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**A STUDY OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN
PRE-SERVICE CHARACTER
EDUCATION TRAINING AND TEACHER EFFICACY**

**by
Judy Koller**

**Presented to the Graduate and Research Committee
of Lehigh University
in Candidacy for the Degree of
Doctor of Education
In Elementary Education**

Lehigh University

April 25, 2006

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CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

Approval and recommended for acceptance as a dissertation in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education.

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to determine if relationships exist between the inclusion of university-based pre-service teacher coursework in character education on a teacher's sense of efficacy for teaching character education in the classroom. The study investigated if the type of institution of higher education (private- religious or public), pre-service character education training through university coursework or staff development, grade-level taught, and years of experience of the teacher played a role in a teacher's belief about their own ability to teach character education.

Surveys were used for the research method. The Character Education Efficacy Belief Instrument (CEEBI) building on the work of Milson and Mehlig (2002) was administered. The study was conducted in May-June 2005 with practicing elementary teachers and at mid-term of the fall 2005 semester with pre-service student teachers. Data was collected from 106 elementary certified teachers practicing in 10 public schools (7 school districts), and 4 private-religious schools. Information from 76 pre-service teachers was collected from a public university and a private-religious college.

The study found that the independent variables did not play a significant role on a teacher's sense of efficacy for teaching character education. Both pre-service and practicing teachers with 0 to 6 years experience received little or no formal training for teaching character education. Practicing teachers reported higher self-efficacy for discussing issues of right and wrong with students. Pre-

service teachers reported a greater sense of efficacy for teaching responsibility at school if this trait was not encouraged in the child's home.

The significance of the study for the educational community was discussed. Limitations of the study and directions for future research were presented.

Chapter 1

The Research Plan

Introduction

Every day American schools are confronted with the problems of disruptive, antisocial or violent behaviors that impede teaching and learning. During this time of increased bullying and violence in schools, it is important for students to be exposed to programs that promote peace and respect. “The need for character education is self-evident” (Nielsen, 2003, p. 3).

What is Character Education?

As defined by the U. S. Department of Education, “character education is a school strategy that helps students develop six core traits: caring, civic virtue and citizenship; justice and fairness; respect; responsibility, and trustworthiness. The Bureau of Community and Student Services is working with schools, students, parents, community agencies, and others to develop and implement character education curriculum materials, teacher-training programs and support activities” (Pennsylvania Department of Education, 2005, p. 1).

According to the definition used by the U.S. Department of Education’s Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools (OSDFS), character education is an inclusive concept regarding all aspects of how schools and related social institutions can support the positive character development of children and adults. “Character refers to the emotional, intellectual, and moral qualities of a person or

group as well as the demonstration of these virtues in pro-social behavior and a moral life” (U.S. Department of Education’s Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools, 2004, p. 1).

The Character Education Partnership (1997) defines character education as efforts to help young people develop good character, which includes knowing about, caring about, and acting upon core ethical values such as fairness, honesty, compassion, responsibility, and respect for self and others. “The intent of character education is to enhance positive student behavior. The overall goal is to help children function in society with recognizably accepted virtues that are a community’s best values and ethical ideals” (Hall, 2000, p. xxiii).

Why is Character Education Important?

Teachers and school administrators in the United States are called upon to pursue character education in schools (Vessels, 1998). Most states in the United States have developed standards and mandates that require, or at least encourage, teachers to address the character development of students in an explicit manner (Neilson, 1998). The Character Education Partnership’s *Eleven Principles of Effective Character Education* call upon schools to address character education in their academic curriculum, extra-curricular activities, interpersonal relationships, and school governance (Lickona, Schaps, & Lewis, 1996). School-based programs such as service learning, life skills education, conflict resolution and violence prevention, social and emotional learning, education for the prevention

of drug/alcohol abuse, and sex education are all described as supporting elements of character education (Milson, 2003, p. 3).

In addition, professional organizations including the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD), the National School Boards Association (NSBA), the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP), the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), the National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS), and the National Education Association (NEA) have endorsed character education as an important educational movement (Nielson, 1998).

In Pennsylvania, *Chapter 4* outlines the basic curriculum standards that must be met for programs to work toward meeting requirements under *No Child Left Behind*. The Pennsylvania Department of Education (2005) recommends in *Parameters and Best Practices*, “Character education shall be included in the local curriculum with value development, and the use of additional resources to reinforce positive values, incorporated into the daily program” (Pennsylvania Department of Education, 2005, p. 2).

Character Education in Teacher Training Programs

The Pennsylvania Code of Professional Practice and Conduct for Educators states in Section 4, Number 6, “Professional educators shall impart to their students principles of good citizenship and societal responsibility” (Pennsylvania Department of Education, 2005). In addition, the PDE guide for *Specific Teacher Education Standards* shall address, “Curriculum models and

approaches including individual and group guidance behaviors, problem solving, and conflict resolution” (Pennsylvania Department of Education, 2005).

Current proposals call upon teachers to serve as positive role models, to seize opportunities to reflect on moral issues within the context of the curriculum, to create a moral classroom climate, and to provide students with opportunities outside the classroom to practice good character through service programs, clubs, and peer tutoring (DeRoche & Williams, 2001; Lickona, 1991; Ryan & Bohlin, 1999; Wiley, 1998; Wynne, 1997). A substantial body of educational literature has focused on the notion of schools and teachers as moral agents noting that “Teacher-preparing institutions and teacher educators carry a heavy responsibility for the educational and professional socialization of teachers who will come to possess the necessary awareness and commitment” (Goodlad, 1990, p. 30).

The call for recent teacher education reform indicates there is support for including character education in teacher preparation program design (Jones, Ryan, & Bohlin (1998); Milson, 2000), yet “there is little training available, particularly at the pre-service level” (Berkowitz, 1998, p. 5). There is little evidence that teacher education programs are actively engaged in the task (Center for the Advancement of Ethics and Character [CAEC] & Character Education Partnership [CEP], 1999; Jones, Ryan, & Bohlin, 1998; Williams and Schaps, 1999). In a nationwide survey, Jones, Ryan, and Bohlin (1998) found that “despite widespread support for character education.... it is not currently a high priority in the curriculum of teacher education” (p. 17).

What is Self-Efficacy?

According to Milson (2003), “Self-efficacy refers to an individual’s belief in his or her ability to act in a manner that will produce desired outcomes. This involves one’s sense of competence in a given situation. Outcome expectancies refer to an individual’s prediction of the likely consequences of his or her actions. Teacher-efficacy has been found to affect student achievement, student motivation, and student’s own sense of efficacy” (p. 7).

What is Teacher-Efficacy?

To develop teachers’ capacities to provide character education, we need to understand what components of character education tend to undermine teacher efficacy. Gibson and Dembo (1984) identified two components of teacher efficacy: personal teacher efficacy (PTE) and general teacher efficacy (GTE). The construct of personal teaching efficacy, based on Bandura’s (1997) theory of self-efficacy, refers to a teacher’s belief about his or her abilities as a teacher. The second construct, general teaching efficacy, is based on Bandura’s (1997) concept of outcome expectancy, which is an individual’s belief about “the degree to which the environment can be controlled, that is, the extent to which students can be taught given such factors as family background, IQ, and school conditions” (Gibson & Dembo, 1984, p. 570). Thus, a teacher’s efficacy beliefs are a combination of perceptions of personal influence and perceptions of the influence of factors external to the classroom. Both of these dimensions of efficacy are relevant to understanding a teacher’s approach to character education. A teacher

who is motivated and persistent regarding character education is likely to believe in his or her own ability to build students' character (Milson & Mehlig, 2002, p. 48).

Teachers' Sense of Efficacy for Character Education

Developing character in youth is a complex process that is unlikely to yield immediate or easily measured results. Among other requirements, teachers must be persistent and motivated for the task. Teacher persistence and motivation have been linked to the construct of teacher efficacy in that teachers with high levels of efficacy tend to exert more effort in teaching situations and tend to persist when faced with obstacles (Gibson & Dembo, 1984).

“The construct of teacher efficacy has clear relevance for character education. For character education to be effective, a teacher must believe in his or her own ability to build the character of students, as well as the ability of teachers in general to overcome negative influences from outside the classroom” (Milson, 2003, p. 9). The character education literature suggests that many teachers lack such convictions (Lickona, 1993; Ryan & Bohlin, 1999; Berkowitz, 1999).

Lickona (1993) observed that, “Character education is far more complex than teaching mathematics or reading; it requires personal growth as well as skills development. Yet teachers typically receive almost no pre-service or in-service training in the moral aspects of their craft. Many teachers do not feel comfortable in the values domain” (p. 11).

Edward DeRoche (2000) explains that the teacher-training process is one of the ten critical factors to having an effective character education program.

“Because a substantial amount of the educational process involving character education takes place in the classroom with the teacher being the main source of direction, it seems only right then for teachers to have additional training and support in order for character education programs to be effective” (p. 32).

Berkowitz (1999) noted that although some teachers have a natural inclination to be character educators, others “find the whole enterprise an unwelcome concept” and “lack the skills, knowledge, and motivation to be character educators” (p. 22). “For teacher education to be effective in training for character education, there needs to be teacher training institutions that focus on character education as a sub-specialty” (Berkowitz, 1998, p. 3).

Although the Character Education Partnership contends that the teacher is central to character education and the classroom could be the one arena to reinforce, model, and practice positive character traits on a daily basis, “there is clearly a discrepancy between the high expectations placed on teachers by state governments and school districts to serve as character educators and the amount of training they receive for the role” (Milson, 2003, p. 5).

The Research Purpose

This project was built on the work of Milson and Mehlig (2002). The purpose of this research study was to investigate whether a relationship existed

between the inclusion of university-based coursework in teacher training programs and a teacher's sense of efficacy for teaching character education.

Information about the effects of how character education integration into teacher preparation curriculum including the vision of the higher-education institutions (public; private, non-religiously affiliated; private, religiously affiliated, colleges and universities) was explored.

Concerns about teacher-efficacy in teaching character education resting in the following independent variables: (1) years of teaching experience, (2) the type of institution where teacher certification was received, and (3) character education training in the coursework or staff development received was analyzed.

Objectives of the Research Project

Members of the educational community continue to voice concerns over addressing character education. There is a need to discover if relationships exist between character education training and a teacher's sense of competence toward teaching character education. "For teacher training in character education to become effective, there is a need to understand how teachers perceive their ability to accomplish the task of character education. This understanding can serve to guide teacher education toward building teachers' knowledge and skills related to character education and, perhaps more importantly, toward building the motivation, resilience, and persistence for success in this domain" (Milson, 2003, p. 6).

Finding out whether or not relationships exist between the impact of university-based pre-service coursework in character education and a teacher's sense of efficacy for teaching character education is an important task. The findings represent important information with the potential to empower educators to make future choices about pre-service character education program incentives. The overall objectives of this research project were:

1. To survey pre-service and practicing teachers' sense of efficacy for teaching character education.
2. To discern if university-based character education coursework has a positive impact on teacher-efficacy.
3. To determine if there are deficiencies in teacher preparation programs for the development of a positive sense of efficacy for teaching character education.

Research Questions

1. What is the relationship, if any, on the impact of teacher preparation coursework in character education and a teacher's sense of efficacy to teach character education?
2. Is there a significant difference between institutions of higher education (college/university) that have a specific commitment to integrate character building courses and activities into their educator preparatory programs and how teachers perceive their ability to accomplish the task of teaching character education?

Hypotheses

1. Teachers receiving university-based coursework in character education will show higher levels of character education teacher-efficacy than teachers who have not had training in this area.
2. Teachers' trained at institutions of higher education, which demonstrate a commitment to preparing students in courses with values-centered components will demonstrate a greater self-efficacy for teaching character education.

Definition of Terms

The following definitions are provided to clarify use in this study:

Character - "One's personal characteristics" (Center for Civic Education, 1995).

"Refers to the emotional, intellectual, and moral qualities of a person or group as well as the demonstration of these virtues in pro-social behavior and moral life" (U.S. Department of Education's Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools, 2004).

Character Education - "as a term has been used interchangeably for moral education, conflict resolution, and life skills education. One commonly accepted definition of character education is "an integrated, intentional effort to help students understand, develop, and use commonly accepted ethical values" (Wilbur, 2000).

Character Education – “is commonly defined as the process of developing in students an understanding of, commitment to, and tendency to behave in accordance with core ethical values” (Milson & Mehlig, 2002, p. 47).

Civic - “One’s public responsibility” (Center for Civic Education, 1995).

Civic Education - “Fosters the development of such behaviors as self discipline, respect for individual worth, and human dignity, respect for differing ideas and for those who hold them, concern for the well-being of others, civic mindedness and attention to public affairs, loyalty, patriotism, understanding of pluralism, support for equality of opportunity and for the common good” (Center for Civic Education, 1995).

Empathy - “Allows the child to appreciate the perspectives and feelings of another, to sense violations of justice and care, and to better distinguish right from wrong” (Berreth & Berman, 1997).

Ethics - “A group of values or beliefs that govern behavior” (Webster’s Third International Dictionary, 1993).

Ideals - “A mental image of excellence or a perfect exemplar that one believes to be attainable” (Webster’s Third International Dictionary, 1993).

Morality - “Habits of conduct relating to right and wrong, good and bad”

(Webster’s Third International Dictionary, 1993).

Principle - “Guiding rules or codes of good conduct by which one directs one’s life or actions” (Webster’s Third International Dictionary, 1993).

Self-Discipline - “Provides the ability to take action and delay or even forgo gratification in order to remain committed to a set of values or goals. Together these skills provide the foundation for moral behavior” (Berreth & Berman, 1997).

Self-Efficacy - is the power of a teacher to produce effects or intended results: effectiveness (Milson, 2003).

Staff Development - Non-university based workshops, conferences, and sessions addressing character development (Milson, 2003).

Teacher-Efficacy – A combination of perceptions of personal influence and perceptions of the influence of factors external to the classroom. “A teacher who is motivated and persistent regarding character education is likely to believe in his or her own ability to build students’ character and the ability of teachers in general to overcome negative influences outside the classroom” (Milson & Mehlig, 2002, p. 47).

Type of College/University (Institutions of Higher Education) -

1. Public College/University
2. Private, Non-religiously affiliated College/University
3. Private, Religiously affiliated College/University
4. Alternative certification: Not through a College/University (Milson, 2003)

University-Based Coursework – Undergraduate courses that address character education (Milson, 2003).

Values - “Successful social concepts held in general high regard, which are derived from pragmatic usefulness over time” (Webster’s Third International Dictionary, 1993).

Virtues - “Traits that adhere to the highest standards of good in order to further the pursuit of the general welfare” (Webster’s Third International Dictionary, 1993).

Chapter Two

Review of Literature

Introduction

Many schools have embraced “character education” as a way to teach a core group of community values as a way to provide guidance for the positive behaviors that should be a part of the education of all people. Many experts have called for schools to be more active in teaching the moral and civic values that are an essential part of our social fabric and sense of community. These calls are not new. In 1909 Dewey stated “A successful school, like a successful business, is a cohesive community of shared values, beliefs, rituals and ceremonies” (Safe and Responsive Schools Project, 2004, p. 1).

Until recent years, the focus of education in America had primarily been on the development of academic skills rather than social competencies. In the 1990s, with the dramatic and increasingly common incidents of school violence, a movement toward teaching academics in combination with character emerged. Character education has recently gained renewed popularity in American schools, both public and private (School Violence Resource Center, 2000).

Milson and Mehlig (2002), authors of *Elementary School Teachers’ Sense of Efficacy for Character Education* contend, “That due to the increasing violence, drug abuse, teen pregnancy, and similar irresponsible and disrespectful behavior, there has been a lack of attention to character in schools” (p. 47).

Cletus Bulach (2002), author of *Implementing a Character Education Curriculum*

and Assessing its impact on Student Behavior states, “Clearly there is a need in our society...to have citizens and students practice behaviors that are of a more civil and moral nature than currently is the pattern” (p. 80). Researcher Lynn Nielsen, upon testing the effectiveness of specific character education programs shares that there is a great need for students to be exposed to programs that promote peace and respect. “The need for character education is self-evident” (Nielsen, 2003, p. 3).

What is Character Education?

As defined by the U. S. Department of Education, “character education is a school strategy that helps students develop six core traits: caring, civic virtue and citizenship; justice and fairness; respect; responsibility, and trustworthiness. The Bureau of Community and Student Services is working with schools, students, parents, community agencies, and others to develop and implement character education curriculum materials, teacher-training programs and support activities” (Pennsylvania Department of Education, 2005, p. 1).

According to the definition used by the U.S. Department of Education’s Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools (OSDFS), character education is an inclusive concept regarding all aspects of how schools and related social institutions can support the positive character development of children and adults. “Character” refers to the emotional, intellectual, and moral qualities of a person or group as well as the demonstration of these virtues in pro-social behavior and a

moral life” (U.S. Department of Education’s Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools, 2004, p. 1).

The Character Education Partnership (1997) defines character education as efforts to help young people develop good character, which includes knowing about, caring about, and acting upon ethical values such as fairness, honesty, compassion, responsibility, and respect for self and others. Wilbur (2000) defines character education as “an integrated, intentional effort to help students understand, develop, and use commonly accepted ethical values” (p. 10). “The intent of character education is to enhance positive student behavior. The overall goal is to help children function in society with recognizably accepted virtues that are a communities best values and ethical ideals” (Hall, 2000, p. xxiii).

Character education is the process of learning common attitudes, beliefs and behaviors that are important for people to have as responsible citizens. Good character education can provide ground rules for life for adults and young people, as it stresses the importance of helping children learn and practice behaviors that reflect universal ethical values. Character education helps children become: (1) Conscious of the right thing to do. (2) Committed to doing the right thing. (3) Competent in doing the right thing (Michigan 4-H Youth Development, 2002).

Certain words occur in any discussion of character, such as “values,” “morals,” “ethics,” “principles,” and “virtues” (Hall, 2000, p. xxiii). “Character Education” as a term, has been used interchangeably for moral education, conflict resolution, life skills education, and health education. The term has been used to

describe a vast number of programs, either developed commercially or at the district/school level, to address moral and character development, as well as civic-mindedness (School Violence Resource Center, 2000).

