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# It's all in the Heart: The Influence of the Personal Values and Philosophies of Administrators and Teachers on the Methodologies and Effectiveness of Character Education

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IT'S ALL IN THE HEART: THE INFLUENCE OF THE PERSONAL VALUES  
AND PHILOSOPHIES OF ADMINISTRATORS AND TEACHERS ON  
THE METHODOLOGIES AND EFFECTIVENESS  
OF CHARACTER EDUCATION.

by

Rebecca Foxworth

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## ABSTRACT

This thesis sought to determine the influence of educators' personal values and philosophies on character education, particularly on methodologies and effectiveness. Research consisted of a two-part study of an elementary charter school. Part one of the study consisted of an interview with two administrators from the school, and part two of the study consisted of a survey sent out to the teachers of the school. Both the interview and survey sought to determine the values and philosophies of character education held by the educators, the methodologies the school uses for character education, and how the educators perceive the effectiveness of the school's character education. The philosophies of the administrators and teachers were rooted in the belief of educating the whole child. These philosophies heavily influenced the curricular and instructional choices of the educators. Because of the belief that education is about more than academics, this school intentionally incorporates character education into the school day. Instructional time is set aside specifically for character education, and character traits are integrated into other subject areas throughout the day. The administrators and the teachers perceived character education to be very effective at the school and see students demonstrating positive character traits in their daily lives.

**KEY WORDS:** character education, character traits, methodology of character education, personal philosophy of educators, values

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**Chapter 1: Introduction**

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. (1947) once said, “The most dangerous criminal may be the man gifted with reason, but with no morals. . . . We must remember that intelligence is not enough. Intelligence plus character – that is the goal of true education.”

Today’s society tends to take a strong stand against values, and because of this, some argue that there is a “value crisis in American society” (Beachum, McCray, Yawn, & Obiakor, 2013, p. 470). Few would argue against the fact that action must be taken to remedy this situation; however, there is great controversy about who is responsible for solving this value crisis. There are many who can, and must take part in solving this crisis, including parents, schools, and the community.

The character education movement has taken a strong stance in favor of incorporating values in the schools as an attempt to solve the values crisis (Sojourner, 2012). Effective character education can produce positive outcomes, such as decreased behavior problems, decreased bullying, increased academic achievement, and a safer, more positive school environment. Positive outcomes, however, are not seen in many schools; therefore, it can be assumed that few schools implement character education. However, according to the Character Education Partnership (n.d.), 18 states mandate character education, 18 states encourage character education through legislation, seven states support character education, but without legislation, and eight states do not

specifically address character education. This means that almost half of U.S. schools implement character education due to legislation, and likely more than half do because of how widely character education is supported.

### **Research Questions and Thesis Statement**

If many schools are implementing character education, why are positive results only seen in a handful of schools? Schools that win awards, such as the Character Education Partnership's (n.d.) National School of Character award, often surpass neighboring schools in academic achievement and positive behavior. It is clear that character education can produce positive results, so why is it failing to do so? This problem has led to the following research questions:

1. What personal values and philosophies do educators hold regarding character education?
2. How do the personal values and philosophies of educators influence methodologies of character education?
3. How do the personal values and philosophies of educators influence the effectiveness of character education?

This paper was written with the assumption that the effectiveness of a school's character education program lies in the heart of the school and in the goals and aspirations of those who run the school. Schools that emphasize whole child education implement character education more effectively than those that focus primarily on academic achievement. When a school's focus is on the overall well-being of the students, rather than on test scores, the educators in that school will be more likely to structure their class and their lessons in ways that result in effective character education.

The goal of this study is to examine the connections between educators' philosophies and the outcomes of their character education so that administrators and teachers can see the impact of their personal philosophy on their students.

Chapter 2 will consist of a philosophical framework to support character education and a review of the literature regarding character education. Chapter 3 will detail the methodology used in this study. Chapter 4 will present the findings of the study and analyze the data collected. Chapter 5 will consist of a discussion of the results of the study, relating the two parts of the study to each other and connecting the results to the reviewed literature. Chapter 6 will consist of a summary of the research purpose, findings of the study, implications of the study, and recommendations for future research.

## **Chapter 2: Literature Review**

The first section of this literature review establishes the foundation for this paper by detailing character traits are important for character education as well as for society as a whole. The second section of this literature review explains the current values crisis in America, and the need for character education. The third section of this literature review details two early approaches, values clarification and moral education, that were the primary methods of incorporating values in schools before the character education movement. The final section of this literature review discusses many facets of character education, including background, character education programs, common pedagogical strategies, and roadblocks.

### **Character Traits**

One of the primary questions that must be addressed in a discussion of character education is which values and character traits should be taught. Davidson and Lickona (2007) published a 227-page report on an extensive study of character education in which it was determined that the character traits that must be taught in an effective character education program can be divided into two categories – performance character and moral character. Performance character includes traits such as diligence, perseverance, and a strong work ethic. Moral character includes traits that promote ethical conduct and interpersonal relationships, such as integrity, justice, and respect. Performance and moral character are interdependent. In order for students to become beneficial, productive members of society, they must develop both performance and moral character.

Peterson and Seligman (2004) recognized the great need for a common vocabulary and set of character traits in order to “reclaim the study of character and

virtue as legitimate topics of psychological inquiry and informed societal discourse” (p. 3). Establishing a common vocabulary is an essential step in order to be able to form institutions, especially schools, that form good character. Good character can be developed, but “conceptual and empirical tools” are needed “to craft and evaluate interventions” (p. 3). The need for such tools, including an established, common vocabulary, led Peterson & Seligman to write *Character Strengths and Virtues: A Handbook and Classification*. The goal of the aforementioned work was to develop a handbook, similar to the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, DSM* (1994), and the *International Classification of Diseases, ICD* (1990). The *DSM* and *ICD* are used to establish a common knowledge and vocabulary for psychological illness, and Peterson and Seligman believed that this type of work was also needed for psychological health. A classification including 24 character traits categorized into six broader character strengths was established through an extensive study. Each character trait was thoroughly examined using 10 criteria in order to establish an adequate set of traits for the classification.

**Strengths of wisdom and knowledge.** The first set of traits is the strengths of wisdom and knowledge, which consists of creativity, curiosity, open-mindedness, love of learning, and perspective (Peterson & Seligman, 2004). Creativity consists of the ability to produce ideas or behaviors that are recognizably original and adaptive, and originality that makes a positive contribution to one’s own life or the lives of others. Curiosity is displayed as an intrinsic interest in ongoing experience and pursues experiential novelty, variety, and challenge. Open-mindedness is displayed as good thinking and arriving at conclusions and beliefs in a thoughtful manner. Love of learning consists of a motivation

to acquire new skills or knowledge or to build on existing skills and knowledge. This positive motivation is general across topics, rather than apparent only with specific topics. Perspective is the ability to coordinate the products of knowledge and experience and to deliberately use these products to improve one's well-being. Perspective includes the ability to listen to others, evaluate what is said, and offer good advice.

**Strengths of courage.** The second set of character traits is the strengths of courage, which includes bravery, persistence, integrity, and vitality (Peterson & Seligman, 2004). Bravery consists of the ability to do what needs to be done despite fear. One who exhibits bravery says and does the unpopular but correct thing, and resists peer pressure regarding morally questionable shortcuts. Persistence is the will to perform in the face of contrary impulses, such as boredom, tedium, frustration, and difficulty. Those who are persistent finish what they start, continue despite obstacles, and stay on task. Those who exhibit integrity are truthful, authentic, and sincere, and have an internal sense that they are morally coherent beings. They display good character even when it is easier to not do the right thing. Vitality consists of a zest and enthusiasm for any and all activities, even in circumstances that are difficult and potentially draining.

**Strengths of humanity.** The strengths of humanity include love, kindness, and social intelligence (Peterson & Seligman, 2004). Love is displayed within reciprocated relationships with other people. In these relationships, people share aid, comfort, and acceptance, and display positive feelings, commitment, and sacrifice. Kindness consists of a pervasive tendency to be nice to other people. Those who are kind are compassionate, concerned about the welfare of others, do favors for others, and perform good deeds. Social intelligence is the ability to process signals concerning motives,



feelings, and other psychological states directly relevant to the well being of one's self and others.

**Strengths of justice.** The next set of traits is the strengths of justice, which include citizenship, fairness, and leadership (Peterson & Seligman, 2004). One who displays good citizenship identifies with, and is obligated to, a common good that goes beyond personal interests to include the groups of which one is a member. Citizenship consists of a sense of duty to pull one's own weight. Fairness consists of treating others in similar or identical ways, not letting personal feelings bias decisions about others, giving everyone a fair chance, and committing to the idea that the same rules apply to everyone. Leadership is displayed through directing group activities, inspiring group members, and preserving good relationships with group members.

**Strengths of temperance.** The strengths of temperance include the traits forgiveness/mercy, humility/modesty, prudence, and self-regulation (Peterson & Seligman, 2004). Forgiveness and mercy are exhibited when one lets bygones be bygones, but not because of fear, guilt, permissiveness, external incentives, or threats. Humility and modesty require letting one's accomplishments speak for themselves, and regard for oneself as fortunate when something good has happened to them. Those who are humble and modest have a sense that they are not the center of the universe. Prudence consists of an orientation to one's personal future. Prudence is exhibited through practical reasoning and self-management that helps one achieve long term goals effectively. Long-term goals are not sacrificed for short-term pleasures. Self-regulation consists of control over one's own responses and choices, especially those that may be swayed by extreme impulses and emotions.

**Strengths of transcendence.** Finally, the strengths of transcendence consist of appreciation of beauty and excellence, gratitude, hope, humor, and spirituality (Peterson & Seligman, 2004). Appreciation of beauty and excellence consists of an ability to notice excellence and appreciate it profoundly. One experiences awe and wonder when in the presence of beauty or excellence. Those who exhibit gratitude display a sense of thankfulness in response to a gift and have a sense that they have benefited from the actions of another. Hope is a stance toward the future and the goodness that it might hold. Those who display hope expect that desired events and outcomes will happen and act in ways believed to make them more likely. Those who display humor are skilled at laughing and gently teasing, bring smiles to the faces of others, see the light side, and make jokes. They sustain good cheer in the face of despair. Spirituality consists of a set of coherent beliefs about the higher purpose and meaning of the universe, and one's place within it, and an interest in moral values and the pursuit of goodness.

### **Whole Child Education**

While much of the current education system seems to focus heavily on academic gains and standardized test scores, many are recognizing the need for a shift in the focus of education (Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD) & Center for Disease Control (CDC), 2014). The ASCD, a global organization dedicated to excellence in education and the success of each child, explains this problem clearly, "Health and well-being have, for too long, been put into silos – separated both logistically and philosophically from education and learning" (p. 3). The resolution of this problem lies in the concept of whole child education, which focuses on the students' well-being, rather than just academic achievement. The ASCD and the CDC collaborated to propose

a model of whole child education that connects students' academics, health, and well-being. The Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child model was designed as an “effort to change the conversation about education from a focus on narrowly defined academic achievement to one that promotes the long-term development and success of the whole child” (p. 6). This model focuses on the collaboration of every adult in a child's life – parents, teachers, school staff, community leaders, political leaders – to promote the overall well-being of that child (Lewallen, Hunt, Potts-Datema, Zaza, & Giles, 2015). The entire school and community must come together to meet all of the needs of each student in order for students to be truly, fully educated. The core belief behind the Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child model is that “each child, in each school, in each of our communities deserves to be healthy, safe, engaged, supported, and challenged” (ASCD & CDC, 2014, p. 9).

### **Values Crisis**

Today's culture is facing a values crisis (Beachum, McCray, Yawn, & Obiakor, 2013; Cline & Necochea, 1996). This crisis has been progressively worsening throughout recent decades. From the “hedonism of the 1960s” to the “narcissism of the 1970s,” from the “materialism of the 1980s” to the “apathy of the 1990s,” American culture has been strayed far away from the values with which it was established (Peterson & Seligman, 2004, p. 5). Few disagree that something must be done about the values crisis, yet most people do not know what to do.

One of the most impactful results of the values crisis has been the removing of values from education (Sojourner, 2012). When the American school system was founded, one of its main purposes was to instill values in students. The founders of

America believed that character education was essential for a successful democracy. As the values crisis has heightened, many have begun to turn back to education with hopes of finding a way to remedy the situation.

Throughout the past 60 years, many attempts have been made to bring values back into the school system. The primary approaches have included values clarification (Kirschenbaum, 2000), moral education (Kohlberg, 1966), and character education (Cline & Necochea, 1996; Lickona, 1996; Sojourner, 2012). Though the philosophies and strategies differ between each approach, the overarching goal of these attempts is to instill positive character traits in students.

### **Early Approaches to Solve the Values Crisis**

**Values Clarification.** The original emphasis on values in public schools began to decline in the middle of the 20th century and became almost nonexistent by the 1960s (Sojourner, 2012). The cultural upheaval and social movements of the 1960s and 1970s led people to believe that virtues were relative and private, and therefore should not be taught in the public schools. It was from this relativistic worldview that the values clarification approach was developed.

Kirschenbaum (2000) explained that values clarification was created as a response to the social upheaval of the 1960s and 70s. The values clarification approach uses discussion of values-laden issues as a means for developing students' values. First, a value-laden topic is selected, then students are introduced with a question or activity that helps students think about the topic. The role of the teacher is to ensure respect for all viewpoints, but to allow students to come to their own conclusions about values.

This approach quickly became popular in the 1960s, but soon began to face scrutiny (Kirschenbaum, 2000). Criticism of values clarification shed light on the hypocrisy of the approach: The methodologies of values clarification inherently promote specific values, such as respect and fairness, despite the approach's claim that values should not be inculcated by the teacher or the curriculum. Once it was accepted that values are an inherent part of education, other approaches began to overshadow values clarification.

**Moral Education.** As values clarification began facing criticism, moral education became the dominant approach for values teaching in America (Sojourner, 2012). Althof and Berkowitz (2006) described moral education as a constructivist psychological approach to moral development that is heavily influenced by psychology and theory. This approach focuses heavily on the cognitive structures of moral reasoning that are developed in children (Kohlberg, 1966).

Lawrence Kohlberg (1966) was the pioneer of the moral education movement. He developed the theory of moral development, which is the foundation of moral education. This theory consists of six stages of moral development. The first stage is obedience and punishment orientation. In an obedience and punishment orientation, one makes decisions to avoid punishment. The second stage is naively egoistic orientation. In a naively egoistic orientation, one makes decisions for personal reward or gain. The third stage is good-boy orientation. In a good-boy orientation, one makes decisions in order to avoid disapproval from others. The fourth stage is authority and social-order-maintaining orientation. In an authority and social-order-maintaining orientation, one makes decisions to avoid censure from authorities and guilt. The fifth stage is contractual

legalistic orientation. In a contractual legalistic orientation, one makes decisions based on community welfare and in order to maintain relationships. The sixth stage is conscience or principle orientation. In a conscience or principle orientation, one makes decisions in order to avoid self-condemnation. The sixth stage is based on universal values. As people develop morally, they pass through each of these stages, as each stage is based on the cognitive structures that develop throughout childhood and adolescence.

The moral education approach to values teaching is based on Kohlberg's theory of moral development. Kohlberg (1966) rejected the idea of a set curriculum to teach values, but rather believes that the teacher must promote moral development by relating to the students on a cognitive level through scenarios of moral judgment. As students are posed with difficult moral conflicts, they reason through the steps that must be taken to solve the conflict, and thus are able to move through the stages of moral development.

