AN ASSESSMENT OF TEACHER PERCEPTIONS OF AND ATTITUDES TOWARD
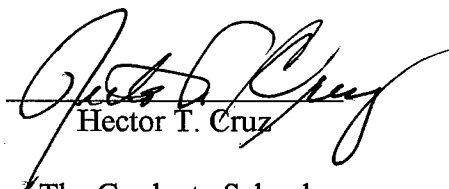
CHARACTER EDUCATION

By

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A Research Paper

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the
Master of Science Degree
With a Major in

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Approved: 2 Semester Credits

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ABSTRACT

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        Character education means many things to different people. Thomas Lickona, a

founder in the current character education movement, in believes it is essentially respect

and responsibility. The California State School Board Association believes character

education is 28 different characteristics. The researcher felt that both of these numbers

were rather extreme. Character Counts! Coalition addresses six main character traits for

character education. These are as follows: trustworthiness, respect, responsibility,

fairness, caring, and citizenship. The following character traits have subcategories as

listed: trustworthiness (honesty, integrity, reliability, and loyalty), and responsibility

(accountability, pursuit of excellence, and self-control.)

        The survey was a modified from a version used by University of Wisconsin-Stout

graduate student Rob Ocker's thesis. The title of his thesis was "An assessment of

parental and staff attitudes toward character education at Roosevelt Elementary School."
However, due to the varied degrees of character education, the survey was changed to
reflect the Character Counts! Coalition character traits. This survey asks three main
questions of the respondents. First, is this important for Unity School District? Second,
should this be part of the curriculum at each grade level? Third, is this *now* a part of your
classroom curriculum? If it is, how are you using it?

These three questions are asked in two distinct areas. Foremost, each question is
asked about the idea of the three questions about each individual character traits. The
final piece of the survey character education. The next portion of the survey asks for
examples and comments about the character traits used in each participant's classroom.

The appropriate data analysis will be done using frequencies and percentages to
interpret the responses and look for trends in the results. The content of the comments
and examples sections will be analyzed for themes and summarized in the findings.

This study examines teacher attitudes toward and perceptions of character
education. This research will occur in Spring 2002 semester. Data will be collected
through a survey given to the teachers of Unity School District. All teachers will be
invited to participate in the study. The participants will be informed verbally of the
nature and purpose of the study. They will also be verbally informed of the voluntary
nature of the study. This information will also be available on the letter to the
respondents. Participants will also be given the opportunity to ask questions and voice
concerns with the researcher prior to participating.

The understanding of teachers' attitudes towards and perceptions of character
education is essential to effective and useful character education. This research hopes to

determine current practices in regards to character education. Based on the research findings, the researcher hopes to develop recommendations for the school district to facilitate a better understanding of character education. Within this framework, teachers and students within the Unity School District will benefit.

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The author would like to express her sincere appreciation to the following people:

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

People are working longer hours. Often a parent leaves the home before their children in the morning and returns home much later (Brooks & Freedman, 2002). People are also putting more energy and effort into work and other activities than ever before. It seems no one is immune. Even students are being overworked. They are spending more time in sports, Scouts, and other after-school activities (Kantrowitz et al., 2001; Sappenfield, 2001). The results of this busy society: less family time, less quality time to interact, and less time for students to learn core values from their parents. Within this rushed, overscheduled pace of life, students are the victims.

It is not just individuals and the family structure that are changing; society is changing as well. In a recent survey of students, teachers, and law enforcement officials, researchers found that violence involving adolescents seems to be more prevalent than it was five years ago (Binns & Markow, 1999). According to Hayes and Hagedorn,

> With the recent rash of school shootings, the nation has focused its attention on violence in the schools, therefore focusing directly on the character development of children. Are these violent incidents signs of a national crisis of character? Do these acts demonstrate a lack of character development? (2000, p. 2)

All of these issues, people working longer hours, having busier lives with no real time for families, and increased violence in children and schools, tremendously affect our society. What is causing this change? Is there a lack of character development in

America's children? Can anything be done? Could character education be a piece of the solution?

Character education is currently one of the top agendas in educational reform. Although research demonstrates that character education is effective (AgBio Communications Unit, 2001; DeCair & Walsh-Vettern, 2001), it is still a highly debated topic. Some view character education as religious values being taught (Singer, 2000). Others view it as a waste of time (Elkind, 1998), and others feel it is just another quick fix for our nation to cling to (M. Larson, personal communication, November 28, 2001). Some even view character education as something that must be "caught but not taught" (Brooks & Goble, 1997, p.73). Within all of these opinions and ideals, not everyone seems to have the same understanding of character education.

Ideally, character education, works to teach students morals. When students are not getting this information at home, school becomes the answer. "The simple fact is that today's society has only one common denominator. Today, the one common thread holding society together is the teacher. All children go to school!" (Brooks & Goble, 1997, p. 63).

Schools have a responsibility to provide character education (*10 good reasons for character education, n.d.*). The outcomes will affect our society. When students have a clear understanding of things that are "right" no matter who you are, or things that are always "wrong," this will impact their daily lives. Over time, student violence will decrease and our society will be safer.

A better society stemming from character education becomes the schools responsibility (*10 good reasons for character education, n.d.*). Teachers and

administrators are becoming responsible for teaching students more than their sole

curricular area. What do teachers feel about this increased responsibility? Do they

accept this responsibility? Are they willing, or are they being forced to accomplish one

more thing in a school day? Although there is much research on character education, not

many studies have focused on teachers and their views.

Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this study is to determine teacher perceptions of and attitudes

toward character education. This study will occur by survey in the spring of 2002 at the

Unity Elementary, Middle, and High School, in Balsam Lake, WI.

Research Questions

There are four questions this research addresses. They are as follows:

- What are teacher perceptions of character education?

- What are teacher attitudes toward character education?

- What are current practices in character education?

  - What recommendations can be made regarding character education for the

    school district?

Definition of Terms

For this study, the following terms need to be clarified.

Character education: An emphasis on developing "good" character or morals

within students in schools. Responsibility, respect, and honesty are examples of these

character traits.

Curriculum: For this research, curriculum will be defined as daily classroom

lessons.

Morals: Simply defined, morals are the "laws of the land." An example, in our society, the legal drinking age is twenty-one.

Values: Values are the judgment or amount of feeling that accompany morals. Again, simply speaking, values are how individuals apply the "laws of the land."

Assumptions and Limitations

This study makes the following assumptions.

1. All participants are teachers and have a vested interest in the current movements of educational reform.

2. All participants will answer openly and honestly.

There are also limitations in the study.