“Character education” is an umbrella term used to describe many aspects of teaching and learning for personal development. Some areas under this umbrella are “moral education/virtues,” “life skills education,” “caring community,” “health education,” “violence prevention,” “conflict resolution/peer mediation.” and “ethic/moral philosophy” (Character Education Partnership 1999, p. 3). Other school based programs such as “service learning,” “education for the prevention of drug /alcohol abuse,” “social and emotional learning”, and “sex education” are all described as supporting elements of character education (Milson, 2003, p. 3).

As indicated by the variety of terms associated with it, character education is broad in scope and difficult to define precisely. Character education treats various aspects of moral education, civic education, and character development. This multi-faceted composition makes character education a difficult concept to address in schools. Each component provides a slightly different slant on what is important, and what should be taught” (Otten, 2000, p.1).

Why is Character Education Important?

Teachers and school administrators in the United States are called upon to pursue character education in schools (Vessels, 1998). Most states in the United

States have developed standards and mandates that require, or at least encourage, teachers to address the character development of students in an explicit manner (Neilson, 1998). The Character Education Partnership's *Eleven Principles of Effective Character Education* call upon schools to address character education in their academic curriculum, extra-curricular activities, interpersonal relationships, and school governance (Lickona, Schaps, & Lewis, 1996). School based programs such as service learning, life skills education, conflict resolution and violence prevention, social and emotional learning, education for the prevention of drug/alcohol abuse, and sex education are all described as supporting elements of character education (Milson, 2003, p. 3).

In addition, professional organizations including the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD), the National School Boards Association (NSBA), the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP), the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), the National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS), and the National Education Association (NEA) have endorsed character education as an important educational movement (Nielson, 1998).

In Pennsylvania, *Chapter 4* outlines the basic curriculum standards that must be met for programs to work toward meeting requirements under *No Child Left Behind*. The Pennsylvania Department of Education (2005) recommends in *Parameters and Best Practices*, "Character education shall be included in the local curriculum with value development, and the use of additional resources to

reinforce positive values, incorporated into the daily program” (Pennsylvania Department of Education, 2005, p. 2).

Walsh (1990) defines education as the process that prepares young people for their social inheritance and advocates three dimensions of education – development of knowledge, training of mental abilities, and development of character. In general, character, good or bad, is considered to be observable in one’s conduct (Walberg & Wynne, 1989). Although character education programs teach a set of commonly accepted set of morals and values, such as trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, and caring, the emphasis of the curriculum is on the student’s observable behaviors rather than the internal values that shape one’s behaviors (Huitt, 1998).

Morals and values cannot be observed or measured, but behaviors can. Districts and schools that have implemented character education programs have reported many observable differences in areas such as academic achievement, school attendance, student dropout rates, behavior, peer interaction, school culture, and parental involvement (Wilbur 2000; Otten, 2000).

Why Character Education?

Many people are concerned about the breakdown in the healthy moral development of children. Increases in delinquency, pregnancy, violence and substance abuse continue to climb among adolescents. Surveys have shown astonishingly high levels of cheating, lying, stealing and drunken driving among teens and young adults. Adults clearly need to do a better job of teaching and

modeling high standards of behavior in the family, school, and community (Michigan 4-H Youth Development, 2002).

Character education is based on the premise that teaching for character is essential for the success of a democratic society that upholds the ideals of respect for others, regard for fairness and justice, concern for the common good, and voluntary participation in helping others. Many educators who implement character education in their schools believe that it helps students develop ethically, socially, and academically, and assists them in understanding both their personal and community responsibilities. As documented by the United States Department of Education's Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools (2004) by character education expert Rushworth M. Kidder, Director of the Institute of Global Ethics, "Character education is essentially about ethics – the application of values to decision making. If you have a set of values, you can either comply or depart from them" (p. 2).

Today, one of the issues of the school reform movement is the focus on character education programs. These programs have spread to nearly every type of school, whether public, private, charter, or faith based in a region funded by Mid-Continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL), (Wilber, 2000).

An Overview of Character Education in America

The theme, the education of the population for citizenship, is throughout major writings in American Education. In the fifth century BC Socrates said, "Our youth now love luxury. They have bad manners, contempt for authority, and

show disrespect for their elders. They contradict their parents; they chatter before company; they gobble their food, and they terrorize their teachers” (Hall, 2000, p. xvi).

Patricia Vardin (2003), author of “Character Education in America” states, “The founding fathers of America believed that good character was needed by its citizens in order to preserve a democracy” (p. 32). In the year 1642, character education made its first appearance in the school curriculum and continued to be an important aspect of educating young children even into the 1900s. Maria Montessori was an advocate for the inclusion of character education and “believed that character education was of equal if not greater consequence than learning to read, write, and do numbers” (Vardin, 2003, p. 32).

Character education was once the sole reason to educate the masses in America. John Locke, 17th Century philosopher, advocated education as “Education for character development.” In 1850, Herbert Spencer said, “Education has for its object the formation of character” (Hall, 2000, p. xxi). Character education was the central focus in the work of Horace Mann (Curti, 1959) and in the 19th century permeated the progressive ideas of John Dewey (1974) believing that educators should be concerned with positive social traits and values such as cooperation, social adjustment, and democracy (Dewey, 1944).

According to Vardin (2003), character education was eliminated from the school’s curriculum in the 1960s and 1970s. Contributing to the decline of character education was the perception of society that “all values are relative, an increase in diversity in schools, fewer rules were being placed upon children in

the school and at home, and the absence of prayer in schools. The elimination of prayer in schools was another reason for character education being taken away. During this decade character education was considered an aspect of moral teaching, which was ultimately associated with religion” (p. 32).

“Since the 1960’s teacher education has downplayed the teacher’s role as transmitter of social and personal values and emphasized other areas such as teaching techniques, strategies, models, and skills. More and more the vision of a good teacher is as the good technician, the skilled craftsman, who has acquired those behavioral skills and strategies that the “effective teacher” research claims are related to achievement. Educational psychology, rather than philosophy and religion, has become the basis of teacher training” (Huitt, 1998, p. 2).

Marvin Berkowitz (1998), author of *Obstacles to Teacher Training in Character Education*, states, “That for many years the authority to teach character education has been claimed by religious institutions, families, and the state” (p. 18). This issue of religion appears to be a major contributor to the current debate of whether it is still ethical for character education to be taught in the public school system (Berkowitz, 1998).

Kohlberg’s (1969) approaches and those of Peck and Havighurst (1960) in the 1960’s inhibited the reemergence of moral development as did the report, *A Nation at Risk* (1983), in the 20th century.

In our current world, the theme in American schools for character development continues. “Now after a generation of confusion about how to return to teaching values, schools are again grappling with methods to address the

character development of their children. The high cost of neglect has become unbearable. Character Education has caught attention in Congress, and The Department of Education allotted \$5.2 million in 1998 to pursue character education instruction” (Hall, 2000, p. xxii).

Over the years several schools and communities worked together establishing character education programs at specific grade levels or within particular curriculum (Ryan, 1986). Several educators believing that a long tradition connects public education with the formation of character include the works of Benninga (1991), and Brogan & Brogran (1999). Recent character education research has indicated that children learn commitment to ethical values from identifying with significant others who live by these values and experience positive reinforcement of positive values (DeRoche, 2000).

The History of Character Education Programs

The character education programming began in 1994 when the Partnership in Character Education Pilot Projects were authorized by Congress. Under this initiative, the Secretary of Education could make a total of up to 10 grants annually to state education agencies in partnership with one or more local educational agencies. Grantees were required to implement projects that incorporated specified elements of character: caring, civic virtue and citizenship, justice and fairness, respect, responsibility, and trustworthiness (U.S. Department of Education’s Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools, (2004, p. 4).

Since 1996, the U.S. Department of Education has awarded more than \$25 million in character education seed money to 36 states and the District of Columbia (Wilber, 2000). Federally funded projects supporting character education in participating states include: California, Connecticut, Iowa, Kentucky, Maryland, Missouri, New Jersey, New Mexico, North Carolina, South Carolina, Utah, and Washington” (Kirchoff, 1997).

In 2001, the character education program was reauthorized and significantly enhanced as part of the *No Child Left Behind Act*. “The new legislation emphasizes a partnership between the school, home, and community all working together to integrate values into children’s learning and lives,” said Linda McKay, senior advisor to the deputy under the secretary for the Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools. The legislation also focuses on the integration of character education into a school’s curriculum offerings and teaching methods. As with other elements of the *No Child Left Behind Act*, the new character education legislation emphasizes proven methods. Grantees must demonstrate that their character education programs have clear objectives that are based on scientifically-based research and must specify how the program will be evaluated (U.S. Department of Education’s Office of Safe and Drug Free-Schools, 2004, p. 4).

Support for Character Education Programs

As a result of societal changes, norms that once were part of the hidden curriculum are today becoming part of planned social experiences (Bowman &

Potts, 2001). Character education frameworks to guide principals in designing programs with critical vision and purpose (DeRoche, 2000), character education research combined with best practices in schools and districts (DeRoche & Williams, 2001), and models for preparing teachers for character education (Milson, 2001), suggest how schools can prepare effective character educators (Munson, 2000).

Several State Departments of Education have linked character education to national curriculum standards. Mandated character education programs in schools throughout Georgia reveal that acceptance of character education is fairly strong among principals (von Eschenbach, 2001, p. 50). Programs developed through “Building Good Citizens for Texas” (Texas Education Agency, 2000), and instructions for teaching character education with quality children’s literature (Wisconsin State Department of Public Instruction, 2001) are examples of specific curricular applications used by states for positive character development. Designing character education curricula that are meaningful and respectful of all learners are the views included in the works of Lickona (1998), Singh (2001), and DeRoche & Williams (2001).

A study in 2001 to analyze the effectiveness of character education based on the perspectives to Alabama public school administrators and teachers was initiated. 249 practitioners participated in the study and findings showed that educators are supportive of character education and felt it is needed in the schools. Results to the survey revealed improved behavior, fewer discipline problems, less violence and sexual harassment. Their perceptions are that students are better

citizens because of the character education program. In addition, they also believed the curriculum was adequate, lessons were relevant, and the teachers were dedicated to teaching character education (Davidson & Stokes, 2001).

Character Education Programs in Elementary Schools

Based on the framework of a well known character education program called *Character Counts*, and the crucial character traits of respect, responsibility, trustworthiness, fairness, caring, and citizenship, first grade character education lessons can easily integrate the daily job chart activities into the existing curriculum (Singh, 2001, p. 46).

Character Counts is a nonpartisan, nonsectarian coalition of schools, communities and nonprofit organizations working to advance character education by teaching the Six Pillars of character: trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, and citizenship. In a web-based survey to analyze teacher behavior, results demonstrated that extension educators and assistants were more likely to make ethical decisions in their personal lives and society, through the internalization of character traits as a result of teaching *Character Counts*. The survey also suggested the need for increased implementation of the *Character Counts* programs (Harms & Fritz, 2001).

With anecdotal records and behavior checklists used by teachers and parents in a kindergarten classroom, Bonnie Fixler (2000) implemented a character development action research project. The intent was to demonstrate the need for character education and to document improvement. By incorporating

character education into the curriculum, using cooperative learning, the multiple intelligences strategies, and the involvement of parents as role models, post intervention data indicated improvement in character development among some children. However, more time with the intervention was recommended to achieve more desired results (Fixler, 2000).

A study by researchers Carlson, Johnson, and Swift (2000) was developed and a series of lessons for fourth, sixth grade, and special education classrooms focusing on targeted behaviors such as fighting, being off-task, and other disruptions were implemented. A probable cause for the students' lack of social skills in the classrooms of these three school districts revealed that societal influences did not encourage positive character development. Lack of consistent discipline, expectations to develop interpersonal competence, and poor peer relationships kept students from making intelligent choices. In addition to the planned lessons, outside speakers visited the classrooms and encouraged students to recognize the importance of positive character traits. Results of post-intervention data indicated that direct instruction and reinforcement of positive character traits lowered incidences of fighting, defiance, off-task behaviors, and peer relationships also improved.

“Essential Character Discipline” is a positive behavior program field tested throughout K-5 classrooms and designed to help students learn integrity, courtesy, loyalty, respect, perseverance, honor, and self-control developed by Davis-Johnson (2001).

In support of the home/school connections, a program of teacher-made character education kits based on good children's literature examines books and activities that can be used by parents at home to support values that teachers are helping their students develop in school (Andrews, 2001). Similarly, Wisconsin's Standards of the Heart includes resources for parents and educators to select quality literature that exemplifies positive character development. This program includes activities for discussions for being successful in school, making responsible decisions, caring about others, contributing to society, developing social and personal skills, such as problem solving, accepting various perspectives, setting and attaining goals, and developing a core set of common values (Wisconsin State Department of Public Instruction, 2001).

An action research project by Burke, Crum, Genzler, Shaub, & Sheets (2001) examined the impact of a character education programs to enhance the learning environment in school. Relating literature with a character theme and recognition of these character traits was incorporated into the curriculum. With daily implementation through direct instruction, use of literature, and parental involvement, the learning environment was greatly enhanced.

Character Education Programs in Secondary Schools

A character education program based on a mission to bridge and build communities through sports incorporates specific lesson formats for health, social studies, and physical education. These lesson formats provide three themes: achievement, stereotypes (especially of people with disabilities), strategies for

healthy minds and healthy bodies, and was developed by Face of America Character Education Curriculum (World T.E.A.M. Sports, 2001).

Character Education programs focusing on classroom management and positive learning environments provide key components for teachers and principals for combating anti-social behaviors and creating an environment that leads to productivity, academic success, and learning. These programs include recommendations for developing student self-direction and self-awareness for children to control their own lives and evade excessive control by others (Edwards, 2000). Work with experimental drama lessons in high school character education programs takes moral issues drawn from student's experiences and creates dramatizations, which portray actual incidents to various character value areas including conflict resolution. Students develop positive scenarios and present this work in classes, churches, and businesses (Krajewski, 1999).

Another character education program by The Friends Council on Education analyzed results from a nationwide survey of 24 Friends High Schools recommends and supports the view that educators should not avoid discussions of conflict, but instead engage students in positive responses to conflict that are peace-promoting and non-violent (McHenry, 2000). Dobbs (1997) maintains that character education is necessary to correct antisocial messages presented in the media.

Divergent Points of View about Character Education

There are those who feel there is a need for character education, and yet others find obstacles to its inclusion into the schools. For example, Marvin Berkowitz (1998) addresses disagreement on what character is and what constitutes character education. His beliefs are based on the limited scientific data of expertise and resources available, and what character education elements are effective.

Likewise, research by Carla Mathison (1998) examined teachers' opinions and attitudes regarding character education. The study indicated that in-service and pre-service teachers consider character education important but differ in their opinions about what character education is and their ability to teach character education. Pre-service teachers hesitated to address the issues of morality and their professional responsibilities in these areas for fear of lawsuits and controversy.

Some critics argue that character education programs may cause educators to instill their moral or religious beliefs upon others. These critics believe that parents should be solely responsible for teaching their children values, and schools are not the appropriate environment where children should be told to do what others may believe to be morally right (Lockwood, 1997).

David Elkind (1998) suggests that moral values are best taught by example in meaningful everyday situations, and that moral concerns are inappropriate for the school curriculum. He contends the benefits of a moral education have not been demonstrated and consume valuable instructional time

better served by other topics. Berger (1999) views character development not the result of special curriculum, but rather embedded in a child's growth through the stimulation of ordinary day situations, learned through relationships between parents and children. Kuersten (1996) agrees that the family, (not schools) are the source of values and role models in the development of character (p. 10).

Where disagreement usually occurs in character education is not the particular traits emphasized, but rather the methods used to teach those values. (Hall, 2000). Some schools might integrate and coordinate character education within subject areas so that buried into the curriculum are necessary lessons on responsibility, respect, cooperation, and diligence. Teachers would be on the lookout for "teachable moments" to emphasize positive character traits (Hall, 2000, p. xxiv; Rusnak, 1998). Those advocating integration maintain that character education separated into a separate course might fail to generalize moral education to practical real-life situations (Hall, 2000, p. xxv).

In contrast, character education can also be taught in a separate context as its own discipline of study (Hall, 2000; Schaeffer, 1999; Singh, 2001). There are those who maintain that specific values exist, such as respect and self-discipline, and are passed on to children through explicit instruction and imitation. In these traditions adults help children to learn specific virtues, become committed to them, and habitually act ethically (Hall, 2000, p. xxvi).

In the United States, this issue of cultural traditions becomes even more complicated as the proponents of character education are included with multicultural education. According to Leming (1994), the future lies in seeking

common grounds, which may not be the same for all communities and must meet constitutional requirements.

Interestingly, these concerns are also reflected in global values in character education. A survey conducted in the country of Turkey prompted research to promote and form a common language among people. A model for moral and values education was developed and implemented in a private school setting. Teachers were educated about moral values, leadership, motivation, and evaluation. As a result of the study, several positive changes were noted in the teachers, such as a strengthened sense of belonging, sharing and solidarity spread, and willingness to accept responsibilities increased. For students, their rate of telling lies declined, rate of academic success increased, and fighting nearly disappeared (Cafo & Somuncuo, 2000).

Taking a strong position for the cultural tradition method of teaching character, Sommers (1998) says, “We are all born into a moral environment as well as a natural environment. Civility, honesty, consideration, and respect are as necessary to survive as are clean air, safe food, and fresh water” (Hall, 2000, p. xxvi).

Critics of cultural tradition warn that conformity to beliefs, attitudes, and controls does not constitute evidence of good behavior. One of the most influential articles attacking character education is by Alfie Kohn (1997). He states, “What goes by the name of character education nowadays is, for the most part, a collection of exhortations and extrinsic inducements designed to make children work harder and do what they’re told” (p. 43). According to an

interpretation by Hall (2000), “Developmental psychology educator, Kohn (1997) contended “that most of what passes for character education is behavioral manipulation and not an invitation to reflect on values. Children need opportunities to make sense of concepts and to reflect on how to proceed when two basic values seem to conflict. While cultural values exist over time, they are new to each new generation of children” (p. xxvi).

