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The Elementary Teacher's Role in Moral Education: An Investigation of One Albuquerque Public School Site

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the Master of Arts in Teaching degree at the School.for International Training, Brattleboro, Vermont.

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This project by Melanie L. Bauer is accepted in its present form.

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the elementary teacher's role as a moral educator. The context is the Albuquerque Public Schools (APS) in New Mexico. I have investigated the Character Counts! program, the moral education program which has been adopted and utilized by the school district. I describe the goals and rationale behind the Character Counts! program, as written about in existing documentation and literature. In addition, I have conducted interviews with individuals in APS in charge of creating and disseminating such information. I have reported on the perceived effectiveness and shortcomings of the Character Counts! program as described by the people in charge of such program implementation, school administrators (i.e. vice-principals and principals), classroom teachers, resource teachers, and other school personnel. Through information gained from surveys and taped interviews, I report what these school personnel see as their roles with regards to a.) moral education and b.) the Character Counts! program. I provide insight into how they see this role being actualized in their teaching. Finally, I provide information about the school personnels' perceived professional development needs with regards to strengthening their value as moral educators.

ERIC Descriptors:

elementary education
moral education
Character Counts! program
survey
professional development
Albuquerque Public Schools
character education

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Assumptions and Hypothesis and Research Project

This paper is an investigation into the elementary teacher's role in the "moral education" of children. In thinking about the moral education of children and the public school's role in this process, there are some important issues to consider. First, in light of all the other factors affecting today's youth, what, if any, influence can educators in the public elementary schools have on this area of their education and development? Also, should, in fact, school personnel have a responsibility with regard to the moral education of our students? If so, what should this responsibility be? If we assert that educators play a part in the moral education of children, how can we assess their success and development needs in this area? Finally, what constitutes moral education?

My choice of topic stems from a personal assumption and belief that teachers play a part in the moral education of children and that they have a responsibility to do so. I also believe and now know for certain, that many teachers may feel a lack of preparedness or support to effectively carry out this aspect of their professional responsibilities. As a result, in some instances, the schools are failing to create a safe environment for children.

The context for my investigation into school personnels' role in the moral education of children is the Albuquerque Public School (APS) district in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Since the beginning of my employment with APS as a bilingual resource and/or ESL teacher in the 1996-1997 school year, I have been aware of the existence of a moral/values-based education program

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utilized by the district. The program is called Character Counts!. In the three elementary schools I have worked in the district, I have seen some examples of adherence to this program. Such examples have consisted of morning announcements with reminders about "this month's Character Counts!" trait (or pillar) and daily ideas for how students can exhibit this trait. Other examples include posters displayed in some classrooms with brief definitions of the six pillars (see Appendix One for copies of the posters).

The six pillars described by the Character Counts! program are *respect, citizenship, caring, trustworthiness, fairness,* and *responsibility*. Although I see these as important values that we "instill" in our children, I have never received any official training in practical methods for teaching these ideals to students. In my experience, traveling from room to room as a resource teacher, I have had the opportunity to see many tremendously skilled teachers who seem to have a very solid foundation in values teaching. These teachers have served as my models. Before I began this study, I had not talked to many of them about their philosophies on the moral education of children or about what they see as their role in this area of their students' development. In part, this project represents an attempt to get these teachers, whom I see as role models in my future development, to articulate their viewpoints on this subject. I hope that they can also offer some practical ideas on the teaching of these values to children.

I have also had the impression that some teachers seem very far removed from the Character Counts! program. It seems as though they know of its existence, but cannot name the six pillars. They may have the posters hanging on their classroom walls, but this seems to be the end of their involvement with the program. On several occasions, I have experienced in-

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school behavior or comments from teachers and administrators which are not exemplary of the values outlined in the Character Counts! program. So I sought to find out what other staff members in my school think about a) school personnel's role in the moral development of children and b) the Character Counts! program.

My research method is almost entirely qualitative. It consists of a survey and follow-up taped interviews. The participants in this project are mainly my co-workers from a public elementary school in APS. They are administrators, classroom teachers of all levels ranging from K-5 and special education, and support staff (i.e. librarian, bilingual resource, physical education, slp (speech and language pathologist), counselor). The participants' age, years of experience, and race varies. Some of the participants are first year employees while others range in years of experience up to thirty-two years. The respondents range in age from mid-twenties to mid-fifties. The school personnel interviewed are either native New Mexicans, both Anglo and Hispanic, or people who have relocated to New Mexico from various parts of the country.

The majority of the students in the school where I work are from a low level income bracket, with approximately ninety percent receiving free and reduced lunch. It is a bilingual school with many of its students either recent immigrants from Mexico or having Mexican parents or grandparents. In addition, many of the students face daily hardships such as a lack of nourishment due to poverty, parents who abuse drugs and or alcohol, domestic violence, and the influence of gang activity in their neighborhood.

I have chosen to keep the research sample narrow and focused on my co-workers within my particular elementary school, former employees of my

school, or district employees who have direct responsibilities related to the Character Counts! program in APS. There are several reasons for this focus. I have chosen to limit the scope to elementary school teachers and personnel because this is where I have gained most of my expertise and where I plan to continue my work as long as I remain in the public schools. For this reason, I have developed many questions about education in the public elementary schools which have inspired my research.

This approach to educational research is supported in Donald Freeman's article, "Another View." Freeman states that in educational research "inquiry needs to guide the process." In thinking about our role as teacher researchers he asks us,

> "What are you wondering about, which issues concern you or which phenomena intrigue you-these factors should drive the research process. They give rise to articulated research questions, to choice of methods, and to research design."[1]

I have many questions about the role of educators in the teaching of values to children. This subject is not often addressed in any of our staff development sessions. This, in part, has led me to wonder what our role as educators needs to be. To my knowledge, what our roles are and how we must effectively carry them out has not been clearly stated either verbally or in APS literature. There is a Character Counts! program in APS, but from what I have seen in the three schools I have worked, it has not been completely developed or had much follow through. I am left questioning the need for a moral based program. Is a set program for values instruction needed? Is Character Counts! a viable program? If it is, how can it be more effectively implemented? If it is not, what would an effective program look

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[1] Freeman, Donald; "Another View"; TESOL Matters; Vol. 8.65 Dec. 1998/Jan 1998).

like?

On a daily basis I often wonder what to say to children who are fighting, being disrespectful, dishonest, etc. In some cases, I find myself remaining neutral or ignoring certain situations out of a fear of not handling the instance in the "right" way. The "right" way would mean one which would not cause trouble from the administration or parents. This way is not always how I would choose to handle the situation if these fears of 'rocking the boat' were not an issue. Thus, another reason I chose this topic was an attempt to learn how other school personnel handle these situations.

These questions could be applied to almost any school setting. One reason for the focus on my particular school is that the specific population we serve suffers from many daily hardships. As a result, many of the students have very little sense of value or self-worth. In many instances, this impedes their academic performance significantly. If we are to do our jobs and help this population reach their academic potential, I believe there is a need for us to focus on building character and a sense of value in our students.

The specific problems faced by our student population make it important for school personnel to think about their roles in moral education together, so that students sense a firm foundation. I have chosen to focus on my particular school setting in an attempt to foster a sense of community. It has been my experience that the more connected I have felt with my co-workers, the better I have been able to perform my duties as a teacher. Teaching tends to be a very isolating profession. This could be a reason for many of the shortcomings in public education. The education of children in values as well as academic areas cannot rest on the shoulders of one individual. There needs to be a sense of community within the school

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setting, some sort of understanding about the basic expectations for students' behavior and personnels' role in seeing that these goals are achieved. Also, because of the pressure involved in our jobs, especially evident with the population we serve, it helps to have a sense of camaraderie with one's co-workers. This project is aimed at helping me to forge this connection with my co-workers about a topic which is important to my professional development as well as the strengthening of our school community.

Another reason for the focus on my particular school setting is that as elementary school educators we play a unique role in the character development of children, a role which differs from the part high school or middle school teachers have. I see this time in a child's life, grades K-5, as the formative years in which all the groundwork is laid for their future. I do not believe that elementary teachers are entirely responsible for laying this foundation, but I do see them as being in the position to have a larger influence on children's moral development than teachers in the higher grades. This viewpoint is supported by the following comment from one teacher. In response to my asking her whether she thought we have more responsibility at the elementary level in our students' character development than we would at the high school or middle school level she answered,

> "Yes, because we're shaping their minds and they're still learning and developing. By the time they are seniors, a good teacher, an angel, could be up there and the kids aren't even gonna pay attention to her because they know everything."[2]

Finally, I have chosen to limit my participants to school personnel in my particular elementary school, former employees of my school, and people in the district directly linked to the Character Counts! program because I

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[2] Participant #1, interview.

intend to utilize the knowledge I gain from this research to learn how I can strengthen my role in my current setting. In this way, I also see myself as being able to serve as a leader for my schools' development in this area. The first step in any research intended to guide one's development as an educator, or to assist in a school's development in a particular area, starts with an assessment of the current situation. The survey and interviews were intended to learn more about: a) what my co-workers see as their responsibilities with regard to moral education b) what they see as the strengths and shortcomings of the current values based Character Counts! program c) what they see as their needs for development in their roles as moral educators d) what they see as the actualization of their beliefs on a daily basis (see Appendix Three for complete survey). In keeping the participants limited mainly to the staff in my school, I can assess what my future role can be and what is needed in our environment. It would be a different project if I were to open it to people at other schools because the problems and needs differ greatly from one school to another even though they might be in the same district.

What is moral education?

One of the first questions I asked the participants in the survey was, "What is your definition of moral education?" One respondent's initial response when I asked him to participate in a project related to moral education was, "Whose definition of 'moral education'?" He went on to explain his position by saying that at the turn of the century the kids that we would now label as "emotionally disturbed" in special education programs were labeled as "morally deficient."[3] This is one reason why on the cover

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[3] Participant #2, transcript from untaped interview.

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letter written to the participants I put the words "moral education" in quotation marks to acknowledge the fact that this term may mean something different to everyone (see Appendix Two for complete cover letter). There were some variations in the definitions which the respondents had for this term, but most answered that we, as elementary school personnel, had some influence on the moral education of children. Some saw us as having a bigger influence than others, but most agreed that we as educators have some influence in this area of our students' development.

In the interviews and surveys, the participants also indicated that a large part of this education consisted of modeling. As one teacher wrote, "Moral education to me means instilling and personifying good human behavior." [4] All of the respondents indicated that teachers and others in the schools serve as role models for children. As this same respondent stated, "Teachers and other school personnel have to be representatives of what we, as educators, want to try and get across to children. We need to understand that we are role models and leaders."[5]

In this way, some of the respondents described the teaching of morals/values to children as a deep acquisition process that occurs as a result of the child's surroundings. A lot of these teachings occur in more subtle ways than direct teaching. One might be able to look at it in terms of the difference between acquiring and learning a language. Most respondents agreed that since children spend so much time in schools during the formative years, grades K-12, educators can't help but have some influence on this acquisition of morals. According to Kevin Ryan and Karen E. Bohlin,

"Children cannot enter the educational system at age 4 and stay until age 16/17 without having their character and their

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[4] Participant #3, survey, p. 2.
[5] Participant #3, survey , p. 2.

moral values profoundly affected by their experience. Children are impressionable,and the events of life in school affect what they think, feel, believe, and do. All sorts of questions bubble up in children's lives: Who is a good person and who isn't? What is a worthy life? What should I do in this or that situation? Sometimes their questions are never even asked out loud. Clearly the answers children arrive at are heavily influence by their experiences in school, with their teachers, peers, and the material they study."[6]

The depth of the acquisition process that must occur if we are to be successful in our responsibilities as the educators of morals is displayed in one respondent's definition of moral education as "the instilling of values".[7] It is also supported by the following definition of the word 'character',

"The English word 'character' comes from the Greek work *charassein*, which means 'to engrave', such as on a wax tablet, a gemstone, or a metal surface. From that root evolved the meaning of character as a distinctive mark or sign, and from there grew our conception of character as 'an individual's pattern of behavior . . . his moral constitution."[8]

When we think about what it means to instill or engrave, we imagine a depth of understanding that exists that cannot possibly be learned through merely talking about the six pillars of good character described in the Character Counts! program. Several of the respondents expressed this idea on the surveys and through interviews. For example, one classroom teacher expressed that she "sees people using these terms (the Character Counts! pillars) as kind of an umbrella and calling upon some of the words by saying things like, 'Let's all be respectful'." According to this teacher, "You need to get these values inside your being rather than just linking them to behaviors."[9]

[6] Ryan, Kevin and Karen E. Bohlin; Building Character in Schools ;p. 22.

[7] Participant # 14, survey, p. 2.

[8] Ryan, Kevin and Karen E. Bohlin; Building Character in Schools ; p. 5.

[9] Participant #4, taped interview.