1. The data collected will be relevant specific to this school district and therefore not generalizible to other settings.

2. There may be unknown factors specific to this school district (unknown to the researcher) that influenced this study.

With the hustle and bustle of our current society, students are not learning to be "good" people. Families do not have time. Violence in our society is increasing, and schools are left to mend and even cure the problem. The current solution is character education, which undoubtedly has merits. But despite these researched benefits, teachers are the ones being mandated in many states to teach character values to students. The teachers' views of character education can have a huge impact on the outcome of character education and on our society as a whole.

CHAPTER TWO

Literature Review

The concept of character education has been around for many years. The review

of literature addresses the definition and understanding of the term character education.

It also looks at the history and role of character education in American schools. Issues in

our society pertaining to character education in addition to the controversy surrounding

character education are also addressed. Finally, current practices, teacher views and

concerns as well as the research regarding the outcome and effects of character education

are discussed.

Character Education: A Definition

Discussion about character education is everywhere. From President George W.

Bush (2001) and the House of Representatives (Etheridge, 2001), to teachers and families

(M. Larson, personal communication, November 28, 2001), character education is

becoming an everyday topic. But what is character education? An unclear definition can

truly add to the heated debate over character education (Ryan, 1995). For example,

character education seems to be very broadly defined in many situations, such as moral

education, citizenship, education in the virtues, character training, and service learning.

According to Zarra, these vague definitions muddle discussions (2000).

Character education has been described and defined in many ways. Character

ed.net defines it as "developing positive character traits among youth" such as

responsibility, perseverance, caring, self-discipline, citizenship, honesty, courage,

fairness, and respect" *(What is character education, n.d.).* According to Lickona,

Schaps, and Lewis, character education is "promoting core ethical values as the basis of good character" (n.d.). This means that schools teaching the "4th and 5th R's" (respect and responsibility) can address character education. The Center for the 4th and 5th R's advocates that "there are universally important ethical values such as respect, responsibility, trustworthiness, fairness, caring, courage, self-control, and diligence". (n.d.). Some organizations even list more than 25 characteristics to define character education (Ocker, 1995).

According to Rusnak and Ribich, "the definition of character education to which one subscribes will make a critical difference" (1997, para. 2). A national definition, which many subscribe to, comes from The Character Counts! coalition. The Character Counts! coalition is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, nonsectarian, national network of 466 schools, groups and communities working to advance character education (Character counts! national homepage, n.d.). This coalition advocates the "Six Pillars of Character." These six pillars are trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, and citizenship (Character counts! national homepage, n.d.).

Zarra defines the purpose of character education. He states the purpose "is to develop good lifelong character traits" (2000, Back to basics: A character education comeback, para. 4). Being a person of character means living by "core values -- understanding them, caring about them, and acting upon them" (Center for the 4th and 5th R's, n.d.). In general, the foundation for most definitions of character education relies upon the "intentional and strategic teachings" of morals and values (*Character education*, 1998). This naturally leads to the question of what exactly do the words *morals* and *values* mean.

Morals and values can be highly controversial words. If one mentions teaching either of these concepts in schools, many argue for the separation of church and state. However, these words do not have an inherent religious meaning. According to the Scott, Foresman Advanced Dictionary, *values* are defined as "2. High worth; excellence, usefulness, or importance: *the value of education, the value of milk as food*" or "6. Meaning, effect, or force: *the value of a symbol*"(Thorndike & Barnhart, 1983, p. 1214). This dictionary defines *morals* as "1. Good in character or conduct; virtuous according to civilized standards of right and wrong; right; just: *a moral act, a moral person*" (Thorndike & Barnhart, 1983, p. 726). Using these definitions, morals are things which are held right in society; and conversely, values are how important those morals are to people. Understanding these definitions accurately aids in the clear understanding of character education.

Lickona addresses character education without getting into a debate over morals and values. He advocates teaching character traits in non-controversial ways. "Character education will serve the nation well if it succeeds in convincing children and adults to practice virtues in the many non-controversial ways—everyday applications of honesty, responsibility, kindness, and courtesy—that constitute good character and basic human decency" (1997, p. 79).

History of Character Education in America

Character education is not a new phenomenon. Throughout time, character education has taken many forms and various definitions. According to Field, "the intensity of the character education debate, who should teach values and morals to the

nation's children, and when and what should be taught is not new to educators" (1996, para. 1).

Throughout history, education has had two specific goals: "to help people become smart and to help them become good" (Lickona, 1993, p. 6). With these goals as the backdrop, early schools in our country addressed character education as a part of daily life. The schools maintained strong discipline, and character was addressed in their curriculum, which came mostly from the Bible. The Bible was the "public school's source book for both moral and religious instruction" (Lickona, 1993, p. 6).

During this time period, there was a public debate about which version of the Bible to use. William McGuffey solved the debate for many and became a key person in the history of character education. In 1836, he developed the widely used text, the McGuffey Reader (Lickona, 1993). According to Field, the McGuffey Readers undeniably had "religious overtones." It also advocated values such as "frugality, cleanliness, honesty, hard work, dedication, patriotism, and obedience" (1996, Early character education, para. 1).

Around the time of the United States Civil War, "education in the classical virtues began shifting toward training in civic virtues or training in democracy"(Zarra, 2000, A history of character education, para. 6). With the issues of the time, such as slavery, politics, and the impending war, character education became less of a priority for the nation. Around the turn of the century, character education experienced a slight resurgence. Public schools began to play an important role in socializing children, both immigrant and native-born, within a socially acceptable moral context (Field, 1996).

Clubs for children of "good character" sprouted up, with the belief that peer pressure would help students act in good character (Field, 1996).

However, it was also during this time that character education was being dealt several brutal blows. The times were changing and more and more immigrants were coming to America. Each new group brought their own religious views and beliefs. People began to challenge schools about their teachings and even textbooks when they felt the resources contradicted their own religious beliefs and morals (Banks & Banks, 1997). Lickona believes that the debate and challenges concerning school teachings and religious beliefs (i.e. Darwin and evolution versus creation) "led people to see all things, including morality, as being in flux" (1993, p. 6). There were negative opinions about the relationship between good conduct and character education (Fenstermacher, 1999). It seemed as though character values had become a personal issue, not something to be taught in schools or debated publicly (Lickona, 1993).

World War II then rendered a refocus on the "purpose, strategy and necessity for character education" (Field, 1996, Effects of World War II on character education, para. 1). Despite the debate, teachers continued striving to make students the best people they could be. Scholars, educators and society began to look ahead to the postwar world.

