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Impact of a Six-Trait Character Education Program on Sixth-Grade Students' Perceived Attitudes and Behaviors

Cindy S. Baumgartner

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IMPACT OF A SIX-TRAIT CHARACTER EDUCATION PROGRAM ON SIXTH-

GRADE STUDENTS' PERCEIVED ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIORS

An Abstract of a Thesis

Submitted

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts in Education

Cindy S. Baumgartner

University of Northern Iowa

May 1997

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to investigate the impact of a pilot character education program, called BOOMERANG, on students' reported attitudes and behaviors of six character constructs. The subjects consisted of 80 sixth-grade students enrolled in a small Midwestern town during the 1995-96 school year who were randomly assigned to an experimental group and a control group.

The intervention consisted of a 16-week character education program led by trained high-school students for a weekly, 30-minute session, using a pilot character education curriculum designed by the researcher. The intervention program consisted of six character traits: (a) caring, (b) citizenship, (c) fairness, (d) respect, (e) responsibility, and trustworthiness.

Data were collected through a student questionnaire, focus-group interviews, and student journals, using a pre-post experimental design. Results of the questionnaire showed statistical significance in the area of respect favoring the experimental group as compared to the control group. However, no statistical significance was found between the experimental and control groups in the character traits of caring, citizenship, fairness, responsibility, and trustworthiness.

The qualitative data from focus-group interviews and student journals showed that the students in the

experimental group demonstrated knowledge of, and more positive attitudes about, the six character traits introduced in the character education program. The data revealed that students also gained in their ability to apply the six character traits to real-life situations.

Due to the complexity of character development, the findings of this study suggest a possible hierarchy to the development of the six traits, with respect being the foundation.

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This study by: Cindy S. Baumgartner

Entitled: IMPACT OF A SIX-TRAIT CHARACTER EDUCATION PROGRAM

ON SIXTH-GRADE STUDENTS' PERCEIVED ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIORS

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The teaching of positive values and good character in children is one of society's most important tasks. Thomas Lickona, one of the nation's foremost experts in character education, describes good character as virtue, as habits of moral action. He further defines character as having three components: moral knowledge, moral feeling, and moral action--knowing the good, desiring the good, and doing the good (cited in Huffman, 1994).

The family is the primary locus of fostering character development. Lickona (1991) states, "Common sense tells us that the family is the primary moral educator of the child. Parents are their children's first moral teachers" (p. 30). Millions of children grow up, unfortunately, in settings where parents simply are not there, or if they are there, values associated with good character are not directly conveyed (Josephson, 1994).

Character development of children is reinforced in many other settings in addition to the family. Because children spend a considerable amount of time in school, schools can play a vital role in character development.

Character education in American schools is not a new idea. According to Lickona (1991), education has had two historic goals: to help young people become smart and to help them become good. Developing good character in young people was a fundamental part of the educational mission in America from the colonial period through the first part of the twentieth century (The Character Education Partnership [CEP], 1996). The moral teachings of dominant religious groups in local communities was closely tied to character development in young people. The CEP further stated that McGuffy's Readers, the most widely used nineteenth century school book in the United States, contained many Biblical stories and other moral lessons.

Since the mid-1950s, moral education goals and objectives have been greatly reduced in curriculum. Because school officials were unsure of what they could and could not legally do, they began to shy away from moral education altogether as a way of avoiding controversy and potential litigation (The CEP, 1996). However, "By the mid-1980's, a number of communities in various parts of the United States began a process which led to the reintroduction of character education in their local schools" (p. 5).

The Character Education Partnership defines character education as "the long-term process of helping young people

develop good character, i.e. knowing, caring about, and
acting upon core ethical values such as fairness, honesty,
compassion, responsibility, and respect for self and others"
(1994, p. 2). Kirschenbaum (1995) states, "...some
educators prefer to describe teaching traditional values or
moral virtues as 'character education'. 'Character' is an
old-fashioned concept, yet an apt one, which evokes a set of
internal qualities that have always been admired as
hallmarks of goodness, virtue, and moral maturity" (p. 21).

Statement of the Problem

Over a three-month period in 1994, at least fifteen
individuals or groups within several school districts
contacted three Youth Development Specialists working for
Iowa State University Extension Service (Baumgartner,
Grover, & Ranum, 1994). Even though the school districts
were spread over six counties in Northeast Iowa, there were
similarities in their requests for assistance, some of which
included: (a) a junior high guidance counselor seeking
assistance to address concerns over cliques in the sixth and
seventh grades because students' actions had become more
aggressive and assertive, (b) parents of eighth-graders
wanting advice on how to help their children handle the
isolation and rejection caused by cliques, (c) a group of

community citizens wanting to tackle the issues of teen depression and suicide which had recently plagued their small community, (d) an elementary school principal interested in educational programs that emphasize respect and inclusion, after survey results of fifth- and sixth-graders in the school showed that 81% felt there was too much name-calling, teasing, and hurting of others by their classmates, and (e) a middle school Student-Teacher Assistance Team concerned about negative displays of superiority and exclusion by some cliques of students in the school, inappropriate behavior--such as sexual comments, harassment, and aggression--between students in the hallways, and an overall lack of acceptance and respect for others, especially towards those different from themselves.

On a national basis, the Joseph and Edna Josephson Institute of Ethics conducted a recent and extensive survey of American high school and college students on issues of ethics. The study showed that "there is a hole in the moral ozone, and it seems to be getting bigger" (Josephson, 1992, p. 35). The study also indicated that a "disproportionately high proportion of young people regularly engage in dishonest and irresponsible behavior" (p. 37). Too many young people have abandoned traditional ethical values, especially honesty, in favor of self-absorbed, win-at-any-

cost attitudes that threaten to unravel the moral fabric of American society. They lie, cheat, and steal at work, at school, and in their personal relationships.

In recent decades, alarming trends among the adolescent population in the United States also have emerged. Some of the deep and pervasive societal indicators that can be recognized include increases in crime and violence, teenage pregnancy and childbirth, sexually transmitted diseases, drug and alcohol abuse, school failure, depression, and suicide. Takanishi (1993) stated that "the adolescent experience in the 1990s is unlike the adolescent experience of any adult-parent or grandparent. Adolescents today face greater risks to their current and future health than ever before" (p. 85).

The public's fear of youth violence is well founded. America's Disintegrating Youth (1995, January 15) stated that the Federal Bureau of Investigation's Uniform Crime Report shows the greatest increase in arrests of violent offenders involves children under the age of 15. This is also true of offenses involving the use of weapons. Today, violence and crime by adolescents is a serious problem in most central cities (Minton, 1995).

Although they comprised only 11% of the population in 1993, adolescents aged 10 to 17 years committed nearly twice

their share of violent crimes, accounting for 18% of all violent crime arrests in 1992. This includes 15% of murder arrests, 16% of rape arrests, 26% of robbery arrests, 15% of aggravated assault arrests, and 23% of weapons arrests, (cited by the Majority Staff of the Senate Judiciary Committee, 1994, in the Federal Bureau of Investigation Uniform Crime Reports).

The number of youth, 14 to 17 years old, arrested for criminal activity has rapidly grown. The U.S. Bureau of Census and U.S. Department of Education, (cited in Eberly, 1991), describe that in 1950, the rate was 4.1 per thousand, but exploded to 47.0 per thousand by 1960, 104.3 per thousand in 1970, and 125.5 per thousand in 1980. In 1988, the rate leveled a little and stood at 117.0 per thousand for this age group. Also, according to the U.S. Department of Justice (cited in Eberly, 1991), in 1989, the under 25-year-olds accounted for 56% of all arrests, including 46% of all arrests for violent crime and 59% of all arrests for property crime.

Neighborhoods, schools, and homes are all places of violence. Homicide has become the third leading cause of death for children 5 to 14 years old and the leading cause of death for young African-American men. Homicide deaths among African-American males, between the ages of 15 and 19

years, increased 111% between 1985 and 1990 (Takanishi, 1993).

While a relatively small percentage of youth belong to organized gangs (6% of youth who are between the ages of 10 to 19 years in most localities), these youth are responsible for a disproportionate share of violent crime (Majority Staff of the Senate Judiciary Committee, 1994).

In the last few years, students have been killed in hallways of what was once a sacred place--the school. The U.S. Department of Justice estimates that 100,000 children carry weapons to school each day. A 1993 Harris poll of students in grades 6 to 12 found a widespread fear of violence at school. According to a former principal of Thomas Jefferson High School in New York City, more than 50% of the young people in her school have puncture wounds on their bodies (Lantieri, 1995). Police officers now patrol schools and use metal detectors to find weapons.

Adolescents in the United States also are unique compared to adolescents in other developed nations in the rates of pregnancy, even when rates of sexual activity are similar. According to Moore (cited in Takanishi, 1993), the pregnancy rate for young adolescents (ages 10 to 14 years) increased 23% in the last decade. Unintended births increased among unmarried adolescents; from 1985 to 1989,

87% were reported to be unintended, compared with 79% in the late 1970s and early 1980s. More than one million teens become pregnant each year, with 650,000 of them unmarried. Teen pregnancies annually result in more than 500,000 live births; over half of these to unmarried mothers (Eberly, 1991).

Sexual activity among adolescents not only carries with it the risk of sexually transmitted diseases, but also the threat of death from the human immunodeficiency virus. Between 1987 and 1989, 20% of the young adults with AIDS were between the ages of 20 and 29, many of whom became infected as adolescents. Between 1960 and 1988, gonorrhea increased four times among youth who were 10 to 14 years old and three times among youth who were 15 to 19 years old, according to the National Center for Education in Maternal and Child Health, 1990, (cited in Takanishi, 1993).

Gans and Blyth, 1990, (cited in Takanishi, 1993), reported that more adolescents are experimenting with drugs at a younger age, especially before age 15. In the 1950s, less than one half of all adolescents used alcohol before entering high school. About forty years later, in a 1989 survey of high school seniors, 65% reported initiating the use of alcohol and 79% had smoked cigarettes by the ninth grade. Juvenile arrest rates for heroin and cocaine

increased dramatically (700%) between 1980 and 1990. For African-American youth, the rates have risen more than 2,000%, compared with a 250% increase for white youth (cited by the Majority Staff of the Senate Judiciary Committee, 1994, in the Federal Bureau of Investigation Uniform Crime Reports). Also, illicit drug use has increased for the second year in a row. There was increased usage of marijuana, stimulants, LSD, and inhalants by youth in the 8th, 10th, and 12th grades in 1993--only cocaine use remained level for those three age groups. According to the University of Michigan's National Institute of Drug Abuse (cited by the Majority Staff of the Senate Judiciary Committee, 1994, in the Department of Health and Human Services Report), 43% of high school seniors report that they have used illicit drugs. A far greater problem is alcohol abuse. Alcohol is used far more frequently than other drugs, and first use of alcohol is occurring at younger ages (Eberly, 1991). One in six deaths among young people is alcohol-related.