One of the most complex endeavors of moral education is the creation of the Just Community School (Althof and Berkowitz, 2006). In the Just Community School model, the school is set up as a small democracy, in which the students are given equal status to the teachers; every decision made in the school is made in a democratic manner (Althof and Berkowitz, 2006). Through this democracy model, students face many moral conflicts, and are then able to develop their moral judgment.

### **Character Education**

**Background.** Character education dates back hundreds of years, but has seen drastic change throughout its development (Sojourner, 2012). According to Sojourner, it was in the late 1980s and early 1990s that the character education movement began, when society realized that America was in a state of moral crisis.

The character education approach differs from moral education in that moral education has a theoretical foundation (Kohlberg, 1966), but character education has a philosophical foundation, relying heavily on the philosophy of Aristotle (Althof & Berkowitz, 2006). Kerr (2011) related Aristotle's philosophy of habituation to character education. Habituation, according to Aristotle, is the learning of virtues through participating in virtuous behaviors and evading non-virtuous behaviors. Habituation develops the starting point for moral development because the virtuous behaviors are positively reinforced by the emotions a child feels and the dispositions he then develops, and then the child internalizes an appreciation for the inherent goodness of the virtues. Then, once those starting points are developed through habituation, the child can develop a greater understanding of those virtues through teaching. Kristjansson (2006) related Aristotle's philosophy of emulation to character education. The goal of character education is for students to internalize character traits, and to act upon those character traits; this cannot be done by simply imitating a model, but can be accomplished when one truly emulates the traits that a role model possesses.

**Programs and Pedagogy.** Thomas Lickona was one of the pioneers and greatest leaders of the current character education movement (Sojourner, 2012). In an effort to help schools create and evaluate character education programs, Lickona (1966) developed eleven principles of effective character education. These principles refer to the core values of the school, the comprehensiveness of programs, the ways programs should be implemented, the roles of various stakeholders, and the importance of program assessment. Lickona's principles have been used to guide many of the endeavors of the character education movement (Berkowitz & Bier, 2005; Bulach, 2002).

Berkowitz & Bier (2005) conducted an extensive study known as the “What Works in Character Education” (WWCE) project in order to examine the current research literature about character education implementation. After an extensive review of many character education programs, 33 programs were chosen for review; from the results of the extensive study of the chosen programs, a list of guidelines for effective character education practice and suggestions for maximizing the effectiveness of character education was created. The lists included professional development, service learning, modeling, community participation, and academic curriculum integration.

In a later study, Berkowitz & Hoppe (2009) further outlined components of effective character education. For character education to be effective, a school must place an authentic emphasis on the promotion of character development, must provide opportunities for professional development, and must promote healthy relationships and parent involvement. Instruction must promote peer interactivity, intrinsic motivation, student empowerment, and service opportunities, and must include diverse students.

Bulach (2002) conducted multiple studies in order to determine how to best implement a character education program and how to assess that curriculum’s effectiveness. Based on his findings, Bulach proposed a model of character education that involves focusing on a behavior of the week in order to develop character traits. This model encompasses many of Lickona’s principles, particularly student, faculty, parent, and community involvement, and program assessment. Bulach created a tool that can be used to assess the effectiveness of character education based on behaviors exhibited by the students that correspond to important character traits. He also provided a survey based on Lickona’s principles that can be used to assess character education programs.



One specific strategy that is commonly used in character education programs is modeling; however, this strategy has faced scrutiny, as research has shown that modeling is often not used effectively (Kristjansson, 2006). Kristjansson presented the two most significant problems with the way that role modeling is currently used in character education. First, most role modeling in today's schools ultimately leads to imitation rather than emulation. Second, when emulation is encouraged, students are often taught to emulate a person rather than the character traits that person exemplifies. These two problems must be addressed in order for modeling to be effective. Sanderse (2013) also addressed the problems of role modeling, arguing that most teachers do not effectively model positive character traits, and are unintentional in their efforts. Without any intentionality in their modeling, teachers often do not end up displaying character traits to their students as clearly as they may think. Role modeling is important, because "teachers can only cultivate children's character if they display it themselves," but teachers must be intentional with their modeling (p. 29).

Educators across the board agree that it is important for education to accommodate the various needs and abilities of diverse student populations. This is just as true in the field of character education, yet diversity is rarely incorporated into the character education curriculum (Cline & Necochea, 1966). Values are transmitted and manifested in different ways by different cultures, so a character education program that only accommodates to the majority culture will not adequately serve those belonging to a minority culture. In order for a character education program to effectively impact all students, it must incorporate the different needs and learning styles of students of diverse student populations.

As with diverse student populations, educators agree that it is important to meet the unique needs of gifted students, yet this is rarely applied to character education (Berkowitz & Hoppe, 2009). Berkowitz and Hoppe examined the common characteristics of gifted students and applied these characteristics to character education strategies. Gifted students typically focus on justice and ethical ideals, have strong leadership skills, have an altruistic and assertive nature, and excel in perspective taking and moral reasoning. Because of their unique strengths, gifted students will thrive in a character education program that is ethics-based, provides authentic opportunities for leadership and service, consists of cooperative learning and project-based learning.

**Roadblocks.** The character education movement has faced many obstacles. Currently, the three most significant roadblocks that have stood in the way of character education are religion, funding, and the standards movement (Howard, Berkowitz, and Schaeffer, 2004).

The American school system began as a religious endeavor, and education was believed to be inadequate if it was not religion-based (Davis, 2006). At first, all schools were Protestant Christian, but in the early 1800s, public schools became more common, not as a way of taking religion out of the school, but as a way of providing free education for all children. The influx of Catholics in the United States during the 1840s and 1850s led to a greater divide between the church and state because the Catholics did not want the predominately Protestant school system to teach their children values, and as a reaction, established parochial schools in order to teach character education in line with Catholic beliefs (Howard, Berkowitz, & Schaeffer, 2004). The public schools gradually became more secular, and legislation about the separation of church and state was passed

until schools were eventually completely separated from religion (Davis, 2006). However, after the upheaval of the 1960s and 1970s, people began to push for more inclusion of values in schools (Howard, Berkowitz, & Schaeffer, 2004). Since then, laws have been passed that allow students to participate in religious activities on school grounds, as long as the school staff is not involved (Davis, 2006). Teachers can, and should, teach about religion; however, teachers are not permitted to impart their own beliefs upon the students, or to attempt to indoctrinate the students with any particular beliefs.

The removal of religion from the public school system is used as an argument against character education because some believe that character and values are religious in nature; however, many believe that values go beyond religion, and are a necessary part of a well-functioning society (Davis, 2006). Margit Sutrop (2015) argues that it is impossible for education to be values-free because it “is founded on an understanding of what a human being is and how he or she should live;” therefore, every aspect of education, from curriculum choices, to instructional methods, to classroom management techniques is naturally driven by the values of the teacher and the school (p. 190). Values are an integral part of society and culture, so it is important for public school teachers to know how to teach morals without crossing the religious boundaries established by the government (Davis, 2006).

Funding has also been a significant roadblock for character education because many schools and districts do not have the financial means to make the curricular changes necessary to effectively implement character education (Howard, Berkowitz, & Schaeffer, 2004). While a few states offer funding for character education, many states

have passed legislation requiring or encouraging character education but do not provide funding; therefore, many districts and schools are at a loss as to how to obtain the resources needed for a high quality character education program.

Lastly, the standards movement created by the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act and Common Core has created a school environment that is not conducive to character education because teachers are pressured to narrow the curriculum down to matters that will be tested on high-stakes exams (Howard, Berkowitz, & Schaeffer, 2004). Sojourner (2012) believes that the testing culture is one of the primary reasons that character education is not effectively implemented in today's schools. Society, both in the school and in the home, has placed a greater focus on academic success rather than on the student as a whole. The pressure to produce high test scores has made many educators reluctant to allocate instructional time to character education, because it is not a part of the high stakes tests (Lapsley & Yeager, 2013). Brown (2013) conducted a study to determine teachers' and administrators' perspectives about the effect of the NCLB Act on character education. The findings from the study indicated that many teachers believe that the NCLB legislation has placed too much of an emphasis on test scores, and though the higher academic standards are beneficial, these standards made it very difficult to teach character education.

The Character Education Partnership published a white paper stating their position that character education and Common Core are not opposing forces, but rather, that character education is necessary for the true success of the Common Core initiative (Fink & Geller, 2013). In their paper, Fink and Geller stated that Common Core is a strong initiative but is missing three key components that are necessary for students to

meet the rigorous demands of Common Core – a focus on citizenship development, a focus on moral and performance character and social-emotional skills, and a focus on a positive and caring school environment. The authors conducted a case study of the school that won the National School of Character award in 2010. The studied school places a heavy emphasis on both performance and moral character, and as a result, has seen marked improvement in achievement test scores, classroom engagement, and student behaviors.

### **Chapter 3: Methodology**

This study was composed of both qualitative and quantitative data. The study was broken down into two parts, the first part consisting of an administrator interview, and the second part consisting of a teacher survey.

The school chosen for this study is a K-12 classical charter school. This school's mission is based on the tenant of educating the whole child — mind, body, and spirit — and therefore holds very high standards for students' academics and character. Character education has been part of the school's core values since it was founded. The chosen school includes three elementary campuses and one secondary campus. This study focuses solely at the elementary level and took place at one of the school's three campuses.

The purpose of this study was to determine the influence of the personal values and philosophies of administrators and teachers on the methodologies and effectiveness of character education. This was done by examining a school that has a longstanding successful character education program. Through an interview and survey, this study revealed perspectives from both the administrative and teacher levels of the school.

#### **Part 1: Administrator Interview**

The participants of the interview included two administrators from the chosen school. Both of the participants play a significant role in the school's character education program. The first administrator was recruited via email and was happy to participate in the study. This administrator is referred to as Administrator #1 in this study. This administrator contacted the second administrator, knowing that the second administrator would be interested. This administrator is referred to as Administrator #2 in this study.

The second administrator agreed to participate, and then email communication took place to set up the interview.

The interview questions were written based on this study's research questions and the literature that was reviewed leading up to the study. The goal of the interview was to determine the school's philosophy towards character education and the ways the school implements character education.

The interview took place in a very casual, face-to-face setting. Both administrators were interviewed together in one interview. They each gave permission for the interview to be audio recorded so that it could later be transcribed and analyzed.

After the interview was completed, it was transcribed for analysis purposes (see Appendix A). The responses to the interview questions were then summarized for this paper. These results were also used in the design of the survey, which is explained in further detail below.

## **Part 2: Teacher Survey**

After the interview was complete, permission was obtained to continue with the study and administer the survey to the teachers. This permission was obtained through email correspondence with the school's Director of Academic Services. Once permission was granted, the Director of Academic Services then spoke with the principals from each of the three elementary campuses of the school, asking for one campus to volunteer to participate in the study. Once one of the campuses volunteered to participate in the survey, all further communication was done via email with that campus's principal. All communication with the teachers was done through the principal, and there was no direct communication between the researcher and the teachers.

The survey was not written until the administrator interview was complete so that results from the interview could be used to guide the writing of the survey. This provided the ability to compare the views of the administrators with those of the teachers and to determine similarities and differences between the philosophies of the stakeholders at various levels of the school. The content of the survey was primarily based on Peterson and Seligman's (2004) *Character Strengths and Virtues*, a handbook written to establish a common vocabulary and set of character traits for character education and development. The school uses this work as a framework for its character education, so it served as a guideline for the survey.

The survey was administered through the platform Google Forms (see Appendix B). A detailed explanation of the purpose of the study, as well as a link to the online survey, was sent to each of the participants in an email from the school's principal. The participants were given a three-week window to complete the survey. Because all communication with the teachers was done through the principal, the number of teachers the survey was sent to is not known. Fifteen teachers participated in the survey.

After the three-week window for the survey closed, the data from the survey was analyzed. The platform chosen for the survey automatically collected the data into a spreadsheet and performed an elementary statistical analysis on the quantitative data. All of the qualitative questions in the survey were coded and analyzed for like themes and patterns. Once the coding was completed, a statistical analysis was then completed where applicable.



## Chapter 4: Analysis of Data

### Part 1: Administrator Interview

**Philosophy.** The first question of the interview sought to learn the school's philosophy towards character education. The administrators were asked why they believe character education is important. Both administrators believed that character education is important because education must focus on the whole child — body, mind, and spirit — not just on the mind. Administrator #1 stated, "Character education really is focusing on the spirit and helping kids develop that as we would in PE, developing a muscle, and their mind in the educational setting." The focus on the whole child is essential in developing exemplary citizens, which is an important focus of the school.

**Goals.** In the second question, the administrators were asked if the school had any specific goals it hoped to accomplish through its character education program. Many schools measure the success of character education through statistics such as suspension rates and disciplinary referrals. Although the administrators understand the importance of suspension rates and disciplinary referrals, the school's main focus in regards to the success of the character education program is the school's culture. In recent years, the school developed a creed, stating the core values and goals of the school. This creed is the foundation of the school's culture, and through character education, the school is attempting to bring students, parents, faculty, and staff, together on the mission to develop this culture.

The school's administration hopes to one day have a measurable way of determining the effectiveness of the school's character education. Character can be very difficult to measure, but the school is beginning to work with a doctoral student who is

developing an assessment that can be given to the students once a year in order to see the overall growth in character throughout the school. This endeavor would make it possible to set more concrete and measurable goals for the school's character education program.

**Influence on academic achievement.** In the third question, the administrators were asked for their view on the effect that character education has on the school's high academic achievement. Both administrators firmly believe that the school's character education program is an influencing factor of the school's high academic achievement, because character traits such as perseverance and respect are crucial for academic success.

**Character education implementation.** The administrators were asked for specific ways that the teachers are expected to integrate character education in their classrooms and whether or not they believe that the teachers are actually doing so. At the school, character education is taught in two ways — through intentional character instruction and integration in other subject areas. Teachers are given a great deal of flexibility regarding how they specifically implement each of these, but they are expected to include both the intentional instruction and the integration in their teaching. With the intentional character instruction, classes will spend time learning about and discussing specific traits, such as perseverance or kindness. Much of the integration comes into play in history and literature, but teachers look for ways to incorporate it into other subjects as well, such as science, math, physical education, and art. Some specific strategies that are often used in the classroom are inquiry thinking, analogies, and connections to literary and historical figures.

Administrator #1 has spent much time in the classrooms observing character instruction and the ways that teachers are implementing character into other subject areas, and states confidently that the teachers are doing a great job of integrating character throughout the school day. The administrator reflected, “What I’m seeing in the classroom is golden, it is so beautiful that my heart is warmed when I go into the classrooms and see what they’re doing.” Administrator #2 discussed a process that is being executed in the secondary side of the school, in which character is being mapped throughout the curriculum in every subject in the secondary school. In these maps, the educators are able to see how the curriculum is touching each of the character traits. This process should soon begin on the elementary side of the school as well.

**Programs.** In the fifth question of the interview, the administrators were asked if there are any specific character education programs or curricula that the school uses. The school does not have a specific character education curriculum. The teachers have quite a bit of freedom in the ways in which they implement character education in their classrooms. The school uses Christopher Peterson and Martin Seligman’s (2004) *Character Strengths and Virtues* as a foundation for character education in order to establish a common vocabulary throughout the school. The 24 character traits detailed in this work are used as a framework for the values that are taught throughout the school.

