13. Comparison studies of teacher perceptions of character education according to subject area taught should be conducted to determine if teachers who teach FCAT

labeled classes (reading, math, and science) might have different perceptions than teachers who do not teach these classes.

APPENDIX A: CHARACTER EDUCATION QUESTIONNAIRE

Copy of LCPS Character Education

Character Education Questionnaire

For the purpose of this questionnaire, character education is defined as any type of educational endeavor dealing with character, morals, and/or values education in Lake County Public Schools. The information you provide will be used only within this study. Individual, school, and school district information will be kept confidential.

Please consider each item concerning character education in lake County Public Schools. Click the response that best fits each question. Please answer ALL items. Thank you!

1. How do you feel about the following statements?

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Mixed Feelings	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
Education is a moral endeavor.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Character education can reverse the perceived moral decline of today's society.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Schools should assume a central role in shaping the character of youth.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Character education should be mandated for public schools.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Character education should be a set explicit curriculum.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Students would benefit from high quality character education programs in schools.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Character education is necessary to transmit core value to students.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Character education prepares students to become responsible citizens.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Negative student behaviors can reduced through character education.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Character education would contribute to improved student achievement.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

2. How do you feel about the following statements?

	strongly disagree	disagree	mixed feelings	agree	strongly agree	N/A
Character education is as important as an academic education.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Character education programs that include parents can be most effective.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Moral lessons learned in the social interactions of daily school life would have more influence on students than the content taught through a formal curriculum.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am comfortable discussing issues of right and wrong with students.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I can positively impact a student's character.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am comfortable modeling appropriate behaviors for students.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I can positively influence the character development of a student who has little directions from parents.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am continually searching for better ways to develop the character of students.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I fear possible retaliations from parents after leading moral discussions.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I receive(d) character/moral education training in college education classes.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I receive(d) character/moral education training/guidance from the Lake County School District.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Copy of LCPS Character Education

3. How do you feel about the following statements?

	strongly disagree	disagree	mixed feelings	agree	strongly agree	N/A
Lake County provides character education curriculum materials.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Lake County School District provides monetary support for character education activities.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Character education is an important part of my curriculum.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I teach character education explicitly, NOT implicitly.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I think that LCPS should install a formal character education curriculum.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Educators have a responsibility to model appropriate behaviors for students.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Students benefit from their teachers teaching about character.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I integrate character education across the curriculum each day.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I teach virtues (or moral qualities) such as honesty.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I teach values (or accepted social principles) such as self-respect.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

4. How do you feel about the following statements?

	strongly disagree	disagree	mixed feelings	agree	strongly agree	N/A
I hold student accountable to my classroom expectations.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I teach students to show tolerance for those who are different.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I connect character education with service opportunities that provide students opportunities.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I provide students with opportunities during the school day to practice good citizenship.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I encourage students to practice fairness (justice, equity, and equality) in various situations.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I inform students that they have a moral responsibility to show diligence by working hard in school.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I express a positive optimism to promote cheerfulness in my classes/school.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I teach students to show courtesy by listening attentively to others without interrupting.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I teach the significance of school rituals and/or traditions to promote school pride.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I model behaviors such as respect for others.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I teach students respect for the environment by promoting attentiveness to the physical appearance of the classroom/school.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

5. How do you feel about the following statements?

	strongly disagree	disagree	mixed feelings	agree	strongly agree	N/A
I strive to maintain a caring, classroom community where kindness prevails.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I provide opportunities for students to practice cooperation in the classroom.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I lead students in a daily Pledge of Allegiance to the American Flag to promote patriotism.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I teach punctuality by expecting students to turn in assignments on time.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I model cleanliness.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I teach patience by helping students realize that they must wait for their turn.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I encourage students to appreciate their own creative efforts.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I teach students to persevere (or be determined) to reach their goals.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Copy of LCPS Character Education

About You

In order to put your answers in context, I must gather some personal information from you. your answers will be confidential. Please mark the appropriate box. Thank you!

6. Gender

- Female
 Male

7. What is your status with Lake County Public Schools?

- Full Time
 Part Time

8. What is your educational role?

- Superintendent/Executive Directors
 Program Specialists
 Principal
 Assistant Principal
 Regular Education Teacher
 Special Education Teacher
 Guidance Counselor
 Transportation
 Para-Professional
 County Office
 Staff
 Other

Copy of LCPS Character Education

9. Please check all grade levels that you presently teach or grades with which you currently work in some capacity

- K
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7
- 8
- 9
- 10
- 11
- 12

10. Ethnicity

- American Indian or Alaskan Native
- Asian, Asian American, or Pacific Islander
- Black or African American
- Mexican, Mexican American
- Hispanic, Non-White
- White, Non-Hispanic
- Other

Other (please specify)

11. What is your total completed years of experience in education?

- First Year
- 1-3 years
- 4-7 years
- 8-10 years
- 10+ years

Copy of LCPS Character Education

12. What type of schooling did you complete?

- 4 Year Private University
- 4 Year Public University
- 2 Year Community College
- Vocational/Tech School
- N/A

13. What is your highest degree completed?

- Doctoral
- Specialist
- Masters
- Bachelors
- AA
- AS
- High School
- N/A

14. Are you a National Board Certified Teacher?

- Yes
- No
- In Progress

15. If you are a classroom teacher, please list any ways you have incorporated lessons concerning character education traits/morals. Answering this statement is completely optional. Thank you!

APPENDIX B: PERMISSION FROM SURVEY AUTHOR

RE: Character Education - Message (Plain Text)

File Edit View Insert Format Tools Actions Help

Reply Reply to All Forward Print Attachments X Undo Redo A+ A-

You replied on 9/30/2008 11:02 AM.
Extra line breaks in this message were removed.

From: Ann Dykes [adykes@cherookeek12.org] Sent: Tue 9/16/2008 9:04 AM
To: Ampel, Jason
Cc:
Subject: RE: Character Education

Yes, you may use it, as is; or you may adapt it to your specific research questions. However, I ask that you please reference that I am the author of the questionnaire in your dissertation. Good luck and don't give up!! You are almost there!!!
Ann Dykes

At 07:47 PM 9/15/2008 -0400, you wrote:
>
>
>
> I am in dissertation hours for the University of Central Florida
and I
>would like to administer your questionnaire to the entire staff of Lake
>County Public Schools.
>
>Jason
>
>
>
>From: Ann Dykes [mailto:adykes@cherookeek12.org]
>Sent: Mon 9/15/2008 4:56 PM
>To: Ampel, Jason
>Subject: Character Education
>
>
>
>Hello Mr. Ampel,
>
>The University of Alabama says that you would like to speak with me.
>What can I do for you?
>
>Barbara Ann Dykes
>Ann Dykes
>Cherokee County Schools

APPENDIX C: INFORMED CONSENT FORM



Informed Consent for an Adult in a Non-medical Research Study

Researchers at the University of Central Florida (UCF) study many topics. To do this we need the help of people who agree to take part in a research study. You are being invited to take part in a research study, which will include questions about character and morals, as they pertain to character education in public schools. You can ask questions about the research. You can read this form and agree to take part right now, or take the form home with you to study before you decide. You will be told if any new information is learned which may affect your willingness to continue taking part in this study. You have been asked to take part in this research study because you **are a staff member of Lake County Public Schools**. You must be 18 years of age or older to be included in the research study and click on the bottom of the screen that you agree to participate and are of 18 years of age.

My name is Jason Ampel and I am conducting this survey research study. I am currently a 7th grade social studies teacher at Clermont Middle School in Lake County and a doctoral student at the University of Central Florida. I am a student in the Educational Studies Department within the College of Education. This questionnaire is a part of my doctoral dissertation. Since I am a graduate student, I am being guided by Dr. Larry Holt, a UCF faculty advisor in the Educational Studies Department.

The title of the study is, “Character Education: Examining the Perceptions of Elementary, Middle, and High School Teachers in a Central Florida School District.” The purpose of this study was to explore if a school model of success, both socially and academically, is one that consists of a formal character education program/system. Previous research demonstrated that schools, which adopt principles of character education, as a formal curriculum or just as an advisory program, show higher levels of behavioral, social, and academic success.

The questionnaire that you will be taking will consist of 50 short statements concerning issues and concerns dealing with character, morals, and/or values education in Lake County Public Schools. You should take part in this study only because you want to. There is no penalty for not taking part, and you will not lose any benefits. You have the right to stop at any time. You will be told if any new information is learned which may affect your willingness to continue taking part in this study.

To complete the survey please click on the link provided at the bottom of this letter. This link will bring you to the questionnaire via [surveymonkey.com](https://www.surveymonkey.com). While the questionnaire is 50 questions, they are short and easy to answer. Answering all the statements should not take more than 10 minutes to complete.

If you have concerns or questions about this survey research project please contact Jason Ampel, Graduate Student, Curriculum & Instruction Program, College of Education, UCF, ampelj@lake.k12.fl.us or Dr. Larry Holt, Faculty Advisor, Department of Educational Studies, holt@mail.ucf.edu.

