“Using Character Education to Improve the Discipline”.

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Abstract

Character education is the fastest growing reform in education today. This movement is encouraging society to examine the personal values, social interactions, and civic responsibilities that our youth struggle with during their school years. Character education can be defined in a myriad of ways and may, in fact, have no concrete definition. For this study total 80 respondents have been taken from the school and colleges of shahpur sadar. A well-structured questionnaire was prepared for data collection. Convenient sampling techniques have been used for data collection. The findings also suggested the need for an increased emphasis on staff development training in character education for teachers and administrators. To reduce discipline problems, schools should include character education programs in their curricula. Society can no longer rely on families to be the only source of character development in shaping the character of children. Everyone must contribute to children’s character development. Children’s homes also need support from schools and communities to develop well-rounded, well-adjusted, and self-disciplined citizens. Table shows that majority 38.8 Percent (31) agree, and 32.5 (26) strongly agree and 15 disagree, 6 strongly disagree and only 2 was not at all. Findings shows that majority 52.5% (42) agrees, and 31.3% (25) strongly agree and 6% (7.5) disagree and 6 (7.5) and only 1% (1.3) was not at all. So research show that majority 52.5% (42) agree. Table shows that majority 37% (46.3) agree, and 33.8% (27) Disagree and 12.5 (10) strongly agree and 6 (7.5) and only 1% (1.3) was not at all. So research show that majority 46.3% (37) agree. Table shows that majority 41.3% (33) agree, and 21.3% (17)
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12.5 (10) and only 4% (5.0) was not at all.
So research show that majority 41.3 (33)
agree. Table shows that majority 36.3% (21)
agree, and 26.3% (21) strongly agree and
20.0% (16) disagree and 8.8 (7) as well as
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that majority 36.3% (21) respondents are
agrees. Table shows that majority 41.3 (33)
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(17) strongly agree and 7.5 (6) not at all and
3.8% (3) was strongly disagree. So research
show that majority 41.3 (33) respondents
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(40) agrees, and 25.0% (20) strongly agree
and 15.0% (12) disagree and 3.8% (3) and
only 6.3% (5) was not at all. So research
shows that majority 50.0% (40) respondents
agree.

Introduction

Much of a child and adolescent's day is
spent at school where they learn how to
read, write and do arithmetic. These students
are developing mentally, physically,
socially, and emotionally from teachers,
school counselors, administrators, support
staff and other students. The definition of
character education can be quite
complicated because of the many values it
encompasses. The definition is universal and
the outcomes are distinguished. Pearson &
Nicholson (2000), feel that there are three
interconnected areas that represent good
character: self, others, and the community.
With their own actual self, students can look
at self-discipline, responsibility,
trustworthiness, courage, and self-discipline. Character traits such as: honesty,
respect, empathy, kindness, and caring play
into effect with students who have
relationships with classmates, teachers,
friends, and family. As more schools are
able to incorporate character education into
their curriculum, the stronger the data will
be indicating changes or modifications to
newly developed programs to best fit the
changing needs of society. Collaborating
and working on integrating character
education in the schools is a team effort and
further research may indicate what is best
for all students in that school and
community. Sharing future research could
indicate how character traits may be made
part of most academic lessons including
foreign language, music and physical
education. Traits can also be taught through
school assemblies, display boards in the
school, and school.
And community projects. Ultimately, by linking these programs with the school's curriculum, children may develop a greater vision for their communities and the world as a whole. Further research may document an awareness of the interconnectedness of each other and the positive character one can embody then pass on to others. Future researchers may want to explore character education to determine a relationship between cultures and ethnicity to determine if the core values are the same for schools in diverse communities. Socially and personally, children will continue to develop their character, through their home environments, communities and schools. With a more enriched environment the effective schools will continue to do research to include character education to determine the correlation between success and one's character. The future of the child in a global society is too important to disregard the need for the development and implementation of character education programs in schools.

Utilizing schools discipline policies, character education programs, and encouragement from parents, schools are beginning to document that they can make a significant difference in the lives of the children they teach. Students will then live the positive character traits they learned through practice by treating others with respect and fairness while recognizing they are becoming responsible, caring, trustworthy citizens. Character can be little things such as holding a door open for others to pass through, helping a friend in need, and having honesty and integrity. "To educate a person in mind, and not in morals, is to educate a menace to society" (Roosevelt, 2007, as cited in Haynes & Berkowitz, n.p.). There are several different ways students can show good character; whether it is in school, home or in the community. "Children learn a repertoire of behaviors that when repeated become habits, which in turn facilitate the formation of good character" (Stone, 1997, p. 22).

