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The Integration of Character Education and its Impact on Teachers' Professional Practice

Katie L. Bahm
University of Missouri-St. Louis

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THE INTEGRATION OF CHARACTER EDUCATION AND ITS IMPACT

ON TEACHERS' PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE

by

KATIE L. BAHM

M.Ed., School Counseling, University of Missouri-St. Louis, 2005
B.M.E, Music Education, Otterbein University, 1998
B.A., Vocal Performance, Otterbein University, 1998

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<u>Dissertation Committee</u>

Marvin Berkowitz, Ph.D. (Chairperson)

Wolfgang Althof, Ph.D.

Helene Sherman, Ed.D.

Debbie Tully, Ed.D.

i

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ABSTRACT

Character education is a growing practice in the world of education and has been widely studied in the K-12 grades. Multiple research studies report specific character education strategies that are effective in the K-12 setting. Research on pre-service teacher training in character education is minimal at best, as is the case with research on best practices in pre-service education in general. What does exist suggests that there is a lack of pre-service training about specific character education strategies. Possibly due to this lack of training, there are few empirical studies investigating the effects of pre-service character education training as it applies to later practice in K-12 school settings. This study explored the perceptions of beginning teachers regarding their past preparation and current implementation of character education. Each of the participants graduated from a university in a Northwest state that currently implements character education in its pre-service curriculum. The research question was: Does the character education initiative at West University's undergraduate pre-service program have an impact on its teacher education graduates' current classroom practices? From this question four hypotheses were formed: (1) Graduates from West University's pre-service undergraduate program perceive their pre-service character education as being effective for them as character educators; (2) Graduates from West University's pre-service program feel competent to implement character education; (3) Graduates from West University's pre-service program report using effective character education strategies in their current classrooms; and (4)

Graduates from West University's pre-service program perceive that they are effectively impacting their students' character, citizenship and critical thinking skills. A mixed-methods design was employed starting with quantitative analysis of a survey that was distributed to teachers in their first five years of teaching after having graduated from the targeted university with a total of 31 respondents. The researcher then interviewed eight survey participants to further investigate the use of character education in the teachers' current classrooms.

The study revealed a mixed picture regarding the subjects' sense of preparedness to implement character education. Quantitative data suggested that subjects felt competent to implement character education, as manifested in positive scores on the Character Education Efficacy Belief Instrument, but the qualitative data revealed the opposite. There was also a mixed picture of the use of character education strategies within their classrooms, with subjects reporting usage of some strategies but in a non-directive approach. The subjects also felt that they were affecting their students' character, citizenship, and critical thinking skills but with limitations.

Teachers play a significant role in imparting character education instruction to students. Pre-service character education preparation is of paramount importance to the success of future character education instruction as shown in past research and supported by this research. The findings from this study are relevant to faculty and administrators in teacher education programs in their quest to develop character education strategies within their pre-service preparation.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

THE INTEGRATION OF CHARACTER EDUCATION AND ITS IMPACT

ON TEACHERS' PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE

LIST OF TABLES

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction, Review of Literature, and Significance of the Study

If you want students to be respectful, you have to model respect. You cannot teach where you do not go (Barbara Luther cited in Lickona, 2004, p. 111).

Character education has a long and diverse history. It has been stated that it is difficult to establish what counts as character education (Character Education Partnership, http://www.character.org/frequentlyaskedquestionsaboutcharactereducation). Character education has formerly been defined by "attempts to inculcate certain (typically traditional or conservative) behavioral tendencies through a fairly limited set of education processes such as exhortation, studying role models, and arts and crafts projects highlighting related values" (Berkowitz,1998, p. 2). Currently, character education employs a wider range of methods to allow for a wide variety of developmental outcomes, such as service learning, cooperative learning groups, student involvement in school democracy, or a buddy system. The developmental outcomes might involve self-concepts, academic goals and motivations, attitudes toward school and teachers, or problem-solving skills. Character education can also be the way teachers model behavior, their attitude in their speech, and the types of behavior tolerated in their classroom. (http://www.character.org/frequentyaskedquestionsaboutcharacter education).

Numerous books have been written on the importance of character education (e.g., DeRoche & Williams, 1998; Lickona, 1991; Lickona, 2004; Lickona, Davidson & Lewis, 2004; Lickona, Schaps, & Lewis, 1994; Shields & Bredemeier, 1995). National conferences and seminars are offered throughout the United States, teaching the importance of character education and identifying implementation strategies. There are professional organizations such as the Character Education Partnership in Washington, D.C., and committees such as the American Education Research Association Special Interest Group in Moral Education. The University of Missouri-St. Louis offers a Leadership Academy in Character Education (LACE), a year long program for administrators to develop a whole school character education initiative. However, there is a lack of substantial and adequate preparation for college students studying to become teachers, those termed teacher candidates. Despite this growing interest in character education, most pre-service education programs do not include specific preparation in moral or character education (Nucci, Drill, Larson, & Browne, 2005). In most teacher education programs more focus exists on content knowledge and methodology and little if any on the idea of developing the character and dispositions of future educators. Character education might include a brief discussion within courses such as educational psychology or child development (Lickona, 1993). Lickona states, "Character education is far more complex than teaching math or reading; it requires personal growth as well as skills and development. Yet, teachers typically receive almost no pre-service or in-service training in the moral aspects of their craft" (1993, p. 11). More and

more states are encouraging schools to provide some sort of character education to their students. (Schaps & Williams, 1999). Teacher candidates complete their curricula to become an educator but can be ill-equipped to deal with the complexity of their future students.

Educators have learned a great deal about factors that contribute to effective professional development of teachers for academic achievement (Penuel, Fishman, Yamaguchi, & Gallagher, 2007). However, there is a lack of research on the pre-service preparation of character education which should be the responsibility of colleges and universities. It is also important to note that few universities implement an entire strategic four year program based around character education training in their teacher education program. Wakefield (1996) found that although education programs claim they offer instruction in the methodology of teaching character, the statistics show that this is not the case. Jones, et al (1999) found that department chairs of teacher education programs stated they included character education but the opposite was actually true. Ryan (1997) and Goodlad, Soder, and Sirotnik (1990) found similar issues with the priority of character education inclusion. Through the little research that has been done, it is difficult to ascertain the reasons underlying the variance in university programs.

In an educational system that is geared toward attaining high standardized test scores, character education may seem out of place. In contrast, the efforts of character education are focused on helping children and young adults understand

their values, care about those values, and then act upon those values (Lickona, 1993). Teachers fear that character education programs will add to their current workload. However, Haynes and Thomas (2001) state, "teachers are reporting that their jobs become easier with the implementation of character education because there are fewer discipline and behavioral problems to detract from teaching time" (p 154).

One of the myths of character education is that it simply tells the children what to do. This is neither the purpose nor the accepted method of character education. True character education encourages children to become independent thinkers who are committed to moral principles in their lives and who are likely to do the "right" thing, even under difficult and challenging circumstances (Schwartz, 2008).

Teachers with preparation in topics such as content knowledge have tools to guide their instruction. However, teachers without character education preparation lack these resources. Leming (1993), Lickona, (1993), and Vincent (1999), leaders in character education, expressed their concerns about the lack of preparation pre-service teachers have for emerging character traits.

It is pertinent to mention a dilemma that has been noted in teacher education overall. Darling-Hammond (2006) suggests that there is much evidence that teachers benefit from teacher education, however many teachers feel underprepared for the true challenges they face in their teaching career. She also states, "Developing teacher education programs that consistently and

powerfully influence practice is not an easy matter" (Darling-Hammond, 2005, p. 34). It is difficult to say what aspects of teacher education have the most influence on teachers' current teaching practices. In addition, new teachers can underestimate the quality of the preparation they received when faced with the difficulties inherent in the early years of a career as evidenced by the following statement from a faculty member from West University: "Annual first year follow-up surveys completed by graduates and administrators at their schools of employment consistently demonstrate a mismatch in item scores. Year after year, graduates rate themselves to be less prepared and much less effective than their administrators report" (Tully, 2012). These issues are relatable to the difficulties in pre-service character education preparation.

The purpose of this study is to explore the impact of preparation on teachers' instructional effectiveness and use of character education strategies in their current classrooms. Specifically, this study is investigating which strategies have been effective and to what extent the teachers are using these in their classroom instruction. The focus of this study is specific to pre-service character education and the impact of the strategies used by graduates in their instruction.

It should be mentioned that character and character education are complex concepts. There are numerous definitions, widely varied goals, and an abundance of arguments over the term character education. Therefore, it might come as no surprise that colleges of education might be wary of implementing such a program in pre-service education.

Definition of Character Education

Character education is defined in a variety of contexts. In the past the focus of character education was on role modeling and lessons that brought light to values (Berkowitz, 1998). Currently character education uses many different methods to develop character (e.g. service learning, moral dilemma discussions, and school democracy). The researchers and theorists in character education do not agree on a definition of character education. The character education field runs the gamut between traditionalists and constructivists. The traditionalists emphasize the development of virtue through social learning processes (Arthur, 2008). The constructivists spotlight the social and moral judgments of students (Colby, 2008). Berkowitz (1998) states character education is "the intentional intervention to promote the formation of any or all aspects of moral functioning of individuals" (p. 3). The Character Education Partnership (CEP) describes character education as "the intentional, proactive effort by schools, districts, and states to instill in their students important core, ethical and performance values such as caring, honesty, diligence, fairness, fortitude, responsibility, and respect for self and others"

(http://www.character.org/frequentlyaskedquestionsaboutcharactereducation). The CEP also states that character education "not only cultivates minds, it nurtures hearts" (www.character.org). The Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD) describe character education as, "teaching children about basic human values, including honesty, kindness, generosity, courage, freedom, equality, and respect" (Berkowitz & Bier, 2005, p. 1). Lickona

(2004) states that character education is the intentional focus to develop character that is good based on core virtues that are not only good for the individual but good for the society. These different definitions show the current lack of a consistent and universal concept.

For the purpose of this study, the definition of character education will follow that of the CEP: "the intentional, proactive effort by schools, districts, and states to instill in their students important core, ethical and performance values such as caring, honesty, diligence, fairness, fortitude, responsibility, and respect for self and others" (http://www.character.org/frequentlyaskedquestionsaboutchactereducation). This definition fits the belief system of the researcher and comes from a very reputable organization that is a national advocate and leader in the field of character education.

What Works?

The role of the teacher is an important factor in character education. Marshall (2001), Munson (2000), and Narvaez & Lapsley (2008) argue that the best way to prepare teachers in character education is to include character education strategies in their pre-service curriculum before they teach in their own classrooms. Teachers need to not only be knowledgeable in character education content and have strong implementation skills, but they should understand the importance of modeling good character for their students. Milson (2002) outlined

two tasks for teacher educators. The first task is to "help teachers think about the challenge and explore the methods for reaching those students who lack good character regardless of, or perhaps despite, where they live" (p. 17). The second task for teacher educators is to "consider how preparation for character education is different for elementary teachers versus secondary teachers" (p. 17). With this said, it is important to note that teachers are more proficient character educators when they have the preparation necessary to become those character educators.

Despite a variety of different theories and goals of character education, researchers are starting to get a handle on "what works" in character education (Berkowitz & Bier, 2005). Berkowitz (1999) also states that teachers know how to transfer knowledge, but he believes that it may require a full course of study in order to train teaches as character educators (p. 21). According to the programs researched there were certain pedagogical strategies that were found to be the most prevalent. Professional development for implementation, interactive teaching strategies, direct teaching strategies and modeling/mentoring were a few of the strategies that focused on the teachers' responsibilities for effective character education. Professional development was found to be important for effective character education pedagogy. Peer discussions and cooperative learning were found to be important strategies to be implemented by the teacher as well as specific whole class instruction for direct teaching strategies. Inclusion was the most common form for adult role models (Berkowitz & Bier, 2005). These practices all focus on the teacher "doing" these strategies and not the actual

program itself. With that said, teachers play an important part in the success of character education programs.

Demand and Capacity

As noted previously, there is a gap between the deans' support of character education and what is actually occurring in the teacher preparation courses. Wakefield (1996) noted that a high percentage of the teacher education programs included in his survey felt that the instructions in the methodology of teaching character and fostering moral development was a valid part of its curriculum. His results showed the opposite; leaders felt it was important but it was not included in the curriculum. However, more than 86 percent in a Phi Delta Kappa/Gallup poll considered it "very important" that public schools prepare students to be responsible citizens (Elam, Rose, & Gallup, 1996). Over 85 percent of deans stated in the Jones et al. study (1999) that character education was of concern to them with more than 90 percent in agreement that core values can and should be taught in schools. Yet, less than 25 percent claimed that character education was strongly emphasized in their required and elective courses. Most of these deans also reported that character education issues or discussions were limited to a single course in educational psychology or history of education. Jones et al. (1999), as cited by Nucci (2008), state,

> Despite high levels of commitment to character education, a disjunct
> between theoretical support and programmatic reality characterizes current

teacher education curricula. Deans express disappointment in the status of their own institution's character education efforts: they describe a situation in which character education is left to the efforts of individual professors rather than serving as a strong foundation for their teacher education programs. While there are undoubtedly models of excellence scattered throughout the country, teacher education as a whole needs to do more to convey to prospective teachers that character foundation is at the heart of what it means to be a teacher (Jones, Ryan, & Bohlin, 1999, p. 20).

This study shows the feelings of educators that character education implementation is necessary, yet they are not sure how to make it happen nor are they sure what effective strategies to employ.

Not only was it found that due to lack of strong dean support, universities are not incorporating character education. It was also found that many are not doing so because they do not have faculty trained well enough to teach character education. As Berkowitz (1998) states, "teacher training in character education requires teacher educators who are familiar with this knowledge and are committed to furthering effective character education" (p. 4). It would take much time and effort for "scholars" of character education to train faculty. Not only is this difficult to do, but it also illustrates that not enough information exists or is available on what colleges and universities are actually teaching in character education. In addition the instructors themselves have inadequate training for this purpose. However, research shows that character education delivered by a trained

10

teacher is more effective than that which is delivered by outside experts (Berkowitz, Bier, & Schaefer, 2003).

Research has shown that there is a gap between the idea of implementing character education within pre-service education and the actual "doing" of it. As mentioned previously, deans and faculty have shown their interest and their thoughts on the importance of character education but also report a lack of implementation. Another issue is the large investment of human and fiscal resources needed to train the faculty to fully understand and use character education well when instructing their pre-service teacher candidates.

Pre-service teachers' attitudes are affected by the character education strategies taught (or not taught) in their undergraduate education. According to Revell and Arthur (2007), most pre-service educators thought character education was not only necessary but also anticipated that their courses would have strategies of character education within them. The student teachers in the above study also stated they felt compelled to be "involved in the process of character education and influencing children's values" (Revell & Arthur, 2007, p. 84). Only 34 percent stated their courses prepared them to develop and influence the character of their students; 52 percent said to a limited extent; and 11 percent said no. These data show that pre-service teacher candidates expected character education training but were not receiving it in their pre-service education. Pre-service educators are stating character education training is important to them and

will affect their future use of character education; but they are not receiving that training.

What Should Teacher Educators Do?

The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) has included standards that focus on character and character education. Proposition #1 states that "teachers are committed to students and their learning" (National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, http://www.nbpts.org/the_standards/the_five_core_propositio). Within this proposition is the declaration that teachers should treat students equally. This requires vigilance on such matters as how students are different and how they can interact well with a diverse group of students. Another standard requires teachers to be concerned with the motivation and self-concept of students as well as their character development and civic virtues (National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, http://www.nbpts.org/the_standards/the_five_core_propositio). These standards show the importance of pre-service teachers understanding of character education and the importance of integrating the methods into their future classrooms.

Specific effective methodologies of teaching about character education in pre-service education are not known. Effective instruction strategies are identified for subjects such as math, science, reading, etc. and this instruction can be clearly assessed. However, strategies in moral and character education are less

developed. There are limited descriptions of promising practices and limited documented effective approaches for integrating character education into teacher education (Munson, 2000; Wakefield, 1997). Milson (2002) states there is a wide range of preparedness for teaching character education. Through his research Milson (2002) does make suggestions for teacher educators to implement the following tasks for teacher educators:

1. provide opportunities for reading and discussion that help teachers think about the challenge of and the methods for reaching those students who lack good character,

2. design teacher preparation experiences that address the differences in philosophy, curriculum, and methods between elementary and secondary character education, and

3. identify successful approaches to both in-service and pre-service teacher education that improves the deficiencies apparent in university-based coursework. (p. 104)

Essential to learning are best practices that establish caring school communities and promote student intrinsic motivation (Noddings, 2005; Ryan & Deci, 2000). It would seem important to have these "best practices" taught in teacher education programs. There is specific pedagogy for science, math, and English; so there well may be specific pedagogy for moral and character education.

The possible "best practices" previously mentioned do not identify curriculum design. They also do not include "how teachers should structure

moral discussion, role-play or other instructional techniques particular to moral and character education for students diverging cultural backgrounds, at different grade levels or periods of development" (Nucci, 2008, p. 4). There is a lack of understanding on how to actually "teach" these techniques to pre-service educators and how effective that training might be. It might be advantageous to say that it might not benefit schools of education to rely solely on "best practices" to prepare their pre-service students.

Teacher preparation might include some background knowledge on character education within the United States to gain an overview of the history of character education. This could possibly include literature on social justice and education. Pre-service educators might learn about the process of moral development as well as social and emotional growth. Nucci & Narvaez (2008) state this would include specific elements of pedagogy that are associated with moral and character development. Some of these elements could be how to identify moral components in the regular academic curriculum, how to engage and lead students in moral discussions, and how to work cooperatively (Nucci, 2008).

Pre-service educators might also learn about the moral and ethical scope of teaching. Numerous researchers have made suggestions that the lack of character training aspects in a teacher educator curriculum may be the reason for the lower levels of moral reasoning in pre-service students (Lampe, 1994; McNeel, 1994; Rest et al, 1999). Rest et al. (1999) state that it is imperative to

have reflection on moral judgments in order to promote moral reasoning skills. Research has found that teacher educator programs place more emphasis on teaching academic methods and skills as well as the theory of teaching than on character education (Cummings et al., 2001; Cummings et al., 2003; McNeel, 1994; Yost, 1997). Revell and Arthur (2007) show that there are "significant benefits for teacher education programs if they develop a systematic approach to the delivery and nature of character education within the curriculum" (p. 88). Revell & Arthur (2007) also state it is possible to make a difference in the practices of student teachers if teacher educators focused on character education pedagological strategies. It seems that pre-service educators would benefit from gaining training in character education and knowing how to use that character education training in their future classrooms.

Munson (2000) also discussed the different curriculum aspects that should be studied within a pre-service character education program. She stated it is important to learn the history of moral education and the changes that continue to occur. Munson also felt it is important for pre-service educators to know the philosophy of moral education and the developmental theories of Kohlberg and Piaget. Munson (2000) identified topics for character education foundations courses: (1) Determining one's own value system; (2) Testing the worth of the value; (3) Making wise choices; (4) Weighing rights versus responsibilities; (5) Emphasize respect and responsibility; (6) Experiencing service learning; (7) Learning to practice tolerance; (8) Weaving character education into the curriculum; and (9) Dealing with class meetings/conflict resolution. Effective

instruction is a vital part of any curriculum, and until character and moral

education have a body of specific researched methodologies to draw from, it will

be difficult to get teacher education programs to include character education in

their curriculum.

Today's classrooms include more diverse student populations than ever

before and understanding the sociological aspects of those students will help them

succeed in school. Some of these sociological characteristics are: the erosion of

the family system, child abuse, the possible lessening of religious influence,

media violence, materialism, and poverty and homeless issues (Lovat & Clement,

2008; Munson, 2000; Marlow & Inman, 2001). Therefore, a character education

curriculum should include, according to Kaye (2004); Lickona (1991 & 2004);

and Porro (1996), the same foundational topics that Munson lists (2000) in her

research: (1) establishing a personal value system; (2) clarifying the value's

worth; (3) making wise choices; (4) assessing responsibilities versus rights; (5)

experiencing service learning; (6) ascertaining how to practice tolerance; (7)

focusing on responsibility and respect; (8) resolving conflicts; and (9) integrating

character education curriculum into pre-existing curriculum. Pre-service teachers

need to have the opportunities in their educational programs to understand,

prepare and even present activities that deal with the above mentioned issues.

Although the idea of morality in teaching has been researched for years,

studies investigating specific curriculum strategies that aid in future teachers' use

of character education are lacking. Faculty do not name or use specific strategies

to develop pre-service students' moral education. However, some strategies that might be of use to pre-service educators are as mentioned: gaining background knowledge and a history of character education, learn about their moral and ethical scope, gain the knowledge and understanding of the sociological trends, learn strategies to establish a caring school community and the best ways to promote student intrinsic motivation. Even if armed with this list it is imperative to find clarity within character education strategies for pre-service educators. It is also important for teacher educators to develop more interest and focus on implementing these strategies in their courses. Further testing and refining of research based interventions that have shown to work within pre-service education is needed.