One respondent emphasized that "moral codes and ethical behavior tend not to be taught, rather, children acquire these attributes via the socialization process."[10] He also reminded us that "it is everyone's role to 'pass on' and model worthy conduct."[11] In an informal interview with this same respondent he talked about what can happen when we, the adults in children's lives, fail to effectively carry out this part of our responsibility to the youth in society. He drew a parallel to a movie he saw, a "Jurassic Park" sequel. In this movie, the older dinosaurs failed in their responsibilities to "socialize" their offspring and chaos occurred in which the young dinosaurs were all killing each other. He talked about this in human terms when he told the story of a time when he was driving and traffic was stopped because a boy of about nine years old was holding up a car full of people with a gun. [12] This alone is an indication that we, the adults in our society, are failing in our responsibilities to educate our children in the areas of morals or character development. He also mentioned that not one person reacted to the situation or did anything to stop it.

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[10] Participant #2, survey, p. 2.
[11] Ibid.
[12] Ibid., transcript of untaped interview.

CHAPTER TWO

THE CHARACTER COUNTS! PROGRAM

Goals and Rationale

In interviewing the person who describes part of her work responsibilities as serving as the "APS liaison or representative for Character Counts!" [13] and in reading some of the literature written about the program, I have gained some insight into the rationale behind the introduction of this program to the school district. According to the information I have gathered, it seems that the program was introduced to the school district in response to the "rapid societal changes that have directly affected children and families."[14]

Some of the same concerns about our youth that we have at the national level have been identified by the community "and the schools in particular" as problems in Albuquerque.[15] Some of the major problems affecting the youth in Albuquerque outlined in the Character Counts! Handbook are: vandalism, namely "incidents of violence within the schools", teenage pregnancies, and the school dropout rates. The statistics on the instances of vandalism recorded by the APS Police Unit and outlined in this handbook are as follows:

> "In 1991, 45 instances of vandalism were committed by K-5th graders, while 270 incidents were committed by 6-8th graders, and 249 by 9-12th graders. There were 2,143 incidents performed by unknown persons. Such incidents have resulted in $.8 million in property damage to schools since 1991. In one incident alone, two weeks before the beginning of the 1994-1995 school year, three youngsters, aged 11, 12, and 13, two of them honor roll students, broke into their neighborhood elementary school, and did

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[13] Participant #6, taped interview.
[14] <u>Character Counts! Handbook For Educators</u>, p. 1.
[15] Ibid., p. 5.

over $10,000 worth of damage in less than 20 minutes. In the state of New Mexico, statistics indicate that in 1992-1993, over 41,100 juveniles were adjudicated for criminal offenses. In Bernalillo County, the number of juvenile offenders for this same period was listed at 11,482."[16]

The statistics on teenage pregnancies in Bernalillo County recorded by the New Mexico Advocates for Children and Families in 1994 and outlined in this Character Counts! handbook state that the number rose from 1,064 in 1990 to 1, 152 in 1992. [17]

In the handbook it is recorded that the "APS dropout rate is high, especially in schools with high percentages of minority students." The dropout rates recorded are as follows:

"The 1992-1993 single-year dropout rate for the district, as reported by APS Research Unit, by ethnicity is : African American 8.7%; Anglo 9.1%; Asian 3.3%; Hispanic 10.3%; and Native American 28.9% The district total single year dropout rate is 11.2%. One-year dropout rates for APS high schools with large minority populations are as high as 19%" [18]

The above statistics are indicators of some of the troubling behaviors that are rising among the youth in Albuquerque as well as the youth of our nation. These behaviors are indicative of "the absence of strong moral character" among today's youth.[19] It seems that the introduction of the Character Counts! program to APS was an assertion that as "educators, and members of our communities and society, we cannot ignore the problems our youth are experiencing today."[20] It was also to recognize the increasingly important role that schools must have in the moral development of children as a result of the breakdown in some other institutions that may have

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[16] Ibid., p. 5.
[17] Ibid.
[18] Ibid.
[19] Ibid., p. 2.
[20] Ibid.

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contributed more strongly in the past.

I asked the Character Counts! liaison was what she personally saw as the goal and rationale behind the introduction of the program to the APS district. Although the above goals and rationale were clearly expressed in the handbook, I wanted to learn what she herself saw as the goal of the program. She expressed what she saw as the two main reasons for the introduction of the program. One was "a direct response to the needs and desires of the community."[21] She told me that there was a poll taken in which 95% of all parents polled wanted APS to have the Character Counts! program in their schools. The other reason was to develop a common language between the community and the schools. As she expressed, "through the language in the Character Counts! program both parents and teachers could expect children to understand what it means to be respectful, etc., because they are using the same language."[22]

Program Description

It is my impression from the research I have conducted regarding Character Counts! that the program is meant to provide a framework. The extent to which it is utilized and developed is left up to individual schools. This notion was expressed by the APS Character Counts! liaison. I asked her if she saw the Character Counts! program as actually helping with some of the problems in APS. One of her responses to this question was, "Every school is different with what they do. Some schools really embrace the program and are continuously doing things related to Character Counts!" [23] I then asked

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[21] Participant #6, taped interview.
[22] Ibid.
[23] Ibid.

her if this was the intention when starting the program or if they had hoped to have a more cohesive program. She responded,

> "This is the same with any program out there. It is always up to the individual schools in the end to decide how much they choose to utilize it or embrace it"[24]

My intention in this section is to provide an outline of the Character Counts! program as described in existing literature. For a look at my particular school's plan with regards to implementation of the program, it will be useful to examine our EPSS proposals for the last few years. This is a school action plan written by school officials at each site and turned into the district. For an assessment of ways in which this plan is actualized as well as the ways in which it is not being actualized in our school, I have conducted a survey and thorough interviews with various school personnel. The people who work in the school on a daily basis are those who can give a true picture of what influence the Character Counts! program has on our educational environment. The results of the surveys and interviews are the subject of the next chapter.

The Character Counts! program was the result of a meeting organized by Michael Josephson, of the Josephson Institute of Ethics, in 1992 in response to an "identified national need."[25] At this meeting, held in Aspen, Colorado an "eminent group of educators, youth leaders, and ethics scholars" met to "see if a common ground and common language could be found concerning the need for and the content of character education."[26] As stated in the handbook, "after three and a half days of discourse, these men and women, with strongly held beliefs and diverse perspectives, crafted and unanimously

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[24] Ibid.
[25] Character Counts Handbook for Educators, p.3.
[26] Ibid.

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endorsed a statement called the Aspen Declaration (see Appendix Five for a copy of this statement). This declaration contains "several core ethical values that form the foundation of democratic society: respect, responsibility, trustworthiness, caring, justice and fairness, and civic virtue and citizenship."[27] After these core values were determined, the Character Counts! coalition, which consists of approximately fifty-five organizations across the nation, was formed to "translate this important statement into action."[28]

At the national level, New Mexico Senator Pete Domenici decided that the "'Six Pillar' approach made good sense and was workable."[29] He formed a Character Counts! group in the Senate and aided in the formation of a similar group in the House. He formed these groups out of "concern about the character of our nation, and particularly about the character of our youth."[30] As a result, it "encouraged the whole country to look at the issue of character" and to celebrate Character Counts! week each year during the second week in October.[31]

At the local level, an Albuquerque Character Counts! Community Task Force was formed with Senator Pete Domenici and Mayor Martin Chavez as its chairs. This group developed the "Vision, Mission, and Goals statement" in order to help "shape the community effort"[32] (see Appendix Six for a copy of this statement). They also created a chart that describes the levels of awareness that they perceived the community would move through as their levels of commitment and awareness about the Character Counts! program

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[27] Ibid.
[28] Ibid.
[29] Ibid.
[30] Ibid.
[31] Ibid.
[32] Ibid., p. 6.

developed over time (see Appendix Seven for a copy of this chart). They also created two action plans, one which contains a list of suggested beginning activities to implement the program, and another which contains a list of suggested ongoing activities to keep the program in place (see Appendix Eight for a copy of these plans).

The handbook also explains that the basis for a six-pillar based character education program is an approach which is "simple enough for students, staff, and parents to understand, yet is clear enough to remain separate from issues raised by such diverse groups as the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) and the Conservative Coalition."[33] Part of the program outline consists of a page in this handbook titled "A Person of Character" which gives general definitions for each of these six character traits. It provides a brief list of "do's" and "don't's" to make it understandable, and to give an example of types of actions or behaviors that exemplify each of the six pillars (see Appendix Nine for a copy of this list). There are 8x11-sized posters hanging in most of the APS classrooms I have seen, each of which name one pillar and gives a brief definition of that trait. For example, the sign for the pillar "Caring" reads "CARING   I am concerned about those around me. I consider their feelings, as well as my own."[34]

I was unaware of any curriculum guide for the Character Counts! program until I went to interview the APS liaison. She told me that there should be at least one copy of this binder called Character Counts! School Guide at every school. Through interviews and survey responses, it was apparent that many of the respondents were also unaware of any Character Counts! curriculum guide. Some others seemed to know of its existence but

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[33] Ibid, p. 15.
[34] Character Counts! School guide, poster pages.

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were not utilizing it in their classrooms for such reasons as a lack of time or a lack of preparedness or training to fully implement it.

Nevertheless, there is a specific Character Counts! curriculum framework outlined in the binder put together by the district entitled, Character Counts! School Guide (see Appendix Ten for a copy of this framework and a sample lesson). The curriculum framework is divided into two major parts: one framework for grades Pre K-5, and the other for grades 6-8. These frameworks are divided into six parts for each one of the pillars. For example, the third section in the Pre K-5 framework is entitled "Caring" and, like the other five sections, it begins with a page which is divided into three columns. The first column has the heading, "District Core Curriculum and Scope and Sequence". The contents of this column are the same in all of the twelve pages, the six found in the Pre K-5 framework, and the six in the 6-8 framework. This column outlines the goals the district expects students to achieve as a result of the character education program. As stated in this column on each of these twelve pages, "these are the Attitudes and Ethics that the district intends students to have as a result of Pre K-12 instruction."[35] The curriculum also includes a list of eleven ways in which the, "students of Albuquerque Public Schools become successful, productive, and responsible contributors to their communities, nation, and world."[36] An example of the way in which the authors of this framework see students fulfilling the above goal can be seen in the last goal on the list. This item states that students will achieve the larger goal mentioned above by "respecting self and others in a pluralistic society."[37]

The second column on this page is titled, "Character Counts Pillar." In

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[35] Ibid., p. 15.
[36] Ibid., p. 15.
[37] Ibid., p. 15.

this case, "Caring" is written below this header. Below this header each of these twelve pages has a statement which starts out with "Persons of character are . . . " In the case of "Caring" it ends, " . . . concerned about those around them."[38] Underneath this, there is a list of ways in which, "learners exhibit" the particular trait. In this case, an example of one of the ways in which "learners exhibit caring" is "by treating others as they would want to be treated."[39] Below this there is a list of quotes by famous people which are exemplary of the particular pillar, for instance:

"If you want to know how to live your life, think about what

you want people to say about you after you die, and live back-

wards."

-Unknown[40] (p. 15)

In the third column of each of these twelve framework pages, entitled "Implementation/Resources" there is a list of between one and three sample lessons included in the section and its age appropriateness. In this section, one of the lessons geared for the levels Pre K-2 is called, "Acts of Kindness Tree"[41] On each of these sample lesson plans there is an outline of information under each of the following headings: Title, Character Counts Pillar, Objective, Materials, Vocabulary, Procedure, Assessment, and Additional Resources.[42] In the case of "Caring", the objective is for "students to acknowledge and participate in caring acts", and the vocabulary to be utilized is "kindness and caring." The actual procedure for this lesson consists of:

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[38] Ibid., p. 15.
[39] Ibid., p. 15.
[40] Ibid., p. 15.
[41] Ibid., p. 15.
[42] Ibid., p. 16.

1. cutting out a tree trunk from brown butcher paper and posting it on the wall. 2. brainstorming with students examples of "acts of kindness" 3. drawing the students' attention to the tree trunk and asking the students what is missing 4. explaining that the leaves will be added to the trunk each time a student shows a kind and caring behavior toward others 5. writing the student's name and action on a green paper leaf which is displayed on and around the tree 6. giving a sticker or reward to the child who contributes a leaf 7. distributing thank you notes describing the students' kind acts. These may be taken home to the parents 8. watching the tree grow

The assessment for this lesson consists of "teacher and student" observation, and additional resources lists the book, The Giving Tree by Shel Silverstein.[43] In this School Guide there is also an extensive bibliography which lists childrens' books with the particular pillar they address.

The preceding section, provides an outline of the information I have been able to gather on the Character Counts! program. This information has come mostly from an interview I conducted with the Character Counts! liaison, The Character Counts! Handbook For Educators, The Character Counts! School Guide, and personal observation. I have provided this information to assist the reader in understanding what the Character Counts! program looks like on paper. The data from the research I conducted in my school site should provide the reader a more accurate perspective of the actualization of this program in one specific Albuquerque school setting. The true perspective of how this program is implemented, and the other ways in which our role as moral educators is actualized in my school site can be better understood by talking to the people who work there. More often than not, the reality of educational programs is different than what is outlined in handbooks. In an attempt to get a clearer picture of what the Character Counts! program looks like in my school and also to see how my co-workers

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[43] Ibid.

see their role as moral educators being realized, I have selected a wide range

of personnel to participate in a survey and extensive interviews.