The Boston University School of Education (2002) suggests that character education may not be a major emphasis in many schools currently, but appears to be an unavoidable element which schools need to consider for future inclusion. The societal changes teens have encountered have impacted students in areas such as dress, manners, language, entertainment, music, sexual habits. Many students seem under the influence of media bombardment that
promotes promiscuity and lax attitudes toward good character development and some family dynamics appear to be more dysfunctional than ever before (Noddings, 1992).

Character education is important for all students. School staff and families need to communicate and work together to gain knowledge and understand character education programs. According to Pearson, et al. (2000), developing good character requires students to recognize the good, crave the good, and put forth the good. Character education often falls into the school's hands. The school, along with parents or guardians must help children identify core values, adapt and commit to those values, and then put them into practice within their own lives (p. 243). Schools may want to include character education to assist students in building healthy character that will allow them to succeed academically, personally, and socially. The education and development of students' character, specifically targeting social betterment and helping others as a means to personal growth needs to be a part of the school's curriculum. When schools use character education programs, they teach students enduring lessons that may include developing and instilling a positive self-esteem, understanding the importance of respecting one another, and taking on the responsibility of working together with others. Schools and families that help students identify their values, develop goals and make decisions, and solve problems are likely to see improved school moral. It is important for teachers, staff members and school counselors, to promote character education to create an optimal learning environment, create a school culture welcoming of diversity, and provide safe schools. Good character education programs may inspire students to continue achieving academically while reducing unwanted behavior.

Classrooms need to be a place where students, teachers, counselors and others live and grow together and it needs to be a place where all students can grow academically, emotionally, physically, and socially. A good character education programs can play a critical role in defining what positive student behavior includes. Character education can be an effective tool to help students explore, define and understand their values. Character education just might be an option to assist schools to reach their goals of student achievement. Character education
can also be a proactive way of helping those students who may be at risk of not finishing school. According to Wings: Helping Kids Soar (2008), those students who are most likely to drop out before they graduate, demonstrate violent behavior, exploit weapons, and/or use drugs, alcohol, tobacco are the students who do not feel comfortable attending school, and cannot associate or attach with anyone in school. According to Battistich, (cited in Haynes and Berkowitz, 2007), the influences of character education programs can have profound effects on numerous problems that schools are facing today including increased drug/alcohol use, aggression, low school attendance, fights and suspensions, school shootings, sexual activity, vandalism, and low academic achievement. Character education may help schools develop a more positive school environment. Viadero (2003) (as cited in Brown, 2007), feels that character education programs can be very useful in the sense of helping prevent school violence, drug problems, and promiscuous sexual activity. Infoplease.com (2007), noted several negative events involving school violence: The Columbine school-shooting in 2005; The Red Lake Minnesota school-shooting in 2006; and another shooting in Cazenovia, Minnesota, where a 15 year old student shot and killed principal, John Klang in April, 2007. Some people question whether traumatic incidents like these in a school setting could decrease through the implementation of character education curriculum programs that teach such things as respect, conflict resolution, and acceptance. Brooks and Kann (1993) state that character education programs can help build safe havens for students to develop good conduct, strong character and acceptance of others.

It is important that students feel they have a safe place to go especially when it comes to the school they attend and the community in which they live. Jacobson (1999) researched the outcomes of some character education programs. After collecting the results from a survey given to an elementary school in Georgia the findings indicated that character education was not a large part of the curriculum. Jacobson (1999) found that schools need to focus on the positive within kids, and encourage children and teach core values. A tragedy such as the Columbine High School shooting incident should not be the impetus to prompt developing character education programs. School violence and related
problem behaviors are genuine concerns that need to be investigated because schools need to be a safe place where students have the opportunity to learn, develop and grow. Not only is school violence, bullying, exclusion, and threats that are the biggest concern for implementing more character education within the schools but issues such as cheating, poverty, harassment, and poor supervision of computer usage that may cause emotional or physical harm to other students. The impact of the media on students is an important consideration for integrating character education into a school's curriculum. Parents do not always have the skills, time or ability to take responsible for developing their child's character. Many parents are now hoping that the children will learn the skills in schools, at church or from other community members (Ryan & Bohlin, 1999). Historically, public schools would build character into the educational curriculum from grade school all the way through college; but over the years, subject matter and demonstration of achievement have forced character education out of the curriculum.