Those who draw on the values reasoning method rely on the research of Lawrence Kohlberg (1969). “Kohlberg believed that humans go through sequential stages of moral reasoning and the behavior is shaped by avoidance of punishment, then move through levels, and finally culminate in behavior that is in accordance with universal moral principles. He contended that moral teaching is not effective, because children cannot comprehend moral concepts until they are mentally ready to do so. The role of the teacher is to supply plenty of simulation games, to remain morally neutral, and to ask “why” questions to tease out students’ personal values” (Hall, 2000, xxvii).

“Kohlberg rejected the focus on values and virtues, not only due to the lack of consensus on what virtues are to be taught, but also because the complex nature of practicing such virtues. In addition, he rejected the relativist view point in favor of the view that certain principles of justice and fairness represent the pinnacle of moral maturity, as he found these basic moral principles are found in different cultures and subcultures around the world” (Nucci, 2002, p. 5).

“A major critique of Kohlberg’s work was put forth by Carol Gilligan, in her popular book, “In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women’s

Development” (1982). She suggested that Kohlberg’s theories were biased against women, as only males were used in his studies. By listening to women’s experiences, Gilligan offered that a morality of care could serve in the place of morality of justice and rights espoused by Kohlberg. In her view, the morality of caring and responsibility is remised in nonviolence, while the morality of justice and rights is based on quality. The morality of care emphasizes interconnectedness and presumably emerges to a greater degree in girls owing to their early connection in identity formation with their mothers. The morality of justice, on the other hand, is said to emerge within the context of coordinating the interactions of autonomous individuals. A moral orientation based on justice was proposed as more prevalent among boys because their attachment relations with the mother, and subsequent masculine identity formation entailed that boys separate from that relationship and individuate from the mother” (Nucci, 2002, p. 9).

“Critics found fault with this value clarification process as only qualified professionals were thought capable of teaching character education in the 1960s-1970s. Ryan (1986) and Lickona (1993) suggested that reasoning alone would not build character. Because teachers were to serve as facilitators, they appeared to students to be morally neutral. Character comes not from acquiring particular points of view or values but from developing a set of common ideas upon which to base one’s life” (Hall, 2000, p. xxviii).

Hall (2000) concludes, “Kohlberg’s brand of values clarification fell short of expectations because critics pointed out that children need first to

understand what are the basic values a society prizes. There is nothing to anchor their moral choices upon, if they have no such understanding” (p. xxvii).

Long-term research conclusions do not yet exist regarding the most effective practice for teaching character education. The debate continues over which practice is more effective: character education integrated through curriculum or character education taught directly as a separate course. And neither is there evidence that point to a preference for traditional inclusion of values or allowing students to establish their own values (Hall, 2000, p. xxix).

Changing Education

Today, more than ever before and perhaps as a result of the rising rate of juvenile crime, teenage pregnancy, drug use, and suicide, society expects help from the schools in instructing its youth in moral and civic ideals. The need to address these issues has grown due to an increase in school violence and the decline of the traditional family. Parents and society see schools as agents of children’s socialization (Keng, 1999).

Socialization, which is the process of nurturing the helpless, psychologically unformed babe into a competent participating member of society, is no longer the prerogative of parents. Parents see schools, whether they are preschools, primary or secondary schools as agents of children’s socialization (Keng, 1999).

Three major reasons for this interest in character education includes the decline of the family, troubling trends in youth character, and a recovery of

shared, objectively important ethical values (Lickona, 1998). Joseph Nisivoccia (1998) examined research indicating a connection between a lack of moral and ethical development and destructive behavior among children and advocates the inclusion of character education in the public schools.

Schools should provide the ‘guidance’ that will help develop occupational and life skills. That guidance will help students develop moral ethics, self-discipline, and self esteem (Dansilp, 1999). The degree of character education programs depends on the frequency of classroom instruction and the commitment of the teacher to the program (Bowman & Potts, 2001).

The Character Education Partnership (1997) recommends that character education be an ongoing process and needs to be a part of each day’s expectations. When teachers expect and stress values in their classrooms, children learn to understand and apply these methods for problem solving. Students know they are to practice character-building skills during class transition times and these skills then continue at home and in the community. In addition, consistently teaching children character values interwoven with all of the basic curriculum areas helps children realize that character is a part of everything they do in life and that demonstrating good character is a gift they can share with others.

American adults want schools to nurture social skills, tolerance, and good citizenship along with the basics of academics. This finding is the outcome of a Roper Starch Worldwide (2000) poll of 1,013 adults sponsored by the W. K. Kellogg and Ewing Marion Kauffman foundations. 83% of the surveyed adults

strongly agree that “a good education is much more than just learning to read, write, and do math” (Roper Starch Worldwide, 2000, p. 4). The basic point is that cognitive and character development (personal and civic) is what public education is all about. Both should be integrated into a school’s environment, as well as its curriculum, instructional strategies, and co-curricular programs (DeRoche & Williams, 2001).

Rushworth Kidder (1994), founder of the Institute for Global Ethics asked leading thinkers around the world to identify what they considered the most pressing issues of the twenty-first century. He responded, “Among the big ones capable of destroying the future if unaddressed, they all listed ethics. Right up there with nuclear catastrophe and environmental accidents was the breakdown of moral values” (p. 10). Similarly, Charles W. White (1997) stated, “A society’s success or failure hinges on how we form or guide the development of intellect and character among the young” (Hall, 2000, p. xviii).

Esther Schaefer (1998), CEO of Character Education Partnership believes persons of good character know, care, and act, on core ethical values such as justice, honesty, compassion, and responsibility. Studies in ten schools by this Character Education Partnership illustrate the successful efforts of surrounding students with environments that teach and encourage needed social values (p. 31). Schools that commit to the task of character development include their intent in their mission and goal statements with clearly defined character traits selected through consensus before instruction begins (Hall, 2000. p. xxiv).

What We Know about Character Education Programs

There is much diversity and variation regarding character education programs. While several are available nationally, only two are currently prominent: *Character Counts* (2004), and *The 40 Developmental Assets* (Roehlkepartain, 1998).

According to a research project by Search Institute and the development of a set of *developmental assets*, “Values give direction to human behavior. What people believe in, what they cherish, what they hold dear - these are the things that enable people to aim themselves in one direction rather than another, to pursue a positive course of action rather than a negative one. There are other forces and factors that also affect behavior, but values are at the core of what it means to be humane (Roehlkepartain, 2000, p. 10).

Values are learned behaviors. The inner life of young people is intimately bound up with matters of meaning, purpose, and connection with creative expressions and moments of joy. Classroom environments that acknowledge and invite such experiences help break down stereotypes, improve discipline, increase academic motivation, foster creativity, and keep more kids in school (Kessler, 2000, pp. xvii).

Search Institute has identified developmental assets “as positive building blocks for the healthy development of all youth that help young people grow up healthy, caring, and responsible” (Roehlkepartain, 1998, p. 4). Instead of beginning with the problems, positive youth development begins by asking what young people need to navigate successfully through adolescence (Roehlkepartain

& Scales, 1995, p. 25). Peter Benson (1995), Search Institute President states, “Our focus is less on how to control or reduce deficits and problems – but on how to promote successful, and vibrant youth. In doing so, we more readily recognize that key factors in healthy adolescent development include families and their communities” (White, 2000, p. 15).

To illustrate the importance of building on strengths, Benson’s developmental assets which are grounded in the social sciences and backed by research in hundreds of urban, suburban, and rural settings, describe the importance of relationships, opportunities, activities, and personal qualities that help young people grow up caring, responsible and resourceful. The more assets a young person has, the more likely he/she will successfully negotiate adolescence (White, 2000. p. 15).

“Forming meaningful relationships across generations needs to become an expected part of everyday life, a norm. Children and youth need to be able to count on adults for support, guidance, and modeling. And adults need to count on young people for energy, optimism, surprises, and youthful insights” (Scales, Benson, & Roehlkepartain, 2001, p. 8).

Character Education in Pre-Service Teacher Training Programs

Historically, character development was at the heart of teacher training in America. Nineteenth century school pioneers, most notably Horace Mann in Massachusetts, sought to create a system of “Normal Schools” to raise up a new breed of teachers to carry out the new “Common School” mission. No longer was

the mission to be limited to the teaching of academic basics, rather, it was to serve as an engine of public virtue. The primary impulse for the founding of the Normal School – the precursors to today’s school of education – was in fact to prepare teachers of exceptional moral character to shape the moral and intellectual sentiments of young people for life in a republican society (Jones, Ryan, & Bohlin, 1998, p. 12).

Currently, most states in the United States have developed standards and mandates that require, or at least encourage, teachers to address the character development of students in an explicit manner (Nielson, 1998) and many professional organizations have endorsed character education as an important educational movement (e.g., Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD), The National School Boards Association (NSBA), The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), The National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP), The National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS), and the National Education Association (NEA)) (Milson, 2003).

Teachers and school administrators in the United States are called upon today to pursue character education in schools (Vessels, 1998). College campuses are finding character education important in the training of pre-service teachers (Berkowitz & Fekula, 1999). One common element among the approaches to character education is the vital role of the teacher. Current proposals call upon teachers to serve as positive role models, to seize opportunities to reflect on moral issues within the context of the curriculum, to create a moral classroom climate,

and to provide students with opportunities outside of the classroom to practice good character through service programs, clubs, peer tutoring (DeRoche & Williams, 2001; Lickona, 1998; Ryan & Bohlin, 1999; Wiley, 1998; Wynne, 1997).

Lickona (1993) observed that, “Character education is far more complex than teaching math or reading; it requires personal growth as well as skills development. Yet teachers typically receive almost no pre-service or in-service training in the moral aspects of their craft. Many teachers do not feel comfortable or competent in the values domain” (p.11). A study by Mathison (1998) pointed out that only 13% of teacher surveyed felt that character education was addressed thoroughly in their teacher preparation program, and 74% feel that character education needs to be given more attention during the teacher preparation process.

Berkowitz (1998) argued that obstacles to teacher training in character education, such as disagreement about the meaning of character education, perceptions of limited space in pre-service curricula for character training, and a lack of character education expertise in teacher training institutions, have resulted in poor teacher preparation. He also noted that negative perceptions of character education among teacher educators are likely to hinder the growth of teacher training in character education.

“One of the stumbling blocks preventing schools from embracing character education is that few teachers have been prepared for this work. Although there are stirring within the teacher education community to give character education greater prominence, the greater majority of teachers are very

unsure of what they can and should do as character educators” (Ryan and Bohlin, 1999, pp. 152-153).

Watson (1999) found that in order to contribute to children’s character development in schools, teacher preparation programs must begin selecting candidates who appear to be principled, caring, and responsible people. He contents that programs need to help pre-service teachers view teaching as a moral act and heighten their awareness of the ethical dimensions of their future profession, so that they can consider their educational decisions through an ethical and academic lens throughout their careers (p. 62).

In a study validated by The Character Development Efficacy Belief Instrument distributed to a sample of 767 elementary teachers in a Midwestern suburban school district, the survey results suggested that teachers earning their undergraduate degrees from private, religiously affiliated universities have a greater sense of efficacy for character development. The findings suggest that programs in these types of universities might serve as a model for preparing teachers for character education (Milson, 2001).

Similarly, research presented at the annual meeting of the Mid-Western Educational Research Association suggested by public school cooperating teachers’ judgments, that pre-service teacher training curriculum modification should include adding character education to the student teaching handbook, and to make students aware of *Character Counts* activities and programs (Chiang, 2001).

The annual meeting of the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (2001) addressed a study whether colleges of education were preparing teachers to become competent and responsible citizens, sensitive to their roles in a global society. Results indicated that social and emotional skills (SEC) were not addressed in admission policies nor were there many explicit courses offered to teach SEC skills. Although most respondents to the survey were interested in pursuing emphasis on SEC education in their classrooms, it was perceived that crowded curriculum and state requirements were the two main hindrances to including SEC training into pre-teaching programs (Marlow & Inman, 2001).

As noted by Berkowitz (1999), “although some teachers have a natural inclination to be character educators, others find the whole enterprise an unwelcome concept and lack the skills, knowledge, and motivation to be character educators” (p. 22). “There is clearly a discrepancy between the high expectations placed on teachers by state governments and school districts to serve as character educators and the amount of training they receive for this role” (Milson, 2003, p. 5).

What is Self-Efficacy and Teacher-Efficacy?

According to Milson (2003) “the construct of teacher-efficacy has been used widely in an attempt to capture teachers’ beliefs about their abilities to accomplish desired outcomes” (p. 9). “Teacher-efficacy is derived from a combination of Rotter’s (1966) social learning theory and Bandura’s (1977) social

cognitive theory. Self-efficacy refers to an individual's belief in his or her ability to act in a manner that will produce desired outcomes. This involves one's sense of competence in given situations. Outcome expectancies refer to an individual's prediction of the likely consequences of his or her actions. Gibson and Dembo (1984) developed a 30-item teacher efficacy scale and asserted that personal teacher efficacy is related to Bandura's notion of self-efficacy in that it refers to a teacher's belief about his or her abilities as a teacher. Researchers have suggested through numerous studies that a teachers sense of efficacy has an effect on teachers' enthusiasm, commitment, effort, goals, planning, organization, openness to new ideas, willingness to experiment with new methods, persistence in the face of obstacles, resilience and with a students who is struggling" (Milson, 2003, p. 7).

Teachers' Sense of Efficacy for Character Education

Milson and Mehlig (2002) first applied the construct of teacher efficacy to character education with the development of the Character Education Efficacy Belief Instrument (CEEBI). "The construct of teacher efficacy has clear relevance for character education. A teacher must believe in his or her own ability to build the character of students, as well as the ability of teachers in general to overcome negative influences from outside of the classroom" (Milson, 2003, p. 9). Berkowitz (1999) noted that although some teachers have a natural inclination to be character educators, others "find the whole enterprise an unwelcome concept" and "lack the skills, knowledge, and motivation to be

character educators” (p. 22). “For teacher education to be effective in training for character education, there needs to be teacher training institutions that focus on character education as a sub-specialty” (Berkowitz, 1998, p. 3).

Summary of the Review of Literature

This review of literature presented research studies and literature on the fundamental areas needed to frame this study: why character education is important; the history of character education; the implementation of character education programs with supporting and opposing perspectives; character education programs for elementary and secondary education; character education teacher preparation; and what we know about self-efficacy and a teachers’ sense of efficacy for character education.

Although the Character Education Partnership contends that the teacher is central to character education and the classroom could be the one arena to reinforce, model, and practice positive character traits on a daily basis, “there is clearly a discrepancy between the high expectations placed on teachers by state governments and school districts to serve as character educators and the amount of training they receive for the role” (Milson, 2003, p. 5). This study seeks to investigate whether differences exist between character education teacher preparation and a teacher’s sense of competence toward teaching character education. Data to support these conclusions will be provided.

Chapter Three

Methodology

Introduction

According to Milson (2003), “Self-efficacy refers to an individual’s belief in his or her ability to act in a manner that will produce desired outcomes. This involves one’s sense of competence in a given situation. Outcome expectancies refer to an individual’s prediction of the likely consequences of his or her actions. Teacher-efficacy has been found to affect student achievement, student motivation, and student’s own sense of efficacy” (p. 7).

“The construct of teacher-efficacy has clear relevance for character education. For character education to be effective, a teacher must believe in his or her ability to build the character of students, as well as the ability of teachers in general to overcome negative influences from outside of the classroom” (Milson, 2003, p. 9). The character education literature suggests that many teachers lack such convictions (Lickona, 1993; Ryan and Bohlin, 1999; Berkowitz, 1999).

Milson and Mehlig (2002) first applied the construct of teacher-efficacy to character education with the development of the Character Education Efficacy Belief Instrument (CEEBI). This research study was built on the work of Milson and Mehlig (2002) by administering the CEEBI to a sample of teachers, and pre-service teachers in the Berks County area in east-central Pennsylvania.

The Research Design

This study was designed as a relationship study. “This type of research design is especially useful for exploratory studies in areas where little is known. The primary purpose of relationship studies is to identify the causes and effects of important educational phenomena” (Borg & Gall, 1989, p. 577).

This design allowed analysis of relationships between several variables simultaneously utilizing a number of statistical procedures, including descriptive statistics, t-tests, correlation studies and regression analysis. Ultimately, data led to the development of a prediction equation that determined behavior patterns. The analysis of data was explained for those relationships that were at the .95 confidence level. Variables included highest academic degree attained, type of institution in which teacher certification was earned, coursework in character development, years of experience, grade level, and subject area taught.

Objectives of the Research Project

The purpose of this study was to determine whether a relationship existed between the impact of university-based pre-service teacher coursework in character education and a teacher’s sense of efficacy for teaching character education in the classroom. The researcher gathered information through the use of a survey, interview, and curriculum review.

There is a need to discover if relationships exist between character education training and a teacher’s sense of competence toward teaching character education. Do teachers graduating from our institutions feel adequately prepared

to teach character education? “For teacher training in character education to become effective, there is a need to understand how teachers perceive their ability to accomplish the task of character education. This understanding can serve to guide teacher education toward building teachers’ knowledge and skills related to character education and, perhaps more importantly, toward building the motivation, resilience, and persistence for success in this domain” (Milson, 2003, p. 6).

The overall objectives of this research project were:

1. To survey pre-service and practicing teachers’ sense of efficacy for teaching character education.
2. To discern if university-based character education coursework has a positive impact on how teachers perceive their ability to teach character education.
3. To determine if there are deficiencies in pre-service teacher training and the positive sense of efficacy for teaching of character education.

Research Questions

1. What is the relationship, if any, on the impact of university-based coursework in character education and a teacher’s sense of efficacy to teach character education?
2. Is there a significant difference between institutions of higher education that have a specific commitment to integrate character education components into their teacher training program coursework on how

teachers perceive their ability to accomplish the task of teaching character education?