CHAPTER THREE

THE TEACHER AS MORAL EDUCATOR: PERSONAL VOICES

A Historical Perspective

Many teachers and school personnel interviewed agreed that as educators, especially at the elementary level, we have an ever-increasing role in the teaching of values or character education to children. Not all teachers welcome this responsibility, but they see it is as an inescapable reality of today's public school profession.   Many teachers emphasized the fact that the greater responsibility in this area was, among other factors, a result of the specific population we serve. They expressed that with a lower income bracket being one of the many challenges faced by our students, the teaching of values or moral development is not evident in a lot of their homes. Thus, the school has, sadly enough, become a major provider of our students' education in this area as well as the other subjects of reading, writing, and arithmetic.

In hearing some of the responses of two teachers who have been working in APS for twenty-four and thirty-two years respectively, it became apparent to me that public school educators have had to carry this role more in recent years. These two teachers noted big changes that have taken place since the start of their careers. One of these teachers saw this added responsibility as a burden.   This perspective is noted in her response to the first question in the interview. I asked her if she saw school personnel playing a large role in the moral education of children. She responded with the following,

"Yes, I think we've had to take that over more and more. I've taught for 24 years. I started in 1969, and teaching then was much different than it is now. I don't think we had as much extra stuff as we do now. We pretty much did our classroom stuff and that was all we had to do, but now we have to do a lot more behavior management, teaching children pro-social skills like how to play with each other, even teaching them games. They don't learn that at home, so they don't know what to do outside on the playground or in the classroom during a free activity period. They don't even know how to go around and take turns in a board game: I feel like we have to do more of that because if we don't do that, our classroom is not managed and we're not able to educate them. We're kind of forced into that and just the aspects of teaching kids how to be a good friend, how to walk down the hall, to go in the restroom and not play. We've had to take that on."[44]

The other teacher commented on this difference in the atmosphere of the school since 1968. In those days, she stated, "Children would always stop and listen if a teacher talked"; whereas, "now, if somebody else comes in, they'll say, 'You're not our teacher. We don't need to listen to you.'"[45] Both of these respondents made clear the difficulty of understanding our roles as teachers in the character development of children and the teaching of values in current society. On the one hand, teachers have more responsibilities in this area than we once did. As another teacher stated, "in many cases the only exposure to values education most of our kids have is in school"[46] So we are having to fill this gap in the teaching of certain basic values that in the past was more often filled at home.

At the same time, however, as exemplified in the previous respondent's statement, teachers are not as respected by students as they once were. Similarly, teachers have less power than they once had. This viewpoint was expressed by this teacher of thirty-two years while she was

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[44] Participant #7, taped interview.
[45] Participant #5, taped interview.
[46] Participant #3, taped interview.

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talking about the "teacher paranoia" that exists. She relates that the reason that teachers are no longer just initially respected is partly "because of our society."[47] As she stated, "They've (society has) taken some of the discipline away from us because we have to be so careful about what we say to children."[48] The reason for teachers' caution, which I understood her to be saying in this conversation, was related to teachers' realistic fears as a result of the upsurge in accusations of child abuse, etc., made against teachers. Some of these accusations are of course justified and others are not. This respondent expressed relief that, as she stated, she has, "all these helpers/adults in here (her classroom)" and some sorrow that society has come to this point. As she stated in her interview,

> "I still hug all of my children when they come in just to let them know this is a safe place and I want them all to be here . . . . (be)cause I've had people say, 'oh you shouldn't hug them anymore.' I think how sad that society has come to that, that we can't even give a little five year old a hug. I give my parents hugs and I see nothing wrong because I know I'm not doing anything wrong with that."[49]

In hearing these two teachers' perspectives in particular, it was clear what a challenge it can be to define the teacher's role in the area of character development, due, in part, to conflicting messages teachers receive in the present day climate. The desire and, more, the need to manage behavior in the classroom has been one reason that teachers have taken on some of the roles that used to be provided by the families. Yet we also have undeniable fears of overstepping our boundaries, fears which cause us to feel our authority is quite tenuous in certain situations. This is made clear by these teachers' responses in that we have been handed added responsibilities that

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[47] Participant #5, taped interview.
[48] Ibid.
[49] Ibid.

can, perhaps, be thought of as inherent in good parenting skills, yet we are fearful of hugging our children if other adults are not present.

Building a Strong Learning Environment

-Personal Consistency

Perhaps one of the most commonly agreed upon challenges in the teacher's role in the education of character is related to consistency. I questioned some teachers about this area and many responded that maintaining consistency was a challenge. On the one hand, they talked about their own personal consistency. They emphasized their belief in the importance of it, but also the difficulty in maintaining it. One support staff teacher talked about her challenge with regards to consistency in that she sometimes finds it difficult to "maintain that front" and "not let what happened in the class before effect how you react in the next class."[50] Another classroom teacher talked about how hard it is to be consistent even when dealing with only one class. She said, " I think it's very challenging and it's so important (the teaching of certain values and social skills), but you have to be so consistent."[51]

Besides the personal difficulty in maintaining consistency, the teacher faces the discrepancy between the messages their students receive in school and the ones they have at home and other areas in their lives. Many school personnel mentioned this as a primary obstacle. One respondent, an educational diagnostician, described this discrepancy by drawing a parallel to

[50] Participant # 3, taped interview.
[51] Participant #8, taped interview.

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the process of "code switching" that occurs with second language learners.[52] As he explained, a lot of the children we serve go through a similar "code switching" process when they find certain behaviors being discouraged at school that are modeled by their parents at home.   As he stated, "It's almost like there might be a type of code switching going on in terms of right and proper conduct, and so if it's different at home and in the community than it is at school, it can be difficult for kids."[53]   One classroom teacher gave a specific example of this difference in values taught at home and in the community, and those at school. She said,

> "I've had parents tell me a lot, 'I tell him to hit him. I tell him if somebody hits him, he can hit him three times harder. He's gonna hit them so hard, they will never hit him back!' Well what do you say? You just say then that he's going to be in trouble in school because we don't allow that."[54]

On the other side of this issue, one respondent was able to speak concretely about the positive effects of consistency. In her case, she has been able to see big influences in some of her childrens' lives who may not have had the most positive role models in their home or community. As she stated, "Because I've been in this area so long, I've had the opportunity, more than some other teachers, to see the extent I have touched some people's lives."[55]   It seemed that one element of her success has to do with her length of service: as a twenty-six year veteran teacher, she has been able to have an impact that extends much beyond the classroom. While talking about the different behaviors that exist in the community which are not tolerated in her classroom, I asked her if she ever found herself educating the parents in

[52] Participant #2, taped interview.
[53] Ibid.
[54] Participant #7, taped interview.
[55] Participant # 5, taped interview.

this area as well.   She stated that because she has been in this same community so long, she has frequently worked with second generation kids in her classroom, children of former students of hers. In this way, she sees herself as having the ability to teach them or coach them in ways that other, newer teachers may not find as successful because of the relationship of trust that has come over time. She gave an example of this in talking about a former student of hers who, years later, had his own son in one of her classes. In this instance, the parent said something negative about another teacher in the school and the child repeated it. Because of her long-standing relationship with him, this teacher was able to talk to the parent and tell him that what he said was not appropriate and that "he was the adult now and what you say around your son matters and you need to set a good example for him."[56] As a result, the parent apologized to the staff member.

-Institutional Consistency

Within our school there are also many mixed messages given to children. Many respondents felt this strongly, and noted that one of the difficulties that they face personally and that we face as an entire school community in aiding in the development of good character is a lack of institutional consistency, beginning at the top. Thus, as many respondents suggested, there is a need for more of a commitment at every level of the educational system to create this consistency. One respondent talked about the ever increasing expectations placed on school personnel by the public and administration while, simultaneously, there is a lack of funding being channeled into the appropriate locations which denies children some of the

[56] Ibid.

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services they need. "Look at how many of our campuses are educating kids in trailers!"[57] he said. This, as he stated, gives kids the message that "Your education is not important enough to be in a real building."[58] In this very example, one can see that no matter how much we as educators try to "instill" a sense of worthiness in these children who, in many cases, get very little attention outside of school, we cannot escape the message they receive when their classroom is a trailer.

Not only are there mixed signals sent from above, but there are also significant differences among the staff on even the most basic issues, like school rules. Many respondents agreed that we, the educators in our school, are falling short in our responsibilities to instill good values in children due to our "lack of consistency" as an educational community. As one teacher noted, "At our school there's a lot of inconsistency" . . . . and "that's a big part of our problem with trying to develop and nurture all of these traits in our children." [59] She gave an example related to the adherence of school rules:

> "We started out with this parking lot business and
> when I'm on duty some kids say, 'Well the other teacher said
> we could go out here(one of the gates).' I said, 'Well this is what
> I was told. This is the rule.' So, if we don't all follow the rules,
> then the kids aren't going to follow them; and they learn who
> they can get away with it with." [60]

The inconsistency in the adherence to school rules among staff

members could also result in the students' feeling of a lack of foundation

within the school As a result, they may experience a loss of a sense of
security.

Another example one teacher gave is that a "kid who is running will

[57] Participant #2, taped interview.
[58] Ibid.
[59] Participant #5, taped interview.
[60] Ibid.

stop if they see a staff member who they know will say something to them; whereas, if they see someone who they know will not say anything, they will just keep on running."[61]   Many respondents expressed that these inconsistencies among staff members are one of our biggest hindrances in providing a learning environment which is conducive to strong character development in our students.

Mixed Perspectives on Character Counts! Program

-A Simplistic Response to a Complex Issue

Teachers' perspectives on the Character Counts! program, as expressed on their surveys, through taped interviews, and informal conversations, varied considerably.   In many informal conversations I had with my colleagues, school personnel had some very negative opinions of the program. On the surveys and in taped interviews, people offered specific examples of the positive effects of the program as well as some reasons for its shortcomings. Nearly all of the respondents agreed that the program was one that had not been fully developed or implemented in our school. Some of the respondents welcomed further development of the program and even offered suggestions of how this could be actualized. Others were not so interested in seeing this program further developed, seeing Character Counts! as a not very viable solution to the problems that exist at our school. In many cases, these people offered other ideas they thought might better get to the root of the issues and strengthen our role in the area of character development.

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[61] Participant #3, taped interview.

Many of the respondents expressed the idea that they see the Character Counts! program as being somewhat superficial. The personnel who had this perspective consistently pointed to the lack of depth in the program as a serious shortcoming. Two of the respondents talked about how the program is presented to the public and on paper is different than what it really is. As one teacher stated, "I think Character Counts! looks very good to the public and the media, but I don't see it doing any good in the schools."[62] Another respondent labeled it a "silver bullet."[63] When I asked him to clarify this concept he said that a "silver bullet" is,

> "the idea that when they discovered penicillin, it was the cure all for any infection. 'Silver Bullet' is an easy ready made answer that works. Character Counts! is not a 'silver bullet.' It doesn't address the need. (The need is) much more complex than that. I think it is still presented to the public as a 'silver bullet'; and it's a lot deeper than that."[64]

This could be one explanation for the reason why, from my own observation and according to many of the respondents, there seemed to be a lot more done with Character Counts! when it was first introduced to the schools a few years ago. As noted by several respondents, much of that enthusiasm has kind of fizzled. Maybe teachers and school personnel have realized that there are a lot more "diseases", ills in the school, that cannot be solved by this one "cure-all" medicine, or that there are other more effective "medicines" out there. This idea was expressed by one teacher who described her initial enthusiasm for the program when she first moved to this state and saw Tom Sellek on television sponsoring this program. She noted the change when she started to work in the classroom and saw what it was really all about. As she stated, her kids don't even listen to the announcements and

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[62] Participant # 9, taped interview.
[63] Participant #2, survey, p. 2.
[64] Ibid, taped interview.

she knows that they can't read the Marquee, so she questions what are they getting out of those aspects of the program. She continued to say how much she has come to hate to hearing the same platitudinal utterances over the loudspeaker every morning. She said, "it needs to be more in depth and not just 'we are all happy to be in school' (part of every morning announcement) mentality."[65] This same view about the kind of rote dialogue that has become attached to the Character Counts! program was expressed by one administrator when she wrote that the risk of a focused program for moral education is that "it can become trivialized."[66] A similar idea was expressed by another teacher who said,"Character Counts! is not a program. It is just a slogan in APS"[67]

-Character Counts! Advantages

In many cases, school personnel, as well as the APS liaison, responded to the question about the advantages they see to the Character Counts! program with a common answer. They wrote about how the Character Counts! program provides a common language for staff members, children, parents, and even organizations and businesses within the community. One respondent talked about how the use of the common values vocabulary has helped with "conflict resolution."[68] According to her, this common vocabulary -- described by a counselor as simple enough to be understood by everyone -- can be used to help mediate conflict situations.[69] She gave an example of how this might be actualized during disputes among children,

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[65] Ibid.
[66] Participant # 10, survey, p. 3.
[67] Participant # 15, survey, p. 15.
[68] Participant #16, taped interview.
[69] Ibid.

Another way the common language presented through the Character Counts! program is utilized at our school is through the disciplinary system. The pillars serve as a basis for the referral system. Many teachers mentioned this as a cohesive element of the program in that the referrals are utilized schoolwide. A lot of the respondents did not go into much detail, but indicated that they see this as a positive element. One respondent wrote, "It is great that (our school) uses the Character Counts! pillars in conjunction with referrals as well as the Panther of the Month"[76] This is an award which is given to students who exhibit traits which exemplify the pillars.