During the 1950's and 1960's formal character education became almost completely invisible in our nations schools (Field, 1996). According to Lickona,

> The rapidly intensifying of American society (Whose values should we teach?)
> and the increasing secularization of the public arena (Won't moral education
> violate the separation of church and state?), became two more barriers to
> achieving the moral consensus indispensable for character education in public

schools. Public schools retreated from their once central role as moral and character educators. (1993, p. 6)

During the 1970s, a form of character education returned, but with a new and different name: values clarification and Kohlberg's moral dilemma discussion (Field, 1996; Lickona, 1993). Both of these terms grasped the individualistic nature of the time period. According to Lickona, value clarification can be defined as not dictating or imposing values on students. Educators should guide students to choose their values independently. Kohlberg's moral dilemma discussion concentrated on helping students develop moral reasoning so they would be equipped to evaluate and determine which values were better than others. Although both of these approaches brought society back toward character education, they were each lacking in some areas (1993).

The last fifteen years has seen another renewal of interest in character education. "Character education is b...a...c...k for another go-round with the American educational system" (*Character Education*, 1998). In the past year, character education has become an important educational reform issue as well. According to U.S. Representative Etheridge, "good character is what separates the civilized world from terrorists like those who committed the Sept. 11 atrocities," and "a national week emphasizing the benefits of good character and character education is in the country's best interests" (2001, para. 4).

Last year, the United States House of Representatives passed a bill urging the president to establish a national "Character Education Week" (Etheridge, 2001). Representative Etheridge also stated that this bill "sent an important message that character education is good for America" (2001, para. 2).

The School's Role

Anderson stated the main question and answer clearly, "Who is responsible for reinforcing the age-old qualities of character? Obviously, there is no single panacea; however, in the ideal world, families, schools and communities would work in harmony to teach young people" (2000, para. 3). However, it is clear that it is not an "ideal" world where families, schools and communities work together. Quite often, it is exactly the opposite, families, schools, and communities all seem to have their own agendas and are entangled self-preservation.

Lickona believed schools are redefining their roles:

Schools, for their part, are rediscovering that there is much they can do to build good character. They can begin by making character development their highest educational priority—the goal that underlies everything else they do. They can challenge all other formative social institutions, especially the family, to do their part in teaching the young the virtues they need—respect, responsibility, prudence, self-discipline, courage, kindness, and chastity—to make a good life and build a good society. (1997, p. 64)

Schools need to address ways to embed character education within their core curriculum for the benefit of students and society.

Current Issues in Society

But what is the reason behind this resurgence in character education. What has changed in our society? According to *Kids these days '99: What Americans really think about the next generation*, there is

a pervasive concern among Americans that the nation's children face a crisis—not an economic crisis brought on by extensive poverty or joblessness, but rather a moral crisis, one that has emerged because adults have failed to teach them about character and values. (Public Agenda, 1999, p. 2)

The general findings of this study are as follows:

- Most Americans describe children and teens in negative terms such as lazy, spoiled, irresponsible. (53% of the general public views children as negative—e.g. lazy, irresponsible, disrespectful and 71% views teenagers as negative—e.g. lazy, irresponsible, disrespectful).

- Neither adults nor teens believe that next generation will make America a better place. (More than 58% of adults and teens believe that today's children will make America a worse place or make little difference.)

- Most Americans view not learning values as the biggest problem facing kids today. (93% of respondents' view not learning values as a very or somewhat serious problem and 91% believe the problem is widespread.)

- Almost 35% of Americans believe that it is not very common to come across friendly, helpful and respectful young people.

- More than 50% of adults feel that too many parents fail to do their job.

- Almost 50% of Americans blame irresponsible parents rather than economic pressures (37%) for the problems kids face (Public Agenda, 1999).

The Metropolitan Life Survey of the American Teacher, 1999: Violence in America's Public Schools – Five Years Later states that a majority of public school

teachers and law enforcement officials believe that the main cause of violence in public schools is the family (Binns & Markow, 1999). According to this survey,

- Most teachers (77%) and law enforcement officials (75%) believe the lack of parental supervision at home is the cause of violence in the schools.

- Most teachers (69%) and law enforcement officials (69%) believe the lack of family involvement is the cause of violence in the schools.

According to Brooks and Freedman, the lack of character in our youth is not due to "bad parents" or "broken families", but moreover due to the fact that "many parents lack the requisite skills to teach manners and values" (2002, p. 22). In families that have necessary skills to teach about character traits, "there simply may not be enough time to do so" (Brooks & Freedman, 2002, p.23).

Children are just not learning basic character traits at home as they did in the past. One researcher found that "teachers are frustrated by what they perceive to be a lack of moral education in the homes of their students" (Mathison, 1998, para. 28). One teacher even stated "Students come from varied home life/backgrounds. I feel we are 'missing the boat' if we do not address character education." The teacher goes on to say, "Students are crying out for guidance – and need solid, organized and carefully planned information" (Mathison, 1998, para. 32). Another source states that "the schools' role as moral educator becomes even more vital at a time when millions of children get little moral teaching from their parents" (*10 good reasons for character education*, n.d., para. 3).

Controversy

The controversy engulfing character education typically falls into one of the following arguments. Elkind believes that "the current time and effort spent in character education is largely wasted and uses up precious time that could be much better spent in other instructional activities" (1998, p. 8). However, according to the Utah State Office of Education, "Character education is not one more thing one your plate! It is the plate!!!" (USOE Character Education Homepage, n.d., para. 2). Other researchers echo the same concern,

> Character education ought not to be seen as a threat to the nation's current
>
> emphasis on academics. In fact, it can help achieve academic goals. Educators
>
> report that literature, social studies, and even science become more interesting to
>
> students when they can focus on social and ethical issues embedded in subject
>
> matter. And they say that focusing on such issues leads students to a deeper level
>
> of engagement and understanding of the curricular content we want them to
>
> master. (Schaps, Schaeffer, & McDonnell, 2001, para. 19)

According to Etzioni, the question of "Whose values are you going to teach?" also adds controversy. He believed liberals will view character education as "an attempt to introduce religious education in public schools" and conservatives "will fear liberal indoctrination" (2001, para. 8). Some critics state that character education is "just another name for teaching morality and has no business in a public-school curriculum" (*Education reports: Character education*, n.d., para 9). However, according to Janine Bempechat of the Harvard Graduate School of Education, these critiques of character education are "misguided". She urged critics "to have a good look at exactly what it is

schools are trying to communicate" (*Education reports: Character education*, n.d., para. 10). When all parties involved have a clear definition and understanding of character education and morals, the discussion resulting from these critiques lessens.