Research at the University of Central Florida involving human participants is carried out under the oversight of the Institutional Review Board (UCF IRB). For information about the rights of people who take part in research, please contact: Institutional Review Board, University of Central Florida, Office of Research & Commercialization, 12201 Research Parkway, Suite 501, Orlando, FL 32826-3246 or by telephone at (407) 823-2901.

By clicking on the link below, you have agreed to take part in the survey research project:

http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=j3D4Jy52JDCqjw96NrWDdA_3d_3d

Jason Alex Ampel

10/16/08

Principal Investigator

Date

APPENDIX D: INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL



University of Central Florida Institutional Review Board
Office of Research & Commercialization
12201 Research Parkway, Suite 301
Orlando, Florida 32826-3246
Telephone: 407-823-2901, 407-882-2012 or 407-882-2276
www.research.ucf.edu/compliance/irb.html

Notice of Exempt Review Status

From: UCF Institutional Review Board
FWA00000351, Exp. 6/24/11, IRB00001138

To: Jason A. Ampel

Date: October 23, 2008

IRB Number: 2008-08-05865

Study Title: From Implicit to Explicit: Looking at teacher perceptions & conceptions concerning character education in Lake County Public Schools

Dear Researcher:

Your research protocol was reviewed by the IRB Vice-chair on 10/23/2008. Per federal regulations, 45 CFR 46.101, your study has been determined to be minimal risk for human subjects and exempt from 45 CFR 46 federal regulations and further IRB review or renewal unless you later wish to add the use of identifiers or change the protocol procedures in a way that might increase risk to participants. Before making any changes to your study, call the IRB office to discuss the changes. A change which incorporates the use of identifiers may mean the study is no longer exempt, thus requiring the submission of a new application to change the classification to expedited if the risk is still minimal. Please submit the Termination/Final Report form when the study has been completed. All forms may be completed and submitted online at <https://iris.research.ucf.edu>.

The category for which exempt status has been determined for this protocol is as follows:

2. Research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey or interview procedures, or the observation of public behavior, so long as confidentiality is maintained.
 - (i) Information obtained is recorded in such a manner that the subject cannot be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subject, and/or
 - (ii) Subject's responses, if known outside the research would not reasonably place the subject at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subject's financial standing or employability or reputation.

A waiver of documentation of consent has been approved for all subjects. Participants do not have to sign a consent form, but the IRB requires that you give participants a copy of the IRB-approved consent form, letter, information sheet, or statement of voluntary consent at the top of the survey.

All data, which may include signed consent form documents, must be retained in a locked file cabinet for a minimum of three years (six if HIPAA applies) past the completion of this research. Any links to the identification of participants should be maintained on a password-protected computer if electronic information is used. Additional requirements may be imposed by your funding agency, your department, or other entities. Access to data is limited to authorized individuals listed as key study personnel.

On behalf of Tracy Dietz, Ph.D., UCF IRB Chair, this letter is signed by:

Signature applied by Janice Turchin on 10/23/2008 01:49:55 PM EDT

IRB Coordinator

APPENDIX E: APPROVAL FROM CENTRAL FLORIDA SCHOOL
DISTRICT



Leading Our Children to Success

201 West Burrell Boulevard · Tavares · FL 32778-2496
(352) 253-6500 · Fax: (352) 343-0198 · www.lake.k12.fl.us

Superintendent:
Anna P. Cowin

School Board Members:

District 1
Larry Metz
District 2
Scott Strong
District 3
Cindy Barrow
District 4
Jimmy Conner
District 5
Kyleen Fischer

September 16, 2008

Jason Ampel
4508 Eden Woods Circle
Orlando, FL 32810

Dear Mr. Ampel:

This letter serves as permission for you to conduct your research for your dissertation while attending the University of Central Florida. I understand a short questionnaire will be placed on line, via surveymonkey.com, and the link along with a description of your dissertation will be sent to all individuals listed on the distribution list for Lake County Schools. It is expressly understood that the survey is not mandatory for employees of the Lake County School District, will be done strictly on a volunteer basis, and that confidentiality will be maintained by you.

I wish you much success in this endeavor. Thank you for all you do and your dedication to the Lake County School District.

Sincerely,

Anna P. Cowin
Superintendent

APC/pjp

APPENDIX F: CHARACTER EDUCATION TRAITS MATRIX

CHARACTER EDUCATION TRAITS MATRIX

(Alabama Character Education Legislation, ACT 95-313)

Directions: On this page you will find the list of character traits that are required by the Alabama Legislature and the Alabama Board of Education to be included in a comprehensive character education program for students of all grades. On page two you will find statements from a survey instrument that seek to determine the extent to which Alabama educators incorporate these traits into their daily lessons. **Please decide which statement(s) relate to each trait and put the number of the statement in the box with the trait(s) that it fits.** You may decide that the statement does not fit any of the traits. In that case, please *put an "X"* on the statement's number. **Every statement should be in at least one trait's box.** Upon completion of the matrix, please feel free to make comments and/or create additional statements that you believe better correlate with the character trait.

COURAGE
PATRIOTISM
CITIZENSHIP
HONESTY
FAIRNESS
RESPECT FOR OTHERS
KINDNESS
COOPERATION
SELF-RESPECT
SELF-CONTROL
COURTESY
COMPASSION
TOLERANCE
DILIGENCE
GENEROSITY
PUNCTUALITY
CLEANLINESS
CHEERFULNESS
SCHOOL PRIDE
RESPECT FOR THE ENVIRONMENT
PATIENCE
CREATIVITY
SPORTSMANSHIP
LOYALTY
PERSEVERANCE

CHARACTER EDUCATOR PRACTICE STATEMENTS

The participants will be asked to circle a response of Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Agree, or Strongly Agree regarding these statements.

26.	Educators have a responsibility to model appropriate behaviors for students.
27.	Students benefit from their teachers <i>teaching</i> about character
28.	I include at least ten (10) minutes of character education in the daily curriculum.
29.	I integrate character education across the curriculum each day.
30.	I teach virtues (or moral qualities) such as honesty.
31.	I teach values (or accepted social principles) such as self-respect
32.	I teach appropriate behaviors such as self-control and respect for others.
33.	I encourage students to show tolerance for those who are different.
34.	I connect character education with service opportunities that give students opportunities to practice traits such as cooperation, kindness, compassion and/or generosity.
35.	I provide students with opportunities during the school day to practice good citizenship.
36.	I encourage student participation and responsibility for making and observing classroom rules.
37.	I make it clear to students that they have a moral responsibility to work hard in school.
38.	I strive to be consistent and fair in dealing with students and encourage them to do the same.
39.	I teach students how to listen attentively to others without interrupting.
40.	I emphasize and teach the significance of school rituals and traditions.
41.	I emphasize good sportsmanship in sports, games and daily interactions with others.
42.	I provide activities that help develop school and community unity among students.
43.	I encourage students to be attentive to the physical appearance of the school, thereby involving them in the shared responsibility of cleanliness and order.
44.	I display pictures of courageous heroes and heroines and lead discussions about them.
45.	I strive to maintain a caring, classroom community.
46.	Each day I teach a trait of the week/month such as cheerfulness, patience, creativity, patience and/or punctuality.
47.	I lead students in a daily Pledge of Allegiance to the American Flag.

COMMENTS AND/OR ADDITIONAL STATEMENT SUGGESTIONS

(If you include additional statements, please indicate the trait(s) with which it correlates.)

THANK YOU!!

APPENDIX G: QUESTION #15 OPEN ENDED RESPONSES

- 1) We discuss/model the following in my classroom: - importance of voting - importance of being open and understanding to other cultures, religions, etc. - importance of your actions and their consequences
- 2) I use things learned in programs I have done at other schools, such as Project Achieve. I encourage doing their best and respecting others even if they do not like someone.
- 3) I teach Practical Nursing so all of the items on the survey are very important in this field and are reinforced in classroom and clinical settings.
- 4) being a role model
- 5) Every date in our centers (work time). I use High Scope, which teaches social skills to students.
- 6) I try to incorporate character-building traits throughout the day as the need arises, and I model it constantly. While I feel that Character Education is important, I also feel that the child's main character development should come from his parents at home, not from any curriculum. I went to school to learn to teach academics, and I believe that too many extra responsibilities are being placed upon classroom teachers (Too Good for Drugs/Violence, Anti-Bullying, Internet Safety, 30 minutes of daily fitness, etc.) Children should have these values instilled in them from their parents. We are doing the parents' job for them, and this takes time away from academics.
- 7) We incorporate character building into our Social Studies unit. However, when moments arise when I have to deal with certain situations, I take the time out with the class to reflect on the situation.
- 8) implementation of class rules modeling
- 9) I integrate character education all throughout the day during situations that arise that deem it necessary. I post "weekly wise words" on my board.
- 10) I do not think character education should be a taught once or twice a year, but rather demonstrated all year long.
- 11) In presenting my classroom rules/syllabus, I emphasize that the procedures are driven by RESPECT (I sometimes sing for them, although Aretha Franklin, I am not!)
- 12) I will stop in the middle of a lesson plan to explain proper behavior for a situation, which just occurred. I will take a five or 10-minute time out discussion concerning a student issue or home issue that may happen to pop up that relates to a moral or ethical question. I will take time to discuss a holiday or event that may have deep roots in society and explain the sacrifice our forefathers made to ensure our freedom and benefits today.
- 13) I am not a classroom teacher now; however, six years ago I was teaching character education lessons as an elementary guidance counselor. The two years before I left, I and the other GC were part of the Specials Wheel. We divided the grades (I had 1st, 3rd and 5th.) and were in the classroom for classroom guidance lessons every other day every other period. We really did not have enough materials so we had to think up

and produce our own character education lessons. I was somewhat fun to be in the classroom. It was also back breaking to think of a lesson, find material, reproduce whatever you needed and then present the lesson to three different age levels.

