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PRE-SERVICE SECONDARY SOCIAL STUDIES TEACHERS' EFFICACY TOWARDS  
CHARACTER EDUCATION: A COMPARATIVE STUDY

by

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A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy  
in the College of Education  
at the University of Central Florida  
Orlando, Florida

Spring Term  
2011

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## ABSTRACT

Character education is one of the most controversial aspects of academic institutions in the United States. The responsibility of educating children about democratic principles and moral values is something many states and schools are taking very seriously as a vital part of a teacher's role in the classroom. This study investigated the personal teaching efficacy and general teaching efficacy beliefs of pre-service secondary teachers at a large university in the state of Florida. This study investigated the responses of 130 pre-service secondary teachers in language arts, science, social studies, and mathematics within one teacher education program.

The questionnaire utilized in this quantitative research study was the Character Education Efficacy Belief Instrument (CEEBI), which was designed by Milson and Mehlig (2002). This instrument is composed of 24 items designed to understand personal teaching efficacy (PTE) and general teaching efficacy (GTE) beliefs. This study examined if there was a statistically significant difference in PTE and GTE scores between secondary pre-service teachers based on the independent variables of a) program/major, b) gender, c) race/ethnicity, and d) coursework in character education.

The results of this survey adds to a rich field of research and literature on character education and teacher education by taking a closer look at the specific beliefs of secondary pre-service teachers regarding their PTE and GTE for character education. This study was an attempt to better understand the teaching efficacy beliefs for secondary pre-service teachers graduating from a teacher preparation program within a state that mandates character education.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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## CHAPTER 1 RATIONALE

### Overview

Instructing students in the moral arena of values and character development is one of the oldest goals of education in our society. From the colonial era through the present, adults and local community members are expected to model appropriate moral behaviors for children and teach them the values necessary to sustain a stable community. Throughout the long years of moral training, the name given to this endeavor has undergone many transformations. Historically, the definition of terms such as character education, values education, citizenship education, and moral education has been somewhat intertwined. The Puritans and other early European settlers referred to the training of individuals for participation in society as moral education (McClellan, 1999). Their approach to moral education was based on religious doctrine and children were expected to learn appropriate moral behaviors in order to be a productive and righteous member of the community. Moral education through religious studies was considered the best method for training the future citizenry in appropriate virtuous behaviors well into the 19th century (McClellan, 1999; McKnight, 2003). Even after the formation of early public schools, meant to be secular, moral education continued to be based primarily on Protestant doctrine. However, the arrival and influx of many new immigrant groups caused the traditional religious based moral training in schools to come under intense scrutiny, mainly because these various groups did not share the same morals and religious beliefs. Having different cultures, values, and beliefs, the new immigrant groups pushed for the separation of church and state in schools so that their children would not have to face the indoctrination of beliefs which they did

not hold. It was at this time that schools and society witnessed the first major conflict regarding “whose values” would be taught in schools. Needing a new approach for a new and diverse population, public schools began to shift from religious based moral education to the development of positive character traits in students through character education.

The relationship between character education and a common set of core values began, at least in part, because of the debate over moral training using the Bible in public schools. As states began to develop laws and protocols to separate public schools from religious affiliations during the early 20th century, a new approach to moral training was needed for schools. This approach was based on the transmission of specific democratic principles and values, traditionally referred to as character education. In 1944, during his National Council for the Social Studies presidential address, James Quillen discussed how “education is concerned with the development of character” (Previte & Sheehan, 2001, p. 81). Education once again became inextricably intertwined with the development of student character traits following several key developments during the mid 20th century, including the end of WWII, the Cold War, Korean War, and the civil rights movement. Throughout this tumultuous era in U.S. history, schools faced increasing blame for the perceived moral decadence of the nation’s youth. This approach would change rapidly during the 1960s and into the 1980s, when the work of several important individuals in the field of character education began to surface. Louis E. Raths, Merrill Harmin, and Sydney B. Simon popularized the values clarification approach to character education in their work, *Values and Teaching* (1966). This approach was widely popular and focused on moral instruction through individual exploration in order to learn the process of valuing. Later, Lawrence Kohlberg and his work on moral development would gain some momentum as a valid method to address character education needs. His theory on the stages of moral development

most notably contributed to the character approaches of moral reasoning, while also playing a key role in providing character education that was age appropriate. Although the effectiveness of these approaches was scrutinized by many parents, religious groups, scholars, and educators, they still played an important role in the rise of contemporary character education that surfaced in the late 1980s and early 1990s.

During the end of the 20th century, many educators began advocating for a return to character education that was not deemed as morally relativistic as the values clarification approach. The work of Thomas Lickona, Kevin Ryan, William Bennett, and Edward Wynne, just to name a few, began calling for a return to true character education. They claimed that the current state of character education was ineffective and cited many examples of increasing school violence, dropout rates, teenage pregnancies, and low voter turnouts of young people. As Benninga & Wynne (1998) noted, “we want them to stop killing and abusing themselves and one another at record rates” (p. 439). The answer offered by many character education advocates was providing instruction to students about a common set of generally agreed upon moral values. William Bennett (1991) stated that “if we want our children to possess the traits of character we most admire, we need to teach them what those traits are” (p.133). Including specific character traits to be valued, such as honesty, respect, hard-work, caring, etc., would prove to be an influential and critical aspect of future character education programs. Interestingly enough, the inclusion of specific character traits into character education programs became so popular that federal and state legislatures began passing laws mandating these morals.

## Mandating Morals

Over the past twenty years, support for character education programs in public schools has grown tremendously. In fact, “since 1993, 23 of the U.S. states have either passed new legislation related to character education or revisited existing legislation addressing moral education” (Glanzer & Milson, 2006, p. 525). This unprecedented wave of legislative mandates clearly demonstrated the growing importance of character education in public schools. The Character Education Partnership (CEP) extended the prevalence of character education in schools by noting that the “combined number of states that are recipients of federal character education grants and states that either require or encourage character education through legislation is 40” (Character Education Partnership, 2005). In the era of high stakes testing and the No Child Left Behind Act, teachers and schools are facing extraordinary accountability measures to produce results, normally in the form of increased standardized test scores. Bearing all of the accountability rhetoric in mind, many states are “mandating morals” by clearly identifying a predetermined list of values that all students should exhibit in our society.

Florida was one of several states that mandated not only character education, but also the specific values to be emphasized in schools. The statute was first authorized in 1998 to include instruction in character education at the elementary schools. Later in 2002, the bill was amended to include all schools in the state, K-12. In addition, this amended bill called for the development of a character education curriculum that “shall stress the qualities of patriotism, responsibility, citizenship, kindness, respect, honesty, self-control, tolerance, and cooperation” (Florida Legislature Senate Bill 20E, 2002). The listing of specific virtues to be taught in character education programs was a trend that several states would follow. Glanzer and Milson conducted

a study of education laws regarding character education in the U.S. and found that “twenty of the 23 states included a list of what specific character qualities or virtues children should be taught” (Glanzer & Milson, 2006, p. 536). While listing specific virtues was not all together surprising, it does however, demonstrate that legislative reforms were seriously considering the implications and recommendations of the contemporary character education reform movement. However, in the era of accountability, it will not be long before legislatures begin demanding evidence supporting the presence and outcomes of character education programs. With that in mind, it is important to consider what exactly makes a character education program effective.

### What makes a Character Education Program Effective?

The effectiveness of character education programs relies on several key components and factors. The Character Education Partnership (CEP) is widely regarded as one of the leading professional organizations dedicated to the character education movement. The goal of this organization is to develop “moral character and civic virtue in our nation’s youth as one means of promoting a more compassionate and responsible society” (CEP, 2005). Among many other things, the CEP also calls for character education programs to be comprehensive in nature. This type of character education program recognizes that several factors contribute to the development of good character and that schools must do everything in their power to address the individual and social dimensions of character development. The Character Education Partnership outlines their idea of an effective character education program in its *Eleven Principles of Effective Character Education* (2010). These eleven principles claim that a truly effective character education program should maintain the following initiatives:



1. The school community promotes core ethical and performance values as the foundation of good character.
2. The school defines “character” comprehensively to include thinking, feeling, and doing.
3. The school uses a comprehensive, intentional, and proactive approach to character development.
4. The school creates a caring community.
5. The school provides students with opportunities for moral action.
6. The school offers a meaningful and challenging academic curriculum that respects all learners, develops their character, and helps them to succeed.
7. The school fosters students’ self-motivation.
8. The school staff is an ethical learning community that shares responsibility for character education and adheres to the same core values that guide the students.
9. The school fosters shared leadership and long-range support of the character education initiative.
10. The school engages families and community members as partners in the character-building effort.
11. The school regularly assesses its culture and climate, the functioning of its staff as character educators, and the extent to which its students manifest good character.