Every five seconds of every school day, a student drops out of public school (Children's Defense Fund, 1994, as cited by the Majority Staff of the Senate Judiciary Committee, 1994). Only 9.2% of chronic juvenile offenders graduate from high school, compared to 74% of non-offenders.

Only 2% of inmates in long-term juvenile facilities are high school graduates, with only 41% having completed eighth grade. Youth who do poorly in school one year have higher rates of street crime the next (Majority Staff of the Senate Judiciary Committee, 1994).

Another disturbing and tragic trend among adolescents is the increase in suicide rates. The Children's Safety Network (cited in Takanishi, 1993), reported that suicide rates almost tripled among youth 10 to 14 years old between 1968 and 1985 and doubled among youth 15 to 19 years old. In several countries, including the United States, the suicide rate among young males has more than tripled since 1950 (Eckersley, 1993). Among young white males, suicide is now the second leading cause of death, exceeded only by accidents, many of which may also be suicides or semi-suicides (Eberly, 1991). According to Hendin, "The United States now ranks among the highest countries in the world in the suicide rate of its young men, surpassing Japan and Sweden, countries long identified with the problem of suicide" (cited in Eberly, 1991). In 1990, the National Center for Education in Maternal and Child Health found that the major cause of disability among adolescents ages 10 to 18 years is mental disorders (Takanishi, 1993). There is a growing body of research suggesting that major depressive

illness is becoming more widespread in western societies,
especially among teenagers and young adults (Eckersley,
1993). Depression can affect between 7% and 33% of
adolescents, depending on its definition, assessment, and
severity (Takanishi, 1993).

Significance of the Problem

These youth trends are significant because they
illustrate the unsettled disposition of youth in America. A
segment of our youth population seems disengaged from
mainstream norms and struggles to find positive role models.
It is vital that young people develop caring relationships
with teachers, peers, and friends in the school environment.
The need for caring teachers was the focus of a study done
by Stanford University's Center for Research on the Context
of Secondary School Teaching (Phelan, Davidson, & Cao 1992,
cited in Benard, 1993). The study found that "the number of
student references to wanting caring teachers is so great
that we believe it speaks to the quiet desperation and
loneliness of many adolescents in today's society" (p. 45).

Josephson (1992) thinks that conscientious efforts must
be made to help our young people develop values and
abilities necessary for moral decision-making and conduct.

Individuals and institutions must consistently model ethical behavior and enforce ethical principals.

Delattre (1992) agreed that it is possible to inculcate respect, generosity of spirit, and intellectual honesty in young people. If parents and teachers (who are both supposed to care for and love them) do not take that task seriously, the young people will learn their habits from the streets, from demagogues, from entertainment, and from commercial media that do not care about or love them.

One teacher, Jean Johnson, described the situation this way, "Given the mixed messages kids are getting from television and movies, and increasing social problems around us, you have to enter your classroom prepared to address big issues" (Logan, 1995, p. 74). Some of the big issues include respect, honesty, loyalty, and tolerance, which are fundamental values that are essential for a classroom to flourish.

Lickona (cited in Huffman, 1994) stated three compelling reasons for schools to provide character education. The first is that good character is needed to be fully human and to be a person capable of working and loving. The second reason is that when schools are civil and caring communities that teach and enforce the values on which good character is based, teaching and learning are

better facilitated. Finally, character education is essential for building a moral society.

Educational administrators, such as Bill Honig (1992), Superintendent of Public Instruction in California, believe that teaching values belongs in our public schools. The challenge is to identify the teaching methods that adequately express the guiding morality of a modern, democratic, pluralistic society.

Kilpatrick (1992) thinks that the core problem facing our schools is a moral one, with all other problems deriving from it. Character education must therefore be put at the top of the school reform agenda. As he stated, "If they [students] don't learn habits of courage and justice, curriculums designed to improve self-esteem won't stop the epidemic of extortion, bullying, and violence" (p. 57).

The disturbing trends in our country's adolescent population reflect a clear need for, a significant interest in, and a rededication to character education in schools across America. If we care about the future of our society and our children, developing good character becomes a moral imperative. As Theodore Roosevelt stated, "To educate a person in mind and not in morals is to educate a menace to society" (cited in The Character Education Partnership, 1996, p. 13). Martin Luther King also said, "Intelligence

plus character--that is the goal of true education" (cited in The Character Education Partnership, 1996, p. ii).

Furthermore, in response to the current demand for character education programs as primary prevention efforts, many new programs are being developed and implemented without solid, research-based criteria. The present research base is "small, disparate, and inconsistent," stated Leming (1993, p. 69). Since few carefully controlled evaluations of character education programs exist, this study can add to the overall body of knowledge and assist in making decisions regarding the ongoing development and direction of the growing field of character education programs.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate the impact of a pilot character education program, called BOOMERANG, on sixth-grade students' reported attitudes and behaviors of six character constructs. To implement the program, trained 11th- and 12th-grade high school students taught character education lessons to selected sixth-grade students in one small Midwestern school district for 30 minutes once-a-week over a 16-week period. The experiential character education curriculum focused on the six constructs of respect,

responsibility, caring, trustworthiness, citizenship, and fairness. Paper and pencil pretests and posttests, consisting of 39 statements, were administered to a control group and an experimental group to measure changes in their self-reported attitudes and behavior toward the six constructs. The Likert-scale instrument was designed by the researcher and three other Iowa State University Extension Service employees (another researcher and two Youth Development Specialists) because no already developed instrument was found that appropriately met the program goals.

Hypotheses

More specifically, this study investigated the following six hypotheses:

1. The experimental group will report a statistically significantly higher level of respect than the control group at posttest.

2. The experimental group will report a statistically significantly higher level of responsibility than the control group at posttest.

3. The experimental group will report a statistically significantly higher level of caring than the control group at posttest.

4.   The experimental group will report a statistically significantly higher level of trustworthiness than the control group at posttest.

5.   The experimental group will report a statistically significantly higher level of citizenship than the control group at posttest.

6.   The experimental group will report a statistically significantly higher level of fairness than the control group at posttest.

Definitions of Terms

1.   Character education: The long-term process of helping young people develop good character; for example knowing, caring about, and acting upon core ethical values such as fairness, honesty, compassion, responsibility, and respect for self and others (The Character Education Partnership, 1994, p. 2).

2.   Caring: Showing understanding, kindness, and concern for others.

3.   Citizenship: Learning to work with others, to make good decisions, and to obey the laws.

4.   Fairness: Making decisions based on treating people honestly and free from bias.

5.   Respect: Treating people with dignity, worth, and as individuals.

6. Responsibility: Being held accountable for things that are within your power to control.

7. Trustworthiness: Being worthy of trust, honor, and confidence.

8. Iowa State University Extension Service: Educational outreach arm of Iowa State University, having offices and staff in every county in the state, with the mission of providing research-based information to help Iowans make better decisions.

9. Journaling activity: A weekly one page (or more, if the student desired) assigned writing activity where sixth grade students shared their thoughts and feelings about the statement or question posed at the conclusion of each week's character education lesson.

10. Cross-age teaching: Any program which uses youth to work with other youth, help other youth, or both.

11. Experiential curriculum: Designed using the experiential learning model of experiencing an activity, sharing the experience by describing what happened, processing the experience to identify common themes, generalizing from the experience to form principles that can be used in real life situations, and applying what was learned to another situation (Extension Service, United States Department of Agriculture, 1992).

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The review of literature is organized into four sections. Section one presents definitions and characteristics of a moral person, section two explores various principles and elements of character education in schools, section three examines the history of character education in American schools, and section four reviews evaluation of specific character education programs in American schools.

Definitions and Characteristics of a Moral Person

The Character Education Partnership (CEP) defines character education as "the long-term process of helping young people develop good character; for example, knowing, caring about, and acting upon core ethical values such as fairness, honesty, compassion, responsibility, and respect for self and others" (1994, p. 2).

Defining a person of good character, however, is an enormous and incredibly complex task. Hanson (1992b) believes that promoters of character education nationwide have a real salesmanship job ahead to overcome objections and secure funding. "You can't sell something if you don't

know what it is. That is why, as with all beginnings, there are the words," he states (1992b, p. 65). According to Ted Sizer, "Good character is like pornography: difficult to define, but easy to recognize" (cited by The National Center For Effective Schools, 1994, p. 5).

Walker, Pitts, Hennig, and Matsuba (cited in Killen and Hart, 1995) provide a list of identified descriptors of the exemplary moral person from research conducted in Canada. The twelve most common characteristics, in descending order of prevalence, are: (a) compassionate or caring, (b) consistent, (c) honest, (d) self-sacrificing, (e) open-minded, (f) thoughtful or rational, (g) socially active, (h) just, (i) courageous, (j) virtuous, (k) autonomous, and (l) empathic or sensitive. Berkowitz (1995) less formally found the same basic set of responses in the United States, Scotland, Switzerland, and the Netherlands. He states, "We need, in essence, an anatomy of the moral person in order to be able to design our educational endeavours [sic] so as to optimally contribute to the formation of the future citizens of our societies" (p. 4).

Ryan (1993) agreed that what constitutes a "good person" has paralyzed many sincere educators and non-educators. Many educators despair when trying to come up with a shared vision of the good person to guide curriculum

builders. He further explained that the work of C. S. Lewis

may provide educators with the multicultural model of a good

person that we are seeking. Lewis (1947) discovered that

certain ideas about how one becomes a good person recur in

the writing of the ancient Egyptians, Babylonians, Hebrews,

Chinese, Norse, Indians, and Greeks, and in Anglo-Saxon and

American writings as well. He called this universal path to

becoming a good person the "Tao" which included values of

kindness, honesty, loyalty to parents, spouses, and family

members, an obligation to help the poor, the sick and the

less fortunate, and the right to private property.