- 14) We as a class have completed activities that enable the student to focus on their strengths and abilities. Different topics concerning values have been addressed through discussion, and or group poster making. Students do best in discussion groups and the most evident concerns regarding their pertinent life come out in these discussions. We as a group discuss probable solutions. Oftentimes, I will use a story or video to portray a particular value that I want to teach. The majority of the class tunes in and works on improving themselves.
- 15) 1. Role-playing various traits monthly 2.Puppets (Reader's Theater related to character traits) 3.View related stories, movies 4.Address traits/morals as opportunities arise involving real life situations as they are happening in the classroom.
- 16) I use beanie babies to act out skits to demonstrate positive and negative ways handle conflicts. I use social stories from the internet and then have student's role play the parts. After transitions from being away from the classroom, I allow a "reporting time" to discuss situations where feelings were hurt on conflict arose. The class discusses ways to resolve the conflict. Then we ask forgiveness or offer restitution the situation warrants it. I am an Emotional Behavior Disorder Teacher, so a larger part of my job is to teach replacement behaviors and conflict resolution, compared to that of a regular ed. teacher.
- 17) Honesty, and Respect, along with not using negative words in class is something I stress to my students. The learning environment should be one where they feel safe to learn.
- 18) I institute it all day long, for example in Morning Meeting, Special person etc. HOWEVER, I do not think we need to make this a formal subject. THERE IS NOT ENOUGH TIME IN THE DAY...we are already responsible for their daily health/obesity for 30 minutes of our academic time...what else can we do. Let the parent do something!
- 19) Many of my daily read aloud are stories that include making correct choices, character Ed and morals. Many of the good children's literature use this opportunity with wonderful illustrations and stories. I always share with the students experiences of my childhood and contrast it to what goes on now.
- 20) One specific way I do this is to have students write reflections on a variety of moral and/or ethical dilemmas. I then share the results of the reflections in a general and completely anonymous manner to promote discussion of the specific topics and how attitudes (both positive and negative) account for observable behavior in society.
- 21) Number one rule in the room is that you must be kind to each other. If you find something in the room that is not yours, try to find out whom it belongs. Use positive language. Encourage each other. Help one another without giving the answers. Clean your space and the floor everyday. Try to keep your desk and papers organized. Respect each other.
- 22) Being a Kindergarten teacher, I naturally integrate character education on a daily basis. I also use Fairy Tales and Nursery Rhymes to teach character Ed as well.

- 23) Practice what I preach.
- 24) (1) Through the use of simulation activities (e.g., "Starpower") in which the students work cooperatively in groups to develop a governmental and economic system. (2) By registering students to vote and encouraging students who are of age and qualified to vote in election years. This activity engenders immediate relevance for my subject matter, increases interest in civics education and encourages life-long participation in our pluralistic republic form of government. (3) Team and group learning activities (cooperative grouping) in which I assign students to groups based upon varying traits (e.g. gender, academic ability, race, language, etc.). Such assigned grouping forces students to interact with children other than their usual choices.
- 25) I teach Pre-K ESE and social/emotional skills are one of my main focuses. I feel that my students are not able to begin learning academic skills until they are able to understand themselves and their effect on those around them. We go over our class rules every day and they include ways to calm ones self and specific things that the students can say/do to interact positively with others. I also take advantage of "teachable moments" when they happen.
- 26) At the beginning of the school year, I use a variety of modeling situations to demonstrate how to be kind, take care of items, and share. As the school year progresses, I incorporate the C.H.A.M.P.s program into everything that we do. I often do not always use the program as it is formatted (icon cards, etc), but the concepts are followed (explain each step; give specific examples, and expectations). The C.H.A.M.P.s program is more for behavior management and behavior modification in my opinion, but it teaches the students a lot, about how they are expected to act and perform in school.
- 27) Mostly throughout the day as situations arise or allow. I also try being a good/positive role model.
- 28) teaching about tolerance and diversity in my cultural unit
- 29) I teach LEAPS lessons to my students.
- 30) I teach respect by showing respect, and I have and the students achieve at a high expectation level.
- 31) Integrating classroom rules & procedures. The buddy system Cooperative Learning
- 32) I think that the use of the Golden Rule is a good start. Every day we, as teachers, indirectly teach character education through our expectations of the day, classroom manners, civility with others, etc. Just teaching others how to be "of manners" is a good start as well...
- 33) Character education traits are incorporated into lessons involving the curriculum such as sharing, taking turns, being patient, encouraging others, having a positive attitude, respecting peers, adults, and things, etc. LEAPS is a program provided by the county office that offers many opportunities to teach character traits and morals.
- 34) The first week, I instruct the students in manners, etiquette, and respect. Daily I remind students that the classroom is a "safe" place; that is, it is free from sexual innuendo, cursing, and insults and that each person deserves--and receives--tolerance and respect, as well as appreciation for his/her individuality. In addition, in English III (junior level) I teach a unit on ethical systems when the class prepares for debates.

- 35) We have math competitions where the student's prize for winning is personal pride, group discussions about why we need rules for school.
- 36) I incorporate character education only implicitly. Neither materials NOR TIME are available for anything else, and will not be as long as TESTING is the primary focus of education in Lake County Schools.
- 37) Too good for drugs and alcohol, Dare
- 38) Following the example of Ron Clark's 55 Essential rules, I have made charts called "To Succeed in Mrs. Burns' Class, Remember Your A-B-C's". (Thinking that 26 rules would be easier to work with than 55.) Although some of them are academic, such as "Completed Homework will be turned in by all students", and some are procedural, such as "Be Organized by putting all materials where they belong," many are concerning morals, such as, "Be polite by saying Thank you when you are given something, and Please when you ask for something;" "During lessons, respect other people's answers, comments or ideas; never laugh at or make fun of anyone."
- 39) I try to model desired behavior, be positive, and provide a safe place for my class
- 40) In my kindergarten classroom, my students are taught to use manners when speaking to any adult and/or peer. We practice saying "please" and "thank you," and "yes/no ma'am/sir." We also daily practice working together and take time each day to say something positive to a friend sitting next to us. My students always say thank you when they receive a compliment, when they take their tray from the cafeteria, and when they are given something. I am a firm believer that students learn by modeled behavior so I hold myself to the standard of character that I wish for my students to achieve.
- 41) Developing moral characters in a mainstream class is difficult, with the way the world is. Individuals think it is automatic in the ESE self-contained classes. It is not, you have a different population of students. Teaching morals in school is an excellent idea. You have the problem of teachers who expect it from their student, and do not see the behavior (negative at times) that they themselves reveal. The main problem I see is the home environment support. Wishing you the best with your study!
- 42) Teaching tolerance programs, integrating reading materials such as trade novels for teens that deal with moral issues into the curriculum, bringing in news articles that deal with moral decisions and issues into the curriculum. We also use our lunch and homeroom times to discuss home or neighborhood issues. My assistant and I discuss our own past decisions and experiences.
- 43) I often incorporate the Andy Griffith Show into my classroom to teach lessons about History, Economics, and Am. Government, etc. while at the same time giving the students a "Life Lesson" about character and morality. I think it would be great to have a class fully devoted to character education built around the morals and values of a show like Andy Griffith.
- 44) LEAPS
- 45) Honesty & transparency are essential to good science. As a science teacher, I deal with that issue on a regular basis. As a teacher "strongly" encouraged doing what ever is necessary to pass a student... suffice it to say at times honesty and accountability are ignored in order to survive.