(p.2-22)

The importance of how character education programs are assessed as being effective should not be lost on teachers during the current educational climate which is dominated by talks of accountability. As funding and support for character education continues to grow, so too will

the pressure on teachers to produce results. Many research studies have been conducted over the years discussing how teachers feel about character education and how well prepared they feel to address moral topics. However, most of these studies are conducted at the elementary level, analyzing their perceptions of character education and sometimes comparing those to secondary teachers. The purpose of this study was to examine the differences, if any, between personal teaching efficacy (PTE) and general teaching efficacy (GTE) towards character education among secondary pre-service teachers in the fields of social studies, mathematics, science, and language arts.

### Importance of the Pre-Service Perspective

Although character education remains one of the most popular and extensive areas of research in the field of education, there remains a surprising lack of research on the attitudes of secondary pre-service teachers. Mahlios and Maxon (1995) discussed how the attitudes and beliefs of teachers developed during their pre-service experience directly impacted their feelings towards students, themselves, and their instructional practice. Goodlad (1990) also noted how “Teacher-preparing institutions and teacher educators carry a heavy responsibility for the educational and professional socialization of teachers who will come to possess the necessary awareness and commitment” (p. 30). While support for the inclusion of character education training in pre-service programs continues to grow, there is little evidence that teacher education programs are actually pursuing the task (Center for the Advancement of Ethics and Character [CAEC], 1999; Jones, Ryan, & Bohlin, 1998). Marvin Berkowitz, the Co-Director of the Center for Character and Citizenship, also believed that there are scarce training opportunities in the area of character education, “particularly at the pre-service level” (Berkowitz, 1998, p. 5). In

addition, a nationwide survey conducted by Jones, Ryan, and Brolin (1998) determined that there was a significant gap between the expectations placed on teachers to be character educators and the education they actually received in their programs. Milson (1999) echoed these findings and stated that “teacher education programs are not currently training teachers adequately to function as character educators” (p. 44). DeRoche and Williams (1998) went so far as to claim that “both university-based pre-service teacher education and in-service staff development have all but ignored character education in recent decades” (p. xii).

This study focused on the different experiences and attitudes that secondary pre-service teachers have with regards to character education training based on their subject area (social studies, math, science, and language arts). Many studies have indicated that secondary teachers have a lower sense of efficacy when teaching character education than elementary teachers do when engaging in the same task. However, simply taking all secondary pre-service teachers as a whole disregards the individual differences that might exist between subject area programs and how each prepares pre-service teachers for the task of being character educators. Since some subject areas, such as social studies and language arts, have a tendency to directly tie in the goals of character education into their content area instruction, it may be found that these pre-service teachers have a different sense of personal teaching efficacy (PTE) or general teaching efficacy (GTE) towards character education than their mathematics or science counterparts. The goal of this study was to determine if there was a significant difference in PTE and GTE towards character education among secondary pre-service teachers in social studies, mathematics, science, and language arts.

## Teacher Efficacy and Character Education

The concept of teacher efficacy was developed from the work of Albert Bandura (1977) and his theory of self efficacy. Milson (2003) defined the concept of self efficacy as “an individual’s belief in his or her ability to act in a manner that will produce desired outcomes. This involves one’s sense of competence in a given situation” (p. 94). The application of Bandura’s theory of self efficacy to the field of education gave rise to the study of teacher efficacy. Gibson and Dembo (1984) identified personal teacher efficacy (PTE) and general teacher efficacy (GTE) as the two constructs that composed a teachers’ sense of efficacy. Personal teacher efficacy deals with a teacher’s internal beliefs regarding their own knowledge, confidence, and abilities as a teacher. General teacher efficacy refers more to a teacher’s belief about “the degree to which the environment can be controlled, that is, the extent to which students can be taught given such factors as family, background, IQ, and school conditions” (Gibson & Dembo, 1984, p. 570). These dual constructs combined to form a teacher’s beliefs about how successful they can be at a task given their own abilities and the external factors that influence classroom learning. Milson (2003) noted how “teacher efficacy has been found to affect student achievement, student motivation, and a student’s own sense of efficacy” (p. 98).

Teacher efficacy has a clear connection to the expanding field of character education in public schools. As states continue to mandate character education as part of the curriculum, it is vital that teachers feel confident in their ability to provide meaningful instruction. Lickona (1993) discussed how “teachers typically receive almost no pre-service or in-service training in the moral aspects of their craft. Many teachers do not feel comfortable in the values domain” (p. 11). Milson (2003) also commented on the connection between character education and teacher

efficacy when he stated “the construct of teacher efficacy has clear relevance for character education. For character education to be effective, a teacher must believe in his or her own ability to build the character of students, as well as the ability of teachers in general to overcome negative influences from outside the classroom” (p. 93).

### Purpose

This study of secondary pre-service teachers’ was designed to determine if pre-service teachers from different content area disciplines (social studies, mathematics, science, and language arts) have a similar or different sense of efficacy in the field of character education. It is important to know about personal and general teaching efficacy beliefs of secondary pre-service teachers towards character education because they will be called upon to address this topic as part of their future profession. Also, since comprehensive character education programs are proven to be the most effective, all teachers must share the responsibility of educating students in the moral domain. Meaning, content area teachers cannot simply pawn off the responsibility of character education and focus solely on their subject matter. Rather, teachers in all fields must begin learning how to address character development both implicitly and explicitly in their classrooms. For this reason, pre-service teachers will be placed into groups based on their primary degree certificate/major (math, science, social studies, and language arts) in order to determine if a significant difference exists in personal teaching efficacy (PTE) or general teaching efficacy (GTE) for character education.

## Significance of the Study

Although there are several studies focusing on character education in schools, there is still a strong rationale for continued research efforts in this field. Any research conducted at schools or about schools quickly recognizes that these institutions are charged with achieving much more than is explicitly listed in course syllabi or mission statements. The function of education in this democratic republic is to promote the academic and moral development of future citizens. While the support of character education programs continues to grow, in theory, this support is often not backed up in reality. Pre-service teachers continue to miss out on how to instruct for character education in teacher preparation programs all over the country. If character education is a legitimate and significant aspect of their future careers, then teacher preparation programs owe it to the students to include direct character education instruction into their curricula. This study of secondary pre-service teachers was designed to offer valuable insight into how well prepared a group of pre-service secondary content area teachers feel to instruct in the moral domain of character education. The findings are significant to designers of teacher preparation programs, methods instructors, school administrators, and character education advocates because it provided information regarding the efficacy beliefs of secondary pre-service teachers in language arts, science, social studies, and mathematics; as well as information addressing the presence of character education topics in a teacher preparation program at a large university in Florida.

This study also added to the wealth of literature in the field of character education by exposing how secondary pre-service teachers in different content areas feel about their responsibilities towards character education. Since an effective character education program

should be comprehensive amongst the entire school staff, it remains important to know how future teachers in the disciplines of social studies, mathematics, science, and language arts feel towards the task of character education. Results could influence current school administrators to offer professional development opportunities to teachers from one of the studied disciplines in order to foster additional support to content specialist that may be struggling to find where and how character education fits into their curriculum. The goal of this study was not to determine an ideal approach to character education training into the core content areas; rather, this study was designed to reveal the differences, if any, between pre-service secondary math, language arts, science, and social studies teachers' sense of efficacy in the field of character education.

### Research Questions

1. Is there a statistically significant difference in pre-service secondary teachers', in the fields of social studies, mathematics, science, and language arts, sense of personal teaching efficacy (PTE) and general teaching efficacy (GTE) for teaching character education?
2. Is there a statistically significant difference in pre-service secondary teachers' sense of personal teaching efficacy (PTE) and general teaching efficacy (GTE) based on gender?
3. Is there a statistically significant difference in pre-service secondary teachers' sense of personal teaching efficacy (PTE) and general teaching efficacy (GTE) based on race/ethnicity?
4. Is there a statistically significant difference in pre-service secondary teachers' sense of personal teaching efficacy (PTE) and general teaching efficacy (GTE) based on coursework in character education?

### Null Hypotheses

1. There is no difference in secondary pre-service teachers' sense of personal teaching efficacy (PTE) and secondary pre-service teachers' sense of general teaching efficacy (GTE) for teaching character education in the fields of social studies, mathematics, science, and language arts.
2. There is no difference in per-service secondary teachers' sense of personal teaching efficacy (PTE) and general teaching efficacy (GTE) based on gender.
3. There is no difference in per-service secondary teachers' sense of personal teaching efficacy (PTE) and general teaching efficacy (GTE) based on race/ethnicity.
4. There is no difference in per-service secondary teachers' sense of personal teaching efficacy (PTE) and general teaching efficacy (GTE) based on coursework in character education.

### Study Assumptions

This study involved a survey of pre-service secondary (6-12) teachers in the fields of social studies, mathematics, science, and language arts to determine their personal teaching efficacy (PTE) and general teaching efficacy (GTE) for character education. Participants in this study have completed all of their designated coursework and are about to begin their final internship/student teaching experience for graduation. As this study was conducted at one of the largest universities in the country, it was assumed that participants' prior education and background in character education was quite different. However, since all participants' are students in the same department (Teaching and Learning Principles) it was assumed that they have been exposed to the basics of character education through their required coursework, which



states that one of the undergraduate education objectives was to “enhance preparation of students in the areas of classroom management, assessment, and preparation for teaching in urban, metropolitan and rural settings” (UCF College of Education Strategic Plan, 2004-2009, p. 4). Also, since this college was in the state of Florida, where character education was mandated as part of the public school curriculum, it was assumed that the coursework of undergraduate teachers in this state addressed this topic in some capacity.