Assessment of Character Education Instruction

Assessment of character education instruction is not well defined. Research looking at past programs and courses designed to affect character education methods have shown mixed and inconclusive results. Mayhew and King (2008) found that some courses have had a positive effect and some have not. Some researchers have said that the differentiated results are due to theoretical and methodological problems. After reviewing some studies, King and Mayhew (2004) found an overall consensus that the studies lacked a research design that could correlate moral reasoning strategies taught in the course content

or intervention to the future use of character education.

Morality and Character Education

Although this study is not focusing on the morality of the teachers, it is imperative to spend a little time discussing the issue of morality and character education. The morality of a teacher is an entirely different line of investigation but needs to be recognized as part of the past research that has affected character education and educators.

Teaching has been stated to be a "moral act" (Schwartz, 2008). DeVries & Zan (1994) and Schwartz (2007) have used words such as "fairness and caring" in describing the understanding that teaching is a moral act reflecting a teacher's character in classroom learning. Fenstermacher (1990) says:

> What makes teaching a moral endeavor is that it is, quite centrally, human action undertaking in regard to other human beings. Thus, matters of what is fair, right, just and virtuous are always present. Whenever a teacher asks a student to share something with another student, decides between combatants in a schoolyard dispute, sets procedures for who will go first, second, third and so on, or discusses the welfare of a student with another teacher, moral considerations are present. The teacher's conduct, at all times and in all ways, is a moral matter. For that reason alone, teaching is a profoundly moral activity. The morality of the teacher may have considerable impact on the morality of the student. The teacher is a model for the students, such that the particular and concrete meaning of such traits as honest, fair play, consideration of others, tolerance, and sharing

are 'picked up', as it were, by observing, imitating and discussing what teachers do in classrooms (p. 133).

Researchers have not clearly identified attributes that teacher education programs should include in their education curriculum? Schwartz (2007) did an extensive literature review and concluded there are seven attributes that were detected as characteristics of individuals who model character (1. Shows obvious moral concern and care for others; 2. Engages in actions that indicate a commitment to the intellectual and/or emotional development of others; 3. Demonstrates congruence between the individual's moral statements, understanding, and actions; 4. Grants leeway to self and others; 5. Demonstrates self-reflection and reasoning skill; 6. Regulates his or her own behavior and emotions in accordance with the social good of others: and 7. Demonstrates empathy and perspective taking). She also found that moral character lends itself to a skill-based approach that will then lead to curriculum development.

Teachers' dispositions and values cannot be separated from instructional skills (Narvaez & Lapsley, 2008; O'Sullivan, 2005; Sherman, 2006). Values are entrenched in school and classroom life. Teachers communicate their values when they select topics or exclude topics, when they insist on correct answers, when they ask students for the truth, and when they establish classroom routines, enforce discipline and give praise (Narvaez & Lapsley, 2008). Teachers have a strong influence on their classrooms and their morals and values flood the classroom. It is important that teachers understand their level of modeling and how much they influence their students.

Some well-known theorists believe that the inclusion of moral developmental stage theories, especially those of Piaget and Kohlberg are important to a character education curriculum (Munson, 2000; Nucci, 2008). Piaget's main focus was human intelligence development. Kohlberg stated that morality follows a developmental pattern and that moral thinking can be advanced educationally, using cognitive conflict, social interaction, democratic participation, and a positive moral atmosphere. He encouraged a Just Community approach to education which includes participant equality, decisions made by all group members, and a teacher that promotes mature moral reasoning but who does not present morality in an authoritative way (Harding & Snyder, 1991).

Teachers trained in the theory of moral development will be able to apply specific knowledge of these theories to social interaction amongst their students. Reimer, et al (1990) stated, "the more that teachers' knowledge of their students' development is specific and defined, the more likely will educational experiences designed to stimulate development be effective" (p. 141). Pre-service teachers need to know what they can expect of their students' cognitive, social, and moral reasoning capabilities which are dependent upon both age and developmental factors according to both Piaget and Kohlberg. Another point to be made is studies have shown that teacher education students enter college at lower levels of moral judgment than college students with other majors (Rest & Narvaez, 1994; Cummings, Dyas, Maddux, & Kochman, 2001). This finding might be of consideration when looking at how well the teacher is able to promote the level of morality for their students. Most teachers are able to recognize Kohlberg's higher

stages of moral reasoning but are not able to reproduce those same stages (Rest, 1994). This finding might indicate that teachers are not well-prepared for making mature moral decisions.

Significance of the Study

There are very few colleges or universities that offer a four year teacher education program that embeds character education. Education has been shown to affect character, either intentionally or unintentionally. So, how can teacher education programs produce future teachers that understand their own character and how they can influence that of their students? Wakefield (1997) states, "Failure to teach character education methods may be indicative of a breach of professional ethics" (p. 10). According to Berkowitz and Bier (2005), there are four categories of positive student outcomes; risk behavior, pro-social competencies, school-based outcomes, and general social-emotional functioning. Character education could be implemented to impact these objectives. Pre-service educators are coming in with the desire to make a difference in the lives of their students and to make children become better people, more competent and more caring (O'Sullivan, 2005). It may benefit teacher educators to recognize the importance of educating future educators in matters of character and to find various ways to include this in their coursework.

To contribute to the currently limited body of research on pre-service character education, this study investigated the perceptions of current practicing

21

teachers who attended a university which implements an integrated character education program in teacher education. The goal of the study was to explore the graduates' perceptions on the impact of their character education instruction during their pre-service preparation. Another goal is for the data to be useful for higher education, particularly teacher education programs. Perhaps teacher education programs would be motivated to implement more character education initiatives based on the results of this study.

Research Question and Hypotheses

The global question that arose from the problem and purpose of this study examines the effectiveness of teaching about character education in pre-service education. The main question being asked is: Does the character education initiative at West University's undergraduate pre-service program have an impact on its teacher education graduates' current classroom practices? From that question, four hypotheses were created:

- Graduates from West University's pre-service program perceive their pre-service character education as being effective for them as character educators.

- Graduates from West University's pre-service program feel competent to implement character education.

- Graduates from West University's pre-service program report using effective character education strategies in their current classrooms.

- Graduates from West University's pre-service program perceive that they are effectively impacting their students' character, citizenship and critical thinking skills.

CHAPTER TWO

Research Design and Methodology

Research in the area of pre-service character education is not abundant. The available research suggests that an emphasis on character education in teacher preparation has proven to be effective, but it has not looked closely at ways in which the curriculum or methodology used affects the teachers' future classroom practice. The participants in this study are current teachers who graduated from a character education focused teacher education program. The study employed a mixed-methods research design. The researcher used a survey, interviews and objective data such as syllabi and other artifacts from West University. Both quantitative data analysis and the qualitative data were completed, the latter analyzed using grounded theory data analysis procedures.

Approval from the University of Missouri-St. Louis and the target university's Institutional Review Boards (IRB) was given before the study began.

Research Design

A mixed methods research design was used to address the research question (Creswell, et al, 2003). The data collection involved gathering both numeric information (e.g. responses to surveys) as well as text information (e.g., interviews) so that the final database represented both quantitative and qualitative data (Creswell, et al, 2003). Specifically, this author used the sequential

explanatory design with in-depth qualitative interviews following the survey. The sequential explanatory design implies collecting and analyzing the quantitative data and then the qualitative data in two consecutive phases within one study. This design was chosen to "assist in explaining and interpreting the findings of a primary quantitative study" (Creswell, et al, 2003, p. 227). Quantitative data was gathered prior to the qualitative data because the researcher was looking for more specific patterns and themes from the survey before looking closer into the participants' thoughts about their current use of character education. The quantitative methods used summarized the data in order to increase generalizability based on the statistical numbers (Roberts, 2010) through descriptive statistics. A sequential explanatory design was used in aiding the researcher when there were unexpected results found from the qualitative data.

In this particular study it was imperative to gain knowledge about whether or not the pre-service program impacted their current character education teaching strategies. With this information the qualitative interviews targeted areas that remained unclear in the quantitative data when developing clearer and more specific questions for the participants to answer. The qualitative data helped make sense of those generalizations and "tell a story from the viewpoint of the participants" (Roberts, 2010, p. 145) to make a richer and more powerful study.

There are strengths and limitations to using the sequential explanatory design. This design is easy to implement due to the nature of the clear stages. The quantitative section done first can be used to distinguish those with certain

patterns relating to the research question. These results can be used to direct

purposeful sampling for the qualitative study. The results can be analyzed into

separate reports with a final discussion bringing results from both sections

together. Using a sequential explanatory design will help if there are any

unexpected results from the quantitative study (Creswell, et al, 2003). The main

weakness of a sequential explanatory design is the amount of time it takes for the

data collection of both a quantitative and a qualitative aspect (Creswell, et al,

2003).

The purpose of the quantitative as well as the qualitative design in this

particular study was to investigate practicing teachers' answers to the questions

on the survey to determine the most influential aspects of a character education

curriculum and how they affect a teachers' future integration of character

education in their classroom. The researcher placed more emphasis on the

qualitative aspect of this study. The quantitative data were analyzed through

statistical means. Using descriptive statistics, no attempt is made to report

behavior or conditions--you measure things as they are (Hill & Kerber, 1967).

Descriptive research involves collecting data in order to test hypotheses or answer

questions concerning the current status of the subjects of the study, reporting the

way things are. The researcher also used inferential statistics to measure the

differences that existed between participants.

The researcher utilized a basic qualitative approach. The overall objective

of the basic qualitative approach is to read (and re-read) a textual database and

"discover" emergent themes (called categories, concepts and properties) and their relationships with one another (Merriam, 2009; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Basic qualitative research methods allowed the researcher to gain insight into how pre-service educators interpreted their experiences regarding character education and the meaning they give to those experiences (Merriam, 2009). These attributes could describe all qualitative studies, although there are other types that have additional traits that a basic qualitative study does not have. For example, a grounded theory approach has the added dimension of "building a substantive theory about the phenomenon of interest" (Merriam, 2009, p. 23). Merriam and others have suggested that those qualitative approaches that do not have an added component, to be identified as "basic". The type of interview questions the researcher used were largely based upon the data received from the quantitative data analysis. However, the researcher asked different types of questions in order to stimulate responses (Patton, 2002). The different types according to Patton are: feeling questions, sensory questions, knowledge questions, experience and behavior questions, and opinion and values questions. The questions used for this research were feeling questions, experience questions and opinion questions. The same questions were asked to all interviewees with the flexibility for probing questions as needed. Four questions focused on basis demographics and one questions asked for the participants' definition of character education.

Participants and Sampling

The quantitative research sample was composed of individuals drawn from West University's School of Education who were in their first five years of teaching. West University provided a list of a total of 182 graduates within the time frame allotted. The criteria for the quantitative aspect of the study included:

1. Graduates of a Teacher Education program at West University (pseudonym) that integrates character education into the undergraduate curriculum,

2. Those who have completed the program through West University in the past five years, and

3. Those who are currently teaching in a K-12 setting.

The rationale for selecting the first criterion was the main emphasis of the study: to look at graduates from a program that integrated character education into the pre-service curriculum. The second criterion was used because West University had a stronger (than previous years and the most current years) character education infusion during the time teachers were enrolled as pre-service candidates. The second criterion also made the sample size more manageable. The third criterion was based upon the goal of obtaining the teachers' perceptions of how they are implementing, or not, character education in their current classroom.

For the qualitative part of the study, a purposeful sampling strategy was used (Patton, 2002). The specific purposeful sampling strategy that was used was criterion sampling. Criterion sampling can provide an important qualitative component to quantitative data and can be useful for identifying cases from a standardized questionnaire that might be useful for follow-up. Using criterion sampling gave greater quality assurance of the study (Patton, 2002). One criterion was that participants had to have completed the survey. Two other of the criteria included gender and number of years teaching. The researcher could only gain access to those that stated they were interested in being interviewed.

The rationale for selecting gender as a criterion was to gain access to a reasonable number of participants from both genders. Each of the amounts of years teaching would need to be fully represented in the qualitative aspect of the study which is why the researcher used the number of year's criteria.

West University (pseudonym) is located in a northwestern state of the United States and is affiliated with a Protestant mainline church. The school offers 84 undergraduate majors and programs (B.A., B.S., and B.L.S.) and five graduate degrees. The total undergraduate enrollment is approximately 2,000 students and the graduate enrollment exceeds 300 students. There are 143 faculty members. The College of Education includes the following programs: undergraduate teacher education, graduate studies in education (GSE), Masters in Teaching (MIT), evening teacher certification (ETC), professional certification, and special education. West University has implemented character education into

their pre-service program. A few years ago, they received a grant to help fund the

integration of character education into their pre-service program. The following

is a quote from a former director;

> We, at West (pseudonym), have always believed in, and have provided, an
> education of   mind and heart. The aspect that we worked toward in the
> grant was intentionality in the ways we sought to prepare our graduates to
> be educators for character. In each program we can enhance this
> education in ways that our graduates will be able to apply in their
> classrooms to the benefit of their students and communities.
> (Mowry, 2006)

For the purpose of this study, the undergraduate teacher education program

graduates were the focus. According to Hanushek & Rivkin (2007) the beginning

teacher is defined as someone with up to five years of teaching experience. The

sample included beginning teachers from across the K-12 spectrum, in both

regular and special education.

Instrumentation

Quantitative

A composite survey was administered to participants as a first step in

gathering data (See Appendices for the survey).   The survey asked for

demographic information: age, gender, race/ethnicity, years of teaching,

graduation date, location currently teaching, grade level teaching and in what

district. The survey also included questions that were focused on the participants'

perceptions of their character education training, strategies being implemented in their current classrooms, and the impact of these practices on their students' behavior and learning. In the second part there were four subsections. The first subsection was the Character Education Efficacy Belief Instrument (Milson & Mehlig, 2002). The Character Education Efficacy Belief Instrument (CEEBI) has 24 items and two subscales. The Personal Teacher Efficacy subscale has 12 items (e.g., "I am usually comfortable discussing issues of right and wrong with my students"). These twelve items were numbers 1, 2, 3, 6, 7, 8, 11, 14, 17, 19, 21 and 23. The General Teacher Efficacy subscale has 12 items (e.g., "Teachers who encourage responsibility at school can influence students' level of responsibility outside of school"). The twelve items in the GTE were 4, 5, 9, 10, 12, 13, 15, 16, 18, 20, 22, and 24. Participants respond using a Likert-type scale (1= strongly agree, 5= strongly disagree). Cronbach's alphas were .79 for Personal Efficacy and .80 for General Teacher Efficacy. In their study of elementary teachers, Milson and Mehlig (2003) reported a bivariate correlation coefficient of .648 between personal teaching efficacy (PTE) and general teaching efficacy (GTE) and reliability coefficients of $\alpha = .8286$ for PTE and $\alpha = .6121$ for GTE (Milson, 2003). These results suggest that the instrument has maintained across administrations similar and acceptable levels of internal consistency as well as correlation between the scales.

The second subsection, Character Education Practice, had questions that have been adapted and modified from an objective scale written by a former dean

of West University Department of Education (see end note[1]).   These questions asked about past students' experiences at West University regarding character education. This follow-up survey was used for a small scale study after being given a grant to incorporate more character education in the target university's pre-service program. Sample questions were: "I was adequately prepared to know how to integrate issues of character into content instruction" and "I implement character education strategies in my classroom to a greater degree than other teachers in my school do". The item numbers are R1, R2, R3, R4, R5, R6, R7, and R8.

The third subsection (Character Education Practice) had questions that were taken from the Checklist for an Ethical Classroom Version 2 – CEC 2 (Narvaez, 2007). The CEC is based on findings about the importance of caring classrooms and communities for ethical development and achievement and is based upon four components: ethical sensitivity, ethical judgment, ethical focus, and ethical action. The factors that are measured in the CEC-2 are the following: caring relationship with each student, safe and trustworthy climate supportive of ethical relationships and meaningful tasks, moral identity development (focusing on the positive effects a person can have on others), supporting self-respect and self-direction, responsiveness to individual needs and differences, providing stimulating course content that promotes critical thinking, developing student

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[1] The researcher did not cite this objective scale in order to keep the university studied anonymous. The researcher can be contacted personally to gain information about credits for the above mentioned scale.

strengths, and fair decision making and democratic skill building. There is no particular scoring used for the CEC. Narvaez designed this checklist for teachers to use annually and compare responses across the years. The questions for this particular study were taken from the following sections of the CEC: Promoting Ethical Behavior, Teacher Responsiveness, Warmth and Immediacy, Providing Safety and Security, Stimulating Curriculum Content, Critical Thinking Development, and Emphasizing Unity. Some sample questions are: "I expect students to treat each other with respect" and "I emphasize respectful, supportive relationships among students, teacher and parents". The questions from the CEC-2 are items R9, R10, R11, R12, R13, R14, R15, R16, R17, R18, R19, and R20.

The fourth and final subsection of the survey consisted of open ended questions that were adapted from a questionnaire from West University and questions designed by the researcher. These questions asked the participants' perceptions of what they might have appreciated the most about their character education training, what character education strategies they specifically learned and the missing pieces were to their character education training (See Appendix C for entire survey).

The survey in this study was comprised of items that were created from previous instruments as well as newly created items. Due to this, the survey was field tested. The researcher asked twenty people from a current teaching program to test the instrument and to judge the face validity. The sampling criteria required that participants were to be teaching currently, and included a mixture of

male and female respondents, teachers at different types of schools (public and private), and teachers of different subject areas. The researcher asked those participating in the field test to "reflect on the cognitive and evaluative processes they used" (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007, p. 197) while taking the survey. There was a 50% survey response rate with ten responses. Their reflections were then recorded and analyzed to determine the consistency with the concepts the survey measured. The researcher asked the field test participants to provide feedback on access and survey navigation, directions, typographical and general overall observations. The survey was then revised and it took about ten minutes to complete according to the feedback. The wording in question 15 in the first section was changed from "no" to "not". The revisions made were to question 15 and 16 in the rating statements as they were repeats. The format of the survey questions was changed from appearing horizontal to appearing vertical.

Qualitative

A link or separate paper explaining an opportunity to be interviewed by the researcher was included at the end of the quantitative survey so the patterns found in the quantitative data could be expanded upon. Eight survey responders replied that they would be willing to be interviewed. The qualitative data was collected through semi-structured interviews. Because the researcher wanted the participants to define their experiences in unique ways, the questions were more open-ended (Merriam, 2009). The researcher was looking for specific

information from all of the respondents but also allowed for less structured

questions. This allowed for the researcher to react "to the situation at hand, to the

emerging worldview of the respondent, and to new ideas on the topic" (Merriam,

p. 90). Each participant was asked the same questions with flexibility to ask

probing questions when needed. A few of those questions focused on basis

demographics as well as their definition of character education. A sample of the

other questions asked were: *If you were to describe your character education*

training you would describe it as; describe some of the strategies that were used

to teach you character education. How were these strategies taught? Do you feel

you were adequately prepared to use character education in your current

classroom? If so, why? If not, what could you have had that would have made

you better prepared?; Do you feel that because of your pre-service training you

are more apt to use strategies that will make a positive impact on your current

students' character? Why? (See appendix F for full list of questions.)

Two interviews took place via Skype, two via email, and four via phone.

The respondents were contacted one more time via email to clarify a question that

was not answered in the first round of interviews.

Data Collection Procedures

Data collection began in May 2011 and was concluded in November 2011.

West University provided a list of 182 graduates that fit the previous mentioned

criterion. Some of the information was erroneous and the researcher had to locate as many graduates in that list that were obtainable via internet research. After a trial run with email addresses and initial mail contact there were twelve undeliverable addresses. After the location of graduates and the returned emails or letters and further research, a total of 104 graduates were located with obtainable email addresses (personal or work) or current school addresses. The researcher then sent out 97 emails with a link to the survey on survey monkey and 80 paper copies of the survey were sent. Some graduates received both an email and a paper copy of the survey to gain a better response rate. After this email was sent out another three emails were returned undeliverable. The total amount of graduates that were successfully contacted was 101. The West University contact sent out a reminder email as well to increase the amount of responses.

A packet and email including a detailed letter describing the study, the value of this study, and study agreement information was sent to the correct addresses. The packet also included a consent form to reject or participate in the study. The letter informed the respondents that their personal identity and the school identity would not be included in any report of the study. The researcher sent a follow-up email within five days of sending the surveys via email. After a two week period, the researcher sent another email to those that have not responded. The researcher asked the participants to return the survey within one month of receiving the first correspondence. The researcher chose this timeline because teachers are usually very busy during the school year and would be more apt to filling out a survey when they are not busy with regular school activities.

Qualitative data were collected after the quantitative data had been collected and analyzed. The researcher clearly described the study, the value of the study and the study agreement information before each interview began. Each participant was given the opportunity to agree to participate or decline. Eight interviewees, two male and six female participated. Three interviews took place via Skype, three took place via phone and two took place via email. The Skype and phone interviews took approximately 30-45 minutes.   The interviews done via email consisted of three exchanges.   All participants interviewed were advised that the interviews were being recorded and transcribed verbatim. Interviewees were told that their identity was changed to maintain confidentiality and that the study's data was conveyed as group data and was kept in a locked secure place. The researcher also collected objective data that included: syllabi, a list of essential character attributes through the department of education at West University, the conceptual framework which included the mission of the school of education, a spreadsheet of different character education principles and which courses included those, curriculum of the program, and other explanatory documents that gave a detailed description of the program at West University. This was done to ensure triangulation. An email exchange with a current faculty member of West University also took place to analyze the depth of which character education strategies were being implemented during the time of the participants' teacher education preparation.