**Conflict with standards.** Finally, the participants were asked for their views on the conflict between character education and Common Core. Because the school is a charter school, it does have some leniency in the area of standards and testing, but the teachers are still required to adhere to the Common Core standards. Neither administrator thought that the standards hindered character education nor that character

education hindered the standards. Although the ever-increasing pressure from standards and testing can take away from character education times, the school has the freedom to make sure character is a priority. Student scores on standardized tests do not hold as much weight in the teachers' evaluations as they do in most public schools because the schools' core values hold more weight in these evaluations than the standards.

Administrator #2 summarized this view in the following way: “[The school’s] stance is that we don’t teach to the test, we don’t teach to the standards, we teach above them.” The goal is not to focus on character instead of academics, but to hold students to high standards in every area of life, including both character and academics.

## **Part 2: Teacher Survey**

**Personal philosophy of character education.** In the first section of the survey, participants were given the opportunity to explain why character education is important to them personally. The short answer responses were coded and analyzed for different themes in the teachers' responses. All 15 participants responded to this question in the survey (see Table C1). Six themes were found in the participants' responses, and some teachers responded with more than one of these themes. Thirty-three percent of participants responded that character education shapes students and positively impacts who they will become. Twenty-seven percent of participants responded that character education equips students to be good citizens and future leaders. Twenty percent of participants responded that character education gives students the tools to combat the negative aspects of today's culture. Twenty percent of participants responded that character education is essential to educating the whole child - spirit, mind, and body. Thirteen percent of participants responded that character education teaches students traits

that future employers and spouses will look for. Seven percent of participants responded that character education develops traits that are essential for academic success.

**Methods and outcomes of character education.** In the second part of the survey, participants were asked a combination of short-answer and numeric rating questions based on Peterson and Seligman's (2004) *Character Strengths and Virtues*. This part of the survey was broken down into six sections, each corresponding to one of the different character strengths.

***Strengths of wisdom and knowledge.***

*Personal philosophy.* The participants were asked which of the specific character traits included in the Strengths of Wisdom and Knowledge is the most important to them personally. All fifteen participants responded to this question (see Table 2). Seven percent of participants responded with Creativity, no participants responded with Curiosity, 20% of participants responded with Open-Mindedness, 67% of participants responded with Love of Learning, and 7% of participants responded with Perspective. Of these traits, Love of Learning was the most important to the participants, and Curiosity was the least important.

The participants were also asked how great an effect they believe the Strengths of Wisdom and Knowledge have on students' academic achievement, on a scale of one to five. Sixty-seven percent of participants responded with a five, and 33% responded with a four. The average perceived rating of the effect of the Strengths of Wisdom and Knowledge on academic achievement was 4.67 (see Table 3).

*Methods.* The participants were asked what methods they use to teach the specific traits that are included in the Strengths of Wisdom and Knowledge. The short answer

responses were then coded and analyzed. The answers were broken down into four categories: curriculum, integration, application, and modeling. Curriculum refers to the specific character education curriculum that is implemented by the school. This includes both direct instruction in character traits as well as class discussion about these traits. Integration includes any methods in which the teachers integrate these character traits into other subject areas. Based on the participants' responses, this is done primarily through the literature and history curricula. Application refers to any methods that apply to the students' personal lives. These methods include student examples, examples of famous people who display these traits, and class activities that give students the opportunity to demonstrate these traits. Modeling refers to both teacher modeling of these traits, as well as school and staff modeling. These categories also apply to the same question in each of the following sections of the survey. Fourteen of the participants responded to this question, and some participants' responses fell into multiple categories, so there is some overlap in the percentages (see Table 4). Seventy-one percent of the responses fell into the curriculum category, 50% were in the integration category, 43% were in the application category, and 7% were in the modeling category. Using the character education curriculum was the most common method used to teach the Strengths of Wisdom and Knowledge, and modeling was the least common method.

*Outcomes.* The teachers were asked how many of their students they believe display each of the character traits included in the Strengths of Wisdom and Knowledge on a scale of one to five. All 15 participants responded to this question (see Table 5). For the trait Creativity, 27% of participants rated their students with a five, 40% of participants rated their students with a four, and 33% of participants rated their students

with a three. The average rating for this trait was 3.93. For the trait Curiosity, 33% of participants rated their students with a five, 60% of participants rated their students with a four, and 7% of participants rated their students with a three. The average rating for this trait was 4.27. For the trait Open-Mindedness, 7% of participants rated their students with a five, 53% of participants rated their students with a four, 33% of participants rated their students with a three, and 7% of participants rated their students with a two. The average rating for this trait was 3.6. For the trait Love of Learning, 27% of participants rated their students with a five, 67% of participants rated their students with a four, and 7% of participants rated their students with a three. The average rating for this trait was 4.2. For the trait Perspective, 60% of participants rated their students with a four, 33% of participants rated their students with a three, and 7% of participants rated their students with a 2. The average rating for this trait was 3.53. Of the traits included in the Strengths of Wisdom and Knowledge, students were rated the highest in Love of Learning and the lowest in Perspective. The overall average rating for students in the Strengths of Wisdom and Knowledge was 3.91 (see Table 6).

*Examples.* At the end of this section, the participants were given the option of providing examples they have witnessed of their students displaying the character traits in the Strengths of Wisdom and Knowledge. Three of the participants chose to share examples. In the first example, the teacher's students display love of learning by choosing library books related to the material that was covered in class in a desire of diving deeper into the subjects. In the second example, the teacher's students display both curiosity and love of learning through their excitement for history and science

lessons. In the third example, the teacher's students display perspective through their interactions with a student who is physically disabled.

***Strengths of courage.***

*Personal philosophy.* The participants were asked which of the specific character traits included in the Strengths of Courage is the most important to them personally. All fifteen participants responded to this question (see Table 7). No participants responded with Bravery, 33% of participants responded with Persistence, 67% of participants responded with Integrity, and no participants responded with Vitality. Of these traits, Integrity was the most important to the participants, and the least important were Bravery and Vitality.

The participants were also asked how great an effect they believe the Strengths of Courage have on students' academic achievement, on a scale of one to five. Sixty percent of participants responded with a five, and 40% responded with a four. The average rating of the perceived effect of the Strengths of Courage on academic achievement was 4.6 (see Table 3).

*Methods.* The participants were asked what methods they use to teach the specific traits that are included in the Strengths of Courage. The short answer responses were then coded, analyzed, and organized into the categories of curriculum, integration, application, and modeling. These categories are discussed in further detail in the Strengths of Wisdom and Knowledge section. Thirteen of the participants responded to this question, and some participants' responses fell into multiple categories, so there is some overlap in the percentages (see Table 8). Forty-six percent of the responses fell into the curriculum category, 77% were in the integration category, 54% were in the



application category, and no responses were in the modeling category. Integration was the most common method used to teach the Strengths of Courage, and modeling was the least common method.

*Outcomes.* The teachers were asked how many of their students they believe display each of the character traits included in the Strengths of Courage on a scale of one to five. All 15 participants responded to this question (see Table 9). For the trait Bravery, 53% of participants rated their students with a four, 40% of participants rated their students with a three, and 7% of participants rated their students with a two. The average rating for this trait was 3.47. For the trait Persistence, 7% of participants rated their students with a five, 47% of participants rated their students with a four, 40% of participants rated their students with a three, and 7% of participants rated their students with a two. The average rating for this trait was 3.53. For the trait Integrity, 13% of participants rated their students with a five, 80% of participants rated their students with a four, and 7% of participants rated their students with a three. The average rating for this trait was 4.07. For the trait Vitality, 7% of participants rated their students with a five, 67% of participants rated their students with a four, and 27% of participants rated their students with a three. The average rating for this trait was 3.8. Of the traits included in the Strengths of Courage, students were rated the highest in Integrity and the lowest in Bravery. The overall average rating for students in the Strengths of Courage was 3.72 (see Table 6).

*Examples.* At the end of this section, the participants were given the option of providing examples they have witnessed of their students displaying the character traits in the Strengths of Courage. Four of the participants chose to share examples. In the first

example, the teacher's students display integrity through their actions towards a student in the class who struggles emotionally. In the second example, the teacher explains that integrity is discussed before every test. In the third example, the teacher's students display bravery when faced with new circumstances, and integrity when asked about something that happened between students. In the fourth example, the teacher's students display persistence when they do not understand a concept by asking questions, rather than simply saying they do not understand.

***Strengths of humanity.***

*Personal philosophy.* The participants were asked which of the specific character traits included in the Strengths of Humanity is the most important to them personally. All fifteen participants responded to this question (see Table 10). Forty-seven percent of participants responded with Love, 47% of participants responded with Kindness, and 7% of participants responded with Social Intelligence. Of these traits, Love and Kindness were the most important to the participants, and Social Intelligence was the least important.

The participants were also asked how great an effect they believe the Strengths of Humanity have on students' academic achievement, on a scale of one to five. Forty percent of participants responded with a five, 53% responded with a four, and 7% responded with a two. The average rating of the perceived effect of the Strengths of Humanity on academic achievement was 4.27 (see Table 3).

*Methods.* The participants were asked what methods they use to teach the specific traits that are included in the Strengths of Humanity. The short answer responses were then coded, analyzed, and organized into the categories of curriculum, integration,

application, and modeling. These categories are discussed in further detail in the Strengths of Wisdom and Knowledge section. Twelve of the participants responded to this question, and some participants' responses fell into multiple categories, so there is some overlap in the percentages (see Table 11). Sixty-seven percent of the responses fell into the curriculum category, 25% were in the integration category, 42% were in the application category, and 25% were in the modeling category. Using the character education curriculum was the most common method used to teach the Strengths of Humanity, and modeling and integration were the least common methods.

*Outcomes.* The teachers were asked how many of their students they believe display each of the character traits included in the Strengths of Humanity on a scale of one to five. All 15 participants responded to this question (see Table 12). For the trait Love, 20% of participants rated their students with a five, 73% of participants rated their students with a four, and 7% of participants rated their students with a three. The average rating for this trait was 4.13. For the trait Kindness, 27% of participants rated their students with a five, and 73 % of participants rated their students with a four. The average rating for this trait was 4.27. For the trait Social Intelligence, 7% of participants rated their students with a five, 47% of participants rated their students with a four, 40% of participants rated their students with a three, and 7% of participants rated their students with a two. The average rating for this trait was 3.53. Of the traits included in the Strengths of Humanity, students were rated the highest in Kindness and the lowest in Social Intelligence. The overall average rating for students in the Strengths of Humanity was 3.98 (see Table 6).

*Examples.* At the end of this section, the participants were given the option of providing examples they have witnessed of their students displaying the character traits in the Strengths of Humanity. Three of the participants chose to share examples. In the first example, the teacher's students display love and kindness through their willingness to help other classmates who are in need and through their community service. In the second example, the teacher's students display kindness in their desire to be a helper in class and in their actions towards one another. In the third example, the teacher's students display kindness by letting other students be the leaders in group assignments.

***Strengths of justice.***

*Personal philosophy.* The participants were asked which of the specific character traits included in the Strengths of Justice is the most important to them personally. All fifteen participants responded to this question (see Table 13). Thirty-three percent of participants responded with Citizenship, 20% of participants responded with Fairness, and 47% of participants responded with Leadership. Of these traits, Leadership was the most important to the participants, and Fairness was the least important.

The participants were also asked how great an effect they believe the Strengths of Justice have on students' academic achievement, on a scale of one to five. Thirty-three percent of participants responded with a five, 53% responded with a four, and 14% responded with a three. The average rating of the perceived effect of the Strengths of Justice on academic achievement was 4.20 (see Table 3).

*Methods.* The participants were asked what methods they use to teach the specific traits that are included in the Strengths of Justice. The short answer responses were then coded, analyzed, and organized into the categories of curriculum, integration, application,

and modeling. These categories are discussed in further detail in the Strengths of Wisdom and Knowledge section. Eleven of the participants responded to this question, and some participants' responses fell into multiple categories, so there is some overlap in the percentages (see Table 14). Sixty-four percent of the responses fell into the curriculum category, 45% were in the integration category, 45% were in the application category, and 27% were in the modeling category. Using the character education curriculum was the most common method used to teach the Strengths of Justice, and modeling was the least common method.

*Outcomes.* The teachers were asked how many of their students they believe display each of the character traits included in the Strengths of Justice on a scale of one to five. All 15 participants responded to this question (see Table 15). For the trait Citizenship, 13% of participants rated their students with a five, 53% of participants rated their students with a four, 27% of participants rated their students with a three, and 7% of participants rated their students with a two. The average rating for this trait was 3.73. For the trait Fairness, 73% of participants rated their students with a four, and 27% of participants rated their students with a three. The average rating for this trait was 3.73. For the trait Leadership, 7% of participants rated their students with a five, 20% of participants rated their students with a four, 67% of participants rated their students with a three, and 7% of participants rated their students with a two. The average rating for this trait was 3.27. Of the traits included in the Strengths of Justice, students were rated the highest in both Citizenship and Fairness and the lowest in Leadership. The overall average rating for students in the Strengths of Justice was 3.58 (see Table 6).

*Examples.* At the end of this section, the participants were given the option of providing examples they have witnessed of their students displaying the character traits in the Strengths of Justice. Two of the participants chose to share examples. In the first example, the teacher's students display leadership as they take turns leading small reading groups. In the second example, the teacher's students display citizenship, fairness, and leadership in skits at weekly assemblies.

***Strengths of temperance.***

*Personal philosophy.* The participants were asked which of the specific character traits included in the Strengths of Temperance is the most important to them personally. All fifteen participants responded to this question (see Table 16). Thirty-three percent of participants responded with Forgiveness/Mercy, 20% of participants responded with Humility/Modesty, no participants responded with Prudence, and 47% of participants responded with Self-Regulation. Of these traits, Self-Regulation was the most important to the participants, and Prudence was the least important.

The participants were also asked how great an effect they believe the Strengths of Temperance have on students' academic achievement, on a scale of one to five. Forty percent of participants responded with a five, and 60% responded with a four. The average rating of the perceived effect of the Strengths of Temperance on academic achievement was 4.40 (see Table 3).

*Methods.* The participants were asked what methods they use to teach the specific traits that are included in the Strengths of Temperance. The short answer responses were then coded, analyzed, and organized into the categories of curriculum, integration, application, and modeling. These categories are discussed in further detail in the

Strengths of Wisdom and Knowledge section. Nine of the participants responded to this question, and some participants' responses fell into multiple categories, so there is some overlap in the percentages (see Table 17). Sixty-seven percent of the responses fell into the curriculum category, 56% were in the integration category, 67% were in the application category, and 22% were in the modeling category. Character education curriculum and application were the most common methods used to teach the Strengths of Temperance, and modeling was the least common method.

*Outcomes.* The teachers were asked how many of their students they believe display each of the character traits included in the Strengths of Temperance on a scale of one to five. All 15 participants responded to this question (see Table 18). For the trait Forgiveness/Mercy, 20% of participants rated their students with a five, 73% of participants rated their students with a four, and 7% of participants rated their students with a three. The average rating for this trait was 4.13. For the trait Humility/Modesty, 60% of participants rated their students with a four, and 40% of participants rated their students with a three. The average rating for this trait was 3.6. For the trait Prudence, 27% of participants rated their students with a four, 47% of participants rated their students with a three, and 26% of participants rated their students with a two. The average rating for this trait was 3. For the trait Self-Regulation, 67% of participants rated their students with a four, 20% of participants rated their students with a three, and 13% of participants rated their students with a two. The average rating for this trait was 3.53. Of the traits included in the Strengths of Temperance, students were rated the highest in Forgiveness/Mercy and the lowest in Prudence. The overall average rating for students in the Strengths of Temperance was 3.57 (see Table 6).