Hypotheses

1. Respondents receiving university based, pre-service coursework in character education will show higher levels of character education teacher-efficacy than respondents who have not had pre-service training in this area.
2. Students enrolled in institutions of higher education demonstrating a commitment to preparing educators with values-centered components will show a greater self-efficacy for teaching character education.

Respondents

The population for this study consisted of:

1. **Practicing Teachers:** There are eighteen school districts throughout Berks County in east-central Pennsylvania. The population for this study consisted of currently employed teachers (Pre-K through 8th Grade) teaching in randomly selected public and private schools throughout the greater Berks County area. The sample consisted of selected teachers responding to the CEEBI Questionnaire (Appendix C).

2. **Current Pre-Service Teachers enrolled in Student Teaching:**

There are three institutions of higher education in the Berks County area with teacher preparation programs. The population for this survey consisted of student teachers currently enrolled in pre-service student teaching assignments in these schools of education. Data was collected during the Spring 2005 and Fall 2005 semesters. The sample consisted of selected student teachers responding to the CEEBI Questionnaire (Appendix D).

3. **College and University Education Department Chairpersons:** To determine the institution's vision concerning character education, the researcher interviewed the chairperson of the education departments associated with the institutions of higher education in Berks County. The researcher created the Institutions of Higher Education Interview Questions (Appendix E) to determine the level of involvement, character education vision, community consensus, character education integration into the curriculum, and character education assessment.

4. **Curriculum Review:** The curriculum review checklist (Appendix F) was designed by the researcher to identify whether specific institutions provide a commitment to including character education into the teacher-training program. The researcher specifically

reviewed curriculum coursework to investigate whether the education department required value-centered components in the core curriculum. Character education might include ethics, morals, values, and the core traits: kindness, responsibility, citizenship, fairness, honesty, and respect.

Costs and Payments to the Respondents

There is no cost associated with participation in this study, and there is no compensation for participation in the study.

Risks and Benefits to the Respondents

The participants may be inconvenienced by the time required to complete the survey, and answer the interview questions. The following results of the study will benefit teacher educators in the future: 1) to provide information and data which will serve as a basis for discussing and thinking about the challenges of teaching character education; 2) to identify effective approaches to improve pre-service teacher training coursework in which character education topics are embedded.

Confidentiality

Information collected from this research study was kept confidential and participant confidentiality was strictly enforced. The respondents' names were not be disclosed or used for reporting the results of the survey. A participant could decide not to take part in this study without affecting their relationship with the school district, Alvernia College, or Lehigh University.

Participation in this study was voluntary and respondents have the right to withdraw from the study by notifying the researcher. The information collected from a participant who decided not to take part in the study would be destroyed.

Instrumentation

The instrument used to measure character education teacher self-efficacy was the Character Education Efficacy Belief Instrument (CEEBI) created by Andrew Milson and Lisa Mehlig (2002), (Appendix A). The CEEBI is appropriate for teachers in public and private school grades K through 12. It consists of 24 questions about oneself to which the subject responds on a five-point Likert-like scale: strongly agree, agree, uncertain, disagree, or strongly disagree. The statements were designed to measure the two dimensions of the teacher efficacy scale (TES): personal teaching efficacy (PTE) and general teaching efficacy (GTE), (Milson & Mehlig, 2002, pp. 50-51).

"Gibson and Dembo's (1984) original PTE items were revised to create 12 CEEBI items designed to investigate teachers' beliefs about their own abilities regarding character education. Also revised were the 12 GTE items to create 12

measures designed to investigate teachers' beliefs about the ability of teachers in general to exert influence over external factors, such as students' family background and home environment" (Milson and Mehlig, 2002, p. 49).

Specifically, the instrument was designed to examine the level of teacher efficacy exhibited for character education by teachers and the effects of the following independent variables: 1) the type of institution of higher education attended by the teacher, 2) training in character education through university coursework, conference attendance, and staff development workshops, 3) the grade level at which the teacher teaches, 4) the subject area taught by the teacher, 5) the type of community in which a teacher's students reside, 6) the family socio-economic status of a teacher's students (Milson, 2003, p. 10-11).

Instrument Validation and Reliability

Milson and Mehlig's (2002) Character Efficacy Belief Instrument survey consisting of 24 statements is based on the two dimensions of Gibson & Dembo's (1984) teacher efficacy scale (TES): personal teaching efficacy (PTE) and general teaching efficacy (GTE). Milson and Mehlig describe the instrument development as follows:

Gibson and Dembo's (1984) original PTE items were revised to create twelve CEEBI items designed to investigate teachers' beliefs about their own abilities regarding character education. Each of these statements uses the first person referent "I". The GTE items on Gibson and Dembo's TES were written to create

twelve items designed to investigate teachers' beliefs about the ability of teachers in general to exert influence over external factors such as students' family background and home environment. These items use the third person referent "teacher". Consistent with research on teacher efficacy construct, the CEEBI was designed to achieve an appropriate level of specificity, with a balance of positive and negative phrasing, and a balance of internal and external locus orientation (Milson, 2003, p. 8).

"Recent research suggests that context-specific efficacy instruments, such as the CEEBI, are more likely to provide valid measures of efficacy judgments than the less contextualized TES (Bandura, 1997; Deemer & Minke, 1999; Pajares, 1997). A bivariate correlation coefficient of .648 between PTE and GTE indicates a moderate correlation between the two scales. We expected some degree of correlation between the scales because they measure constructs; however, this moderate level of correlation also suggests that the two scales measure distinct aspects of efficacy. We used Cronbach's index of internal consistency to test the reliability of each scale. The reliability coefficient for PTE ($\alpha = .8286$) and GTE ($\alpha = .6121$) suggest acceptable evidence of the reliability of these scales (Glass & Hopkins, 1996)" (Milson & Mehlig, 2002, p. 50).

Procedure

The researcher completed and submitted a Human Subjects Questionnaire to the Lehigh University Human Subjects Instructional Research Review Board. Upon approval, data collection for this research study was conducted.

The accessible population for the study consisted of practicing teachers in eighteen school districts in the Berks County area. Berks County schools are located in various urban and rural areas. A list of school districts was obtained through the Alvernia College Education Department. School district offices were asked to provide a list of the elementary and middle schools buildings in the district and the names of the building principals. A packet of information including a Letter of Request (Appendix A), a Lehigh University Informed Consent Form (Appendix B), and copies of the Character Education Efficacy Belief Instrument and Survey [CEEBI] (Appendix C) were delivered to the district offices.

Surveys were delivered to the selected school districts. The building principals distributed the materials to teachers in grades K through 8. The packet of materials for teachers contained: 1) the Lehigh University Informed Consent Form explaining the research study (Appendix B); 2) the Character Education Efficacy Instrument and Survey (Appendix C). Teacher's returned the completed surveys to the principal. The principal returned the surveys to the researcher in a self-addressed, pre-stamped envelope. The survey took approximately a maximum of 15 minutes to complete. Each school was coded by an identification

number, and was kept in a secured file for confidentiality. Participation in the survey was voluntary.

Two institutions of higher education located were represented. The private-religious college was located in an urban setting while the state institution represented a rural setting. An interview appointment was made to meet with the chairperson of the education departments to arrange an appropriate time to conduct the interview (Appendix E) and review curriculum coursework and core requirements regarding character education (Appendix F).

At the time of the interview, a packet of information including a Lehigh University Informed Consent Form (Appendix B) and copies of the Character Education Efficacy Belief Instrument and Survey for Student Teachers (Appendix D) was delivered to each education office chairperson to be distributed to the student teachers. The survey took approximately a maximum of 10 minutes to complete during a scheduled seminar when student teachers meet for their required practicum session. The surveys were returned to the researcher by the chairperson in a self-addressed, pre-stamped envelope.

Statistical Methods

All data was collected from the Character Education Efficacy Belief Instrument and Survey (Appendix C and D), coded and compiled in the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences Software Program (SPSS). A series of descriptive statistical procedures (t-tests, correlation studies, and regression analysis) to address the research questions proposed in this study and a table

providing frequencies and descriptive statistics was used to develop the framework upon which additional statistical procedures was employed. A one-way ANOVA was utilized to examine significant differences that may exist. Providing this type of information enabled the researcher to better understand the significant interactions that may occur consistently throughout the data. All statistical results relating to this test were reported. Only statistically significant results were reviewed, evaluated, and discussed.

The researcher used a correlation approach collecting quantitative data on explanatory variables. Some of these variables included, academic degree attained, types of institution in which teaching certification was earned, years of teaching experience, grade level taught, and type of pre-service coursework which included any components of character education. Additionally, a regression analysis was performed on the data to determine if the information provides any predictive capabilities. If the regression analysis provides a significant result, a prediction equation was developed and presented, thereby allowing a predictive capability on teacher-efficacy based on the significant dependent variables. Finally, certain questions may need nonparametric testing. On these variables a chi-square statistical test will be completed if significantly more respondents have chosen a particular option. All analysis will be tested to the 95% confidence level.

Pilot Study

The principal of a high school in the Berks County area was contacted for a pilot study of the instrument used in this research study. This school was not included in the study findings as this research included only elementary level teachers and pre-service teachers. The principal was kind enough to take the survey and provide feedback. The CEEBI (Appendix C) was distributed to the high school teachers (n= 45) at a faculty meeting with full participation for the pilot study.

The pilot study was helpful in clarifying the time management needed for teacher participation. It took the high school teachers approximately 15 minutes to complete the survey. No changes were deemed necessary to the instrument or method of data collection.

Limitations

A limitation to this study was the level of higher education institutional access available to the researcher. The most advantageous access would have been full participation of five institutions at the university level of the research design. Only two of the five approached institutions participated in the study.

One of the institutions did not respond to the call or e-mail indicating interest in the study. The second institution did not reply to participation during the available student teaching seminar time constraints during the fall 2005 semester even though the survey was approved by the Instructional Review

Board. The third institution had just added a 4-year elementary education degree program to this campus site and pre-service student teachers were not available for data collection at this time.

Chapter Four

Results

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to report the findings of this study. The chapter begins with the purpose, overall objectives and research questions. Next, a description of the return rate and demographics are reported. Finally, the findings from this study, organized by survey items and tables are displayed.

Purpose and Objectives

The purpose of this research study was to investigate whether a relationship exists between the impact of university-based coursework in teacher training programs and a teacher's sense of efficacy for teaching character education.

The overall objectives were:

1. To survey pre-service and practicing teachers' sense of efficacy for teaching character education.
2. To discern if university-based character education coursework has a positive impact on how teachers perceive their ability to teach character education.
3. To determine if there are deficiencies in pre-service teacher training and the positive sense of efficacy for teaching of character education.

Research Questions

1. What is the relationship, if any, on the impact of university-based coursework in character education and a teacher's sense of efficacy to teach character education?
2. Is there a significant difference between institutions of higher education that have a specific commitment to integrate character education components into their teacher training program coursework on how teachers perceive their ability to accomplish the task of teaching character education?

Descriptive Statistics

This section of the findings provides descriptive data about the sample that was used in this study. The results of the character education questionnaire for practicing teachers and pre-service teachers are presented in this chapter as well as the results from the Character Education Efficacy Instrument. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software program was used to complete the descriptive statistics. The independent variables listed below were investigated as potential influences on self-efficacy. The study indicated that these variables did not play a strong role in a teacher's efficacy for teaching character education.

The data is presented in the order established in the original survey.

1. Independent Variables:

- a. Highest academic degree attained
- b. Year certified
- c. State (Location of institution where certified)
- d. Type of institution (Public, private)
- e. Type of school where you teach (Public, private)
- f. Type of community where you teach (Urban, suburban, rural)
- g. Social economic status of students
- h. Coursework in character education
- i. Staff development in character education
- j. Grade level taught
- k. Years of teaching experience
- l. Subject taught

2. Dependent Variables: Character Education Efficacy Belief

Instrument (CEEBI)

- a. PTE: Personal Teaching Efficacy Belief
- b. GTE: General Teaching Efficacy Belief

Population:**Selected Characteristics for Practicing Teachers**

The survey questionnaires were mailed to the principals at 14 elementary and middle schools that met the population requirements. These schools included 4 private schools and 9 public schools located in urban, suburban, and rural areas throughout Berks County, Pennsylvania. In addition, 1 rural public school in Montgomery County in southeastern Pennsylvania responded to the study. Surveys were distributed to 198 teachers. Returns were received from 106 practicing teachers which is a 53.5% response rate.

The researcher coded the surveys allowing for tracking of the schools and the number of participants responding to the questionnaire. Information was evaluated and coded with numerical value to facilitate analyses. A summary of the frequency distribution is provided in Table 1-A for the practicing teachers in the 10 public and 4 private schools surveyed. Of the practicing teachers who responded to the questionnaire, 89.6% taught in public schools while 10.4% were teachers in private schools.

Table 1-A.**Practicing Teachers: Frequency and Percentages of Schools Surveyed**

Public Schools	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Private Schools*			
1	12	11.3	11.3
2	9	8.5	19.8
3	2	1.9	21.7
4*	4	3.8	25.5
5*	4	3.8	29.2
6	6	5.7	34.9
7	7	6.6	41.5
8	8	7.5	49.1
9	1	10.4	59.4
10*	1	.9	60.4
11	6	5.7	66.0
12*	2	1.9	67.9
13	7	6.6	74.5
14	27	25.5	100.0

Selected Characteristics for Pre-Service Teachers

The survey questionnaire was distributed to the supervisors of student teachers in the education departments at two institutions of higher education in Berks County. One institution is a private-religiously affiliated college, and the other a public, state university located in Berks County in southeastern Pennsylvania. 76 questionnaires were distributed. Returns were received from 76 pre-service teachers which is a 100% response rate.

The researcher coded the surveys allowing for tracking of the universities and the number of participants responding to the questionnaire. Information was evaluated and coded with numerical value to facilitate analyses.

A summary of the frequency distribution is provided in Table 1-B for the 28 public university and 48 private college pre-service teachers surveyed. The pre-service teachers had completed their first student teaching placement and were surveyed at the mid-term point of the academic semester. 36.8% of the respondents were receiving teacher-training at a public university, while 63.2% were enrolled in a private, religious college.

Table I-B.

Pre-Service Teachers: Frequencies and Percentages of Universities Surveyed

Pre-Service Teachers	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Public University	28	36.8	36.8
Private - Religious	48	63.2	100.0

Highest Academic Degree Attained By Practicing Teachers

In survey item 1, the education level of the practicing teachers with 1 to 5 years of experience was categorized into 3 levels: Bachelor's degree, master's degree and doctorate degree. Bachelor's degrees were held by 86.8% of the respondents, with 13.2% having master's degrees. A doctorate degree was not indicated by any of the respondents.

Table 2.

Highest Academic Degree Attained

Highest Degree	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Bachelors	92	86.8	86.8
Masters	14	13.2	100.0
<u>Doctorate</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0.0</u>	<u>100.0</u>
Mean: 1.13	Standard Deviation: .34		

When Did You Earn Your Teaching Certificate?

In survey item 2, practicing teachers reported a range of years when teaching certification was earned between the years of 1976 and 2005. The highest frequencies were categorized in the years 2002, 2003, and 2004 representing 61.9%. Table 3 displays the frequencies and percentages for all the teachers responding to the survey. Approximately 76% of the practicing teachers received teaching certification between the years 2000 and 2005. 100% of the pre-service teachers indicated that they would receive certification from a college or university in the year 2005.

Table 3-A.

When Did You Earn Your Teaching Certificate?

Practicing Teachers

Year	Frequency	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
1976	1	1.0	1.0
1979	1	1.0	1.9
1980	1	1.0	2.9
1982	1	1.0	3.8
1984	1	1.0	4.8
1985	1	1.0	5.7
1986	2	1.9	7.6
1987	1	1.0	8.6

Table 3-A. (Continued)

When Did You Earn Your Teaching Certificate?

Practicing Teachers

Year	Frequency	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
1990	2	1.9	10.5
1992	1	1.0	11.4
1993	1	1.0	12.4
1994	2	1.9	14.3
1995	1	1.0	15.2
1996	2	1.9	17.1
1997	1	1.0	18.1
1998	3	2.9	21.0
1999	3	2.9	23.8
2000	6	5.7	29.5
2001	5	4.8	34.3
2002	18	17.1	51.4
2003	25	23.8	75.2
2004	22	21.0	96.2
2005	4	3.8	100.0
Mean: 1999.97		Standard Deviation: 6.2	

Table 3-B.

When Did You Earn Your Teaching Certificate?

Pre-Service Teachers

Year	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
2005	76	100.0	100.0

From Which State Did You Earn Your Teaching Certificate?

In survey item 3, 100% of the respondents indicated that they had earned teaching certification from a college or university in the state of Pennsylvania.

From Which Type of Institution Did You Receive Your Teacher Certification?

Table 4 presents the frequencies and percentages of public, private, non-religious, private religiously affiliated institutions, and alternate certification of all respondents. 62.3% of the practicing teachers indicated they received certification from a public institution, while 36.8% received teaching certification from private institutions. 1 respondent indicated alternate certification.

Of the pre-service teachers surveyed, 36.8% will be certification from a public university, and 63.2% from a private, religious college.

Table 4.

From Which Type of Institution Did You Receive Your Teacher Certification?

Institutions for Practicing Teachers	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Public	66	62.3	62.3
Private, Non-Religious	6	5.7	67.9
Private, Religious	33	31.1	99.1
Alternate Certification	1	.9	100.0

Mean: 1.71

Standard Deviation: .95

Institutions for Pre-Service Teachers	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Public	28	36.8	36.8
Private, Religious	48	63.2	100.0

Mean: 2.26

Standard Deviation: .97

In Which Type of School Do You Teach or Student Teach?

The practicing teachers and pre-service teachers surveyed identified the types of schools in which they were currently teaching. Table 5 reports the frequencies and percentages of public schools, private religious schools, and private non-religious schools. 87.7% of the practicing teachers indicated they taught in public schools, while approximately 12% of the respondents taught in private schools.