The participants in this study completed the Character Education Efficacy Belief Instrument (CEEBI), which was a questionnaire that provided data regarding pre-service secondary teachers’ PTE and GTE for the task of character education. Since completion of this study was voluntary and the participants were anonymous, the study further assumes that participants answered the questions honestly.

#### Limitations of Study

1. This questionnaire went out to secondary pre-service social studies, mathematics, science, and language arts majors at one university in the state of Florida. Therefore, results of this study may not be generalizable to pre-service teachers outside of this program. Also, since this school is one of the top ten largest institutions in the country in terms of student population, the results may not be generalizable to smaller colleges or universities that boast smaller class sizes and programs.
2. This study focused only on pre-service secondary content area teachers in the fields of social studies, mathematics, language arts, and science, thereby excluding other important future school personnel including foreign language, exceptional education, physical education, art, music, and teachers of other elective courses offered in secondary schools.

3. Since character education is a rather broad term, encompassing several different meanings and definitions, each participant in the study may have a slightly different interpretation of character education. Without a uniform definition of character education, the pre-service teachers will be responding to the character education questions based on their own unique experiences with this topic.

### Definition of Terms

*Character-* “Refers to the emotional, intellectual, and moral qualities of a person or group as well as the demonstration of these virtues in pro-social behavior and moral life” (U.S. Department of Education’s Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools, 2004).

*Character Education-* “the intentional intervention to promote the formation of any or all aspects of moral functioning of individuals” (Berkowitz, 1998, p. 3).

*Moral-* of or pertaining to conduct or character from the point of right and wrong; teaching a conception of right behavior (Webster’s Dictionary and Thesaurus, 1997).

*Moral Education-* “the conscious attempt to help others acquire knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values that contribute to more personally satisfying and socially constructive lives” (Kirschenbaum, 1995, p.14)

*Values-* successful social concepts held in general high regard, which are derived from pragmatic usefulness over time (Webster’s Dictionary and Thesaurus, 1997).

*Perception-* The complex processes by which people select, organize, and interpret sensory stimulation into a meaningful and coherent picture of the world (Berelson & Steiner, 1964).

*Personal Teaching Efficacy (PTE)*- the belief that a teacher holds about his or her own teaching effectiveness (Bandura, 1986).

*General Teaching Efficacy (GTE)*- a teacher's general belief about the nature of teaching and its effectiveness to produce results regardless of outside circumstances (Bandura, 1986).

*Pre-service Teacher*- For the purpose of this study, the researcher defines a pre-service teacher as a student in a teacher preparation program who has completed their general education requirements and has either completed or is participating in the methods course of their designated subject area.

*Teaching Major*- the primary area of degree certification or declared major. For this study, the categories were math, science, social studies, and language arts.

*Race/Ethnicity*- a subset of a population distinguished by having a common heritage (language, customs, history, etc.) (Jordan, Metha, & Webb, 2000). For this study, six categories were included: African American, Asian/Pacific Islander, Caucasian, Hispanic, Native American, and Other (provided with a blank space to explain).

*Gender*- a sexual category; males or females as a group (American Heritage Dictionary, 2001). This section was divided into two categories, male and female.

*Curriculum/Methods course*- an education course focusing on teaching methods and strategies specific to a particular area of specialization (math, science, social studies, language arts, etc..) in education.

*Core Education courses*- common coursework required of all majors in a college of education regardless of primary area of certification or degree.

*Specialization area courses*- upper division courses in one's primary field of certification or specialization (math, science, social studies, language arts, etc..) Typically, these courses are heavily focused on the content relevant to each particular field and are usually offered outside the college of education.

### Organization of this Study

This study was organized into five chapters. The first chapter contains a brief introduction to the topic, purpose of the study, research questions, significance of the study, assumptions of the study, and definition of terms. The second chapter was a thorough review of related literature. Chapter three was a discussion about the methods, procedures, and design of this research study. The fourth chapter presented the findings of the study. Finally, the fifth chapter concluded the study with a discussion regarding the implications of the findings, limitations, and recommendations for future research.

## CHAPTER 2 REVIEW OF LITERATURE

### Introduction

There is certainly no shortage of literature when discussing the topic of character education. Even a cursory glance at the research in this field will reveal a wealth of studies and theories all directed at improving the enterprise of character development in our nation's youth. Part of the reason for this wealth in literature is the long time presence character development has enjoyed as a crucial aspect of education. From the earliest days of the new republic, individuals such as Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, John Adams, Benjamin Franklin, and Benjamin Rush have all noted the importance of educating citizens for participation in a democratic society (Hunter, 2000; Rosenberg, 1996). In fact, the need for educating young people in moral and democratic principles is part of the reason for the formation of free public schools in America during the 19th century (McClellan, 1999).

Over the years, there has been a great deal of change in the field of character education that has caused some confusion regarding the nature of its presence in contemporary K-12 classrooms. One of the most difficult problems to address when discussing character education continues to be the multitude of definitions and terminologies associated with this term. That being said, it would be irresponsible to proceed with a thorough review of literature regarding character education without first exploring the variety of terms and definitions that traditionally operate under the realm of character education.

## Defining Character Education

Historically, the use of terms such as moral education, citizenship education, values education, and character education has been closely intertwined. Indeed, throughout this paper the reader will easily notice my own use of these words in an interchangeable fashion. To be sure, there are marked differences between all of the aforementioned terms, but each of them has been commonly used at various times throughout U.S. history to identify approaches to character development of young people. For instance, the Puritans and other early European settlers referred to the training of individuals for participation in society as moral education. Their approach to moral education was based on religious doctrine and children were expected to learn appropriate moral behaviors in order to be a productive and righteous member of the community. Moral education through religious studies was considered the best method for training future citizens in the U.S. well into the 19th century (McClellan, 1999; McKnight, 2003). However, the arrival of many new immigrant groups caused the traditional religious based moral training in schools to become obsolete, mainly because these various groups did not share the same morals and religious beliefs as the Christian dominated schools. Having different cultures, values, and beliefs, the new immigrant groups pushed for the separation of church and state in schools so that their children would not have to face the indoctrination of beliefs which they did not hold.

Citizenship education refers to the enterprise of developing knowledge, values, and skills in youth for purposes of carrying out the rights and duties incumbent upon individuals in their relations within a society (Quigley & Bahmueller, 1991). Preparing students for active and productive civic engagement has been one of the traditional goals of schools, especially after the formation of our democratic republic and during periods of increasing social problems and

immigration. The role of schools in this process was to instill in students a sense of civic virtue that would encourage them to develop habits that were conducive to the well being of society, while also promoting a strong sense of patriotism and other fundamental principles of American constitutional democracy.

Values education generally refers to the shift in moral instruction created during the tumultuous 1960s. During the height of the civil rights movement, character educators began contributing new research and theories about the practice of teaching values and morals. Values clarification was the major approach championed by Rath, Harmin, & Simon in their work titled, *Values and teaching*, (1966). The values clarification camp believed that transmitting values required more than simple student obedience and recognition of terms. They thought that discussion of value conflicts as witnessed in everyday life was the key to helping students understand the true meaning of values. The values clarification approach also requires the teacher to be non-judgmental of student's values choices, focusing most of their attention on posing guided questions to help students analyze their own values decisions. This method would be the topic of much controversy and debate among many contemporary character education advocates, as they primarily believed in a universal set of values that should be directly transmitted, not open to discussion or debate.

Character education has been defined in a plethora of ways since it's reemergence in the late 1980's and early 1990's. Several popular educators and organizations have provided definitions of character education over the years. Some of the influential figures in the contemporary character education movement include the likes of Edward Wynne, Thomas Lickona, Kevin Ryan, James Leming, and Marvin Berkowitz, just to name a few. Each of the

aforementioned educators has written extensively on the topic of character education since the early 1990's and all have created varying definitions of character education. Also, there are other researchers in the field of character education that have difficulty accepting the definitions and views presented by many of the advocates for contemporary character education. Educators such as Alan Lockwood, Alfie Kohn, and Alex Molnar, just to name a few, have all offered challenges, criticisms, and alternative definitions to the field of character education. Since there remains a great deal of debate over definitions provided by individuals on both sides of the contemporary character education movement, I will briefly discuss definitions offered by federal and state governments and national organizations. This will be done not to discredit any of the well written definitions offered by the abovementioned educators. Rather, the terms briefly addressed below will focus on the definitions of character education provided by popular government programs and agencies because their terminology informs much of the general public about the focus of contemporary character education.

The United States Department of Education Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools released a brochure in 2006 entitled, "Character Education....our shared responsibility." This brochure defined character education in the following way:

Character education is a learning process that enables students and adults in a school community to understand, care about, and act on core ethical values such as respect, justice, civic virtue, and citizenship, and responsibility for self and others. Upon such core values, we form the attitudes and actions that are the hallmark of safe, healthy and informed communities that serve as the foundation of our society (U.S. Department of Education's Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools, 2006, p. 1).