Data Analysis

The survey data were analyzed through descriptive statistics and inferential statistics. The surveys were transferred from Survey Monkey into Excel documents and then into SPSS (Version 19). The paper documents were transferred into Excel and then into SPSS. An assumption was that the errors were normally distributed with constant variance. All answers were changed into numerical form. Any questions that were left blank were given a three which was an "uncertain" answer. There were two surveys of which the demographic data was the only data that was completed so they were deleted. Questions 2, 4, 8, 10, 15, 17, and 21 in the Character Education Efficacy Belief Instrument (CEEBI) as well as question 5 in the rating statements were reverse coded. There was no manipulation of variables and no attempt was made to establish causality. Basic descriptive statistics such as means, standard deviation, and frequency distribution were used in this study. A simple ANOVA was conducted to measure the significant differences that existed between the participants. The ANOVA looked at the differences between the teachers that have been teaching 0-3 years and those that have been teaching 4-5 years, location of teaching, type of district (urban, rural, and suburban), and type of school (public and private).

In qualitative research, according to Merriam (1998), "…the investigator is the primary instrument for gathering and analyzing data and, as such, can respond to the situation by maximizing opportunities for collecting and producing meaningful information" (p. 20). Miles and Huberman (1994) state the analysis

requires a full analysis, to ignore no information that is relevant, and the researcher should organize his or her information coherently.

The researcher used the strategies described by Strauss and Corbin (1998) and Merriam (1998; 2009) to analyze the data. The qualitative data was analyzed using grounded theory data analysis procedures. According to grounded theory data analysis procedures, data are analyzed using constant comparative method (Merriam, 2009). This means that information obtained was continuously looked at with the purpose of finding similarities and differences. Similar data were then grouped together and given a tentative name. Looking for the patterns in the data, the researcher then combined similar data identifying relationships between various data groupings. According to Corbin and Strauss, "the incidents, events, and happenings are taken as, or analyzed as, potential indicators of phenomena, which are thereby given conceptual labels" (Corbin & Strauss, 1990, p. 7). The researcher coded one incident or statement with a label that represents its essence. As more incidents come along that are like the first, the researcher labeled them with the same name. Such processes of comparison and naming similar phenomena the same way allowed the researcher to construct preliminary concepts. Corbin and Strauss stress the importance of "always grouping like with like" (Corbin & Strauss, 1990, p. 9). The number of these concepts grows as data analysis continues. At the same time, similar concepts were grouped together to construct preliminary categories.

According to grounded theory data analysis, all interview data obtained

from the interviews were coded through open coding, "the interpretive process by

which data are broken down analytically" (Corbin & Strauss, 1990, p. 12). The

researcher used researcher-generated label. As Merriam states "because you are

being open to anything possible at this point, this form of coding is often called

open coding" (Merriam, 2009, p. 178). Conceptualization of the data by giving

conceptual labels to report perceptions and incidents was used. Concepts related

to the same phenomena were grouped together to form categories. Both concepts

and categories were generated through the use of constant comparisons to

emphasize similarities and differences between instances. Following Merriam

(2009), "the basic strategy of the constant comparative method is compatible with

the inductive, concept-building orientation of all qualitative research, the constant

comparative method of data analysis has been adopted by many researchers who

are not seeking to build substantive theory" (p. 199). To achieve the status of

categories, the researcher looked at developing more abstract concepts, but also

identified properties and dimensions of each of the categories represented.

Another type of coding that was used is axial coding. Axial coding looks at the

relationships and assists in establishing links between categories and sub-

categories. "In axial coding, categories are related to their sub-categories, and the

relationships tested against data" (Corbin & Strauss, 1990, p. 13). In addition to

looking at the relationships between sub-categories and categories during axial

coding, the researcher continued to develop the categories. The identified

relationships were viewed as tentative, in need to be verified in more data. "To be

verified (that is, regarded as increasingly plausible) a hypothesis must be indicated by the data over and over again" (Corbin & Strauss, 1990, p. 13). After viewing the relationships over and over, the categories were formed.

Strauss and Corbin (1998) elucidate another step is to conduct a deeper analysis through memos. According to Strauss & Corbin the definition of memos is the researcher's notation of thoughts, interpretation, questions, and directions for further collection of data as understandings unfurl. Glaser states that a memo encapsulates the "meaning and ideas for one's growing theory at the moment they occur (Glaser, 1998, p. 178). The memos taken ranged from notes containing a few words to a multiple page log. These memos aided in the interpretation of statements made in the interviews and kept a record of the researcher's thoughts.

To maintain anonymity in this study, the reporting of the data included the use of pseudonyms for the subjects named in the context.

Validity & Reliability

Validity and reliability are concerns that need to be discussed when collecting, analyzing and interpreting data. In a quantitative study, one must convince readers that procedures have been followed through the use of variables and statistics (Merriam, 2009). A qualitative study must show in a detailed description that the conclusions are reliable and seem sensible (Merriam, 2009).

The criteria for a quantitative study and a qualitative study are going to be different when demonstrating the validity and reliability of the study.

Vanderstoep and Johnston (2009) define reliability as, " the extent to which a measure yields the same scores across different times, groups of people, or versions of the instrument...reliability is about consistency" (p. 62). Hill and Kerber (1967) make the statement that the reliability of a survey depends on the length, the format, the wording, and the survey's motivational response. The researcher concentrated on the significant topic of the study; asked information that cannot otherwise be obtained through the university; was arranged efficiently; and the questions were objective without showing any bias.

Vanderstoep and Johnston (2009) describe validity as determining whether the research truly measures that which it was intended to measure or how truthful the research results are at the end of the study. The validity in descriptive studies is important for the amount of numbers in the study to be useful. The researcher conducted a small field test assessment to check the survey's validity. Upon completion of the field test, the author revised the survey to ensure validity. The validity and reliability were also stronger from this field test of the survey because the survey was administered to educators that match the criterion of the study and was also administered in a separate state.

Trustworthiness for the qualitative research was checked by taking the findings back to the participants to see if the results were credible. Merriam (2009) states that when considering triangulation a researcher should be aware of

his/her bias. Using this strategy, the researcher asked others to comment on the findings making note of biases for inter-coder reliability. Through the use of multiple methods and multiple sources of data triangulation took place to increase the internal validity of this study. The researcher used member checks to ensure validity as well (Merriam, 2009). Member checks took place after the interviews ruling out any misinterpretation or misunderstanding of what was said. This enhanced the trustworthiness of this particular study (Merriam, 2009; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). There were issues pertaining to transferability and trustworthiness that were discovered after the analysis of the research. This issue will be discussed in detail in Chapter Four.

When looking into the reliability in the qualitative section of this research, the researcher looked at the "dependability" or "consistency" of the data results (Merriam, 1998, p. 206). Merriam states, "if the findings of a study are consistent with the data presented, the study can be considered dependable" (2008, p. 222). This aspect of findings in this study will be difficult to replicate, so an audit trail was kept so others could be aware of how the researcher arrived at the results. The question of replicating results is of concern in quantitative research, not in qualitative research (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992). Precision (Winter, 2000), credibility, and transferability (Merriam, 2009) provide the lenses of evaluating the findings of a qualitative research. According to Merriam, qualitative research wants to "understand how people interpret their experiences, how they construct their worlds, and what meaning they attribute to their experiences" (p. 5). It would be difficult to replicate how people interpret their experiences and the

meaning they make. Again, it should be stated that there were findings from the

study that made transferability clearer and will be discussed further in Chapter

Four.

Chapter Three

Results

This study used a sequential explanatory design. The qualitative results assist in explaining and interpreting the findings of the quantitative study. Two phases of reporting the data collection process will be used in this chapter. The purpose of this study was to examine the perceptions of current practicing teachers who attended one university which implemented an integrated character education program in teacher education. The goal of the study was to explore the graduates' perceptions on the impact of the character education program. The global question that arose from the problem and purpose of this study examines the effectiveness of teaching about character education in pre-service education. The main question being asked was: Does the character education initiative at West University's undergraduate pre-service program have an impact on its teacher education graduates' current classroom practices? From that question, four hypotheses were created:

- Graduates from West University's pre-service program perceive their pre-service character education as being effective for them as character educators.

- Graduates from West University's pre-service program feel competent to implement character education.

- Graduates from West University's pre-service program report using effective character education strategies in their current classrooms.

- Graduates from West University's pre-service program perceive that they are effectively impacting their students' character, citizenship and critical thinking skills.

Chapter 3 presents the results of an analysis of the quantitative and qualitative data collected from graduates through the Character Education Efficacy Belief Instrument (CEEBI), rating statements designed by a past dean of the university being studied, the Checklist for an Ethical Classroom Version 2 – CEC 2 (Narvaez, 2007), and through researcher designed interviews. The survey was given to 104 graduates of West University that were within their first five years of teaching, in the months of August and September of 2011.

Response Rate

Quantitative

During this study, there were many attempts to contact the possible participants to gain a high response rate. Literature reviews have identified four ideas that consistently raise response rates: (1) repeat contacts; (2) financial incentives; (3) university sponsorship and (4) stamped return envelopes (Dennis, 2003). During this study there were four contacts from the researcher and one from a professor at West University. This contact would also include the university sponsorship strategy. The mail copies were sent with two separate return envelopes; one for the completed survey and one for the completed

information for an interview to maintain anonymity. Before these surveys were sent the possible participants received an email notification that they would be invited to participate in the forthcoming survey which Dennis (2003) states is another way to gain a higher response rate. After the numerous contacts with the possible participants the researcher decided that there would be no more responses after a two month time period as well as emails being sent that contained anger and frustration with being contacted many times.

Out of the 104 graduates originally contacted via email with a link to the survey on Survey Monkey and through paper copies in the mail, thirty teachers agreed to take the survey and completed the survey. However, three participants did not complete the second section of the survey via Survey Monkey dropping the sample size to 27 for certain questions in the quantitative survey. The response rate was almost 30% for this study. One might assume that a low response rate is not beneficial for a study. However, it can be said that "rates less than 50% should not be a problem" (Dennis, 2003). The researcher is not located in the same area of the possible participants which could have affected the response rate as well as the lack of affiliation with the university being studied.

Qualitative

The total response rate to participate in interviews was eight. The researcher sent out a total of six emails and one mail request over a two month period requesting interviews from participants. The researcher also contacted

those participants who had responded to previous emails stating their surveys were completed. The researcher did not know if they had replied yes on the survey due to the nature of the survey and anonymity.

Description of Participants

The percentage of male respondents versus female respondents was weighed heavily towards female with male being 22.6% and female being 77.4% (See Table One). The most prevalent year of graduation was 2008 (51.6%). There was a 12.9% response rate for the graduating years of 2006, 2007 and 2009. The lowest participation rate for year of graduation was 2010 (9.7%). Years of teaching weighed heavily in one direction with 71% having taught three to four years. Most of the respondents currently teach in a public school (83.9%).

Table One
Demographic Information

Years of teaching	1-2	19.4%
	3-4	71.0%
	5 or more	9.7%
Gender	Male	22.6 %
	Female	77.4%
Grade Level	Elementary	44.0%
	Secondary	56.0%
Type of School	Public	83.9%
	Private school with religious mission	6.5%
	Private school without religious mission	0.0%
	Magnet	6.5%
	Charter	0.0%
	Other	3.2%
Race	African –American	0.0%
	Caucasian	90.3%
	Latino/a or Hispanic	0.0%
	Native American/Alaskan	0.0%
	First or second generation-immigrant	0.0%
	Other	9.7%
Type of District	Urban	32.3%
	Rural	29.0%
	Suburban	38.7%

See full demographic information in Appendix A

There were two males and six females that were interviewed. All of them taught

in public school with a wide range of subjects taught (math, Spanish, dual

language, special education, language arts and an elementary specialist). Three of

the interviewees graduated in 2008, two in 2007, one in 2006, one in 2009 and

one in 2010.

Results

Quantitative

The survey data were analyzed through descriptive statistics. The surveys

were entered into Excel and then transferred into SPSS. An assumption was made

that the errors are normally distributed with constant variance. The main aspects

that were looked at were the mean and standard deviation of the variables. There

was no manipulation of variables and no attempt to establish causality. Basic

descriptive statistics such as means, standard deviation, and frequency distribution

were used for the quantitative data analysis. A simple ANOVA was conducted to

measure the significant differences that existed between the participants.

The demographic variables measured were (1) number of years teaching,

(2) gender, (3) whether they teach elementary or secondary, (4) the type of

school: public or private, (5) race, (6) and the type of district (urban, rural or

suburban). After running a basic analysis it was found that the groupings weighed

heavily in one direction for the years of teaching (71% 3-4 years), gender (77.4%

female), race (90.3% Caucasian), and type of school (84% public). *See appendix*

A for full list of demographics.   Due to these numbers being unequally spread the

comparisons for all hypotheses were only done according to

elementary/secondary and type of district (urban, rural, suburban).

> **Hypothesis One:** Graduates from West University's pre-service program
>
> perceive their pre-service character education as being effective for them
>
> as character educators.

An alpha level of 0.05 was used for all statistical tests. SPSS, Version 19

was used for all analyses for this hypothesis as well as the subsequent hypotheses.

The absolute values for each of the items were 1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree,

3=uncertain, 4=agree, and 5=strongly agree.   Items six and seven from the

Character Education Practice survey were used to analyze this hypothesis. The

items in this section were numbered with an R before the number. Item six (R6)

is: *I was adequately prepared to know how to integrate issues of character into*

classroom management. Item seven (R7) is: *I was adequately prepared to know*

how to integrate issues of character into content instruction. Table Two shows

the descriptive statistics for the R6 & R7 combined.   The range was 3.00 with the

minimum being 2.00 and the maximum being 5.00 for the individual questions.

For the questions combined the minimum was 4.00 and the maximum was 10.00.

Table Two

R6 & R7 questions from survey including group n, means, and standard deviation

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Item Type	N	M	SD
R6 & R7 combined	27	7.29	1.66
R6	27	3.81	.878
R7	27	3.48	.849

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There was a low sample size which concluded a low mean for the following variables; years of teaching, gender, subject taught, and public versus private. Due to these low numbers, only the variables of type of district and elementary versus secondary will be discussed. Looking specifically at grade level for R6 & R7 it is noted that the mean of elementary teachers was 7.8 and the mean for secondary teachers was 6.9. These numbers show that elementary teachers report that they were more adequately prepared to integrate character education into their classroom management and content instruction. Looking at the questions individually, the trend continues. Question 6 (R6) has a mean of 4.07 for elementary and 3.69 for secondary. Question 7 (R7) has a mean of 3.7 for elementary and 3.3 for secondary. (See Table Three).

Looking at item R6 specifically (*I was adequately prepared to know how to integrate issues of character education into classroom management*) 64.3% responded with a four (agree). 17.9% responded with a five (strongly agree).

The responses for R7 specifically (*I was adequately prepared to know how to integrate issues of character into content instruction*) 59.3% agreed or scored it a four and 7.4% scored it a five or strongly agreed.

Table Three
R6 & R7 questions combined as well as individually according to grade level teaching with n, mean, and standard deviation.

ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY

Item Type	N	M	SD
R6 & R7 (Elementary)	13	7.77	1.64
R6 & R7 (Secondary)	14	6.86	1.61
R6 (Elementary)	13	4.08	.862
R6 (Secondary)	14	3.57	.852
R7 (Elementary)	13	3.69	.855
R7 (Secondary)	14	3.29	.825

The one-way ANOVA was calculated for R6 and R7 individually and combined. The analysis shows that there is no statistical difference between the

53

elementary and secondary teachers when compared with total R6 & R7 and with
each question individually. The significance levels were .158 for R6 & R7
combined, .138 for question R6 and .220 for question R7. (see Table Four).

Table Four ANOVA

R6 & R7 combined as well as individual questions R6, R7 are shown.

ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY

		Sum of Squares	dF	Mean Square	F	**Sig.**
R6 & R7 total	Between Groups	5.608	1	5.608	2.123	**.158**
	Within Groups	66.02	25	2.641		
	Total	71.63	26			
R6	Between Groups	1.722	1	1.722	2.346	**.138**
	Within Groups	18.352	25	.734		
	Total	20.074	26			
R7	Between Groups	1.114	1	1.114	1.581	**.220**
	Within Groups	17.626	25	.705		
	Total	18.741	26			

The next comparison made was with the variable **type of district**. The
different levels within this variable were urban, rural and suburban. The
dependent variables again were R6 & R7 combined as well as individually.

Looking at the combined questions of R6 & R7 it was found that there was a slight difference in the three types of districts. The mean of urban was 7.4, the mean of rural was 6.4 and the mean of suburban was 7.6. These data show that teachers in rural districts report feeling that they were less prepared to know how to integrate issues of character into classroom management and content instruction. The same trend holds true for R6 individually and R7 individually (see Table Five).

Table Five

Descriptives of R6 & R7 combined as **well as R6 and R7 individually regarding type of district**.

TYPE OF DISTRICT

Item Type		N	M	SD
R6 & R7 combined	Urban	10	7.40	1.65
	Rural	5	6.40	2.30
	Suburban	12	7.58	1.38
R6	Urban	10	3.90	.876
	Rural	5	3.40	1.34
	Suburban	12	3.92	.669
R7	Urban	10	3.50	.850
	Rural	5	3.00	1.00
	Suburban	12	3.67	.778

When completing the ANOVA comparing R6 & R7 combined as well as individually it shows that there is no statistical difference between urban, rural and suburban when asking if they feel adequately prepared to integrate issues of character into classroom management and content instruction. The significance levels were .411 for R6 & R7, .522 for R6 individually and .349 for R7 individually (see Table Six).

ANOVA (Table Six)
R6 & R7 combined as well as individual questions R6, R7 are shown.

TYPE OF DISCTRICT

		Sum of Squares	dF	Mean Square	F	**Sig.**
R6 & R7 total	Between Groups	5.113	2	2.556	.922	**.411**
	Within Groups	66.517	24	2.772		
	Total	71.63	26			
R6	Between Groups	1.057	2	.529	.667	**.522**
	Within Groups	10.017	24	.792		
	Total	20.074	26			
R7	Between Groups	1.547	2	.787	1.100	**.349**
	Within Groups	17.167	24	.715		
	Total	18.741	26			

In summary, the scores for the items R6 & R7 show that the graduates from West University feel they were prepared on an "average" level as the scores hovered between the 3.0 and 4.0 ranges with the scale going up to a 5.0. However, it is difficult to make a generalized statement about whether or not teachers from West University feel that they were adequately prepared due to the low n of the sample.

The last part of the survey was three open ended questions. They were focused on answering this particular hypothesis. Although these could be considered qualitative in nature, it is necessary to include them in the analysis here due to the questions relating very directly to this particular hypothesis.

The first question asked the participants to describe what they most appreciated about their teacher training focused on character education. Nine out of the fifteen responses discussed the idea that professors taught them how to integrate character education into their current curriculum: "Learning what it was like to integrate character education into subject areas"; "The strategies that can be incorporated in the regular education classroom"; "Integrating character ed into a lesson"; "How to integrate into classroom management". Another theme with six participants discussing was that of role modeling: "….professors modeled character ed infusion by treatment of their students…and emphasized the importance of positive interaction with students"; "…and how to actively model (rather than passively model) behavior, character, respect, etc. for my students";

"Discussions on how to show compassion and be a role model, while still maintaining a structured and disciplined academic setting."

A second open-ended question asked was: "I specifically learned the following Character Education strategies in my teacher training." Sixteen participants answered this question and 8 out of 16 talked about class meetings. Seven out of 16 stated they specifically learned cooperative learning as a strategy. The other strategies that a couple of participants discussed were creating a classroom community and service learning. One person stated that they did not learn any strategies while attending West University.

The final open question targeted the missing pieces in their character education training. Five out of the sixteen responses discussed was that of having the ability to find ways to apply the actual character education to curriculum that is already full. Some of the statements made were: "I have no idea how to integrate this into math lessons when my curriculum is already so compacted that I can't fit it in at all"; "How to integrate it into the curriculum when teaching content area lessons"; "How to find time to blend character education into a very busy school day full of required teaching curriculum." Another theme that was communicated from four respondents was the idea of knowing how to integrate parents and families more into the character education curriculum. Some of the statements say: "How to improve parents/families into the character education (Home integration, parent involvement/feedback, extends into community, etc" and "How to get difficult parents on board." A couple of participants stated that

they would have liked to see more specific ways of how to apply what they were taught: "The application of it all. I think it is easy to talk about something, but you learn so much more when you put it into practice."

It can be concluded from the recurrent themes to the open-ended questions that graduates of West University report their training in character education had some effects yet had some missing pieces. The sample size was too small to make generalizations and this makes it difficult to say whether or not, according to the survey data, graduates of West University feel their character education was beneficial for them as character educators.

Hypothesis Two: Graduates from West University's pre-service program feel competent to implement character education.