*Examples.* At the end of this section, the participants were given the option of providing examples they have witnessed of their students displaying the character traits in the Strengths of Temperance. Three of the participants chose to share examples. In the first and second examples, the teachers' students display forgiveness through their actions towards one another. In the third example, the teacher has one student who demonstrated great forgiveness after being accidentally hurt at recess by another student.

***Strengths of transcendence.***

*Personal philosophy.* The participants were asked which of the specific character traits included in the Strengths of Transcendence is the most important to them personally. All fifteen participants responded to this question (see Table 19). Twenty percent of participants responded with Appreciation of Beauty & Excellence, 33% of participants responded with Gratitude, 7% of participants responded with Hope, no participants responded with Humor, and 40% of participants responded with Spirituality. Of these traits, Spirituality was the most important to the participants, and Humor was the least important.

The participants were also asked how great an effect they believe the Strengths of Transcendence have on students' academic achievement, on a scale of one to five. Forty-seven percent of participants responded with a five, and 53% responded with a four. The average rating of the perceived effect of the Strengths of Transcendence on academic achievement was 4.47 (see Table 3).

*Methods.* The participants were asked what methods they use to teach the specific traits that are included in the Strengths of Transcendence. The short answer responses were then coded, analyzed, and organized into the categories of curriculum, integration,



application, and modeling. These categories are discussed in further detail in the Strengths of Wisdom and Knowledge section. Eleven of the participants responded to this question, and some participants' responses fell into multiple categories, so there is some overlap in the percentages (see Table 20). Sixty-four percent of the responses fell into the curriculum category, 34% were in the integration category, 45% were in the application category, and 34% were in the modeling category. Using the character education curriculum was the most common method used to teach the Strengths of Transcendence, and integration and modeling were the least common methods.

*Outcomes.* The teachers were asked how many of their students they believe display each of the character traits included in the Strengths of Transcendence on a scale of one to five. Fourteen participants responded to every part of this question, and one participant responded for every trait except for Humor (see Table 21). For the trait Appreciation of Beauty and Excellence, 13% of participants rated their students with a five, 53% of participants rated their students with a four, and 33% of participants rated their students with a three. The average rating for this trait was 3.8. For the trait Gratitude, 33% of participants rated their students with a five, 60% of participants rated their students with a four, and 7% of participants rated their students with a three. The average rating for this trait was 4.27. For the trait Hope, 33% of participants rated their students with a five, 47% of participants rated their students with a four, and 20% of participants rated their students with a three. The average rating for this trait was 4.13. For the trait Humor, 36% of the participants who responded rated their students with a five, 43% of participants rated their students with a four, 14% of participants rated their students with a three, and 7% of participants responded with a two. The average rating

for this trait was 4.07. For the trait Spirituality, 80% of participants rated their students with a four, 13% of participants rated their students with a three, and 7% of participants responded that this trait is not applicable for the grade they teach. The average rating for this trait was 3.6. Of the traits included in the Strengths of Transcendence, students were rated the highest in Gratitude and the lowest in Spirituality. The overall average rating for students in the Strengths of Transcendence was 3.97 (see Table 6).

*Examples.* At the end of this section, the participants were given the option of providing examples they have witnessed of their students displaying the character traits in the Strengths of Transcendence. Four of the participants chose to share examples. In the first example, the teacher's students display gratitude by writing notes to each other, mentioning specific character traits that another student has displayed towards them or saying how another student has blessed them. In the second example, that teacher's students display gratitude by filling out papers that state what they are grateful for in other students. In the third example, the teacher uses humor to connect with students and teaches students how to appropriately use and respond to humor. In the fourth example, the teacher's students display gratitude for their parents.

## **Chapter 5: Discussion**

This study was driven by three research questions, seeking to determine the influence of educators' personal values and philosophies on character education, particularly on methodologies and effectiveness. The belief of the researcher is that when educators hold personal values and philosophies that focus beyond academics and on the whole child, those values will have a significant positive impact on character education, and thus on the students. The goal of this study was to give credence to this view by studying the values, philosophies, methodologies, and effectiveness of character education at an elementary school.

### **Interpretation of Results**

The three research questions for this study were each studied from two perspectives – administrator and teacher. The administrator perspective was determined through the interview, and the teacher perspective was determined through the survey.

**Research question 1.** The first research question for this study sought to determine the values and philosophies of educators regarding character education. At the studied school, the administrators and teachers held similar views of the importance and value of character education.

The administrators' philosophy of character education was strongly based on the concept of educating the whole child. The administrators believe that education is about so much more than teaching a child's mind. For a child to be truly educated, a school must focus on every aspect of that child – spirit, mind, and body. This administrative view perfectly aligns with the school's creed, which emphasizes the school's value of excellence, not just in academics, but in character as well.

The teachers' philosophy of character education aligned very closely with that of the administrators. Of the six main reasons the teachers gave for believing character education is important (see Table 1), four pertained to the ways character education shapes students, one mentioned its effect on future careers and relationships, and only one related directly to academic performance. This, of course, does not mean that the teachers do not value academic success, but rather that the teachers, just as the administrators, believe that education reaches a child far beyond academic success.

The primary discrepancy between the philosophies of the administrators and teachers is the phrasing used to convey the various philosophies. As noted, the core of the responses from the administrators and teachers is very similar. However, the philosophy of educating the whole child, which was central to the response of the administrators, was only mentioned by 20% of the teachers. Despite this discrepancy in terminology, it does appear that the school's philosophy of character education is fairly uniform throughout the various levels of the school. Although only 20% of the teachers specifically mentioned the whole child philosophy, almost every teacher touched on aspects of this philosophy, such as the way that character education shapes who students become.

**Research question 2.** The second research question for this study sought to determine how the values and philosophies of educators influence the methodologies that a school uses for character education.

The administrators stated that the teachers have great flexibility in how they choose to implement character education in their classrooms, but as a general rule, character traits are taught to students through direct instruction, and they are also

integrated into other subject areas, particularly literature and history. Because the administrators believe that education is about more than just academics, the school chooses to assign time specifically to character education, and to expand the curriculum to make sure that it is not just reaching the students' minds, but their hearts as well.

The connection between the philosophies and methodologies of the teachers is very similar to that of the administrators. It was established above that the teachers and administrators hold the same philosophy of believing that educating the whole child is important. Just like the administrators, the teachers believed that it was important to take time to provide direct instruction in character, as well as to integrate it into other academic subjects. When averaging the teachers' responses about methodologies used to teach all six of the strengths together, 71% of the responses referred to direct character curriculum, and 50% of the responses referred to integration into other subject areas. These were the top two methodologies the teachers use for character education. They also found it very important to apply the character lessons directly to the students' lives. Very few of the teachers, only an average of 7%, stated that they use modeling to teach the different traits. This low statistic is somewhat surprising, given how important all of the teachers personally believe that character is. However, this trait does not necessarily mean that the teachers do not model the traits, but may mean that they simply do not rely on modeling to teach character. This may suggest that the teachers' views on methodology to teach character education align with the literature that suggests that modeling, in itself, is not a sufficient way to teach character (Kristjansson, 2006).

**Research question 3.** The third research question for this study sought to determine how the values and philosophies of educators influence the effectiveness of a

school's character education. In regards to this question, the administrators provided a broad response as to the effectiveness of the school's character education, referencing their observations from the classrooms, and the teachers provided a more detailed response, breaking down the observations they have noticed in their students in each character trait.

From the administrative perspective, it appears that the school's character education is very effective in positively influencing the students. Administrator #1 spends much time observing character education in the classrooms, and through these observations, strongly believes that great results are being produced from the school's character education. The administrators' philosophy of character education relied heavily on the concept of educating the whole child, as they believe the school should focus on developing all aspects of who students are, beyond simply academics. Based on their views, this is being done in the classrooms, and is thus producing very positive results. This school also tends to have very high academic achievement, and the administrators believe that character education, especially regarding performance character, is important to the school's academic success.

Based on the teachers' responses, the average rating of the students was highest in the Strengths of Humanity. Within the Strengths of Humanity, the students were rated the highest in kindness and the lowest in social intelligence. This aligns with the values of the teachers. When asked which trait was the most important, kindness was tied for the highest rating, and social intelligence was the lowest. It seems logical that the students would be rated higher in the traits that the teachers find more important, because

the teachers likely focus on those traits more than others. Although that is the case for this set of traits, it can be seen below that this is not always the case.

The second highest average student rating was in the Strengths of Transcendence. Within the Strengths of Transcendence, the students were rated the highest in gratitude and the lowest in spirituality. The alignment with the values of the teachers is different for this strength, however. The teachers ranked gratitude as the second most important, which aligns with gratitude being the highest rating for the students. However, spirituality, which was the lowest rating for students, was the highest importance for the teachers. Because this school is a charter school, not a private school, spirituality cannot really be discussed in the classroom. This is one explanation for why the trait that is the most important to the teachers is not equally high in student ratings.

The third highest average student rating was in the Strengths of Wisdom and Knowledge. Within the Strengths of Wisdom and Knowledge, the students were rated the highest in curiosity and the lowest in perspective. Although students received the highest rating in curiosity, no teachers chose this trait as the most important. There is no explanation, based solely on the data that was collected in the survey, that can be made for this discrepancy. Perspective, which received the lowest student ranking, was ranked the second lowest by teachers, above curiosity.

The next highest average student rating was in the Strengths of Courage. Within the Strengths of Courage, the students were rated the highest in integrity and the lowest in bravery. This aligns with the values of the teachers. The teachers rated integrity as the most important trait, and bravery was tied with vitality for the lowest.

The second lowest average student rating was in the Strengths of Justice. Within the Strengths of Justice, the students were rated the highest in fairness and the lowest in leadership. The Strengths of Justice possessed the greatest discrepancy between student ratings and teacher rankings. Fairness, the highest student rating, received the lowest teacher ranking; leadership, the lowest student rating, received the highest teacher ranking. There is no explanation, based solely on the data that was collected in the survey, that can be made for this discrepancy.

The students received the lowest average rating in the Strengths of Temperance. Within the Strengths of Temperance, the students were rated the highest in forgiveness/mercy and the lowest in prudence. This aligns with the values of the teachers. Forgiveness/mercy received the highest teacher ranking, and prudence received the lowest teacher ranking.

### **Implications for Educators**

The information gleaned from this study can be very beneficial to educators. Based on the results of both the interview and the survey, it is apparent that there is unity in philosophy and values of character education throughout the various levels of the school, and that positive outcomes are being produced in the students. It is important for educators to understand that, in order to have a successful character education program that effectively develops positive character in students, the heart of the school and of each educator must be focused beyond just academic performance. A school must genuinely care about the heart of each child, just as much as the mind, if it hopes to grow students into good people, good citizens, and good future leaders.



## **Chapter 6: Conclusion**

### **Summary of Research**

This study examined the philosophies and values regarding character education held by administrators and teachers. This study was driven by three research questions, seeking to determine the influence of educators' personal values and philosophies on character education, particularly on methodologies and effectiveness. These questions were researched in a two-part study of an elementary charter school that is known for its character education. Part one of the study consisted of an interview with two administrators from the school, and part two of the study consisted of a survey sent to the teachers of the school. Both the interview and survey sought to determine the values and philosophies of character education held by the educators, the methodologies the school uses for character education, and how the educators perceive the effectiveness of the school's character education.

Both the administrators and the teachers believe that education is not just about academics, but is about educating the child as a whole – spirit, mind, and body. This philosophy heavily influenced the curricular and instructional choices of the educators. Because they believe that education is about more than academics, the educators at this school are very intentional about incorporating character education into the school day. Instructional time is set aside specifically for character education, and character traits are also integrated into other subject areas throughout the day. Both the administrators and the teachers perceive the character education to be very effective at the school and see students demonstrating positive character traits in their daily lives. It is quite clear that

the philosophies of the educators at this school have a significant positive influence on the school's character education program and on the students.

### **Limitations of the Study**

This study was confined to just one school. Because of the small population size and scope of the study, the data could be biased depending on characteristics of the specific school, such as demographics and the type of school. Another limitation is that, as stated in the administrator interview, it can be very difficult to measure character. Because of this, much of the data, particularly regarding the effectiveness of the school's character education, is based on the opinions and perceptions of the administrators and teachers.

One limitation of the interview portion of the study is that both of the administrators who were interviewed work directly with the school's character education. This could have produced a bias in favor of character education, because it is at the core of both administrators' jobs. Another limitation of the interview is the small sample size. Only one interview took place with just two administrators.

One limitation of the survey is that the number of teachers to whom the survey was sent is unknown because all communication took place between the researcher and the school's principal. Another limitation of the survey is that some questions were not answered by all participants. The rate of participation decreased significantly from the beginning to the end of the survey. Some data may not fully reflect the actual views of the teachers because calculations could only be made based on the respondents' answers.

## **Suggestions for Further Research**

This study was limited to one charter school at the elementary level. In order to broaden this study, and limit any bias that could be present due to the small sample size, this study could be replicated using more schools, different types of schools, or by expanding it to the secondary level.

Expanding this study to include multiple schools could also present a greater variety in the educators' philosophies. In this study, the administrators and teachers held very similar values and philosophies. It would be helpful to compare the effectiveness and methodologies of educators with different philosophies to really see how philosophy is influencing character education.

## **Conclusion**

The conclusions of this study are very important for the field of education. If teachers hope to educate a generation that is equipped to face the values crisis that society is facing today, and to rise up as influential leaders in the world, it is absolutely vital that teachers understand that simply teaching children academics is not enough. Students need to be taught positive values and character traits, and be given opportunities to develop these traits. Teachers must understand that their philosophies influence the ways that they teach and the outcomes that are produced in their students. Therefore, if students are to learn to value good character, teachers must personally value it themselves. Otherwise, the field of education will be fighting a losing battle in its effort to produce future leaders who are adequately equipped to face society's values crisis.

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## APPENDICES

## APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT

\*For the purpose of anonymity, any identifying factors of the school were replaced in brackets in this transcript.

\*\*Please note that this interview took place in a casual setting. This transcript was recorded verbatim and is thus written with grammar that reflects the conversational nature of the interview.

**Researcher:** Why does [the school] think that character education is important?

**Administrator #2:** I think it's just the whole thing of exemplary citizens, so like an exemplary citizen in this world is not. . . you can't just focus on the education of the mind, it has to be mind, body, spirit. So for us, character education really is focusing on the spirit and helping kids develop that as we would in PE, developing a muscle, and their mind in the educational setting.

**Administrator #1:** Another thing I would just toss in is whenever you talk about a classical education, really they're infused, and so the character has to be a part of, like you said, integrating the mind, body, spirit. So much of the classwork is involved in that, because you can have a brilliant person. . . . [Remainder of answer inaudible.]