Berkowitz (1995) identified language as a significant

impediment to an integrated model of moral education. He

maintained that there is profound confusion of rhetoric in

this field, with usage of a potpourri of terminology that is

inconsistent. He attributed the confusion to the usage of

terms that are not interchangeable, and to which most

educators are apparently not aware. Thus, education in this

field is currently alternatively referred to as

> values education, character education, moral
> education, personal and social education, citizenship
> education, civic education, religious education,
> moralogy, and democratic education, among other
> rubrics. Now, it would not be so worrisome nor so
> troublesome if these terms were truly interchangeable,
> but they are not. Values and character are not
> equivalent....Furthermore, values and character are not
> necessarily in the domain of morals. (p. 4)

Former U.S. Secretary of Education, William Bennett
(cited in Benninga, 1991), explained that

> The term 'values' may suggest that judgments of
> right and wrong, noble and base, just and unjust, are
> mere personal preferences, that things are worthwhile
> only if and insofar as individuals happen to 'value'
> them.
> We need to reach for a new term. Because these
> issues are not matters of mere personal taste, let me
> propose that we reconsider the enterprise now known as
> 'the teaching of values.' Let me suggest that we re-
> label that enterprise as the effort to help form the
> character of the young. (p. 131)

The terminology in the United States now favors using

"character education," although there is still failure to

adequately define this terminology. Berkowitz (1995) formed

an analogy between this field of study and Humpty Dumpty.

He says, "Humpty Dumpty has not only broken into pieces, but

we find ourselves unable to agree on the names of the pieces

or even what the task is. No wonder the field is so

fractionated" (p. 6). Berkowitz thinks the best approach is

a dialectical one which makes optimal use of knowledge from

all the diverse domains. It should revolve around how to

best explain and influence moral growth, given all the

available knowledge and theoretical perspectives. He

further explains that an effective and justifiable approach

to moral education should begin with a clear and accurate

understanding of the nature of the moral person. He

proposes a taxonomy of a moral person composed of seven

parts: moral values, moral behavior, moral character, moral emotion, moral reasoning, moral identity, and meta-moral characteristics (1995).

Berkowitz (1995) further believed that moral character is related to both behavior and values. He distinguished two major ways in which the term character is used. First, character refers to the way one tends to act or behave. If one acts dishonestly or selfishly, then one manifests bad character. If one acts honestly and altruistically, one manifests good character. The second use of the term refers to personality, or being a "person of character," similar to the original Aristotelian view of virtue. This second view of character is still closely tied to behavior because virtue is believed to originate in habitual behaviors and to lead to moral behavior. Aristotle also argued that reflection is central to virtue because there must be awareness of the value of the behavior. Thus, the primary goal of character education is the development of moral habits that will hopefully become character traits or virtues. Berkowitz (1995) also stated that the promotion of unreflective habits is more developmentally appropriate in the primary schools. At the secondary level, the active reflection on the moral validity of habits is more

appropriate. Then, habits can evolve into ethically justifiable character traits.

Principles and Elements of Character Education in Schools

As schools confront the causes of our deepest societal problems, questions of character loom large. Schools can play an important role in developing character in students. Individuals, groups, or both have differing thoughts on what they believe should be the basic principles and elements of character education in schools. This section will examine these varied thoughts. It is easy to see that there will not be, and probably never will be, agreement on every moral issue.

As The Ethics Resource Center (1994) stated in The Teaching of Ethics, "No one would argue that schools ought not to teach physics because many questions remain unanswered. We teach what we know so the next generation can help us solve our unanswered questions. The same is true of our moral knowledge" (p. 8).

Although the language, theory, and psychology about character development is complicated, fractionated, and inconsistent, polls generally demonstrate that the vast majority of parents are strongly in favor of public moral

education (Berkowitz, 1995). How this is to be done is the question.

The Character Education Partnership (CEP) began in March of 1993 as a national nonprofit, nonpartisan coalition committed to putting character development at the top of the nation's educational agenda. As mentioned previously, they define character education as, "the long-term process of helping young people develop good character; for example knowing, caring about, and acting upon core ethical values such as fairness, honesty, compassion, responsibility, and respect for self and others" (1994, p. 2). Character education calls for teaching, sharing, and modeling moral beliefs, not imposing or coercing one's values.

According to Pritchard (1988), character education typically endorses a specific content to be learned, a set of qualities and moral virtues. It also concentrates directly on behavior that reflects the acceptance of the relevant values and emphasizes the motivational, relatively stable aspects of personality that direct an individual's actions.

There is a wide variety of materials, techniques, and strategies currently used to provide character education in schools. However, The CEP (1996) stated that "There is no

single formula or method for providing effective character education" (p. 9).

The Character Education Partnership believes that character education is an essential element of successful school reform (cited in Lickona, 1993). In a CEP publication, <u>Eleven Principles of Effective Character Education</u>, Lickona, Schaps, and Lewis (1995), outlined basic principles of effective character education, as follows:

1. Character education promotes core ethical values as the basis of good character.

2. "Character" must be comprehensively defined to include thinking, feeling, and behavior.

3. Effective character education requires an intentional, proactive, and comprehensive approach that promotes the core values in all phases of school life.

4. The school must be a caring community.

5. To develop character, students need opportunities for moral action.

6. Effective character education includes a meaningful and challenging academic curriculum that respects all learners and helps them succeed.

7. Character education should strive to develop students' intrinsic motivation.

8. The school staff must become a learning and moral community in which all share responsibility for character education and attempt to adhere to the same core values that guide the education of students.

9. Character education requires moral leadership from both staff and students.

10. The school must recruit parents and community members as full partners in the character-building effort.

11. Evaluation of character education should assess the character of the school, the school staff's functioning as character educators, and the extent to which students manifest good character.

In July 1992, the Josephson Institute of Ethics convened a conference of 29 leading educators and youth leaders to discuss how character education might be systematically advanced by coordination between various groups and by reaching a consensus on what constitutes the core ethical values of American society. They looked for words to describe the ethical values that they believed form the core of a democratic society and of good individual character. The diverse group reached a consensus on six core values, called "pillars" of character, they think should be common to all values education programs and that are not racially, culturally, religiously, or politically

biased. The identified "pillars" include: "trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, justice and fairness, caring, and civic virtue and citizenship" (Hanson, 1992a, p. 34). The conference participants explained that if character education is to work society-wide, diverse groups are going to have to work together. According to Hanson (1992b), "A standard lexicon is critical because language is the currency of communication" (p. 65). Effective character education depends on consistency and repetition. A common language also promises the greatest likelihood that programs or organizations promoting the consensus language will be better able to attract funding, which is critical to long-term success. Conference participants endorsed a statement of principle, called the Aspen Declaration on Character Education (Hanson, 1992b) which reads as follows:

> 1. The next generation will be the stewards of our communities, nation, and planet in extraordinarily critical times.
> 2. In such times, the well-being of our society requires an involved, caring citizenry with good moral character.
> 3. People do not automatically develop good moral character; therefore, conscientious efforts must be made to instruct young people in the values and abilities necessary for moral decision making and conduct.
> 4. Effective character education is based on core ethical values rooted in a democratic society; in particular, respect, responsibility, trustworthiness, caring, justice and fairness, and civic virtue and citizenship.
> 5. These core ethical values transcend cultural, religious, and socio-economic differences.

6. Character education is, first and foremost, an obligation of families and faith communities, but schools and youth service organizations also have responsibility to help develop the character of young people

7. These responsibilities are best achieved when these groups work in concert.

8. The character and conduct of our youth reflect the character and conduct of society; therefore, every adult has the responsibility to teach and model the core ethical values and every social institution has the responsibility to promote the development of good character. (p. 64)

Lickona (1983) asserted, "A child is the only known substance from which a responsible adult can be made" (preface). He further delineated what character education must do to develop good character in the young. First, there must be an adequate theory of what good character is, one which gives schools a clear idea of their goals. Character must be broadly conceived to encompass the cognitive, affective, and behavioral aspects of morality. Schools need to help children understand the core values, adopt or commit to them, and then act upon them in their own lives. Once there is a comprehensive concept of character, a comprehensive, holistic approach to develop it—especially in the classroom--is needed. Lickona (1993) explained that in classroom practice, a comprehensive approach to character education obligates an individual teacher to:

1. Act as caregiver, model, and mentor to students

2. Create a moral community in the classroom

3. Practice moral discipline

4. Create a democratic classroom environment

5. Teach values through the curriculum

6. Use cooperative learning

7. Develop the "conscience of craft" to foster student appreciation of learning and capacity for hard work

8. Encourage moral reflection

9. Teach conflict resolution

10. Foster caring beyond the classoom

11. Create a positive moral culture in the school

12. Recruit parents and the community as partners in character education. (pp. 10-11)

Brooks and Kahn (1993) delineated the following eleven essential elements of character education programs that insure student conduct and enrichment of the educational movement:

1. Direct instruction: the teaching of character values must be purposeful and direct

2. Language-based curriculum: students need to learn the basic vocabulary and language that expresses core concepts and links the words to explicit behavior

3. Positive language: students must know what is expected of them translated into explicit positive language

4. Content and process: each should be a part of a character education curriculum

5. Visual reinforcement: using signs, banners, and other attention-getting means

6. School climate approach: in the classroom, office, hallway, cafeteria, bus, and on the playground and into the home and neighborhood

7. Teacher-friendly materials: those that require limited training and preparation

8. Teacher flexibility and creativity: to adjust character education lessons to individual teaching and learning styles

9. Student participation: so students can develop a sense of ownership

10. Parental involvement and then some: character education is most effective and enduring when routinely involving and conferring with parents

11. Evaluation: implementation of character education programs must include preassessment of goals, occasional consultations during the program, and a postevaluation of results

Williams (1993) stated that character education in schools manifests itself in teacher practice as respect for each student as a responsible, active learner. The "model teacher" understands that students require an environment of mutual trust and respect. She describes "model teachers" as those who (a) present clear, consistent, and sincere messages; (b) do not pull rank (are never authoritarian); (c) communicate high expectations; (d) listen actively; (e) communicate their commitment through actions; (f) are hard-

working and really care about their students' learning; and

(g) command and deserve respect.