- 46) I incorporate LEAPS lessons on character into my curriculum on a regular basis because I teach ESE students, and this is necessary for them.
- 47) I teach vocational classes (work/co-op) and consistently work with students to improve their technical skills as well as their personal skills, including their ability to look sharp at a job interview, the necessity of working with people on the job (teamwork) and being polite and honest. It is a struggle as the students today have very little understanding of personal ethics and receive little or no values training at home.
- 48) I use the Leaps program and skill streaming to incorporate character curriculum into my daily lessons.
- 49) It is easy to include character education in a reading class. It is a missed opportunity if you do not.
- 50) Modeling is the most effective way I have found to change behaviors positively.
- 51) I use the Changing Lives Character Curriculum, written by D.W. Rutledge and published by Mark 1. I originally obtained it to use with the teams that I coach because a lot of its focus is written from a sports perspective. Mark 1 has also published a classroom focused version as well, but I have adapted this one just fine. It has a workbook and sections on Attitude, Responsibility, Self-Image, Character, Leadership, and Goals.
- 52) One class that I teach is Service Learning. We do many things to teach character education, etc.
- 53) LEAPS lessons provided by the county
- 54) I USE THE RESPONSIVE CLASSROOM TRAINING EACH DAY. RECEIVED A GRANT TO PURCHASE MATERIALS TO INCORPORATE IN MY DAILY LESSONS. (RECEIVE ...OOPS)
- 55) The incorporation of character education is throughout my day. Showing respect, kindness, self-discipline in my self fosters this. Expecting my students to show respect, kindness, self-discipline, and addressing it through positive affirmation along with corrective discipline incorporates character Ed in our day.
- 56) The first 5-10 minutes of class, I go over one insight from the Student Code of Conduct. I have written very few referrals in my 29 years.
- 57) Character education has to be taught as an integrated part of a lesson. It is ridiculous to stop the curriculum in any classroom and teach character education. The teacher loses class time and student interest wanes. No student has ever been excited to learn about the value of honesty, integrity, or other value. However, if a teacher takes time to teach a reading passage that has moral/ethical ideas in it and discusses it, the odds are much better that students will be engaged in the lesson. Also, Parker Palmer's The Heart of the Teacher has influenced my ideas about character education. We teach who we are. Students understand this basic premise, it is up to the teachers to be honest, and forthright about who are they are (in and out of the classroom).
- 58) I do character talks in my classes and I lead my example and expect certain behavior in my classroom at all times. My students know to respect each other and I do not tolerate anything less. I also try to explain why a student should act and does the right thing not just tell them and leave it at that.

- 59) Goal Setting, Managing emotions, Decision Making, Communication, conflict resolution, Respect for self and others
- 60) The county HOPE Program incorporates many of the character development topic in it's curriculum through Donna Coates, Lake County.
- 61) Lake County's Shared Network and The Safe Climate Coalition hold a mini conference each year and two years ago had a speaker who discussed the benefits of character building on classroom behavior and grades. The speaker was the coach on whom the TV show, "Friday Nights" was based. I encompass character building in my Bell Ringers exercises and in the real life (world problems) I use in my math classes. Of course, modeling and living these lessons are important.
- 62) Being a chorus teacher, we practice everyday in the classroom about working together as a group. I stress to my students that we are "on stage" all the time not just for a performance. It is important to me that my students have respect for me, their classmates, and for their school.
- 63) The guidance counselor comes in and teaches a lesson on self respect, bullying, etc.
- 64) I feel the most important thing is to take those teachable moments and model good practices!
- 65) Portions of "Too Good for Drugs" deals with cooperation, peer pressure, and friendship. Use teachable moments when issues arise within the classroom.
- 66) Those teachable moments, Too Good for Drugs LEAPS
- 67) We have taught a unit on bullying. We are in the process of teaching units from Project Achieve (Stop and Think) on building good character and how to act/react to certain situations. Actually, each grade level is teaching character edu. Using an appropriate grade level curriculum. We are spending quite a lot of time this year teaching expected classroom behaviors. The theory is that if the students know what is expected of them in any given situation they will behave/perform better.
- 68) I have not incorporated specific lessons to teach character education. I teach it every hour, every minute as issues arise, as students interact. I take every opportunity to make sure that the behaviors reflected in my classroom are consistent with all that character education is. However, I do not believe that character education should be taught at the school level as a curriculum. It needs to be taught at home!!!
- 69) Everyday through LEAPS and their experiences.
- 70) Character education is an important part of our day in our 9-11 year old Trainable Mentally Disabled class. Our students need extensive training in social skills on a very basic level. It is so important that they be able to function in society in appropriate ways. It is a huge part of what we do here every day at Lake Hills School.
- 71) LEAPS - Lessons to help students with behavior and character.
- 72) LEAPS Lessons, modeling, discussions (sometimes heated),,,,,,
- 73) I would like to say that I think character development is an important tool for students to learn. I try my best to incorporate these skills whenever possible. Too good for Drugs is a great way to introduce character development. That being said, I do not think this should be a mandated subject. We have so little time to implement all of the

require material as it is. There are not enough hours in the day to teach everything well.

- 74) Students learn about specific character traits (such as kindness, honesty, respect, etc.) at the beginning of my class, and then must document how they use them each day in a portfolio. They also participate in pre- and post-tests to gauge how their understanding of and development of positive character traits have changed throughout the year.
- 75) I teach Guidance on the wheel so my entire K-5 lesson plans focus on the Florida Dept. of Education's character-development curriculum. The qualities stressed are patriotism, responsibility, citizenship, kindness, respect, honesty, self-control, tolerance and cooperation. During the end of October, we participate in Red Ribbon Week with lesson plans geared toward the dangers of drugs, alcohol and tobacco. We stress making healthy choices. During the last 2 months of school, my lesson plans focus on career education. Every other year we plan a Career Day where community businesses bring their trucks, uniforms, etc. and the students walk around talking with individuals about their careers.
- 76) Just today we discussed the vocabulary word "traits"...used examples of good character traits...am constantly reinforcing good study habits, how to succeed in life, how students have to work hard to achieve good grades, etc. Please note that on question #1, the word receive is spelled incorrectly. Just wanted to let you know. (l before e except after c)
- 77) These rise from the content of stories where we discuss and compare our lives to those discussed in the curriculum.
- 78) Students in class actively participate in recycling and cooperative learning activities. Students take responsibility for classroom responsibilities such as cleaning the pet cages, leading bell ringer and participating in classroom contests. Students are not allowed to tell one another to shut up or say unkind things to one another. Students are encouraged to say, "Yes, Ma'am," instead of responding with "what", "huh" or "yea." When items have been stolen in class, students have been offered rewards for finding them or turning in people who have taken items. Class discussions have been held concerning theft and how it impacts others.
- 79) Taking back long lost control of the Lake County classrooms from the students is going to take much more than a lesson in morals.
- 80) I teach Pre K which you did not list as an option BUT really should have included as character Ed starts with us in Pre K...
- 81) My classes have been a sponsor for a child in Ethiopia for years. We are designated helpers to a first grade class. Character building is in our specials rotation (taught by a guidance counselor).
- 82) I am a Pre-K teacher. This year I have made a Good Character Counts Cape. I have created an animal for each character trait, like Responsible Rhino. Each trait has a badge that is put on the back of each cape and as I am teaching about this character trait, my children wear their cape. My children have really enjoyed learning about Responsibility and they are constantly using it in our classroom and at home. My parents have let me know how their child has become more responsible. If we could start this in the Pre-K and continue this process through out our children education, I

believe our children will become responsible adults. I really believe we need to have Character Education as part of our curriculum. Thank you for letting me take this survey. Linda Duncan

- 83) In our reading curriculum, we have centers where the third, fourth, and fifth graders work together. The fourth and fifth graders are expected to assist the third graders when needed. The students work in groups most of the time. They are now working together to do a class science project. Debates are done on a regular basis where the students learn the rules for a debate and use appropriate wording to oppose or agree with different arguments. The students play organized sports during recess time and when there is a problem with rules or getting along it is discussed and the class problem solves to solve the problem. We also are involved with Project Achieve at our school. There are different character traits within this program and it has steps that are tools to make the students more successful. Traits include anger management, following directions, etc. I am a teacher of gifted students, so it is very important to keep them humble and patient towards their peers.
- 84) To teach students to respect others when presenting papers. To offer help in any subject before school for all students.
- 85) We do a (moral) thought for the day and a word of the day. We also read important things that happened on this day during the past years.
- 86) I do not believe in a separate character education program - I believe that this undermines my belief that students should be taught to be moral at ALL times.
- 87) Now, I teach Pre-K/ESE. I feel that incorporating character Ed is a vitally important part of our ongoing teaching to our developmental delayed students. Some of our students are language delayed and they learn by observing the correct way to be from the modeling of the adults in our classroom.
- 88) In my classroom students learn about themselves and the world around them through lessons and materials chosen specifically for that purpose. One example, which seems to instigate students to critically examine themselves and their worlds, is the poem by Maya Angelou "STILL I RISE". Not only are they learning literary devices, but also while studying poetry students will recognize her ability to persevere against numerous odds, along with the challenges faced by African Americans. Another would be our persuasive speeches. Student's research and record information on issues they feel strongly about and present a persuasive speech in the class. I do a Holocaust unit using Dr. Suss's World War II cartoons. I could go on and on. Not only do these lessons meet the objectives I set in preparing my eighth graders for high school English, but they are great character education motivators. The discussions are enlighteningly awesome!
- 89) Through the use of moral dilemmas of characters and situations in literature....
- 90) In my Trainable Mentally Handicapped class (now ID), we participate in the Scouting in the schools program for boys and girls. We are currently in the process of having a food drive for the local food bank. We do community service activities with the nursing home in our neighborhood. In all of these activities, we encourage the children to help others and to appreciate what they have. As issues arise in the classroom, I take that as an opportunity to develop character in my children.
- 91) I taught Values Clarification in Massachusetts and DUSO (Development of

Understanding of Self and Others) as well as a ropes course to integrate lessons in self-respect and getting along with others/teamwork. All students benefited from the lessons. I later used these lessons and techniques in inner-city schools in Orlando - especially working with ESE boys who had been arrested and had criminal records. At the end of the year, they showed a large gain in academic instruction since the character education focused them on their future careers and daily living.