Current practices

Schools and communities can implement character education in a variety of ways. Rusnak and Ribich discussed some of these possibilities such as kit based approaches, service programs, creating a character education class. However they felt that all of these approaches are doomed for failure because a belief in character education is not inherent in the staff. However, if a school district has support from the staff, these practices could be effective. Rusnak and Ribich advocated for parents, schools and communities to work together to facilitate children learning character education in all aspects of their life (1997).

However, there are current programs that are working. In Dayton, Ohio's public schools, educators developed "The Word of the Week" program. Each week throughout the school year students focus on learning about different character traits such as honest, accepting, self-controlled, and cooperative. The school and community came together to develop this plan (What's the word on character education?, 1997).

Brooks and Freedman advocate a school-wide program in which students learn "STAR." "STAR" stands for success through accepting responsibility. When working with students, the acronym "STAR" stands for stop, think, act, and review. This program focuses on observable behaviors, and encourages students in good decision making. The base for the program is the 6 Pillars of Character (2002).

The Character Counts! Coalition offers strategies for classroom teachers as well as school-wide activities. The T.E.A.M. (Teach, Enforce, Advocate, Model) is a strategy that individual classroom teachers can use to enhance character education in their classrooms (*T.E.A.M., n.d.*). The Character Counts! Coalition also offers more than 30 tips or activities for schools. Some examples of these are as follows: a quotation of the week, morning announcements, contests, hallway displays, community service projects, murals (*Tips for schools and youth activities, n.d.*). They also offer strategies for developing a school-wide climate. Some of these are as follows: written rules expectations for students, faculty, administrators, and parents; training for all staff, from bus drivers to district superintendents; committees and taskforces involving teachers and other staff, parents and students; and monitoring, modeling and enforcement (*Tips for schools and youth activities, n.d.*).

Teachers' Views and Concerns

Within the thought that character education is the school's responsibility, what do teachers think? If teachers are the main players in implementing and maintaining character education, it is important to examine their views. Mathison studied teachers from four large metropolitan areas to determine teachers' opinions /attitudes toward character education. Her survey results showed that almost 75% of teachers responding supported character education, and felt it should be implemented across the curriculum. Furthermore, 85% of the teachers responding felt it was the primary responsibility of the home. She found that in general, teachers view character education as an important and necessary component of public schools. She also learned that while most believe in the

importance of character education, teachers have differing ideas of what character education is and how it should be taught (1998).

Outcome and Effects

There are some significant outcomes as a result of character education. As part of a five-year study in South Dakota on the effects of character education, students and character education are coming out on top. In the third year of the study, researchers surveyed more than 7000 youth that participated in a character education program. The students surveyed were "less likely to lie, cheat, tease others and break into property" (AgBio Communications Unit, 2001, para. 2). Some of the results of the study are as follows:

- Students saying that they had used physical force against another declined 33 percent.

- Students saying that they had teased someone because of race or ethnicity declined 45 percent.

- Students saying that they had taken illegal drugs dropped 32 percent.

- Students saying that they had broken into someone else's property declined 50 percent.

- Students saying that took something without paying for it (shoplifting) dropped 46 percent.

- Students saying that they had vandalized or defaced property dropped 46 percent.

- Students saying that they cheated on exams fell 30 percent.

- Students saying that they received a detention or a suspension declined 28 percent (2001).

Many districts using a character education program have seen drops in their records of disturbance as well (*Does CC! work?,* n.d.). Teacher observations in districts using a comprehensive character education program also found character education to be effective *(Does CC! work?,* n.d.). Although these studies show favorable outcomes with the use of a character education program, there is not a huge body of research on these outcomes.

Character education is a current issue in educational reform, but is not a new phenomenon. There are proponents on both sides of the issue, but a clear definition of character education eases some of the debate. Society has changed over time and it seems children are not learning character traits at home. Schools have become the necessary provider. Teachers are providing character education in a variety of ways.

CHAPTER THREE

Methodology

This section will address the subjects and selection process. It will also discuss the instrument to be used, how the data will be collected, and information about data analysis. Lastly, limitations, assumptions and ethical considerations concerning the methodology of research will be discussed.

Purpose

The purpose of this study is to determine teacher perceptions of and attitudes toward character education at the Unity School District in Balsam Lake, WI. This study will focus on the following research questions:

1. What are teacher perceptions of character education?

2. What are teacher attitudes toward character education?

3. What are current practices related to character education?

4. What recommendations can be made regarding character education for the Unity School District?

Subject Selection and Description

The subjects for this study will be the school staff at the Unity Elementary, Middle School and High School. There are approximately 90 staff members. Because of the relatively low number in the population, the researcher will attempt to survey all members of the population.

Procedure

The researcher addressed the middle school and high school teachers at a staff meeting. The nature of the study was explained and the subjects were given a chance to ask questions. Each teacher received a cover letter addressing the purpose of the study and the survey instrument. Due to a change in protocol, the researcher missed the elementary staff meeting. However, the teachers were given the surveys informing them of the same information individually rather than in a group.

All participants were given one week to complete the survey. They returned the completed surveys to the office in the elementary and middle schools. They were returned to the mailroom in the high school. The researcher personally picked up the surveys.

Instrumentation

The survey instrument used was modified from a version used by University of Wisconsin-Stout graduate student Rob Ocker's instrument. His thesis was entitled "An assessment of parental and staff attitudes toward character education at Roosevelt Elementary School" (1995). However, due to the varied degrees of interpretation of character education, the survey was changed to reflect the Character Counts! Coalition character traits.

Part one of the survey reflects demographic information. Part two addresses teachers perceptions' of character education by listing a number of character traits and then asking three main questions. First, is this character trait important for Unity School District? Second, should this character trait be part of the curriculum at each grade level? Third, is this character trait *now* a part of your classroom curriculum? Part three of the

survey covers current practices by asking respondents to give examples of how they teach specific character traits in their classrooms.

The final portion of the survey (part four) addresses teacher attitudes toward character education by asking basically them same questions of character education in general. First, do you feel character education is important for Unity School District? Second, should character education be part of the curriculum at the level I teach? Third, should character education be a part of the curriculum at all levels? Finally, is character education *now* a part of your classroom curriculum? Respondents were asked to comment on each question as well.

Data Analysis

The data analysis was done at the University of Wisconsin-Stout Information and Operating Systems Department. The statistical software program used was SPSS (version 9.0). The frequency subpart of the program was used to provide frequencies and percentages. Respondents comments concerning character education and current practices were analyzed to present recommendations based on the qualitative data received.

Ethical Considerations

One concern that can be identified is the attitudes of the teachers toward filling out the survey. For example, if a teacher perceives this survey as more work that for the teacher, it could influence that teacher's responses.