Huffman (1993) believed that character education must

pervade all aspects of a school's operation and influence

its ethos. All segments of the school community must feel a

responsibility for, and a commitment to, nurturing the moral

development of students. Huffman's school district developed

an action plan for a comprehensive character education

program which consisted of the following:

        1.   Identifying a core of values as the heart of
our character education efforts
        2.   Presenting the strategies to the staff and
community
        3.   Writing the core values into the existing K-12
curriculum
        4.   Asking each school in the district to write a
behavior code that reflects our core values
        5.   Encouraging all employee groups to acknowledge
their role in the development of ethical students
        6.   Providing an ongoing character education
parenting program for the community
        7.   Developing community service programs at both
elementary and secondary levels
        8.   Asking each school to create a caring
environment that ensures the success of each student.
        (pp. 25-26)

The Personal Responsibility Education Process (PREP) is

a grassroots approach to character education that seeks to

strengthen student responsibility (Moody and McKay, 1993).

PREP helps schools in the St. Louis metropolitan area build

consensus about which character traits to reinforce.

According to Sanford McDonnell, chair of PREP and Chairman

Emeritus of McDonnell Douglas Corporation (cited in Moody
and McKay), "PREP does not promote one set of values, but it
gives schools a process that lets them rediscover their own
values and reinforce them" (p. 28). Furthermore, PREP
provides opportunities for learning to value citizenship
education and being responsible. Schools can find many
character traits they can include in the curriculum with the
full support of the entire community. The most important
element in PREP is collaboration.

The Association for Supervision and Curriculum
Development sees service-learning as an essential element of
character education. Association affiliates are encouraged
to provide leadership for the establishment of required
service programs that span all ages, all students, the
curriculum, and the community (Howard, 1993). The
Association asserts that service-learning is character
education applied.

The Heartwood Institute, established by Eleanor Childs,
recommends the use of multicultural literature to help
children learn seven character attributes: courage,
loyalty, justice, respect, hope, honesty, and love. Childs
(cited in Logan, 1995) maintains that schools are perfect
places for teaching character education since there are

basic universal ideas that teachers already deal with every day such as justice, loyalty, and honesty.

According to Burrett and Rusnak (1993), an integrated character education model recognizes both the affective and cognitive factors involved in educating the whole child and ultimately the responsible adult. Two key principles are emphasized when character education is implemented in schools. First is the recognition that character education is a part of every subject. Second, the school and community must be viewed as partners in character education efforts. Other important principles that are recommended include a positive classroom environment, empowered teachers, character education as action education, and character education supported through administrative policy and practice.

History of Character Education in American Schools

The ancient Greek philosopher, Heraclitus (cited in Lickona, 1993) wrote, "Character is destiny" (p. 11). Wynne (1995) stated, "There's really nothing so new at all about the proposed character approach" (p. 152). He sees the character approach being revitalized now and attracting more supporters, while the pick-your-own values approaches are falling into disfavor.

Ryan (1993) explained that

> Our founders and early educational pioneers saw in the
> very diverse, multicultural American scene of the late
> 18th and early 19th centuries the clear need for a
> school system that would teach the civic virtues
> necessary to maintain the novel political and social
> experiment. They saw the school's role not only as
> contributing to a person's understanding of what it is
> to be good, but also as teaching the enduring habits
> required of a democratic citizen. (p. 16)

Huffman (1993) stated that America's public schools

have historically viewed character development as a major

mission. In fact, the early schools treated the

transmission of knowledge as secondary to character

development. Titus (1994) also stated that character

education was a part of every school in America in the early

decades of the 20th century.

Leming (1993) explained that the 1990s are not the

first time in our country's history that character education

has captured the attention of educators. Character

education became a major preoccupation in the first three

decades of this century. There was a mood then, among the

population and among educators, that social stability was

being threatened and that moral standards needed to be

strengthened. Factors such an increased industrialization

and urbanization, the tide of immigration, World War I, the

Bolshevik Revolution, and the spirit of the Roaring '20s

contributed to this mood.

During the 1920s and 1930s, almost every American school was responding in some way to the educational goal of developing character (McClellan, 1992). Between 1924 and 1929, Hartshorne and May (1928-1930) conducted the Character Education Inquiry, the most detailed and comprehensive study to date into the nature of character and the school's role in its development. The study, which focused on student deceit and service, concluded that the incidence of deceit varied widely in classrooms and schools, and that honesty was situational. Another conclusion reached was that the mere urging of honest behavior by teachers, or the discussion of standards and ideals of honesty, had no necessary correlation to behavior.

By the 1950s, character education goals and objectives were greatly reduced in school curriculums (The CEP, 1996). There are several explanations for this change of view. There was the growing recognition that education in the moral domain is highly complex, the philosophical sway of logical positivism which led to questioning the school's role in imparting moral principles, and the inability to objectively measure results of moral education. All knowledge, including values, was seen as changing, situational, and relative (Titus, 1994). School officials

began to shy away from moral education altogether as a way of avoiding controversy and potential litigation.

The 1960s began a new period of interest, although moral relativism and cultural pluralism undermined the nation's consensus on moral character (Heslep, 1995). Kohlberg linked his cognitive-developmental theory of moral reasoning with the practice of moral reasoning in schools, specifically moral dilemma discussions. The teacher facilitated student reasoning, assisted in resolving moral conflicts, and ensured that the discussion took place in an environment for stage growth in moral reasoning.

During the 1960s and 1970s, the Values Clarification movement also became widely used in schools (The CEP, 1996). Clarification and introspection of one's values through a questioning was the main focus. This approach offered no guidance as to what ought to stand as acceptable moral values. The teacher facilitated the valuing process, withheld personal opinions so as not to influence students' thought, and was nonjudgmental in regard to whatever values the students arrived at. As Simon, Howe, and Kirshenbaum (1972) stated, "The values clarification approach tries to help young people answer some...questions and build their own value system" (p. 18).

According to The Character Education Partnership (1996), "By the 1980s, the moral climate in many U.S. schools had degenerated to the point where poor attitudes and disciplinary problems among significant numbers of students made constructive educational activities increasingly difficult" (pp. 4-5).

By the mid-1980s, a number of communities in various parts of the United States, including Baltimore and St. Louis, began a process which led to the reintroduction of character education in their local schools. According to Grossnickle and Stephens (1992)

> In 1986, the U.S. Supreme Court supported the nature of character education in its Bethel v. Fraser ruling, stating, 'The process of educating our youth for citizenship in public schools is not confined to books, the curriculum, or civics classes; schools must teach by example the shared values of a civilized social order.'" (p. 17)

In 1992, a Wingspread Conference was held in Wisconsin to discuss "How to Provide Effective K-12 Character Education" (The CEP, 1996). Leaders associated with the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, Princeton Project 55, and the Johnson Foundation were a part of this conference, which sought to give greater attention and priority to character education and which also recommended formation of a new national coalition to support these efforts.

In 1992, as mentioned previously, the Josephson Institute of Ethics, coordinated a conference and issued a statement on character education, the Aspen Declaration on Character Education. In 1993, the Institute formed the Character Counts! Coalition which is a national partnership of organizations involved in the education, training, and care of youth based on the six "pillars of character."

In 1993, many of the individuals who were active participants at the Wingspread Conference, the Aspen meetings, or both formed The Character Education Partnership. This national, non-profit, nonpartisan coalition dedicates itself to developing good character and civic virtue in young people as one way of promoting a more compassionate and responsible society (The CEP, 1996).

Since 1993, state governments have enacted new policies and legislation regarding active support of character education. As local interest in character education continues to grow, State Departments of Education--though varying greatly--play a critical role as a support system for implementation efforts at the grass-roots level.

The character education movement continues to gain momentum in American schools. Something significant is happening. No one knows yet how broad or deep this movement

is. We have no studies to tell us what percentage of schools are making what kind of effort (Lickona, 1993).

Evaluation of Character Education Programs in American Schools

From a practical standpoint, one cannot live with assumptions about an educational program's effectiveness. To demonstrate effectiveness and establish the credibility of any educational program, including character education, scientific assessments are necessary. Leming (1993) pointed out that research can not inform practice with only informal evaluations of low generalizability.

Efforts to evaluate character education are not new. Hartshorne and May's studies in the 1920s with 10,000 school children found that some classrooms in the same school were significantly more honest than other classrooms, a difference that the researchers attributed to the moral climate created by the teacher (Lickona, 1991).

There was a renewed interest in evaluating moral education in the 1970s, with a shift away from assessing behavior to trying to evaluate the quality of students' thinking (Lickona, 1991). Kohlberg's moral dilemma discussions and values clarification were comparatively evaluated during this time period. Through research reviews, there is fairly consistent evidence of the

effectiveness of Kohlberg-based moral reasoning programs, but little empirical support for values clarification.

Despite recent attempts, overall, there is a critical lack of empirical information on the effects of character education programs in schools. There also is a lack of tested instruments that have been used in such evaluations, no standard instrumentation, or any standard method within which they could be employed (Weed, 1995). "Character education is in its infancy," said S. Weed (personal communication, February 2, 1996) at a National Character Education Partnership Forum. He further explained that, "Nobody has done much research. Mistakes will be made and we can learn from them."

Pritchard (1988) maintained that the object of investigation is "enormously complex" (p. 484). It is difficult to precisely isolate what it is about particular school experiences that cultivate growth of character in students.

According to Leming (1993), the current revival of interest in character education, if it is to succeed, has to successfully address the question of the assessment of program effectiveness. Like the 1920s, few of the current character education programs have systematically evaluated their effects on children through controlled evaluations.

Two approaches exist regarding the evaluation of
contemporary character education programs (Leming, 1993).
The first approach relies on informal evaluation methods
that collect anecdotal evidence or that survey teachers and
administrators. This approach does not attempt to control
for potential bias in information on student behaviors, nor
does it compare students within the programs with non-
program students. The second approach utilizes experimental
design, focuses on student behaviors, compares program
students with non-program students, and attempts to control
for potential sources of bias.

Informal Evaluation Approach

Some schools and districts have informally recorded
positive results after beginning a character education
program.

The Association for Supervision and Curriculum
Development (1995) described how Los Angeles area schools,
using curriculum from The Jefferson Center for Character
Education, found substantial declines in the median number
of discipline problems reported by school administrators in
the first year. Brooks and Kann (1993) further described
the effectiveness of character education at the 25
elementary and middle schools completing the Jefferson

Center-LAUSD pilot during the 1990-91 school year. Major discipline problems decreased by 25%, minor discipline problems went down 39%, suspensions fell by 16%, tardiness dropped by 40%, and unexcused absences declined by 18%.