- 92) Having the students evaluate the traits that show positive and negative of characters in the stories they read.
- 93) I work with ESE student who always need encouragement ...they struggle to achieve.
- 94) I DO WISH THE GUIDANCE DEPARTMENTS COULD BE LARGE ENOUGH TO HAVE WEEKLY GUIDANCE WITH ALL STUDENTS. OUR SCHOOL ONLY HAS TRUE GUIDANCE FOUR TIMES A YEAR, BECAUSE THEY ARE ALWAYS INVOLVED WITH SRI THINGS!!!!!! I DON'T THINK THIS IS RIGHT!!
- 95) I am our school's FCA sponsor and we meet every day before school to discuss topics that concern high school students. We read scripture together and pray together. I am weary of programs that are passed down by the county office. I have seen so many of them fail. I believe that it is of primary importance that our administrators hire good people. Hire the best people possible and let them teach!
- 96) Covey habits/ Steps to Respect programs.
- 97) I use opportunities that arise in class or in the community as a springboard for discussion. Although we do have a "curriculum" in Too Good for Violence, I do not feel it meets the needs of young children. They need a program that responds to the issues they deal with: trouble making friends, tolerance, patience, and responsibility for their role in society.
- 98) Cooperative learning teaches students that you must work with people you do not like and still get along to complete the activity. (Real-world concepts). Also, literature as a basis to promote change and learn from our history. Also, student receive extra credit for classroom leadership without being told to participate (cleaning the board, picking up the floor, passing back papers, assisting other students with missed notes, providing pens, paper or highlighters for an activity). This teaches values, responsibility and permits them to gain credit for showing good leadership and character. Also, I model my doctoral work for them, and remind them that education is life-long. They can do anything they wish, and money should not be the reason for their goals. I tell them that if everyone loved what they did, and did what they loved, the world would be a better place overall. :)
- 99) I incorporate character education by providing it in the environment, with having students obtain responsibilities, and in the assignments that I have them take. The assignments include leadership, responsibility, and lead through intense discussion about why it is important to uphold a good character.
- 100) Too Good for Drugs and Too Good for Violence are two programs that I use with my students along with the Human Growth and Development program. I try to reinforce the concepts in all of those programs throughout the school year.
- 101) Our guidance office has developed an acronym for our mascot: panthers: positive, accepting, etc. We say the "Panther Pledge" each morning, and encourage

students to practice the skills in the pledge throughout the day. The guidance counselors speak to the students on the televised announcements in the morning to reinforce monthly character traits. My co-teacher and I insist that students be respectful of each other, and respectful towards all adults on campus. There are rewards (some concrete, some intangible) for respectful behavior and consequences for disrespect. We encourage honesty in all things - work, words and actions. One of our goals is to promote a strong work ethic in the students by expecting work to be done (and done well) when it is assigned - nothing less than a students' best is accepted. This belief - that the students can do good work, can be successful, and can be honest and respectful - is communicated daily.

- 102) I teach additional character education/issues and solutions more now as a Resource teacher for K-5 than ever before in the gen. ed. classroom. I see the issues that illustrate the need for more character education daily and much more frequently now than I did 6 years ago when I started teaching and a lot more here in Central Florida than I did in Southeastern PA where I taught for 3 years prior to FL, and this has surprised me. However, the guidance programs and character education programs are year long not just one week and I suppose are more established. Also, the guidance counselors in PA actually do get to meet with small groups weekly for help with family matters etc., and here- our counselors are burdened with more paperwork and administrative work than ever before. Perhaps this is one reason why I see more and more each year that students are struggling with character based decisions because if they aren't getting it at home (the biggest factor) they need the support at school and we are struggling to provide it.-Good luck on your research!
- 103) I teach the Second Step program in my Social Studies classes. This is really about bullying and on campus prevention of same among other things. The teaching of character, integrity and doing the right thing naturally fits into the discussions. There are 13 lessons in the program to fit in through the school year. Unfortunately, the school classroom has to fill the void in parenting that in past generations has provided this training. While we have so many fine students, there are too many who really have no idea how to handle themselves well in the social/public setting whether at school or anywhere else.
- 104) Too Good for Drugs Too Good for Violence Used Health and Fitness curriculum for Character Counts Implement Learning Team strategies from day one Use Team work strategies continually Strong communication with parents Involve parents in homework nights to teach/communicate the teamwork learning environment
- 105) I produce the in-house TV shows, which include the pledge to the flag and a patriotic song each morning. I insist the children treat each other with respect. Teasing is not tolerated. Excellence and good effort are rewarded.
- 106) I teach ESE students with Autism Spectrum Disorder. Social skills training/character education is part of our daily routine. I have used the LEAPS program with older Aspergers/High Functioning Autism students, the Stop-and-Think model/curriculum with all ages, social skills picture books and lessons, as well as creating specific social stories for individual situations.
- 107) We use the LEAPS lessons on a weekly basis teaching social skills and character. I work with EH kids so all day everyday is a behavior lesson. Lots of redirecting and modeling good behavior.

- 108) I feel that modeling appropriate behavior is more efficient than formal lessons.
- 109) Any opportunity that presents itself in reading materials - reading stories or novels as well as social studies or in classroom interactions between students.
- 110) I am not sure if Lake Co Schools provides a curriculum for Character Education-our Guidance Counselor does an excellent job of providing us activities and lessons to do with our students. I had mixed feelings as I was filling out this questionnaire because I feel that character education begins in the HOME! As teachers, we should not be expected to teach values to our students. Numerous times, I have seen students who act perfectly respectable toward be, become rude/violent when speaking to their own parents! It was astounding to me that the child was acting the way that he was--to his mother! If Lake County Schools does develop a curriculum that they expect us to teach the kids, the big question is...WHEN ARE WE SUPPOSED TO SQUEEZE THAT INTO OUR DAY! Best of luck with your project.
- 111) preach it - practice what you preach
- 112) Although I checked Kindergarten, I am currently a Pre-Kindergarten teacher at Astatula. EVERY day, character education is part of what I do as four-year-olds need to learn how to treat others the way they want to be treated, how to listen when others are speaking, and that they must take turns in everything we do. Good citizenship is a great part of our day - being a good citizen in our classroom involves courtesy, caring, and hopefully empathy. Empathy is the hardest at four and five years old. Good luck with your dissertation... it is truly a test of perseverance! Dr. K. Ball
- 113) WeUse ADePT meetings (small assigned groups) to teach character development and self-development.
- 114) I believe that effective teachers model and thus "teach" desirable character traits. I do not want to see it added as another must teach. I do not have time now for all I need to do.
- 115) In kindergarten we teach character ed. our entire day. It is part of our social skills and personal development curriculum.
- 116) Our school has implemented the LEAPS program for grades 3-5, and well as other character programs for younger grades. We also use the CHAMPS program to model what is expected in the classroom and to attempt to improve classroom management. Our district also uses the Too Good for Drugs program for character building.
- 117) I teach pre-K this year and K most of my 36 years. Positive character traits have been and always will be an everyday, all day, on going part of my teaching.
- 118) There are tons of ways I do incorporate it - small and big lessons!
- 119) Jrotc teacher and this is the background for all we do. HQ incorporates this into our leadership lessons.
- 120) I do not "teach" character education. I model good citizenship and good virtues for students. Cleanliness, punctuality, patience, cooperation, etc. are just a few but not all. The school is an extension of the home and as such must have the support of the parents to be successful. We teach good attributes by modeling. Students observe what we do and adjust and pay little attention to what we say about character. "Actions

speaking louder than words."