The Character Education Efficacy Belief Instrument (CEEBI) was analyzed for this hypothesis. The CEEBI was designed to measure teachers' sense of efficacy for implementing character education. The CEEBI consists of twenty-four statements to which the participant respond on a 5-point Likert-type scale. The statements were designed to measure two dimensions: personal teaching efficacy (PTE) and general teaching efficacy (GTE). The PTE consists of twelve items designed to investigate teachers' beliefs about their own abilities regarding character education. The GTE consists of twelve items designed to examine teachers' beliefs about their ability to exert influence of external factors,

such as students' family background and home environment (Milson & Mehlig, 2002).

The total sample size for the CEEBI was 30. The responses for the CEEBI indicate average levels of personal teaching efficacy (PTE) and general teaching efficacy (GTE) about character education.   According to Milson (2012, via email conversation) the overall scores (PTE & GTE) above a 36 were considered high or positive. The mean composite scores for this study on the PTE scale were 41.33 (SD=1.66) and 39.60 (SD=2.87) on the GTE scale, which represent a positive score. The highest possible score for each individual item is 5, creating a maximum of 60 and minimum of 12 for each scale, with a midpoint of 36.

The mean scores for each item can be used to determine the general level of efficacy exhibited for each item. The highest possible score is 5.00 and the lowest possible score is 1.00 on each item. The mean item score between 1.00 and 2.99 are considered low or negative, those between 3.00 and 3.99 are neutral or average, and those scores above 4.00 are considered high or positive (See tables 7 & 8 for item means).   There are items that are considered negative. The mean item score on the negative items (2, 6, 8, 17, and 21=PTE and 4,10,13,15,16, and 22=GTE) between 1.00 and 2.99 are considered high or positive, those between 3.00 and 3.99 are neutral or average and those scores above 4.00 are considered low or negative.

There were Personal Teaching Efficacy items that were considered high or positive. The first was item one, "I am usually comfortable discussing issues of right and wrong with my students" with a mean of 4.53. Item 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" had a mean of 1.96 (reverse-negative question) which states they do believe they can have an impact on the character of a child no matter the home influence. Item 3, "I am confident in my ability to be a good role model" was also high with a mean of 4.60. Item 6, "I am usually at a loss as to how to help a student be more responsible" had a mean of 1.90 (reverse-negative question) which reports the teachers do know ways to help a student become more responsible. Item 7 was high with a mean of 4.30 ("I know how to use strategies that might lead to positive changes in students' character"). Item 8, "I am not sure that I can teach my students to be honest" had a mean of 1.81 (reverse-negative question) which reports teachers feel they can teach their students to be honest. Item 11, "I am able to positively influence the character development of a child who has had little direction from parents" was high with a 4.13. Item 17, "I often find it difficult to persuade a student that respect for others is important" had a mean of 2.13 (reverse-negative question). This means teachers do not find it difficult to persuade their students that respect for others is important. The next item that had a high or positive mean (4.23) was item 19, "I will be able to influence the character of students because I am a good role model". The final item with a high or positive score mean was item 21, "I sometimes don't know what to do to help students become more compassionate"

with a mean of 2.53 (reverse-negative question) which reports teachers tend to know what to do to help students become more compassionate (See table 7).

One item had a neutral or average was item 23, "I am continually finding better ways to develop the character of my students" with a mean of 3.96 (See Table 7).

There was one item on the PTE scale that had a low mean. That was item 14, "When I have a student who lies regularly, I can usually convince him/her to stop lying to me" with a mean of 2.87 (See table 7).

Table 7 – *Distribution of Responses to Personal Teaching Efficacy Items, Percentages*

CEEBI item	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly agree	Mean
1. I am usually comfortable discussing issues of right and wrong with my students. (+)	0	0	0	45.2	54.8	4.53
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. (-)	32.3	54.8	0	12.9	0	1.96
3. I am confident in my ability to be a good role model. (+)	3.2	0	0	29	67.7	4.60
6. I am usually at a loss as to how to help a student be more responsible. (-)	22.6	71	3.2	3.2	0	1.90
7. I know how to use strategies that might lead to positive changes in students' character. (+)	0	0	3.2	64.5	32.3	4.30
8. I am not sure that I can teach my students to be honest. (-)	29	64.5	3.2	3.2	0	1.81
11. I am able to positively influence the character development of a child who has had little direction from parents. (+)	0	0	3.2	80.6	16.1	4.13
14. When I have a student who lies regularly, I can usually convince him/her to stop lying to me. (+)	3.2	19.4	64.5	12.9	0	2.87
17. I often find it difficult to persuade a student that respect for others is important. (-)	16.1	67.7	3.2	12.9	0	2.13
19. I will be able to influence the character of students because I am a good role model. (+)	0	0	0	77.4	22.6	4.23
21. I sometimes don't know what to do to help students become more compassionate. (-)	3.2	58.1	22.6	16.1	0	2.53
23. I am continually finding better ways to develop the character of my students. (+)	0	10	6.7	53.3	30	3.96

Note. CEEBI=Character Education Efficacy Belief Instrument. The item numbers represent the order in which the items were presented in the survey. To show consistency, the negative questions were not reverse –coded for the tabulation of frequencies.

The distribution of responses to the GTE items, shown in Table 8, shows a different pattern of high or positive efficacy. In the PTE there were ten items above 4.0 and in the GTE there was only four items. Item 4, "Teachers are usually not responsible when a child becomes more courteous" had a mean of 1.97 (reverse-negative question). This reports that teachers feel they do have responsibility when a child becomes more courteous. Item 10, "Teachers who spend time encouraging students to be respectful of others will see little change in students' social interactions" was also high with a mean of 2.56 (reverse-negative question). Teachers feel they will see change when they spend time encouraging students to be respectful of others. Item 15, "If students are inconsiderate, it is often because teachers have not sufficiently modeled this trait" was high with a mean of 2.43 (reverse-negative question). The final item that was high was item 24, "Teachers who encourage responsibility at school can influence students' level of responsibility outside of school" had a mean of 4.26. (See Table 8)

The GTE had more items that were marked uncertain than did the PTE. As stated previously the scores between 3.00 and 3.99 were considered neutral or average. There was a total of seven items that scored between a 3.00 and a 3.99. The first was item 5 ("When a student shows greater respect for others, it is usually because teachers have effectively modeled that trait") with a mean of 3.33. Item 9 ("When students demonstrate diligence it is often because teachers have encouraged the students to persist with the task") had a mean of 3.94. Item 12 ("If parents notice that their children are more responsible, it is likely that teachers have fostered this trait in school") had a mean of 3.53. Item 13, "Some

students will not become more respectful even if they have had teachers who promote respect" (reverse-negative question) had a mean of 3.55. The next item was item 16, "If responsibility is not encouraged in a child's home, teachers will have little success teaching this trait at school" (reverse-negative question) with a mean of 3.56. Item 18, "When a student becomes more compassionate, it is usually because teachers have created caring classroom environments" had a mean of 3.76. The final item that was considered average or neutral was item 22 "Teachers cannot be blamed for students who are dishonest" (reverse-negative question) with a mean of 3.33 (See Table 8).

There was one item that scored low in the GTE. Item 20, "teaching students what honesty is results in students who are more honest" had a mean of 2.43 (See Table 8).

It is of interest to note that in this study the teachers scored higher in more items from the Personal Teaching Efficacy scale (PTE) than they did of the General Teaching Efficacy scale (GTE). It can be said that participants here report having high confidence in their abilities regarding character education (PTE). They have an average or neutral belief about their ability to exert influences of external factors of the students.

Table 8 – Distribution of Responses to General Teaching Efficacy Items, in Percentages

CEEBI Item	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly agree	Mean
4. Teachers are usually not responsible when a child becomes more courteous. (-)	16.1	71	12.9	0	0	1.97
5. When a student shows greater respect for others, it is usually because teachers have effectively modeled that trait. (+)	3.3	13.3	33.3	43.3	6.7	3.33
9. When students demonstrate diligence it is often because teachers have encouraged the students to persist with the task. (+)	0	3.2	9.7	77.4	9.7	3.94
10. Teachers who spend time encouraging students to be respectful of others will see little change in students' social interaction.(-)	12.9	54.8	6.5	19.4	6.5	2.56
12. If parents notice that their children are more responsible, it is likely that teachers have fostered this trait in school. (+)	0	0	45.2	54.8	0	3.53
13. Some students will not become more respectful even if they have had teachers who promote respect. (-)	0	9.7	32.3	51.6	6.5	3.55
15. If students are inconsiderate, it is often because teachers have not sufficiently modeled this trait. (-)	6.5	61.3	19.4	9.7	3.2	2.43
16. If responsibility is not encouraged in a child's home, teachers will have little success teaching this trait at school. (-)	10	56.7	20	10	3.3	3.56
18. When a student becomes more compassionate, it is usually because teachers have created caring classroom environments. (+)	0	3.2	16.1	80.6	0	3.76
20. Teaching students what honesty is results in students who are more honest.(+)	3.3	63.3	23.3	10	0	2.43
22. Teachers cannot be blamed for students who are dishonest. (-)	0	19.4	35.5	35.5	9.7	3.33
24. Teachers who encourage responsibility at school can influence students' level of responsibility outside of school. (+)	0	0	6.5	58.1	35.5	4.26

Note. CEEBI=Character Education Efficacy Belief Instrument. The item numbers represent the order the items were presented on the survey. To show consistency, the negative questions were not reverse –coded for the tabulation of frequencies.

The descriptive statistics of the PTE show that the mean for *elementary teachers* was 41.38 and the mean for *secondary teachers* was 41.29 with a possible maximum score of 60 and midpoint of 36. It can be said that both elementary and secondary teachers feel they feel confident (positive) in their personal teaching efficacy. The scores were lower on the GTE (general teaching efficacy) for both elementary and secondary teachers in this study. The mean of the GTE for elementary was 39.46 and 39.70 for secondary. The results show that there is little difference between the personal teaching efficacy and the general teaching efficacy of the elementary teachers and the secondary teachers.

One-way analyses of variance (ANOVAs) were conducted on the PTE and the GTE between elementary and secondary school teachers. The results show that there is no statistical difference in the elementary and secondary teachers personal teaching efficacy ($p =.886$) and their general teaching efficacy ($p=.822$).

The descriptive statistics for the *type of district* are almost identical to those of the elementary and secondary. The PTE (personal teaching efficacy) mean of urban teachers was 40.0, rural teachers was 41.88, and suburban teachers was 41.33. Comparing these scores to that of Milson and Mehlig's (2002) study it could said that these scores indicate a lower score but still a positive personal teaching efficacy. When looking at the GTE (general teaching efficacy) the mean of urban teachers was 39.90, rural teachers was 39.37 and suburban teachers was 39.50. Comparing these scores also to Milson and Mehlig (2002) it could be said

that these scores again were lower but still considered in the positive range for personal teaching efficacy. There was little difference in the scores of the three districts and this shows that their general teaching efficacy is lower than their personal teaching efficacy.

One-way analyses of variance (ANOVAs) were conducted on the PTE and GTE for the three different types of districts (urban, rural, and suburban). The PTE results show that $p=.484$ and GTE results show that $p= .923$. These results show that there is no statistical difference within the urban, rural and suburban districts.

In summary, the CEEBI measures the personal teaching efficacy (PTE) and the general teaching efficacy (GTE) scores of teachers. The analyses show that the teachers have a positive sense of personal teaching efficacy and a positive sense of general teaching efficacy. There is no difference in the scores of elementary versus secondary as well as no difference in urban, rural, or suburban districts.

Hypothesis Three: Graduates from West University's pre-service program will report using effective character education strategies in their current classrooms.

Hypothesis three was analyzed using a set of questions from the rating statements in the survey. The numbers of those questions were R8, R10, R11, R12, R14, R15, R16, R17, R18, R19, R20, and R21. The R is used to mean rating and to differentiate these items from the CEEBI question numbers. A factor analysis was run on the data but proved to be inconclusive as the sample size was too small. The researcher then did a basic content analysis looking for word frequencies as well as doing checks with two other professors, one on her committee. Neuendorf (2002) suggests that when human coders are used in content analysis, reliability translates to intercoder reliability or the correspondence among two or more coders.

While looking at the questions it was discovered that two subscales evolved. The subscales are entitled Social Climate/Relational and Pedagogy. Social Climate/Relational consists of R10, R11, R12, R14, R20 and R21. The subcategory Pedagogy consists of R8, R15, R16, R17, R18, and R19. See Table 9 for the specifics of each question for Social Climate/Relational and Table 10 for Pedagogy.

Table 9

Social Climate/Relational – Distribution of responses in percentages.

Question	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly agree
R10. I emphasize respectful, supportive relationships among students, teachers and parents.	0.0	0.0	0.0	39.3	60.7
R11. I communicate with each student personally each day.	0.0	17.9	7.1	46.4	28.6
R12. I appreciate and teach appreciation for all students' cultures and backgrounds.	0.0	0.0	3.6	35.7	60.7
R14. I provide opportunities for appropriate and safe expression of feelings.	0.0	0.0	10.7	46.4	42.9
R20. I emphasize the positive impact the group can have on the entire classroom setting.	0.0	0.0	7.1	53.6	39.3
R21. I encourage excitement and deep thinking within my classroom.	0.0	0.0	7.1	50.0	42.9

Table 10

Pedagogy

Question	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly agree
R8. I teach stand-alone Character Education lessons on a regular basis.	17.9	46.4	14.3	14.3	7.1
R15. I provide opportunities for respectful discussion of different viewpoints.	0.0	0.0	21.4	39.3	39.3
R16. I provide opportunities for student input into the curriculum.	3.6	7.1	7.1	67.9	14.3
R17. Value conflicts and ethical/moral dilemma discussions are discussed in lessons.	3.6	10.7	17.9	57.1	10.7
R18. I help students develop critical thinking skills.	0.0	0.0	3.6	67.9	28.6
R19. I provide cooperative learning activities within my classroom.	0.0	0.0	3.6	60.7	35.7

As stated previously, the only variables with an adequate distribution for meaningful analyses are teaching level (elementary and secondary) and type of district (urban, rural, and suburban). Looking at elementary and secondary first the mean for the overall scale of the total questions in Hypothesis three was 49.69 for elementary and 47.29 for secondary with a total possible maximum of 60. There is a trend for elementary teachers' scores to be higher than the secondary which shows that the elementary teachers report a more frequent use of effective character education strategies. When doing an ANOVA it shows that there is no statistical significance with p equals .191.

For the type of district and the overall score for Hypothesis three the mean was 48.50 for urban, 48.40 for rural, and 48.41 for suburban. This shows there is no difference amongst the means of the three districts. The ANOVA shows that there is no statistical difference with *p* equals .999.

The first subcategory mentioned was the *Social Climate/Relational* with questions R 10, R11, R12, R14, R20 and R21 being those included. The mean for elementary teachers was 26.53 and for secondary teachers it was 25.42 with a possible of 30. The elementary teachers scored slightly higher continuing the trend. Looking at the analysis of variance it shows that there again is no statistical difference with p equals .286. Continuing looking at this category within the type of district it was found that the mean for urban was 26.10; rural was 25.40 and 26.08 for suburban. There was a slight difference in the means with urban and suburban scoring higher. Yet again, there is no statistical difference within the ANOVA as *p* equals .880.

The second subcategory in Hypothesis three was *Pedagogy*. Looking again at the elementary and secondary teachers we see that the mean for elementary teachers was 23.15 and for secondary 21.85. This again supports the trend that elementary teachers scored higher showing that they feel more confident in their current use of character education strategies. However, the ANOVA shows again that there is no statistical difference with *p* equals .205. The type of district shows that the mean for urban was 22.40, rural was 23.00 and

suburban 22.33. Those teaching in rural districts scored higher than urban and suburban in *Pedagogy* which is different than their scores in *Social Climate/Relational*.   The trend continues with there being no statistical difference with *p* equals .893.

Hypothesis three was answered by looking at a select number of questions from the rating statements in the survey given to the participants. Two subcategories were made entitled Social Climate/Relational and Pedagogy. The data show that elementary teachers report using more relational strategies within their classroom and more specific character education pedagogy than that of secondary teachers. When looking at the rural, urban and suburban districts it was found that teachers of urban and suburban districts report more relational strategies with their students and climate in their classroom than those teachers of rural districts.   However, teachers in rural districts report more character education strategies than teachers in urban and suburban.

Hypothesis Four: Graduates from West University's pre-service program perceive that they are effectively impacting their students' character, citizenship and critical thinking skills.

Hypothesis four was answered by looking at the data from one single question in the rating statements questions section of the survey. The question asks: "My students' behavior and learning are positively impacted by my emphasis on citizenship and character."

Again, the sample size was small and there was no difference in other categories so the analysis was only done on the elementary and secondary teachers and those in the rural, urban and suburban districts. The overall mean for item 9 (R9) was 3.67. The mean for elementary teachers was 4.15 (maximum possible score of 5.00) and the mean for secondary was 3.21. The trend of elementary teachers scoring higher continues here as well. Elementary teachers feel they are impacting their students' behavior and learning more with their emphasis on citizenship and character than that of secondary teachers. An ANOVA was run and found that there is a statistical difference with *p* equals .012. Elementary teachers report that they are affecting their student's character, citizenship and critical thinking skills more positively than do secondary teachers.

Looking at the type of district, the mean of urban was 3.8 (5.0), 3.8 for rural and 3.5 for suburban. The difference is very slight between suburban and rural and urban. An ANOVA was run and there was no statistical difference with

p equals .756.

Quantitative Results Conclusion

As stated previously, a sequential explanatory design was used for this study. The quantitative data were gathered and analyzed first so the researcher could look for more specific patterns and themes from the survey before looking more closely into their thoughts about their current use of character education. There were some interesting findings in that both elementary and secondary teachers scored lower on the General Teaching Efficacy scale from the CEEBI than they did on the Personal Teaching Efficacy scale (which will be discussed more thoroughly in the subsequent chapter). There was a theme that elementary teachers report using more character education strategies in their current classrooms. Elementary teachers also state they are affecting their student's character, citizenship and critical thinking skills significantly more positively than do secondary teachers.

When discussing the open-ended questions, the participants felt that West University prepared them by teaching them the concepts of class meetings and cooperative learning. They felt that they were missing more ways of how to implement those and other character education strategies in their current curriculum. After finding these trends, questions were designed to gain more information from eight of the participants through the use of interviews. The data

from those interviews found themes and categories that show a more in depth story of the data found during this particular research.

Qualitative (Results)

Due to the low n of the sample it was hard to determine the general thoughts about the respondents' pre-service character education training. The researcher felt it was necessary to interview participants to help make gain a more accurate sense of the quantitative data and to aid in telling a story from the participants' viewpoint. The questions were designed after a basic analysis of the survey responses was done. The next section is an analysis of those interviews with the participants.

A grounded theory analysis begins with categories (Merriam, 2009). The process of determining the categories was taken through many steps before concluding the forthcoming categories. To facilitate the development of grounded theory, Corbin & Strauss (2007) advise doing phases of coding (i.e., open and axial). According to grounded theory data analysis, all interview data obtained from the interviews will be coded through open coding, "the interpretive process by which data are broken down analytically" (Corbin & Strauss, 1990, p. 12). The first step was to read through the interview data and begin looking for segments or sections of the data that might possibly answer the overall research question. As the interviews were read, the coding process began. The data were looked at with an open mind and a blank slate to begin the *open coding* process. The transcript

76

was read line by line and the naming of the elements of the data began. *Axial coding* or analytical coding was done next as the previous open codes were put into groups. Categories or "conceptual elements that cover or span many individual examples" (Merriam, p. 181) were designed to encapsulate the recurring themes across the interviews. Axial coding looks at the relationships and assists in establishing links between categories and sub-categories. As Corbin and Strauss state, "In axial coding, categories are related to their sub-categories, and the relationships are tested against data" (Corbin & Strauss, 1990, p. 13). In addition to looking at the relationships between sub-categories and categories during axial coding, researchers also continue to develop the categories. To gain insight into possible categories, notes were taken on sheets of paper by the researcher and then categorized manually. They were put together through a visual concept map and then moved around numerous times to represent the data given. The next step was to put the categories, properties and dimensions into an excel spreadsheet to see the analysis categorically. See Appendix B for code book.

Categories with Properties and Dimensions (narrative)

Each of the categories found will be discussed in thorough detail in the upcoming section. The categories have been given subcategories, properties and dimensions and each one of those is discussed below. There are also examples for each that supports the category that was found. The themes found were:

77

meaning of character education, training, and teacher as role model, implementation of character education, impact, continuing education, and overall university. A chart containing the categories, subcategories, properties, dimensions and examples can be found in Appendix B.