Pre-service teachers indicated that approximately 92% were student teaching in a public school, and approximately 8% in a private school.

Table 5.

In Which Type of School Do You Teach?

School Type:	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Practicing Teachers			
Public	93	87.7	87.7
Private, Religious	12	11.3	99.1
Private, Non-Religious	1	.9	100.0

Mean: 1.13

Standard Deviation: .37

School Type:	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Pre-Service Teachers			
Public	70	92.1	92.1
Private, Religious	4	5.3	97.4
Private, Non-Religious	2	2.6	100.0

Mean: 1.11

Standard Deviation: .39

In Which Type of Community Do The Students Who Attend Your School Live?

Practicing teachers and pre-service teachers identified either an urban, suburban, or rural type of school community in which the students they taught lived. Table 6 reports the frequencies and percentages for each type of community. Approximately 83% of the practicing teachers are teaching in urban or suburban communities, while 17% of the teachers serve in a rural area.

Approximately 84% of the pre-service teachers indicated they are student teaching in urban and suburban areas, while 15.8% were serving as student teachers in a rural community.

Table 6.

In Which Type of Community Do The Students Who Attend Your School Live?

Community:	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Practicing Teachers			
Urban	32	30.2	30.2
Suburban	56	52.8	83.0
Rural	18	17.0	100.0
Mean: 1.87	Standard Deviation: .68		

Community:	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Pre-Service Teachers			
Urban	33	43.4	43.4
Suburban	31	40.8	84.2
Rural	12	15.8	100.0
Mean: 1.72	Standard Deviation: .72		

What Is The Socio-Economic Status (SES) of the Children at this School?

The respondents reported the socio-economic status of the students in the school where they taught. Table 7 represents the frequencies and percentages of the low, middle, and high socio-economic levels. Approximately 94% of both the practicing teachers and pre-service teachers indicated that the children in their school communities represented low to middle socio-economic status.

Approximately 6% of both the practicing and student teachers taught in a school with high economic status.

Table 7.

What Is The Socio-Economic Status (SES) of the Children?

SES:	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Practicing Teachers			
Low	30	28.3	28.3
Middle	70	66.0	94.3
High	6	5.7	100.0

Mean: 1.77 Standard Deviation: .54

SES:	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Pre-Service Teachers			
Low	41	53.9	53.9
Middle	30	39.5	93.4
High	5	6.6	100.0

Mean: 1.53 Standard Deviation: .62

Have You Received Any College Coursework in Character Education?

Respondents identified whether they received any college coursework in character education. A summary of these findings is given in Table 8. Both the practicing and pre-service teachers highest percentage was indicated with the “no” response. 61.3% of practicing teachers, and 71.1% of pre-service teachers indicated that they had not received any college coursework in character education.

Table 8.

Have You Received Any College Coursework In Character Education?

Character Education Coursework:	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Practicing Teachers			
Yes	41	38.7	38.7
No	65	61.3	100.0

Character Education Coursework:	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Pre-Service Teachers			
Yes	22	28.9	28.9
No	54	71.1	100.0

Have You Received Any Staff Development In Character Education?

Practicing teachers and pre-service teachers reported whether they had received staff development in character education. Table 9 displays the frequencies and percents of the responses “yes” or “no” by all of the respondents. 80.2% of the practicing teachers and 86.8% of the pre-service teachers indicated having had “no” staff development in character education.

Table 9.

Have You Received Any Staff Development In Character Education?

Character Education Staff Development: Practicing Teachers	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Yes	21	19.8	19.8
No	85	80.2	100.0

Character Education Staff Development: Pre-Service Teachers	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Yes	10	13.2	13.2
No	66	86.8	100.0

What Grade Level Do You Teach This Year?

A summary of the grade levels represented by the practicing teachers and pre-service teachers responding to the survey are provided in the frequency and percentage distribution in Table 10. 59% of the practicing teachers indicated they teach in the primary grades (pre-k – 3rd grade), while 26.4% are elementary teachers in the intermediate grades (4th- 5th); with only 2% of those surveyed at the middle school level (grades 6-8). Pre-service teachers were student teaching in all of the grade levels. 2 elementary grade levels with high frequencies were indicated with 23.7% in 1st grade and 15.8% in 5th grade.

Table 10-A.

What Grade Level Do You Teach This Year?

Grade Level: Practicing Teachers	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Pre-K	3	2.8	2.9
K	11	10.4	13.3
1	14	13.2	26.7
2	16	15.1	41.9
3	18	17.0	59.0
4	10	9.4	68.6
5	18	17.0	85.7
6	12	11.3	97.1
7	1	.9	98.1
8	2	1.9	100.0

Mean: 3.07

Standard Deviation: 2.14

Table 10-B.

What Grade Level Do You Teach This Year?

Grade Level: Pre-Service Teachers	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Pre-K	2	2.6	2.6
K	4	5.3	7.9
1	18	23.7	31.6
2	9	11.8	43.4
3	7	9.2	52.6
4	9	11.8	64.5
5	12	15.8	80.3
6	4	5.3	85.3
7	4	5.3	90.8
8	2	2.6	93.4
9	2	2.6	96.1
10	1	1.3	97.4
11	1	1.3	98.7
12	1	1.3	100.0
Mean: 3.47 Standard Deviation: 2.95			

Overall, How Many Years Of Teaching Experience Do You Have?

For the purpose of statistical analysis, practicing teachers were grouped into 3 levels of teaching experience: First year, 1-3 years, 4-6 years, and 7-10 years.

Table 11 presents the frequencies and percentages reported for the four levels of teaching experience. Of the 106 practicing teachers surveyed, 38 indicated they were in their first year of teaching, 52 were teaching 1-5 years, and 14 had 4-6 years of teaching experience. Only 2 teachers responding to the survey listed 7-10 years experience.

Table 11.

Overall, How Many Years Of Teaching Experience Do You Have?

Teaching Experience: Practicing Teachers	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
First Year	38	35.8	35.8
1-3 Years	52	49.1	84.9
4-6 Years	14	13.2	98.1
7-10 Years	2	1.9	100.0
Mean: 1.81	Standard Deviation: .73		

What Subject Area Do You Teach Most Of The Time This Year?

Subject area was categorized into twelve areas: art, foreign language, language arts, integrated curriculum, mathematics, music, multiple subjects, physical education, science, social studies, special education, and other. 60.4% of the practicing teachers indicated that they teach language arts most of the time, 13.2% teach multiple subjects, and 13.2 % teach special education. The frequency of responses represents a wide range of subjects taught by the classroom teachers.

For the pre-service teachers the information was similar to practicing teachers. 12 student teachers listed high frequencies in language arts and 40 student teachers taught multiple subjects most of the time. Approximately 65 of the 76 pre-service teachers were student teaching in an elementary education situation, and 11 were assigned to a secondary grade.

Table 12.**What Subject Area Do You Teach Most Of The Time This Year?**

Subject Area: Practicing Teachers	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Art	0		
Foreign Language	1	.9	.9
Language Arts	64	60.4	61.3
Integrated Curriculum	4	3.8	65.1
Mathematics	1	.9	66.0
Music	2	1.9	67.9
Multiple Subjects	14	13.2	81.1
Physical Education	1	.9	82.1
Science	2	1.9	84.0
Social Studies	1	.9	84.9
Special Education	14	13.2	98.1
Other	2	1.9	100.0

Table 13.

What Subject Area Do You Teach Most Of The Time This Year?

Subject Area: Pre-Service Teachers	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Art	0		
Foreign Language	1	1.3	1.3
Language Arts	12	15.8	17.1
Integrated Curriculum	6	7.9	25.0
Mathematics	6	6.6	31.6
Multiple Subjects	40	52.6	84.2
Science	3	3.9	88.2
Social Studies	2	2.6	90.8
Special Education	7	9.2	100.0

CEEBI - Character Education Efficacy Belief Instrument

PTE - Personal Teaching Efficacy:

The instrument used for this study is Milson and Mehlig's (2001) Character Education Efficacy Instrument (CEEBI). The CEEBI consists of 24 statements to which the respondents indicate on a five-point Likert-like scale: strongly agree, agree, uncertain, disagree, and strongly disagree. Items are based on two dimensions. Twelve of the CEEBI items are designed to investigate teachers' beliefs about their own abilities regarding character education. Each of these statements uses the first-person "I". This "personal teaching efficacy" (PTE) dimension is represented in survey items 1, 2, 3, 6, 7, 8, 11, 14, 17, 19, 21, 23.

The mean scores for each item can be used to determine the general level of efficacy exhibited for each item. With 5.00 representing the highest possible score and 1.00 presenting the lowest possible score on each item, mean item score between 1.00 and 2.99 are considered negatively efficacious, those between 3.00 and 3.99 are neither positive nor negative (neutral), and those scores above 4.00 are considered positively efficacious.

According to the PTE data, practicing teachers and pre-service teachers indicated:

1. Positive to the following items:
 - a. Survey Item #1 - I am usually comfortable discussing issues of right and wrong with my students.
 - b. Survey Item #3 - I am confident in my ability to be a good role model.

- c. Survey Item #19 - I will be able to influence the character of students because I am a good role model.
- d. Survey Item # 7 (Pre-service Teachers only) – I know how to use strategies that might lead to positive changes in students’ character.
- e. Survey Item # 11 (Pre-service Teachers only) - I am able to positively influence the character development of a child who has had little direction from parents.

2. Neutral to the following survey items:

- a. Survey Item # 23 – I am continually finding better ways to develop the character of my students.
- b. Survey Item #7 (Practicing Teachers only) - I know how to use strategies that might lead to positive changes in students’ character.
- c. Survey Item #11 (Practicing Teachers only) – I am able to positively influence the character development of a child who has had little direction from parents.

3. Negative to the following survey items:

- a. Survey Item # 2 – When a student has been exposed to negative influences at home, I do not believe that I can do much to impact a child’s behavior.
- b. Survey Item # 6 – I am usually at a loss as to how to help a student be more responsible.

- c. Survey Item # 8 – I am not sure that I can teach my students to be honest.
- d. Survey Item # 14 – When I have a student who lies regularly, I can usually convince him/her to stop lying.
- e. Survey Item # 17 – I often find it difficult to persuade a student that respect for others is important.
- f. Survey Item # 21 – I sometimes don't know what to do to help students' become more compassionate.

CEEBI: Survey Item 1: PTE - I am usually comfortable discussing issues of right and wrong with my students. In survey item 1, respondents did not select the responses “strongly disagree or disagree” on the instrument. Table 14 represents the frequencies and percentages of the responses “uncertain, agree, and strongly agree” to this survey item. 105 of the 106 practicing teachers indicated a positive response, and 73 of the 76 pre-service teachers agreed to the statement concerning usually feeling comfortable discussing issues of right and wrong with their students.

Table 14.

Issues of Right and Wrong

Survey Item 1: Practicing Teachers	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Uncertain	1	.9	.9
Agree	30	28.3	29.2
Strongly Agree	75	70.8	100.0

Mean: 4.70 (Positive Range)

Standard Deviation: .48

Survey Item 1: Pre-Service Teachers	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Uncertain	3	3.9	3.9
Agree	32	42.1	46.1
Strongly Agree	41	53.9	100.0

Mean: 4.50 (Positive Range)

Standard Deviation: .58

CEEBI: Survey Item 2: PTE - When a student has been exposed to negative influences at home, I do not believe that I can do much to impact that child's character. In survey item 2, respondents indicated that they strongly disagreed, disagreed, agreed, or were uncertain to this statement. A summary of these findings is given in Table 15 indicating that 85.8% of the practicing teachers and 90.8% of the pre-service student teachers disagree and personally believe in their abilities that a teacher can have impact on a child that has been exposed to negative influences at home.

Table 15.

Negative Influences At Home

Survey Item 2: Practicing Teachers	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Disagree	35	33.0	33.0
Disagree	56	52.8	85.8
Uncertain	12	11.3	97.2
Agree	3	2.8	100.0
Mean: 1.84 (Negative Range)		Standard Deviation: .73	

Survey Item 2: Pre-Service Teachers	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Disagree	27	35.5	35.5
Disagree	42	55.3	90.8
Uncertain	5	6.6	97.4
Agree	2	2.6	100.0
Mean: 1.76 (Negative Range)		Standard Deviation: .69	

CEEBI: Survey Item 3: PTE - I am confident in my ability to be a good role model. In survey item 3, practicing teachers indicated that they agree or strongly agree with the statement. They did not select responses “uncertain, disagree, strongly disagree”. Pre-service teachers data did include “strongly disagree and uncertain”. Table 16 displays frequencies and percentages for the respondent’s ability to be a good role model. Information indicates that 100% of the practicing teachers feel positive, while 97.4% of the pre-service student teachers were positive in their ability to be a good role model.

Table 16.

A Good Role Model

Survey Item 3: Practicing Teachers	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Agree	29	27.4	27.4
Strongly Agree	77	72.6	100.0

Mean 4.7 (Positive Range) Standard Deviation: .45

Survey Item 3: Pre-Service Teachers	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Disagree	1	1.3	1.3
Uncertain	1	1.3	2.6
Agree	25	32.9	35.5
Strongly Agree	49	64.5	100.0

Mean: 4.59 (Positive Range) Standard Deviation: .66

CEEBI: Survey Item 6: PTE - I am usually at a loss as to how to help a student be more responsible. In survey item 6, respondents identified that they strongly disagree, disagree, are uncertain, agree, or strongly agree with the statement that they are usually at a loss as to how to help a student be more responsible. Table 17 reports the frequencies and percentages. 90.6% of practicing teachers disagree, and 89.5% of pre-service teachers disagree that they are at a loss about how to help children be more responsible.

Table 17.

Help A Student Be More Responsible

Survey Item 6: Practicing Teachers	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Disagree	29	27.4	27.4
Disagree	67	63.2	90.6
Uncertain	5	4.7	95.3
Agree	3	2.8	98.1
Strongly Agree	2	1.9	100.0

Mean: 1.8 (Negative Range)

Standard Deviation: .77

Survey Item 6: Pre-Service Teachers	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Disagree	28	36.8	36.8
Disagree	40	52.6	89.5
Uncertain	6	7.9	97.4
Agree	2	2.6	100.0

Mean: 1.7 (Negative Range)

Standard Deviation: .71

CEEBI: Survey Item 7: PTE - I know how to use strategies that might lead to positive changes in students' character. The data collected for survey item 7 indicates approximately 78% of the 106 practicing teachers agree that they personally know strategies that might lead to positive changes in their students' character. Approximately 81% of the 76 pre-service teachers indicated their agreement with this statement as well. Table 18 reports the frequencies and percentages of the respondent's personal beliefs to this item.

Table 18.

Positive Changes in Students' Character

Survey Item 7: Practicing Teachers	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Disagree	1	.9	.9
Disagree	6	5.7	6.6
Uncertain	16	15.1	21.7
Agree	61	57.5	79.2
Strongly Agree	22	20.8	100.0

Mean: 3.91 (Neutral Range)

Standard Deviation: .82

Survey Item 7: Pre-Service Teachers	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Disagree	3	3.9	3.9
Uncertain	11	14.5	18.4
Agree	45	59.2	77.6
Strongly Agree	17	22.4	100.0

Mean: 4.0 (Positive Range)

Standard Deviation: .73

CEEBI: Survey Item 8: PTE - I am not sure that I can teach my students to be honest. In survey item 8, both populations have similar responses. 76.4% of the practicing teachers indicated that they disagree and strongly disagree with the statement that they were not sure they could teach a student to be honest. Table 19 represents the frequencies and percentages including the responses by 76.3% of the pre-service teachers who strongly disagree and disagree that they are not sure that they could teach a student to be honest.

Table 19.

Teach Students To Be Honest

Survey Item 8: Practicing Teachers	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Disagree	33	31.1	31.1
Disagree	48	45.3	76.4
Uncertain	18	17.0	93.4
Agree	7	6.6	100.0
Mean: 1.9 (Negative Range)		Standard Deviation: .87	

Survey Item 8: Pre-Service Teachers	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Disagree	27	35.5	35.5
Disagree	31	40.8	76.3
Uncertain	8	10.5	86.8
Agree	7	9.2	96.1
Strongly Agree	3	3.9	100.0
Mean: 2.05 (Negative Range)		Standard Deviation: 1.09	

CEEBI: Survey Item 11: PTE - I am able to positively influence the character development of a child who has had little direction from parents.

The data collected for item 11 reports that approximately 83% of practicing teachers, and 88% of pre-service teachers agree that they are able to positively influence character development of children with little direction from parents. Table 20 displays the frequencies and percentages of respondents including those who were uncertain and disagree that they could positively influence these children.

Table 20.

Little Direction From Parents

Survey Item 11: Practicing Teachers	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Disagree	3	2.8	2.8
Uncertain	14	13.2	16.0
Agree	72	67.9	84.0
Strongly Agree	17	16.0	100.0

Mean: 3.97 (High Neutral Range) Standard Deviation: .64

Survey Item 11: Pre-Service Teachers	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Disagree	3	3.9	3.9
Uncertain	6	7.9	11.8
Agree	45	59.2	71.1
Strongly Agree	22	28.9	100.0

Mean: 4.13 (Positive Range) Standard Deviation: .72

CEEBI: Survey Item 14: PTE - When I have a student who lies regularly, I can usually convince him/her to stop lying. Approximately 49% of practicing teachers and 56% of pre-service teachers indicated that they were uncertain if they could convince a student to stop lying. Table 21 displays the frequencies and percentages of respondent's personal beliefs to survey item 14, which includes agree, disagree and strongly disagree with the statement that they could convince a child to stop lying.

Table 21.