The Allen Elementary School in Dayton, Ohio, now known as the Allen Classical Academy, reported similar results as well as tremendous increases in students' academic performance (Scott, 1992).

According to M. J. Aguilar (personal communication, February 2, 1995), the public schools in Albuquerque, New Mexico reported increases in positive student behavior both inside and outside the classroom after an implemented character development program.

The Character Education Institute in San Antonio, Texas also noted positive results from schools who used their K-6 character education curriculum materials, which have been produced and used for over twenty years. These results were summarized after soliciting testimonials and using other informal evaluation methods (Goble & Brooks, cited in Leming, 1993).

According to The CEP (1996), annual evaluations of The Personal Responsibility Education Process (PREP) in area schools demonstrate that after implementing PREP, there is better student behavior, fewer office referrals for

disciplinary reasons, improved academic performance, and more positive teacher attitudes toward students.

The Heartwood Institute reported "excellent results" from teachers who used their curriculum (The CEP, 1996, p. 56). Students were more attentive, showed more concern for others, and were more inclined to discuss disagreements than to fight about them.

Formal Evaluation Approach

Some schools and districts have attempted to formally evaluate implemented character education programs.

According to Berkowitz (1995), the single most impressive and successful program in moral education is the Child Development Project (CDP) in San Ramon, California. It is a multi-faceted approach to child moral development, with classroom, school-wide, and family components. The CDP conducted an in-depth study and has produced the most comprehensive results of character education research, including longitudinal studies since 1983. Classroom practices such as supportiveness, cooperation, student thinking and discussion, and an emphasis on prosocial values, led to improved interpersonal and academic behavior. These classroom practices specifically affected student outcomes such as learning motivation, concern for others,

and conflict resolution skills. These outcomes were evaluated over several years using instruments developed and tested by researchers employed by The Child Development Project.

Weed completed two scientific evaluations of character education programs in Utah. The first evaluation (1995, January) involved kindergarten through sixth-grade schools in the Weber County district. Each grade level's curriculum was written by a different group of teachers, which may explain the varied evaluation results. Overall effects for the program were mixed. Some grades, particularly second and fifth, showed positive program effects in the short-term using pre-post comparisons. These results were stronger for schools with higher levels of program implementation. A committed principal who provided ongoing support and encouragement was an important factor in schools that consistently scored better (1995, January).

Weed (1995, May) also completed a major evaluation of the AEGIS kindergarten through sixth-grade, character education program which attempted to facilitate the value acquisition process. From prior and extensive research on adolescents, Weed knew that character flaws and value deficits have a strong and direct causal relationship to risky and self-destructive behavior (1995, May). Weed's

research showed that character education has real promise as a way to cope with the myriad of social problems we face in our society (1995, May). Evaluation results of the first generation program demonstrated reductions in alcohol experimentation, tobacco experimentation, and a ten-fold decrease in drug experimentation for seventh-graders previously involved in the AEGIS character education program. Discipline problems dropped by 140% in the grade school classes. Comparison between seventh-grade program students (who had four years of character education during elementary school) and non-program students also showed significant differences between students on several key measures for the particular year--1993--researched. Program students scored significantly higher on the personal standards scale, lower on rebelliousness, higher on personal efficacy, higher on ethical behavior, and higher on recognition of ethical behavior having a positive effect on their future. Weed's research also showed a dramatic personal affect on teachers. In a survey conducted with teachers, 90% of them said they would give up "something else" and do character education again next year. Weed's research showed strong parental support for character education as well. In a survey involving paired rankings relative to all core subjects taught in a school, parents

ranked reading and writing as top priority, math as second
priority, and character education as their third choice
(1996). Weed stated that the research and evaluation
component was very much a part of the original design of the
program. Evaluation strategy was directly tied to goals,
purposes, and assumptions. Three elements--design,
analysis, and measurement--were carefully prepared and
integrated.

At The National Character Education Partnership Forum,
S. Weed (personal communication, February 3, 1996)
recommended establishing a baseline to determine what is
going on before the intervention. He stated that the
easiest research method is a matched comparison, using a
Solomen-four, group design for data analysis. He also
recommended multiple measures (where possible) and suggested
short-term and long-term studies, pre and posttesting,
longitudinal studies, anecdotal reports on student behavior
from teachers, anecdotal reports from teachers relating to
job satisfaction and morale, and anecdotal reports from
parents to ascertain their level of support and to engage
them in a significant and positive way.

Current research has several limitations, according to
Leming (1993). The majority of programs have been limited
to elementary schools. He found this puzzling since the

rise of current interest in character education was stimulated largely over concern by adolescent risk-taking behaviors. Since research with adolescent samples has shown that it is difficult to sustain program effects over time, Leming felt it is essential that research on character education for the adolescent group receive intensive attention. He also noted that all studies that have utilized multiple classrooms have detected considerable variations in program effects between classrooms. This may be explained through differences in program implementation or through the nature of the teacher and the classroom climate established. Another limitation of current research is that there is no study that has attempted to assess whether reading morally inspiring literature has the expected effect on character, even though many people interested in character education believe this should be a part of any program.

Today a body of research, although slim, does exist related to character education that can inform practice and assist in the development of effective programs. Based on this research, Leming (1993) offered information on establishing effective character education programs. Didactic methods (codes, pledges, teacher exhortation) alone do not have any significant or lasting effect on character.

Character develops within a social web or environment. Behavior is shaped by clear rules of conduct, student ownership of those rules, supportive environments, and satisfaction from complying with the norms of the environment. Character educators should not expect character formation to be easy.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

This study examined the impact of a six-trait pilot character education program, called BOOMERANG, on sixth-grade students' reported attitudes and behaviors of six character constructs.

This chapter, organized in four sections, contains a description of the procedures followed in this study. Section one describes the subjects, section two explains the instruments used in the study, section three details the intervention procedures, and section four explains the method of data analysis used in the study.

Subjects

The subjects for this study consisted of 80 sixth-grade students enrolled in a middle school in a small Midwestern town during the 1995-96 school year. One experimental group and one control group were utilized for this study. Students were randomly assigned to either the experimental or control group, as explained in the Intervention Procedures section. The 40 students in each group were assigned to two classes consisting of 20 students in each, 10 males and 10 females.

The age range of students in the experimental and control groups was from 11 to 12 years. The subjects were overwhelmingly white, middle-class students of the Protestant faith.

Selection of Subjects

During the 1995-96 school year, (specifically January to May 1996), sixth-grade students in a small Midwestern town were randomly assigned to an experimental or control group for a pilot character education study. Two classes were included as part of the experimental group and two classes were included as part of the control group. Students were selected for the two experimental classes first. This was accomplished by selecting one slip of paper out of five that had numbers one through five written on them. The number four was randomly pulled out. Starting at the top of the alphabetized list of sixth-grade students, the middle school principal counted down four names. This student was placed in an experimental class. This procedure was continued through the list of students' names until the first experimental class was selected. This same procedure was used to select the second experimental class. The remainder of sixth-grade students were considered control group students.

Instruments

There were two different instruments used to collect data. A student survey provided an objective measure. A set of focus-group questions provided a qualitative measure.

Student Survey

One instrument used for this study was titled "BOOMERANG Character Education Program Student Survey" (Appendix A), which was developed in 1996 by the researcher, in conjunction with another researcher and two Youth Development Field Specialists, all employed by Iowa State University Extension Service. This was done because no already developed instrument was found that appropriately met the program goals. Approval for the study and the data collection process was obtained from the University of Northern Iowa Human Subjects Review Board. The student survey instrument was administered to experimental and control groups of sixth-grade students using the pre and posttest approach. The same instrument was used at both data collection times to assess students' perceived attitudinal and behavioral changes.

The student survey instrument was a paper and pencil self-report, centering around the six character constructs of caring, citizenship, fairness, respect, responsibility,

and trustworthiness. The instrument consisted of 39 items with a five-point Likert scale, yielding a range of scores between 47 (lowest possible score) and 187 (highest possible score). The 39-item instrument consisted of two pages of statements and utilized a five-point Likert scale. A value of 1 was considered "not at all," 2 was considered "not very often," 3 was considered "some of the time," 4 was considered "most of the time," 5 was considered "always," and no response was given a value of 0. A high score indicated a student perception of more caring, citizenship, fairness, respect, responsibility, or trustworthiness. Examples of statements used in the instrument include "I respect my classmate's opinions," "My classmates are honest with one another," "I treat my classmates fairly," and "My classmates care about me."

In the instrument, questions 1, 7, 13, 19, 25, and 31 relate to the concept of fairness. The range of scores for this sub-scale was 6 to 30. One example of a statement relating to fairness is "My classmates treat each other fairly." Questions 2, 8, 14, 20, 26, and 32 relate to the concept of responsibility. The range of scores for this sub-scale was 6 to 30. One example of a statement relating to responsibility is "I think before I act." Questions 3, 9, 15, 21, 27, 33, 37, and 39 relate to the concept of

citizenship. The range of scores for this sub-scale was 8 to 40. One example of a statement relating to citizenship is "I help make my school a good place to be." Questions 4, 10, 16, 22, 28, 34, and 38 relate to the concept of respect. The range of scores for this sub-scale was 11 to 31. One example of a statement relating to the concept of respect is "My opinions are respected by my classmates." Questions 5, 11, 17, 23, 29, and 35 relate to the concept of caring. The range of scores for this sub-scale was 10 to 26. One example of a statement relating to the concept of caring is "My classmates treat each other with kindness." Questions 6, 12, 18, 24, 30, and 36 relate to the concept of trustworthiness. The range of scores for this sub-scale was 6 to 30. One example of a statement relating to the concept of trustworthiness is " I can rely upon my classmates to keep promises."

An Iowa State University Extension researcher conducted a reliability co-efficient analysis with the pooled sample regarding the six character traits. This showed an internal consistency in the way students responded to items across the six dimensions. The instrument showed sufficient internal reliability, as reported in Chapter 4, to use with the variables as specified.

Focus-Group Questions

The second instrument used for this study was a set of predetermined questions (Appendix B) utilized in focus-group interviews. This instrument was prepared in 1995 by the researcher and two Youth Development Field Specialists, all employed by Iowa State University Extension Service. The instrument consisted of nine open-ended questions. One example of a question is "How do you feel about what you have been doing in the BOOMERANG program?"