Meaning of Character Education

The first of the seven categories that I discovered could be considered the most foundational to this study. It was imperative to have a clear understanding of the interviewees' definitions of character education before there could be an understanding of their answers about character education. The label for this category is **Meaning of Character Education.**   A question was asked of the interviewees to describe their definition of character education. When using grounded theory, the researcher begins the analysis process from the first set of data collection. According to grounded theory analysis, data was analyzed using constant comparative method (Merriam, 2009). This means that information obtained was continuously looked at with the purpose of finding similarities and differences. Similar data was then grouped together and given a tentative name. In this category for example, a list was made of the many terms that were used when describing character education. For example, phrases like "teach them to be good citizens", "citizens in society", and "how to get along in society" were grouped together. They question was asked during the interview about the

interviewees perspective on the definition of character education. Due to this being a specific question, the label pre-existed and the phrases were designated to the pre-named category ("what is character education"). Looking for the patterns in the data, I continued to combine data identifying relationships between various data groupings. As more incidents came along like this one, I labeled them with the same name ("what is character education"). Such processes of comparison and naming similar phenomena the same way allowed me to construct preliminary concepts. The number of concepts grew as I continued the data analysis and similar concepts were grouped together to construct preliminary categories. Both concepts and categories were generated through the use of constant comparisons to emphasize similarities and differences between instances. In this particular category, I placed each of the notes on the relatable phrases in a list to compare and contrast the differences between items that might have fit the definition of character education (i.e., responsibility) and those items that did not fit the definition of character education as well (i.e., helping the teacher out). While doing axial coding, I looked at establishing links between the categories and subcategories. The categories were seen as tentative as more data was analyzed again, which developed more of the categories. As I looked through the data in this particular example I found that some of the words under this category were not necessarily fitting (i.e., role model, and integrity). As I removed some of these words or phrases, I viewed the relationships between the words and phrases that remained in the section and the category was formed which was then

entitled (definition of character education). To achieve the status of categories, I developed more abstract concepts and then identified properties and dimensions of each of the categories represented. This process was completed with exact same steps in the forthcoming categories and subcategories.

Within the category of definition of character education there were six subcategories found and named. The first subcategory is called *values*. The property or definition of this category is "discusses teaching good values to their students." On one end of the dimensions is that there is no discussion of values in their answer and the other end of the dimension is that the interviewee places a strong emphasis on values in their definition of character education. Three out of the eight people's responses pertained to values. One interviewee responded, "I think character education is teaching, maybe not necessarily morals, but good values" (B.J.). Another interviewee stated that character education included "knowing right from wrong" (B.O.).

A second subcategory within the Meaning of Character Education is that of *citizenship*. This can be described as being a good citizen in society. The dimensions were found to range from missing in their definition to placing a strong emphasis on citizenship in their definitions. Five of the eight respondents included citizenship in their definitions.   A few examples included, "it's almost like good citizenship in a way and how to get along in society" (B.J.), "be a contributing citizen in society" (S.K.) and "or teach them how to be a good citizen

in the world" (R.C.). A few of the other interviewees just stated the word

citizenship in their answers to the definition of character education.

Another subcategory is that of the *positive treatment of others*. The

property of this subcategory is that the interviewees discussed having the ability

to treat others with respect in regards again to the definition of character

education. To continue with the above subcategories this one also has the

dimensions of missing to having a strong emphasis. Five out of the eight

interviewees included a description of the positive treatment of others in their

definitions of character education. One example was from S.K., "…how to deal

with other people around them". Another person (S.C.) stated, "But how to

incorporate things like kindness, and um, fairness, and not cheating and things

like that". Other interviewees used the phrases being kind, being fair, and being

equal in their definitions.

A fourth subcategory in the Meaning of character education is that of

integrity. To give this a definition would be to say the individual discusses

standing up for kids, helping others out (like the teacher), and their every day way

of living. The dimensions again were no discussion of integrity to having a strong

emphasis on integrity. Three of the interviewees used the word integrity in their

definition but one made a descriptive statement regarding integrity; "Teaching

students to live with integrity, which I define as doing what is right even when it

is not popular or when no one is watching" (P.T.).

The fifth subcategory is *responsibility*. This can be described as the interviewee talks about the students' learning responsibility for their actions. Again the dimensions were no discussion of responsibility to having strong emphasis on responsibility in their definition of character education. Overall, four of the eight interviewees used the word responsible but S.K. used the phrase, "how to be responsible".

The last subcategory in the Meaning of character education category is that of *necessity*. This subcategory is described as having the need for character education in the school setting. The dimensions are that it is not important to it is absolutely important to have in the school setting or the school curriculum. Out of the eight interviewees, seven of them responded that character education was a necessity in an educational curriculum. One interviewee stated, "It might be more important than any content we teach in today's society" (P.T.). On the other end, R.C. stated, "I don't think like specific character traits are necessary to be taught. Um, but I think indirectly through school wide behavior expectations, and um, I think that is important for kids." All of the interviewees stated that it was important to some degree with only R.C. disagreeing that it was as important directly.

Training

The second major category was labeled as *Training.* This category deals with the training they specifically had at West University during their pre-service education. This category includes four subcategories: *amount, specific strategies, respect,* and *specific professors.* The subcategory of amount discusses the amount of training they had at West University. The dimensions are that they do not remember any training to having adequate training. Eight out of the eight respondents discussed the amount of training they received at West University. The answers to this question were spread across the entire dimension. One person stated, "I don't remember learning a whole lot" (B.J.) and another person stated, "I'm pretty sure they did not do anything". Another person specifically answered, "I would say I was adequately prepared to indirectly teach character education" (R.C.).

The second subcategory in Training was *specific strategies.* To describe, the property definition was the discussion of specific character education strategies used at West University in the pre-service training. The dimensions ranged from no specific strategies used to a class discussion on how to implement specific strategies in the curriculum. Six out of the eight interviewees stated that they felt they had adequate or somewhat adequate training in character education at West University. One person stated, "I remember having one class or one portion of a class talking about character education. Umm…they kinda did a

preview of what character education means and different character education programs that schools use, and then some of the traits that were highlighted within those programs, no, they weren't real specific you could say"(R.C.) On the opposite end one person said, "I had some classes where we actually taught using the strategies themselves. They would say this is cooperative learning and here is how you do that and we were taught that way" (S.C.). Another person stated, "I remember talking about the eleven pillars of character education and more about what they were. Of course, we learned about cooperative learning, I don't know if it was necessarily in the context of character education, or in the context of learning styles and teaching styles" (R.C.).

The third subcategory under Training is that of *respect*. The property of this subcategory describes whether or not a teacher was given strategies to gain students' respect or if it was an inherent trait. Seven of the eight interviewees discussed how they felt most of their idea of having good character and the ability to gain respect was something that was not taught to them and that they had in within themselves. They discussed how they did not feel that West University trained them to be more respectful or gain more respect from their students and that they were inherently given that trait of being respectful. However, they do feel that West University might have helped them see their inherent traits better and gain more knowledge on how to use them more efficiently. One person said, "I think it can enhance your teaching, but I definitely think there is that innate knowledge of how to teach respect" (R.C). Another person said, "I think it was

more about who I was and how that fits into my teaching" (T.B.). B.N. gave an example of a certain statement a professor made to her that influenced her thoughts about respect. "One of my professors said, 'if you can get, if you can make your lesson interesting and engaging, then you can win kids over and not have to worry so much about disciplining because they will show you respect, they will see how much you care and how much you love your subject, that you can engage them through that subject."

The final subcategory in Training is that of *specific classes/professors*. The description of this category is the discussion of the difference between the professors' implementation during their pre-service training. The dimensions ranged from no implementation to some implementation. The overall consensus of the interviewees was that there was an uneven discussion or training of character education in their courses. One person stated, "I would say there were some that were more apt to talk about it than others. I don't think I could say that we touched on it (character education) in all of the classes I took at West University" (S.C.). Another interviewee stated, "There were some that were very focused on um, their objectives and what they needed to get taught and I would even say that, um, the way they treated students was very different from some professors that you know had that, I guess they wanted to have that standard for how they taught our class and they wanted us to have that standard when we taught our own students" (R.C.).

Teacher as Role Model

Another main category was that of *Teacher as role model*. This was the idea that teachers are a role model to their students and have an impact on their students' character. There were three subcategories within this category: *influence, character,* and *expectations*. The subcategory of *influence* addressed the property of how the teacher can be a positive or negative influence on their students. The dimensions of this category ranged from teachers being a positive role model to being a negative role model. The discussion of being a role model was talked about in seven out of the eight interviewees responses. One example came from P.T.; "Sometimes I think it is hard for me to teach character and making decisions, when I know that some of my own choices are not good choices and are not good examples. I don't like being a hypocrite". Another person talked about how they do influence their students; "I affect them in my actions….just by living my life as a good example" (B.N.).

The second subcategory was *character*. The properties describe this to the discussion of how a teacher must have good character in order to impact their students' character with the range being from no need to show good character to a strong need to show good character. This was discussed in seven out of the eight interviews with a strong opinion with much emotion in their answers. One person stated, "If you are a good role model….and…let me just say this…if you yourself have good character then, if you are given the correct strategies than you can

teach character ed. I know some teachers who are not of exceptional character and it would be interesting to see them teach lessons on that, you know, I just don't know how that would really work" (B.J.). Some answers were less emotional but with just as much emphasis. "So just from personal experience by treating my kids with respect and expecting them to treat each other with respect" (R.C). Another interviewee stated, "….because it comes out of how you are respecting other people in the building and how you are a role model of respect".

The third and final subcategory was necessary in describing another way a teacher could be a role model. This subcategory was entitled *expectations*. The dimensions stated if a teacher has expectations for their students and the impact it can possibly have on the students. The dimensions are that they have low expectations to having high expectations for students as well as for themselves. Four out of the eight interviewees discussed expectations in indirect ways or in a small context of their answer. One person talked about the expectations that teachers have as well as whole school expectations. "You see, what happens is we feel like we don't have consistent expectations. We aren't consistent in our school wide guidelines, many not necessarily rules…" (T.B.). Another person discusses having expectations for students that differ depending on the students' abilities. "I am not labeling them and I am letting them show me what they can truly do as a student. I mean if they, they might not be able to do what the other students are doing, but I don't expect that from that student, not yet" (S.K.).

The fourth and final subcategory under Teacher as role model is that of *respect*. This subcategory was defined as another way to support the subcategory of character. The respect subcategory was given the property of if a teacher was given strategies to gain students' respect or if it was an inherent trait. Seven of the eight interviewees discussed how they felt most of their idea of having good character was something that was not taught to them and that they had in within themselves. They discussed how they did not feel that West University trained them to be more respectful or gain more respect from their students and that they were inherently given that trait. However, they do feel that West University might have helped them see their inherent traits better and gain more knowledge on how to use them more efficiently. One person said, "I think it can enhance your teaching, but I definitely think there is that innate knowledge of how to teach respect" (R.C). Another person said, "I think it was more about who I was and how that fits into my teaching" (T.B.). B.N. gave an example of a certain statement a professor made to her that influenced her thoughts about respect. "One of my professors said, 'if you can get, if you can make your lesson interesting and engaging, then you can win kids over and not have to worry so much about disciplining because they will show you respect, they will see how much you care and how much you love your subject, that you can engage them through that subject."

Implementation of character education

A fourth main category was entitled *Implementation of character education*. This category addressed the discussion of the teachers' current implementation of character education in their current classrooms. Within this category there were two subcategories found which are *time and strategies*. The subcategory of *time* was described as the amount of time teachers feel they have to do character education in their classrooms. The dimensions range from having no time within their curriculum to fitting in lessons in specific time ranges (beginning or end of school year). All but one of the interviewees stated that they feel their curriculum is quite full and they feel they do not have the time to implement character education into their daily routine. For example, "My curriculum is so compact and so I can't imagine squeezing it in. There is so much I have to do. I don't teach large group lessons on it (character education)". (B.J.) Another person stated, "I rarely actually ever do stand alone lessons. I think, you know, we are so content driven I feel like I have no freedom to necessarily do that" (T.B.). There were a couple that stated they do a short unit at the beginning of the year discussing how to be a team and work together. One person discussed doing a unit at the end of the year. "We do in the spring a unit on bullying. But on a regular basis, no. It's a thing we do in the spring after the MSP is over and the standardized testing is out of the way….let's be realistic" (S.C.).

The second subcategory was entitled *strategies*. This addressed the type

of strategies the teachers use in the current classrooms when they do have the time

to implement character education. Due to the nature of this subcategory there

were five properties given. The first property was inviting the school counselor

into the room for a lesson which ranges from absent to present. Two of the eight

people stated this was a strategy that they used in their current school. One

person stated, "I haven't personally taught a lesson, but we are lucky enough to

have school counselors that do. To teach, at least in the upper grades they teach a

couple lessons on bullying" (R.C.). This would be a connection to the fact they

felt they do not have the time to implement and allow the counselor to come into

their room to do a short lesson.

The second property of the category of strategies was using character traits

in classroom discussion which again ranges from absent to present. Three of the

eight interviewees discussed having the time to possibly have a short discussion

on character traits with their students. One person stated, ""We are going to learn

each character trait and we are going to do definitions..... So we did power points

on it, we did a whole unit that took us about two or three months. We taught the

other six grade students what these character traits were about. And then we let

them observe their classmates to see who they could nominate for the best

example of this character trait. So, at the end of the 2 1/2 months we had a big

presentation and we nominated one person from each class for each character trait

and there were 30 kids that got an award. You know, this person is respectful

because...and they had to put why, they couldn't just nominate their friends....they had to put the reason why" (S.K.).   The same person also stated, "We did a whole unit on it last year. When I taught that unit at the end they were able to nominate their peers and whoever was a good example of each character trait" (S.K.).

Another property or strategy was having an anti-bullying campaign which ranged from absent to present. Two of the eight of the interviewees stated their school principle might talk about it at the beginning of the year or at an assembly however, one person was very specific in their use of anti-bullying. "At my school we have started over the past two years getting into the Rachel's Challenge…..I think they are worldwide now..encouraging schools to adopt and promote positive behavior and acts of kindness" (S.C.).

Another strategy was teaching character through literature. This strategy captures the idea that teachers were teaching character traits through the different character traits of different personalities in literature. Two of the eight interviewees discussed using this strategy in their current classroom. One person stated, "If I am teaching them a book, I have them pick a character and I have them do like a group activity that shows how the main character is a good example of a character trait. So they can match up the character with the character trait. So, if a character in the book is being respectful than they pick

that character in the book to show how that character is a good example of respect or caring or any of the traits" (S.K.).

The last property or strategy is that of the three R's. The dimensions here again range from absent to present. Through non-directive language three out of the eight interviewees stated they used different aspects of the three R's (respect, responsibility, and the right thing). One person particularly stated, "We have something called the three R's. We'd go through this thing at the beginning of the year talking about like, you know, what does that look like. How you are suppose to treat other kids, how you are suppose to treat teachers, and what happens if you don't follow those rules" (B.N.).

Impact

The next main category found within the data was that of *Impact*. This category addressed the impact a teacher can have on the students and possibly what is impacted. There were two subcategories within this category. The first subcategory is the *ability to impact all students' character which is if teachers feel they are able to impact every student's character and the challenges they face*. The dimensions were from not all students are able to be impacted to every student can be influenced or impacted no matter the outside variables. The discussions about the impact of students' character were wide varied with seven out of the eight responding that they felt they could influence the students'

character. The answers were given quickly and with much emotion from the interviewees. Many of them expressed times when they thought they could reach someone and they didn't and times when everyone else was having difficulty reaching a student and they were more successful. There was also a range of how they felt they could impact every student and how they could not impact every student. One interviewee stated, "I don't think every background can be impacted. I don't think I am going to reach every child (B.J.). Another example, "That makes it very hard if they don't have support at home" (B.N.) On the opposite end, "I think you can influence most kids regardless of what is happening at home. There are a few kids who have already become completely apathetic and I do not have enough contact with them on a daily basis to have an impact on them. That is where coaching is beneficial in teaching character, because you spend so much extra time with your kids" (P.T.). Another interviewee stated, "I think so, because I think I can hopefully teach them kindness no matter what your environment is at home and this is what is expected of you in society overall or in a school setting or later on" (T.B.).

The second subcategory was *what about the students was impacted which discussed the different aspects of the student that might be impacted*. The dimensions ranged from social and behavior influences to cognitive influences. Not too many of the interviewees answered this question in the first round of interviews. They were all contacted again via email specifically asking them to describe how they felt they might have impacted or continue to impact their

students with only four responding focusing on the social and behavioral as well as the cognitive influences. One person stated, "I see some changes in their critical thinking as far as considering the consequences of their actions as well as some shifts in the behavior resulting in improvements in their citizenship and personal integrity" (S.C.) . Another person stated, "I think that the integrated character education teaching I do affects my students as citizens as well as critical thinkers. I focus heavily on our classroom community and how we are all connected. I often appeal to them as citizens of our classroom when modification of behaviors is needed and my end goal is for them to think before they act in order to consider the way their actions affect the classroom as a whole and specifically students around them" (T.B.).

Continuing Education

The next main category was *Continuing Education*. This category addressed the responses to whether or not the interviewees were participating in continuing education that focused on character education. Within this category there were two subcategories which were *participation and desire*. The first subcategory, *participation*, discussed if the current teachers were attending any character education workshops, training, reading books, etc. The dimensions ranged from participating in no continuing education to reading an article or book pertaining to character education. The overall consensus from all interviewees

was that they were not participating in any formal character education training at the moment with all eight of the interviewees responding that they did not attend any conferences. One person stated, "I have never seen anything, honestly, in our district that has stuff like that. Most of the stuff is, um, regarding workshops on mostly technology and stuff like that" (B.N.). There were instances of reading a book or an article pertaining to character education. One person stated, "Our principal does occasionally send out, okay quite often she sends out links to education articles, so if anything has character education contained, when I get a chance, I read it" (T.B.). One person talked about a book they read last year, "And then our school last year did a book study on a book called *Teach Like a Champion*" (S.C.).

The second subcategory in Continuing Education was *desire*. This subcategory addressed the teachers (interviewees) having the desire to attend workshops, training, etc. focused on character education. The dimensions ranged from not having the desire to having the desire to attend if it was available to them. Again, all eight of the interviewees' response contained a desire to gain a stronger knowledge of character education. One person stated, "I would go to character education workshops if that was something the district really believed would help me become a better teacher, and would truly help the students in this district" (P.T.). Another person stated, "Workshops…I think we would, if we had that opportunity" (T.B.). One person indirectly talked about continuing education in the way that districts and teachers dealt with character education. "It's like

maybe if we actually kinda talked about this stuff maybe we could actually get our test scores up and that thing. We can't really reach kids if they are having, you know, psychological issues. It's not going to work." (B.N.)

Overall University

The seventh and final main category was *Overall University*. This category described the discussion on the type of university the interviewees attended and the community within that university. The first subcategory was called *type*. This was described by the overall focus of the entire university with the dimensions having no Christian affiliation to having a Christian affiliation. Three of the interviewees discussed that the type of university they attended had an impact on how they were influenced by their pre-service training and the type of teacher they have become. One person made mention that they were taught basic positive character because West University is "a private Christian college" (T.B.). Another person stated, "….for West kinda being associated with um, Presbyterianism and that sort of thing and Christianity…" (B.N.). The context of these statements again was that they had the influence on character because of the overall focus of the university of which they attended.

The second subcategory was *community*. This focused on the setting of the community and its expectations for the students at West University. The dimensions ranged from within the School of Education to the entire West

University. Four of the eight interviewees responded that within both the School

of Education and the entire community at West University there was a sense of

community. They did service learning projects together and were trained in

cohorts that gained a sense of community through projects, etc. In regards to the

entire West University one person stated, "We had a whole day school wide

where we just do community service" (T.B.). In regards to the School of

Education, "Service learning was a part of the education community. There was a

yearly event called the writing rally where people volunteered their time, and we

had a reading night, where we, like our school we student taught in, would come

and we would read to them" (T.B.). Again, most interviewees stressed they felt a

sense of community within their pre-service education not only within the School

of Education but also within West University overall. Another person stated, "I

think that West has a philosophy in education that is all about the kids….what the

kids need. You know we did a couple of classes where we talked about

integrating cultural practices in what you taught. Everyone's culture practices

when you taught the lesson. It was something where you alienated one culture

they wanted us to do inclusion in everything we taught. Also, different religions

and different cultures" (S.K.).

Objective Data

When looking at the objective data there was found a strong implementation of character education. There is a checklist of character education principles that the College of Education has according to each of the courses that are taught. The checklist includes: core ethical values; character as thinking, feeling, and behaving; proactive approach; caring community; moral action; challenging curriculum; self-motivation; moral community for staff; support for character education; family as partners; and evaluates character. Each course is listed along with a check mark showing which course implements or has characteristics of the above mentioned character education principles. West University also utilizes an evaluation form to be completed before the student can graduate from West University. The form asks about the performance of the essential character attributes (student interaction-caring; reliable and consistent-responsibility; human interaction-respect; presentation of self-citizenship; knowledge about subject matter-diligence; passion for teaching-trustworthiness; initiative-integrity; accept and apply feedback-fairness; communication skills-honesty).

One syllabus from a Children's Literature and Language Literacy course showed they "discuss using children's books as a vehicle for teaching values, character traits, and attitudes". Another section of the syllabus states, "Classroom assignments are designed to assist the student in developing thoughtful strategies

for the selection and utilization of children's literature in order to help children understand their world, their own values and beliefs; to consider the implementation of values in their own lives; and to instill a sense of endless possibilities for the future."

A syllabus from a course about assessment in the secondary classroom states, "you will learn the importance of compassion and honesty in assessment decisions (faith and values: relationship to others)." The syllabus states that the course will focus on implementing the focus of "Educators of Mind and Heart". Finally, under the course description the syllabus states, "Candidates will study academic dishonesty including ways to establish a climate that encourage honesty from their students; discernment and decision making regarding breaches of honesty; and strategies for dealing with dishonesty in their classrooms." (To keep anonymity the researcher did not cite the above quotes.)