- 121) WE READ LITTLE BOOKS THAT TEACH CHARACTER EDUCATION AND ROLE PLAY SCENARIOS SO THEY FIND THE WORDS THEY NEED. I ALSO FOLLOW THE Responsive classroom training from Massachusetts.
- 122) My blueprint for morals is the Bible. God's word pretty much covers all the bases. His word is complete, covers honesty, truthfulness, respect, integrity, sexual purity, tolerance, love, God's divine plan for sexual orientation, marriage and allegiance to one partner of the opposite sex. I cover current events almost daily, so there are plenty of opportunities to address morals and choices. I am not ashamed or afraid to approach the subject under the umbrella of the mandates of God, I have to answer to Him ultimately and nobody else. Man judges my flesh, God judges my soul. I would rather be found worthy by Him and jobless, than worthy by man and condemned by God.
- 123) My third block Service-Learning class presents Character Education lessons to 5th grade students at Minneola Elementary on a monthly basis. Students design the lessons and give hands-on opportunities for younger to experience during lessons.
- 124) We have special games that we play if someone is "caught" doing something nice or showing respect. We use cooperative learning groups, which is a great way to teach a lesson in sharing while not invading personal space.
- 125) I think the word "morals" is very dangerous as one's "morals" are often determined, at least in part, by their religion. You should be careful that this does not become religious education. I think I know where you are going, but there are some who will want to take this to a level, which does not belong in public schools.
- 126) Teaching good character is constant. Just as I model kind words and respect, I expect it from my students. When the opportunity presents itself, the good choice is expected rather than the bad. Consequences for bad choices are natural. Good choices are rewarded. Kindergarten is about learning to get along.
- 127) AT THE SENIOR LEVEL, THIS IS NOT ACCOMPLISHED THRU WORKSHEETS AND STRUCTURED POWER POINT ASSISTED CURRICULUM. I CHOOSE NEWS CLIPS THAT STIMULATE DISCUSSION IN THE COURSE OF THE "READING" LESSON, EXPAND UPON MORALITY AND CHARACTER LESSONS OF LITERATURE, AND USE ANECDOTAL OPPORTUNITIES TO PROMOTE GOOD BEHAVIOR AND DISCUSSION ABOUT CHOICES, LIFE DECISIONS, FAIRNESS, ETC. WE TALK ABOUT WORLD ISSUES AND SCHOOL PROBLEMS IN THE CONTEXT OF RIGHT AND WRONG, OPTIONS, AND HOW TO ADDRESS LIFE ISSUES, REALISTICALLY. A STRUCTURED MORALITY CURRICULUM WOULD, (NO MATTER HOW WELL-INTENTIONED) I FEAR, BE MORE OF THE WHITEWASHED NONSENSE THAT WE ENJOY IN OTHER AREAS. THE OLDER KIDS WANT "REAL" AND TO BE ACKNOWLEDGED AND ADDRESSED AS ADULTS. THEY RECOGNIZE AND DISCOUNT PREPACKAGED FORMULAIC PABLUM. EACH SCHOOL, EACH CLASS, EACH STUDENT HAS DIFFERENT ISSUES AND A FORMULA DOES NOT WORK FOR ALL. THEY GENERALLY KNOW THE PRESCRIBED ANSWERS, THEY NEED REAL ANSWERS TO REAL PROBLEMS, OR AT LEAST A REAL APPROACH. I DO NOT ENDORSE THE VILLAGE TO RAISE A CHILD INTRUSIVE BIG-BROTHER THEORY, AND WOULD BE TOTALLY HOSTILE TO PACKAGED MORALITY TRAINING IN THE SCHOOL

BEING APPLIED TO MY CHILDREN, WHO, THANKFULLY, HAVE GRADUATED. CHARACTER AND MORALITY IS THE PURVUE OF THE HOME. WHERE THE HOME FAILS, OTHERS MAY PICK UP THE SLACK, AS NEEDED, BUT I WILL NOT CRAM A PACKAGE DOWN THE THROATS OF ALL OF MY STUDENTS. TO DO SO NOT ONLY OVERSTEPS THE BOUNDS OF THE SCHOOL, BUT IT INSULTS THE SANCTITY OF THE PARENT CHILD RELATIONSHIP, AND VALUE OF THE HOME. SUCH CHARACTER AND MORALITY BY AD INFINITUM COMMITTEE WILL ALSO PRESENT SUCH A POLITICALLY CORRECT CURRICULUM, WHICH IT WILL BE RENDERED SO DILUTE, AMBIGUOUS AND FORMULAICALLY INANE, THAT IT WILL DO MORE HARM THAN GOOD. OF COURSE, WE WILL ALSO HAVE THE INPUT OF THE "RELIGIOUS RIGHT" WHO WILL SEE THIS AS OPPORTUNITY TO FORWARD THEIR AGENDA, VERSUS, THE LIBERAL LEFT.....ETC.,ETC. LET TEACHERS WHO CAN, TEACH. LET THE KIDS CHOOSE THEIR OWN MENTORS WHEN THEY NEED HELP. THE GOVERNMENT/SCHOOLS WILL ONLY MAKE A MESS OF SOMETHING THAT IS AN ART, NOT A SCIENCE. YOU CANNOT REPLACE JUDGEMENT, CARING, RESPONSIBILITY, AND REALITY WITH A WORKBOOK, POWERPOINT AND SANITIZED, STATE-APPROVED, CURRICULUM TO SOLVE THE PROBLEMS OF THE CRUMBLING AMERICAN FAMILY.

- 128) I have read biographies of "heroes" who showed good character traits. When we read stories, we discuss positive and undesirable actions of the characters. Our school also uses "Steps to Respect" for character education.
- 129) I have used many resources to devise lessons on character. I am fortunate to teach P.E. and now Body Management. My classes are currently working on materials I have on tolerance, self-esteem, character, sportsmanship, bullying etc;
- 130) Character education and the development of good morals and values are integrated in my daily lessons. I do believe this is the responsibility of the child's parents but many do not take the time so it is left up to the educators.
- 131) Assignments turned in on time. Waiting for "ones" turn. Listening when others talk - me or a student. Always being courteous. Service Learning is a very beneficial tool for teaching character education. We have done one class mentoring with an elementary class to teach such lessons.
- 132) In the Social/Personal Skills class the students study healthy lifestyles, safe lifestyles, emotional health and self-advocacy, social awareness, and self-expression.
- 133) I answered the survey, and included this comment: The good questions you raise cannot accurately be answered in isolation, so let us consider them in context. Florida suffers because legislators and state leaders cut school funding, which in turn has degraded normal academic curriculum. With high schools no longer offering a normal array of courses, colleges and universities must increase remediation. The lawmakers and leaders who created this problem, in order to shift the blame away from themselves, embarked upon a "reform" agenda based on standardized testing, which purports to measure school performance but in reality only reflects a tiny portion of overall performance. What counts most is how students perform in the world after high school. Teachers know this, and continue to strive toward real-world, positive student outcomes in spite of the lack of support and attacks from above by politicians and state education bureaucrats who should be finding ways to solve the alarming curriculum problem brought about by low funding. I support character education in theory because it builds wisdom, and thus plays a role in positive student outcomes.

And in a good-faith environment, it could be added without difficulty. However, in Florida our education leaders will likely use it as another gimmick to replace traditional scholarship and further weaken knowledge. Students need both knowledge and wisdom to succeed. The people who lead our education funding efforts in the Legislature, and who direct the state DOE, have shown little interest in solving the dilemma they created. The biggest character issue in education occurs at the top, where bad faith masks the underfunding, and thus the dumbing down, of traditional academics. Let us solve the bigger character problem at the top by building and funding a curriculum that actually supports a well-rounded, deep education. Florida's leaders have to stop faking it. Then once we have a normal school system with normal course offerings, let us promote character education both ways - as part of the effective teacher's practice, and in the form of nondenominational courses that stress helpful behavior, personal responsibility, and self-sufficiency - traits shared by all ethical traditions of the world. Good luck with your project, Mike Archer Mount Dora High School

- 134) LEAPS Affective Behavior Program and Project Achieve
- 135) At the school I work out of, the administration devotes the "homeroom" to work in character development, anti-drug discussions, homelessness and hunger awareness and discussions and reading about people with disabilities and what they can and have achieved.
- 136) We discuss how characters in books/stories responded to specific situations and the consequences of those situations. We discuss specific character traits when studying books/stories and when doing creative writing. I often stop an activity to address some situation in the classroom when I see a "teachable moment".
- 137) I have a character trait of the month that we work on and "fruit" that we grow on little trees with their name on it. If they have demonstrated that trait then they get a "fruit" sticker on their tree. I am very big on manners and etiquette. I stand with my class as they go through the lunch line to make sure that they say thank you. I tell them that people with manners are perceived smarter and nicer. I also just want to add that I am not afraid to talk about moral issues with my students however, I do believe that it is the parent's responsibility to be the central source. Most are just doing a very poor job right now and so it is falling on the educators to teach not only the curriculum but how these students should act also. Thank you for doing this survey, I hope that more attention is paid to this issue.
- 138) There are clear academic and behavioral expectations in my class. I use "please" and "thank you" whenever possible, and encourage the students to do the same. I refer to them as "ladies and gentlemen" and do not allow students to interrupt me or any other speaker. Although I do not teach in a traditional academic setting I expect students to behave as they would in other classrooms--sitting in a particular seat, raising a hand to speak, etc.
- 139) Because of the time frame of what I'm suppose to cover, in my subject area, there is very little time to teacher these things with any quality. Some of the things that we do in advisory seems lame to the students and getting them to do their best with these is tough. Because there is no grading involved.
- 140) In my art class, a negative comment about artwork is absolutely not allowed. I encourage respect and kindness by encouraging students to think of positive things to

say about each other's artwork. They also know that if they do not like someone's artwork, they need to keep their opinion to themselves. This practices self-control and instills the necessity of being respectful of other's feelings.