Statement of the Problem

The researcher found no evidence of who monitors, assesses, and evaluates the character education program within the school and college system. The guidelines were very vague which led the researcher to conclude that further research needed to be done. Consequently, there was a need to examine the critical character education principles and their relationship to student performance. There were both federal and state mandates that governed the implementation of character education programs in schools. A major problem was the lack of research on the impact of the critical principles of character education as they relate to improving student performance. Relatively little attention has been given to the perceptions of teachers of the possible influence the critical principles of character education on student performance.

Significance of the Study

Previous research about the effects of character education programs does not yield clear conclusions. In this study, based on teacher comments, parent interviews, and disciplinary records, it appears that following the implementation of a character development program in this elementary
school, student behavior improved. Because all the parents and almost half of the students credited the teacher as a primary factor for the changes in behavior, and all the teachers credited the character education program as a primary factor, one could logically conclude that the character education program contributed to the improved behavior. This study described a reduction in disciplinary problems in schools where character education programs were in effect as compared to schools without a program. However, other factors could also have contributed to the changes in behavior. One of these factors was the “teacher.” The parents identified the teacher as being a primary factor in the changes in student behavior. Additionally, four of the students also credited the teacher for affecting behavior. The teachers, however, credited the character education program. Because the researcher was primarily responsible for introducing the character education program into the school, the teachers may have, consciously or unconsciously, credited the program with the changes in student behavior, rather than their own actions, because they believed that was what the researcher wanted to happen. Previous research about the effects of character education programs does not yield clear conclusions. In this study, based on teacher comments, parent interviews, and disciplinary records, it appears that following the implementation of a character development program in this elementary school, student behavior improved. Because all the parents and almost half of the students credited the teacher as a primary factor for the changes in behavior, and all the teachers credited the character education program as a primary factor, one could logically conclude that the character education program contributed to the improved behavior. This study described a reduction in disciplinary problems in schools where character education programs were in effect as compared to schools without a program. However, other factors could also have contributed to the changes in behavior. One of these factors was the “teacher.” The parents identified the teacher as being a primary factor in the changes in student behavior. Additionally, four of the students also credited the teacher for affecting behavior. The teachers, however, credited the character education program. Because the researcher was primarily responsible for introducing the character education program into the school, the
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**Objectives of the Study**

- To Assess the Activities That Teachers Can Easily Use While Teaching in Any Subject.
- To Assess the Teachers Make Changes in a Curriculum if Students Did Not Respond Appropriately.
- To Assess the Teachers Identify and Target Students for Character Improvement.
- To Assess the Review with Teachers the Causes for Student Character of Discipline Problems.
- To Assess the Adequate Time is provided for Character Education for Discipline.
- To Assess the Character Education Program Has Improved Students’ Discipline.
- To Assess the Strategies for Getting Problem Students’ Parents to Improve Character Education.
- To Assess the Effective in Showing Teachers Practically how to Teach Character Education.

**Review of Literature**

Otten (2000), stated "In character education, the school community recognizes the core values of the school and works to teach, implement and emphasize those shared values within the students' lives" (n.p.). He further recommended the important character traits schools should develop ought to be introduced into the classroom environment where the student is learning. Students' education and development should appear naturally by their ability to help others and to make a difference in their community. Teachers are not lacking opportunity to develop student's positive morals; it just needs to be incorporated into their everyday teaching (Jacobson, 1999). With character education programs being built into the curriculum, schools have the ability to make a difference in the lives of children. Professionals believe that educators need to strictly focus on developing positive morals, though realizing that it will not eliminate all negative actions that do occur at school (Weimer, as cited in Jacobson, 1999). According to Otten (2000),
"character education integrated into the school community is a strategy to help re-engage our students, deal with conflict, keep students on task in the learning environment, and reinvest the community with active participation" (n.p.).