In addition, the Character Education Partnership (CEP), a nonpartisan coalition of organizations and individuals dedicated to the moral development of our nation's youth, defines



character education as the process of teaching students to know about, care about, and act upon core ethical values such as fairness, honesty, compassion, responsibility, and respect for self and others (Character Education Partnership, 1997).

### Historical Overview of Character Education

As the variety of definitions and terms associated with character education indicate, the history of this field enjoys a long and, at times, tumultuous place in society. Covering the history of character education in great detail would be a gratuitous and daunting task for this research study. Instead, a brief overview of this history will be provided for the purpose of revealing the tradition and evolution of character education in schools. For a complete and detailed reading on the history of character education, please refer to B. Edward McClellan's *Moral Education in America: Schools and the Shaping of Character from Colonial times to the Present* (1999).

From the earliest days of European settlement in America, there has always been a concern for the moral development of children. Puritans, Quakers, and other early settlers all expressed a unique interest in the moral development of not only their children, but all children residing in the community. Parents were the primary people responsible for the moral training of their children, with formal schools and churches playing a rather minimal role in this task. However, once communities and colonies became more secure and stable in their new environment, some schools did begin to surface. These early schools were funded by the community and typically featured a female teacher, since females were thought to be better models of virtuous behavior during this era. Surprisingly, requirements for original teachers in these schools had very little to do with the teachers intelligence, and everything to do with the teachers character. This standard would prove to be critical in the field of education, as teachers

would continually be looked to as “moral models” for their students well into the 20th century, and arguably, still to this day.

Following the revolutionary war, the new United States of America began to develop a vision for a national public school system to educate future citizens. Although there were many men who wrote about their vision of the function education should play in the new democratic republic, such men as Benjamin Franklin, James Madison, John Adams, and Thomas Jefferson all were particularly passionate about the role of moral education in schools (Hunter, 2000; Rosenberg, 1996). While many colonists still wanted the focus of education to be on religious teachings, men like Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Jefferson envisioned a slightly more secular experience in schools. However, while these two men did propose an education system built around practical education instead of religious scriptures, both men did recognize the importance of moral development in schools. Franklin discussed how reading material for children should “contain some useful instruction, whereby the understandings or morals of the youth may at the same time be improved” (Franklin, 1974, p. 501). Jefferson also believed that the drive for increased moral reasoning was a better goal for education than the direct indoctrination of values (Spring, 1990). However, Jefferson would go on to say that students not responding to this form of instruction should certainly be “trained in the habits of right and wrong” (Heslop, 1969, p. 79).

Although many of the aforementioned men did a great deal too initiate the discussion on public education in America, the person most generally associated with this development would be Horace Mann. Mann has been referred to as the “father of public schools in America” and one of the earliest champions of universal public schools. Mann viewed moral education in the schools not as an aspect of the curriculum, but the foundation upon which all other knowledge

would be obtained. “Moral education is a primal necessity of social existence. The unrestrained passions of men are not only homicidal, but suicidal, and a community without a conscience would soon extinguish itself” (Mann, 1969, p. 201). Much like Thomas Jefferson, Horace Mann firmly believed that if the newly formed democracy was going to succeed, then citizens would surely have to be educated in both civic and moral principles on their path to self enlightenment. Mann directly expressed this belief by writing how “our institutions demand men, in whose hearts, great thoughts and great deeds are native, spontaneous and irrepulsive” (Mann, 1838, p. 14).

While many of the earliest public schools were not based entirely on religious teachings and principles, they certainly were not devoid of this presence altogether. Bible readings in classrooms were quite common into the early 20th century. Popular textbooks of this era, like the *McGuffey Readers* and the *New England Primer*, sought to directly teach lessons in morality to students. Although the *McGuffey Readers* were far less religious based than the *New England Primer*; both of these materials addressed the critical field of education in the moral domain. These lessons were expected to be accepted completely and not open to any form of discussion, debate, or analysis. The overarching belief of the time was that children needed to learn how to behave in order for good habits and morals to develop. However, as the population and diversity of the U.S. continued to grow during the late 19th and early 20th centuries, so too did the controversy surrounding the place of teaching morality through religion. New immigrant groups arriving to America did not always share the same religious beliefs as the schools in their communities, causing many families to seek a curriculum more accommodating to their personal beliefs and values. As states and local school systems adjusted to meet the needs of a new and

diverse population, the restructuring of moral instruction without the presence of religion would be the task of the 20th century.

The early 20th century witnessed a gradual shift away from moral education based on religious teachings. In its place, schools and educators began to emphasize democratic principles, an effort commonly referred to as citizenship education. It was generally believed that democratic instruction could adequately fill the void of moral instruction through religious beliefs because many of these principles were essentially the same. For instance, both democratic and religious beliefs expressed the importance of traits such as honesty, trustworthiness, caring, responsibility etc... Although many educators lobbied for a return to traditional moral instruction, schools had already begun to transition into a new era of moral training. This era, consisting of the 1930's-1960's, saw a decrease in moral training and an increase in the indoctrination of democratic beliefs. The events of WWII and the Cold War caused the U.S. education system to place a new emphasis on the importance of patriotism and the celebration of democracy. McClellan discussed how the years leading up to the Cold War viewed education as a "moral contest in which the values of democracy and decency were arrayed against the forces of authoritarianism and evil, and classrooms were expected to play an important role in the battle" (McClellan, 1999, p. 71). Schools were expected to promote love for America, its institutions, ideals, and form of government. This increased nationalism added superfluous fuel to the frantic paranoia of the Cold War, a time when character education was focused on teaching the evils of communism rather than addressing the moral development of youth. However, key court rulings and events during the 1960's would lead to a renewed attention to the field of character and moral education.

In 1962 and 1963, the Supreme Court made three very influential rulings that would dramatically change the field of character education. *Engel v. Vitale* (1962) was the first of the Supreme Court decisions and involved the forbidding of school prayer (Jeynes, 2010, p. 206). *Murray v. Curlett* (1963) expanded the effects of the aforementioned ruling by not only prohibiting school prayer and Bible readings, but also causing so much fear of lawsuits that schools began to drop the whole enterprise of character education (Murray, 1982). In the final of these three influential cases, the Supreme Court decided to disallow school prayer at the beginning of the school day in *Abington v. Schempp* (1963). These court decisions carried immense ramifications because schools suddenly had to cut religion from the moral instruction of students. Since morality and religion shared a long and storied past in U.S. classrooms, schools were left with the responsibility of character education without any real method for this endeavor.

Fortunately, or, unfortunately according to many character education advocates, the work of some prominent educational psychologists and professionals was on the rise in the 1960's. In 1966, Louis E. Raths, Merrill Harmin, and Sydney B. Simon published their book entitled, *Values and Teaching* (1966). This volume of work enjoyed a quick rise to popularity in public schools, then an equally quick demise. The premise of this instructional method was values clarification. On the surface, values clarification seemed to be the perfect solution for character education at the time because it was devoid of any religious influences and encouraged students to formulate their own values through analysis and reflection. However, this method was met with sharp opposition from character education professionals because values clarification assumed that all students were inherently "good" and that these morals would be revealed during well planned scenarios and exercises. These opponents consistently questioned how this method

would account for negative values that may be justified by students during this process, such as lying, cheating, abuse of power, etc... Many of these claims were warranted and proponents of the values clarification model had difficulty addressing some of the fundamental flaws of this theory. Nevertheless, this method opened the doorway for new approaches to character education, most notably, moral reasoning.

Similarly to values clarification, Lawrence Kohlberg's theory on moral reasoning and advocacy for moral development in character education came under significant attacks throughout the 1970's and into the early 1990's. One of the major concerns for many educators was that Kohlberg's original theory was developed on research that studied only male students. The feminist approach to character education spawned out of this issue, citing that girls consistently reasoned at lower levels of Kohlberg's stages. Feminist approach advocates claimed that his theories and stages could not be generalized to females, and thus weakened the overall legitimacy of the moral development approach. Also, much like the values clarification approach, moral development was criticized for contradicting its stated goal of being non-indoctrinative. McClellan (1999) addresses Kohlberg's contradictions by discussing how, "his definition of stages and his assumption that higher stages were better than lower stages revealed a clear commitment to a principle of justice" (p. 85). Eventually, Kohlberg would modify some of his original positions regarding the nature of indoctrination and moral education by distinguishing between moral principles and rules. He believed that conventional moral education focused on a series of rules to shape behavior, while moral principles acted as universal guides for making moral decisions (Kohlberg, 1975, p. 50). Although Kohlberg continued to rework his moral development approach over the years to answer his critics, the method itself was never widely implemented by school teachers. However, unlike the values

clarification process, Kohlberg's approach to moral education has not disappeared from the popular discourse of contemporary character education and his ideas are still a driving force in the development of new character education theories (Lockwood, 2009).