Another teacher, who has a lot of knowledge about the referrals, had much to say on this issue. The idea of the referral system is that when a student commits some sort of infraction that a teacher deems worthy of a referral (written disciplinary warning), he/she writes the name of the child and the date on the referral slip and then checks the action committed and the Character Counts! pillar which was violated (see Appendix Eleven for a copy of a referral slip). This particular teacher said that, in her opinion, "The subheadings on the referral slips are ridiculous."[77] She also mentioned that many times teachers pick a pillar or a subheading that does not even match the offense. She gave the example of a child who hit another child with a book, slashing his lip. She said that the teacher checked the subheading, "improper use of an object." This teacher questioned, "Wouldn't that also be disrespectful or a lack of citizenship?"[78]

I told this teacher that it seems that some people have seen the use of the Character Counts! pillars on the referrals as a positive aspect, and I asked her what she thought about this. She said that it could be "both good and

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[76] Participant # 12, survey, p. 3.
[77] Participant #9, taped interview.
[78] Ibid.

bad" depending on the way it is used. In talking with her, it seems that this common language with regards to the referral system can sometimes be misused. It also can be utilized in a way which actually serves to cut off communication between the child and the teacher. She explained that in some cases teachers just tell the kids "You did that! You broke the citizenship pillar! You're getting a referral."[79] The teacher sticks the referral in the child's file and that's it. In this way, the children do not learn anything from the experience, because, as she stated, as soon as they learn they are getting a referral the kids no longer want to listen, rather "they want to flip you off and go away."[80] As expressed by this respondent, if the teacher initially tells the child what he/she did wrong and why it was wrong in the first place, before writing a referral, it would have a greater effect on the child. She says she might ask the child a question like "Why do you think this would bother me? or Why do you think I would think this is bad?" She says then she may choose to give the child a referral and tell him/her something like, "You were not being safe, so I'm going to have to give you a referral." But, as she mentioned, she would not choose to use words like "You broke the citizenship pillar, so you're getting a referral."[81] As with anything, if we use the terminology presented by the Character Counts! program as blanket statements, without making any attempts to encourage a depth of understanding in our students, then, as stated by one respondent, they become "buzz words" which "go in one ear and out the next."[82]

As mentioned earlier, this trivialization and lack of depth in the Character Counts! program are its biggest shortcoming, according to many

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[79] Ibid.
[80] Ibid.
[81] Ibid.
[82] Participant #13, survey, p. 3.

participants. As stated by one teacher in an informal conversation, "We have morning announcements and we get some handouts once in a while. Does that constitute a program?"[83] One other teacher expressed that sometimes the daily message over the loudspeaker does not even match the pillar for that month.[84] The instilling of values, of course, cannot be relegated solely to platitudes and posters. As one teacher noted, "You could say the same message for a month and no one would notice."[85] I asked one teacher if she thought a lot of kids had a genuine understanding of what the words in the six pillars are. She answered, "I think they can spit it out to you . . . The six pillars are(such and such); but if you go deeper than that, they have no clue."[86] This comment summarizes many of the respondents' opinion that the Character Counts! program is one that has not been fully developed, and has t become ineffective and trivialized.

Actualization of Beliefs

The Character Counts! program is not, according to many of the respondents, a program that has been fully developed by APS. Nevertheless, many of the teachers and school personnel shared with me ways in which they see the teaching of certain values being actualized in their daily work with their students. Again, there is an obvious lack of consistency. Some teachers use the Character Counts! pillars as a framework or as a starting point upon which to build. Some mentioned that the traits outlined in Character Counts! were ones which they themselves already possessed and

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[83] Participant #14, informal interview.
[84] Participant #9, taped interview.
[85] Participant #15, informal interview.
[86] Participant #9, taped interview.

encouraged in their students. As one respondent wrote, "I feel that I have been teaching and representing the Character Counts! pillars before it was labeled Character Counts!. To me the six pillars are characteristics all educators should be exemplifying all year round."[87]

Others pick and choose which pillars they see as important to emphasize in their classroom. For instance, one respondent wrote, "Fairness is the one pillar I don't use too much in my class because sometimes life isn't fair!"[88] Another teacher talked about citizenship as a trait that she does not utilize very much because it "is such a weird word for the kids."[89] She continued to say,

> "I think of citizenship as people moving to America. I'm applying for citizenship. I don't think 'oh I'm being a good citizen."[90]

This is an example of the difficulty in creating consistency in values-based programs due to the differing perspectives on the priority given to certain ideals.

Another issue many school personnel mentioned the importance of creating a safe environment for students. As one teacher wrote, "learning cannot take place if the environment is not inviting and safe."[91] One classroom teacher conveyed the connection between a safe classroom and some of the Character Counts! pillars. She wrote, "Even if we didn't have Character Counts!, I would still be teaching my students about respect, responsibility, trustworthiness, etc., because these characteristics are necessary ingredients for a safe and caring classroom."[92] In this way, the Character

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[87] Participant #3, survey, p. 2.
[88] Participant #13, survey, p. 2.
[89] Participant #9, taped interview.
[90] Ibid.
[91] Participant # 3, survey, p. 2.
[92] Participant # 13, survey, p. 2.

Counts! pillars serve, as one administrator wrote, "to make the implicit explicit."[93]

How does a teacher create this safe and caring environment? What are the practical ways in which they can help to develop "good" character in their students? I asked several school personnel these questions. One of the most common responses had to do with modeling. As one teacher stated, words are not enough; so "You can't just say here are the pillars, and let the students figure them out." [94] As another teacher said, you need to model "the specific behavior or traits you would like to see more of."[95] One support teacher expressed that modeling occurs in even the simplest examples, little actions that we may do naturally, or that we may easily forget, can have an influence on kids. She gave the example of always remembering to say thank you if a student is being helpful.[96] The educators also described how peers could serve as models. They talked about how teachers can help this peer modeling to be positive by using lots of positive reinforcement and praise when they see kids doing what they would "like to see them doing."[97]

Another common element mentioned by many school personnel in discussing safe and values-based classroom environments involved consistency. This, as mentioned earlier, also seems to be a challenge for some educators. Classroom behavior management for many teachers is linked to the concept of consistency and also to the teaching of values. For many it is a crucial element in promoting "good" character in the classroom. This is noted by one respondent's answer to how she sees the teaching of values being actualized on a daily basis. She wrote, "consistency in management and

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[93] Participant # 10, survey, p. 2.
[94] Participant # 4, taped interview.
[95] Participant # 5, taped interview.
[96] Participant #3, taped interview.
[97] Participant # 5, taped interview.

discipline is a big factor."[98] I asked several teachers, who I see as having

mastered this area of classroom management, what they see as factors in their

success. One kindergarten teacher talked about the consistency of rules in her

classroom. She said,

> "I tell my children my rules are the same in here. They don't
> change, and if I'm not here and there's a substitute, then the
> the rules are still the same and I expect you to follow those
> with whoever comes in here and if you ask them, 'What do
> we know about our rules? 'They're never going to change
> They're always the same.' And I think that's important for
> children. They need that consistency."[99]

Many teachers mentioned the importance of establishing a clear

system of classroom management in the beginning of the year because it is

much easier to relinquish some of that "control" as the year goes on than to

try and get it once it is lost. This same kindergarten teacher explained this

concept in terms of new teachers who "make the mistake of trying to get all

their students to like them."[100] She also talked about this in terms of the

"tough love" you need to have with kids.   As she stated in her interview, she

has the attitude with kids as expressed in the following,

> "I care about you, so I'm not going to let you behave this way and
> you know the rules and if you choose to break the rules, then we're
> going to have a problem and I'm not here to make you like me.
> I'm here to teach and if you choose to do this, then I can't teach
> and you're not going to be learning."[101]

Other teachers have mentioned the importance of having the children

take part in the process of establishing classroom or class rules. In this way,

they can take ownership of them instead of just obeying the rules because the

teacher tells them to.

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[98] Participant #3, survey, p. 2.
[99] Participant #5, taped interview.
[100] Ibid.
[101] Ibid.

This concept of personal ownership is related to another aspect that many teachers thought was important in helping to develop good character in children. In her article, "Implications of Piaget's Constructivist Theory for Character", Rheta DeVries outlines Piaget's definition of the "two types of morality". They are as follows:

> 1) morality of obedience that he called 'heteronomous' morality. The individual who is heteronomously moral follows rules made by others out of obedience to an authority with coercive power. Heteronomous morality is conformity to external rules that are accepted and followed without question."

> 2) autonomous. By 'autonomy' or self-regulation, Piaget did not mean simple independence in doing things for oneself without help. Rather the individual who is autonomously moral follows self-constructed principles to which he or she feels a personal commitment. These rules have a feeling of personal necessity. The individual who is autonomously moral follows internal convictions about the necessity of respect for persons in relationships with others.[102]

As many teachers expressed, it is sometimes hard to see what effects we have on our students. It is hard to know whether we are teaching them to be "heteronomously" moral or "autonomously" moral. The fact that on a daily basis this is somewhat difficult to assess, is exemplified by one teacher's response to the question about whether she has been able to see any measurable, beneficial effects of the Character Counts! program. She wrote,

> "Somewhat, but I think this is hard to measure. Are the kids just following my rules and expectations or have they really become respectful? I don't know."[103]

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[102] DeVries, Rheta; "Implications of Piaget's Constructivist Theory for Character Education"; <u>Action in Teacher Education</u>; vol. 20, no. 4; Win 1998; p. 40.
[103] Participant #13, survey, p. 3.

A kindergarden teacher talked about the importance of helping to instill this internal sense of morality even at the early age of five. She said that even in kindergarten children know that if "they are not doing something of good character, then they probably don't feel good about themselves."[104] She gave a practical way in which she helps to instill this internal sense of self-worth in the following example of how she might talk to a child:

> "I tell the children sometimes when they bring a paper to me and ask , 'Is this a good paper?' 'You tell me. I can tell by looking at your face that it's a a good paper because you feel good about it.'"[105]

She continued to say, "Maybe if I looked at it, I'd say, 'What do you think?' It's more important what you think than what I think about it.' "[106] In this way, she begins to assist in the development of students who "autonomously" feel good about themselves and take pride in their work. In fact, according to this teacher, instilling a sense of pride in her students is one of the biggest factors in the development of good character. For, as she stated, "if a child is proud of him/herself, then he/she usually has good character."[107] Although she did not use the term "autonomous morality", she could tell that she had helped to instill some values that extended beyond her classroom. One way this teacher has been able to measure this influence has been in some of the contacts she has had with former students. She gave an example of a former student who was graduating from college with a degree in chemistry who called her to invite her to his college graduation ceremony. The former student told this teacher, "I want you to know I'm proud of

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[104] Participant #5, taped interview.
[105] Ibid.
[106] Ibid.
[107] Ibid.

myself."[108]   This is one of the main values this teacher emphasizes to her kids, so she knew it must have become a part of this student, and others as well, if she could remember this and tell her twenty years later.

Another third grade teacher interviewed talked about how she sees herself assisting in developing an intrinsic sense of values in older children. She does this through an approach called classroom meetings. These meetings occur on a weekly basis throughout the year. There is a book in which children write down "issues" to be discussed at the meetings. She expressed that this "cuts down" on them coming to tell her every time there is a problem. She said that these issues are usually conflicts that children are having with each other, but they could be anything that pertains to the class. A few of the kids have jobs in the meetings such as a facilitator and a secretary. She explained how they have to fill out job applications to get these positions. She also said that she acts as an active member of the group and sits on the floor with the group. The meetings always start with appreciations which "sets the tone of the meeting" because "everyone feels good that they had somebody appreciate them."[109]   After this, the facilitator and secretary read the issues and open the meeting up to the people involved in the issue. The people involved in the issue get to say their side of the story while everyone listens. Then the facilitator will ask which Character Counts! pillars the particular issues involve. Finally, as a group, they will talk about possible solutions and come to a consensus about which ones seem viable for their class.

The above examples are ways in which teachers working with different age levels attempt to foster the development of their students'

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[108] Ibid.
[109] Participant # 8, taped interview.

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intrinsic sense of values. One teacher interviewed talked about how in many cases she saw teachers creating an atmosphere which would develop more of a "heteronomous" sense of morality. When I asked this teacher if she saw educators having a large influence in their students' character development, she said "no". In talking to her further, it turns out that she did not say no because she thought that teachers should not have this responsibility, but because, at present, she did not see many teachers actively working on developing morals in their students.

She sees the main goal of most teachers as maintaining order in their classroom so that they can get through the curriculum.[110] As she said, "It's not an issue of creating morally healthy children, but getting them to be quiet so you can get through page nine in your math book."[111] She said that she saw most teachers doing minimal work in the area of the teaching of values. This means, according to this teacher, that they limit their dealings with values to the terms of the "good" and the "bad" and the "right" and the "wrong", but "a lot of people don't take the time out to teach the kids what's beyond the good and the bad."[112] These statements point to the difference between educating our children in ways that promote a genuine understanding versus memorization of concepts. In the case of values teaching, a genuine understanding would produce "autonomously" moral children. Teaching students to obey rules in the classroom simply because they are the rules and the teacher says so would produce "heteronomously" moral children.