"Good character, like the weather, gets a lot of talk, but too little action; to be effective, character education must become integral to the daily actions of everyone in the school community" (Hayes and Berkowitz, 2007 n.p.) Benninga, Berkowitz, Kuehn, and Smith (2006), explain that students can become involved in volunteer activities within their communities such as organizing and implementing charity events, making communities safer by creating cleaner environments, and visiting the elderly, or raising money for charities as a way to develop character in the students. The focus of Chapter II is on defining character education, determining the positive effects these programs have on students in schools, and describing what is being done to encourage continued development of these programs. The chapter will conclude with a discussion on responsibility and initiative for implementing character education programs within schools today.

Importance of Character Education Programs within Schools There is numerous negative school incidents that have happened that reflect poor decision making and unhealthy character traits. The Columbine school shooting, incidents of cyber bullying, harassment of students, and texting inappropriate pictures or threats to others are a few examples. According to one character education program, One way to prevent such negative behaviors is to create a positive school climate that is rooted in shared values and responsible student participation. By building caring environments in which students feel safe and supported, schools can reduce the root causes of conflicts and help students gain a sense of belonging and attachment to school. These feelings are an important part of keeping students engaged in the educational process. Across the country, parents, students, and civic leaders are turning to character education as a way to help create such strong, healthy learning environments (the challenge.org, 2004, n.p.).

Good character education programs emphasize consequences for choices and support the need for alternatives for teenagers to learn assets that promote good character. With character education
programs, it is helpful to have support from all the Caring adults in a child's life. Educators can help young people become caring, trustworthy, respectful, and responsible citizens by integrating different character education programs within their schools and community.

Greer (2007) believes that it is the schools responsibility to develop these programs and to teach students what good character means so that it may reduce the number of negative incidents. Teacher, parents, and the community members can help students understand the significance of a healthy, positive character. To have students understand character, they must first recognize what forms a healthy, positive character. According to Lickona, Schaps, and Lewis (2007), members of the school community should help students understand and recognize more about character through behaviors that can be taught, practiced and measured throughout school. Lickona, et.al (2007) want students to model caring, honesty, fairness, responsibility, and respect for self and others though classroom discussions, and everyday encounters with other students and adults. It is important that these core ethical values and traits be incorporated into academic lessons and though real-life experiences (Pearson and Nicholson, 2000).

Stone (1997) noted that the newsletters reinforce the philosophy that parents are valued as the primary educator in their children's lives (p.22). In order to implement character education the school staff must become an inclusive, caring, and contributing community in which all share responsibility for character education. In an attempt to adhere to the same core values that guide the education of students, effective character education programs are encouraged to take a three-prong approach to include student thinking, feeling, and behavior. The schools may wish to provide opportunities for ethical decisions, and acknowledge appropriate responses. The schools must involve parents and community members as full-partners in the character-building effort (The Character Education Partnership, 2000). Character Education Programs There are researched-based models of character education that are used to create a positive learning environment and to instill positive character within students. Viadero (cited in Brown, 2007) states that there are over 300 programs available for character education in school districts, however, only about
twenty-percent have a strong research base. With character programs that teach students do good things for others, it is often best when lessons are implemented throughout the course of the school day. This provides students with opportunity to apply what is learned in character education at both school and at home. Character education programs could be incorporated into all subject areas, as that way, teachers, parents and school counselors, work together as a team to reinforce the curriculum. Challenge.org

There are additional ways to utilize character education within the school curriculum. The Challenge.org (2004), group provides an example of when teaching a student how to read, teachers would work to identify character education as one focal point in the reading lesson. With this process, teachers can help the students understand the content of what they are reading and then ask questions about developing good character. Discussions on the characteristics of the hero, downfall of the villain, and qualities of leadership, can emphasize the outcomes of good character. There are many teachable moments for students to learn good character through education. (Stone, 1997). Leming, Searcy and Meadows (cited in Martin & Martin, 2007) found through character education program evaluations a reduction of alcohol and drug abuse, decrease in vandalism, and drop in discipline problems. Improved school attendance, increase in student morale, and increase in student responsibility are a few of the positive aspects of character education programs. Finally, parental involvement at school and in the lives of children is greatly improved as a result of character education communication with the home (Bulach, as cited in Brown, 2007, p.143). If schools integrate character education programs at an early age, children as young as four years old may begin to understand the importance of positive character. According to a researcher in the field, Viadero (2007), character education programs can enhance student's academic progress and social development. According to Benninga, et al. (1993), schools that connect their goals and activities with character education programs show signs of improvement in academic achievement. According to Brooks and Kann (1993), successful, effective character education programs are a result of a whole school effort. A positive and supportive school environment encourages good
character building, while allowing students to gain the skills necessary for good decision making in all aspects of life. Students are gaining positive assets from being a part of character education programs. Stone (1997) indicated the ninety-four percent of character education program participants have noted a decrease in problem behaviors within the classroom. For example, teachers said that following the lesson on responsibility, the completion of homework assignments increased, and students were observed to be better prepared with the necessary school supplies (Stone, 1997, p. 22).