**Researcher:** What are any specific goals [the school] has for character education?

**Administrator #2:** So, probably not like, measurable, really, in the sense of character education in general is very hard to measure, so you'll find that a lot of people will use things like suspension, expulsion rates, that kind of stuff, disciplinary referrals, to kind of measure. I'd say for us, the biggest thing we really measure and we focus on would be our culture surveys, and so at [the school], I would say character and culture are incredibly intertwined, so you can't separate one without separating the other. So



everything we do, in that sense, that links positive culture. For example, two years ago we started the process to create a creed, so we now have a creed. It's for the whole K-12 life of the school, this is who we are as [school mascot], and I don't have a copy of it and I don't have it memorized. But that's the kind of thing that we really use. The culture piece is definitely easier to measure than the character piece. But we really have, like, and this may be going into some of your other questions, but I would say, like, two tracks to the character program. One would be. . . and I'm going to talk K-12, it's going to be a little different, but I'm going to talk general. . . you have the intentional character instruction, which for example in the secondary side, is through our [school mascot] Teams. So, they have, once a week, where the teacher will do a lesson, let's say it's on perseverance or kindness, or courage, for example, one of those things. So that's the intentional. The other track is integrated in curriculum, and that is actually, in my mind, the more important track, because you have access to kids in a way that keeps them from rolling their eyes because it's integrated in the curriculum. So if you're in history, for example, you're studying some founding father or whatever, you're talking about the character traits that got that person to where they are. Or literature, I mean, nothing is better for building empathy and that kind of thing than in fiction, but a lot of schools are going off of fiction into non-fiction. But we're committed to that kind of thing, because once again, the classical, tradition. But it's a natural place for character to be incorporated. So I probably didn't answer your question as far as our measurements, because things are a little more fluid, I would say, if that makes sense. Definitely the culture piece, and actually, we're getting ready, which is interesting, I'll definitely keep you informed, we're getting ready to probably do a survey, a character survey. It's a guy

out of University of Missouri who's getting his PhD, it's for his thesis, and he's developing this, it's the first one that's actually going to be really measurable, where you can give it to your students once a year and see the growth in character in your school. We're probably going to do that in the Spring. That'll be our first step to being a little more accountable and measurable. And we're all for that and I'm all for that, it's just that character is squishy, and it's very hard. It's not like you can measure it easily. But we're trying.

**Researcher:** Academic achievement is pretty high at [the school]. Do you think that character education has influence on that?

**Administrator #2:** I absolutely do.

**Administrator #1:** Perseverance, the self recognition. Respect, respect for yourself and for your teacher and for preparing Socratic seminars is respect for classmates. Respect is huge.

**Researcher:** Are there specific ways that the teachers are supposed to integrate character education in the classroom?

**Administrator #2:** They definitely have it a couple ways. They integrate through, especially literature and history, that kind of thing. Always talking about the character traits that tie in with the literature and the historical figures. And science math, wherever we can in that kind of thing. But they also, a lot of teachers do books. The library pulls books every month and then they send out, so they always have access to literature that, let's say they're talking about forgiveness that month. So the library will pull books and the teacher can go use them with their class. A lot of teachers use kind of a class meeting or circle model to talk about the character traits and morning meeting kind of thing.

There's a lot of room for teachers to individually decide what works for them, but absolutely, there is an expectation for both the intentional character conversations and the integrated into curriculum.

**Administrator #1:** Absolutely. I have reports that I've been doing observations for the cottage school program and I can share those with you on how they integrate that into the classical education as far as inquiry thinking. You know, "reach into the bag, what do you think is in here?" Where the little ones, they pull it out, and they teach them how to ask questions. Then once they do that, they take something as simple as an apple, and then they start to bring in a lesson and the character trait with that. I could send you some of those reports. Or they'll watch a video, just a little clip. And then say, "what do you notice in here?" And they just start the conversation and then they gradually gravitate the conversation to character: "how can you do that to someone in your home or classroom?" And then they'll think about, "well, I can help my little brother tie his shoes," and then they start applying it. We did the kindness bucket filling. The kids, what we were trying to do, is rather than us trying to teach self regulation and kindness, is we decided if we did bucket filling, we'd get both, because a kid is not going to push another kid out of the way to be the first out the door. Instead, they're going to open the door and let them be first. They want to be a bucket filler, not a bucket dipper. You teach them an analogy that's visual and their concentration and focus is on filling people's buckets all day long, rather than my way, my way.

**Administrator #2:** A good question teachers will use to get from literature into character would be, let's say they're talking about the main character in a book, whoever that is, let's say Joe. So the teacher would say, "So, would you want to be friends with Joe?"

And then the kids say why or why not. And as soon as you go down to that, you're in the world of character.

**Administrator #1:** "And then are you a friend like Joe?"

**Researcher:** Are there any specific programs or strategies [the school] uses for character education?

**Administrator #2:** Kind of. What we use, and this is something I'm not sure if you're familiar with. If you're not, you need to get familiar with it if you're going to study character. Martin Seligman and Christopher Peterson have a book out called *Character Strengths and Virtues*. They actually, coming from the world of positive psychology, they spent years, like five years, kind of distilling down character traits from both eastern and western civilization into six broad virtue categories, and there are 24 character traits in those. And that's kind of our filter, and with that, there's a website you can go on. It's called [viacharacter.org](http://viacharacter.org). What you can do is go on there and take a free character survey. It's like 120 questions and it'll rate you 1-24 your top character strengths. The big thing for [the school] was getting a common vocabulary in character. What you'll find a lot of times is that people are talking about similar things a lot of times, but they're not using a common language, and so the unifying nature of this is that we have these 24, and that doesn't mean we don't talk about other things, but these 24 kind of guide, and they are from both the world of performance character and moral character. Those are the two big things. Performance character is stuff like self regulation, perseverance, that kind of thing. And then you have moral character, which is the kindness and the courage and all those. But this combines both of them. It's a really great way for people to talk about

character and use the same language. It's not like a preset program like Character Counts or one of the things off the shelf, but it definitely has meat in it.

**Administrator #1:** And it really is great. It covers everything. There are some actions that I think would go under kindness, or something like that, that would encompass things like forgiveness, that's not a standalone one of the 24. But, that would tuck under the kindness, or compassion, or respect.

**Researcher:** From your perspective, do you think that all the teachers are actually implementing the character education in the ways you want?

**Administrator #1:** What I'm seeing in the classroom is golden, it is so beautiful that my heart is warmed when I go into the classrooms and see what they're doing. I know that in the cottage school program they are very intentional and regimented about it and they have benchmarks they set for themselves that they must meet. So they must, even pause for three minutes, and "let's talk about this, we're getting ready for Thanksgiving, and how would you like to talk about your thoughts." One of the things they did is pull in kindness and pulled in some of the elements of kindness and gratitude at the same time and they decided they were going to write letters of thanks to soldiers for Thanksgiving. So they're doing intentional hands-on actions and that part, if you want to say is measurable. They're actually producing an outcome where they're investing in people, and that is beautiful. I do think the teachers really are. Some lessons are easier than others, like *To Kill a Mockingbird* in literature.

**Administrator #2:** We're in the process of mapping character throughout curriculum on the secondary side. English maps 7-12th grade with every book and where it falls in the

24 character traits. So from 7-12th you can see in English, you're touching on all of those character traits. It's a really cool thing to see it in action.

**Administrator #1:** That has been amazing to look at and to see. It's inspirational to see the grid and how well we're covering all 24 character traits.

**Researcher:** Do you think that the Common Core standards conflict with [the school's] character education?

**Administrator #2:** I don't think so. I mean, like, I think the bigger conflict, things, when you look at Common Core, how you incorporate, I think [the school's] stance is that we don't teach to the test, we don't teach to the standards, we teach above them. For example, when I say a lot of schools are kind of abandoning fiction because the standards are actually mostly in nonfiction. What [the school] would say is, if we can have a senior that can read and understand *Brother's K*, we're pretty sure they can read a technical manual and understand and answer questions. So it's kind of that idea, and right now there seems to be, that seems fine. Now long term, who knows, because it kind of gets a little fuzzy. It feels like we've landed in a place now, as much testing as we have, it definitely eats into academics, time, and character. Teachers just feel more stress. But I would say, you know, I think we still feel the freedom to make character a priority at [the school].

**Administrator #1:** I was just working on two weeks ago the accreditation process, where every one of our teachers is looking at their subject, and they're going through the level which they meet those state standards. Green is for good, yellow is, well, we did marginally well, and red is whoops, we don't address it. What I have found is that our core values as a charter school can supersede some of the state standards. We have some

of our own policies. And so some of the things we, that would be our higher filter, would be our core values than the state standards. We still do need to speak about our rationale on why we feel that we can go that route. That's what we're in the process of.

**Administrator #2:** One thing we have to our advantage is the freedom in how we evaluate our teachers. We're not evaluating them on how their kids do on these standardized tests. That gives teachers a lot more freedom. Schools that are going to 50% is how your kids do, it is so hard. That's a big piece of it.

## APPENDIX B: SURVEY QUESTIONS

### Consent for Participation in Survey Research

**Investigator:** [REDACTED]

**Responsible Principle Investigator (RPI):** [REDACTED]

**Purpose of the Study:** The purpose of this study is to research the goals, underlying philosophies, and practices of a school's character education program.

**Procedures:** This study consists of an online survey. Questions will be in multiple choice and short answer format. You will be asked questions about your personal thoughts and philosophies about character education, character education practices that are implemented in your classroom, and your perception of any behavioral and academic outcomes of your school's character education program.

**Discomforts and Risks:** This study presents minimal risk. You are free to decline to answer any questions, or to stop the survey at any time. As with all research, there is a chance that confidentiality could be compromised; however, precautions are in place to minimize that risk.

**Benefits:** There is no direct benefit to you from taking part in this study. It is hoped that this research will provide insight to the effectiveness of different approaches to character education.

**Statement of Confidentiality:** The results of this study will be disseminated in a thesis paper, but no personally identifiable information will be shared. All files involved in this study, including survey responses and data analysis, will be retained for five years in password protected files on the investigator's computer.



**Whom to contact:** Please contact the RPI with any questions, or concerns about the research. You may also call the RPI if you feel you have been injured or harmed by this research. She can be contacted at [REDACTED] or via email at [REDACTED]. If you have any questions about your rights as a participant in this study, please contact the Southeastern University Institutional Review Board at [REDACTED] or via email at [REDACTED].

**Voluntariness:** Participation in this study is voluntary and may discontinue at anytime.

**Dissemination:** This research will be disseminated in a thesis paper that will be completed in November of 2016. This paper will be submitted to the faculty of Southeastern University and will also be deposited in an online repository through the Southeastern University library called Fire Scholars. You will also be offered a copy of the paper when it is complete.

### **Consent**

- By clicking “Yes” you acknowledge that you have read and understand the above consent and voluntarily agree to participate in this study.
- If you do not agree to participate in this study, please select “No” to end the survey.

**Do you give consent to participate in this study? \* *Mark only one oval.***

- Yes
- No *Stop filling out this form.*

### Personal Philosophy of Character Education

**Why is character education important to you personally?**

Answer:

## Strengths of Wisdom & Knowledge

**Creativity:** Students produce ideas or behaviors that are recognizably original and adaptive. Students' originality makes a positive contribution to their own lives or the lives of others. (Peterson & Seligman, 2004, p. 95)

**Curiosity:** Students possess an intrinsic interest in ongoing experience and pursue experiential novelty, variety, and challenge. (p. 98)

**Open-Mindedness:** Students display good thinking and arrive at conclusions and beliefs in a thoughtful manner. (p. 100-101)

**Love of Learning:** Students are positively motivated to acquire new skills or knowledge or to build on existing skills and knowledge. This positive motivation is general across topics, rather than apparent only with specific topics. (p. 103)

**Perspective:** Students coordinate the products of knowledge and experience and deliberately use these products to improve their well-being. Students are able to listen to others, evaluate what is said, and offer good advice. (p. 105-106)

**On a scale of 1-5, how many of your students do you believe display these character traits on a daily basis?** *Mark only one oval per row.*

	1 None	2 A Few	3 Some	4 Most	5 All	N/A for my grade
Creativity	0	0	0	0	0	0
Curiosity	0	0	0	0	0	0
Open-Mindedness	0	0	0	0	0	0

Love of Learning	0	0	0	0	0	0
Perspective	0	0	0	0	0	0

**On a scale of 1-5, how great of an effect do you believe these traits have on students' academic achievement? *Mark only one oval.***

	1	2	3	4	5	
No effect	0	0	0	0	0	Crucial for academic achievement

**What methods have you used to teach these specific character traits?**

Answer:

**Do you have any student examples of these character traits that you wish to share?**

Answer:

**Which of these specific character traits is the most important to you personally?**

*Mark only one oval.*

- Creativity
- Curiosity
- Open-Mindedness
- Love of Learning
- Perspective

## Strengths of Courage

**Bravery:** Students possess the ability to do what needs to be done despite fear. Students say and do the unpopular but correct thing and resist peer pressure regarding morally questionable shortcuts. (Peterson & Seligman, 2004, p. 199)

**Persistence:** Students have the will to perform in the face of contrary impulses, such as boredom, tedium, frustration, and difficulty. Students finish what they start, continue despite obstacles, and stay on task. (p. 202)

**Integrity:** Students are truthful, authentic, and sincere, and students have an internal sense that they are morally coherent beings. Students display good character even when it is easier to not do the right thing. (p. 205-206)

**Vitality:** Students are full of zest and display enthusiasm for any and all activities, even in circumstances that are difficult and potentially draining. (p. 209)

**On a scale of 1-5, how many of your students do you believe display these character traits on a daily basis? *Mark only one oval per row.***

	1 None	2 A Few	3 Some	4 Most	5 All	N/A for my grade
Bravery	0	0	0	0	0	0
Persistence	0	0	0	0	0	0
Integrity	0	0	0	0	0	0
Vitality	0	0	0	0	0	0

**On a scale of 1-5, how great of an effect do you believe these traits have on students' academic achievement?** *Mark only one oval.*

	1	2	3	4	5	
No effect	0	0	0	0	0	Crucial for academic achievement

**What methods have you used to teach these specific character traits?**

Answer:

**Do you have any student examples of these character traits that you wish to share?**

Answer:

**Which of these specific character traits is the most important to you personally?**

*Mark only one oval.*

- Bravery
- Persistence
- Integrity
- Vitality

#### Strengths of Humanity

**Love:** Students display love within reciprocated relationships with other people. In these relationships, students share aid, comfort, and acceptance and display positive feelings, commitment, and sacrifice. (Peterson & Seligman, 2004, p. 293)

**Kindness:** Students have a pervasive tendency to be nice to other people. Students are compassionate, concerned about the welfare of others, do favors for others, and perform

good deeds. (p. 296)

**Social Intelligence:** Students have the ability to process signals concerning motives, feelings, and other psychological states directly relevant to the well being of themselves and others. (p. 299)

**On a scale of 1-5, how many of your students do you believe display these character traits on a daily basis?** *Mark only one oval per row.*

	1 None	2 A Few	3 Some	4 Most	5 All	N/A for my grade
Love	0	0	0	0	0	0
Kindness	0	0	0	0	0	0
Social Intelligence	0	0	0	0	0	0

**On a scale of 1-5, how great of an effect do you believe these traits have on students' academic achievement?** *Mark only one oval.*

	1	2	3	4	5	
No effect	0	0	0	0	0	Crucial for academic achievement

**What methods have you used to teach these specific character traits?**

Answer:

**Do you have any student examples of these character traits that you wish to share?**

Answer:

**Which of these specific character traits is the most important to you personally?**

*Mark only one oval.*

- Love
- Kindness
- Social Intelligence

### Strengths of Justice

**Citizenship:** Students identify with and are obligated to a common good that goes beyond personal interests to include the groups of which one is a member. Students have a sense of duty and pull their own weight. (Peterson & Seligman, 2004, p. 357)