141) I push attendance (perseverance) - I offer a prize for a class that comes to school for five consecutive days. I also push good citizenship by awarding tickets for "Catching the Students Doing Good." I give out a monthly prize by drawing a ticket out of each class's jar. I really encourage the saying of the Pledge - I read to my 1st period John McCain's story of being a POW and how one of his fellow soldiers sewed, a flag and they said the pledge every day even when it meant that they would be beaten.

142) When reading literature I always have the students relate their experiences/life to what we read. How would you have reacted in this situation? Do you think the character could have acted differently? How has his/her action affected others? These are just some of the questions I asked the students to analyze how actions draw a reaction.

143) I do this by modeling for my students and having high expectations in my classroom. I feel that is the way it should remain. There is no way to ADD MORE curriculum in the elementary schedule.

144) I teach students with Emotional/Behaviorial Disturbances in a self-contained classroom. I use reading materials (Bluford series and other teen novels) to teach students about situations that people get into and the choices that are out there. We make connections from the readings to our own lives, world, and the neighborhood (low socio-economic area). I also bring in materials to supplement the readings such as movies, news articles, and information from places such as Teaching Tolerance. My assistant and I openly discuss issues we have been faced with and the choices we have made, including the consequences. We promote intrinsic values by praising the students, calling home with good reports, or presenting them to other teachers and administrators when they have made good choices. We try to make problems become learning experiences without a "set" character curriculum. I have found incidental learning and modeling the best way of teaching morals and character education. I will tell you that the biggest obstacle to overcome is normally the home environment of the students. Many times generational poverty has its own rules and it is hard to show students that they can achieve by doing the right thing.

145) We try and work co-operatively everyday. Disrespect and mean fun are not tolerated. No interrupting is strictly enforced. We have the slogan "There is no Wisdom greater than Kindness." displayed.

146) In government, we frequently discuss sensitive issues and it is well known that a level of respect is required in order to participate in such discussions. We also directly discuss what it means to be a model citizen and why breaking laws, even minor ones, is not acceptable. Most of these lessons are done through discussion, although some of them are done in the form of writing essays or short response to a prompt.

147) Since I teach science, there is plenty of opportunity to have students work together and show respect for each other's ideas. I start each year with a discussion of integrity and honesty and reinforce it all year.

148) We mainly teach character education through guidance lessons.

149) I teach AFJROTC; all of our lessons are about leadership, perseverance,

character, honesty and integrity. It is the core to our courses!

- 150) I regularly add a character question for student response to literature they read. Several years ago, I wrote and received a \$1500 grant from the Southern Poverty Council on Tolerance. I created student backpacks for students to take home and complete character building worksheets and journals. They were to share these with their siblings and parents. This allowed them to earn character badges. I had to do a take home project because there was not enough time in the day to cover the skills I wanted students to learn. The program was successful and I did see students begin to internalize the character traits. (This should give you lots to write about!! Good Luck.)
- 151) I believe that until the parents take more responsibility in their child's character, what we do in the classroom will not matter. Character education needs to be reinforced at home. Otherwise, the students are confused and unsure of what is right or wrong.
- 152) My classroom motto is "This is OUR classroom until you decide you are more important than someone else." We live by that credo in my room. My first rule on my syllabus is that everyone has the right to learn without the criticism of others. The Mendez curriculum also assists.
- 153) I have incorporated "Character Counts" curriculum into my classroom as a middle school teacher, but I feel that is only as good as the teacher that is teaching it. Some teachers I worked with felt uncomfortable with it, and did not do a good job. I feel I influence my students more by setting examples of tolerance, fairness, and over-all goodness every day in my classroom.
- 154) I believe the character of a child is set before they enter school. Research supports this. Therefore, tolerance is part of our daily routine. Home is the place where character development is instilled.
- 155) I use picture books to show the students how someone of good and poor character impacts themselves and those around them. I incorporate these books in the stories we cover in our intensive reading program. I also give the students time to talk about events that occur both on campus and in the real world. I model all aspects of good behavior for my students at all times.
- 156) I teach an entire unit on emotional/mental health in which I incorporate self-esteem, self-concept, morality, honesty, and acceptance.
- 157) I have covered a unit on understanding the law and the consequences of breaking the law with emphasis on character as a method of staying out of situations where one would be in position of breaking the law. We practice kindness, consideration, tolerance and good citizenship in general in our classroom.
- 158) I teach EBD, so I begin the year teaching all socially appropriate behaviors the first few weeks, then we discuss character education the rest of the year...very time there is a problem, we discuss social skills and character traits.
- 159) When there is an incident on campus that the entire student body has taken sides. Such as a fight, racial or ethnic issue, I make a point to discuss the situation in class for as long as the students need to "vent", always pointing out the moral lesson that can be drawn from it.
- 160) LEAPS program provided by the county; discussion with regard to "teachable

moments" when something happens in the classroom or a current event, model acceptable character traits

- 161) This is the parents and religious activity job. We as teachers cannot be solely held responsible for teaching morals to students. This is a dangerous subject to the future of what teachers. We will be on the media telling poor Johnny he did something wrong today, ruined his self esteem
- 162) I have a quote of the day that educates, motivates and inspires. Also, I frequently give motivational speeches about how to succeed.
- 163) I answered, "mixed feelings" because I feel we do teach character development, but I am not sure I want a character development curriculum. Some of it is a "teachable" moment that allows us as a class to truly understand acceptance, or understanding.
- 164) I teach a class titled Social Personal Skills. We address Character as well as other social skills such as self-esteem, communication skills, bullying awareness and so on.
- 165) I teach my students a 4 1/2 week unit on Character Development, including self-esteem, self-concept, goal development and decision making skills.
- 166) I don't feel we should teach one unit or even two units on ethics; I feel it should be incorporated curriculum-wide in all of our subject areas. I incorporate character/moral education in many lessons: honesty, punctuality, originality of one's own work, fairness, and work habits. My students earn a work habits grade and often have "real world" assignments as if their work were an "on the job" assignment. Students create brochures, flyers, and letters that I actually use/send.
- 167) Second Step program- students did not take seriously. They were attentive in class and participated in the activities, but did not apply what they learned. GREAT program- again, students enjoy this, but I see very few results.
- 168) By promoting service/learning projects in my curriculum.
- 169) I teach LEAPS lessons every Friday.
- 170) The LEAPS curriculum, Dare to Dream, ESE materials
- 171) I have taught character education for years. I learned, from experience, how important it is. I made up some materials to use - I do it the first two weeks of school - it sets the tone for our year together. I revisit often - and focus on needs of the class.
- 172) I constantly discuss events and situations that have to do with character and moral. As a reading teacher, I choose books that will influence these characteristics and we discuss their place in our lives.
- 173) I try to incorporate current world and local events into character education opportunities on a weekly basis.
- 174) Through the Mendez program and Human Growth and Development. Sportsmanship lessons and using rules as player, fan and coach.
- 175) I teach daily social skills through Skillstreaming the Elementary School Child.
- 176) Please check spelling of the word "receive" in your research. Thanks!

177) LEAPS Lessons

178) In social studies, I teach about character when I do my unit on the Holocaust. Unfortunately, I do not have the time to do additional alternative lessons throughout the year.

179) through audience etiquette; watch, listen, and learn

APPENDIX H: EMAILS SENT TO PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR

RE: TEACHERS....I NEED YOUR HELP PLEASE - Message (HTML)

File Edit View Insert Format Tools Actions Help

Reply Reply to All Forward

You replied on 11/17/2008 12:00 PM.