Another consideration to be addressed is the prior relationship between the researcher and the subjects. This prior relationship has both a positive and a negative effect. On the positive side, their prior relationship will aid in the likelihood of teachers

actually participating in the study. However, they might feel they have to participate, as opposed to being voluntary, because of the prior relationship. To combat this, the researcher will have a third party collect the survey and data.

CHAPTER FOUR

Results

In reporting the results of this study, it is important to first review the research questions. Consequently, the results can be interpreted from both the statistical and qualitative data that was collected in relationship to these questions.

The four questions this research addressed are as follows:

- What are teacher perceptions of character education?

- What are teacher attitudes toward character education?

- What are current practices in character education?

- What recommendations can be made regarding character education for the Unity School District?

The results of this study are based on the data analysis from the responses of teachers at Unity Elementary, Middle, and High School. The population for this study included all of the teaching staff at all three levels, about 90 people. The sample of 46 included 16 elementary staff members, 14 middle school staff members, 15 high school staff members and 1 middle/high school staff member. The results for each demographic item with frequencies and percentages are shown in the following tables.

Table 1: Teaching Level Classification of Respondents

	Frequency	Percent
Early Childhood-Grade 5 Elementary School	16	34.8
Grade 6-Grade 8 Middle School	14	30.4
Grade 9-Grade 12 High School	15	32.6
Grade 6-8 and Grade 9-12	1	2.2

Results in Table 1 show that the sample of respondents was evenly spread between the three school levels.

Table 2: Gender of Respondents

	Frequency	Percent
Male	20	43.5
Female	26	56.5

The results in Table 2 show that more females responded to the survey than males.

Table 3: Educational Level of Respondents

	Frequency	Percent
Bachelor's Degree	20	43.5
Master's Degree	24	52.2
Specialist's Degree	2	4.3

Table 3 addresses the educational level of respondents. More than half of the respondents (56.5%) have a degree above a bachelor's degree.

Table 4: Respondents Years of Experience in Education

	Frequency	Percent
0-1 year	3	6.5
2-6 years	8	17.4
7-10 years	6	13
11-20 years	15	32.6
21+ years	14	30.4

The results in table 4 show that more than three-quarters (76.1%) of the teachers

responding have been in education for more than seven years. Sixty-three percent of

respondents have been in education for more than 11 years. The lowest amount of

respondents (6.5%) were in their first year of teaching.

Table 5: Respondents Previous Character Education Training

	Frequency	Percent
Previous Character Education Training	34	73.9
No Previous Character Education Training	12	26.1

The results in Table 5 show that almost three-quarters (73.9%) of the respondents

have had previous character education training.

Table 6: Types of Previous Character Education Training

	Frequency	Valid Percent
Graduate Classes	20	58.8
Undergraduate Classes	6	17.6
Workshops or Seminars	18	52.9
Inservices	23	67.6
Teacher's Convention	7	20.6
Other	2	5.9

Results in table 6 show that teacher in-services (67.6%) were the most popular

form of previous character education training, followed by graduate level classes

(58.8%). Respondents were able to choose more than one option for this response, so the totals will not add up to 100 percent.

Research Question 1: What are teacher perceptions of character education?

To determine teacher perceptions of character education, first teachers were asked to indicate their views concerning six main character traits. These character traits were as follows: trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring and citizenship. The following two character traits have subcategories as listed: trustworthiness (honesty, integrity, reliability, and loyalty), and responsibility (accountability, pursuit of excellence, and self-control).

In part 2 of the survey, respondents were asked three questions for each character trait. Question A: Is this character trait important for Unity School District? Question B: Should this character trait be part of the curriculum at each grade level? Question C: Is this character trait *now* part of your classroom curriculum?

Table 7: Question A: Is this character trait important for Unity School District?

| | YES | | NO | |
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
1.Trustworthiness	46	100	---	---
Honesty	46	100	---	---
Integrity	46	100	---	---
Reliability	46	100	---	---
Loyalty	46	100	---	---
2. Respect	46	100	---	---
3. Responsibility	46	100	---	---
Accountability	46	100	---	---
Pursuit of Excellence	46	100	---	---
Self-Control	45	97.8	1	2.2
4. Fairness	45	97.8	1	2.2
5. Caring	46	100	---	---
6. Citizenship	45	97.8	1	2.2

Table 7 shows the respondents responses to Question A (Is this character trait important for Unity School District?). All of the respondents (100%) agreed that the character traits of respect, responsibility, caring, trustworthiness, honesty, integrity, reliability, loyalty, responsibility, accountability, and pursuit of excellence were important for Unity School District. Three character traits (fairness, citizenship, and self-control) received 45 votes each (97.8%). All of the character traits listed were highly scored as being important for Unity School District.

Table 8: Question B: Should this character trait be part of the curriculum at each grade level?

| | YES | | NO | |
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
1.Trustworthiness	43	95.6	2	4.4
Honesty	43	95.6	2	4.4
Integrity	42	93.3	3	6.7
Reliability	42	93.3	3	6.7
Loyalty	42	93.3	3	6.7
2. Respect	44	97.8	1	2.2
3. Responsibility	43	95.6	2	4.4
Accountability	43	95.6	2	4.4
Pursuit of Excellence	42	93.3	3	6.7
Self-Control	43	95.6	2	4.4
4. Fairness	43	95.6	2	4.4
5. Caring	43	95.6	2	4.4
6. Citizenship	43	95.6	2	4.4

Results for Table 8 show teachers' views on the character traits being part of the curriculum at each grade level. One teacher did not answer this question, and as a result there are 45 responses. The most teachers (97.8%) felt that respect should be taught at

each level. All of the character traits listed received at least 93.3% of teachers believing that they should be taught at all levels.

Table 9: Question C: Is this character trait now part of your classroom curriculum?

| | YES | | NO | |
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
1.Trustworthiness	37	82.2	8	17.8
Honesty	37	84.1	7	15.9
Integrity	39	86.7	6	13.3
Reliability	33	73.3	12	26.7
Loyalty	31	68.9	14	31.1
2. Respect	39	86.7	6	13.3
3. Responsibility	41	91.1	4	8.9
Accountability	38	84.4	7	15.6
Pursuit of Excellence	40	88.9	5	11.1
Self-Control	39	86.7	6	13.3
4. Fairness	38	84.4	7	15.6
5. Caring	38	84.4	7	15.6
6. Citizenship	33	73.3	12	26.7

For all of the character traits except honesty, one teacher did not respond, making the sample 45 responses. For the character trait honesty, two teachers did not respond making that sample 44 responses. Fortyone of fortyfive teachers (91.1%) stated that they address responsibility in their classroom curriculum. Forty of fortyfive (88.9%) teachers stated that they address pursuit of excellence in their classroom curriculum. On the other end of the spectrum, only 31 of 45 or 68.9% of teachers say they address loyalty as part of their classroom curriculum. Thirtythree of fortyfive or 73.3% of teachers say they address citizenship and loyalty in their classroom curriculum.