**Fairness:** Students treat others in similar or identical ways, not letting their personal feelings bias decisions about others. Students give everyone a fair chance and are committed to the idea that the same rules apply to everyone. (p. 361)

**Leadership:** Students direct group activities and inspire group members. Students create and preserve good relationships with group members. (p. 365)

**On a scale of 1-5, how many of your students do you believe display these character traits on a daily basis?** *Mark only one oval per row.*

	1	2	3	4	5	N/A for my
	None	A Few	Some	Most	All	grade
Citizenship	0	0	0	0	0	0

Fairness	0	0	0	0	0	0
Leadership	0	0	0	0	0	0

**On a scale of 1-5, how great of an effect do you believe these traits have on students' academic achievement? *Mark only one oval.***

	1	2	3	4	5	
No effect	0	0	0	0	0	Crucial for academic achievement

**What methods have you used to teach these specific character traits?**

Answer:

**Do you have any student examples of these character traits that you wish to share?**

Answer:

**Which of these specific character traits is the most important to you personally?**

*Mark only one oval.*

- Citizenship
- Fairness
- Leadership

#### Strengths of Temperance

**Forgiveness/Mercy:** Students let bygones be bygones, but not because of fear, guilt, permissiveness, external incentives, or threats. (Peterson & Seligman, 2004, p. 432)

**Humility/Modesty:** Students let their accomplishments speak for themselves and regard themselves as fortunate when something good has happened to them. Students have a



sense that they are not the center of the universe. (p. 435-436)

**Prudence:** Students have an orientation to their personal futures. Students display practical reasoning and self-management that helps them achieve long term goals effectively. Students do not sacrifice long-term goals for short-term pleasures. (p. 438)

**Self-Regulation:** Students exert control over their own responses and choices, especially those that may be swayed by extreme impulses and emotions. (p. 442)

**On a scale of 1-5, how many of your students do you believe display these character traits on a daily basis? Mark only one oval per row.**

	1 None	2 A Few	3 Some	4 Most	5 All	N/A for my grade
Forgiveness /Mercy	0	0	0	0	0	0
Humility/ Modesty	0	0	0	0	0	0
Prudence	0	0	0	0	0	0
Self- Regulation	0	0	0	0	0	0

**On a scale of 1-5, how great of an effect do you believe these traits have on students' academic achievement?** *Mark only one oval.*

	1	2	3	4	5	
No effect	0	0	0	0	0	Crucial for academic achievement

**What methods have you used to teach these specific character traits?**

Answer:

**Do you have any student examples of these character traits that you wish to share?**

Answer:

**Which of these specific character traits is the most important to you personally?**

*Mark only one oval.*

- Forgiveness/Mercy
- Humility/Modesty
- Prudence
- Self-Regulation

#### Strengths of Transcendence

**Appreciation of Beauty & Excellence:** Students notice excellence and appreciate it profoundly. Students experience awe and wonder when in the presence of beauty or excellence. (Peterson & Seligman, 2004, p. 520)

**Gratitude:** Students display a sense of thankfulness in response to a gift and have a sense that they have benefited from the actions of another. (p. 524)

**Hope:** Students possess a stance toward the future and the goodness that it might hold.

Students expect that desired events and outcomes will happen and act in ways believed to make them more likely. (p. 526)

**Humor:** Students are skilled at laughing and gently teasing, bring smiles to the face of others, see the light side, and make jokes. Students sustain good cheer in the face of despair. (p. 530)

**Spirituality:** Students have coherent beliefs about the higher purpose and meaning of the universe and their place within it. Students take an interest in moral values and the pursuit of goodness. (p. 533)

**On a scale of 1-5, how many of your students do you believe display these character traits on a daily basis?** *Mark only one oval per row.*

	1 None	2 A Few	3 Some	4 Most	5 All	N/A for my grade
Appreciation of Beauty & Excellence	0	0	0	0	0	0
Gratitude	0	0	0	0	0	0
Hope	0	0	0	0	0	0
Humor	0	0	0	0	0	0
Spirituality	0	0	0	0	0	0

**On a scale of 1-5, how great of an effect do you believe these traits have on students' academic achievement? *Mark only one oval.***

	1	2	3	4	5	
No effect	0	0	0	0	0	Crucial for academic achievement

**What methods have you used to teach these specific character traits?**

Answer:

**Do you have any student examples of these character traits that you wish to share?**

Answer:

**Which of these specific character traits is the most important to you personally?**

*Mark only one oval.*

- Appreciation of Beauty & Excellence
- Gratitude
- Hope
- Humor
- Spirituality

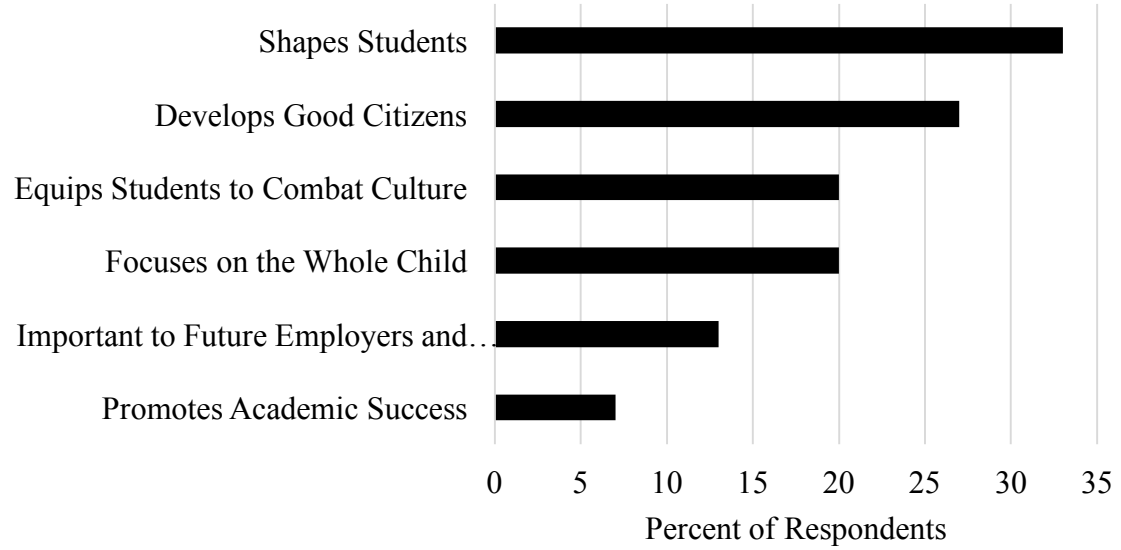
**If you would like to receive a copy of my final thesis paper, please provide your email address. If you would not, please click "Submit" to finish the survey.**

Answer

APPENDIX C: TABLES

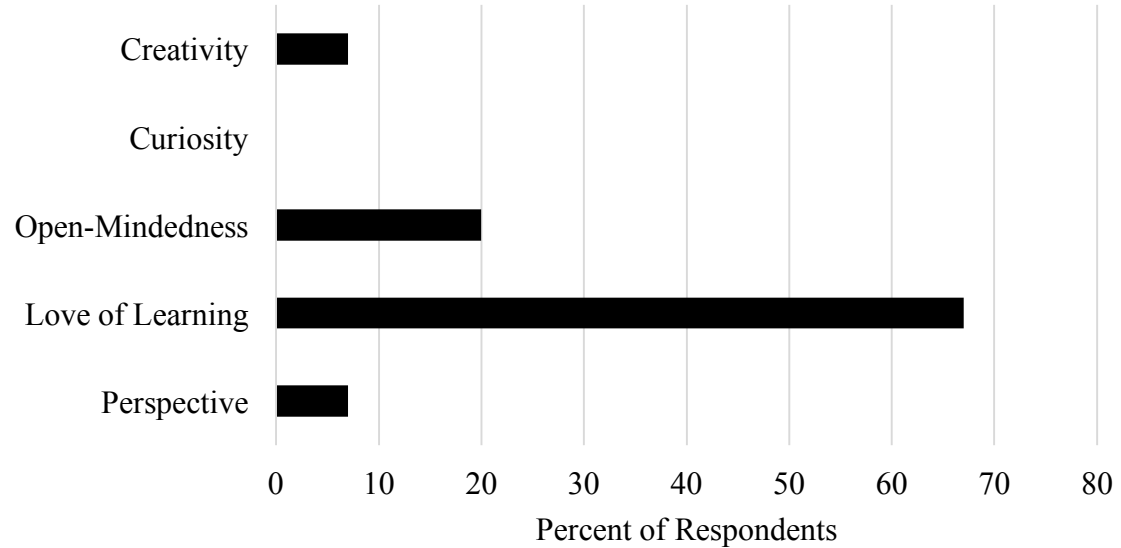
**Table C1**

*Why Teachers Believe Character Education Is Important*

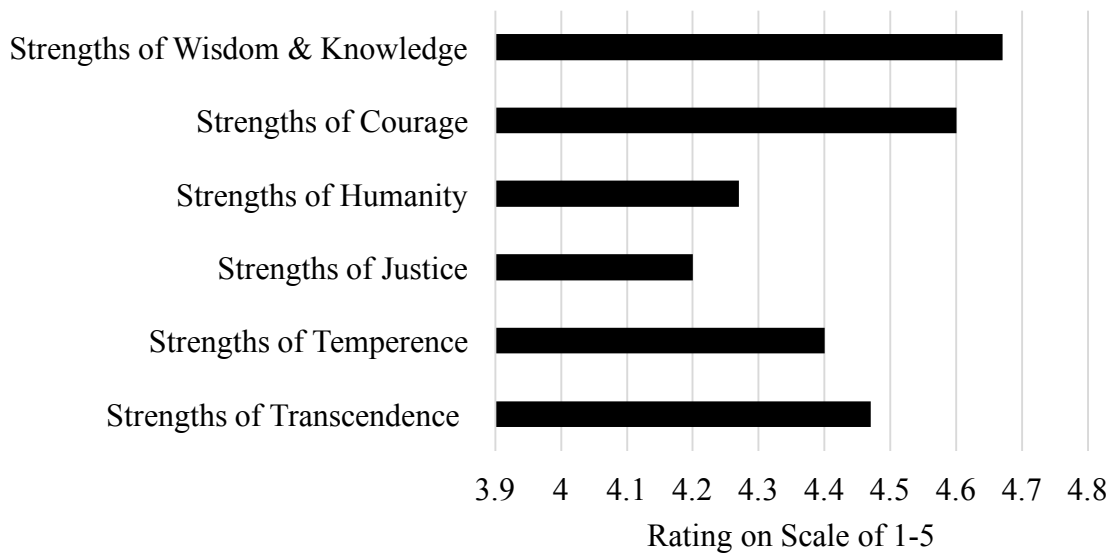


**Table C2**

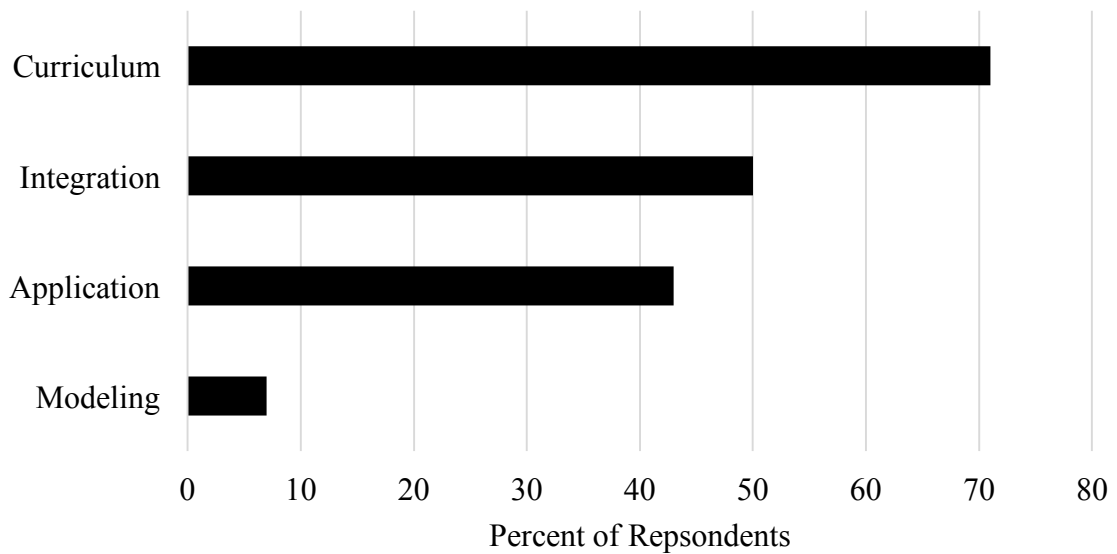
*Personal Philosophy: Strengths of Wisdom and Knowledge*