To administer this instrument, each question was separately asked. The researcher then paused to allow for student responses. If there was confusion or a lack of response, questions were rephrased for clarification or probes were given such as, "How are some of the rest of you feeling about this?" or "Do others of you feel the same way or differently?"

Intervention Procedures

This section is organized into three parts to describe the design of the intervention, the intervention procedure, and the testing and data collection.

Design of the Intervention

Two experimental classes, consisting of 20 students each, participated in a weekly, pilot character education program session. One experimental class met first period in the morning, with students excused from 15 minutes of Channel 1 News and 15 minutes of one of their classes. The second experimental class met during the last period in the afternoon, with students excused from 15 minutes of one of their classes and 15 minutes of homeroom. Each class was taught a weekly 30-minute experiential character education lesson by a team of four trained high school students.

The two control groups remained in their regular classrooms. Depending on the time of day, the control students either watched 15 minutes of Channel 1 News, along with 15 minutes of one class, or participated in 15 minutes of homeroom and 15 minutes of one of their classes. Thus, these students were not taught the weekly, 30-minute character education lessons, did not participate in the weekly journaling activity and were not trained in any other program.

Two teams of high school students from the same school district taught sixth-graders the BOOMERANG character education lessons. Each team, finalized after a selection process, was composed of one male and three females. A team

of four high-schoolers in each class allowed for one-on-one and small-group interaction with sixth-grade students due to the low student-teacher ratio.

High school students interested in serving as cross-age teachers for the pilot character education program were selected through an application and interview process. Because the high school was concerned about students missing class time, a prerequisite for students' participation was an assigned study hall during the scheduled program delivery time.

Information was distributed that described the program, its goals, and necessary student qualifications and characteristics. High school staff also were asked to recommend students.

High school students indicated their interest by completing a written application form. They then were contacted for individual interviews so that the program and time commitment could be explained. During the interview, students also were asked about their goals for participating in the program. Teams of high school cross-age teachers were selected based on these guidelines. Students also were asked to sign a contract that included parental and staff approval.

The eight high school students selected as cross-age teachers were trained at a two-day, overnight retreat. They received 15 hours of education in basic principles of youth development, teamwork, teaching techniques, group processing, and the curriculum content. The training was provided by the researcher and three Youth Development Field Specialists, all employed by Iowa State University Extension Service.

The trained teams of high school cross-age teachers were assigned to an experimental class based on their available study hall time. The teams taught character education lessons to their respective experimental groups every Monday for 16 weeks.

Intervention Procedure

The character education lessons were 30 minutes long and emphasized the character traits of caring, citizenship, fairness, respect, responsibility, and trustworthiness. The pilot curriculum used was written by the researcher, utilizing the experiential learning model (Figure 1). Each lesson was sequential, building on the previous lesson.
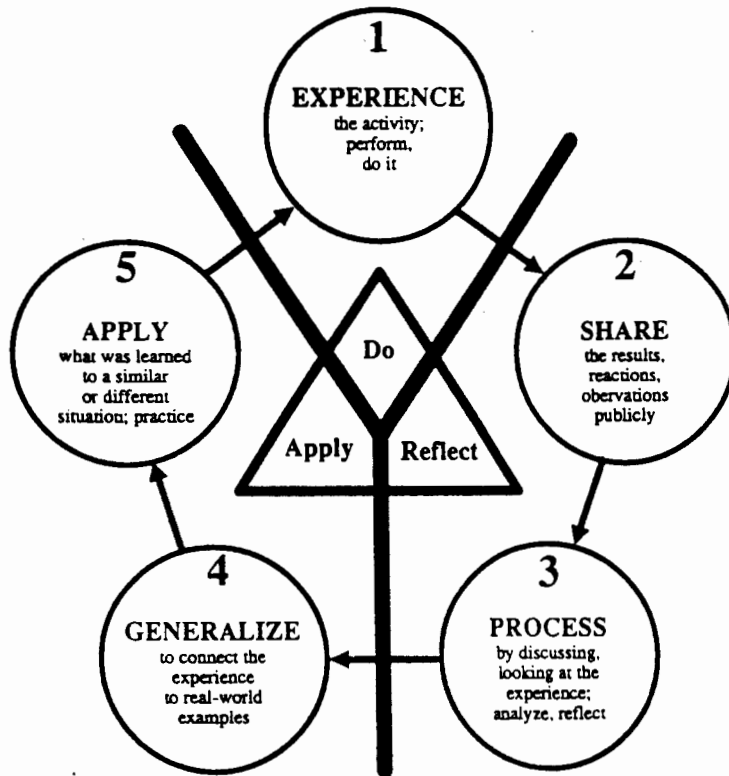
Figure 1. The Experiential Learning Model (Extension Service, U.S.D.A., 1992).

Weekly character education lessons were designed using a similar format. A sample lesson included the following:

1. The lesson began with a 2-3 minute discussion and review of the previous week's lesson.

2. A tower-building activity was introduced and directions were explained. Sixth-grade students were divided into small groups and participated in the small-group activity for approximately 10 to 15 minutes.

3.   The results of the tower-building activity were shared for a few minutes, via observation and judging of towers.

4.   In the next five minutes, high school students used processing questions to give feedback and to help the sixth-graders analyze and reflect on their experiences in the activity.

5.   Discussion continued, tying this activity to the character traits of caring, respect, and responsibility.   If not previously done, each character trait was defined and explained.   Positive character traits and behaviors, such as teamwork and cooperation, that were demonstrated during the activity were noted.

6.   To help sixth-graders generalize the lesson, experiences and examples were shared from each others' lives for 2 to 3 minutes.

7.   Sixth-grade students, assigned a weekly journaling activity, were given an opportunity to share with the class what they wrote as their previous week's journal entry.

8.   Toward the end of the class period, sixth-graders received the current week's journal assignment.   Each student was asked to write a minimum of one page in their journal and have it completed before the next week's lesson. An example of a journal assignment is "Thinking about how

sixth-grade students treat each other, what do you worry about at school? Why? Think of one way this could be improved or changed." The journaling activity completed the experiential learning model because students connected what they learned from the lesson and applied it in a different situation.

Journal notebooks were collected every other week and entries were read by the high school cross-age teachers. Positive and encouraging written comments were used as a means of feedback and of building trusting relationships with the younger students.

A hired Site Coordinator, who also attended the training retreat, supervised each experimental group's weekly lesson and met once-a-week with the high school students to process and evaluate their teaching experiences from the previous lesson. The Site Coordinator also assisted students by answering questions and assisting with the planning and preparation for the upcoming lesson, although the high school students were individually responsible for reviewing the lessons and preparing for teaching. The Site Coordinator provided a means of consistency for the lesson execution, as well as a caring adult presence with the high school and sixth-grade students.

Testing and Data Collection

Data were collected using three methods. First, an objective measure was used. Secondly, focus-group interviews were conducted. Finally, journal entries were used.

Objective measure. A pre and posttest design was utilized to assess the effectiveness of the BOOMERANG character education program on sixth-grade students' reported attitudes and behaviors. In the week prior to the beginning of the program, students in the experimental and control groups were administered the "BOOMERANG Character Education Program Student Survey" (Appendix A), a paper and pencil, Likert-type instrument consisting of 39 self-report items designed around the six character trait constructs of the program. At the conclusion of the program, the same instrument was administered with students in the experimental and control groups. At both data collection times, the test directions and statements were read out loud by the classroom teacher and students individually marked their corresponding response.

Focus-group interviews. Qualitative data were gathered during the eighth week of the pilot character education

program by conducting focus-group interviews with students
in the experimental group. Two focus-group interviews were
conducted during the eighth week to ascertain program
effectiveness and allow time for any needed revisions before
program completion. Five students from each experimental
class were randomly selected to participate in the small-
group interview process which lasted approximately 30
minutes for each group. The students, researcher, and Site
Coordinator convened in a conference room of the district's
middle school for the focus-group interviews. The
researcher facilitated and moderated the discussion. The
Site Coordinator served as a second set of listening ears,
made notes, and summarized the discussion at the end. The
procedure for the focus-group interviews was:

1. The researcher welcomed students and explained the
reason for the focus-group interviews--to learn more about
their thoughts and feelings regarding the BOOMERANG
character education program. Everyone wore a nametag and
was on a first-name basis.

2. The researcher explained the focus-group process to
the students. Students were asked to respond to a prepared
set of questions. As each question was asked, they were to
individually comment and discuss their responses with the
others, not with the researcher. As explained, a goal was

to acquire a full range of ideas, thoughts, feelings, and reactions. Students were encouraged to elaborate on, or disagree with, comments another person had said. A tape recorder was used to tape the interviews in order to accurately capture their words, although names would not be attached to their comments when the script was transcribed.

3. Actual interviews then began. A prepared set of questions (Appendix B) was used for the 30 minute focus-group interviews.

4. At the conclusion of the focus-group interviews, the Site Coordinator briefly reviewed the group's comments, asking students if the summary accurately described their thoughts and if they had any questions. Students then were dismissed to their classes.

Journal entries. Qualitative data also were obtained when the researcher reviewed written entries from student journals which were collected at the conclusion of the 16-week program.

Data Analysis

Three sets of data were analyzed to assess the impact of the six-trait character education program on sixth-grade students' reported attitudes and behaviors. These consisted

of the student survey, focus-group interviews, and journal entries.

Student Survey

Responses to the items on the student survey instrument (Appendix A) were coded and analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). An analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to analyze, organize, and summarize the data on experimental versus control groups of students. These statistics, as reported in Chapter 4, were used to assess students' perceived attitudes and behaviors. Procedures utilized to analyze and interpret the data were those suggested by an Iowa State University Extension Service researcher.

Focus-Group Interviews

Student responses to the predetermined questions were tape recorded and later transcribed. Personal testimonials and other anecdotal evidence were summarized and used to assess any indications of attitudinal and behavioral changes.

Journal Entries

At the conclusion of the program, the researcher reviewed the students' weekly journal entries. Again, personal testimonials and other anecdotal evidence were summarized and used to assess any indications of attitudinal and behavioral changes.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

In this study, the following six hypotheses were investigated:

1. The experimental group will report a statistically significantly higher level of respect than the control group at posttest.

2. The experimental group will report a statistically significantly higher level of responsibility than the control group at posttest.