One can see what happens when we produce children who are obedient to authority but who have no genuine understanding of values.

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[110] Participant #9, taped interview.
[111] Ibid.
[112] Ibid.

These children usually fall apart when this authority figure is absent (witness

the age-old problems substitute teachers have with their students).

Unfortunately, for various reasons, our public schools do not often teach for a

genuine understanding in many areas not only character development.   This

viewpoint is supported by the following passage,

> "...Howard Gardner and others have argued that even in teaching
> academic content, schools frequently do not teach for understanding.
> They focus on skills, facts, and automatic capacities while failing to
> build students' genuine understanding of the theories and concepts
> underlying the subject matter. In social and ethical domains,
> unfortunately, there is an even greater danger that teachers will fail
> to take the time necessary to teach for understanding, when we
> simply tell children how they must behave, rewarding their good
> behavior and punishing their bad, we fail to build their genuine
> understanding of moral concepts (such as fairness, reciprocity,
> responsibility, and so on) that can guide their behavior when they
> encounter new situations to which these values might apply."[113]

One special education teacher also talked about how a lot of times,

when it comes to values, many teachers try to remain very neutral and

objective. She thinks that "they need to take a stand for what is right."[114] For,

as she says, "there is a basic way of living in this world today and we know

what is right and wrong."[115] As she emphasized, "teachers need to stop being

these antiseptic figures in the classroom", thinking that they have to refrain

from telling the kids anything so as not to influence them, because

"regardless of whether we mean it or not, we influence the kids."[116] This

argument that teachers do influence children whether they intend to or not is

supported by the following excerpt from DeVries:

> ".....schools and teachers do influence development whether they
> intend to or not. Every school and classroom has a socio-moral

[113] Watson, Marilyn; "The Child Development Project: Building Character by Building Community";
Action in Teacher Education; vol. 20, no. 4, Win 1998, p. 64
[114] Participant # 9, taped interview.
[115] Ibid.
[116] Ibid.

atmosphere that either promotes or hinders character development as well as intellectual development. This awareness should be part of a comprehensive effort to promote reflection about the conditions necessary to promote children's optimal development."[117]

The way this special education teacher sees herself actualizing her beliefs in the classroom is by being up front with her students and talking to them about her beliefs. In doing this, she talked about the fine line that teachers can sometimes walk regarding appropriateness, and between sharing one's beliefs without "pushing it off onto"[118] their students. She sees it as an even greater disservice to children, however, when educators remain "neutral." She talked about the unusually difficult situation which occurred this year, having one of her students diagnosed with cancer and dying. As a result, she really "saw herself going out on a limb," and talking about some issues that are normally considered "taboo in the public schools."[119] She talked about the importance, especially in such circumstances, of teachers sharing their beliefs with children. As she stated,

> "I think kids need to see what I believe and how I respond and how I do things, so that they know how. I can't just tell them and avoid things that are taboo in the public schools because then the kids don't see it. It's just by word of mouth and with kids that's in one ear and out the other. My kids have asked me questions specifically about my personal beliefs and my own system of checks and balances and I've told them. I tell them, 'Well it's not for everybody, but this is what I believe.."[120]

She talked about how it is especially important for teachers in a school such as ours to take on this responsibility of talking to children about values. As she stated,

> "Unfortunately, some of those kids we work with, they feel like there is so little value to who they are. I think at our school where

[117] DeVries, Rheta; "Implications of Piaget's Constructivist Theory for Character Education"; p. 45
[118] Participant #9, taped interview.
[119] Participant # 9, taped interview.
[120] Ibid.

you have such crazy home lives, or negligent home lives, where the parents are just not even there for them . . . as the teacher, it's hard to take that on, but you need to take on the role of a family member for the kids."[121]

In the above statement, one can see the advantage of using authentic, genuine relationships as a way to teach values--showing true relationship as a value in itself.

The viewpoints expressed above point to the importance of educators giving direct attention to the teaching of certain values. This idea was expressed by another teacher while talking about her own lack of consistency: "I think I'm not teaching it like I should. I'll teach math or science everyday. But, I don't teach the Character Counts! or morals everyday." In her classroom "there was a lack of time devoted to it", and as she expressed, "if we want kids to be better readers, we read everyday. If we want them to have more positive morals, then we should probably be doing it more on a daily basis."[122] I told this teacher that a lot people have said that modeling was one of the biggest factors in the teaching of values to children. Although there is undoubtedly much importance in modeling, according to this teacher, she also believes that it is not enough and that there also needs to be direct attention given to the subject. As she expressed,

> "I'd like to think I am a good model. I'm not telling kids or other
> teachers negative things, but the kids are just wild. They come
> in from every recess having trouble - all of them . . . I think it needs
> directness - not just maybe they'll see it, maybe they won't. We need
> to be more direct."[123]

In his book, Our Children and Our Country, William J. Bennett talks about this need for directness in terms of "moral literacy." As he writes,

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[121] Ibid.
[122] Participant #1, taped interview.
[123] Ibid.

"Being literate entails more than recognizing the forms and sounds of words. It is also a matter of building up a body of knowledge enabling us to make sense of the facts, names, and allusions cited by an author." He cites E. D. Hirsch of the University of Virginia who has written about "cultural literacy." In the same way that we cannot expect children to have "cultural literacy" unless we teach it, Bennet writes, we cannot expect them to be morally literate unless we directly address those issues.[124]   One teacher gives an example of this in terms of talking to kids about "good" choices and "bad" choices. She says that sometimes she thinks some people just tell kids "that's wrong or that's bad, don't do that." In order to develop a deeper understanding, "you need to say to the child whether it's right or wrong, but you also need to explain why you feel that way because the kids look to you for guidance."[125] For, "if they have no background knowledge or understanding of why it's bad, they're going to do it because they don't understand."[126]   She talked about this in terms of teachers not being afraid to share some of their own "bad" choices with kids when appropriate. She gave the following example,

> "I've told them that I've experimented - you know, I got drunk once. I picked the most terrible experience where I threw up all over myself. Then I let them know well this is the consequence I got for the choice I made. Then I let them fill in the blanks by asking them, 'How do you think it made me feel?' And then the kids said, 'I don't want to feel that way.' "[127]

She gave this example to emphasize the point that "so many kids today hear 'you gotta be good, you gotta be good'" and she's afraid that if they make a "bad choice" they may feel that they have "fallen so short of the expectation" that they figure "what's the point I'm a bad person anyway."[128]

[124] Bennett, William, J.; Our Children Our Country;Simon and Schuster; New York; 1988, p. 79.
[125] Participant # 9, taped interview.
[126] Ibid.
[127] Ibid.
[128] Ibid.

In the above situation where she used herself as an example, she notes, at least kids can understand that good people make bad choices all the time. The fact that the kids we serve in many cases have very low self-esteem due to a lack of positive attention from their families points to the need for this kind of explicit teaching of values. The importance for educators to make personal connections and reach their students' hearts as well as their minds is expressed in the following, from the book <u>Reaching and Teaching All</u> <u>Children</u>:

> "The responsibility to educate both hearts and minds has numerous implications, a prominent one being the realization that intellectual landmarks cannot be erected on the debris of broken spirits."[129]

There are many reasons why public school educators might not attempt or might not be successful at reaching the hearts and minds of connection with all their students. One important reason is that some educators just do not feel it is their place nor their responsibility to teach children values or morals. One administrator told me she felt that values should be taught at home and that if people wanted a "moral education", they should send their children to a "Christian" school. But this ignores the fact that many of the children are not getting any consistently positive values-education in the home. As a result, as stated by many teachers, more of the responsibility does fall on our shoulders. I asked the teacher who said she saw many educators remaining neutral with regards to values why she thought they maintained this stance. According to her, the reasons could be class size, or the fact that they are not in touch with what they themselves are feeling, or doing, or they may have a group of kids that they feel have a good enough family background that these issues could be taken care of at home.

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[129] Editors: Sinclair, Robert, L. and Ward J. Ghory; <u>Reaching and Teaching All Children</u>; Corwin Press, Inc.; California; 1997, p. 14.

Some of them also might not want to experience the "vulnerability" of values-based discussions; they might feel incompetent to lead discussions in the area.

> "You have to be aware that those kids are going to talk. They're going to go home and tell their parents what you tell them. You need to be careful and accept responsibility for what you tell the kids and remembering their age and the fine line of being appropriate. It's really a convicting thing when you talk to kids about your life and what you believe because these little ones hold you accountable to it every day. So once you've said it, they're going to be looking for it every day, so you have to do it. It could be a scary place to go if you're not too sure."[130]

Her answer about teachers not knowing what they themselves were feeling sparked my own questions about the role of teacher reflection in education. I asked her if she thought that it was important for teachers to know what they value and why they value it. She did not really address this question in terms of values, but she did state that "teachers need to know what they're thinking and feeling so that they can help those kids who are thinking and feeling because they might not be getting it at home."[131] This points to the importance of reflection upon one's own thoughts and feelings as a way of helping teachers to better understand their students and to help them develop their own set of values and ways of thinking. Teachers need to understand themselves, in fact, before they can help their students begin to gain their own insights.

Professional Development

The idea of professional development in the area of character

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[130] Participant # 9 , taped interview.
[131] Ibid.

education meant something different to each of the school personnel involved in my research. One idea that became clear to me was the many different aspects to consider in thinking about strengthening our role in the moral development of our students. Through the surveys and interviews, it became clear that many people were well aware of these complexities. Many people thought of the interconnectedness of several areas that have an effect on our development in this role. These areas include: personal development in this area of our training as teachers (such as training based on personal reflection of our own values), the strengthening of our staff and school environment as a whole (via schools assemblies and/or staff development geared towards strengthening community and consistency), and the educating of the community we serve. They also saw a need to connect with larger forces outside of our school and community which affect our abilities to better educate children about values.

The knowledge that so many factors affect our childrens' moral development influenced some of the respondents' answers. This practical wisdom caused some educators to think about development in this area in ways that were based in setting realistic goals that teachers could actualize in their classrooms and that we as a school community could achieve. These ideas were based on the knowledge that we, as educators, only have so much power or control in the outcome of our students' character development. There are other factors that may have a larger effect on the students that we are not able to change. Examples of some of these factors are neglect, abuse, drug use, and gang activity. Other respondents offered insight into changes which they suggested would have larger effects and get to the core of some of our present limitations. One change could be to include more funding for

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public education, thus enabling a smaller student-teacher ratio. These changes would have to start from higher up and are not ones that we would be able to make without that support. Some people welcomed the idea of training. They expressed that they could use some more guidance and structure to further implement the Character Counts! program. Others agreed that our school could use some support in strengthening its role in the moral development of our students, yet they did not see training as the answer.

With regards to the Character Counts! program, I asked several respondents if they saw it as a cohesive program for moral education in our school or if they thought teachers just "did their own thing" in this area of their teaching. Almost all agreed that our school lacked cohesion with regards to moral education. Most everyone agreed that our school could benefit from a more cohesive program, but many did not know if Character Counts! was the program we needed. In terms of developing our schools' role in the character development of our students, many agreed that, currently, the amount of attention devoted to this is left up to the individuals, but that in order to have more success it would need more school-wide attention. Some suggestions included entire school assemblies focusing on the clarification of school rules, grade level staff meetings addressing ways to teach a target Character Counts! pillar to children, and placing emphasis on follow-through and consistency among staff regarding expectations and consequences for student behavior. The idea that the teaching of values needs some level of school-wide attention is expressed in the following respondent's comment. In answer to the question of whether she thought this was something that should be addressed by the whole school

she said, "Yes, it needs to be school-wide because if one class is getting it, then they go outside and they're mixing with those others who aren't getting it. Everybody's got to get it."[132] This notion of coherence being a key component in the creation of a school environment which assists in the development of children with strong morals is also supported in the following research data:

"Edward Wynne (1988) studied 140 schools in the Chicago area and found that one of the major characteristics of 'good' schools was coherence, 'things sticking together.' He reported that in these good schools, 'the vitality of the total environment (coherence) stifled occasional surges of inefficiency.' What we mean by coherence is attention by the leadership to promote and monitor the vitality, the togetherness, the interrelationships of all the components of the character education council's interactions and work. For a school's character education program, coherence is the 'glue' that relates what is happening in one grade or classroom to another, one program to another, and the unity of all the school's relationships and activities to each other. Coherence binds the consensus values to the daily life in the school. Coherence gives one the 'big picture' of character education."[133]

Many respondents gave suggestions about how we could have more coherence in our school. One idea aimed at creating this staff unity was professional development geared toward community building. Some also talked of the obstacles in creating such cohesiveness. Again, several respondents talked about the need for more school-wide assemblies addressing both the Character Counts! pillars and expectations for student behavior which must be enforced throughout the school. A former teacher at our school talked to me about the differences she saw in her new school. In her opinion, the behavior of the students is better at her new school. She attributed this to the school-wide focus on student expectations for behavior