Convince A Student To Stop Lying

Survey Item 14: Practicing Teachers	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Disagree	2	1.9	1.9
Disagree	28	26.4	28.3
Uncertain	52	49.1	77.4
Agree	24	22.6	100.0

Mean: 2.9 (Negative Range)

Standard Deviation: .75

Survey Item 14: Pre-Service Teachers	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Disagree	2	2.6	2.6
Disagree	16	21.1	23.7
Uncertain	43	56.6	80.3
Agree	15	19.7	100.0

Mean: 2.9 (Negative Range)

Standard Deviation: .72

CEEBI: Survey Item 17: PTE - I often find it difficult to persuade a student that respect for others is important. In survey item 17, 78.3% of the practicing teachers, and 86.8% of pre-service teachers responded that they disagree and strongly disagree that it is difficult to persuade a student to respect others. Table 22 represents additional frequencies and percentages of the respondents indicating their personal teaching efficacy to this statement.

Table 22.

Respect For Others Is Important

Survey Item 17: Practicing Teachers	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Disagree	15	14.2	14.2
Disagree	68	64.2	78.3
Uncertain	17	16.0	94.3
Agree	5	4.7	99.1
Strongly Agree	1	.9	100.0
Mean: 2.1 (Negative Range)		Standard Deviation: .75	

Survey Item 17: Pre-Service Teachers	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Disagree	11	14.5	14.5
Disagree	55	72.4	86.8
Uncertain	5	6.6	93.4
Agree	4	5.3	98.7
Strongly Agree	1	1.3	100.0
Mean: 2.07 (Negative Range)		Standard Deviation: .74	

CEEBI: Survey Item 19: PTE - I will be able to influence the character of students because I am a good role model. In survey item 19, both practicing teachers and pre-service teachers indicated similar positive responses to the survey statement. 94% of the practicing teachers and 90% of the pre-service teachers agree and strongly agree that they would be able to influence the character of students because they are good role models. Table 23 displays the frequencies and percentages of the respondents including those who were undecided with the statement.

Table 23.

A Good Role Model

Survey Item 19: Practicing Teachers	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Undecided	7	6.6	6.6
Agree	70	66.6	72.6
Strongly Agree	29	27.4	100.0
Mean: 4.2 (Positive Range)		Standard Deviation: .55	

Survey Item 19: Pre-Service Teachers	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Undecided	7	9.2	9.2
Agree	44	57.9	67.1
Strongly Agree	25	32.9	100.0
Mean: 4.2 (Positive Range)		Standard Deviation: .61	

CEEBI: Survey Item 21: PTE - I sometimes don't know what to do to help students become more compassionate. In survey item 21, approximately 52% of the practicing teachers reported they disagree and strongly disagree with the survey statement. 50% of the pre-service teachers indicated that sometimes they do not know what to do to help students become more compassionate as well. Similarly, 31% of practicing teachers and approximately 36% of the pre-service teachers agree that sometimes they do not know what to do to help students become more compassionate. Table 24 represents the findings for this item.

Table 24.

Help Students Become More Compassionate

Survey Item 21: Practicing Teachers	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Disagree	11	10.4	10.4
Disagree	45	42.5	52.8
Undecided	17	16.0	68.9
Agree	33	31.1	100.0

Mean: 2.6 (Negative Range) Standard Deviation: 1.0

Survey Item 21: Pre-Service Teachers	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Disagree	7	9.2	9.2
Disagree	31	40.8	50.0
Undecided	9	11.8	61.8
Agree	28	36.8	98.7
Strongly Agree	1	1.3	100.0

Mean: 2.8 (Negative Range) Standard Deviation: 1.08

CEEBI: Survey Item 23: PTE - I am continually finding better ways to develop the character of my students. 71.7% of the practicing teachers and 83.7% pre-service indicated they agree and strongly disagree that they are continually finding ways to develop the character of students. Approximately 21% of the practicing teachers and pre-service teachers indicated they were undecided about their personal ability to find better ways to help students develop character. Table 25 reports the frequencies and percentages of these findings.

Table 25.

Finding Better Ways to Develop Character

Survey Item 23: Practicing Teachers	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Disagree	7	6.6	6.6
Undecided	23	21.7	28.3
Agree	58	54.7	83.0
Strongly Agree	18	17.0	100.0

Mean: 3.8 (Neutral Range)

Standard Deviation: .79

Survey Item 23: Pre-Service Teachers	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Disagree	3	3.9	3.9
Undecided	17	22.4	26.3
Agree	44	57.9	84.2
Strongly Agree	12	15.8	100.0

Mean: 3.8 (Neutral Range)

Standard Deviation: .72

CEEBI - Character Education Efficacy Belief Instrument

GTE - General Teaching Efficacy:

The second dimension of the Character Education Efficacy Instrument is the “general teaching efficacy” (GTE). This dimension was designed to investigate teachers’ beliefs about the ability of teachers in general to exert influence over external factors such as students’ family background and home environment. Twelve of the 24 statements in the CEEBI instrument use the third-person referent and are represented on the questionnaire in items 4, 5, 9, 10, 12, 13, 15, 16, 18, 20, 22, 24.

The mean scores for each item can be used to determine the general level of efficacy exhibited for each item. With 5.00 representing the highest possible score and 1.00 presenting the lowest possible score on each item, mean item score between 1.00 and 2.99 are considered negatively efficacious, those between 3.00 and 3.99 are neither positive nor negative, and those scores above 4.00 are considered positively efficacious.

According to the GTE data, practicing teachers and pre-service teachers indicated:

1. Positive to the following survey item:
 - a. Survey Item # 24 – Teachers who encourage responsibility at school can influence students’ level of responsibility outside of school.

2. Neutral to the following survey items:

- a. Survey Item # 5 – When a student shows greater respect for others, it is usually because teachers have effectively modeled this trait.
- b. Survey Item #9 – When student demonstrate diligence, it is often because teachers have encouraged students to persist with tasks.
- c. Survey Item #12 – If parents notice that their children are more responsible, it is likely that teachers have fostered this trait at school.
- d. Survey Item # 13 – Some students will not become respectful even if they have teachers who promote respect.
- e. Survey Item # 18 – When a student becomes more compassionate, it is usually because teachers have created caring classroom environments.
- f. Survey item # 22 – Teachers cannot be blamed for students who are dishonest.

3. Negative to the following survey items:

- a. Survey Item # 4 – Teachers are usually not responsible when a child becomes more courteous.

- b. Survey Item # 10 – Teachers who spend more time encouraging students to be more respectful of others will see little change in students’ social interaction.
- c. Survey Item # 15 – If students are inconsiderate, it is often because teachers have not sufficiently modeled this trait at school.
- d. Survey Item # 16 – If responsibility is not encouraged in a child’s home, teachers will have little success teaching this trait at school.
- e. Survey Item # 20 – Teaching students what it means to be honest is unlikely to result in students who are more honest.

CEEBI: Survey Item 4: GTE -Teachers are usually not responsible when a child becomes more courteous. In survey item 4, 89% of the practicing teachers and 85% of the pre-service teachers reported that they strongly disagree or disagree with the statement that teachers are not responsible when a child becomes courteous. Table 26 displays the frequencies and percentages of these findings including those who were undecided and 1 pre-service teacher who agreed with the survey item statement.

Table 26.

Teachers Are Usually Not Responsible

Survey Item 4: Practicing Teachers	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Disagree	24	22.6	22.6
Disagree	71	67.0	89.6
Undecided	11	10.4	100.0
Mean: 1.8 (Negative Range)		Standard Deviation: .56	

Survey Item 4: Pre-Service Teachers	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Disagree	27	35.5	35.5
Disagree	38	50.0	85.5
Uncertain	10	13.2	98.7
Agree	1	1.3	100.0
Mean: 1.8 (Negative Range)		Standard Deviation: .74	

CEEBI: Survey Item 5: GTE - When a student shows greater respect for others, it is usually because teachers have effectively modeled that trait. For this item, 76 of the 106 practicing teachers indicated that they agree or strongly agree that teachers in general believe that when a student shows greater respect, it is usually because teachers have effectively modeled that trait. 57 of the 76 pre-service teachers responded positively as well. 27 practicing teachers and 14 pre-service teachers responded “uncertain”. Table 27 summarizes these findings.

Table 27.

Shows Greater Respect For Others

Survey Item 5: Practicing Teachers	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Disagree	3	2.8	2.8
Uncertain	27	25.5	28.3
Agree	64	60.4	88.7
Strongly Agree	12	11.3	100.0

Mean: 3.8 (Neutral Range)

Standard Deviation: .67

Survey Item 5: Pre-Service Teachers	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Disagree	5	6.6	6.6
Uncertain	14	18.4	25.0
Agree	47	61.8	86.8
Strongly Agree	10	13.2	100.0

Mean: 3.8 (Neutral Range)

Standard Deviation: .74

CEEBI: Survey Item 9: GTE - When students demonstrate diligence, it is often because teachers have encouraged the students to persist with tasks. In survey item 9, approximately 82% of the practicing teachers and 70% of the pre-service teachers indicated that they agree and strongly agree with the statement. 13% of practicing teachers and 25 % of the pre-service teachers responded “uncertain” to the general belief that when a student demonstrated diligence, it is because teachers have encouraged the student to persist with tasks. Table 28 displays the respondent’s frequencies and percentages.

Table 28.

Students Demonstrate Diligence

Survey Item 9: Practicing Teachers	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Disagree	5	4.7	4.7
Undecided	14	13.2	17.9
Agree	79	74.5	92.5
<u>Strongly Agree</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>7.5</u>	<u>100.0</u>

Mean: 3.8 (Neutral Range) Standard Deviation: .61

Survey Item 9: Pre-Service Teachers	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Disagree	4	5.3	5.3
Undecided	19	25.0	30.3
Agree	45	59.2	89.5
<u>Strongly Agree</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>10.5</u>	<u>100.0</u>

Mean: 3.7 (Neutral Range) Standard Deviation: .71

CEEBI: Survey Item 10: GTE - Teachers who spend time encouraging students to be respectful of others will see little change in students' social interaction. In survey item 10, 91.5% of the practicing teachers and 84.2% of the pre-service teachers reported that they disagree and strongly disagree that teachers who spend time encouraging students to be respectful will see little change in students' social interaction. Approximately 9% of the pre-service teachers and 2% of the practicing teachers shared a positive response to the statement. Table 29 represents the frequencies and percentages of the responses to this statement.

Table 29.

Encouraging Students To Be Respectful

Survey Item 10: Practicing Teachers	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Disagree	31	29.2	29.2
Disagree	66	62.3	91.5
Uncertain	6	5.7	97.2
Agree	3	2.8	100.0

Mean: 1.8 (Negative Range)

Standard Deviation: .66

Survey Item 10: Pre-Service Teachers	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Disagree	26	34.2	34.2
Disagree	38	50.0	84.2
Uncertain	5	6.6	90.8
Agree	4	5.3	96.1
Strongly Agree	3	3.9	100.0

Mean: 1.95 (Negative Range)

Standard Deviation: .99

CEEBI: Survey item 12: GTE - If parents notice that their children are more responsible, it is likely that teachers have fostered this trait at school.

In item 12, approximately 60 % of the practicing teachers indicated they agree and strongly agree that if a parent notices that their children are more responsible, it is likely that teachers have fostered this trait at school. Approximately 66% of the pre-service teachers responded positively, as well. 35% of the practicing teachers and 30% of the pre-service teachers responded “undecided” to the statement. Table 30 displays frequencies and percentages of the responses to the survey item.

Table 30.

Children Are More Responsible

Survey Item 12: Practicing Teachers	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Disagree	5	4.7	4.7
Uncertain	37	34.9	39.6
Agree	60	56.6	96.2
<u>Strongly Agree</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>3.8</u>	<u>100.0</u>
Mean: 3.5 (Neutral Range)		Standard Deviation: .64	

Survey Item 12: Pre-Service Teachers	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Disagree	3	3.9	3.9
Uncertain	23	30.3	34.2
Agree	43	56.6	90.8
<u>Strongly Agree</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>9.2</u>	<u>100.0</u>
Mean: 3.7 (Neutral Range)		Standard Deviation: .69	

CEEBI: Survey Item 13: GTE - Some students will not become respectful even if they have had teachers who promote respect. Information indicated that approximately 72% of the practicing teachers and 65% of pre-service teachers agree and strongly agree that some students will not become respectful even if they have had teachers who promote respect. On the other side, 19.8% of the practicing teachers and 23.7% of pre-service teachers indicated “strongly disagree and disagree” to this statement. These findings are presented in Table 31.

Table 31.

Some Students Will Not Become Respectful

Survey Item 13: Practicing Teachers	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Disagree	3	2.8	2.8
Disagree	18	17.0	19.8
Uncertain	9	8.5	28.3
Agree	68	64.2	92.5
Strongly Agree	8	7.5	100.0

Mean: 3.5 (Neutral Range)

Standard Deviation: .96

Survey Item 13: Pre-Service Teachers	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Disagree	3	3.9	3.9
Disagree	15	19.7	23.7
Uncertain	9	11.8	35.5
Agree	45	59.2	94.7
Strongly Agree	4	5.3	100.0

Mean: 3.4 (Neutral Range)

Standard Deviation: 1.0

CEEBI: Survey Item 15: GTE - If students are inconsiderate it is often because teachers have not sufficiently modeled this trait at school. 77.4% of practicing teachers and 64.5% of the pre-service teachers reported that that disagree and strongly disagree to the statement that if students are inconsiderate it is often because teachers have not sufficiently modeled this trait at school. Table 32 summarizes the frequencies and percentages to survey item 15.

Table 32.

Students Are Inconsiderate

Survey Item 15: Practicing Teachers	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Disagree	10	9.4	9.4
Disagree	72	67.9	77.4
Uncertain	13	12.3	89.6
Agree	9	8.5	98.1
Strongly Agree	2	1.9	100.0
Mean: 2.2 (Negative Range)		Standard Deviation: .82	

Survey Item 15: Pre-Service Teachers	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Disagree	6	7.9	7.9
Disagree	43	56.6	64.5
Uncertain	13	17.1	81.6
Agree	13	17.1	98.7
Strongly Agree	1	1.3	100.0
Mean: 2.4 (Negative Range)		Standard Deviation: .92	

CEEBI: Survey Item 16: GTE - If responsibility is not encouraged in a child's home, teachers will have little success teaching this trait at school. For item 16, 43.4% of practicing teachers and 51.3% of pre-service teachers indicated that they disagree and strongly disagree that if responsibility is not encouraged at home, teachers will have little success teaching this trait at school. 26.4% was reported for both the "uncertain" and "agree" response by practicing teachers. 34.2% of pre-service teachers were uncertain, while 14.5% agreed with the statement. Table 33 displays the frequencies and percentages of the findings.

Table 33.

Responsibility Is Not Encouraged At Home

Survey Item 16: Practicing Teachers	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Disagree	4	3.8	3.8
Disagree	42	39.6	43.4
Uncertain	28	26.4	69.8
Agree	28	26.4	96.2
Strongly Agree	4	3.8	100.0

Mean: 2.8 (Negative Range) Standard Deviation: .98

Survey Item 16: Pre-Service Teachers	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Disagree	2	2.6	2.6
Disagree	37	48.7	51.3
Uncertain	26	34.2	85.5
Agree	11	14.5	100.0

Mean: 2.6 (Negative Range) Standard Deviation: .77

CEEBI: Survey Item 18: GTE - When a student becomes more compassionate, it is usually because teachers have created caring classroom environments. In item 18, approximately 80% of practicing teachers and 72% of pre-service teachers reported that they agree and strongly agree, to the belief that when a student becomes more compassionate, it is usually because teachers have created caring classroom environments. 17% of practicing teachers and 23.7% of pre-service teachers were “uncertain” with their response. A summary of the findings is displayed in Table 34.

Table 34.

Caring Classroom Environments

Survey Item 18: Practicing Teachers	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Disagree	3	2.8	2.8
Uncertain	18	17.0	19.8
Agree	77	72.6	92.5
Strongly Agree	8	7.5	100.0

Mean: 3.8 (Neutral Range)

Standard Deviation: .58

Survey Item 18: Pre-Service Teachers	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Disagree	3	3.9	3.9
Uncertain	18	23.7	27.6
Agree	48	63.2	90.8
Strongly Agree	7	9.2	100.0

Mean: 3.7 (Neutral Range)

Standard Deviation: .67

CEEBI: Survey Item 20: GTE - Teaching students what it means to be honest is unlikely to result in students who are more honest. In item 20, 68.9% of practicing teachers and 72.4% of pre-service teachers disagree and strongly disagree with this statement. Table 35 provides a summary of the finding to the respondent's general belief that teaching students what it means to be honest is unlikely to result in students who are more honest.

Table 35.

Students Who Are More Honest

Survey Item 20: Practicing Teachers	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Disagree	11	10.4	10.4
Disagree	62	58.5	68.9
Uncertain	25	23.6	92.5
Agree	8	7.5	100.0

Mean: 2.2 (Negative Range)

Standard Deviation: .75

Survey Item 20: Pre-Service Teachers	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Disagree	12	15.8	15.8
Disagree	43	56.6	72.4
Uncertain	14	18.4	90.8
Agree	6	7.9	98.7
Strongly agree	1	1.3	100.0

Mean: 2.2 (Negative Range)

Standard Deviation: .86

CEEBI: Survey Item 22: GTE - Teachers cannot be blamed for students

who are dishonest. In item 22, 47% of practicing teachers and 42% of pre-service teachers indicated that they agree and strongly agree to the belief that teachers cannot be blamed for students who are dishonest. 34.9% of practicing teachers and 28.9% of pre-service teachers were “uncertain”. Table 36 provides a summary of the teachers who responded to this statement.

Table 36.**Students Who Are Dishonest.**

Survey Item 22: Practicing Teachers	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Disagree	1	.9	.9
Disagree	18	17.0	17.9
Uncertain	37	34.9	52.8
Agree	42	39.6	92.5
Strongly Agree	8	7.5	100.0
Mean: 3.3 (Neutral Range)		Standard Deviation: .88	

Survey Item 22: Pre-Service Teachers	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Disagree	1	1.3	1.3
Disagree	21	27.6	28.9
Uncertain	22	28.9	57.9
Agree	27	35.5	93.4
Strongly Agree	5	6.6	100.0
Mean: 3.1 (Neutral Range)		Standard Deviation: .96	

CEEBI: Survey Item 24: GTE - Teachers who encourage responsibility at school can influence students' level of responsibility outside of school. In item 24, 94.4% of practicing teachers and 92.1% of pre-service teachers indicated that they agree and strongly agree to the belief that teachers who encourage responsibility at school can influence students' level of responsibility outside of school. Table 37 provides a summary of the teachers who responded to this statement.