3. The experimental group will report a statistically significantly higher level of caring than the control group at posttest.

4. The experimental group will report a statistically significantly higher level of trustworthiness than the control group at posttest.

5. The experimental group will report a statistically significantly higher level of citizenship than the control group at posttest.

6. The experimental group will report a statistically significantly higher level of fairness than the control group at posttest.

Various methods were used to gather data including a student survey, focus-group interviews, and journal entries. For purposes of this study, qualitative analysis will not be employed for data gathered from the focus group interviews and journal entries.

Student Survey

First, a Kuder-Richardson test of internal consistency was run for the six components comprising the study. The values were: .70 for respect, .76 for responsibility, .65 for caring, .72 for trustworthiness, .84 for citizenship, and .77 for fairness.

Table 1 describes all means and standard deviations for the experimental and control groups.

The six hypotheses were tested using a two-way analysis of variance (ANOVA). The results for each hypothesis also are reported.

Hypothesis 1 (group by time interaction for respect) was supported by the study. The students' perceived sense of respect was statistically significant from pre to posttest, as reported in Table 2, which shows an F-ratio of 4.57 and $p = .04$.

Table 1

Pretest Means, Posttest Means, and Standard Deviations for
the Experimental Group (N = 40) and the Control Group (N =
40)

		RESPECT	RESPONS	CARING	TRUST	CITIZ	FAIR
		Experimental Group					
Pre-test	M	25.0	21.2	19.1	23.7	32.1	23.7
	SD	3.2	3.2	2.9	2.9	3.9	2.6
Post-test	M	25.8	21.6	19.3	22.8	32.8	23.1
	SD	2.5	4.3	2.6	3.0	3.9	3.2
		Control Group					
Pre-test	M	25.6	22.2	19.5	25.3	33.0	24.7
	SD	3.2	3.8	2.9	2.6	4.3	3.0
Post-test	M	24.5	20.6	18.5	23.1	31.0	23.6
	SD	3.1	3.5	2.8	3.4	4.6	3.0

Note.   RESPECT = respect; RESPONS = responsibility; CARE =
caring; TRUST = trustworthiness; CITIZ = citizenship; FAIR =
fairness

Hypothesis 2 (group by time interaction for
responsibility) was not supported by the study. The
students' perceived sense of responsibility was not
statistically significantly from pre to posttest, as
reported in Table 3, which shows an F-ratio of 2.60 and p =
.11.

Table 2

ANOVA of Sample and Pre-post for RESPECT (N = 80)

Source	SS	df	MS	F	p
Sample	6.00	1	6.00	.70	.40
Pre-post	.97	1	.97	.11	.74
Inter-action (S x P)	38.54	1	38.54	4.57	.04
Explnd	45.51	3	15.17	1.77	.15
Residual	1334.48	156	8.55		

Note. Explnd = Explained

Table 3

ANOVA of Sample and Pre-post for RESPONSIBILITY (N = 80)

Source	SS	df	MS	F	p
Sample	.22	1	.22	.02	.89
Pre-post	12.04	1	12.04	.94	.33
Inter-action (S x P)	33.11	1	33.11	2.60	.11
Explnd	45.38	3	15 13	1 19	.32
Residual	1987.89	156	12.74		

Note. Explnd = Explained

Hypothesis 3 (group by time interaction for caring) was not supported by the study. The students' perceived sense of caring was not statistically significant from pre to posttest, as reported in Table 4, which shows an F-ratio of 1.96 and p = .16.

Hypothesis 4 (group by time interaction for trustworthiness) was not supported by the study. The students' perceived sense of trustworthiness was not statistically significant from pre to posttest, as reported in Table 5, which shows an F-ratio of 1.36 and p = .25.

Table 4

ANOVA of Sample and Pre-post for CARING (N = 80)

Source	SS	df	MS	F	p
Sample	.615	1	.615	.08	.77
Pre-post	6.626	1	6.63	.90	.35
Inter-action (S x P)	14.54	1	14.54	1.96	.16
Explnd	21.78	3	7.26	.98	.40
Residual	1154.92	156	7.40		

Note. Explnd = Explained

Hypothesis 5 (group by time interaction for citizenship) was not supported by the study. The students' perceived sense of citizenship was not statistically significant from pre to posttest, as reported in Table 6, which shows an F-ratio of .22 and p = .64.

Table 5

ANOVA of Sample and Pre-post for TRUSTWORTHINESS (N = 80)

Source	SS	df	MS	F	p
Sample	29.76	1	29.76	3.72	.06
Pre-post	73.50	1	73.50	9.19	.003
Inter-action (S x P)	10.84	1	10.84	1.36	.25
Explnd	114.09	3	38.03	4.76	.003
Residual	1247.42	156	8.0		

Note. Explnd = Explained

Hypothesis 6 (group by time interaction for fairness) was not supported by the study. The students' sense of fairness was not statistically significant from pre to posttest, as reported in Table 7, which shows an F-ratio of .255 and p = .61.

Table 6

ANOVA of Sample and Pre-post for CITIZENSHIP (N = 80)

Source	SS	df	MS	F	p
Sample	323.99	1	323.99	1.33	.25
Pre-post	332.81	1	332.81	1.37	.24
Inter-action (S x P)	53.04	1	53.04	.22	.64
Explnd	709.84	3	236.61	.97	.41
Residual	37975.74	156	243.43		

Note. Explnd = Explained

Table 7

ANOVA of Sample and Pre-post for FAIRNESS (N = 80)

Source	SS	df	MS	F	p
Sample	24.20	1	24 20	2.98	.09
Pre-post	27.24	1	27.24	3.35	.07
Inter-action (S x P)	2.08	1	2.08	.255	.61
Explnd	53.51	3	17.84	2.20	.09
Residual	1267.52	156	8.12		

Note. Explnd = Explained

Focus-Group Interviews

Additional data from focus-group interviews revealed benefits that the objective measure did not reflect. This section will give results of this data. The instrument used consisted of nine open-ended, predetermined questions. Specific responses seem to indicate new knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviors in regard to the character traits that were the focus of the program. Overall, responses were positive, as indicated by sample responses that follow.

When asked, "What have you been doing in the BOOMERANG program?," students' answered, "Learning how to handle problems," "Learning friendship skills," "Learning how to treat others fairly and to work together," "Learning that I shouldn't hate," and "Learning how to stick up for friends."

When asked, "How do you feel about what you have been doing in the BOOMERANG program?," students answered, "I've learned a lot," "I feel it's a good educational program to build character," "I have mixed feelings—some things are a repetition from what we've done in guidance, but that's probably OK, especially learning about making friends," "Boring because it's things I already knew," "I liked the activities and teamwork," and "Everything has a purpose."

When asked, "Have you noticed any changes in your classmates' behavior since you started the BOOMERANG

program? If so, what?," students answered, "Yes, people feel they can share personal experiences," "Yes, I can walk away from a situation instead of arguing," "No, none in myself," "[Students] are more respectful to you and treat you better. They don't pick on me as much or on other people," and "I've made new friends."

Journal Entries

This section will give results from the journaling activity. At the conclusion of each weekly class lesson, students were given a journal writing assignment. Specific written entries indicate a reflection on the lesson contents and application to real-life situations. Some sample journal entries follow.

When asked, "Who is someone you know that displays qualities of good character? Why? How does that person act?," students responded, "My dad—because he cares for others and other people's property. My dad helps his friends and other people every day....He thinks kindly of others and acts with respect for others," "My dad--because he is kind and he takes time out to do things with me. He always thinks in a positive manner. For things I don't do well, he helps me with it and encourages me to do my best," and "My friend ... because I can tell her anything and I

know she won't tell. She will stand up for me and cares about me. She has helped me through a lot of hard times. I trust her and relate to her easily."

When asked to "Tell about a time when you treated someone or something with respect," students responded, "I treated my friend with a great amount of respect when her cat died. She was very sad because it was her favorite cat. I was spending the night and she was crying. I told her I was very sorry for her and let her cry on my shoulder," "I treated someone with respect when some of my friends were making fun of another one of my friends that they didn't like. I stood up for that person and told my other friends to leave her alone and that they wouldn't like it if they got made fun of," and "One time I treated someone with respect was when a new girl came to my school in fifth grade. I didn't put a label on her just because she wasn't my type of person. I didn't leave her out of activities and I treated her as an individual and respected her property."

When asked, "Do you have a behavior that you want to change? How might you do it?," one student's response was, "I want to try not to steriotype [sic] people because of what others think of them and how they treat them. I already am usually nice to them, but I do seem to make fun

of them when others do. I could [stop] by just ignoring my friends when they do this."

When asked to complete the statements "I am a good friend because I...., I would be a better friend if I....," students responded, "I am a good friend because I listen to my friends when they need someone to listen [to them]. I would be a better friend if I listened more often. I also could be a better friend if I spent more time with all of my friends, not just one or two" and "I am a good friend because I help them in times when they need [it], I help them through tough situations. When they need advice I will always be willing to help and talk things out. I would be a better friend if I did more things with different friends and not just the same ones."

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

This chapter is organized into four sections. Section summarizes the study, section two discusses the results, section three explains limitations of the study, and section four offers recommendations for further research.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to investigate the impact of a six-trait character education program, called BOOMERANG, on sixth-grade students' reported attitudes and behaviors of six character constructs. The six hypotheses investigated in this study were:

1. The experimental group will report a statistically significantly higher level of respect than the control group at posttest.

2. The experimental group will report a statistically significantly higher level of responsibility than the control group at posttest.

3. The experimental group will report a statistically significantly higher level of caring than the control group at posttest.

4.   The experimental group will report a statistically significantly higher level of trustworthiness than the control group at posttest.

5.   The experimental group will report a statistically significantly higher level of citizenship than the control group at posttest.

6.   The experimental group will report a statistically significantly higher level of fairness than the control group at posttest.

Discussion of Results

Based on the data collected in this study, the following conclusions are drawn.

The first hypothesis, which tested whether perceptions of respect would be statistically significant in the experimental group compared to the control group, was supported.

"Respect" is one of the primary components of character education. The importance of respect was underscored by Lickona (1991). He defined respect as

> showing regard for the worth of someone or something. It takes three major forms: respect for oneself, respect for other people, and respect for all forms of life and the environment that sustains them. Respect for self requires us to treat our own life and person as having inherent value....Respect for others requires us to treat all other human beings—even those we dislike—as having dignity and rights equal to our

own....Respect for the whole complex web of life prohibits cruelty to animals and calls us to act with care toward the natural environment, the fragile ecosystem on which all life depends. (p. 43)

Lickona (1991) also explained that the values of respect and responsibility are the "fourth and fifth R's" that schools must teach if they are to develop responsible citizens of society (p. 43).