Research Question 2: What are teacher attitudes toward character education?

In order to answer research question 2, teachers responding were asked their views of character education in part 4 of the survey. They were asked four questions. Question 1: Do you feel character education is important for Unity School District? Question 2: Should character education be part of the curriculum for the level in which you teach? Question 3: Should character education be part of the curriculum at all levels? Question 4: Is character education now a part of your classroom curriculum? Respondents were asked to comment on their responses as well.

Table 10: Question 1: Do you feel character education is important for Unity School District?

	Frequency	Percent
YES	45	97.8
NO	1	2.2

The results in Table 10 show that more than 97% of the teachers responding feel character education is important for Unity School District. Teachers were asked to comment on their response to this question. Some of the responses are as follows:

- "I think it is important for any district. I think, more and more character education has become something that needs to be done in schools since some kids are not getting it at home."

- "All of the identified elements of character education are vital to student success and decorum within the school setting."

- "How can it not be? If you look at what it is when you talk about "character" can you be educated and not have many of these qualities?"

- "Character education should be important to <u>any</u> district and all members of a community."

- "Good character means good future for all of us."

The responses to Question 1 (Do you feel character education is important for Unity School District?) bring a few themes into perspective. The written responses show that almost all teachers surveyed feel that character education is important for the school district. Many teachers are concerned that students are not learning character traits at home and feel that the school has the duty to provide it. Many also feel that teachers do character education on their own without any mandated, formalized program.

Table 11: Question 2: Should character education be part of the curriculum for the level in which you teach?

	Frequency	Percent
YES	42	95.5
NO	2	4.5

The results in table 11 show that 2 teachers did not answer this question. Of the 44 respondents that answered, 42 believe character education should be part of the curriculum at the level in which they teach. Teachers were asked to comment on their response to this question. Some of the responses are as follows:

- "It is part of my teaching philosophy."

- "Yes, I think it should be naturally woven into the existing curriculum whenever possible."

- "Children must be responsible for their actions! I instill this philosophy in first grade."

- "Yes, if it can be integrated into other subject areas."

- "Character education is very important at the middle level. This is the time that kids start looking more to their peers for direction. It is important that they have a basis in proper behavior, especially if the home life is questionable."

- "Not necessarily a direct teaching unit, but by indirect means."

The responses to Question 2 (Should character education be part of the curriculum for the level in which you teach?) bring a few themes into perspective as well. Many teachers feel that character education is essential at their teaching levels. Many teachers also feel that character education should be incorporated or integrated into current curriculum. Many teachers believe it is important for students to have good models at their teaching level.

Table 12: Question 3: Should character education be part of the curriculum at all levels?

	Frequency	Percent
YES	43	95.6
NO	2	4.4

One teacher chose not to answer the question addressed in Table 12. More than 95% of teachers responding feel that character education should be part of the curriculum at all levels. Teachers were asked to comment on their response to this question. Some of the responses are as follows:

- "This curriculum should be at all levels."

- "All humans need help at all ages developing these qualities."

- "Not overwhelmingly so, but teachers and administrators need to encourage character development and reward those positive traits."

- "Yes, building character is beneficial to all ages. Kids continue to learn and build from past experiences!"

- "I don't feel all families are teaching their children these traits. Someone needs too or we are raising children who may not succeed in life."

- "It would benefit our school greatly to work together on character education and make it a priority k-12."

- "I think this should be ongoing, taught throughout all levels of education."

- "It should be a curriculum unto itself that is reinforced everywhere else throughout the district."

- "These are life skills! Students should be learning these traits throughout their lives."

- "I feel we have our role, but the home life and parental role is more important."

- "Appropriate at all developmental levels—k-12."

- "Definitely in the elementary and Middle school levels. By the time they reach high school, it's more important to work on team building."

The responses to Question 3 (Should character education be part of the curriculum at all levels?) demonstrate some themes as well. The written responses show that almost all teachers surveyed feel that character education is important for all grade levels. Many teachers feel that it is important to start teaching character education when students are young, while others feel it should start when students are older. Other teachers feel that it is important to incorporate character education into the existing curriculum, and others feel it is important enough have an entire curriculum. It seems although teachers feel

character education is important at all levels, there is not a consensus to how it should be presented.

Table 13: Question 4: Is character education now a part of your classroom curriculum?

	Frequency	Percent
YES	35	79.5
NO	9	20.5

The results shown in Table 13 display that almost 80% of teachers responding to this item address character education as part of their classroom curriculum. Two teachers chose not to answer this question. Again, teachers were asked to comment on their response to this question. Some of the responses are as follows:

- "It is not overt, such as within a specific lesson. However, it is exemplified and encouraged daily as well as inherent in reading selections chosen."

- "I add it."

- "Not formally."

- "We have become so obsessed with reading, writing, and mathematics that we have thrown away the little extras that made students feel good about themselves."

- "I think every teacher tries to incorporate it into every-day activities. However, I don't think it is actually in our curriculum."

- "I think building good students for the future who can take on responsibility is far more important than my curriculum."

- "We used to cover it somewhat. We have so many demands for standards to cover."

- "Not in curriculum, but used."

- "Informally, not directed curriculum"

The responses to Question 4 (Is character education now a part of your classroom curriculum?) identify a few themes as well. Not one teacher identified a curriculum that they use to teach character education. There is not a set curricular standard for character education, but many teachers tie it into everyday lessons where appropriate because they feel it is important.

Research Question 3: What are current practices in character education?

This research question relates to part 2 and 3 of the survey. If teachers responded that they did address character traits in their classroom, they were then asked to give an example. Some of the examples are as follows:

- "I don't specifically teach these things, but indirectly they are all in my classroom through things I say things I demand, having due dates and penalties for not meeting."

- "It's not a written curriculum, but I teach and demand those traits from my students, myself and my team."

- "Mainly through classroom expectations and teacher modeling. Also through the reading material chosen and discussed in the classroom."

- "1:1 discussions, whole group discussions, discussions as situations present themselves, community building."

- "I use from time to time some community building activities in my classes. At the beginning of the year, I have all the students go through a three-day core values activity to set our class values. I also model and discuss character at appropriate times."