The researcher was also given information regarding West University's conceptual framework for their College of Education. The mission of the School of Education is to "prepare educators of mind and heart who are scholars, community members, guardians, visionary leaders, and effective practitioners." Another statement within the conceptual framework that is important to this study was, "Educators are encouraged to become transformational servant leaders, acting as advocates and guardians for students as members of learning communities".

The objective data also showed the university did mid-year and end of year evaluations of the implementation character education in their pre-service program. The evaluations illustrated that some parts of their implementation occurred just as they had envisioned and others took different twists and turns. Another report explained the need and success of implementing character education into more faculties' syllabi. Other report findings were they focused on using common character education language and vocabulary and becoming even more intentional about infusing and discussing issues of character in their pre-service training.

Conclusion

Having looked at both the quantitative and the qualitative data it has been found that there were some significant findings yet most of the hypotheses were rejected. It was found regarding Hypothesis One *(Graduates from West University's pre-service program perceive their pre-service character education as being effective for them as character educators)* that elementary teachers felt they were more prepared to integrate character education into their classroom management and content instruction compared to secondary teachers. Teachers in rural districts reported they felt less prepared to know how to integrate issues of character education into their classroom management and content instruction. Overall, the scores revealed that teachers felt they were prepared on an average

level. The open ended questions discussed in the survey part of the research supported these findings. The teachers stated that professors taught them how to integrate character education into their curriculum instruction. They also discussed that professors demonstrated good role modeling to them which was supported in the qualitative data findings. The data led to a category entitled teacher as role model and found that the teachers perceive that it is important to be a good role model. It was also found that those interviewed perceived their professors to be good role models to them which was supported through the category of training. Another open ended question discussed character education strategies. The strategies discussed in the short answers on the survey stated class meetings and cooperative learning. These were two strategies that were also discussed in the qualitative interviews. In the final open ended question participants answered they felt they were not prepared on how to find the time to implement strategies within their current curriculum. This theme was also found within the qualitative data. The lack of time to implement character education was discussed repeatedly in the interviews with only one person not making mention of it in the interview.

Hypothesis two *(Graduates from West University's pre-service program feel competent to implement character education)* was tested using the CEEBI. The mean composite scores were positive (above midpoint of 36) for the Personal Teaching Efficacy scale (PTE) and positive for the General Teaching Efficacy scale (GTE) with the PTE score being higher than the GTE score. It was found

that teachers have more confidence in their own abilities in character education and less confidence in their abilities to influence the students' outside factors such as their family background and home environment. They have confidence to teach issues of right or wrong, good role modeling, and to use character education strategies to positively develop students' character. However the qualitative data brought about another perspective. Those interviewed did not feel confident in their abilities to implement character education within a full curriculum. They stated that having this knowledge was a missing piece of their training at West University.

Within the data of Hypothesis three *(Graduates from West University pre-service program report using effective character education strategies in their current classrooms)* it was found that elementary teachers report using more character education strategies than do secondary teachers. Elementary teachers also scored higher on the social climate/relational subcategory as well as within pedagogy; which again shows they report having more confidence in their ability to use character education strategies. The qualitative data shows that the respondents are using some character education strategies within their curriculum. The strategies discussed ranged from asking a counselor to come in and give a lesson to discussing character traits in their classroom, to implementing an anti-bullying campaign within their school, to discussing and implementing the three R's and to teach character through literature. The overall theme was that these strategies were used sparingly and not on a regular basis in their classrooms.

Finally, when looking at Hypothesis four *(Graduates from West University pre-service program perceive that they are effectively impacting their students' character, citizenship and critical thinking skills)* it was found that elementary teachers feel they are impacting their students' behavior and learning more with their emphasis on citizenship and character than that of secondary teachers. According to the qualitative data one of the themes portrayed teachers feel they are able to have an impact on most students' character but not all. It was shown (in the interview samples) that the teachers feel the need to have the support at home yet students are not unreachable if they don't have that home support system. It was also found that the teachers see changes in the students' critical thinking such as the differences in the students' choices after considering the consequences. The respondents feel they impact their students' citizenship skills and their behavior.

The next chapter will discuss what these results mean to the study and compare them with other research as well as make recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER FOUR

Discussion

The overall research question that guided this study was: Does the character education initiative at West University's undergraduate pre-service program have an impact on its teacher education graduates' current classroom practices? From this question, four hypotheses were developed. Each of these hypotheses will be discussed in the subsequent sections.

Hypothesis One: Graduates from West University's pre-service program perceive their pre-service character education as being effective for them as character educators.

Hypothesis one was not supported mainly because there was not enough data as well as there was no comparison group. There was a considerable difference between the quantitative data and the qualitative data. The quantitative data displayed the teachers' sense of being effective for them as character educators as adequate. However, when looking at the qualitative data, their answers were quite different.

According to the quantitative data the participants felt adequately trained to teach character education. They also reported that they felt prepared to use

character education in their classroom management. However, they felt less

trained to integrate character education into their classroom instruction.

When looking at the qualitative data it was found that there was a different

picture of the pre-service character education training the participants in the

interview study had received. The open-ended questions at the end of the survey

uncovered that the graduates learned about class meetings and cooperative

learning but felt they were missing more practical application efforts and more

detailed ways to implement the strategies they were given. The interview

responses said anything from "I don't remember anything" to "I would say I was

adequately trained in character education". The responses were focused more on

the fact that they did not remember any specific character education training. It

could be said that the year of graduation and the track and types of classes taken

made a difference in their responses. Each year the implementation strategies and

amount could have been different which caused each of the students to gain a

different level of training in character education. These responses give the

opposite impression than the responses from the survey. In the survey more than

half responded that they did feel prepared but only 25% of those interviewed felt

they had any training at all. Only one interviewee actually stated that they were

"adequately prepared." These findings should be compared with the responses

about the meaning of character education. Most of the respondents did not have a

clear definition and had to be probed for more specific answers regarding this

definition. When the interviewer asked them what specific strategies they were

given they reported "none." However, when they were given examples to probe the responses were often that they did not realize that strategy was character education. Perhaps the teachers while in their training were not given specific directions as to what strategies were specifically character education strategies. This could have caused the lack of knowledge of specific character education strategies. It should be stated here again that there were only eight interview responses obtained which could affect the differences in the responses.

It could be said that there was a disconnection between the planned implementation of character education and the actual implementation of character education. The participants did not know a clear definition and did not feel as if they were given the tools to implement specific strategies within their current classrooms. It is possible that the entire faculty was not knowledgeable in character education and the expectations were not equivalent across the coursework. To teach character education, one has to be trained in character education and this might be the missing link in the success of the training at West University.

Hypothesis Two: Graduates from West University pre-service program

feel competent to implement character education.

The overall picture shows that the hypothesis cannot be supported because

of the differences between the quantitative and the qualitative data. The

quantitative data provide evidence that the teachers in this study do feel

competent to implement character education. However, the qualitative data

portray a different picture.   The qualitative data show there is a level of feeling

inadequate because of time limits within the classroom schedule.

The responses for the CEEBI indicate positive levels of personal teaching

efficacy (PTE) and positive levels in the General Teaching Efficacy (GTE).

However, when looking at the absolute values of the scores we see a difference

(PTE = 48.50 and GTE=45.34) It is interesting to note the difference in scores of

the Personal Teaching Efficacy (PTE) and the General Teaching Efficacy (GTE)

scales. It was found that the teachers in this study have more confidence in their

own abilities in character education and less confidence in their abilities to

influence the students' outside factors such as their family background and home

environment. They have confidence to teach issues of right or wrong, good role

modeling, and to use character education strategies to positively develop students'

character. Again, we see a slight difference or new thought within the qualitative

data. The data show there is a level of feeling inadequate because of time limits

within the classroom schedule.

The items on the GTE scale scored lower and it can be concluded that teachers doubt the abilities of teachers in general to have an overall impact on students' character but do not necessarily doubt themselves as individuals. However, the teachers conveyed average or neutral efficacy on item 14 of the PTE scale, "When I have a student who lies regularly, I can usually convince him/her to stop lying to me". 64.5% responded that they were uncertain about this particular question. This suggests that teachers doubt their own ability and that of teachers in general to positively change the character in some but not all students. It can also suggest that teachers lack confidence in being able to change students' character that is in need of a positive change. Another question that backs up this suggestion is item 21, "I sometimes don't know what to do to help students become more compassionate". This finding may not be surprising in that teachers do not always feel they can reach every student and can get frustrated when a student does not want to better themselves or make more positive choices.

It should be mentioned that there was a small and non-significant difference between the elementary and secondary teachers when comparing their Personal Teaching Efficacy (PTE) and their General Teaching Efficacy (GTE). The elementary teachers scored higher than secondary teachers on both the PTE and the GTE. When looking at the type of district it was found that again there was no statistical difference. The limited research using the CEEBI supports these conclusions. Milson and Mehlig (2002) found higher character education

teaching efficacy using the CEEBI in elementary teachers than in that of secondary teachers.

As stated previously, the teachers lack confidence in their ability to control the amount of time they are given to implement character education. This theme could be an answer as to why the teachers do not have a complete sense of competency in certain areas of character education. The qualitative data materialized a category about this implementation of character education. The respondents felt they were not given much time in their curriculum to do character education. One respondent stated, "My curriculum is so compact and so I can't imagine squeezing it in" (B.J). The overall theme was not that they did not feel confident in their ability to integrate character education but that they were overwhelmed with the current curriculum and lacked the confidence to figure out ways to implement character education into their current curriculum. There were no responses about not feeling confident and many responses about not having the time to implement character education. This raises some interesting questions. Do teachers truly have the confidence in implementing character education? Are they overwhelmed to the point of not being able to see fitting anything else into their curriculum or just specifically character education? Do they feel confident in their abilities (PTE) and not the overall ability (GTE) of teachers because of this feeling of not having the time? We know that they do feel confident in their abilities to affect the character of students as shown in the quantitative data but what we do not know is the lack of confidence in the overall ability due to their

feelings of having a lack of time in their compact teaching schedules. We might

conclude that the feelings of being overwhelmed and not having the time could

have an impact on their general teaching efficacy and their ability to reach all

students' character. We could also conclude that the neutral or average scores in

the GTE mean that teachers are being realistic in knowing that it is not possible to

reach all students in all situations even though they would like to have that ability.

Hypothesis Three: Graduates from West University's pre-service

program will report using effective character education strategies in their

current classrooms.

The hypothesis cannot be fully supported because there was no

comparison group. However, the data did show that teachers are currently using

character education strategies in their classroom. Furthermore, they are mainly

using character education strategies in a non-directive way.

There were two subscales formed from the data: Social Climate/Relational

and Pedagogy. Teachers in this study scored high percentages on the Social

Climate/Relational scale with all of the items within the "agree or strongly agree"

category (mean=25.97/30). This shows that teachers in this study are using strong

social climate/relational strategies within their classrooms. The subcategory of

Pedagogy did not score as high (mean=22.50/30). For example, item R8 ("I teach

stand-alone Character Education lessons on a regular basis") had 17.9% strongly

disagree and 46.4% disagree. This shows that teachers in this study are not implementing more focused and directive character education strategies within their classroom.

According to the qualitative data, the interviewees stated they do use character education strategies but not with intentionality. The qualitative data show that the respondents are using some character education strategies within their curriculum. Some teachers ask a counselor to come in and give a lesson; some discuss character education traits in their classroom; a few execute and complete an anti-bullying campaign within their school; some teachers discuss and implement the three R's, and a couple teach character through literature. However, the overall theme was that these strategies are used sparingly and not on a regular basis in their classroom. It can be concluded that teachers state they use the character education strategies but when asked specific questions about those strategies they reveal that they do not use them as much as they thought they did. It should be mentioned again that the low number of interviews completed did not give an exhaustive look into more specific character education strategies currently being used by those in this study.

When looking at specific numbers within the quantitative data, a trend was discovered that elementary teachers' scores were higher than secondary teachers' scores which show that the elementary teachers report a more frequent use of effective character education strategies; however, there was no statistical

significance. According to the data, elementary teachers use more relational strategies within their classroom and more specific character education pedagogy than do secondary teachers. When looking at the rural, urban and suburban districts it was found that teachers of urban and suburban districts use more relational strategies with their students and focus more on the climate in their classroom than teachers in rural districts.   However, teachers in rural districts use more specific character education strategies than teachers in urban and suburban districts.

Hypothesis Four: Graduates from West University's pre-service program perceive that they are effectively impacting their students' character, citizenship and critical thinking skills.

The hypothesis could not be fully supported mainly because there was no comparison group. However, when looking at the absolute scores we see that teachers do feel they are impacting their students' character, citizenship and critical thinking skills. Being a good role model to their students was found to be of importance to the teachers in this study. The qualitative data show that these teachers are aware of their limited abilities to affect all students.

The item in the survey stated, "My students' behavior and learning are positively impacted by my emphasis on citizenship and character." The mean of this question was 3.67 out of a possible 5. It could be said that teachers in this

study feel that they are in the average range of feeling that they are positively

impacting their students' behavior and learning because of their emphasis on

citizenship and character.   According to the qualitative data, the themes are the

teachers feel they are able to impact some but not all of their students' character.

It was shown that the teachers feel the need to have the support at home; yet

students are not unreachable if they don't have that home support system. It was

also discovered that the teachers see changes in critical thinking such as the

changes in the students' choices after considering consequences. The respondents

feel they impact their students' citizenship skills and their behavior. For example

one interviewee stated the following, "I see some changes in their critical thinking

as far as considering the consequences of their actions as well as some shifts in

the behavior resulting in improvements in their citizenship and personal integrity"

(S.C.).

It should also be noted the teachers in this study report that being a

positive role model impacts their students' character. The interviewees discussed

the idea that a teacher is a role model to his/her students and that this positive role

modeling does impact their students' character. One interviewee stated, "I affect

them in my actions….just by living my life as a good example" (B.N.). Within

this theme was the idea that teachers need to have good character to impact their

students' character. There were many examples of this discussion but one in

particular stated, "If you are a good role model….and…..and let me just say

this…if you yourself have good character then, if you are given the correct

strategies then you can teach character education" (B.J.). It should also be mentioned that the interviewees discussed the importance of having high expectations of their students in order to have a positive influence on their students' character. It is obvious within these data that the teachers within this study felt that being a positive role model and having high expectations is an important factor in the influence of their students' character.

An interesting conclusion within the questions of the survey that focused on the impact of character, citizenship and critical thinking skills, was that elementary teachers scored higher than secondary teachers. The trend of elementary teachers scoring higher in the area of character education was continued. Elementary teachers feel they are impacting their students' behavior and learning more with their emphasis on citizenship and character than that of secondary teachers**.** This was the only significant finding when looking at the quantitative data.

Report of Additional Findings

The qualitative data exhibited more findings that were not relevant to the above hypotheses. One finding was regarding the topic of respect. Interviewees described in their discussions about how they felt they were inherently given traits to better gain students' respect. They also discussed how they did not receive

114

those traits in their pre-service preparation.   These traits were something that came to their pre-service training with and did not learn them after they had the training. However, they did state that they felt West University might have helped to develop those traits and aided them in gaining more knowledge on how to use those traits more efficiently.

A question was asked of the interviewees whether or not they participated in any continuing education that focused on character education. The overall response was that these teachers were not participating in any continuing education on character education. However, one person stated that they were reading a book entitled *Teach like a Champion.* Even though the interviewees were not currently involved in any continuing education they did have a strong desire to attend workshops or have some sort of current training in character education.   Most of them discussed the idea that their district did not enforce character education training but focused on other training which did not give them the time to do continuing education in character education. It could be said that these teachers would like to be learning more about character education but they are not given the opportunities or the time.

The last finding is about West University overall. The interviewees made mention of the fact that West University was a "private Christian college" (T.B.). They felt that they were impacted because of the focus of the university regarding character. They discussed how the university had a focus to influence their

students in positive ways. In the information section of the West University's website it states, "West (pseudonym) has held fast to its founding mission of providing 'an education of mind and heart' through rigorous intellectual inquiry guided by dedicated Christian scholars." The mission of the school of education states, "The mission of the school of education is to prepare educators of mind and heart who are scholars, community members, effective practitioners, visionary leaders, and guardians". A direct relationship seems to exist between the focus of the university and the interviewees' statements about the influence of the university. Because of the above mentioned focus of the university the interviewees also discussed how they felt a sense of community while attending West University. They discussed doing service projects and volunteering in local schools as well as having students come to the university for reading nights. Emphasis was also placed on the idea that the interviewees felt a sense of community within the school of education as well as the university as a whole. This raises the following question: Did the teachers who reported they had adequate training in character education feel it was because of the overall focus and intentions of the university?   Were the graduates impacted on their outlook of students because of the way they were treated while in their pre-service training (assuming all professors utilized the goal of the university)?

Limitations

There were several limitations beyond the design limitations discussed in Chapter two; however the researcher took every measure to minimize the effects of these limitations on the study. The researcher recognized the following limitations:

1) There was no comparison group for this study. The data were only collected from one University within the given criterion and was not compared with a group of similar criterion. A control group design strives to keep the conditions and influential factors identical except the experimental group is exposed to the experimental treatment. If outside variables or natural developmental trends have brought about changes they should be reflected in the scores of the control group as well. Thus, the change of the experimental group that is beyond the change in the control group can be attributed to the experimental treatment. Without a control group or a longitudinal design it is difficult to discern cause and affect relationships.

2) There was a low response rate from this study with only 30% responding. The total respondents were 30 for the survey response and 8 interviews. Due to the low response rate the results cannot be generalized to this population of 104 graduates from West University. Although no rules govern an acceptable response rate,

it is clear that higher is better (Dennis, 2003). The larger the response rate the greater the ability to generalize to a particular population.

3) The university participating in the study was located in the Northern states and the researcher was located in Missouri. The researcher could not gain the best contact with the respondents and did not have any connection with the University being studied. Gall, et al (2007) states that you need to build a positive relationship with the members of your site from which the participants will be selected. Being in two different states made this difficult and in return hindered the amount of responses. (See remarks on transferability beginning on page 18.)   It should be noted the cooperation of the faculty at West University was very positive and the willingness to help was extraordinary.

4) This study was limited by the validity and reliability of the instruments used. The Character Education Efficacy Belief Instrument (CEEBI) has been previously validated and tested for reliability. (See Chapter two for full results.) The Checklist for an Ethical Classroom does not have a particular scoring and the questions designed from a previous questionnaire done at West University do not have a particular scoring either. The complete results of validity and reliability testing for the Character

Education Efficacy Belief Instrument (CEEBI) and the Checklist for an Ethical Classroom Version 2 – CEC 2, as well as the qualitative questions are provided in Chapter 2 of this study.

5) The study was limited to only graduates from West University that were currently within their first five years of teaching that were able to be contacted. It was also limited by the number of graduates West University could locate initially and then how many graduates the researcher could finally locate with the correct contact information which was a limited number of 104.

6) The interviews were done via telephone, email and Skype. The email contacts were hindered by the inability to do an emotional interpretation. The phone interviews lacked eye contact as well as only the interpretation of the voice inflections. The interviews done through Skype potentially had eye contact and emotional interpretation although the eye contact and emotional interpretation was less than a face-to-face interview. The methods used for interviews lacked the ability to perceive most if not all emotional content and because of this, the researcher might have missed some data content.

7) Due to confidentiality regulations given in the IRB process, I could not compare answers of those interviewed with their survey answers. The interview respondents were eight participants that

stated on an anonymous survey that they would be willing to be interviewed. That contact information was in no way connected to their survey responses. The researcher might have been able to compare the interviewees' responses with their survey responses if anonymity was not a requirement in this research. Having the comparisons might have given more insight into why there was a discrepancy between the quantitative results and the qualitative results.

Trustworthiness

The researcher secured approval for conducting the research from the Institutional Review Board of the University of Missouri-St. Louis. This study did not have any hidden agendas, and the results of the study relied on the willingness of each participant to be honest and forthright when reporting. Participants were assured they need only share information they felt comfortable sharing and all information would be kept confidential. In addition, participants were allowed to withdraw from the study at any time. A thorough explanation of the purpose of the study was given to all participants. Every effort was made to protect the participants' anonymity. All survey instruments were distributed in closed envelopes and returned in sealed envelopes. The survey instruments were also

distributed via email with a link from Survey Monkey, assuring anonymity. Any concerns about possible repercussions were eliminated by the complete anonymity of all respondents and by examining surveys in groups. Results were presented in a summative format to further reduce any possibility of participants' identification or retribution.

The interviews were done via technology and recorded with a digital recorder. The respondents in this study were willing participants who spoke with candor, their responses indicative of personal reflection and critical thinking. However, the two interviews done via email did not provide as efficient and thorough responses as those done via phone and Skype.

Merriam (2009) describes the strategies that a researcher can use to ensure consistency. A few if those strategies (triangulation, member checks, peer review and an audit trail) were used in this research. Triangulation was done through the use of multiple methods and multiple sources of data. In cases of missing information the researcher contacted the interviewees again to check for the correctness and to make a complete picture. The follow-up interviews were conducted with a different method than the original interview method (i.e. Skype-email).