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[132] Participant #1, taped interview.
[133] DeRoche, Edward F. and Williams, Mary M.; Educating Hearts and Minds,; Corwin press, Inc.; California; 1998, p. 41

that were emphasized very strongly at the beginning of the year in assemblies. This opinion was expressed in response to the question of whether she saw any advantages to having a set program for moral education such as Character Counts!. She replied,

> "If you don't start the year off with expectations as a whole school, whether it's Character Counts! or whatever it is, you have to do that at the very beginning. You can't just let each teacher do their own thing. You have to have a total school expectation. How are we going to walk? How are we going to sit down in the cafeteria? What are the playground rules?"[134]

This teacher talked about how at her new school there was a total school commitment to these assemblies and an emphasis by all the teachers to the school rules. She attributed this cohesiveness to the leadership of her current principal. As she stated, "The principal has to lead it, the principal has to live it, and whatever the principal thinks is important for that school, this is the way that school is."[135] She talked about how this total school commitment was played out in the following example,

> "All of the teachers for at least a whole month, when we took them (the kids) out to the playground, we said, 'Okay, look at that good line. You have your hands behind your back. You really know how to be safe. You're being respectful.' And then calling them on it, 'Hands behind your back!', if they were not in a straight line and it seems like such a picky thing, but it starts them off right."[136]

One can see, from this example, the difficulty in balancing the need for consistency and the adherence to certain rules, while simultaneously encouraging a sense of individuality in our students. I inquired about what my colleagues saw as ways they themselves or we as a school could improve in the area of development of positive character in our students, and what would be useful in terms of professional development. Many saw training as

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[134] Participant #7, taped interview.
[135] Participant #7, taped interview.
[136] Ibid.

an option which could help, but others also mentioned that our follow through, or what we would actually do with the training was even more important. As one respondent noted, "Teachers and other school personnel could benefit (from training), but if they don't apply it, it's worthless."[137] In another question on the survey aimed at finding out what kind of trainings school personnel would find useful, this same respondent emphasized that the "personality and experiences" teachers have has a greater effect on their teaching than does training. As she stated, "Training can only help if you (the school personnel) believe it is of value to the children and yourself."[138] Another classroom teacher seemed to agree with this perspective. I asked her if our school was doing a good job in their role of teaching character education; and whether she thought there was room for development in this area. She responded,

> "You can't mandate morals. You can't mandate people to treat people well. The people who really care about children growing up in society as really kind and generous people are living their lives that way and are examples for the kids. The other people that have a deviant lifestyle or are not cream of the crop as far as moral development goes, how can you expect them to teach good morals to children?"[139]

-Drawing the Line: Private and Public Lives

This brings up a whole other issue: what we deem to be a "deviant lifestyle" and where we draw the line in terms of a teacher's private life. Perhaps this is too big of subject to address in this paper, but the point it makes is that, as many of the respondents noted, an educator comes to the profession with his/her own set of values and what he/she deems

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[137] Participant # 3, survey, p. 3.
[138] Ibid.
[139] Participant #4, taped interview.

important. Inevitably this may, and likely will, have a larger effect on his/her teaching of certain values to the students than a training would have. This also points again to the importance of modeling that many of the school personnel noted. For, as this classroom teacher expressed, children can see through any idea or person which is not genuine. She gave the example of smokers who "couldn't be telling the kids to talk to their parents about how smoking is bad, if they [themselves] are smokers." In this example, as she stated, the kids would know that it wasn't "from the heart."[140]

Many school personnel welcomed the idea of training. Many agreed that one reason for the lack of success of the Character Counts! program was a lack of training in the practical applications of the program. Very few respondents stated that they had ever received any training related to Character Counts!. Those who did mention having received some training mostly suggested that it was a very superficial overview of the program. One teacher described this in terms of the lack of follow-up on many programs that are introduced in the public schools. This idea is shown in her response to my question about whether Character Counts! was a cohesive plan for moral education. She responded,

> "We get so many different programs. Now we're going to have SQS (Strengthening Quality in Schools). It's kind of like we get introduced to all these things and here's something you can do, but there's not a lot of follow-up. 'Now you're on your own. Now you do it!' "[141]

Another classroom teacher agreed that when the Character Counts! program was first introduced a few years ago, it was given more attention. I asked her if she saw the Character Counts! program as being fully implemented in our school. She stated that though it was not fully

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[140] Ibid.
[141] Participant #5, taped interview.

implemented, she didn't see this necessarily as a programmatic issue, but rather a lack of follow through on the part of the teachers. As she expressed,

> "It's our fault. We're supposed to have assemblies on it. We've talked about how grade levels could do assemblies on one pillar once a month, but it just kind of got pushed away, but a few years ago when it first came out, we were all supposed to be big on it, but we didn't. It's our fault, but I guess the principal's the one to push it, make us have an assembly. It (f)izzled."[142]

I asked this same teacher if she thought we had room for development in this area and if she had any suggestions on how our school could improve. She implied that the problem was not necessarily with the plan that we may have had a few years ago, but with our follow through. She said,

> "There's definitely room for improvement. We'd have to go back to our original plans. It's probably written somewhere. Our school's got a plan and it had to do with each grade level focusing on one of the pillars all year long, assemblies, or plays, presentations, speeches, reading books about them. There is no limit to what we could do with it, if we use our imagination!"[143]

Another teacher offered her ideas about why the Character Counts! program never fully got underway. She suggested that although it may sound good for us to meet and collaborate on ideas about how to implement the program, the reality is that this was another burden for a lot of teachers who are already overwhelmed. The reason she felt the program has not succeeded was due to a lack of structure and a lack of desire and time on the part of the teachers to invent activities using the framework provided by the program. This opinion is noted in the following response to my question about whether the intention was to continue with the grade level meetings and the intensity in which the program began. She said,

> "Actually I think it was kind of forced on us and we don't want to do it, to tell you the truth. Teachers don't want to do it because it

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[142] Participant #1, taped interview.
[143] Ibid.

involves their own time. And why should we reinvent the wheel? Why should we take some curriculum and have to figure the whole curriculum out? That is not our job. We have to do that enough as it is. I feel like teachers don't think it's as important as teaching a kid to read."[144]

When I asked this same teacher what kind of professional development would be helpful to her, she, along with several other respondents, mentioned having some training in conflict mediation. She felt like this would be useful and a practical solution to some of the behavior problems at my school. She talked about how we had tried to do a mediation program which would involve some students as mediators but that it did not survive because the educators were not properly trained in this area. Many of my colleagues also noted the importance of involving the students and the need for training which would better inform teachers of ways to provide the scaffolding necessary to help children solve some of their own conflicts. One teacher talked about another training which she was involved with this year called "Bullyproofing". She saw the training for this program as being more successful because "it teaches children how to think through things" with the teacher giving them "the tools."[145] This underscores the idea that many teachers see the value in teaching that strives towards creating an "autonomous" sense of morality in their students and that many would welcome trainings which would support this endeavor.

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[144] Participant #7, taped interview.
[145] Participant #9, taped interview

CHAPTER FOUR

CONCLUSION

I started this project with the knowledge that one teacher in particular greatly influenced me and had a profound effect in shaping my future. This was my fifth grade teacher, Mr. Wager. As a child I faced some similar traumas to the ones that a majority of the students at my school face. I was a survivor of domestic violence and abuse. These problems in my home life were severely affecting my performance in school especially in the third and fourth grades. By the time I got to fifth grade I was at risk of completely failing in school due to my lack of self-esteem. My fifth grade teacher played a huge role in completely turning my life around. I went from having almost no motivation in school, receiving barely passing grades, to being an A student, testing as gifted. I attribute a large part of this change to having had Mr. Wager as a teacher. Somehow he was able to create a safe environment in his classroom and to reach me in a way that my other teachers did not. Unlike my teachers in third and fourth grade, he was able to see that the academic problems I had were not a result of an inability or lack of motivation, but emotional turmoil and a lack of self-worth. His influence continued even after I left the fifth grade. I internalized the faith that he had in me and was successful in school from that point on.

I see his influence as part of the reason why I chose to teach in elementary school. The reality is that sometimes it is difficult for elementary school teachers to see what, if any, effects they have on their students. I have noticed this especially in my current position as a bilingual resource teacher because I serve approximately one hundred and seventy children. I work so

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hard just to find a way to teach Spanish for one half hour to eight classes daily. As a result of having so many students for so little time, I often wonder if I have any effect at all.

Another issue that I struggle within my position in the public schools has a lot to do with the political climate of this environment. I find myself always thinking twice about what I say to children at school regarding values, dealing with conflicts, or even just showing them affection. This, I know, partly derives from my own lack of security; and I have seen a growth in this area as I have become more confident in myself and my position. It also comes from an overall environment which is not always the most supportive, a lack of professional development around these issues, the unclear role of the teacher and the school system in values instruction, the threat of liability, and time constraints. This hesitation is also a factor that some of the other school personnel interviewed have expressed. For instance, one respondent mentioned the neutrality that most teachers maintain when it comes to values teachings. She talked about this in terms of some teachers' only dealing with values having to do with getting students to adhere to certain rules so that they could cover the required curriculum.

Many of the respondents talked about why they see "heteronomous" rather than "autonomous" values teaching going on in our school and other public schools. Some teachers strongly expressed the opinion that they did not see it as our job to teach values or morals. They saw this as the role of the family. Thus, one reason for their their lack of focus on values teachings that encourages intrinsic learning of certain morals could be a result of the fact that they themselves do not see this as their main purpose in teaching. This notion is expressed in the following comment by one respondent,

"Our focus needs to be on teaching the kids to read. My gosh, if they cannot read, how are they going to feel good about themselves and be responsible? And so I think that a lot of people feel that way. I mean focus on the priorities here. The priority is not to have kids that are caring; that comes with feeling good about yourself because you're learning, because you're achieving. I feel like those two go hand and hand; and if you have a child who is not achieving, then they don't want to behave."[146]

This teacher obviously sees the connection between children with a high sense of self-esteem and academic achievement. She acknowledges their inter relatedness. Yet, I, along with some other personnel interviewed, see their connection not so much in a linear way, where one precedes the other, but more circular. In other words, the majority of the students in our school have very few positive influences in their home and community lives and thus very little sense of hope or self-worth. Many teachers have thus stated the importance of educators working to instill this sense of value in their students, seeing this personal connection and the strengthening of their hearts as the only way for a lot of our students to excel academically. For this reason, they stated that the teaching of values is one of their top priorities as elementary school educators.

Many of the respondents mentioned what they saw as the personal as well as the institutional limitations with respect to the moral education of children. My colleague, who labeled the Character Counts! program as a "silver bullet", did not see the answer to developing morally healthy children in any set values based program or trainings. He saw the answer in the development of individual relationships with each one of our students. He talked about this in terms of the increasing demands placed on school personnel and the need for monetary support from the public and

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[146] Participant #7, taped interview.

administration that would assist in "going to some of the root things that would make a difference."[147]   He saw one of these root elements as teacher-student ratio. This viewpoint is expressed in the following response given by this participant,

> "There are people who disagree with me, but my understanding of the research is that the biggest thing that impacts student outcomes is a lower student-teacher ratio. Nationwide if we really put action to the idea that public education is important and funded it at a level where we could have a smaller pupil-teacher ratio. To me, regardless of a program, when you've got one teacher dealing with fifteen kids, that is a manageable group and a lot can take place as far as observing the social interactions with kids, guiding and directing kids' behaviors."[148]

Class size or case load is an obvious reason for educators' limitations in making personal connections with their students, but there are other factors which may also inhibit this connection. As other respondents emphasized, many educators attempt to maintain their neutrality when it comes to dealing with values in school. They suggested several reasons for this stance. They talked about the lack of time available and the pressure to cover the required curriculum. Others discussed the upsurge in fears among teachers in forming personal relationships with their students because of the changes that have occurred in society, such as the increase in the publicity of more crimes against children by adults. One teacher described this in terms of the reluctance of many teachers to even give their students a hug for fear of false accusations. Another teacher talked about this in terms of accountability. She suggested that some teachers may not want to approach issues that could sometimes be seen as sensitive or controversial in their classrooms for fear of being held to their words by their students or having to explain their position

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[147] Participant # 2, taped interview.
[148] Ibid.

community in the classroom, not only can the teacher teach, but the students will feel better about themselves and work harder."[149]

The question still remains about how to better prepare ourselves for this increasing role that is upon us. Many teachers offered suggestions on how we could make our school an even safer climate which would, in itself, assist in developing character in our students. Most also agreed that presently the Character Counts! program is not one which has been fully implemented or even one that has been effective. Many indicated that this is not so much an issue of what program we choose to adopt, if any, but our need for follow through. They talked about how in our school and in public education in general we are continually being introduced to new programs and left on our own to fully develop them. Many agreed that our school could benefit from a more cohesive program with more comprehensive trainings in the practical applications of teaching character to children. Others also mentioned the idea that although trainings in this area may help, nothing is more important than teachers serving as role models for their students and living lives of integrity, because children are able to see through anything or anyone which is not genuine. Many teachers also mentioned the need for consistency and emphasized how important it would be to include parents and the community in any trainings on this subject. Some respondents suggested the need for more dialogue with other staff members and with members of the community we serve to better assess the needs for development in this area. Almost all agreed there was room for development in the creation of a school climate which would be more conducive in assisting our students to be morally healthy.