- "This is interwoven into everything I do and model all year long. We talk/discuss/deal with this issue hourly."

The responses to the examples of current practices in character education also presented some themes. Many teachers identified classroom rules and expectations as part of their current practices in character education. Many teachers also identified addressing character traits (when applicable) as part of class discussions and other assignments. Other teachers identified holding students responsible for their obligations such as homework and good behavior as character education. Character education does not have one solitary look at Unity School District; teachers are presenting character education in a variety of ways.

Conclusions

Character education is essential to many educators. This study shows that the respondents all felt strongly that character education could be described by a list of character traits. The results of this study also showed that teachers believe that character education is important at Unity School District. They also felt it was important for all grade levels. However, there is no one clear-cut way already in place to present character education.

CHAPTER FIVE

Conclusion and Recommendations

Awareness of teachers views concerning character education is essential for understanding how character education can be effectively implemented in schools. This study addressed this issue by asking four research questions.

1. What are teacher perceptions of character education?

2. What are teacher attitudes toward character education?

3. What are current practices in character education?

4. What recommendations can be made regarding character education for the Unity School District?

Conclusions, themes, concerns, and recommendations will be addressed in this section. They are based on the quantitative and qualitative data from respondents gathered in this study.

Themes and Concerns

There were a number of themes and concerns about character education indicated by teachers completing this survey. Themes and concerns were identified through the respondents' written responses to the survey.

Identified Themes about Unity School District and Character Education

Teachers responses to the survey clearly identified some themes to be addressed. These themes are as follows.

- Character education is important to Unity School District.

- Teachers agree that the character traits of trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring and citizenship are important traits for students to learn.

- Character education is important at each individual school level.

- Currently, teachers incorporate it into their daily lessons because they feel it is the schools role.

- Character education is currently taught without a set curriculum.

Using a clearly defined understanding of character education, teachers at Unity feel that character education is important for all students within the district. Many teachers feel they are addressing character education into their classroom curriculum, but are concerned about several issues. These issues are as follows: community and parental involvement, curriculum, implementation at the high school level, and classroom guidance. Specific examples of these concerns follow.

Concerns about Community and Parental Involvement

Some respondents had concerns about community involvement and the role of the parent. Two examples of statements are as follows:

- "It's important for all people everywhere—can character education be taught? Does it override parental influences?"

- "Question can be answered either way, do we do it, yes! Speakers, in class, bulletins, etc. Is it formal—no—do we need more maybe yes! However this really is a community thing also. What do they think? Feel?"

Concerns about Curriculum

Although many teachers were addressing character education in their classrooms, the issue of curriculum seems to raise some concerns. Some samples of these concerns are as follows:

- "I don't believe that kids internalize a "one-size' curriculum. I believe it should be flexible—easy fit to the class."

- "If it's done correctly, there's a lot of research that point out that this "theme of the month" stuff doesn't work. A group of Cumberland teachers implemented a school-wide program (k-4) that they developed as part of their action research project for their masters and it's been very successful."

- "I did not answer YES, but here's the question I have. When we hold discussions, the class may discuss character issues, but it is not written into the lesson plan as such or in the curriculum that students *have* to do this. At the high school level, as elementary and middle school level, what curriculum would go? Are counselors the "teachers"? Do we throw out a unit on decimals? How this is worked *into* the curriculum would affect the answers? Over the years I've seen different attempts to "teach" kids to be "good" people. Nothing lasting, all programs faded."

Concerns about Implementing Character Education at the High School Level

Although many teachers responded that character education was important for all levels, there were some definite concerns about how to address character education at the high school level. Some sample comments are as follows:

- "Definitely in the elementary and Middle school levels. By the time they reach high school, it's more important to work on team building."

- "I think high schoolers can't be left out; they are facing great challenges to their character."

- "In the high school, where would it be taught?"

Concerns about Classroom Guidance

Teachers also were concerned about classroom guidance and character education. Some teachers felt that character education is directly related to classroom guidance. Some examples of these concerns are as follows:

- "We <u>need</u> classroom guidance to support the teaching of these concepts."

- "Classroom guidance and development should be taught by the elementary guidance counselor."

- "I do it on my own because I believe it is important. I would like to see the guidance counselor support this with classroom guidance."

These themes and concerns are reported to share some useful information regarding teachers' attitudes toward and perceptions of character education. These themes and concerns can serve as a framework for making recommendations for Unity School District. The themes and concerns may also be used to help future educators and researchers.

Conclusions

The results of the study, themes and concerns lead to the following conclusions in response to research question one (What are teacher perceptions of character education?). Teachers feel that the identified character traits of trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring and citizenship are important for students for Unity School District. Teachers believe that character education is important to Unity School District and at

each individual grade level. However, teachers feel some concern about how to address character education at each level, especially the high school level. Teachers believe that character education is becoming more and more the schools responsibility, but are concerned about parental and community involvement.

The finding of the study, themes and concerns also lead to conclusions relating to research question two (What are teacher attitudes toward character education?). Many teachers feel character education is important but are concerned about having a specific curriculum. There is some debate about how to best address character education curriculum. Should there be a set curriculum, or should teachers be asked to address certain issues in class?

The following conclusions can be made based on the data from the survey, themes and concerns in relationship to the third research question (What are current practices in character education?). Roughly four out of five teachers feel they are currently addressing character education in their classrooms. Currently, Unity has no mandate on teaching character education, but many teachers feel they are addressing it in their classrooms to the benefit of the students. Teachers noted that classroom guidance is related to character education. Teachers would like to see classroom guidance lessons to support current character education efforts.

Recommendations for Unity School District

Based on the finding of this study, the themes and concerns of respondents, the following recommendations are provided to assist the Unity School District regarding character education. The following recommendations are listed to address this study's

final question (Research Question 4: What recommendations can be made regarding character education for the Unity School District?).

- The first recommendation is for Unity School District to evaluate the desired effects for a character education program. To do this, a group of teachers, administrators, community members, and parents could come together to share views. The character education plan (and assessment strategy) then would belong to all of the interested parties. This would enable the effort to involve the community as well as the school. If school staff members are going to incorporate character education, it is essential to demonstrate its effectiveness in order to have staff (and community) support.

- The second recommendation is for Unity School District to establish a core set of character traits for use by all grade levels. These character traits would be uniform across all grade levels and curricular levels. These character traits could be incorporated into a code of conduct or classroom expectations. However, it would be essential for all students to know that these character traits do not change from year to year, or classroom to classroom. The school would become a unified front upholding a core set of character traits enforceable across all grades.