### Social Issues Contributing to the Rise of Character Education in Schools

While character education continued to be a topic of conversation in the overall field of education, its importance certainly dwindled during the 1960's into the 1990's. During this time period, several social and academic developments began to occur that troubled society. Statistics and relevant news stories regarding the decadent behaviors of youths were routinely used as beacons for advocates of the character education movement, a practice still used by present day advocates. For instance, Edward Wynne and Thomas Lickona, two of the most influential writers of the contemporary character education movement, frequently attributed moral decay of the 1980's and 1990's to the lack of character education in schools. Wynne discussed the dramatic increase in divorce rates, single parent families, teenage pregnancies, murders, suicides, violent crimes, drug abuse, etc., to build a rationale for a return to character education. This sentiment was echoed in the work of Benninga and Wynne (1998) when they plainly stated that they wanted students to "stop killing and abusing themselves and one another at record rates" (p. 439-440). One survey of school-children in 1990 revealed that most students relied on trial-and-error in making moral decisions, and most of these decisions relied heavily upon self-interest (Cole & Genevie, 1990). In addition, Jeynes (2010) believed that school shootings played a major role in renewing society's interest in character education. Jeynes discussed how prior to the 1980's and 1990's, school shootings tended only to take place in urban settings. Since many Americans associated urban areas with crime, violence, and poverty, these school shooting stories were not

always seen as a worthy component of national news coverage. However, as school shootings slowly began spreading to rural and suburban areas, the media and society began to take a national interest in these events. Take for example the tragic school shootings at Columbine High School in 1999 and Virginia Tech in 2007. These senseless acts of intense violence and murder left many citizens concerned about the character development of young people and the future of our democratic republic.

Naturally, character education advocates do not claim that the reemergence of moral instruction will bring an end to acts of violence in schools or deviant behaviors in students. Nearly all advocates of contemporary character education recognize and acknowledge the social, political, and economic influences outside of the schools control that contributed to the perceived breaking down of morality in America. Contemporary character education was a movement birthed from social problems in which parents, educators, and government leaders all sought a logical solution to, what they considered to be, a lack of character development and morality in contemporary students. In response to these widespread concerns, contemporary character education advocates launched a massive renewal of character education in public schools during the 1990's, the likes of which our society has never seen. The following section will discuss a brief overview of contemporary character education, how it came to pass, and the effect it continues to have on the development of character education initiatives into the 21st century.

### Contemporary Character Education

The arrival of the contemporary education movement can trace its origins back to a number of important events, developments, and changes in the United States over the past 30 years. Vessels (1998) writes, "Character education regained momentum during the 1980s and



1990s because many parents, educators, and other concern citizens from various subcultures and regions of the country saw the need for prevention programs that would counter the tide of moral decline” (p. 5). If there was one thing that advocates for the return to character education learned from the values clarification era, it was that teachers could not instruct children in character development by treating them like fully mature adults. Lickona (1991) addressed this problem with values clarification when stating, “In the end, values clarification made the mistake of treating kids like grown-ups who only needed to clarify values that were already sound. It forgot that children, and a lot of adults who are still moral children, need a good deal of help in developing sound values in the first place” (p.11). The absence of these “sound values” as Lickona phrased it, led many character educators to begin focusing on a certain set of universal character traits that could guide character education across America. This task would prove to be difficult due to the tremendous amount of political, social, economic, religious, and racial diversity that can be found in America. However, at the Aspen Summit Conference on character education in 1992, a group of dedicated educators came together in order to undertake the task of reshaping character education. This conference was organized by philanthropist Michael Josephson in an effort to coordinate a clear set of goals and a unified approach to character education. Numerous educators attended this conference from a variety of fields ranging from educational psychologists to superintendents of school boards. Notably, important researchers from the field of character education in attendance at this conference included Thomas Lickona, Kevin Ryan, and Marvin Berkowitz. The end result of this conference would be the production of a new character education program built around “the six pillars of character: trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, justice, caring, and civic virtue” (Barnhill, 1995, p. 19). The six pillars of character would be adopted by the Josephson Institute to create the Character Counts! program.

The organization states that the six pillars are “ethical values that most people agree on, not politically, religiously, or culturally biased” (Character Counts! website). The Character Counts! program has consistently increased in popularity over the years and continues to be one of the most utilized programs in the field of character education.

The implications of the Aspen Summit Conference and the subsequent Character Counts! program were tremendous for advancing the cause of character education on a national scale. Perhaps the most influential aspect of this conference and the Character Counts! program was the inclusion of a specific set of character traits that should be taught to students. While many character education advocates and researchers had previously discussed the importance of “universal values,” Character Counts! was one of the first approaches to contemporary character education that utilized these universal values as the foundation for their program. Former Secretary of Education and advocate for the return of character education, William Bennett, discussed the need for directly teaching character traits when stating, “if we want our children to possess the traits of character we most admire, we need to teach them what those traits are” (1991, p.133). While the emphasis on specific character traits continued to evolve as a focal point for the contemporary character education movement, the election of President Bill Clinton in 1992 proved to be another turning moment for character education.

A brief look into the Presidency of Bill Clinton can easily show the former chief executives affinity for character education. President Clinton’s emphasis on character education in schools can be viewed in several different ways. For instance, one could interpret Clinton’s importance on character education as a true concern which he felt as a moral individual, or a skillful political move by focusing his public agenda on issues of major concern to the public.

However one chooses to view the intentions of President Clinton in the field of character education, it was clear that character education was on the rise as a topic of national interest. During President Clinton's administration, he hosted five conferences on character education and specifically referenced the importance of character education in his state of the union address in 1996.

By 1993, one year after the Aspen Summit Conference and into the term of President Clinton, the Character Education Partnership (CEP) was formed. The Character Education Partnership would become one of the leading national organizations for contemporary character education because it advocated for a comprehensive approach to character education. The CEP mission statement discusses how this organization was formed as a "nonpartisan coalition of organizations and individuals dedicated to developing moral character and civic virtue in our nation's youth as one means of promoting a more compassionate and responsible society" (CEP, 2005). Essentially, the goal of the CEP was to create, sponsor, and advocate for quality resources, programs, and initiatives in the expanding field of character education. While the CEP did contribute a great deal to the widespread knowledge and availability of contemporary character education, the most substantial contributions would come the following year, in 1994, from the federal government.

The Partnership in Character Education Pilot Projects were authorized by Congress in 1994 in order to provide annual grants to state education agencies in partnership with one or more local educational agencies. Under this program, the Secretary of Education could distribute up to 10 grants each year. These grants were issued with the requirement that grantees implement projects that specifically incorporate character elements: caring, civic virtue and citizenship,

justice and fairness, respect, responsibility, and trustworthiness (U.S. Department of Education's Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools, 2004). The primary function of this program was to provide actual funding to begin the process of implementing character education programs in several states. Never wanting to miss out on any opportunities to receive additional funding, several states began taking action on character education initiatives. A study of state legislation passed in contemporary character education was conducted by Glanzer and Milson (2006). In this study, the researchers analyzed and evaluated current legislative trends across all 50 states in the field of character education. This study found that 26 states had some form of legislation directly addressing character education. However, of these 26 states, 23 of them "had passed or substantially modified legislation related to character education between 1993 and 2004" (Glanzer & Milson, 2006, p. 536). The sudden increase in mandated character education clearly shows that this topic was a priority throughout society, from local communities to the executive office; character education was slowly working its way back into public schools.

Despite a great deal of growth and support for character education during the late 1990s, there continued to be some concern about the effectiveness of character education to positively impact students behavior. In 1999, the tragic school shootings at Columbine High School harshly reminded the public that, although progress had been made, much still needed to be done. The election of President Bush and the subsequent passing of the No Child Left Behind Act (2001) worked to increase federal funding for character education initiatives. This increase in funding contributed to the revision and expansion of numerous state mandated character education programs. The NCLB Act was particularly useful in expanding required character education programs from K-5, to K-12. In addition, the NCLB Act continued the practice of listing specific character traits to be addressed in character education programs. Inclusion of specific traits

would prove to be influential by setting an informal standard that many states would follow when passing future mandates on character education, For instance, the state of Florida passed its first piece of state legislation requiring mandatory character education in 1999. This bill authorized character education instruction in elementary schools. In 2002, Senate bill 20E was passed which required there to be a character development program in K-12 schools by the 2004-2005 school year. The law (s. 1003.42(2)(q), F.S) stated that “each district school board shall develop or adopt a curriculum for the character development program that shall be submitted to the department for approval. The character development curriculum shall stress the qualities of patriotism, responsibility, citizenship, kindness, respect, honesty, self-control, tolerance, and cooperation” (Griesheimer & Cornett, 2002, p.3). Expanding character development requirements to the secondary level was an interesting twist to character education, mainly because prior to this time most character education programs were focused on the elementary grade levels. This could potentially be one of the reasons why secondary teachers feel less prepared to teach character education than their elementary counterparts (Milson & Mehlig, 2002). With character education expanding and securing a steady place in K-12 classrooms via federal and state legislation during the late 1990s, advocates for character development could now focus their attention on the development of new strategies and theories about how best to engage in the task of character education in elementary, middle, and high school. As a result, an unprecedented amount of research and curriculum materials related to character education teacher preparation and instruction.