Table 37.

Level of Responsibility Outside of School

Survey Item 24: Practicing Teachers	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Disagree	2	1.9	1.9
Uncertain	4	3.8	5.7
Agree	68	64.2	69.8
Strongly Agree	32	30.2	100.0

Mean: 4.2 (Positive Range) Standard Deviation: .61

Survey Item 24: Pre-Service Teachers	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Disagree	1	1.3	1.3
Uncertain	5	6.6	7.9
Agree	45	59.2	67.1
Strongly Agree	25	32.9	100.0

Mean: 4.2 (Positive Range) Standard Deviation: .63

Inferential Statistics

In order to test the hypothesis, an analysis of variance (ANOVA) statistical procedure was used to examine the data concerning a teacher's sense of efficacy to teach character education and the difference between character education teacher education programs between a public institution and private, religiously-affiliated institution.

The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software program was used to conduct the statistical analysis. The .05 level of probability was used to determine significance in all analysis. Only the significant findings of this study are discussed in detail.

The results of the ANOVA indicated a significant difference for practicing teachers and pre-service teacher's sense of efficacy for discussing issues of right and wrong with students (Survey item #1), and if responsibility is not encouraged at home, teacher's will have little success teaching this trait at school (Survey item #16). The ANOVA results are displayed in Table 37.

Table 38.

ANOVA: Significant Differences in Practicing Teacher's and Pre-service

Teacher's Sense of Efficacy

CEEBI						
Survey Item #1:		SS	df	MS	F	p
Right and Wrong Issues	Between Groups	1.737	1	1.737	6.338	.013
	Within Groups	49.340	180	.274		
	Total	51.077	181			

CEEBI						
Survey Item #16:		SS	df	MS	F	p
Responsibility Not Encouraged At Home	Between Groups	3.054	1	3.054	3.809	.053
	Within Groups	144.309	180	.802		
	Total	147.363	181			

Interview and Curriculum Review

An interview format was used to determine the level of involvement and character education vision in each institution of higher education interviewed (Appendix E). In addition, a review of the curriculum coursework and core requirements for the teacher preparatory programs of the respondents were analyzed (Appendix F).

An interview was conducted with the chair-person of the education department from the private-religious institution, as well as an interview with the elementary education department chair at the public university.

Similarities implementing the specific Pennsylvania Department of Education Standards that include problem solving and conflict resolution instructional practices into the teacher training program were apparent for both

institutions. Behavior management strategies were also included in additional courses in the education curriculum requirements. Foundations of Education courses for both institutions included ethical leadership and principles, in addition to addressing *Pennsylvania's Code of Professional Practice and Conduct for Educators*.

Both the private-religious college and the public university incorporated the college mission statement into the development of curriculum and were included on various course syllabi. Character education language, including; “values of collegiality, humility, and service; social responsibility, moral integrity, and moral leadership” were part of the institution’s overall vision. Both institutions had developed these missions’ statements as a college community (department and college as a whole).

Although a specific course with “character education” objectives was not listed within the required courses at the public institution – the imbedded components of classroom management and behavior management were identified. The specific character education program, “Character Counts” with the core traits (kindness, responsibility, citizenship, fairness, honesty, and respect) was addressed in one of the early childhood courses at the private-religious college. Six credits of courses with “moral and ethic components” were required in the core curriculum at the private-religious institution. Community service requirements were encouraged by the public institution and required by the private-religious institution.

Summary of Results

With the use of a survey, this study investigated whether a relationship existed between the impact of university-based coursework in teacher training programs and a teacher's sense of efficacy for teaching character education.

A sample of 106 practicing teachers taken from 10 public schools and 4 private-religious schools, and a sample of 76 pre-service teachers currently student teaching in a public university and a private-religious college in Berks County provided the survey data for analysis.

Descriptive data including highest academic degree received, year certified in teaching, type of institution where certification was received, coursework and staff development in character education, and years of teaching experience was presented.

Two research questions were examined and investigated. The hypothesis was rejected with no significant differences found. The series of descriptive statistical procedures used included t-tests, correlation studies, and regression analysis.

Generalizations about teacher's self-efficacy for teaching character education were analyzed from the CEEBI survey. The study included positive, neutral, and negative teacher efficacy responses. Tables displaying the frequencies and percentages from the data are included in this chapter for each survey item.

A one-way ANOVA was utilized to examine differences between the practicing teacher's and pre-service teacher's responses to the questionnaire. The

results of the ANOVA indicated a significant difference for practicing teachers and pre-service teacher's sense of efficacy for discussing issues of right and wrong with students (Survey item #1), and if responsibility is not encouraged at home, teacher's will have little success teaching this trait at school (Survey item #16).

Chapter Five

Conclusions

Introduction

This chapter will provide a summary of the purpose of the research study and a discussion of the findings. The discussion of the findings is organized according to research questions. A report of additional findings, implications, the limitations of the study, and recommendations for continued research are included in this chapter.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to determine whether a relationship existed between the inclusion of university-based coursework in teacher-training programs and a teacher's sense of efficacy for teaching character education in the classroom. This study built on the work of Milson and Mehlig (2002) by administering the Character Education Efficacy Belief Instrument, (CEEBI) to a sample of practicing teachers and pre-service teachers in the Berks County area of northeastern Pennsylvania. The researcher gathered information through the use of a survey, interview, and a curriculum review.

Summary of the Findings

Research Question 1: What is the relationship, if any, on the impact of pre-service coursework in character education and a teachers' sense of efficacy to provide character education for students?

Hypothesis 1: Teachers receiving university based coursework in character education will show higher levels of character education self-efficacy than students who have not had pre-service training.

This study found no significant differences existed between teacher's reported sense of efficacy toward teaching character education and pre-service coursework or staff development preparation. The hypothesis was rejected.

According to the data:

1. In the role of *university-based coursework in character education* the findings suggested that most teachers do not receive pre-service coursework in character education. Approximately 61% of the practicing teachers, and 71% of the current pre-service (student teachers), reported no formal training in character education training.
2. In the role of *staff development* on a teacher's sense of efficacy for teaching character education, "no" staff development in character education was reported by 80% of the practicing teachers and 87% of the pre-service teachers.

Research Question 2: Is there a significant difference between institutions of higher education that have a specific commitment to integrate character education components into their teacher training program coursework on how teachers perceive their ability to accomplish the task of teaching character education?

Hypothesis 2: Students enrolled in institutions of higher education demonstrating a commitment to preparing students in courses of ethics and morality will demonstrate a greater self-efficacy for teaching character education than students not so enrolled.

This study found no significant differences existed between types of institutions of higher education and teacher reported sense of efficacy toward teaching character education. The hypothesis was rejected.

According to the data:

1. In the role of *types of institutions where certification was received* practicing teachers indicated that 62.3% received certification from a public institution, 31.1% from a private-religious institution, 5.7% from a non-religious institution, and .9% indicated alternate certification.
2. In the role of *types of institutions where certification was received* for current pre-service (student teachers), 36.8% would receive teaching certification from a public institution, while 63.2% would receive certification from a private-religious institution.

3. This study contradicted the findings reported by research validated by the Character Education Efficacy Belief Instrument (Milson, 2001) suggesting that teachers earning their undergraduate degrees from private, religiously affiliated universities have a greater sense of efficacy for character education.

Report of Additional Findings

Character Education Efficacy Belief Instrument Survey

This study found a significant difference within the responses of the practicing teachers and pre-service teachers for two of the items used to measure character education teacher self-efficacy by the Character Education Efficacy Belief Instrument (CEEBI) created by Andrew Milson and Lisa Mehlig (2001), (Appendix C).

CEEBI: Item 1: I am usually comfortable discussing issues of right and wrong with my students. This item was designed to measure the dimension of personal teaching efficacy (PTE), to investigate teachers' beliefs about their own abilities regarding character education.

According to the data:

1. The research indicated a significant difference of .013 reporting that 71% of practicing teachers strongly agree with this statement, while 54% of pre-service teachers strongly agree in their level of teacher efficacy.

2. Findings suggest that practicing teachers with 1 to 6 years of teaching experience feel more comfortable discussing issues of right and wrong with students as compared to pre-service (student teachers) who have less experience teaching in their own classrooms.

CEEBI: Item 16: If responsibility is not encouraged in a child's home, teachers will have little success teaching this trait at school. This item was designed to measure general teaching efficacy (GTE), to investigate teachers' beliefs about the ability of teachers in general to exert influence over external factors, such as students' family background and home environment.

According to the data:

1. The research indicated a significant difference of .053 reporting that 43.4% of the practicing teachers responded negatively to this statement (strongly disagree or disagree), while 51.3% of the pre-service teachers responded negatively to this level of general teaching efficacy.
2. Findings suggest that pre-service, student teachers are more confident that they will have success teaching responsibility at school if this trait is not encouraged in the child's home. Practicing teachers with 1 to 6 years of teaching experience feel more strongly that without encouragement from home, teachers will have little success teaching responsibility at school.

Implications of Results

According to the data collected from the Character Education Efficacy Belief Instrument (CEEBI), specifically to examine the level of teacher efficacy exhibited for character education, practicing teachers and pre-service teachers indicated:

1. Positive to the following items:
 - a. Survey Item #1 - I am usually comfortable discussing issues of right and wrong with my students.
 - b. Survey Item #3 - I am confident in my ability to be a good role model.
 - c. Survey Item #19 - I will be able to influence the character of students because I am a good role model.
 - d. Survey Item # 24 – Teachers who encourage responsibility at school can influence students’ level of responsibility outside of school.
 - e. Survey Item # 7 (Pre-service Teachers only) – I know how to use strategies that might lead to positive changes in students’ character.
 - f. Survey Item # 11 (Pre-service Teachers only) - I am able to positively influence the character development of a child who has had little direction from parents.

2. Neutral to the following survey items:

- a. Survey Item # 5 – When a student shows greater respect for others, it is usually because teachers have effectively modeled this trait.
- b. Survey Item #9 – When student demonstrate diligence, it is often because teachers have encouraged students to persist with tasks.
- c. Survey Item #12 – If parents notice that their children are more responsible, it is likely that teachers have fostered this trait at school.
- d. Survey Item # 13 – Some students will not become respectful even if they have teachers who promote respect.
- e. Survey Item # 18 – When a student becomes more compassionate, it is usually because teachers have created caring classroom environments.
- f. Survey item # 22 – Teachers cannot be blamed for students who are dishonest.
- g. Survey Item # 23 – I am continually finding better ways to develop the character of my students.
- h. Survey Item #7 (Practicing Teachers only) - I know how to use strategies that might lead to positive changes in students' character.

- i. Survey Item #11 (Practicing Teachers only) – I am able to positively influence the character development of a child who has had little direction from parents.

3. Negative to the following survey items:

- a. Survey Item # 2 – When a student has been exposed to negative influences at home, I do not believe that I can do much to impact a child’s behavior.
- b. Survey Item # 4 – Teachers are usually not responsible when a child becomes more courteous.
- c. Survey Item # 6 – I am usually at a loss as to how to help a student be more responsible.
- d. Survey Item # 8 – I am not sure that I can teach my students to be honest.
- e. Survey Item # 10 – Teachers who spend more time encouraging students to be more respectful of others will see little change in students’ social interaction.
- f. Survey Item # 14 – When I have a student who lies regularly, I can usually convince him/her to stop lying.
- g. Survey Item # 15 – If students are inconsiderate, it is often because teachers have not sufficiently modeled this trait at school.

- h. Survey Item # 16 – If responsibility is not encouraged in a child’s home, teachers will have little success teaching this trait at school.
- i. Survey Item # 17 – I often find it difficult to persuade a student that respect for others is important.
- j. Survey Item # 20 – Teaching students what it means to be honest is unlikely to result in students who are more honest.
- k. Survey Item # 21 – I sometimes don’t know what to do to help student become more compassionate.

The results of this study generally support the findings of Milson and Mehlig’s (2002) study suggesting that teachers appear efficacious (Positive) for character formation when presented with statements that do not include the nature of the students’ character. For example, teachers overwhelmingly agreed with statements such as, “I am usually comfortable discussing issues of right and wrong with my students”; “I am confident in my ability to be a good role model”; “I will be able to influence the character of students because I am a good role model.”

The study suggests that teachers were less positive, although not entirely negative (Neutral) about statements such as “When a student shows greater respect for others, it is usually because teachers have effectively modeled this trait; when students demonstrate diligence, it is often because teachers encourage the students to persist with tasks”; “if parents notice that their children are more

responsible, it is likely that teachers have fostered this trait in school.” The research suggests that teachers tend to doubt their ability to change the character of their students.

As with Milson and Mehlig’s (2002) research, the results of this study indicate that teachers appear less efficacious for character development when presented statements about their ability to change specific character traits. For example, (Negative) responses were reported for statements such as, “I am usually at a loss as to how to help a student be more responsible”; “I am not sure that I can teach my students how to be honest”; and “Teaching students what it means to be honest is unlikely to result in students being more honest.” In addition, teachers doubt their ability to overcome negative influences from students’ homes as indicated by the (Negative) reports to statements such as, “When a student has been exposed to negative influences at home, I do not believe that I can do much to impact a child’s behavior”, and “if responsibility is not encouraged in a child’s home, teachers will have little success teaching this trait at school.”

Discussion of Objectives

The overall objectives of this research project were:

1. To survey pre-service and practicing teachers’ sense of efficacy for teaching character education.

This research study suggests that teacher's doubt their abilities to change the nature of a students' character and doubt their efficacy to help student's overcome negative influences from home. Significantly more responses were measured at the "Neutral" (neither agree nor disagree) and the "Negative" levels of efficacy.

2. To discern if university-based character education coursework has a positive impact on teacher efficacy.

Prior research and educational literature focused on character education programs, not specifically on pre-service training in character education. The data from this study was intriguing as findings indicated that there were no significant differences in the efficacy levels of teachers who received character training and those receiving no coursework at all.

3. To determine if there are deficiencies in the areas of pre-service teacher training for the development of a positive sense of efficacy for the teaching of character education in private and public universities/colleges.

This study was the first snapshot done seeking information about the visions of institutions that prepare teachers for certification. The type of institution of higher education at

which a teacher earned certification did not have a significant impact on teacher-efficacy in this study

In Conclusion

In Pennsylvania, *Chapter 4* requirements under *No Child Left Behind* recommends that “Character education shall be included in the local curriculum with value development, and the use of additional resources to reinforce positive values incorporated into the daily program” (Pennsylvania Department of Education, 2005).

The Pennsylvania Code of Professional Practice and Conduct for Educators states that “Professional educators shall impart to their students principles of good citizenship and societal responsibility” and shall address “Curriculum models and approaches including individual and group guidance behaviors, problem solving, and conflict resolution” (Pennsylvania Department of Education, 2005).

Since the Pennsylvania Department of Education recommends that character education be included in the local curriculum with positive value development, this particular study was done to determine how teachers perceive their ability to teach character education.

As indicated by the data collected through the interview and curriculum review, education departments preparing teachers in elementary education appear to have no requirements for any formal training in character education.

Institutions that certify teachers have mandatory courses for classroom

management which include objectives for “Behavior Management” and “Conflict Resolution” in addition to objectives to cover the Pennsylvania Code of Professional Practice and Conduct for Educators. However, there appears to be no specific course that addresses the character education programs developed by *Character Counts*, *Developmental Assets*, and *the Character Education Partnership*. It is up to the individual college instructor teaching an education course to determine if the character education core traits of kindness, responsibility, citizenship, fairness, honesty, and respect are worth taking class time to discuss.

In most cases, a teacher certified to teach at the elementary level goes right from a student teaching assignment with little or no training for the issues of character education. With the exception of the partnership with the master cooperating teacher in the student-teaching assignment, the pre-service teacher has received little or no formal guidance for character education.

This research study was aimed at applying the teacher efficacy construct to the field of character education in an attempt to guide teacher education efforts in character education. Members of the education community continue to voice concerns about the considerable expectations placed on teachers across the United States for teaching character education. The study indicated that despite widespread support for character education, there was little training available - particularly at the pre-service level.

Limitations

In interpreting the data from this study, the reader should be aware of the limitations of this research effort:

1. The generalization of the study was limited to the Berks County area in the state of Pennsylvania from which the sample was drawn for the study.
2. The pre-service, student-teacher's sample of the study was only conducted in one public university and one private-religious College in Berks County. Inferences to conditions in private and public institutions in other states would be inappropriate and were not offered in this study.
3. The population sample included only a portion of elementary teachers – those with 0-6 years teaching experience. If a different group of individuals had been selected to participate in the study, the results could have been significantly different.
4. The study was limited by the honesty and reliability of the individuals providing answers to the questionnaire.
5. The study focused on the personal and general beliefs of practicing teachers and pre-service teachers, and not with the collection of objective data.
6. The interpretation of the matter of degree to which a student received college coursework in character education (Survey Question #8) may be inconsequential to the research study.

Recommendations for Future Research

1. This study should be replicated in a different county and different state.
2. Studies focusing on the responses from junior high school teachers and high-school teachers should be undertaken to determine efficacy level in the secondary schools.
3. For the elementary grades, future studies should focus on the efficacy for teaching character education at specific grade levels; early childhood, primary, intermediate grades.
4. Focus on studies that provide information for teachers about their ability to change student's character. Continue conversation and discussion at the college level about the types of courses in which character education pre-service training can best provide teachers with effective methods for reaching potentially troubled students.

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APPENDIX A

Letter of Request for Participants

Letter of Request

Dear Educators,

As a Professor in Early Childhood/Elementary Education and a Supervisor of Student Teachers at Alvernia College, I am interested in pre-service teacher training in "Character Education."