Students need to practice virtuous habits, such as respect, within the school environment. Vincent (1994) stated

Students should learn to assist others, not just academically but socially. For example, older students should model proper behavior for younger students to see and follow. Students should develop good habits in proper communication and courtesies, for they will be needed to show respect for others both in school and as they become adults. (p. 25)

The students' perception of a higher level of respect, as assessed in this study, is a positive outcome and is one that could be attributed to several factors. During the 16-week intervention, the subjects were involved in many activities, most of which stressed the importance of showing respect for themselves and others. Because the original requests for intervention were from teachers and others concerned over issues dealing with respect, a larger emphasis was placed on this component throughout the lessons. Thus, there were unequal amounts of time spent addressing each character component in the lessons.

Because of the program duration, there may not have been enough of a significant stimulus to affect the other character components.

The team of high school students also served as excellent role-models of respect, displayed not only toward the sixth-grade students, but also toward each other, the school staff, and the school property. The researcher observed the development of relationships and bonding between the older (high school) and younger (sixth-grade) students during the 16-week intervention. This was displayed through interactions, such as talking and smiling, and also through demonstrations of physical affection, such as hugs. Because strong relationships developed, sixth-grade students may have had the desire to emulate an older student. Williams (1993) studied students in grades 6 to 8 to determine how respect was taught to, and learned by them. She explained, "I expected to find that formal lessons about respect produce the best results. Yet, the findings indicate that respect is taught best through a hidden curriculum of modeling and quality teaching that creates a positive moral climate" (p. 22). The utilization of cross-age teachers, as part of the intervention design, may have been an important factor in the acquisition of respect.

The other five hypotheses, which tested whether perceptions of responsibility, caring, trustworthiness, citizenship, and fairness would be statistically significant in the experimental group compared to the control group, were not supported.

The constructs of respect, responsibility, caring, trustworthiness, citizenship, and fairness are complex character traits that are difficult to quantifiably measure. However, qualitative data (gathered from focus-group interviews and journal entries) demonstrate that the intervention did seem to make a positive impact on the participating students, as indicated by their verbal and written comments. As stated in Chapter 4, the comments and personal testimonials that were shared through focus-group interviews and journal entries were convincing evidence of positive change within individuals.

The character traits of caring, citizenship, fairness, responsibility, and trustworthiness may simply be more difficult to assess than respect. Perhaps a more sensitive instrument is needed to assess these character components.

It also could be speculated that respect may be a foundational character component; that is, it may be necessary for this character component to be achieved first before other character components can emerge. The

development of character in an individual may be hierarchical; development of respect may need to be achieved before the additional character components can be attained.

An increase in the duration of the intervention, the number of activities in the intervention, or both may cause additional character components to develop.

The lack of statistical significance for the character components of responsibility, caring, trustworthiness, citizenship, and fairness should not be attributed to a lack of integrity in the treatment. The treatment was a comprehensive 16-week program, utilizing the experiential learning model, which has been shown to be effective with youth. More likely, the lack of statistical significance could be linked to the duration of the intervention. Perhaps, a one-year intervention period would be more desirable.

The lack of statistical significance also could be linked to the psychometric soundness of the instrument used. Isolating and attempting to measure specified character components proved to be a challenge. Although the objective instrument was designed with the guidance of a researcher employed by Iowa State University Extension Service, there may not be a paper and pencil-type test that can accurately

measure the subtle distinctions between various character components.

The results of the Kuder-Richardson test for internal consistency indicated sufficient reliability for the objective instrument utilized in the study.

Limitations

As is the case with all studies, this study has some possible limitations, especially since the constructs studied are incredibly complex.

One possible limitation of the study could be attributed to the use of the measuring instrument, "BOOMERANG Character Education Program Student Survey" (Appendix A). This was the first attempt to develop an instrument of this type. Although only one hypothesis was supported in the study, additional data from focus group interviews and journal entries revealed benefits that the objective measure did not reflect. Future studies may be able to refine the objective measure even further.

The objective measure used to assess changes only measured students' perceptions. The use of additional instruments would be worthwhile exploring to ascertain other elements of character development and to give a richer, more comprehensive profile.

As stated previously, the original requests for intervention were from teachers and others concerned over issues dealing with respect. Thus, a larger emphasis was placed on this component throughout the lessons. Unequal amounts of time were spent addressing each character component in the lessons.

Another possible limitation of the study was the number of subjects. There was a total of 80 subjects in the sample. Future studies with a larger and more diverse population are necessary in order to properly test the intervention and instruments.

Social desirability could have been a limiting factor for this study. Sixth-grade students, when tested, may have wanted to give socially acceptable responses.

Another possible limitation of the study is the fact that the experimental group was not isolated from the control group. The experimental group, and the benefits it received through the treatment, could have influenced the comparison group.

Recommendations for Further Research

In future studies, the intervention could be expanded to include additional components such as courage, integrity, patience, or others. Additionally, the character components

that were emphasized in this study could be combined in a different manner or eliminated on an individual basis. Thus, the intervention could feature any number of character components and in a variety of combinations.

Future studies also could measure additional outcomes of the experimental group such as self-esteem, their psychological well-being, or specific moral development traits such as empathy and altruism. Furthermore, assessments could measure the students' attitudes and behaviors towards family members, teachers, and others.

Additional ideas for future studies include utilizing more subjects to increase the sample size, making the control the experimental group, using dilemmas in the pre- and post-testing, and establishing longitudinal studies.

Another fascinating research study could also include measuring the impact of the intervention on the high school students. Assessments could examine any changes in knowledge, attitudes, skills, and behaviors resulting from their role as cross-age teachers.

Another element of the program that could be expanded further is measuring attitudinal and behavioral changes in students as assessed by teachers, parents, and others in the community.

Finally, since there is speculation of respect being hierarchical, further studies could examine if there is a hierarchy of character traits. Must respect emerge before the other traits would? Does trust emerge before fairness? These are some questions that could guide future research in this area.

We have more to learn about the complexity of a human being. More specifically, we need to better understand how a person's value-system and beliefs are influenced and shaped by the forces around him or her. This is just one of many challenging issues in the interesting field of human development in general, and in the area of character development in particular.

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APPENDIX A

STUDENT SURVEY

Character Education Program

Student Survey Pre-Test

Please tell us how things are going for you and your classmates at school. No one will know how you answered these questions. We just ask you to be honest.

For each statement, circle the number that describes your experiences. For example, if the statement is always true circle "5." If it happens not at all circle "1." Use "2", "3" and "4" to represent differences between these extremes.

	Not At All	Not Very Often	Some of the Time	Most of the Time	Always
1. I listen carefully when my classmates speak	1	2	3	4	5
2. When I am angry toward other classmates, I talk to them about the problem we are having ...	1	2	3	4	5
3. I understand what a person of good character is like	1	2	3	4	5
4. I respect my classmate's opinions	1	2	3	4	5
5. My classmates treat each other with kindness ..	1	2	3	4	5
6. I am a person upon whom others can rely to keep my promises	1	2	3	4	5
7. My classmates listen carefully to me when I am talking	1	2	3	4	5
8. When classmates become angry at me, they are willing to talk about the problem	1	2	3	4	5

	Not At All	Not Very Often	Some of the Time	Most of the Time	Always
9. My classmates understand what a person of good character is like	1	2	3	4	5
10. My opinions are respected by my classmates ...	1	2	3	4	5
11. My classmates are rude toward one another	1	2	3	4	5
12. I can rely upon my classmates to keep promises	1	2	3	4	5
13. I treat my classmates fairly	1	2	3	4	5
14. I think before I act	1	2	3	4	5
15. I think I am a good citizen	1	2	3	4	5
16. I respect the property of others	1	2	3	4	5
17. I care about my classmates	1	2	3	4	5
18. I can depend upon my classmates to do what they say they will do	1	2	3	4	5
19. My classmates treat each other fairly	1	2	3	4	5
20. My classmates think before they act	1	2	3	4	5
21. My classmates think I am a good citizen	1	2	3	4	5
22. Students in this class respect the property of others	1	2	3	4	5
23. My classmates care about me	1	2	3	4	5
24. My classmates can depend upon me to do what I say I will do	1	2	3	4	5
25. When disagreements arise, I listen to my classmate's side of the story	1	2	3	4	5
26. I take responsibility for my actions	1	2	3	4	5
27. I do what is expected of a good person	1	2	3	4	5
28. I only like classmates who are like me	1	2	3	4	5
29. I ask others to be a part of my activities	1	2	3	4	5
30. My classmates are honest with one another	1	2	3	4	5
31. When disagreements arise, classmates listen to each other's side of the story	1	2	3	4	5
32. My classmates take responsibility for their actions	1	2	3	4	5
33. My classmates do what is expected of a good person	1	2	3	4	5

	Not At All	Not Very Often	Some of the Time	Most of the Time	Always
34. I accept my classmates for who they are..........	1	2	3	4	5
35. Others ask me to be a part of their activities......	1	2	3	4	5
36. My classmates trust each other	1	2	3	4	5
37. I help make my school a good place to be.........	1	2	3	4	5
38. My classmates accept me for who I am.............	1	2	3	4	5
39. My classmates help make our school a good place to be..	1	2	3	4	5

40. I am a: 1. Male   2. Female

41. I am in grade: 4   6   8   10   11   12

42. I have attended school in this town since grade:

K   1   2   3   4   5   6

APPENDIX B

FOCUS-GROUP INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Focus-Group Interview Questions

1.   What have you been doing in the BOOMERANG program?

2.   How do you feel about what you have been doing in the BOOMERANG program?

3.   What have you learned since being involved with the BOOMERANG program?

4.   What do you like most about the BOOMERANG program?

5.   What do you like least about the BOOMERANG program?

6.   How do you feel about having the high school Team Teachers leading the BOOMERANG lessons?

7.   Have you noticed any changes in your classmates' behavior since you started the BOOMERANG program? If so, what?

8.   Has your behavior changed since you started the BOOMERANG program? How?

9.   Would you like to see the program expanded to include everyone? Why?