## Contemporary Character Education Programs and Materials

The goal and purpose of the government funding these character education initiatives was ultimately to teach students how to be effective decision makers and responsible citizens. By closely relating the goals of character education and citizenship education, advocates for contemporary character education were able to shed many concerns regarding the past precedent of connecting moral instruction to religion. Since the development of good citizens and good people have many overlapping goals and desired character traits, advocates for both character education and citizenship education willingly adopted and supported the interrelated goals of each program. Not surprisingly, increased funding and the demand for character education programs to meet the needs of state mandated character education requirements resulted in a massive outpour of new approaches to the field. While there continues to be great variety in these numerous programs, they all appear to be working towards similar goals of improving student behavior through the teaching of universal values for the purpose of creating democratically responsible citizens. In the following paragraphs, several key organizations and programs dedicated to character development of students will be highlighted to provide an overview of what typical, contemporary character education attempts to accomplish in the classroom.

The Character Training Institute (CTI) was founded in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, as a non-profit organization in 1996. This institute created the *Character First!* program, which was designed around 45 character qualities. Originally, the program was developed and designed for public elementary schools in the local area. However, this program expanded in the spring of 2000 to include a middle school and high school component. Perhaps this organization had some

good foresight into the events that would shortly follow, i.e. NCLB Act (2001) and the required expansion of character education to K-12. The approach to character education advocated by this program includes the following:

Character First is a leadership development program based on character that is delivered many ways—training seminars, books, magazines, curriculum, email—that focus on real-life issues at work, school, home, and the community. Our materials describe good character and talk about the attitudes a person needs in order to improve relationships and make ethical choices. This vocabulary helps colleagues challenge and applaud one another for good character. (Character First! website)

For more detailed information about this organization and program, please visit their website at <http://www.characterfirst.com/>. It may also be worth noting to the reader that the state of Florida character education mandate required that any character development program provided in elementary schools must be similar to the *Character First!* or *Character Counts!* programs.

*Character Counts!* was one of the programs mentioned earlier in this section as a major influence on contemporary character education. This program was launched in 1993, following the conclusions and recommendations of the Aspen Summit Conference on character education a year earlier. Funding and organization of this project was provided by the non-profit and non-partisan Josephson Institute of Ethics, which resides in Marina Del Rey, California. The *Character Counts!* program revolves around the “Six Pillars of Character,” which are trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, and citizenship. This approach to character education provides an educational framework to teach universal values (the Six Pillars) and consists of a large coalition of organizations with a flexible approach to implementation. For more detailed information about this program, please visit their website at <http://josephsoninstitute.org/index.html>.

*The Seattle Social Development Project* began in 1981 to test several strategies for reducing childhood delinquency, drug abuse, and school failure. J. David Hawkins was the principal investigator of this study who utilized a longitudinal study to determine the effects of these interventions over an extended period of time. Participants have been interviewed regularly since 1985 and the focus on positive youth and adult development that drives this project continues to expand. While this project does not exactly relate to the programs previously mentioned, this project continues to be highly respected in the field of character education because of its potential to examine the long term benefits of character education lessons. For more information on this project please visit their website at <http://depts.washington.edu/ssdp/index.html>.

The Character Education Partnership outlines their idea of an effective character education program in its *Eleven Principles of Effective Character Education* (2010). These eleven principles claim that a truly effective character education program should maintain the following list of traits:

1. The school community promotes core ethical and performance values as the foundation of good character.
2. The school defines “character” comprehensively to include thinking, feeling, and doing.
3. The school uses a comprehensive, intentional, and proactive approach to character development.
4. The school creates a caring community.
5. The school provides students with opportunities for moral action.



6. The school offers a meaningful and challenging academic curriculum that respects all learners, develops their character, and helps them to succeed.
7. The school fosters students' self-motivation.
8. The school staff is an ethical learning community that shares responsibility for character education and adheres to the same core values that guide the students.
9. The school fosters shared leadership and long-range support of the character education initiative.
10. The school engages families and community members as partners in the character-building effort.
11. The school regularly assesses its culture and climate, the functioning of its staff as character educators, and the extent to which its students manifest good character.

(p.2-22)

These 11 principles serve as the foundation of the CEP's vision for effective character education programs. Much like the *Character Counts!* approach, *The Eleven Principles of Effective Character Education* provides a myriad of flexible activities and strategies, ranging from classroom activities to staff development, that are all designed to help maximize the benefits of character education. For more information on this project please visit their website at <http://www.character.org/elevenprinciples>.

The growing number of character education programs, methods, and strategies of the contemporary movement could conceivably be one of its greatest strengths, or a major downfall. Extensive variety in content, curriculum, and pedagogy makes it difficult for teachers, school administrators, and policy makers to determine which programs will be the most effective in

achieving the desired outcomes of contemporary character education. Since the Department of Education classifies character education materials as supplemental in scope, they are ineligible for consideration under the state instructional materials adoption process (Griesheimer & Cornett, 2002, p.4). Many of these programs and strategies have research to validate their advocated approaches, but this research should be examined critically for potential biases. As the end of the first decade in the 21st century comes to a close, the outcomes and effectiveness of many contemporary education programs remain a work in progress. However, a brief overview of the positive growth in character education and its programs indicate that society still, for the most part, supports the presence of character education in the classroom. That being said, attention must also be paid to the training and preparation of the teachers that are expected to occupy the all important role of moral educators.

#### Teacher Preparation for Character Education

As a result of the increased attention given to the delinquent behaviors of young people in the 1980's and 1990's, "the American school has increasingly been looked to as the solution to a whole host of social problems, e.g. racism, teen violence, teen pregnancy, low self-esteem, sexually transmitted diseases, drug and alcohol abuse, etc., the agenda of teacher education has become increasingly crowded" (Jones, Ryan, Bohlin, 1998, p. 11). If schools are determined to be the proverbial, "bus driving the change," then classroom teachers would certainly have to be considered the wheels. From the earliest days of teacher training, it was expected that teachers would be responsible for far more than simply academic instruction. One of the earliest founders of teacher preparation in America was Samuel Hall in 1823. Hall founded the Colombian School

at Concord in response to what he perceived as poor teacher training during the time. Hall discussed the seven attributes of an effective teacher as:

First, common sense, the ability to appraise conditions realistically, and through judgment and discrimination to exercise propriety; second, uniformity of temper; third, a capacity to understand and gauge character; fourth, decision of character; pursuit of a uniform course without dissuasion from action he judges correct; fifth, affection for the respect and good will of students; sixth, just, moral discretion; seventh, the necessary literary qualifications: reading, spelling, writing, grammar, arithmetic, geography, and American history (Guttek, 1991, p. 190).

A few years before Hall's school, Emma Willard opened the doors to her famous Troy Female Seminary in order to train young female teachers. This school offered a unique opportunity for a profession during an era when the rights of women were continually suppressed. Since female teachers were very popular and widely preferred throughout the 19th century, a career as a teacher would provide women with more independence and an opportunity to break free from their domestic shackles. However, although women did have some opportunities to study the art of teaching, these institutions and programs were quite limited into the early 20th century.

Through all the changes in character education over the years, there remains to be one constant in this field, the importance of the teacher. Horace Mann was one of the first individuals in the U.S. concerned with the direct and widespread training of teachers. His efforts led to the development of "Normal Schools," which were teacher preparation institutions designed to train future teachers to carry out the mission of the "Common School." In a "Common School," teachers were held accountable not only for teaching academic content, but also for the moral and civic development of their students. The complexity of helping students develop both academically and morally led Horace Mann to believe that "Normal Schools" would be a

necessity in order to properly train teachers to handle the mutual responsibilities of being an academic and moral instructor. These institutions sought to “prepare teachers of high moral character to develop the moral and intellectual sentiments of young people for life in a republican society” (Jones, Ryan, & Bohlin, 1998, p. 12). The “Normal Schools” served as a foundation for present day Colleges of Education in which institutions of higher learning directly concern themselves with the training of future teachers. However, as history has shown, changes in the social, political, and economic landscape change the focus of teacher preparation programs to meet current needs considered to be pressing by contemporary society, politicians, and educators.