- The third recommendation is for the district to implement a character education program. The researcher is not advising the school district to purchase a specific curriculum, or a kit to teach character education. But moreover, the researcher is suggesting that the district develop a strategy to ensure students are receiving character education. The researcher is not suggesting that teachers cut core curricular areas; but instead, embrace and incorporate character education traits specifically throughout the curriculum. A specific plan addressing how to incorporate character

education at various levels along with a school-wide specific set of character traits (as mentioned in the second recommendation) would make any efforts much more effective.

- The fourth recommendation is for the district to encourage the entire school staff to support character education efforts. In order for a character education to be effective, all members of the school staff must be on board with current efforts. This means inviting support staff, custodial staff, food service, transportation, and not just teachers to become involved and support character education efforts. The guidance and counseling department should play a more vital role in character education efforts. Having regular classroom guidance lessons would enhance character education efforts.

These recommendations are not trying to make teachers work harder by having to incorporate more material. Moreover, these efforts try to unify and standardize what is already happening at Unity School District. The saying "work smarter, not harder" explains the effort accurately.

In summary, this study examined teachers' perceptions of and attitudes toward character education. It also looks at current practices in character education at Unity School District. Both the qualitative and quantitative results of this study have been reported to assist Unity School District in their quest to produce quality students and citizens. From the results of the study, four main recommendations are made for the district. These recommendations advocate the school district formalizing parts of the character education puzzle and involving all parties that work with students. Teachers

already have some puzzle pieces in place, but are missing the administrative guidance to effectively put the puzzle together in the best interest of all students.

APPENDIX A

Cover Letter and Survey

March 11, 2002

Dear Teachers,

I am writing to ask for your help in learning more about current teacher perceptions of and attitudes toward character education within the Unity School District. I am a graduate student at the University of Wisconsin-Stout and I am researching teacher's ideas with regards to character education.

I have enclosed a survey that addresses character education and your opinions concerning the importance and value of character education. It also looks at current grade level and individual classroom practices dealing with character education. The survey should take about 5-10 minutes to complete. Please return the completed surveys to the school office within one week. The data from the survey responses will be compiled and analyzed. The information gathered will lead to a greater understanding of teacher's perceptions of and attitudes toward character education at Unity. Results from this survey will be available for the school district and the various schools.

Please understand that your participation in this survey is voluntary. There are no identifiable risks. Your responses to the surveys will be confidential.

If you have any questions about this survey, please contact the researcher or research advisor. Julie Bever may be reached at either (715) 485-3005 or bevers@lakeland.ws. Hector Cruz may be reached at either (715) 232-2556 or cruzh@uwstout.edu.

Thank you in advance for your assistance.

Sincerely,

Julie Bever

Human Research Subjects Consent Form

I understand that by returning this survey, I am giving my informed consent as a participating volunteer in this study. I understand the basic nature of the study and agree that there are no identifiable risks. I also understand the potential benefits that might be realized from the successful completion of this study. I am aware that the information is being sought in a specific manner so that no identifiers are needed and so that confidentiality is guaranteed. I realize that I have the right to refuse to participate and that my right to withdraw from participation at any time during the study will be respected with no coercion or prejudice.

NOTE: Questions or concerns about the research study should be addressed to Julie Bever, the researcher at 715-485-3005, or Hector Cruz, researcher advisor at 715-232-2556. Questions about the rights of research subjects can be addressed to Sue Foxwell, Human Protections Administrator, UW-Stout Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects in Research, 11 Harvey Hall, Menomonie, WI, phone 715-232-1126

Part 1: General Information

Directions: Please indicate your answers by checking the appropriate blanks.

1. Gender:
_____ Male
_____ Female

2. Educational Level:
_____ Bachelor's Degree
_____ Master's Degree
_____ Specialist's Degree
_____ Doctoral Degree
_____ Other (specify) _____

3. Grade level currently teaching:
_____ Early Childhood-Grade 5
_____ Grade 6-8
_____ Grade 9-12

4. Years of experience in education:
_____ 0-1 year
_____ 2-6 years
_____ 7-10 years
_____ 11-20 years
_____ More than 20 years

5. Have you had any character education training?
_____ Yes
_____ No
         If yes, check all that apply.
         _____ graduate college courses
         _____ undergraduate college courses
         _____ workshops or seminars
         _____ in-services
         _____ teachers' convention
         _____ other

Part 2: Perceptions of Character Education

This purpose of this study is to assess teacher attitudes about character education in this school district. According to the Josephson Institute of Ethics and the Character Counts! Coalition, there are six main "Pillars of Character." These are as follows: trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, and citizenship. The following character traits have subcategories as listed: trustworthiness (honesty, integrity, reliability, and loyalty), and responsibility (accountability, pursuit of excellence, and self-control)

For this survey, please indicate your views about the following character traits and curriculum. Please respond to each item in three ways:

First, do you feel individual character traits are an important objective for the Unity School District?
Second, should individual character traits be part of the curriculum at each grade level?
Third, are individual character traits *now* a part of your classroom curriculum?

Indicate "Yes" or "No" to the three questions posed about each character value by checking the appropriate space.

Character Traits	QUESTION A: Is this important for Unity School district?		QUESTION B: Should this be part of the curriculum at each grade level?		QUESTION C: Is this *now* a part of your classroom curriculum?	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
1. Trustworthiness: Worthy of confidence						
Honesty: Free from deception, genuine						
Integrity: Adherence to a code of values						
Reliability: Fit to be trusted or relied on, keeps promises						
Loyalty: Faithful to a cause or ideal, an allegiance						
2. Respect: High or special regard, to honor the						

essential worth and dignity of the individual					
3. Responsibility: The quality or state of being responsible, accountable					
Accountability: Accepting consequences for actions, thinking before actions					
Pursuit of Excellence: Working toward a goal to the best of one's ability					
Self-control: Be disciplined in control of one's emotions and words and actions, uses self-restraint					
4. Fairness: A range of morally justifiable outcomes					
5. Caring: To be concerned about					
6. Citizenship: Responsibilities including civic virtues and duties					

Part 3: Current Practices

If you answered yes to question C in the above chart addressing character traits in your classroom, please list some examples below.

Part 4: Teacher Attitudes toward Character Education

Please circle your answer to each question and write comments.

1. Do you feel character education is important for Unity School District?
   YES   NO   Please comment on your response.

2. Should character education be part of the curriculum at the level I teach?
   YES   NO   Please comment on your response.

3. Should character education be a part of the curriculum at all levels?
   YES   NO   Please comment on your response.

4. I s character education *now* a part of your classroom curriculum?
   YES   NO   Please comment on your response.

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