**Table C3**  
*Perceived Effect On Academic Achievement*

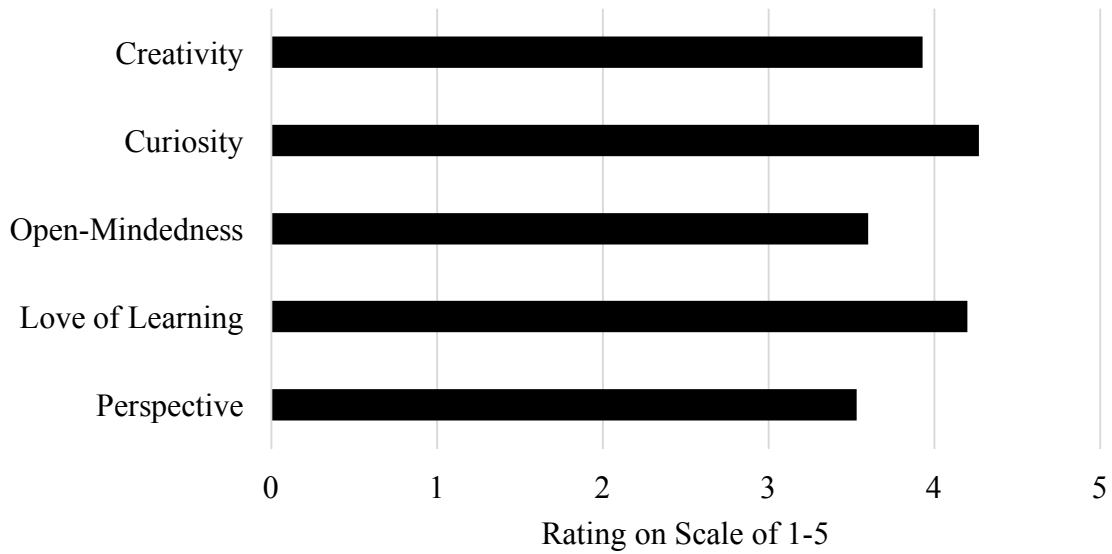


**Table C4**  
*Methods Used to Teach Strengths of Wisdom & Knowledge*



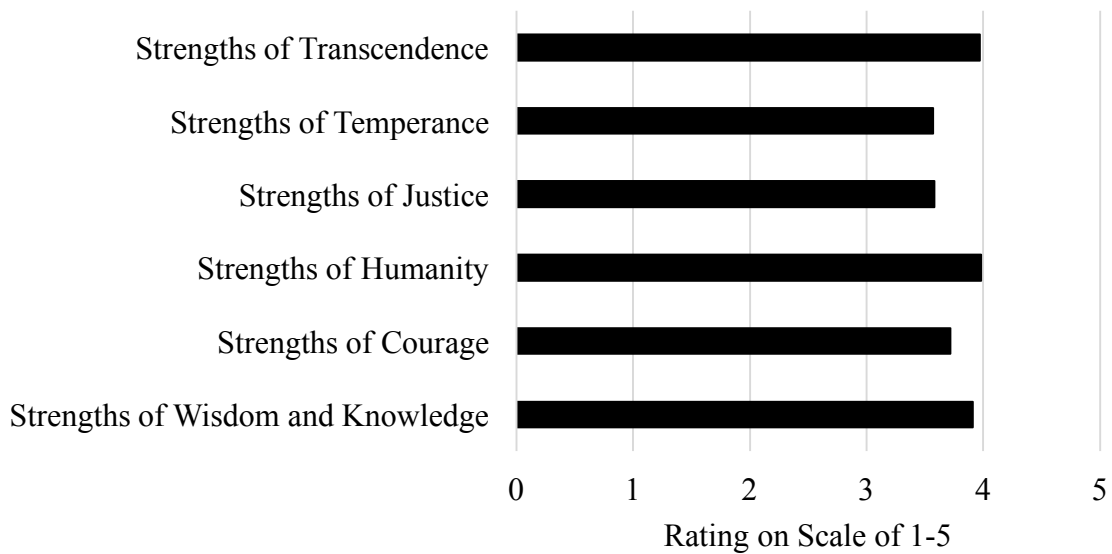
**Table C5**

*Average Student Rating in Strengths of Wisdom & Knowledge*

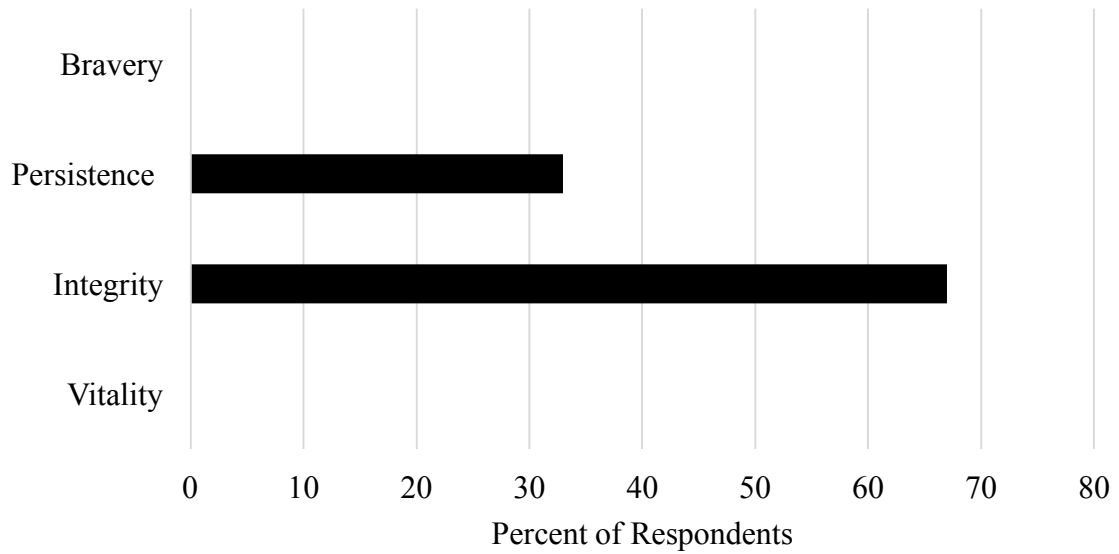


**Table C6**

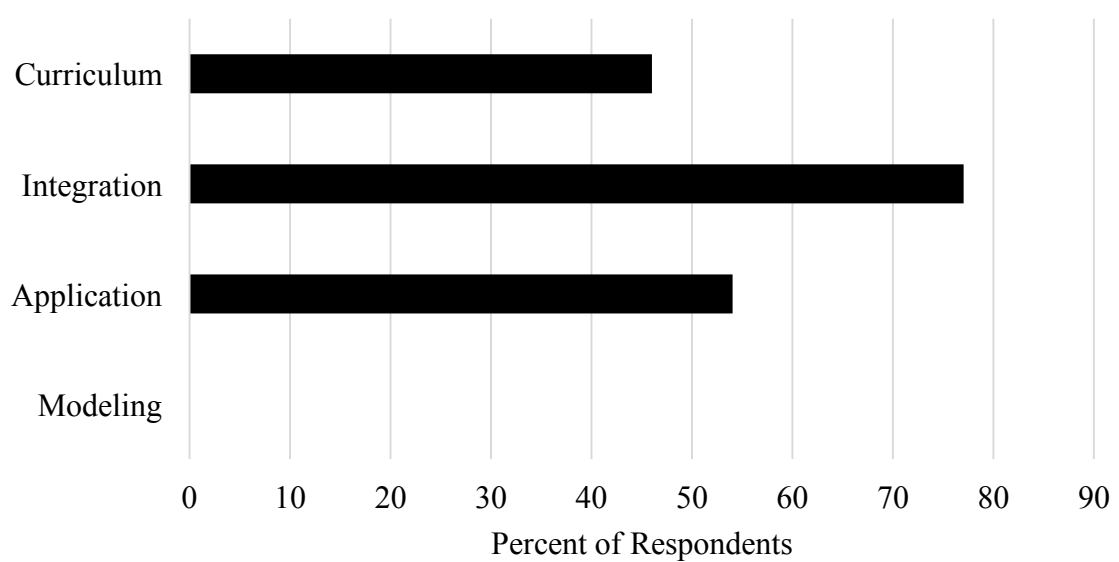
*Overall Average Student Rating in Each Strength*



**Table C7**  
*Personal Philosophy: Strengths of Courage*



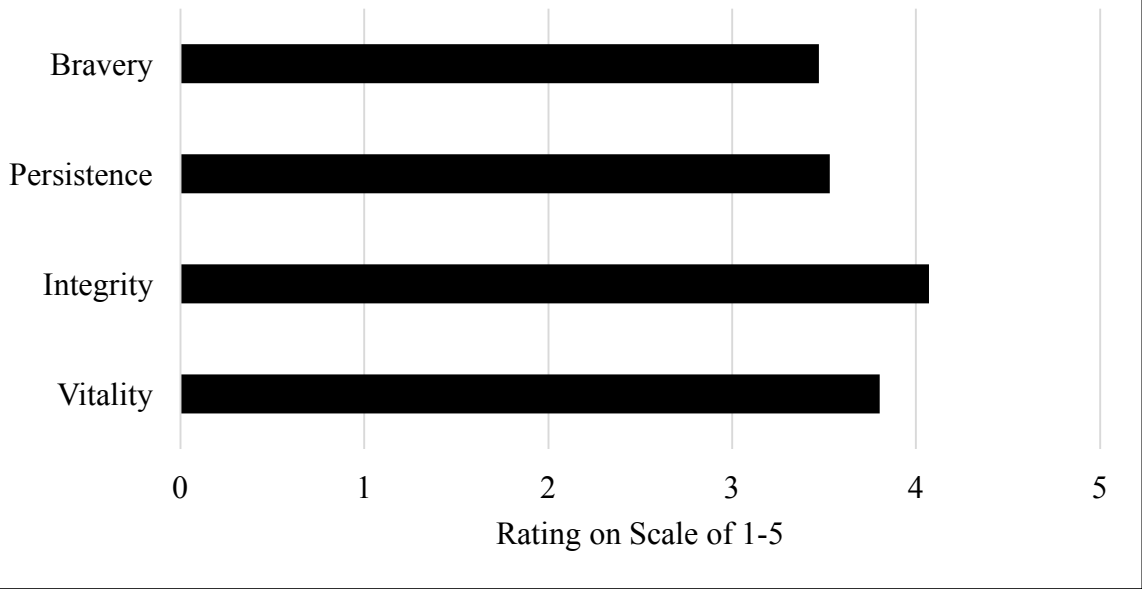
**Table C8**  
*Methods Used to Teach Strengths of Courage*