After conducting this research, I am still left with many questions. I

[149] Ryan, Kevin and Karen E. Bohlin; Building Character in Schools; Jossey-Bass Publishers; San Francisco; 1999, p. xi.

know that one of the reasons I chose to go into elementary education was my own personal experience of having had one teacher who had a great influence in my life. I went into teaching thinking that if I could have such an influence on just one student, then it would all be worth it. Having worked in APS for four years I have lost a bit of that idealism, often wondering if my students will remember me the next year. If I stay in public education, I plan to have my own classroom which will offer the opportunity to form more personal connections with my students, which I see as one of the most important factors in having an influence on childrens' values.

I interviewed many teachers about this topic and many expressed similar frustrations regarding the unreal expectations placed on teachers and the difficulty of forming personal relationships with students that resulted. Some teachers offered stories of true dedication and determination to reach their students and have an affect on their lives despite the institutional and personal limitations.

I came to this project with the strong conviction that personal reflection and having the courage to face one's own emotions and ideas about the world are of utmost importance in teaching. This I still believe to be true, knowing that what my fifth grade teacher had was an insight and wisdom that was not learned in any book, set values based program, or training. I also believed that a sense of community and support among the staff at a school is one of the biggest factors in my own happiness at work and what makes me shine as an educator. My current school does have a much more supportive climate than the school where I worked last year and I can see this greatly affecting the attitudes of the staff and students and thus the moral climate of the environment. Despite this fact, I learned from the co-workers who

participated in my study that many, including myself, thought we had much room for improvement in the area of teamwork and cohesiveness among the staff. In fact, many saw this as an area of primary importance for the development of a morally healthy school climate.

Overall, the project was successful in helping me develop in this area of my teaching because at the very least it opened up communication between me and my co-workers about a subject that is very important to me. In this way it helped me to further develop that sense of community that is a crucial element in reaching my potential in a teaching environment. It also seemed to inspire many of my co-workers to think about their role in values education and thus encourage the personal reflection that I believe so important. It helped us to think about ways that we can move forward as a community in this area in a manner that would be more profoundly meaningful, in part because it derives from internal reflection, than the current values based program imposed from without, has provided.

TRUSTWORTHINESS

I am reliable. People have confidence in me and can count on me and can count on my word.

CITIZENSHIP

My community is important to me. I do my part to make it a better place in which to live.

RESPONSIBILITY

I am accountable for my actions.

I fulfill obligations.

CARING

I am concerned about those around me. I consider their feelings, as well as my own.

RESPECT

I treat others with courtesy and honor.

FAIRNESS

I am free of bias.

I am open-minded

and just.

3/29/00

Dear Participants:

    Attached is a survey which contains questions about educators' perceptions on "moral education", with specific questions about the Character Counts! program in APS.   I am gathering this information as research necessary to complete my master's thesis. I recognize that the idea of moral education may mean something different to everyone. Therefore, in question seven of the survey I have asked you to think about what the concept of moral education means to you.

    If I have given you this survey and asked you to participate, it is because I perceive you as someone who may have some valuable insight on this topic. I realize that it is a busy time of year and we are all overloaded with paperwork. If you could set aside the approximately twenty minutes that it would take to complete this survey and/or participate in a ten or fifteen minute interview, I would greatly appreciate it.

    The information you provide in this survey is completely confidential. I am not going to be sharing it with anyone else. It is to be used for my own research purposes only. I will only cite information you provide in my thesis with your permission and offer you the option to maintain your anonymity through the use of a pseudonym (see bottom of the survey). My main objective is to get people's honest opinions about these questions.

    Also, please check yes or no to the question on the bottom of the survey which asks whether you would be willing to participate in a ten or fifteen minute follow up interview. I will be asking some people to participate in interviews. I will mainly ask the same questions as the survey contains, but I may request clarification or further information on some of your written responses. If you would rather address any or all of the questions on the survey in the form of an interview, please indicate this at the top of the form or underneath any of the questions you would rather answer in person. I would appreciate any information or ideas you have about this topic, whether that be in writing, or through an interview, or a little of both.

    If you are so helpful in agreeing to complete the survey, please be as honest as possible. Also, do not hesitate to provide as much detail as you can. Feel free to use extra paper, if you wish to write more than the space provides.

    I have a deadline to complete this project. Therefore, I will be coming around to collect the surveys from the people willing to partcipate on (Friday, April 14, 2000). I will gladly accept completed surveys in my mailbox anytime before this date.

    I thank you in advance for your participation. Your cooperation, insight, and ideas are tremendously appreciated.

Sincerely,

Melanie L. Bauer (Bilingual Resource)

General Information:

1. What is your position within APS?(i.e. administrator, classroom teacher, support staff,etc.)

2. How many years have you held this position?

3. What, if any, are the other positions you have held within APS?

For Administrators (Please answer questions 4-7):

4. In what ways do you see the Character Counts! pillars affecting your decisions in the hiring process?

5. Were you asked about your philosophy of "moral education" or your support of the Character Counts! program when you were hired for your current position?

6. Do you look for teachers who uphold the values outlined in the six pillars of Character Counts!?

7. Are there specific questions you ask potential employees to learn about their abilities and/or intentions to provide education to children in the area of Character Counts! or other moral based programs? What are some examples of questions you might ask?

For All Participants Including Administrators (Please answer questions 8-21):

8. Do you see teachers and other school personnel playing a large role in the "moral education" of children? What is your definition of moral education?

9. Do you see the Character Counts! program as having any particular effect on your teaching or working with children? Do you see other factors as having a greater influence on your teaching of certain values to children? (comments welcomed)

10. Did the moral education of children play any role in your education/teacher-training program prior to beginning your career as a teacher or other school personnel?

11. What do you see as your role with regards to the Character Counts! program? Do you feel it is your responsibility to teach the six pillars: the values of respect, citizenship, caring, trustworthiness, fairness, and responsibility to your students? (comments welcomed)

12. If you do see yourself teaching these values to children, how do you see this being actualized on a daily basis? (i.e. Do you have thematic units which deal with these subjects or is the instruction in these areas less direct?) (additional comments welcomed)

13. What do you see as the advantages, if any, of having a set program for moral education such as Character Counts! within APS?

14. Have you been able to see measurable, beneficial effects of the Character Counts! program or other values-based programs you have been involved with? (comments welcomed)

15. Do you see any disadvantages or shortcomings to the Character Counts! or other values-based educational programs? (comments welcomed)

16. Assuming that you see yourself as having a role in the moral education of children, do you feel that you have been adequately trained in this area?

17. Have you ever received any specific trainings in the area of Character Counts!?

18. Do you feel that teachers and other school personnel could benefit from
    professional development sessions in Character Counts! or other trainings
    that focus on the schools' role in the moral education of children?

19. If you do feel that trainings or professional development would be useful,
    do you have any idea about what these sessions might focus on or what might
    be most useful to you? (Some ideas: working with children on specific character
    traits; learning how to counsel children; techniques for counseling; techniques for
    incorporating moral values into the curriculum or syllabus.)

20. Have you had other experiences or training which have given you knowledge in the
    teaching of values outside of APS? (additional comments welcomed)

21. Do you feel you could benefit from further development in the area of the moral education of children? What are some other ways, besides trainings, you expect to develop in this area of your profession?

**** Would you be willing to participate in a ten or fifteen minute follow-up interview on this topic?
_____ yes _____ no

**** Do I have permission to cite any of the information you have provided in my thesis? (Note: your identity will be strictly protected (see below) and all information will be held in strictest confidence) _____ yes _____ no

If I were to use some of the information you have provided in my thesis, how would you like to be cited. For example, would you like me to use your first name only, your first and last name, your last name only, or a pseudonym? If you would like me to refer to you using a pseudonym, please let me know what you would like me to call you on the line below.

_____

Thank you again for your participation in this project. Your input is greatly appreciated.

Sample Follow-up Interview Questions

The following are examples of some of the questions I asked respondents in follow -up interviews.

(Questions for Respondent #6-Character Counts! liason)

1. Could you describe what your job entails? What are some of the specific duties it involves?

2. Have you held other positions in APS prior to the Character Counts! program?

3. Are you involved with trainings for teachers in the Character Counts! program? Who receives the trainings? What do they consist of?

4. Do you feel that teachers/school personnel have a large role in students' character development?

5. What do you feel should be the schools' responsibility with regards to character development?

6. I read in the handbook some of the specific goals and rationale behind the introduction of the Character Counts! program to APS, but could you describe in your own opinion what you see as the main goals and objectives for introducing the program to APS?

7. In your opinion has the Character Counts! program helped with some of the problems in APS?

8. Do you see the Character Counts! program as being fully implemented within the schools or do you see areas for development in this realm? What would be your suggestion to teachers, principals, and other school personnel to benefit fully from the program?

9. I read about the Character Counts! task force. Does this group still exist? Who is in this group? What is the role of this group?

(Questions for Respondent #3)

10. You mention behavior management as being a key factor. Could you explain a little about what your system is like? Was this an area that you were always strong in or is it something that has developed with experience over time?

11. You wrote about self-monitoring as a way to develop in this area of moral education. Do you feel this ability to reflect, assess strenghts and weaknessnesses objectively is an important quality of a good educator?

12. Do you think it is important for teachers to understand themselves (their own system of values-what they think and why they think it)? Does this help strenghten their role as educators?

(Question for Respondent #8)

13. You wrote in the survey that you feel it is a main responsibility of yours to teach the values/six pillars outlined in the Character Counts! program. What, if any, do you feel are the difficulties/limitations you experience in fulfilling this responsibility?

(General Questions)

14. Do you see yourself having a large influence in the outcome of your students' character development? (i.e. have you ever seen a big change/impact in one of your students who may not have the most positive role models in other realms of his/her life?)

15. In our school or in other schools you have worked in APS, do you see the Character Counts! program in character education adopted by APS as a cohesive plan for moral education? (i.e. Do you see there being clear expectations for teachers in terms of our teaching of values to children which all teachers/school personnel follow or Do you think teachers basically do their own thing?)

16. Do you see Character Counts! as a program that has been fully implemented in our school or merely slogans that appear on the walls and in the morning announcements?

17. Do you think we, our school, would benefit from more of a cohesive plan for character education or should this be left up to the individuals to teach their own students in their own way?

18. What are some of you ways of monitoring the success of values education in your classroom? or With regards to character education, what are some specific examples that show what you do works?

19. Do you see our school or other schools in APS as doing a good job in their role in teaching character education? What are some ways you would suggest we improve as a school in this arena, beyond just your classroom?

20. Do you remember the Character Counts! workshop? What was it like? What did it consist of? What did you learn? What kind of activities did you do?

21. What would you say are ways in which you assist in developing good character in children in your classroom? (i.e. specific behaviors you have or encourage in children or character building activites)

CHARACTER COUNTS!

The Aspen Declaration

I   The next generation will be the stewards of our communities, nation, and planet in extraordinarily critical times.

2.   The present and future well-being of our society requires an involved, caring citizenry with good moral character.

3.   People do not automatically develop good moral character; therefore, conscientious efforts must be made to help young people develop the values and abilities necessary for moral decision making and conduct.

4.   Effective character education is based on core ethical values that form the foundation of democratic society, in particular, respect, responsibility, trustworthiness, caring, justice and fairness, and civic virtue and citizenship.

5.   These core ethical values transcend cultural, religious and socioeconomic differences.

6.   Character education is, first and foremost, an obligation of families; it is also an important obligation of faith communities, schools, youth, and other human service organizations.

7.   These obligations to develop character are best achieved when these groups work in concert.

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

Albuquerque Character Counts Coalition

TRUSTWORTHINESS-CARING-CITIZENSHIP-RESPECT-RESPONSIBILITY-FAIRNESS

VISION

Albuquerque: A community where all citizens personally embrace the principle that Character counts.

MISSION

The Albuquerque Character Counts Coalition will provide leadership and coordination to promote and encourage character development in Albuquerque. The Coalition will place character at the forefront of the Albuquerque agenda.

GOALS

1.

   (a.)   Raise the consciousness of the entire community so that all citizens embrace the principle that Character Counts.

   (b.)   Raise the commitment of the entire community so that all citizens embrace the principle of Character Counts

2.

        Involve the youth of Albuquerque in the promotion of character at home and in the school and community.

3.

   (a.)   Integrate character education into new and existing programs.

   (b.)   Encourage families to adopt and model the Six Pillars of Character.

   (c.)   Encourage the community to adopt and model the Six Pillars of Character.

4.

   (a.)   Build a pro-active approach to character education as a way to create a safe, healthy community.

   (b.)   Maintain a pro-active approach to character education as a way to create a safe, healthy community.

5.

        Establish a long-term commitment to Character Counts concept by providing current and future Leadership Council members.