A second common strategy for guaranteeing validity in qualitative research is the use of member checks. "This is the single most important way of ruling out the possibility of misinterpreting the meaning of what participants say and do and the perspective they have on what is going on, as well as being an

important way of identifying your own biases and misunderstandings of what you observed" (Maxwell as cited in Merriam, 2009). After the preliminary analysis the researcher took some of the findings back to the participants asking if they felt it was a true description. I was looking for their opinion on my perceptions of the data. The overall consensus was that my perceptions of their responses were accurate.

Another strategy used was peer reviews. The data were taken to members of the committee on this dissertation to be looked over and discussed. I asked the reviewers about their opinions of my findings and if my perceptions were correct. I also asked a person not on my committee to look over my comments on the findings to see if they hold true to the raw data.

The final strategy used to ensure credibility was that of an audit trail (Merriam, 2009). It has been described in Chapter two how the data was collected. The development of the categories was described clearly in Chapter three as well as the decision processes throughout the study. The researcher kept a journal and memos on each process of this study as it was being completed. As each piece of the data was being analyzed the researcher kept a consistent notation or memo of each interaction with the data.

Transferability

From a qualitative perspective it is important to discuss the issue of transferability. Transferability is a process performed by *readers* of research. "Transferability refers to the generalizability of results from one specific sending context in a qualitative study to another specific receiving context" (Creswell & Clark, 2008, p 225). Random sampling was not useful in this research which makes the samples not statistically representative of a population. This is the case in most qualitative research and therefore generalizability cannot be established. In most qualitative research, the sample population is not statistically representative of a population. Therefore generalizability cannot be established. Morgan (2007) explains that, "we cannot simply assume that our methods and our approach to research makes our results either context-bound or generalizable; instead, we need to investigate the factors that affect whether the knowledge we gain can be transferred to other settings" (p. 60). Due to the nature of this being from a specific university with a certain focus it can be said that the factors might be difficult for the researcher to transfer to other settings. However, it might not be impossible as stated by David Morgan (2007):

> I do not believe it is possible for research results to be either so unique that they have no implications whatsoever for other actors or other settings or so generalized that they apply in every possible historical and cultural setting (p. 60).

One of the most universal ways to understand generalizability in qualitative research is looking at the way the reader sees the study.   Reader generalizability requires "leaving the extent to which a study's findings apply to other situations up to the people in those situations" (Merriam, 2009, p. 236). The reader decides how the findings of the study related to their particular situation. Merriam (2009) says, "the researcher has an obligation to provide enough detailed description o f the study's context to enable readers to compare the 'fit' with their situations".

This researcher provided adequate descriptive data trying to make transferability more probable. This study looked at a religious affiliated university in a northwestern state that maintains a College of Education. West University not only has a religious affiliation, but its foundations are grounded in those religious beliefs. The religious values and beliefs are imbedded throughout the university as well as the College of Education curriculum. This type of university is not wide spread and this limits generalization. The College of Education affirms they introduced character education into their teacher training program. There was an overlap between the teachers' perceptions as reported in the survey and as reported in the interviews. The level of implementation was described through the objective data given to the researcher from the University. However, it should be noted that the objective information received from West University was too incomplete to accurately paint a rich picture.

Descriptions were used in this study to convert interviews into coherent, comprehensive, and detailed accounts of the teachers in this study's perceptions. These descriptions are purposed to allow the reader to make his/her own decisions regarding transferability. Due to the detail included in this report, the reader is able to apply the information to other settings and situations thus deciding on the external validity of findings.

Conclusion of Findings

This study had a very small prospective sample which in turn gave a low response rate. Due to this limitation it was difficult to see any significant findings in the data. It would have been interesting to see the difference in the analysis between the amount of years teaching and the graduation year, however the response rate was so low that it was not possible. These results could have proven to be significant in the graduates' confidence of teaching character education and the training they received. The perceptions of the character education training of those in this study were quite different between the quantitative and the qualitative data.

When looking at the quantitative data and the qualitative data overall it was found that there was a difference between the feelings of the participants.

The quantitative data showed that the participants felt they were prepared to teach character education. However, the qualitative data showed that the participants did not feel as prepared to implement character education in their current teaching curriculum. Only eight interviewees were part of the qualitative data. This partial sample was most likely not representative to the entire sample that completed the survey.   It should also be mentioned that their answers in the survey could have been marked low on their surveys as well as their interviews. As was stated before, confidentiality did not allow for the researcher to compare the participants' survey answers with their interview answers.

The definitions of character education varied yet had some similarities. This finding parallels the fact that researchers and theorists in character education do not agree on a definition of character education (Arthur, 2008; Berkowitz, 1998; Berkowitz & Bier, 2005; Colby, 2008; Lickona, 2004). The words depicted in the current study's findings (values, citizenship, positive treatment of others, and responsibility) do occur in definitions from other sources described in the literature review. Some of those sources use words such as: "core, ethical and performance values such as caring, honesty, diligence, fairness, fortitude, responsibility, and respect for self and others" (http://www.character.org/frequentlyaskedquestionsaboutcharactereducation) and "teaching children about basic human values, including honesty, kindness, generosity, courage, freedom, equality, and respect" (The Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development -ASCD).

The pre-service training of the teachers in this study shows that they have different experiences in their training. The interviews show that there is a wide spectrum of feelings on their experiences within their training. One person stated they were adamant that they did not receive any character education training and many others stated they do not remember talking much about character education. However, there were those that responded that they remember having conversations about character education programs and the pillars of character education. If there were more participants there might have been a significance difference between the years since graduation. For example, two interviewees that stated they had character education training graduated in the year 2006. According to a professional at West University, the character education program was stronger in the beginning years which would have been 2005-2006 (retrieved via phone December 2011). She also stated this difference was because of changes within the administration of the university. It was also found that the graduates felt some professors chose to implement character education in their courses more than others. This could be a reason for the wide range of feelings about the teachers' pre-service training in character education. It might be said that West University did not require all professors within the department to implement character education within those five years. This could be related to the previous research done by Jones et al (1999) showing that character education was of concern to deans of colleges with more than 90 percent in agreement that core values can and should be taught in schools. Yet, less than 25 percent

claimed that character education was strongly emphasized in their required and elective courses. Wakefield (1996) noted that a high percentage of the teacher education programs in his survey felt teaching character were a valid part of its curriculum; however, the results portrayed that it was not included in the curriculum. Previous research has also found that faculty are not well trained to teach character education. As Berkowitz (1998) states, "teacher training in character education requires teacher educators who are familiar with this knowledge and are committed to furthering effective character education" (p. 4). It would take much time and effort for "scholars" of character education to train faculty. This could be one reason as to why the teachers in this study had such vast differences in their perceptions of their character education training.

According to the literature review specific effective methodologies of teaching about character education in pre-service education are not known. There are limited descriptions of promising practices and limited documented effective approaches for integrating character education into teacher education (Munson, 2000; Wakefield, 1997). There is a lack of understanding on how to actually "teach" these techniques to pre-service educators and how effective this training would or would not be. Because there are no promising practices and a lack of understanding as to how the techniques of character education should be taught at the pre-service, the professors at West University were doing the best they could with the knowledge they have regarding character education. Since there are no proven effective strategies the graduates of West University in this study were not

impacted in the way they could have been if there were specific effective strategies.

The qualitative data established a theme that depicted the idea of teachers being role models (positive or negative) to their students. The respondents felt it was quite important to be a positive role model to their students and that they can impact their students' character no matter the outside variables. Most of the respondents stated they need to be a good role model to their students and doing so would make an impact on their students' character. This finding supports the previous findings that the role of the teacher is an important factor in character education. According to Berkowitz & Bier (2005), the most common form of modeling was the inclusion of adult role models within a student's education. Schwartz (2008) stated that teaching is a moral act and it will affect the students' education. And Fenstermacher (1990) said,

> The morality of the teacher may have considerable impact on the morality of the student. The teacher is a model for the students, such that the particular and concrete meaning of such traits as honest, fair play, consideration of others, tolerance, and sharing are 'picked up', as it were, by observing, imitating and discussing what teachers do in classrooms (p. 133).

Teachers have an impact on their students and their students' character. The findings above as well as the findings within this study support this statement. It is important that teachers understand their level of modeling and how much they influence their students.

The above discovery supports the finding in this study of how certain professors in the graduates' pre-service training had more of an impact on their character education use than others. One respondent said, "…the way they treated students was very different from some professors that, you know, had that… I guess they wanted us to have that standard for how they taught our class and they wanted us to have that standard when we taught our own students" (R.C.). Some respondents also talked about specific professors being models of character for them in their pre-service training. Milson (2002) states there is a wide range of preparedness for teaching character education which could be the effect of the differences between the professors from West University.

Another theme that emerged from the qualitative data was that of the overall university (in regards to West University). Many of the interviewees stated that they feel the impact the university had on their character and their current teaching style goes back to the way the university was run as a whole. Some respondents made statements that because the school was a Christian university the goals of the faculty and staff were of that focus. Many interviewees also discussed the fact that the community at West University was geared toward making a sense of community through community service and keeping them in cohorts to gain an even stronger sense of community. Thinking about the philosophy of education, one statement was made that West University has a philosophy that was "focused on the kids and what the kids needed" (S.K.). The mission statement from the College of Education at West University says, "In the

Christian tradition of servant leadership, educators serve humankind, seeking opportunities to assist, encourage, and support all those under their care in a manner that leads to transformation in the lives of their students" (received from West University professor, 10/2011). This statement supports the feelings of the respondents' thoughts on the university's focus.

A theme regarding the teachers' participation in continuing education focused on character education was also uncovered in the qualitative data. Almost all of the respondents stated they do not currently do any continuing education focused on character education. However, they all state that if they had the opportunity they would attend a seminar or workshop focused on character education. Most of the districts in which the respondents teach do not offer any character education and the respondents would like to see more of these types of continuing education opportunities. More and more states are encouraging schools to provide some sort of character education to their students (Schaps & Williams, 1999) which could be the reason why the participants in this study would like to have more training in character education. They see the importance and desire for some training in character education while they were in their pre-service training. These statements are supported by Revell & Arthur (2007) ; most pre-service educators thought character education was not only necessary but also anticipated that their courses would have strategies of character education within them. The student teachers also stated they felt compelled to be "involved in the process of character education and influencing children's values" (p. 84).

When looking at the objective data provided by West University it can be found that the university is still implementing some of the character education strategies that they implemented during the five years of their grant. Looking at a couple of syllabi from professors shows that they used literature to facilitate character development. Another syllabus states the students will learn the importance of compassion and honesty in assessment decisions- faith and values. Other words that were used in syllabi include honest, discernment, caring for students, teaching values, and character traits. This supports the statements given in the answers from the interviewees about their definition of character education, the strategies they currently use, and how some professors used character education in different ways. West University School of Education has a mission statement that states: "to prepare educators of mind and heart who are scholars, community members, guardians, visionary leaders, and effective practitioners." It goes further to discuss community members:

> Effective educators develop and sustain intentionally collaborative and interdependent relationships among teachers, students, and their families, counselors, administrators, and other members of the development of a learning community. Educators understand their roles as professional colleagues in the school, community and professional organizations and recognize the importance that educators play in the creation of the culture of classrooms in a democratic society (Received from professor's syllabus at West University, 2011).

The researcher was also given an evaluation form that cooperating teachers must complete on their student teacher from West University. This evaluation focuses on the character attributes of the student. This form is required to be completed before the student can graduate from West University. This shows the consistency of West University being focused on character. Another consistency is the checklist of character education principles that the College of Education has according to each of the courses that are taught. This chart shows what character education principles are focused in each course. Those character education principles include: core ethical values, character as thinking/feeling/behavior, proactive approach, caring community, moral action, challenging curriculum, self-motivation, moral community for staff, support for character education, family as partners, and evaluation of character. All of these principles are included in courses except for moral community for staff and evaluation of character. Again, the university does have an awareness of character education. However, there continues to be a missing link within the actual teaching of the character education strategies to their pre-service students which is supported by past research (Elam, Rose & Gallup, 1996; Jones et al, 1999; Wakefield, 1996).

Implications for Practice

The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) has included standards that focus on character and character education. Proposition #1 discusses that students should be treated equally. Another standard requires teachers to be concerned with the motivation and self-concept of students as well as their character development and civic virtues (National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, http://www.nbpts.org/the_standards/the_five_core_propositio). Since the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards requires teachers to include character education then practicing teacher educators should begin to focus on learning ways to include character education in their pre-service preparation.

Research in teacher education implies there is support for the inclusion of character education training in pre-service preparation programs (Milson, 2000). However, Berkowitz (1998) states, "there is little training available, particularly at the pre-service level" (p. 5). There is not an abundance of evidence that teacher education programs are aggressively employing this task (Character Education Partnership, 1999; Jones, Ryan & Bohlin, 1998; William and Schaps, 1999). As stated previously, 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). Despite this growing interest in character education, most pre-service education programs do not include specific

preparation in moral or character education (Nucci, Drill, Larson, & Browne, 2005).

As stated in the literature review there is a gap between what the institutions report they are doing in character education and what is actually being taught. There is also a gap in knowing what strategies actually work in pre-service character education training. This study found that graduates from West University were not keenly aware of specific strategies and most felt they were not adequately trained. It could be said that they were not aware of the strategies being used because they were not told they were directly related to character education or their idea of character education was not relatable to the strategies being used.

There appears to be no specific course at West University that addresses character education programs. It was found that it was 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 many instances, a teacher certified to teach goes directly from their student teaching assignment to the classroom with little or no training in character education.

The education community continues to voice concerns about having substantial expectations of themselves in their classroom regarding character education. This study supported that statement and found that teachers would

like to do it, if they had more training and more time.

<p style="text-align:center">Recommendations for Future Research</p>

Character education in pre-service education can have positive effects on those that go through the program. In order for character education training to be fully implemented and effective, pre-service programs need to have a clear focus and discover effective strategies for implementation.

The review of literature showed a lack of research on the implementation and effectiveness of pre-service character education training. This study looked at the effectiveness of a program that stated they implemented character education training in their pre-serving training. It would be most beneficial to do a number of studies to conclude what the best strategies for implementation would be before we can figure out if the training is actually effective. If those effective strategies were found, it might be said that more universities and colleges would be implementing those strategies and then more of those programs could be studied for their effectiveness.

A longitudinal study that entailed looking at the knowledge of character education and its strategies from those that were entering pre-service training, throughout their training, and then when their training was completed would

prove to be beneficial. It would benefit teacher educators to have a thorough understanding of how they are impacting or not impacting their students.

The climate in schools is an important factor when trying to execute character education. One major source in the school climate is that of the administration. It is essential to have administrative support when implementing character education. This study did not ask a directed question regarding the administrative support when discussing the participants' current character education implementation. It would be beneficial to take a look at how teachers might connect being well-prepared in character education if they are given the administrative support to implement character education within their current classrooms.

Another study that would be valuable would be one that focused on looking at the differences of graduates' opinions of their character education preparation according to the challenges they face as a teacher. According to Darling-Hammond (2006) the opinion a teacher gives about their teacher education preparation does depend on the type of district in which they are teaching. A question to consider: Does the intensity of needs in the school setting (location, population, local economic situation, etc.) make a difference in the reported opinion of graduates toward their character education preparation?

Summary and Conclusion

This study asked the question: *Does the character education initiative at West University's pre-service program have an impact on their pre-service students' future character education implementation?* It was found that the graduates that did not remember their training felt it was not helpful in their current character education implementation. Those that remember or felt that they did have adequate training see some connection to their current implementation but would not give full credit to West University. There were many other variables that were found to have made the graduates' use of character education in their current classrooms such as seeing the need for the implementation, bullying, school wide expectations, etc. According to past research pre-service programs do not know the effective strategies to use in training their future teachers in character education. Due to this, it is difficult to have an impact on their students' future use, if they are unaware of the best practices. Teacher educators need to continue to research best practices for character education training as more and more schools are requiring their teachers to implement character education in their curriculum.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Demographic Information

Years of teaching	1-2	19.4%
	3-4	71.0%
	5 or more	9.7%
Gender	Male	22.6 %
	Female	77.4%
Grade Level	Elementary	44.0%
	Secondary	56.0%
Type of School	Public	83.9%
	Private school with	
	religious mission	6.5%
	Private school without	
	religious mission	0.0%
	Magnet	6.5%
	Charter	0.0%
	Other	3.2%
Race	African –American	0.0%
	Caucasian	90.3%
	Latino/a or Hispanic	0.0%
	Native American/Alaskan	0.0%
	First or second generation-	
	immigrant	0.0%
	Other	9.7%
Type of District	Urban	32.3%
	Rural	29.0%
	Suburban	38.7%
Year of Graduation	2006	12.9.%
	2007	12.9%
	2008	51.6%
	2009	12.9%
	2010	9.7%

Demographics Continued

Age		
	20-25	38.7%
	26-30	38.7%
	31-25	6.5%
	36-40	12.9%
	41-45	0.0%
	46-50	3.2%
	51 and up	0.0%

Subject Area Taught (Current Year)

Art	0.0%
Foreign Language	9.7%
Integrated Curriculum	0.0%
Language Arts/English/Reading	12.9%
Mathematics	16.1%
Music	3.2%
Multiple Subjects equally	22.6%
Physical Education	12.9%
Science	0.0%
Social Studies	3.2%
Special Education	19.4%

Appendix B – Code Book

Category	Subcategories	Property	Dimensions	Examples (interviewees)
Meaning of character education	values	Discusses teaching good values to their students.	Ranges from missing to having a strong emphasis	"I think character education is teaching , maybe not necessarily morals, but good values…" (B.J.) "Knowing right from wrong" (B.N.)
	citizenship	Discusses being a good citizen in society	Ranges from missing to having a strong emphasis	"it's almost like good citizenship in a way and how to get along in society" (B.J.) "….be a contributing citizen in society" (S.K.) "….or teach them how to be a good citizens of the world" (R.C.)
	positive treatment of others	Discusses having the ability to treat others with respect	Ranges from missing to having a strong emphasis	"how to deal with other people around them" (S.K.) "But how to incorporate things like kindness, and um, fairness, and not cheating and things like that" (S.C.)
	integrity	Discusses the individual standing up for kids, helping the teacher out, and the way of living	Ranges from missing to having a strong emphasis	" Teaching students to live with integrity, which I define as doing what is right even when it is not popular or when no one is watching." (P.T.)
	responsibility	The individual talks about the students' learning responsibility for their actions	Ranges from missing to having a strong emphasis	"…how to be responsible" (S.K.)
	necessity	Discusses the need for character education in the school setting	Ranges from not important to absolutely important	"It might be more important than any content we teach in today's society" (P.T.) "I don't think like specific character traits are necessary to be taught. Um, but I think indirectly through school wide behavior expectations, and um, I think that is important for kids" (R.C.)

155

Category	Subcategories	Property	Dimensions	Examples (interviewees)
Training	pre-service amount	Discusses the amount of training they had at West University	Ranges from does not remember any training to having adequate training	"I'm pretty sure they did not do anything" (B.N.) "I would say I was adequately prepared to indirectly teach character education" (R.C.) "I don't remember learning a whole lot" (B.J.)
	specific strategies	Discusses the specific character education strategies used at West University in their pre-service training	Ranges from no specific strategies to discussion on how to implement into curriculum	"I had some classes where we actually taught using the strategies themselves. They would say this is cooperative learning and here is how you do that and we were taught that way" (S.C.) "….they kinda did a preview of what character education means and different character ed programs that schools use" (R.C.) "I remember talking about the eleven pillars of character ed and more about what they were. Of course, we learned about cooperative learning. I don't know if it was necessarily in the context of character education, or in the context of learning styles and teaching styles" (R.C.) "I remember having one class or one portion of a class talking about character education. Umm...they kinda did a preview of what character education means and different character ed programs that schools use. And, then some of the traits that were highlighted within those programs. No, they weren't real specific so you could say." (R.C.)
	Respect	Discusses if a teachers were given strategies to gain student's respect or if it is an inherent trait	Ranges from having the inherent trait to gaining more strategies	"I think it can enhance your teaching. But I definitely think there is that innate knowledge of how to teach respect…." (R.C.) "I think it was more about who I was and how that fits into my teaching" (T.B.) "One of my professors said, 'if you can get, if you can make your lesson interesting and engaging, then you can win kids over and not have to worry so much about discipline because they will show you respect, they will see how much you care and how much you love your subject, that you can engage them through that subject'" (B.N.)
	specific professors	Discussed the difference between the professors' implementation during their pre-service training	Ranges from no implementation to some implementation	"I would say there were some that were more apt to talk about it than others. I don't think I could say that we touched on it (character education) in all of the classes I took at West University". (S.C.) "There were some that were very focused on um, their objectives and what they needed to get taught and I would even say that, um, they way that they treated students was very different from some professors that you know had that, I guess they wanted to have that standard for how they taught our class and they wanted us to have that standard when we taught our own students." (R.C.)