The growing importance of character education in the United States throughout the late 1990’s and into the 21<sup>st</sup> century places teacher preparation institutions in a precarious position. Teacher preparation programs are not only responsible for the traditional development of future teachers regarding pedagogy, assessment, and curriculum development; but also for the moral domain of character education. Over half of all U.S. states currently mandate character education in K-12 public schools. This means that universities have an obligation to begin addressing, in an explicit fashion, the development of pre-service teachers as character educators. However, as several research studies have indicated, many universities are not adequately addressing the realm of character education. Milson (2003), discussed the clear discrepancy “between the high expectations placed on teachers by state governments and school districts to serve as character educators and the amount of training they receive for this role” (p. 93). Prominent character educator Marvin Berkowitz also addressed many of the challenges to incorporating character education training into teacher preparation programs in his article, “Obstacles to Teacher Training in Character Education” (1998). In this article, Berkowitz examines several

assumptions about the nature of character education and systematically addresses perceived and practical problems to making character education a viable component of teacher education programs. His findings led to the conclusion that “clearly teacher education has a long way to go toward being an effective and significant contributor to character education” (p. 10). However, some colleges throughout the U.S. have begun to answer the call for an increased presence of character education training in pre-service teacher preparation at the university level. One such program can be found at Simpson College in Redding, California. This program, explained in an article written by Whitmer and Forbes (1997), describes how the college began to directly and purposefully include training in the moral domain. Faculty members at the university received in-service training from character education specialists on how to incorporate character development into their existing course curriculum. In this system, character education was not viewed as an “add-on” to an already full pre-service curriculum. Rather, this training program focused on how character education can be infused into existing school curriculums at the university and K-12 level. Approaching character education training in this fashion allowed pre-service teachers to experience and practice the explicit implementation of values lessons into their specific content areas. While programs like that found at Simpson College show promising signs, these programs are often scarcely found throughout the overall landscape of higher education. A sentiment echoed by Berkowitz (1998) through his extensive character education research when stating “it is very difficult to identify teacher training institutions with a focus in character education” (p. 6).

## Differing Views on Character Education

Although the popularity and presence of the contemporary character education continues to grow every year, there still remain several of those in education and society who are skeptical of this movement. Dissent in this field should not come as a surprise, especially when considering that the two sides (advocates and adversaries) of character education cannot even agree on a definition of the term and what it constitutes. Many opponents argue that the character education movement continues to be based on indoctrination of values and remains preoccupied with controlling student behavior, not developing character. Alan Lockwood has written several articles and books since the 1980's criticizing various components of contemporary character education theory (Lockwood, 1985, 1993, 1996, 1997, 2009). In Lockwood's most recent work *The case for character education: A developmental approach* (2009), he highlights many of the perceived flaws he has with contemporary character education and also lays the foundation for a new approach. Lockwood's proposed method revolves around the developmental research of Lawrence Kohlberg and others to build a better approach to character education. The primary criticisms Lockwood makes regarding contemporary character education deal with fundamental problems in two areas. Lockwood criticizes the general theory of contemporary character education in the following ways:

1. The bleak view of human nature
2. The emphasis on personal responsibility for bad behavior to the exclusion of social, political, and economic factors
3. The unwarranted assertion of historical and contemporary consensus on the nature of values and their transmission

4. The narrow belief that individual possession of particular values will solve social problems
5. The mistaken belief that desirable values clearly lead to particular desirable actions
6. The failure to take seriously circumstances in which values come into conflict with one another
7. The failure to recognize that moral principles, not simple assertions of values, are critical in determining moral behavior (2009, p. 33).

Lockwood continues to critique the psychological assumptions of contemporary character education in the following ways:

1. They give the impression of a simple, clear, and direct relationship between values and behavior when there is none
2. They give the erroneous impression that children do not already hold, at least verbally, the values that character education intends to promote
3. To the extent that they endorse a philosophy of learning, it is the inappropriate and inadequate one of behaviorism
4. Their emphasis on teachers modeling desired behavior in order to promote such behavior among young people is limited and ill-considered
5. The suggestion that children be taught to habitually engage in specified behaviors is misconceived (2009, p. 33).

Lockwood's critiques and concerns are listed in detail because of his credibility in the field of character education. He has published extensively on this topic for nearly thirty years and attention should be paid to many of his concerns. However, many of his critics accuse Lockwood

of having an outdated vision of contemporary character education and that many of his concerns are indeed being addressed by new and improved programs. While Lockwood certainly occupies a special place in the realm of opponents to contemporary character education, he definitely is not alone in his issues.

In discussing critics to contemporary character education, Alfie Kohn will likely be a name that people in the field can readily identify. His 1997 article titled, “How not to teach values: A critical look at character education” remains as one of the most scathing responses to the contemporary character education movement. Kohn’s major issue revolved around his concern that conformity to culturally acceptable norms of behavior did not always manifest itself into good behavior. Kohn blasted contemporary education when stating, “what goes by the name of character education nowadays is, for the most part, a collection of exhortations and extrinsic inducements designed to make children work harder and do what they’re told” (1997, p. 430). Several others agreed with Kohn in his assertion that character education was more about manipulating children’s behavior than helping them internalize moral values (Hall, 2000).

Other central concerns of the contemporary character education movement include such questions as; should schools teach values at all? Can children’s moral growth even be impacted by character education? Can values truly be learned through direct instruction, devoid of any real life experience? Are teachers comfortable, confident, and prepared to serve as “moral role models?” Does a set of universal values truly exist? All of these concerns and multiple others have raised legitimate questions about character education that have certainly forced advocates of the contemporary movement to continually advance and evolve their system. This type of



academic discourse will need to be continued in the future if contemporary character education wishes to remain a mainstream aspect of the public school agenda.

### Teacher Efficacy and Character Education

The construct of teacher efficacy derived from the work of Albert Bandura and his Social Cognitive Theory in 1977. This theory was implemented in an effort to better understand how people acquire and maintain certain behavioral patterns. Bandura's original work of trying to understand human behaviors would later evolve into the offering of intervention strategies to determine if these interventions would cause any change in behavior (Bandura, 1977). Since the original work of Bandura utilized modeling as a tool to influence behavior, this theory naturally found its way into the field of character education, where teachers would be expected to model appropriate conduct and behaviors for both their students and their peers.

Self efficacy can be defined as a cognitive motivational construct that involves two components, outcome expectancy and self-efficacy (Bandura, 1977). Outcome expectancy was closely related and eventually evolved into general teaching efficacy (GTE), the construct utilized in this study. Outcome expectancy addresses the belief that individuals have regarding their own responsibility for the results of a specific action. Self efficacy was closely related and eventually evolved into personal teaching efficacy (PTE), when applying this theoretical construct to the field of character education. Self efficacy pertains more specifically to the individual effect a person thinks they will have on a given situation. As Enderlin-Lampe (2002) noted, in order for educators to advance their levels of teacher efficacy, they must first believe that their actions and behavior can have an effect on the education of their students.

Determining teacher efficacy in relation to specific tasks in education was built around the research of Gibson and Dembo (1984). In this study, the authors identified the dual components of teacher efficacy as, personal teaching efficacy (PTE) and general teaching efficacy (GTE). As mentioned earlier, these constructs were built on the outcome expectancy (=GTE) and self efficacy (=PTE) constructs in Bandura's theory of self efficacy. Gibson and Dembo's (1984) slight change in terminology and meaning of these important constructs allowed many researchers in the field of character education to gain a better understanding of what these potential variables will attempt to measure. It was determined that true teacher efficacy could only be measured by their belief in one's self, and a teacher's belief that they can succeed at the given task in spite of various external factors which they cannot control. In the years that followed Gibson and Dembo's original work, several studies were conducted to determine if the Teacher Efficacy Scale, as measured by PTE and GTE, did indeed consist of two separate dimensions measuring both internal and external distinctions (Guskey & Passaro, 1994; Woolfolk & Hoy, 1990; Guskey & Passaro, 1994; and Deemer & Minke, 1999). While the conclusions drawn by these studies indicated some confusion regarding whether or not the teaching efficacy scale (TES) was in fact a two-dimensional construct, Bandura (1997) offered some clarification on this issue by discussing how teacher efficacy is specific to a particular teaching task or subject matter. Take for instance a social studies teacher who has had a great deal of coursework in the history of WWI, but not in the area of character education. This teacher will likely experience two completely different levels of efficaciousness and confidence based on the task with which they feel more prepared to instruct. Deemer and Minke would support this claim when stating that "instruments that separately assess teachers' perceptions in specific domains of teaching can be expected to tap the variations in efficacy judgments and

increase the predictive power of efficacy perceptions” (Deemer & Minke, 1999, p. 9). Additional research studies supporting the use of TES for context specific purposes include Riggs and Enochs, 1990 (science teaching); Coladarci and Breton, 1997 (special education); and Milson and Mehlig, 2002 (character education).

Milson and Mehlig’s (2002) study on elementary teacher’s sense of efficacy for character education laid the foundation for the TES to be used for determining how confident teachers feel about their role in character education. This quantitative study analyzed a sample of elementary school teacher’s efficacy beliefs towards character education. The researchers developed the Character Education and Efficacy Belief Instrument (CEEBI) in order to find out how confident the teachers felt about their role as character educators. The CEEBI consisted of 24 likert scale items designed to measure the teachers’ personal teaching efficacy and general teaching efficacy towards character education. Findings from this “suggest that most elementary school teachers exhibit high levels of efficacy for character education” (p. 53).

### Summary

The purpose of this literature review was to present relevant research and literature on the crucial areas needed to build a foundation for this study. Some of these areas included defining character education; the history of character education in public schools; social issues contributing to the rise of contemporary character education; characteristics of contemporary education and its key programs; differing views of character education; and teacher training and efficacy for character education.