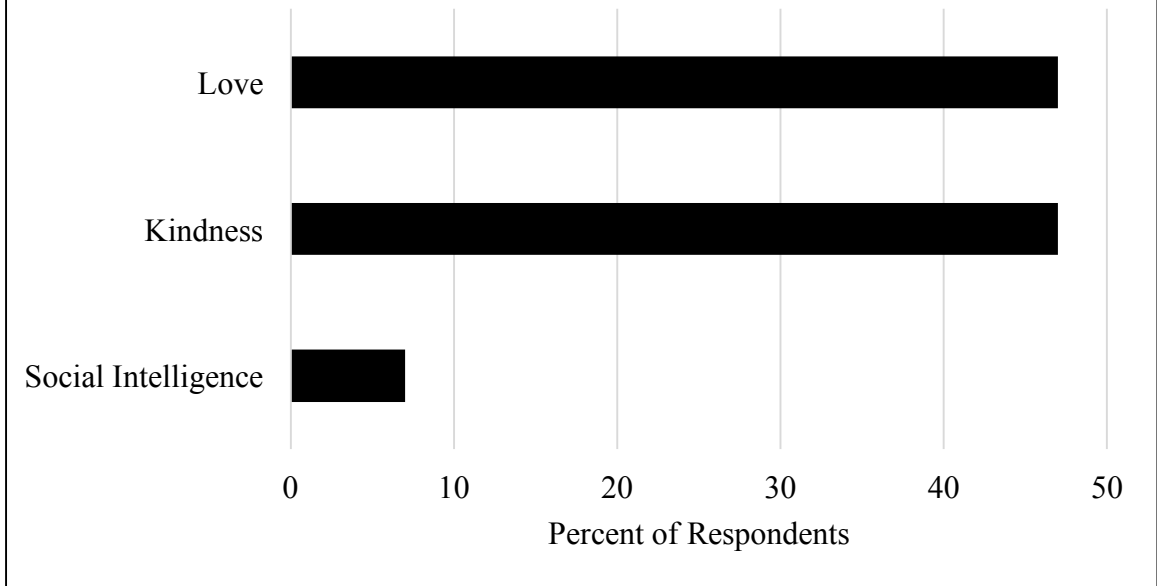
**Table C9**

*Average Student Rating in Strengths of Courage*



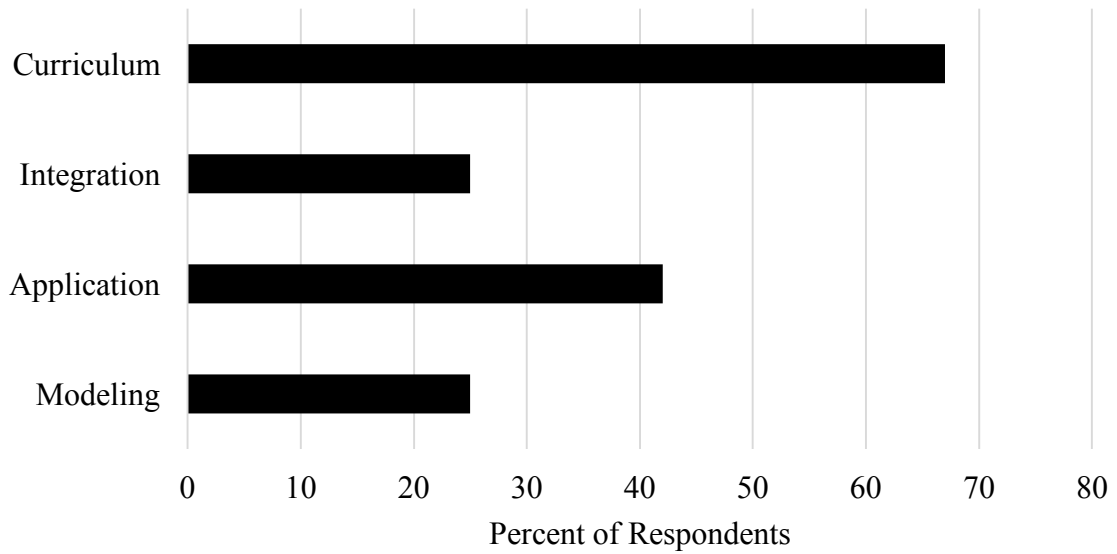
**Table C10**

*Personal Philosophy: Strengths of Humanity*



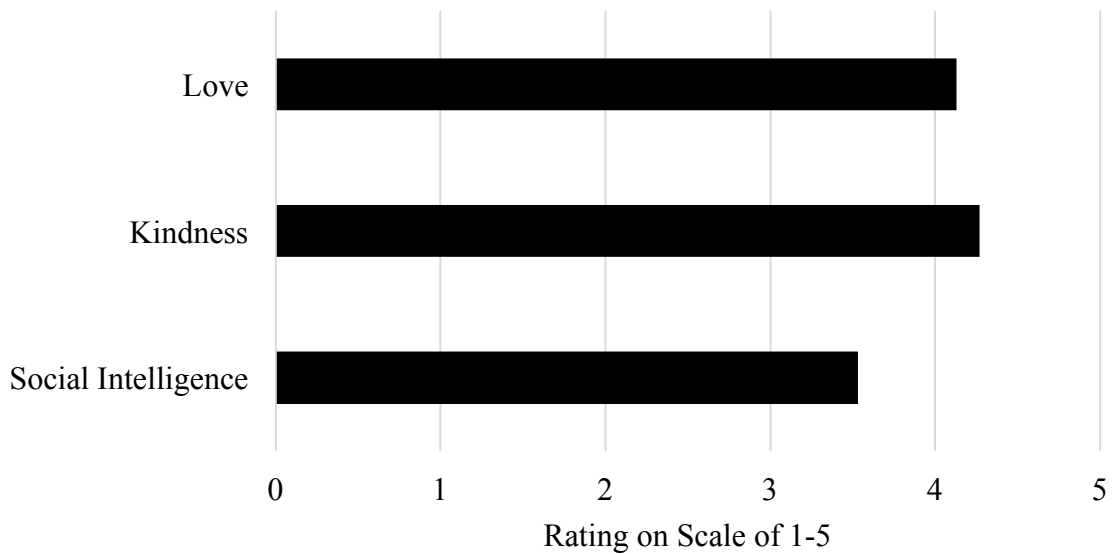
**Table C11**

*Methods Used to Teach Strengths of Humanity*



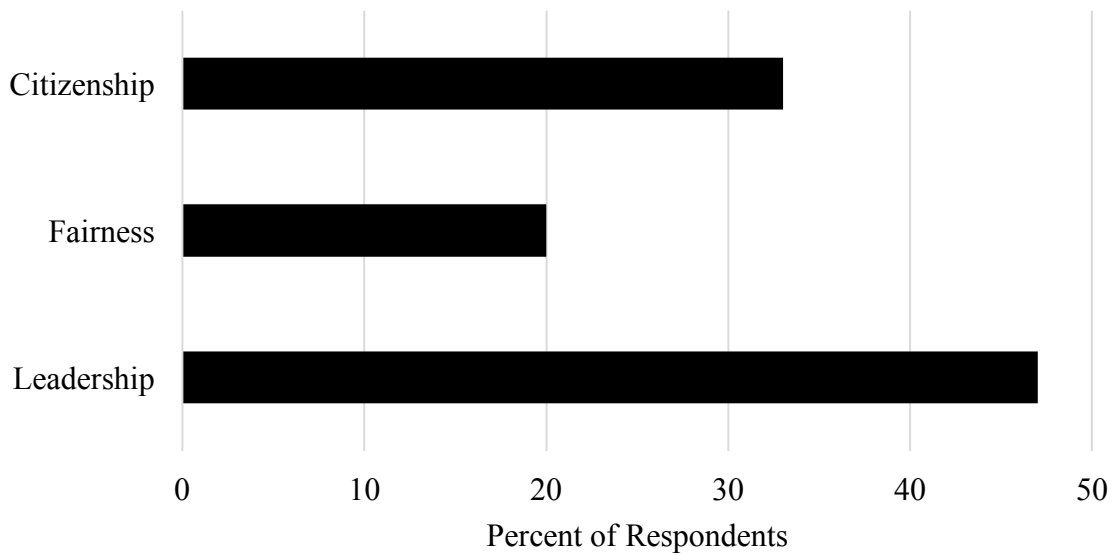
**Table C12**

*Average Student Rating in Strengths of Humanity*



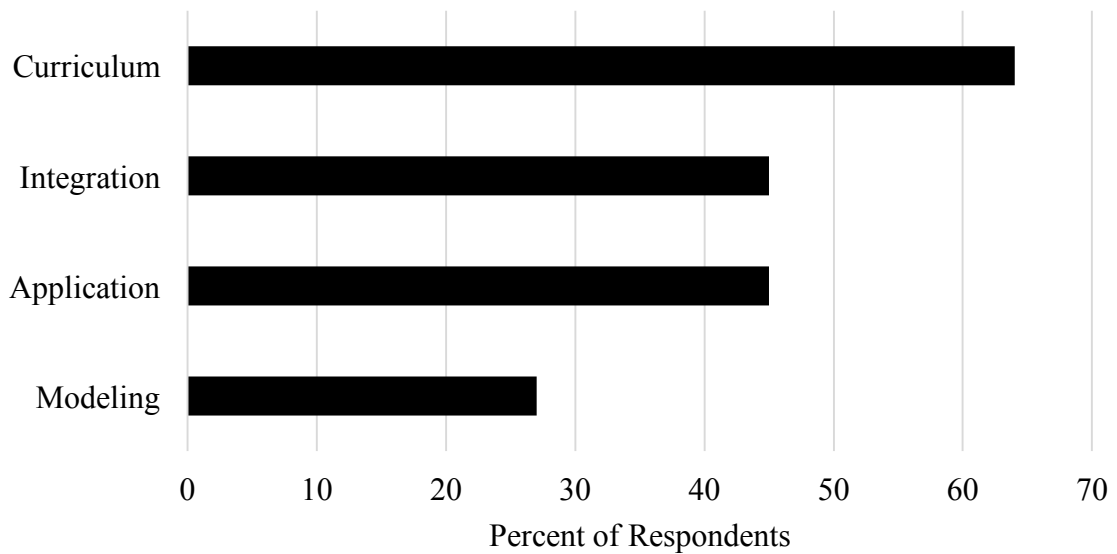
**Table C13**

*Personal Philosophy: Strengths of Justice*



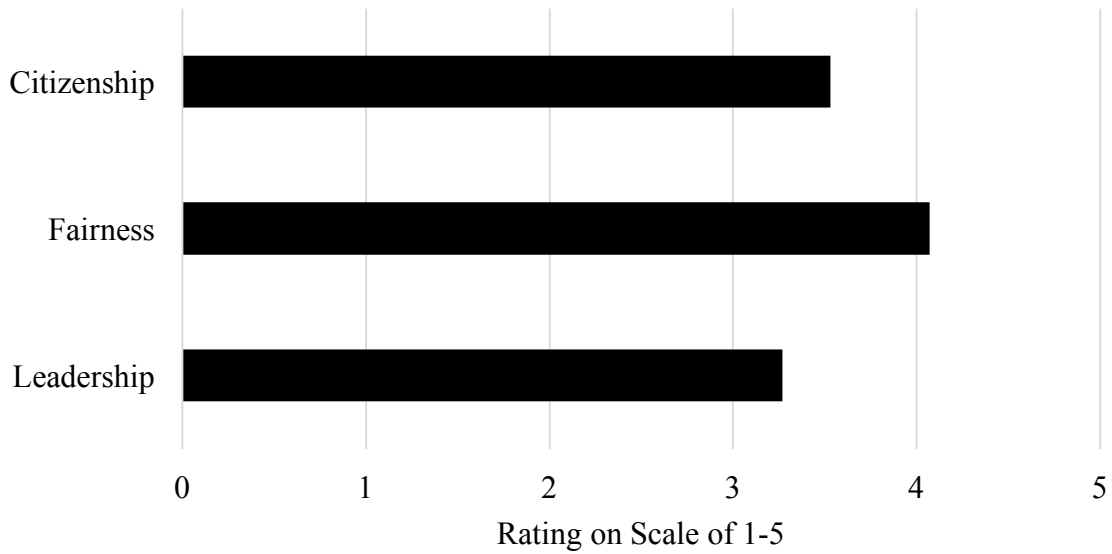
**Table C14**

*Methods Used to Teach Strengths of Justice*



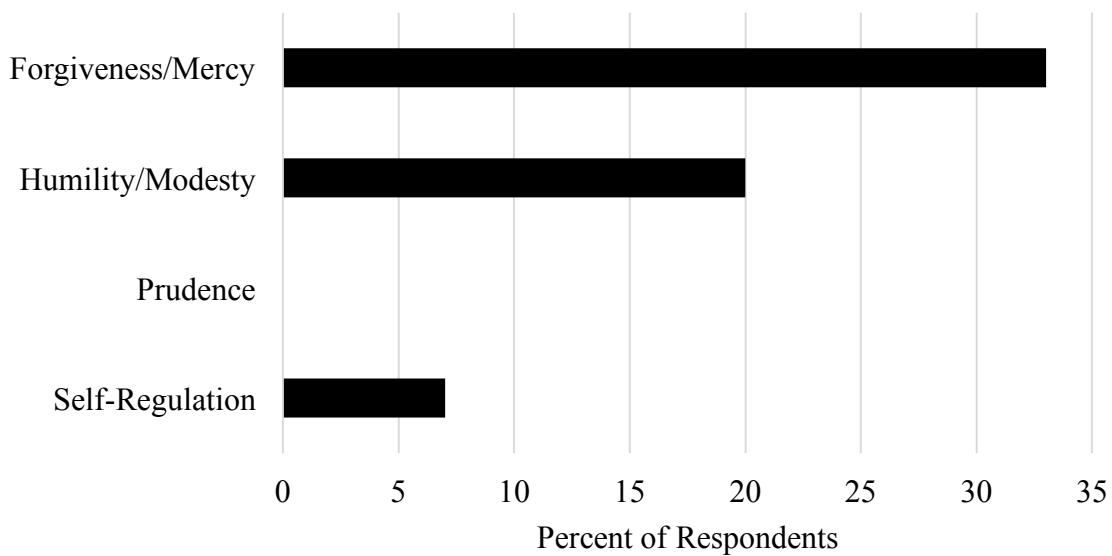
**Table C15**

*Average Student Rating in Strengths of Justice*

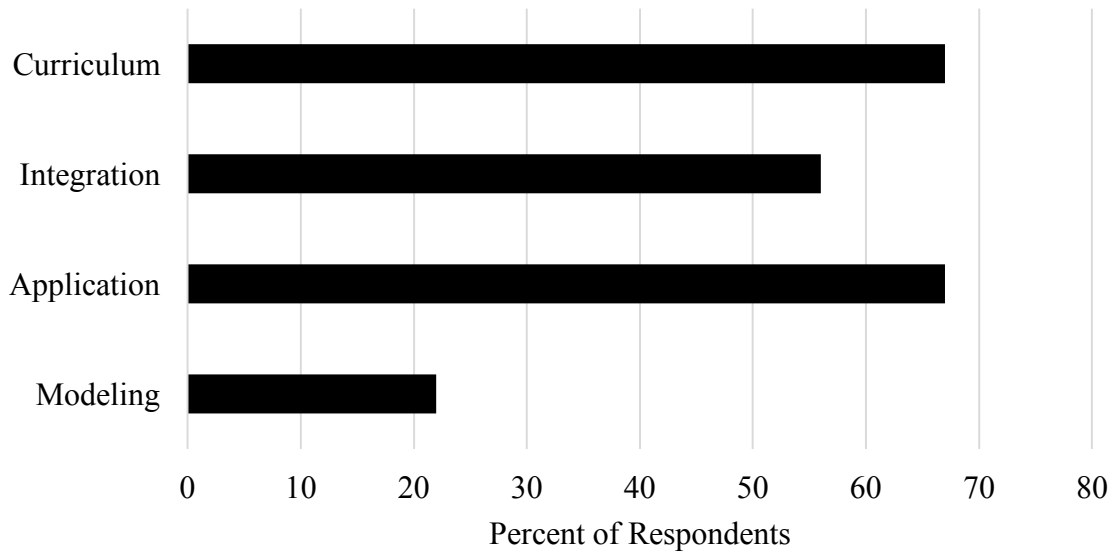


**Table C16**

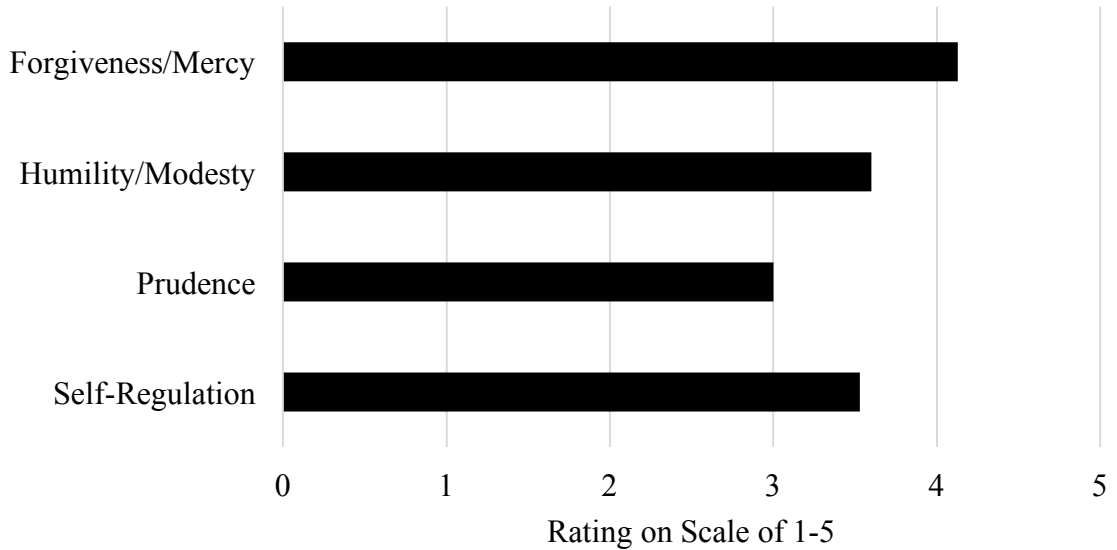
*Personal Philosophy: Strengths of Temperance*



**Table C17**  
*Methods Used to Teach Strengths of Temperance*

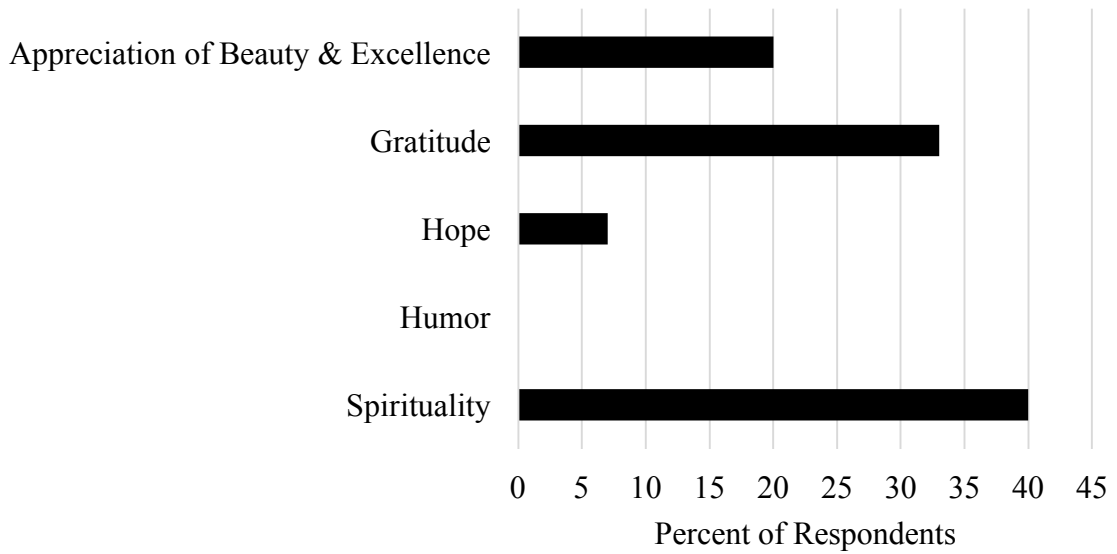


**Table C18**  
*Average Student Rating in Strengths of Temperance*



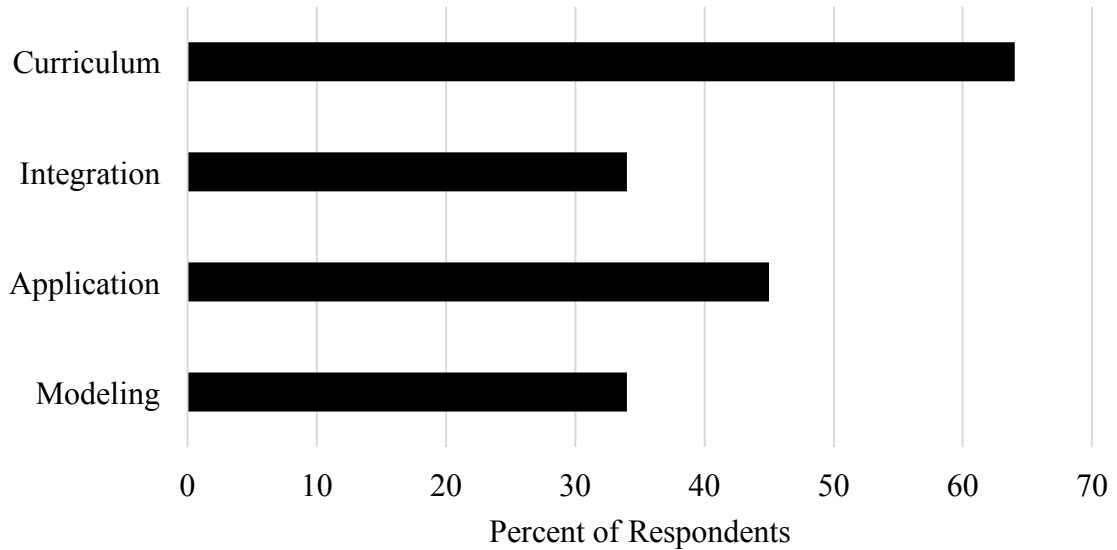
**Table C19**

*Personal Philosophy: Strengths of Transcendence*



**Table C20**

*Methods Used to Teach Strengths of Transcendence*



**Table C21**

*Average Student Rating in Strengths of Transcendence*