Category	Subcategories	Property	Dimensions	Examples (interviewees)
Teacher as role model	Influence	Discusses the idea of how a teacher can be a positive or negative influence on their students	Ranges from teachers being a positive role model to being a negative role model	"Sometimes I think it is hard for me to teach character and making decisions, when I know that some of my own choices are not good choices and are not good examples. I don't like being a hypocrite". (P.T.) "I affect them in my actions…just by living my life as a good example" (B.N.)
	Character	Discusses how a teacher must have good character in order to impact their students' character	Ranges from no need to show good character to strong need to show good character	"So just from personal experience by treating my kids with respect and expecting them to treat each other with respect" (R.C.) "…because it comes out of how you are respecting other people in the building and how you are a role model of respect" (R.C.) " If you are a good role model...and...let me just say this....if you yourself have good character then, if you are given the correct strategies than you can teach character ed. I know some teachers who are not of exceptional character and it would be interesting to see them teach lessons on that, you know, I just don't know how that would really work" (B.J.)
	Expectations	Discusses if a teacher has expectations for students and the impact it can have	Ranges from having low expectations to having high expectations for the students and for themselves as teachers	"You see, what happens is we feel like we don't have consistent expectations. We aren't consistent school wide guidelines, maybe not necessarily rules…." (T.B.) "I am not labeling them and I am letting them show me what they can truly do as a student. I mean if they, they might not be able to do what the other students are doing, but I don't expect that from that student, not yet" (S.K.)

Category	Subcategories	Property	Dimensions	Examples (interviewees)
Implementation of character education	Time	The amount of time teachers feel they have to do character education in their classrooms	Ranges from having no time to fitting in lessons in specific time ranges (beginning or end of school year)	"My curriculum is so compact and so I can't imagine squeezing it in. There is so much that I have to do. I don't teach large group lessons on it". (B.J.) "I rarely actually ever do stand alone lessons. I think, you know, we are so content driven I feel like I have no freedom to necessarily do that. I think my program is pretty rigorous too" (T.B.) "We do in the spring a unit on bullying. But on a regular basis no. It's a thing we do in the spring after the MSP is over and the standardized testing is out of the way....let's be realistic" (S.C.)
	Strategies	Inviting counselor into the room for a lesson	Ranges from absent to present	"I haven't personally taught a lesson, but we are lucky enough to have school counselors that do. To teach, at least in the upper grades they teach a couple of lessons on bullying." (R.C.)
		Using character traits in classroom discussions	Ranges from absent to present	"We are going to learn each character trait and we are going to do definitions..... So we did power points on it, we did a whole unit that took us about two or three months. We taught the other six grade students what these character traits were about. And then we let them observe their classmates to see who they could nominate for the best example of this character trait. So, at the end of the 2 1/2 months we had a big presentation and we nominated one person from each class for each character trait and there were 30 kids that got an award. You know, this person is respectful because...and they had to put why, they couldn't just nominate their friends....they had to put the reason why." (S.K.) "We did a whole unit on it last year. When I taught that unit at the end they were able to nominate their peers and whoever was a good example of each character trait." (S.K.)
		Anti-bullying campaign	Ranges from absent to present	"At my school we have started over the past two years getting into the Rachel's challenge….I think they are worldwide now, encouraging schools to adopt and promote positive behavior and acts of kindness". (S.C.)
		Character through literature	Ranges from absent to present	"If I am teaching them a book, I have them pick a character and I have them do like a group activity that shows how the main character is a good example of a character trait. So they can match up the character with the character trait. So, if a character in the book is being respectful than they pick that character in the book to show how that character is a good example of respect or caring or any of the traits." (S.K.)
		The three R's	Ranges from absent to present	"We have something called the three R's. We'd go through this thing at the beginning of the year talking about like, you know, what does that look like. How you are suppose to treat other kids, how you are suppose to treat teachers, what happens if you don't follow those rules" (B.N.)

158

Category	Subcategories	Property	Dimensions	Examples (interviewees)
Impact	Ability to impact all students' character	Discusses if teachers feel they are able to impact every student's character and the challenges they face	Ranges from not all students are able to be impacted to every student can be influenced no matter the outside variables.	"I don't think every background can be impacted. I don't think I am going to reach every child" (B.J.) "I think you can influence most kids regardless of what is happening at home. There are a few kids who have already become completely apathetic and I do not have enough contact with them on a daily basis to have an impact on them. That is where coaching is beneficial in teaching character, because you spend so much extra time with your kids". (P.T.) "Um, that makes it very hard if they don't have support at home". (B.N.) "I think so, because I think I can hopefully teach them kindness no matter what your environment is at home and this is what is expected of you in society overall or in a school setting or later on." (T.B.)
	What about the student is impacted	Discusses different aspects of the student that might be impacted	Ranges from social and behavior influences to cognitive influences	"I see some changes in their critical thinking as far as considering the consequences of their actions as well as some shifts in the behavior resulting in improvements in their citizenship and personal integrity." (S.C.) "I think that the integrated character education teaching I do affects my students as citizens as well as critical thinkers. I focus heavily on our classroom community and how we are all connected. I often appeal to them as citizens of our classroom when modification of behaviors is needed and my end goal is for them to think before they act in order to consider the way their actions affect the classroom as a whole and specifically students around them." (T.B.)
Continuing Education	Participate	Discusses if the current teachers are attending any character education workshops, training, reading books, etc.	Ranges from participating in no continuing education to reading an article/book	"Our principal does occasionally send out, okay quite often she sends out links to education articles, so if anything has character education contained, when I get a chance I read it". (T.B.) "No, not really specifically. I just don't think I can relate anything back to character education". (R.C.) "I have never seen anything, honestly, in our district that has stuff like that. Most of the stuff that is um, regarding workshops is mostly technology and things like that." (B.N.) "And then our school last year did a book study on a book called "Teach Like a Champion". (S.C.)
	Desire	Teachers having the desire to attend workshops, etc. focused on character education	Ranges from not having the desire to having the desire if it was available.	"It's like maybe if we actually kinda talked about this stuff maybe we could actually get our test scores up and that thing. We can't really reach kids if they are having, you know, psychological issues. It's not going to work." (B.N.) "I would go to character education workshops if that was something the district really believed would help me become a better teacher, and would truly help the students in this district." (P.T.) "Workshops, I think we would, if we had the opportunity" (T.B.)

Category	Subcategories	Property	Dimensions	Examples (interviewees)
Overall University	Type	The focus of the overall university	Ranges from having no Christian affiliation to having Christian affiliation	"It is a private Christian college" (T.B.) "...for Whitworth kinda being associated with um, Presbyterianism and that sort of thing and Christianity..." (B.N.) "I think that Whitworth that has a philosophy in education that is all about the kids…what the kids need. You know we did a couple of classes where we talked about integrating cultural practices in what you taught. Everyone's culture practices when you taught the lesson. It was something where you alienated one culture they wanted us to do inclusion in everything we taught. Also, different religions and different cultures" (S.K.)
	Community	The setting of the community and its expectations for students	Ranges from within School of Education to entire West university	"Service learning was a part of the education community, yea and we had, um, there was a yearly event called the writing rally where people volunteered their time….and we had a reading night, where we, like our school we student taught at, would like come and we would read to them." (T.B.) "We had a whole day school wide where we just do community service" (T.B.)

Appendix C - Survey

SECTION I

Demographic Information

1. Gender □Male □Female

2. Year of Graduation _____

3. Age □ 20-25

□ 25-30

□ 30-35

□ 35-40

□ 40-45

□ 45-50

4. Please check how you identify. Please check all that apply, or other, if the options do not fit you:

□ African-American

□ Caucasian

□ Latino/a or Hispanic

□ Native American/Alaskan Native

□ First or second-generation immigrant (your parents were born outside of the U.S.)

□ Other (Please specify) _____

5. Years of Teaching □ 1-2

□ 3-4

□ 5 or more

6. In what state do you teach? _____

7. In what type of district do you teach?

  □ Urban

  □ Rural

  □ Suburban

8. What grade level did you teach <u>this year?</u>

 Check all that apply

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

9. What subject area do you teach most of the time <u>this year?</u>

 Please check <u>only one</u>

□ Art	□ Multiple subjects equally
□ Foreign Language	□ Physical Education
□ Integrated Curriculum	□ Science
□ Language Arts/English/Reading	□ Social Studies
□ Mathematics	□ Special Education
□ Music	□ Other

10. In what type of school do you teach?

  □ Public school
  □ Private school with a religious mission
  □ Private school without a religious mission
  □ Magnet
  □ Charter
  □ Other: please describe _____

Please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with each statement at this point in time. Check the number that best describes your response (1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=Uncertain, 4=agree, 5= Strongly agree).

1. I am usually comfortable discussing issues of right and wrong with my students.

□ 1=strongly disagree □ 2=disagree □ 3=uncertain □ 4=agree □ 5= strongly agree

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.

□ 1=strongly disagree □ 2=disagree □ 3=uncertain □ 4=agree □ 5= strongly agree

3. I am confident in my ability to be a good role model.

□ 1=strongly disagree □ 2=disagree □ 3=uncertain □ 4=agree □ 5= strongly agree

4. Teachers are usually not responsible when a child becomes more courteous.

□ 1=strongly disagree □ 2=disagree □ 3=uncertain □ 4=agree □ 5= strongly agree

5. When a student shows greater respect for others, it is usually because teachers have effectively modeled that trait.

□ 1=strongly disagree □ 2=disagree □ 3=uncertain □ 4=agree □ 5= strongly agree

6. I am usually at a loss as to how to help a student be more responsible.

□ 1=strongly disagree □ 2=disagree □ 3=uncertain □ 4=agree □ 5= strongly agree

7. I know how to use strategies that might lead to positive changes in students' character.

□ 1=strongly disagree □ 2=disagree □ 3=uncertain □ 4=agree □ 5= strongly agree

8. I am not sure that I can teach my students to be honest.

□ 1=strongly disagree □ 2=disagree □ 3=uncertain □ 4=agree □ 5= strongly agree

9. When students demonstrate diligence it is often because teachers have encouraged the students to persist with tasks.

□ 1=strongly disagree □ 2=disagree □ 3=uncertain □ 4=agree □ 5= strongly agree

10. Teachers who spend time encouraging students to be respectful of others will see little changes in students' social interaction.

□ 1=strongly disagree □ 2=disagree □ 3=uncertain □ 4=agree □ 5= strongly agree

11. I am able to positively influence the character development of a child who has had little direction from parents.

□ 1=strongly disagree □ 2=disagree □ 3=uncertain □ 4=agree □ 5= strongly agree

12. If parents notice that their children are more responsible, it is likely that teachers have fostered this trait at school.

□ 1=strongly disagree □ 2=disagree □ 3=uncertain □ 4=agree □ 5= strongly agree

13. Some students will not become respectful even if they have had teachers who promote respect.

□ 1=strongly disagree □ 2=disagree □ 3=uncertain □ 4=agree □ 5= strongly agree

14. When I have a student who lies regularly, I can usually convince him to stop lying.

□ 1=strongly disagree □ 2=disagree □ 3=uncertain □ 4=agree □ 5= strongly agree

15. If students are inconsiderate it is often because teachers have not sufficiently modeled this trait.

□ 1=strongly disagree □ 2=disagree □ 3=uncertain □ 4=agree □ 5= strongly agree

16. If responsibility is not encouraged in a child's home, teachers will have little success teaching this trait at   school.

□ 1=strongly disagree □ 2=disagree □ 3=uncertain □ 4=agree □ 5= strongly agree

17. I often find it difficult to persuade a student that respect for others is important.

□ 1=strongly disagree □ 2=disagree □ 3=uncertain □ 4=agree □ 5= strongly agree

18. When a student becomes more compassionate, it is usually because teachers have created caring classroom environments.

□ 1=strongly disagree □ 2=disagree □ 3=uncertain □ 4=agree □ 5= strongly agree

19. I will be able to influence the character of students because I am a good role model.

□ 1=strongly disagree □ 2=disagree □ 3=uncertain □ 4=agree □ 5= strongly agree

20. Teaching students what it means to be honest is unlikely to result in students who are more honest.

□ 1=strongly disagree □ 2=disagree □ 3=uncertain □ 4=agree □ 5= strongly agree

21. I sometimes don't know what to do to help students become more compassionate.

□ 1=strongly disagree □ 2=disagree □ 3=uncertain □ 4=agree □ 5= strongly agree

22. Teachers cannot be blamed for students who are dishonest.

□ 1=strongly disagree □ 2=disagree □ 3=uncertain □ 4=agree □ 5= strongly agree

23. I am continually finding better ways to develop the character of my students.

□ 1=strongly disagree □ 2=disagree □ 3=uncertain □ 4=agree □ 5= strongly agree

24. Teachers who encourage responsibility at school can influence students' level of responsibility outside of   school.

□ 1=strongly disagree □ 2=disagree □ 3=uncertain □ 4=agree □ 5= strongly agree

SECTION II (B)

1. I use the Character Education training I received at Whitworth in my classroom.

□ 1=strongly disagree □ 2=disagree □ 3=uncertain □ 4=agree □ 5= strongly agree

    (b) If you agree or strongly agree, please give a frequency of how often:

        □ Daily
        □ Weekly
        □ Monthly

2. Character Education is emphasized in my school.

□ 1=strongly disagree □ 2=disagree □ 3=uncertain □ 4=agree □ 5= strongly agree

3. Character Education is emphasized in my district.

□ 1=strongly disagree □ 2=disagree □ 3=uncertain □ 4=agree □ 5= strongly agree

4. I implement Character Education strategies in my classroom to a greater degree than other teachers in my school do.

□ 1=strongly disagree □ 2=disagree □ 3=uncertain □ 4=agree □ 5= strongly agree

5. I am not able to implement Character Education in my class right now.

□ 1=strongly disagree □ 2=disagree □ 3=uncertain □ 4=agree □ 5= strongly agree

6. I was adequately prepared to know how to integrate issues of character into classroom management.

□ 1=strongly disagree □ 2=disagree □ 3=uncertain □ 4=agree □ 5= strongly agree

7. I was adequately prepared to know how to integrate issues of character into content instruction.

□ 1=strongly disagree □ 2=disagree □ 3=uncertain □ 4=agree □ 5= strongly agree

8. I teach stand-alone Character Education lessons on a regular basis.

□ 1=strongly disagree □ 2=disagree □ 3=uncertain □ 4=agree □ 5= strongly agree

9. My students' behavior and learning are positively impacted by my emphasis on citizenship and character.

□ 1=strongly disagree □ 2=disagree □ 3=uncertain □ 4=agree □ 5= strongly agree

10. I emphasize respectful, supportive relationships among students, teachers, and parents.

□ 1=strongly disagree □ 2=disagree □ 3=uncertain □ 4=agree □ 5= strongly agree

11. I communicate with each student personally each day.

□ 1=strongly disagree □ 2=disagree □ 3=uncertain □ 4=agree □ 5= strongly agree

12. I appreciate and teach appreciation for all students' cultures and backgrounds.

□ 1=strongly disagree □ 2=disagree □ 3=uncertain □ 4=agree □ 5= strongly agree

13. I expect students to treat each other with respect.

□ 1=strongly disagree □ 2=disagree □ 3=uncertain □ 4=agree □ 5= strongly agree

14. I provide opportunities for appropriate and safe expressions of feelings.

□ 1=strongly disagree □ 2=disagree □ 3=uncertain □ 4=agree □ 5= strongly agree

15. I provide opportunities for respectful discussion of different viewpoints.

□ 1=strongly disagree □ 2=disagree □ 3=uncertain □ 4=agree □ 5= strongly agree

16. I provide opportunities for student input into the curriculum.

□ 1=strongly disagree □ 2=disagree □ 3=uncertain □ 4=agree □ 5= strongly agree

17. Value conflicts and ethical/moral dilemma discussions are discussed in lessons.

□ 1=strongly disagree □ 2=disagree □ 3=uncertain □ 4=agree □ 5= strongly agree

18. I help students develop critical thinking skills.

□ 1=strongly disagree □ 2=disagree □ 3=uncertain □ 4=agree □ 5= strongly agree

19. I provide cooperative learning activities within my classroom.

□ 1=strongly disagree □ 2=disagree □ 3=uncertain □ 4=agree □ 5= strongly agree

20. I emphasize the positive impact the group can have on the entire classroom setting.

□ 1=strongly disagree □ 2=disagree □ 3=uncertain □ 4=agree □ 5= strongly agree

21. I encourage excitement and deep thinking within my classroom.

□ 1=strongly disagree □ 2=disagree □ 3=uncertain □ 4=agree □ 5= strongly agree

SECTION III
Open-Ended Questions

1. What I most appreciated about my teacher education training in character education was:

   _____
   _____
   _____
   _____
   _____
   _____
   _____
   _____

2. I specifically learned the following character education strategies in my teacher training: (i.e. service learning, class meetings, cooperative learning)

   _____
   _____
   _____
   _____
   _____
   _____
   _____

3. The missing pieces to my character education training were:

   _____
   _____
   _____
   _____
   _____
   _____
   _____

Please send this part of the survey in the LARGE envelope provided.

Appendix D – Interview Contact Information

Follow-up Interview

I would be willing to be contacted for a follow-up interview by the researcher.

     □ Yes

     □ No

Contact Information:

     Name: _____

     Address 1: _____

     Address 2: _____

     Email: _____

     Phone: _____

     I have a Skype account: □ Yes   □ No

PLEASE SEND THIS PAPER BACK IN SEPARATE (PROVIDED-small) ENVELOPE FROM SURVEY RESPONSE
This will insure your anonymity.

Thank you for taking the time out of your busy schedule to fill out this survey. Have a great school year!

Appendix E - Letter of Consent

Department of Educational Psychology

402 Marillac Hall South Campus University of Missouri-St. Louis

St. Louis, Missouri 63121-4499

Telephone: 314-516-5783

E-mail: klbkrc@mail.umsl.edu

Informational Consent

As a former pre-service student in the College of Education at West University, you are invited to join a study conducted by Katie Bahm, Doctoral Candidate at the University of Missouri-St. Louis under the guidance of Dr. Marvin Berkowitz, Sanford N. McDonnell Professor of Character Education. You have been asked to participate in the research because you completed the Teacher Education program at West University and are currently teaching in a K-12 setting. Your decision whether to participate will not affect your current or future relations with West University or the University of Missouri-St. Louis. If you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw at any time without affecting that relationship.

This study will examine the impact of the character education training you received at West University. The researcher is asking the question: Does the character education initiative at West University's pre-service program have an impact on their pre-service students' future character education implementation?

If you agree to be part of this study, you can expect: to complete one questionnaire and possibly give permission to be interviewed by the researcher. Up to 200 former students in the College of Education at West University will be participating. The questionnaire should take approximately 10-15 minutes. The interviews, if you agree to participate, will take approximately 45-60 minutes.

All data from this study will be confidential and anonymous: no personal information from your survey or interviews will be shared with West University. Your name will not be used in any way. All data will be kept on a password-protected computer. Also, this study will not cost you anything, and you will not be paid for your participation. However, the results of this study will teach us

172

about the effects of a teacher education program that infused character education which in turn, might enhance other departments of education.

Your participation is completely voluntary. You do not have to join this study, and you may leave it at any time. You do not have to answer all of the questions. You will NOT be penalized if you do not join, or if you withdraw. There are no risks to this study. The benefits would be the possible impact of aiding West in understanding their current program and its effects.

I will do everything I can to protect your privacy. I will not reveal your name in any publication or presentation that may result from this study. In rare instances, a study must undergo an audit or program evaluation by an oversight agency. Such agencies must keep participants' data confidential. **Your name will NOT be going back to West University for any reason.** Any data shared with West will all be under pseudonyms. If you have any questions or concerns about the study, please contact Katie Bahm at 314-724-9092 or klbkrc@mail.umsl.edu. You may also ask questions or state concerns to the Office of Research Administration at the University of Missouri-St. Louis at 314-516-5897.

Please print this page to have a copy of this consent form for your records.

Sincerely,

Katie L. Bahm

Appendix F - Interview Questions

1. What year did you graduate?

2. In what type of school district do you currently teach?

3. What subject(s) do you currently teach?

4. What grade level do you currently teach?

5. Does your current school emphasize character education and if so how and to what degree?

6. If you were to give a definition of character education what would that definition entail?

7. Do you feel that character education is of necessity in education?

8. If you were to describe your character education training you would describe it as:

9. Describe some of the strategies that were used to teach you character education. How were these strategies taught? Through example, or by specific teaching?

10. Do you feel you were adequately prepared to use character education in your current classrooms? If so, why? If not, what could you have had that would have made you better prepared?

11. Do you feel that because of your pre-service training you are more apt to use strategies that will make a positive impact on your current students' character? Why?

12. Would you say that there were some professors at West University that emphasized character education more than others? Were there certain classes?

13. Respect is a word that has been given many meanings and seems to be something that is not easily taught. Do you feel that you were given strategies to enable yourself to gain respect from your students or do you feel that it is something that was inherently in you before your pre-service training?

14. Do you feel that you are able to influence a student's character no matter what the impact is at home? Do you feel that your pre-service training impacted (or not) that confidence?

15. Most people replied that they do not teach character education lessons as "stand-alone lessons". Do you agree with this? Is it impossible in today's public education realm to teach stand alone character education lessons?

16. Do you feel you are limited in time to be able to teach character to your students?

17. Are you attending more character education seminars or workshops or are you doing reading of your own about new and different character education strategies? Or are you simply using what you were shown in your pre-service education? In other words, do you feel that you want to learn more about character education strategies and are actually doing this?