This study is part of the requirements for my dissertation at Lehigh University. I am specifically interested to know if educators graduating from our institutions feel adequately prepared to teach character education. How do teachers perceive their ability to accomplish the task of teaching character education? This information will serve as a basis to identify approaches to improve pre-service teacher training in this area.

Your input is greatly appreciated and will help to make the results more meaningful.

(1) Please read the *Lehigh University Informed Consent Form*.

(2) Please complete the *Character Education Efficacy Belief Instrument and Survey*.

Thank you for taking the time to participate in this study. If you have any questions or are interested in the results, please do not hesitate to contact my advisor or me. Our addresses are listed on the *Lehigh University Informed Consent Form* on the following page.

Sincerely,

Judy A. Koller
Doctoral Student
Lehigh University

APPENDIX B

Lehigh University Informed Consent Form

LEHIGH UNIVERSITY INFORMED CONSENT FORM

A STUDY OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PRE-SERVICE CHARACTER EDUCATION TRAINING AND TEACHER EFFICACY

PRIMARY INVESTIGATOR: Judy A. Koller
PHONE: 610-796-8254
E-MAIL: judy.koller@alvernia.edu

RESEARCH ADVISOR: Dr. Lynn Columba
PHONE: 610-758-3237
E-MAIL: hlc0@lehigh.edu

RESEARCH PURPOSE: The purpose of this study is to determine if a relationship exists between the impact of university-based coursework in pre-service teacher education programs and a teacher's sense of efficacy for teaching character education.

TERMS: *Efficacy* refers to an individual's belief in his or her ability to act in a manner that will produce desired outcomes. *Character education* is defined as efforts to help young people develop good character, which includes knowing about, caring about, and acting upon core ethical values.

COST AND PAYMENTS TO THE PARTICIPANT: There is no cost associated with or compensation for participation in this study.

RISKS/BENEFITS TO THE PARTICIPANT: The participants may be inconvenienced by the amount of time (approximately ten minutes) required to fill out and return the survey to the primary investigator. As a result, the benefit of this study may guide teacher educators toward building teachers' knowledge and skills related to character education.

CONFIDENTIALITY: Participant anonymity and information obtained from this study will be kept confidential. There is no need for participants to use their name or the name of their schools anywhere on the survey. All survey forms will be kept in a secured file that can only be accessed by the researcher.

PARTICIPANT'S RIGHT TO WITHDRAW FROM THE STUDY: Participants may withdraw from this study at any time by notifying the primary investigator. If a participant decides not to take part in this study, all information collected from the participant will be destroyed.

VOLUNTARY CONSENT BY PARTICIPANT: Participation in this study is voluntary. A participant may decide not to take part in this study without affecting their relationship with their school district, Alvernia College, or Lehigh University.

If you have any questions or concerns pertaining to this study, please contact Judy Koller or Dr. Columba. To report any problems related to your participation in this study, contact Ruth L. Tallman, Office of Research and Sponsored Programs at Lehigh University, 610-758-3024.

**BY COMPLETING AND RETURNING THE CHARACTER EDUCATION
EFFICACY BELIEF INSTRUMENT & SURVEY, YOU HAVE CONSENTED TO
PARTICIPATE AND HAVE GIVEN ME PERMISSION TO USE THIS
INFORMATION FOR THE STUDY.**

APPENDIX C

Character Education Efficacy Belief Instrument and Survey

CHARACTER EDUCATION EFFICACY BELIEF INSTRUMENT AND SURVEY

- There are no correct or incorrect answers.
- Your answers will be kept completely confidential.
- Thank you for your participation.

**PLEASE RESPOND TO EACH OF THE FOLLOWING ITEMS.
CIRCLE ONE RESPONSE FOR EACH ITEM.**

- 1. Highest academic degree attained?**
 - a. Bachelors
 - b. Masters
 - c. Doctorate
- 2. When did you earn your first teaching certificate? _____ (YEAR)**
- 3. From which state did you earn this teaching certificate? _____ (STATE)**
- 4. From which type of institution did you receive your teacher certification?**
 - a. Public college/university
 - b. Private, non-religiously affiliated college/university
 - c. Private, religiously affiliated college/university
 - d. Alternate certification – not through a college/university
- 5. In which type of school do you teach?**
 - a. Public school
 - b. Private school with a religious mission
 - c. Private school without a religious mission
 - d. Other _____ (PLEASE DESCRIBE)
- 6. In which type of community do the students who attend your school live?
(Check all that apply)**
 - a. Urban
 - b. Suburban
 - c. Rural
- 7. How would you describe the socio-economic status (SES) of the
students who attend your school? (Check all that apply)**
 - a. Low family income
 - b. Middle family income
 - c. High family income

8. Have you received any college coursework in character education?

- a. Yes. If yes, check all that apply:
- i. Undergraduate coursework with embedded character education topics (Example: *Character Counts*, *Developmental Assets*, *The Character Education Partnership*)
 - ii. Undergraduate coursework in ethics, values, or morality
 - iii. Graduate coursework that addressed character education
 - iv. Other training: (PLEASE DESCRIBE) _____
- b. No _____

9. Have you received any staff development in character education?

- a. Yes. If yes, check all that apply:
- i. Attended a character education session at a conference
 - ii. Attended a staff development workshop on character education
 - iii. Other training: (PLEASE DESCRIBE) _____
- b. No _____

10. What grade level do you teach this year? (Circle all that apply)

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

11. Overall, how many total years of teaching experience do you have?

- a. This is my first year of teaching
- b. 1 – 3 years
- c. 4 – 6 years
- d. 7 – 10 years
- e. More than 10 years

12. What subject area do you teach most of the time this year?

(Please check only one)

- | | |
|----------------------------------|----------------------|
| a. Art | j. Social Studies |
| b. Foreign Language | k. Special Education |
| c. Language Arts/English/Reading | l. Other _____ |
| d. Integrated Curriculum | |
| e. Mathematics | |
| f. Music | |
| g. Multiple Subjects Equally | |
| h. Physical Education/Athletics | |
| i. Science | |

DIRECTIONS:

For the following questions, please indicate your level of agreement by circling the appropriate letters in the left column.

SA = Strongly Agree

A = Agree

U = Uncertain

D = Disagree

SD = Strongly Disagree

- SA A U D SD 1) I am usually comfortable discussing issues of right and wrong with my students.
- SA A U D SD 2) When a student has been exposed to negative influences at home, I do not believe that I can do much to impact that child's character.
- SA A U D SD 3) I am confident in my ability to be a good role model.
- SA A U D SD 4) Teachers are usually not responsible when a child becomes more courteous.
- SA A U D SD 5) When a student show greater respect for others, it is usually because teachers have effectively modeled that trait.
- SA A U D SD 6) I am usually at a loss as to how to help a student be more responsible.
- SA A U D SD 7) I know how to use strategies that might lead to positive changes in students' character.
- SA A U D SD 8) I am not sure that I can teach my students to be honest.
- SA A U D SD 9) When students demonstrate diligence, it is often because teachers have encouraged the students to persist with tasks.
- SA A U D SD 10) Teachers who spend time encouraging students to be respectful of others will see little change in students' social interaction.
- SA A U D SD 11) I am able to positively influence the character development of a child who has had little direction from parents.

- SA A U D SD 12) If parents notice that their children are more responsible, it is likely that teachers have fostered this trait at school.
- SA A U D SD 13) Some students will not become respectful even if they have had teachers who promote respect.
- SA A U D SD 14) When I have a student who lies regularly, I can usually convince him/her to stop lying.
- SA A U D SD 15) If students are inconsiderate it is often because teachers have not sufficiently modeled this trait at school.
- SA A U D SD 16) If responsibility is not encouraged in a child's home, teachers will have little success teaching this trait at school.
- SA A U D SD 17) I often find it difficult to persuade a student that respect for others is important.
- SA A U D SD 18) When a student becomes more compassionate, it is usually because teachers have created caring classroom environments.
- SA A U D SD 19) I will be able to influence the character of students because I am a good role model.
- SA A U D SD 20) Teaching students what it means to be honest is unlikely to result in students who are more honest.
- SA A U D SD 21) I sometimes don't know what to do to help students become more compassionate.
- SA A U D SD 22) Teachers cannot be blamed for students who are dishonest.
- SA A U D SD 23) I am continually finding better ways to develop the character of my students.
- SA A U D SD 24) Teachers who encourage responsibility at school can influence students level of responsibility outside of school.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION.

Note: This survey was adapted from the *Character Education Efficacy Belief Instrument* (Milson & Mehlig, 2002).

APPENDIX D

Character Education Efficacy Belief Instrument and Survey (For Student Teachers)

**CHARACTER EDUCATION EFFICACY BELIEF INSTRUMENT AND SURVEY
(FOR STUDENT TEACHERS)**

- There are no correct or incorrect answers.
- Your answers will be kept completely confidential.
- Thank you for your participation.

**PLEASE RESPOND TO EACH OF THE FOLLOWING ITEMS.
CIRCLE ONE RESPONSE FOR EACH ITEM.**

1. From which type of institution are you receiving your teacher certification?

- a. Public college/university
- b. Private, non-religiously affiliated college/university
- c. Private, religiously affiliated college/university
- d. Alternate certification – not through a college/university

2. In which type of school are you student teaching?

- a. Public school
- b. Private school with a religious mission
- c. Private school without a religious mission
- d. Other _____ (PLEASE DESCRIBE)

**3. In which type of community do the students who attend your school live?
(Check all that apply)**

- a. Urban
- b. Suburban
- c. Rural

4. Have you received any college coursework in character education?

- a. Yes. If yes, check all that apply:
 - i. Undergraduate coursework with embedded character education topics (Example: *Character Counts*, *Developmental Assets*, *The Character Education Partnership*)
 - ii. Undergraduate coursework in ethics, values, morals
 - iii. Graduate coursework that addressed character education
- b. No

5. Have you received any staff development in character education?

- a. Yes. If yes, check all that apply:
 - i. Attended a character education session at a conference
 - ii. Attended a staff development workshop on character education
 - iii. Other training: (PLEASE DESCRIBE)
- b. No _____

6. What grade level are you currently student teaching? (Circle all that apply)

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

7. What subject area are you currently student teaching? Please check only one.

- a. Art
- b. Foreign Language
- c. Language Arts/English/Reading
- d. Integrated Curriculum
- e. Mathematics
- f. Music
- g. Multiple Subjects Equally
- h. Physical Education/Athletics
- i. Science
- j. Social Studies
- k. Special Education
- l. Other: _____ (SPECIFY)

8. How would you describe the socio-economic status (SES) of the students who attend your school? (Check all that apply)

- a. Low family income
- b. Middle family income
- c. High family income

DIRECTIONS:

For the following questions, please indicate your level of agreement by circling the appropriate letters in the left column.

SA = Strongly Agree
A = Agree
U = Uncertain
D = Disagree
SD = Strongly Disagree

- | | | | | | |
|----|---|---|---|----|--|
| SA | A | U | D | SD | 1) I am usually comfortable discussing issues of right and wrong with my students. |
| SA | A | U | D | SD | 2) When a student has been exposed to negative influences at home, I do not believe that I can do much to impact that child's character. |
| SA | A | U | D | SD | 3) I am confident in my ability to be a good role model. |
| SA | A | U | D | SD | 4) Teachers are usually not responsible when a child becomes more courteous. |
| SA | A | U | D | SD | 5) When a student show greater respect for others, it is usually because teachers have effectively modeled that trait. |
| SA | A | U | D | SD | 6) I am usually at a loss as to how to help a student be more responsible. |
| SA | A | U | D | SD | 7) I know how to use strategies that might lead to positive changes in students' character. |
| SA | A | U | D | SD | 8) I am not sure that I can teach my students to be honest. |
| SA | A | U | D | SD | 9) When students demonstrate diligence, it is often because teachers have encouraged the students to persist with tasks. |
| SA | A | U | D | SD | 10) Teachers who spend time encouraging students to be respectful of others will see little change in students' social interaction. |
| SA | A | U | D | SD | 11) I am able to positively influence the character development of a child who has had little direction from parents. |
| SA | A | U | D | SD | 12) If parents notice that their children are more responsible, it is likely that teachers have fostered this trait at school. |

- SA A U D SD 13) Some students will not become respectful even if they have had teachers who promote respect.
- SA A U D SD 14) When I have a student who lies regularly, I can usually convince him/her to stop lying.
- SA A U D SD 15) If students are inconsiderate it is often because teachers have not sufficiently modeled this trait at school.
- SA A U D SD 16) If responsibility is not encouraged in a child's home, teachers will have little success teaching this trait at school.
- SA A U D SD 17) I often find it difficult to persuade a student that respect for others is important.
- SA A U D SD 18) When a student becomes more compassionate, it is usually because teachers have created caring classroom environments.
- SA A U D SD 19) I will be able to influence the character of students because I am a good role model.
- SA A U D SD 20) Teaching students what it means to be honest is unlikely to result in students who are more honest.
- SA A U D SD 21) I sometimes don't know what to do to help students become more compassionate.
- SA A U D SD 22) Teachers cannot be blamed for students who are dishonest.
- SA A U D SD 23) I am continually finding better ways to develop the character of my students.
- SA A U D SD 24) Teachers who encourage responsibility at school can influence students level of responsibility outside of school.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION.

Note: This survey was adapted from the *Character Education Efficacy Belief Instrument* (Milson & Mehlig, 2002).

APPENDIX E

Institutions of Higher Education Interview Questions

Institutions of Higher Education Interview Questions

A Study of the Relationship Between Pre-Service Character Education Training and Teacher-Efficacy

Character Education Introduction

Character development is a holistic approach that connects the moral dimension of education to the social and civic realms of students' lives. Basic attitudes and values of the society are identified and reinforced in the school and community. Morals are "caught, not taught" and "classroom life is saturated with moral meaning that shapes students' character and moral development" (Ryan, 1996, p. 75).

In character education, the school community identifies the core values of the school and works to teach and reinforce those shared values within the students' lives. Consensus must be reached to develop the shared vision of what character traits should be fostered (Haynes, 1994). Those character traits should permeate the child's learning environment, whether in the classroom, hallway, gymnasium, cafeteria, sports arena, or local restaurant. The character traits are part of the fabric of the whole community, and all stakeholders model the desired behavior (Otten, 2000).

Many organizations (both profit and nonprofit), state departments of education, and local school districts have created character education programs. The curriculum differs depending on the target ages and the specific focus of the program. Even though these differences do exist, a successful character education

program requires the following fundamental elements: (1) *Community Participation* that requires teachers, administrators, staff, students, and parents to be invested in the process. (2) An *Integrated Curriculum* across all subject areas and grades. (3) *Character Traits* that can be identified and clearly defined by all individuals. (4) A *Strong Experiential, Service Learning Component* that allows community-based, real-world learning experiences. (5) *Outcome Assessment* that measures the effectiveness of the character education program (University of Arkansas School Violence Resource Center, 2001).

Interview Questions

Question 1: Level of Involvement

Is your institution currently developing or implementing teacher training in a character education program? (For example: Character Counts, Developmental Assets, The Character Education Partnership)

Question 2: Character Education Vision

Has your institution identified a list of character education traits/elements (For example: kindness, responsibility, citizenship, fairness, etc.) to be adopted into the mission/vision of your program?

Question 3: Building Community Consensus

How did your institution go about creating community consensus about the elements of character education? Have any school or community groups (For

example: students, faculty, religious groups, business leaders, community organizations, etc.) assisted in integrating character education into the curriculum?

Question 4: Character Education Integration into the Curriculum

Which subjects, courses, approaches or activities have been implemented into your program/curriculum that will contribute to the development of character? (Course Title, Community Service Requirements, etc.)

Question 5: Character Education Assessment:

In your opinion, what observable improvements, if any, has the character education curriculum made in reducing behavioral problems and enhancing the focus on learning in your school/organization (For example: Academic achievement, attendance, behavior, peer interaction, school culture)? Is there a sense that character education courses in ethics and morality better prepare pre-service teachers to teach character education?

APPENDIX F

Curriculum Review

Appendix F

Curriculum Review

The researcher will review education department and core coursework requirements to specifically investigate whether teacher training in character education is addressed.

Courses:	Education Department	Core Requirement
That address <i>Pennsylvania's Code of Professional Practice and Conduct for Educators</i>		
With Character Education topics embedded: • <i>Character Counts</i> • <i>Developmental Assets</i> • <i>The Character Education Partnership</i>		
That identify character education core traits: • Kindness • Responsibility • Citizenship • Fairness • Honesty • Respect		
That address: • Ethical Leadership • Ethical Principles • Ethical Dilemmas (case studies, reading lists, etc.)		

Biography

Judy Koller, born December 1951, grew up on a farm in rural Berks County, Pennsylvania and is the daughter of the late Floyd and Helen Fenstermacher. After graduating from Fleetwood High School, she attended Keystone Junior College receiving her Associates Degree in 1971. Upon completion of her Bachelors Degree (1973) from Kutztown University, Judy returned to the Fleetwood Area School District to serve as a first grade teacher for almost twenty years. She completed her Masters Degree (1976) at Kutztown University and Reading Specialist Certification (1989) at Temple University.

The fall semester of 1992 took Judy to a new position in higher education. As an assistant professor in the education department, she taught elementary education courses and supervised student teachers at Alvernia College in Reading, Pennsylvania. During her time at Alvernia College, she started her doctoral studies at Lehigh University as well as completing certification as a Supervisor of Curriculum and Instruction in Elementary Education (2000).

From 2001-2004 Judy was called to serve as the Minister of Christian Education at St. Paul's United Church of Christ in Fleetwood, Pennsylvania. At St. Paul's she facilitated the Christian education programs for young children through adult levels, investigated research studies on Christian education topics, supervised ongoing programs, delivered sermons, developed curriculum, and served on the administrative team. All this was done in addition to continuing her studies at Lehigh University.

In 2004 Judy returned to her assistant professor position at Alvernia College. Her future includes writing books for children and continuing research on character education development.