From: Archer, Mike Sent: Mon 11/17/2008 11:56 AM
To: [Redacted]
Cc: 'Larry Holt'; Moxley, Susan; 'Grassel, B'
Subject: RE: TEACHERS....I NEED YOUR HELP PLEASE

I answered the interesting survey about character education, and included this comment:

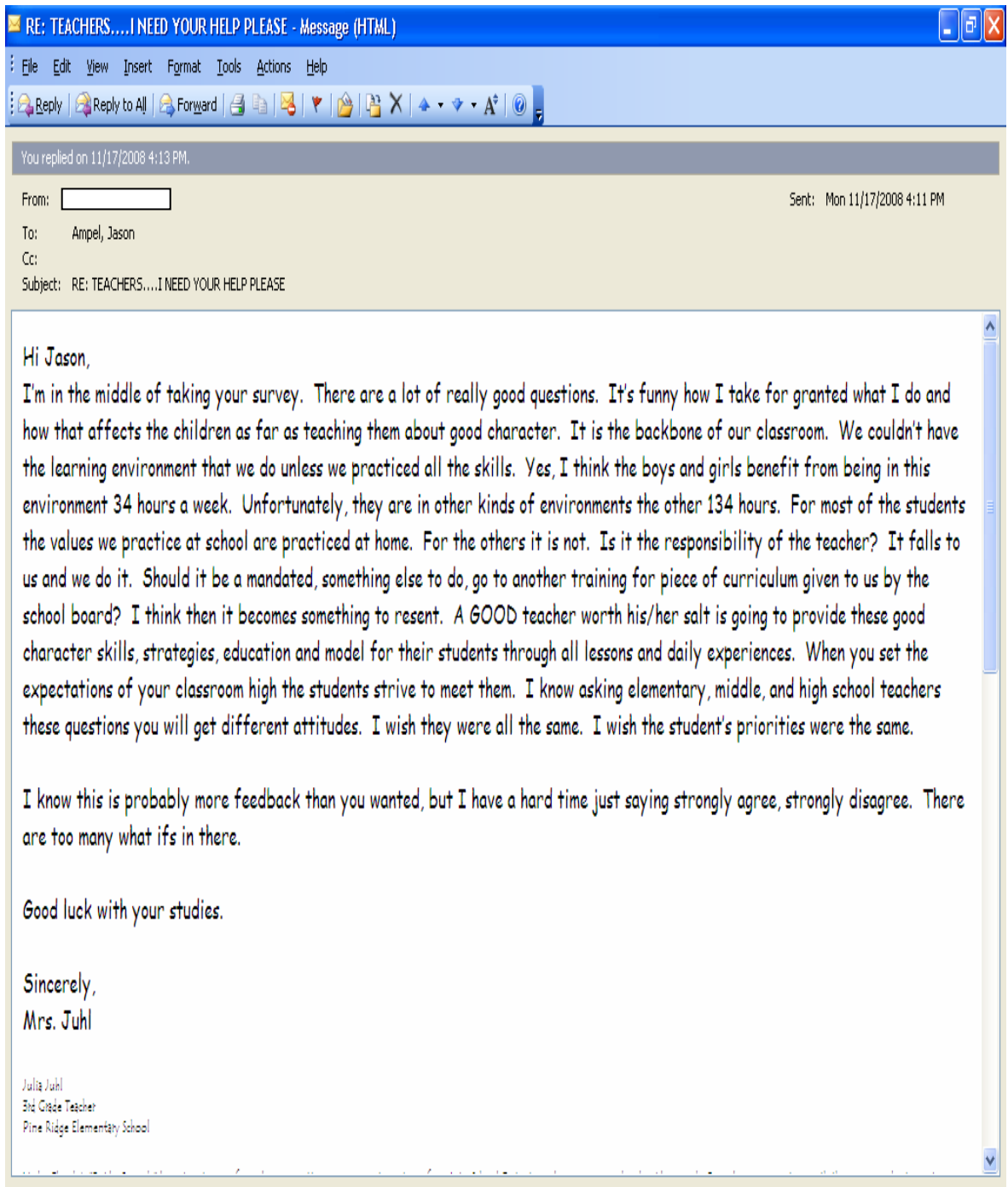
The good questions you raise cannot accurately be answered in isolation, so let's consider them in context.

Florida suffers because legislators and state leaders cut school funding, which in turn has degraded normal academic curriculum. With high schools no longer offering a normal array of courses, colleges and universities must increase remediation. The lawmakers and leaders who created this problem, in order to shift the blame away from themselves, embarked upon a "reform" agenda based on standardized testing, which purports to measure school performance but in reality only reflects a tiny portion of overall performance.

What counts most is how students perform in the world after high school. Teachers know this, and continue to strive toward real-world, positive student outcomes in spite of the lack of support and attacks from above by politicians and state education bureaucrats who should be finding ways to solve the alarming curriculum problem brought about by low funding.

I support character education in theory because it builds wisdom, and thus plays a role in positive student outcomes. And in a good-faith environment it could be added without difficulty. However, in Florida our education leaders will likely use it as another gimmick to replace traditional scholarship and further weaken knowledge.

Students need both knowledge and wisdom to succeed. The people who lead our education funding efforts in the Legislature, and who direct the state DOE, have shown little interest in solving the dilemma they created. The biggest character issue in education occurs at the top, where bad faith masks the underfunding, and thus the dumbing down, of traditional academics.



APPENDIX I: RECRUITMENT LETTER



I am currently a 7th grade social studies teacher at Clermont Middle School in Lake County and a doctoral student at the University of Central Florida. I am conducting a survey research study on the topic of Character Education in public schools. I have constructed a questionnaire as a part of my dissertation research.

Your input as educators is extremely valuable.

The questionnaire will consist of 50 short statements concerning teaching character education in Lake County Public Schools.

The questionnaire will only take 7-8 minutes to complete.

Lake County Public Schools and the Institutional Review Board at the University of Central Florida have approved this study.

If possible, can you please take some time to complete this survey within the next two weeks. That would be by November 26, 2008.

The link below will take you to the survey. By clicking on the link below, you have agreed to take part in the survey research project:

http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=QIbwdcUyDNVXUgDuNJ5Cmg_3d_3d

Jason Alex Ampel

Principal Investigator

APPENDIX J: PRELIMINARY TESTING FOR EXPERIENCE

Box's Test of Equality of Covariance Matrices requires a significance level higher than .001 to not violate the assumption (Pallant, 2005, pg. 258). In this case, the significance level was .459 meeting the necessary requirements.

To test whether the assumption of equality of variance for a variable has been violated, a Levene's Test of Equality of Error Variances must be conducted. This tests the normality of the data and requires a significance level for each dependent variable of importance, efficacy, and practice of .05 or greater. If this assumption is violated, a researcher must set a more conservative alpha level when looking for significance in the Tests of Between-Subjects Effects. The dependent variable of importance had a significance level of .948. The dependent variable of efficacy had a significance level of .370. The dependent variable of practice had a significance level of .393 within Levene's Test of Equality of Error Variances.

APPENDIX K: PRELIMINARY TESTING FOR DEGREE ATTAINED

Box's Test of Equality of Covariance Matrices requires a significance level higher than .001 to not violate the assumption (Pallant, 2005, pg. 258). In this case, the significance level was .795 meeting the necessary requirements.

To test whether the assumption of equality of variance for a variable has been violated, a Levene's Test of Equality of Error Variances must be conducted. This tests the normality of the data and requires a significance level for each dependent variable of importance, efficacy, and practice of .05 or greater. If this assumption is violated, a researcher must set a more conservative alpha level when looking for significance in the Tests of Between-Subjects Effects. The dependent variable of importance had a significance level of .243. The dependent variable of efficacy had a significance level of .414. The dependent variable of practice had a significance level of .188 within Levene's Test of Equality of Error Variances.

APPENDIX L: PRELIMINARY TESTING FOR GENDER

Box's Test of Equality of Covariance Matrices requires a significance level higher than .001 to not violate the assumption (Pallant, 2005, pg. 258). In this case, the significance level was .559 meeting the necessary requirements.

To test whether the assumption of equality of variance for a variable has been violated, a Levene's Test of Equality of Error Variances must be conducted. This tests the normality of the data and requires a significance level for each dependent variable of importance, efficacy, and practice of .05 or greater. If this assumption is violated, a researcher must set a more conservative alpha level when looking for significance in the Tests of Between-Subjects Effects. The dependent variable of importance had a significance level of .288. The dependent variable of efficacy had a significance level of .351. The dependent variable of practice had a significance level of .037 within Levene's Test of Equality of Error Variances. Since this dependent variable violates the significance level of $<.05$, a Bonferroni adjustment will be made when investigating the Test of Between-Subjects Effects.

APPENDIX M: PRELIMINARY TESTING FOR NBCT

Box's Test of Equality of Covariance Matrices requires a significance level higher than .001 to not violate the assumption (Pallant, 2005, pg. 258). In this case, the significance level was .050 meeting the necessary requirements.

To test whether the assumption of equality of variance for a variable has been violated, a Levene's Test of Equality of Error Variances must be conducted. This tests the normality of the data and requires a significance level for each dependent variable of importance, efficacy, and practice of .05 or greater. If this assumption is violated, a researcher must set a more conservative alpha level when looking for significance in the Tests of Between-Subjects Effects. The dependent variable of importance had a significance level of .686. The dependent variable of efficacy had a significance level of .673. The dependent variable of practice had a significance level of .685 within Levene's Test of Equality of Error Variances.

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