PILLARS OF CHARACTER

#Trustworthiness	#Respect
#Responsibility	#Fairness
#Caring	#Citizenship

Developed by: Albuquerque Character Counts!SM Leadership Council

The Albuquerque Community - Year 1
Character Counts Coalition
Levels of Awareness

- Don t know about the idea
- Don t care about the idea

- Aware of the idea
- Formulated no opinion about the idea

- Aware of the idea
- Think the idea is a good one

- Aware of the idea
- Think the idea is a good one
- Personally support the idea

- Aware of the idea
- Think the idea is a good one
- Personally support the idea
- Professionally support the idea

- Aware of the idea
- Think the idea is a good one
- Personally support the idea
- Professionally support the idea
- Willing to give time and effort

- Aware of the idea
- Think the idea is a good one
- Personally support the idea
- Professionally support the idea
- Willing to give time, effort, and money

Developed by: Mary Jane Aguilar, Albuquerque Public Schools - Albuq. NM

APS CHARACTER COUNTS ACTION PLAN

BEGINNING ACTIVITIES

APS School Board Resolution endorsing and supporting the Character Counts! initiative.

Provide the APS School Board with progress of Character Counts! in APS and in the community.

Secure commitment from APS to provide personnel for the planning and implementation of the Character Counts! Leadership Council.

Conduct formal Character Counts! awareness orientation for all administrators at district administrators' meeting.

Provide Josephson Institute training in Character Counts! initiative for district staff/teacher/parent administrator representatives.

Insure that every high school cluster is represented at Josephson Institute training.

Provide and fund a 1/2 time resource person to the Albuquerque community, to train district and community personnel, and to promote the Character Counts! initiative.

Provide monthly networking and collaboration workshops for trainers.

Assist schools with their specific training.

Provide local, state, and national presentations to promote Character Counts!

Promote districtwide awareness of Character Counts! activities through the APS "Perspective" and the APS Team Action for Student Assistance (TASA) Newsletters.

APS CHARACTER COUNTS ACTION PLAN

ONGOING ACTIVITIES

Provide the APS School Board with evidence of continued progress of Character Counts! in APS and in the community.

Continue commitment from APS to provide personnel for the planning and implementation of the Character Counts! Leadership Council.

Conduct follow up Character Counts! orientation for all administrators at district administrators' meeting.

Prepare and distribute a district Character Counts! handbook.

Plan with High School Cluster Forums to insure Character Counts! development throughout the entire district.

Provide monthly skill building workshops for trainers.

Assist schools with specific training as well as follow up training.

Provide local, state, and national presentations to promote Character Counts!

Continue promotion of districtwide awareness of Character Counts! activities through the APS "Perspective" and the APS Team Action for Student Assistance (TASA) Newsletters.

Advocate for the Six Pillars of Character through the "word of the month" promotion.

Provide a press release to start the school year, with additional promotions through school newsletters.

Involve parent organizations in the promotion of the Character Counts! initiative.

Provide opportunities for each school's student council to become actively engaged in developing awareness and practicing the Six Pillars.

A Person of Character...

**• IS TRUSTWORTHY • TREATS PEOPLE WITH RESPECT •
• IS RESPONSIBLE • IS FAIR • IS CARING •
• IS A GOOD CITIZEN •**

CHARACTER COUNTS

TRUSTWORTHINESS

Honesty *Do:* tell the truth; be sincere.

Don't: betray a trust, deceive, mislead, cheat or steal; don't be devious or tricky.

Integrity *Do:* stand up for your beliefs; be your best self; walk your talk; show commitment, courage, and self-discipline.

Don't: do anything you think is wrong.

Promise-Keeping

Do: keep your word and honor your commitments; pay your debts and return what you borrow.

Loyalty *Do:* stand by, support, and protect your family, freinds and country.

Don't: talk behind other people's backs; spread rumors or engage in harmful gossip; don't do anything wrong to keep or win a friendship or gaiin approval; don't ask a friend to do anything wrong.

RESPECT

Do: judge all people on their merits; be couteous and polite; tolerant, appreciative and accepting of individual differences; respect the right of individuals tomake decisions about their own lives.

Don't: abuse, demean, or mistreat anyone; don't use, manipulate, exploit or take advantage of others.

RESPONSIBILITY

Accountability

Do: think before you act; consider the consequences on all people affected; think for the long term; be reliable; be accountable; accept responsibilty for the consequences of your choices; set a good example for those who look up to you.

Don't: make excuses, blame others for your mistakes or take credit for others' achievements.

Excellence

Do: your best and keep trying; be diligent and industrious.

Don't: quit or give up easily.

Self-Restraint

Do: exercise self-restraint and be disciplined.

FAIRNESS *Do:* treat all people fairly; be open-minded; listen to others; try to understand what they are saying and feeling, make decisions which affect others only after appropriate considerations.

Don't: take unfair advantage of others' mistakes or take more than your fair share.

CARING *Do:* show you care about others through kindness, caring, sharing and compassion, live by the Golden Rule and help others.

Don't: be selfish, mean, cruel or insensitive to others' feelings.

CITIZENSHIP

Do: play by the rules; obey laws; do your share; respect authority; stay informed; vote; protect your neighbors; pay your taxes; be charitable; help your community by volunteering service. protect the environment; conserve natural resources.

ALBUQUERQUE PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Character Education Curriculum Framework
Grades PreK-5

District Core Curriculum and Scope & Sequence	Character Counts Pillar: Caring	Implementation/Resources
These are the Attitudes and Ethics that the district intends students to have as a result of PreK-12 instruction. Students of Albuquerque Public Schools become successful, productive, and responsible contributors to their communities, nation, and world by: • respecting the rights and responsibilities provided by the Constitution of the United States; • respecting the feelings, ideas, and property of others; • accepting responsibility for performing at full potential; • appreciating and developing individual creativity; • making decisions which promote good health; • demonstrating ethical decision-making; • understanding the importance of honesty, dependability, integrity, and perseverance; • demonstrating empathy, caring, adaptability, and politeness with others; • respecting the importance of learning; • taking responsibility for the care of self, school, community, and the environment; • respecting self and others in a pluralistic society.	Persons of good character are concerned about those around them. Learners exhibit caring by: • showing that they care about others through kindness, sharing, and compassion; • treating others as they would want to be treated; • helping others. **QUOTES** • *You are what you do.* 　　-Unknown • *When we quit thinking primarily about ourselves...we undergo a truly heroic transformation of consciousness.* 　　-Joseph Campbell • *It is nice to be important, but it is more important to be nice.* 　　-John Marks Templeton • *You are not what you own.* 　　-Fugarzi • *The best portion of a good person's life is the little nameless, unremembered acts of kindness and love.* 　　-William Wordsworth • *If you want to know how to live your life, think about what you want people to say about you after you die, and live backwards.* 　　-Unknown	1. Acts of Kindness Tree (PreK-2) 2. Dare to Care (3-5) 3. Caring Coupons (K-8)

Title: *Acts of Kindness Tree*

Grade Level: PreK - 2

Character Counts Pillar: Caring

Objective: Students will acknowledge and participate in caring acts.

Materials: brown and green paper, stickers, thank you notes

Vocabulary: kindness, caring

Procedure:
1. Cut out a tree trunk from brown butcher paper and post it on the wall.
2. Brainstorm with students examples of "acts of kindness."
3. Draw the students' attention to the tree trunk. Ask the students what is missing.
4. Explain that the leaves will be added to the trunk each time a student shows a kind and caring behavior toward others.
5. Write the student's name and action on a green paper "leaf" which is displayed on and around the tree.
6. Give a sticker or other reward to the child who "contributes a leaf."
7. Distribute thank you notes describing the students' kind acts. These may be taken home to parents.
8. Watch the tree grow.

Assessment: teacher and student observation

Additional Resources: *The Giving Tree*, Shel Silverstein. Harper and Row, 1964.

APPENDIX ELEVEN

Staff Guidelines and Responsibilities
For Discipline Plan 1999 - 2000

Duty Adult

-Every adult at Atrisco is considered a Duty Adult and can give a referral or a compliment for good behavior at any time. -The adult who gives a referral should ask the student which character pillar was not followed and what they could have done to follow it. -Staff should encourage students to follow this strategy when there is a conflict:

1. **IGNORE/WALK AWAY.**
2. **ASK THE OTHER PERSON IN A STRONG VOICE TO LEAVE THEM ALONE.**
3. **FIND AN ADULT FOR HELP.**

-Each Teacher will be assigned a Buddy Teacher to pair up with for detention purposes as followed:

1st	and	Area Sp. Ed.	2nd	and	5th
Shelly		Kimberly	Mildred		Mark
Terri		Maggie	Dawn		Debbie
John C.		Warren			
Lisa		Kindergarten	Karen		Kristy
		3rd	**and**	**4th**	

Diane	Jessica
Heather	Manuel
Lorraine P.J. (Resource/gifted)	

*SxS and Kindergarten may be asked to help with detention if necessary.

-Teachers should have a detention area in their rooms where detention students can come sit and get as little attention as possible.

-Teachers will keep records for their own students so that the proper consequences can be given swiftly for each infraction.

-Teachers will need to make sure that their students get to the monitor room at each detention time.

-If a student earns a full day of detention (I. S. S.), teachers need to send adequate work to keep them busy for the day.

-Review rules at the beginning of each month.

-CONSISTENCY THROUGHOUT THE SCHOOL WILL DETERMINE THE SUCCESS OF OUR DISCIPLINE PLAN!!!

(Name of School) **Rules**

n the classroom and throughout the school I will be a good citizen,
WILL:
RESPECT everyone at (School) by being courteous and polite to:
ALL Staff
Students
Visitors

2. Show good CITIZENSHIP by demonstrating appropriate
behavior :
Listen and follow directions
No fighting
No use of foul language

3. Show CARING at Atrisco:
No Vandalism
No stealing

4. Be TRUSTWORTHY and follow all school rules:
Walk everywhere except when playing on the playground.
Play only on the playground and not around buildings.
No throwing objects.

5. Be FAIR in work and play:
Do not threaten anyone.
Wait in line quietly.

6. BE RESPONSIBLE FOR MYSELF.

CONSEQUENCES

First referral: miss one day of recess
Second: miss two days of recess and call parents
Third: miss three days of recess and call parents
Fourth: miss four days of recess and have parent/teacher
   conference with the student present.
Fifth: miss five days of recess and have parent /teacher/
   principal conference with the student present.
Sixth: SEVERE CLAUSE – In school suspension (I.S.S.) all day.

CAFETERIA RULES

1. Line up quickly and quietly in alphabetical order.
2. Sit together by class.
3. Be courteous to others.
4. Use quiet voices.
5. Raise hand to be excused.
6. Exit out door marked "out."

STUDENTS NOT FOLLOWING RULES WILL SPEND THEIR LUNCH RECESS AT
THE TIME-OUT TABLE IN THE CAFETERIA.

GOOD CITIZEN AWARD SYSTEM

Students will be given the opportunity to practice good citizenship habits by nominating and electing a "Good Citizen" from their classroom each month.

Each nomination must be justified by examples of good character from the Character Counts pillars.

To exemplify "Fairness", a student can be elected only once during the year.

Elections will be held on the last Friday of each month.

Pictures of the "Good Citizen" will be taken by teachers within each grade level and posted on the bulletin board by the office.

Ideas for awards:

- Being first in line
- Sitting at a special table
- Going to read to the administrators, or another class
- Helping in the library
- Extra recess
- Popcorn party

Tribute to Sergio Andrade
(the kindergardener murdered by his step-father)

Boy in a box
father's burning rage
he helped her bury the bird just the other day
says he got stung by a bee
instead he was squashed to the wall
the flames never cease
they say its locked away
will we remember it all
two boys dead in just one month
one to cancer, the other to fear
the wind never stops
blowing dust
covering our eyes
birds of prey, birds of lust
one bird comes to take him away
he hopes of a better place
a way far away

SOURCES CITED

Surveys and Interviews

Surveys written by the author were answered by Respondents #1through #5, #8, and #10 through #23. They were handed out and returned in the period between March 29, 2000 and May 26, 2000. The entire survey appears in appendix three.

Follow-up interviews were conducted by the author with Respondents #1 through #5, #8, #11, and #16. All follow-up interviews were tape recorded and roughly transcribed. Material that is directly quoted was then corrected so that it is verbatim.

Tape recorded interviews were conducted with Respondents #6,#7, and #9. These respondents did not complete a survey prior to the interview.

Respondent #1 Survey and follow-up interview by author, March 30, 2000, Albuquerque.

Respondent #2 Survey and follow-up interview by author, March 31, 2000, Albuquerque.

Respondent #3 Survey and follow-up interview by author, April 3, 2000, Albuquerque.

Respondent #4 Survey and follow-up interview by author, March 30, 2000, Albuquerque.

Respondent #5 Survey and follow-up interview by author, April 4, 2000, Albuquerque.

Respondent #6 Interview by author, April 7, 2000, Albuquerque.

Respondent #7 Interview by author, April 18, 2000, Albuquerque.

Respondent #8 Survey and follow-up interview by author, April 21, 2000, Albuquerque.

Respondent #9 Interview by author, April 22, 2000, Albuquerque.

Respondent # 10 Response from survey written by author.

Respondent #11 Survey and follow-up interview by author, March 31, 2000, Albuquerque.

Respondent #12 Response from survey written by author.

Respondent #13 Response from survey written by author.

Respondent #14 Response from survey written by author.

Respondent #15 Response from survey written by author.

Respondent #16 Survey and follow-up interview by author, April 24, 2000, Albuquerque.

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