Teachers believe that character education belongs in their school. Ninety-five percent of these teachers feel it is the school counselor who has been most suitable to dispense information about character which has made such a difference within their school (Stone, 1997). Character education programs in the schools strive to positively promote student Success through various means such as encouraging them to speak respectfully toward others, volunteer throughout the community, and caring for others. These programs also provide students options for alternative activities that give opportunities to making Positive choices (Benigni, 2006). Schools offering character education also report positive student qualities that lead to good character. Some of these qualities include self-respect, empathy, conflict resolution, kindness, responsibility, and cooperation.

Starr (1999) reported that an elementary school in Virginia has all of The students participating in service learning programs. These programs allow for Students to potentially merge community service into all aspects of the curriculum. For example, Starr (1999) described the youngest students exchange visits with senior citizens. Second and third graders provide food and clothing to needy families and exchanged letters with other families in the community as part of their study of the postal system. Fourth and fifth graders adopt a ward at the local Veterans Administration hospital to learn about the technology used to treat patients there (Starr, 1999, n.p.).

**Procedure of the Study**

For this study total 80 respondents have been taken from the school and colleges of shahpur sadar. A well-structured questionnaire was prepared for data collection. Convenient sampling techniques have been used for data collection.
### Data Analysis

**Activities That Teachers Can Easily Use While Teaching in Any Subject**

Table shows that majority 38.8% (31) agree, and 32.5% (26) strongly agree and 15 disagree, 6 strongly disagree and only 2 was not at all.

**Teachers Make Changes in a Curriculum if Students Did Not Respond Appropriately**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
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Table shows that majority 52.5% (42) agrees, and 31.3% (25) strongly agree and 6% (7.5) disagree and 6 (7.5) and only 1% (1.3) was not at all. So research show that majority 52.5% (42) agree.
Teachers Identify and Target Students for Character Improvement

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Review with Teachers the Causes for Student Character of Discipline Problems

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Adequate Time is Provided for Character Education for Discipline

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Character Education Program Has Improved Students’ Discipline

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Strategies for Getting Problem Students’ Parents to Improve Character Education

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Effective in Showing Teachers Practically how to Teach Character Education

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<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not at All</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>80</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table shows that majorities 42.50% (34) agree, and 30.0% (24) strongly agree and 17.5% (14) disagree and 7.5% (6) and only 2.5% (2) was not at all. So research shows that majority 42.5. % (34%) respondents agree.
Summary and Discussion

How do students learn about virtues or character traits? How do students learn the most important virtues in their lives? How do they learn about honesty, tolerance, courage, self-diligence, respect for others, courtesy, perseverance, fairness, cooperation, and self-control? Do schools naturally teach these virtues or are they taught at home or learned automatically? These programs allow for the whole child to be honored in a special way to build on the intrinsic motivation in a way that universal virtues are developed. The main challenge for administrators and teachers is to help students grow up as moral human beings and to provide them with the resources needed to become good citizens. Schools must engage and inspire students’ hearts and minds, which requires that schools become better at meeting students’ character development needs. The findings from this research study suggested the need for a commitment toward schools providing school-based character education programs in their curricula. Schools should invest in a commercial character education program. The findings also suggested the need for an increased emphasis on staff development training in character education for teachers and administrators. To reduce discipline problems, schools should include character education programs in their curricula. Society can no longer rely on families to be the only source of character development in shaping the character of children. Everyone must contribute to children’s character development. Children’s homes also need support from schools and communities to develop well-rounded, well-adjusted, and self-disciplined citizens.

Bibliography