Milson (2003) discussed how “there is a clear discrepancy between the high expectations placed on teachers by state governments and school districts to serve as character educators and the amount of training they receive for the role” (p. 93). As the perceived need for character education continues to grow in the public eye, it will be vital for teacher education programs, methods instructors, and school administrators to identify if certain content area teachers may need more support than others in the realm of moral education. For this reason, this study sought to investigate whether differences exist between secondary pre-service math, science, social studies, and language arts teachers in the areas of personal teaching efficacy (PTE) and general teaching efficacy (GTE).

## CHAPTER 3 METHODOLOGY

### Introduction

An exhaustive review of research in the field of character education revealed a significant amount of research in both character education, and teacher efficacy. Teacher efficacy arose out of Albert Bandura's work in the 1970's on self efficacy. Bandura's (1977) theory of self efficacy has since been applied to a plethora of fields in order to gauge how well prepared people feel to accomplish designated tasks. In relation to teacher efficacy, Bandura's theory has been applied and studied by numerous scholars including Ashton and Webb (1986); Deemer and Minke (1999); Gibson and Dembo (1984); Guskey and Passaro (1994); Woolfolk-Hoy and Hoy (1998); and Weasmer and Woods (1998). The application of teacher efficacy to study character education was first conducted by Milson and Mehlig (2002) in their study to identify elementary teachers' personal and general teaching efficacy for character education.

This study examined the relationship between secondary pre-service teachers in math, science, social studies, and language arts, and their sense of efficacy for character education. Survey research and quantitative methods were used in this comparative study in order to investigate the personal and general teaching efficacy for character education of each targeted group and identify any significant differences in efficacy between secondary pre-service teachers in math, science, social studies, and language arts. This study was built on the work of Milson and Mehlig (2002) by administering their *Character Education and Efficacy Belief Instrument* (CEEBI) to a group of secondary pre-service teachers at the University of Central Florida.

### Research Questions

1. Is there a statistically significant difference in pre-service secondary teachers', in the fields of social studies, mathematics, science, and language arts, sense of personal teaching efficacy (PTE) and general teaching efficacy (GTE) for teaching character education?
2. Is there a statistically significant difference in pre-service secondary teachers' sense of personal teaching efficacy (PTE) and general teaching efficacy (GTE) based on gender?
3. Is there a statistically significant difference in pre-service secondary teachers' sense of personal teaching efficacy (PTE) and general teaching efficacy (GTE) based on race/ethnicity?
4. Is there a statistically significant difference in pre-service secondary teachers' sense of personal teaching efficacy (PTE) and general teaching efficacy (GTE) based on coursework in character education?

### Null Hypotheses

1. There is no difference in secondary pre-service teachers' sense of personal teaching efficacy (PTE) and secondary pre-service teachers' sense of general teaching efficacy (GTE) for teaching character education in the fields of social studies, mathematics, science, and language arts.
2. There is no difference in pre-service secondary teachers' sense of personal teaching efficacy (PTE) and general teaching efficacy (GTE) based on gender.
3. There is no difference in pre-service secondary teachers' sense of personal teaching efficacy (PTE) and general teaching efficacy (GTE) based on race/ethnicity.

4. There is no difference in per-service secondary teachers' sense of personal teaching efficacy (PTE) and general teaching efficacy (GTE) based on coursework in character education.

### Population

The featured population in this study included secondary pre-service teachers in social science education, science education, mathematics education, and language arts education. Each student from these selected programs was enrolled in their internship II experience (ESE 4943) during the fall semester of 2010 or the spring semester of 2011 at the University of Central Florida. This experience consisted of pre-service teachers spending an entire semester as an intern in a secondary classroom, eventually taking over the teaching responsibilities of the classes to gain valuable, practical experience in the field. Currently, the University of Central Florida ranks as one of the top five largest universities in the country, boasting a total enrollment number of 53,644 students. The population drew from the College of Education, which has a total enrollment of 5,731 students, with 3,763 of those students being undergraduates. The researcher contacted the Director of Clinical Experiences at the University of Central Florida to obtain total enrollment numbers of Internship II students in social studies, math, science, and language arts during the Fall 2010 and Spring 2011 semesters. Since the total number of students involved in Internship II during Fall 2010 and Spring 2011 varied quite a bit based on program and semester completed, the total number of participants in each major for each semester was quite different. The following table (see table 1) represented the total population of pre-service teachers for this study by program and the semester each student was enrolled in Internship II.

**Table 1: Total Population**

Major	Fall 2010	Spring 2011	N=
Social Studies	16	33	49
Math	8	17	25
Science	7	18	25
Language Arts	13	34	47
<b>Total</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>102</b>	<b>146</b>

### Study Participants

The total population for this research study consisted of one hundred and forty six secondary pre-service teachers in social studies, mathematics, science, and language arts. Of the one hundred and forty six secondary pre-service teachers that were contacted for voluntary participation in this study, a total of one hundred and thirty (89% response rate) usable responses were collected. Unusable responses were determined to be any questionnaires that were incomplete or missing the self-reported demographic grouping variables. All incomplete questionnaires were removed from future analysis in this study.

#### *Gender*

Participants in this research study were asked to self-report the demographic variable for “Gender,” (see Table 2). The participants were given two options, a) male, and b) female. The responses indicated that 30% of the participants were male (N=39), and 70% of the participants were female (N=91).



**Table 2: Gender of Study Participants**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Male	39	30.0	30.0	30.0
Female	91	70.0	70.0	100.0
Total	130	100.0	100.0	

*Race/Ethnicity*

Participants in this research study were asked to self-report the demographic variable for “Race/Ethnicity,” (see Table 3). The participants were given six options, a) African American, b) Asian/Pacific Islander, c) Caucasian, d) Hispanic, e) Native American, or f) Other. The option to choose “Other” was accompanied by a blank space for respondents to “please specify” their race/ethnicity. The responses indicated that 17.7% of the participants were African American (N=23), 3.8% of the participants were Asian/Pacific Islander (N=5), 58.5% of the participants were Caucasian (N=76), and 20% of the participants were Hispanic (N=26).

**Table 3: Race/Ethnicity**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid African American	23	17.7	17.7	17.7
Asian/Pacific Islander	5	3.8	3.8	21.5
Caucasian	76	58.5	58.5	80.0
Hispanic	26	20.0	20.0	100.0
Total	130	100.0	100.0	

*Program/Major (Primary area of degree/certification)*

Participants in this research study were asked to self-report the demographic variable for “Program/Major,” (see Table 4). The participants were given eight options, a) Art, b) Language Arts/English, c) Science, d) Math, e) Social Studies, f) Foreign Language, g) Exceptional Education, h) Physical Education, and i) Other. The option to choose “Other” was accompanied by a blank space for respondents to “please specify” their “program/major.” Three responses in the “other” category indicated chemistry and biology as their primary area of certification. These three responses were recoded to be included in the broader field of “Science.” The responses indicated that 32.3% of the participants were in the field of language arts (N=42), 16.2% of the participants were in the field of science (N=21), 34.6% of the participants were in the field of social studies (N=45), and 16.9% of the participants were in the field of mathematics (N=22).

**Table 4: What is the primary area of your degree?**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Language Arts	42	32.3	32.3	32.3
Science	21	16.2	16.2	48.5
Social Studies	45	34.6	34.6	83.1
Mathematics	22	16.9	16.9	100.0
Total	130	100.0	100.0	

*Character education coursework in Undergraduate program*

Participants in this research study were asked to self-report the demographic variable for “Have you ever received any coursework discussing character education in your undergraduate program?” (see Table 5). The participants were given three options, a) yes, b) no, or c) unsure.

The responses indicated that 50.8% of the participants had received coursework discussing character education in their undergraduate program (N=66), and 32.3% of the participants had not received coursework discussing character education in their undergraduate program (N=42), and 16.9% of the participants were unsure if they had received coursework discussing character education in their undergraduate program (N=22). This question also had a follow up response which asked all participants who choose “yes” to receiving coursework in character education to identify the general courses in which they received this instruction (see Table 6). Participants had the option to choose all categories that applied between a) Curriculum/Methods Courses, b) Core Education Courses, c) Specialization Area Courses, or d) Other. The option to choose “Other” was accompanied by a blank space for respondents to “please explain” where else they may have received instruction in character education. Participant responses to this item were recoded into SPSS for statistical analysis. The coding consisted of “0” for participants who did not respond or answer this question, “1” for participants selecting the curriculum/ methods courses, “2” for participants selecting core education courses, “3” for participants selecting specialization area courses, “4” for participants who chose both curriculum/methods courses and core education courses, “5” for participants who chose both curriculum/methods courses and specialization area courses, “6” for participants who chose both core education courses and specialization area courses, and “7” for participants who chose curriculum/methods courses, core education courses, and specialization area courses. As the “Other” option was not exercised by any participants in this section, no coding was needed to account for this option. The responses to the follow up question, “If yes, please indicate in which classes you addressed the topic of character education (Check all that apply)” indicated that 49.2% of participants did not answer (had not received character education during their coursework or were unsure if they had received this instruction)

(N=64), 12.3% of participants indicated that character education was addressed during their curriculum/methods courses (N=16), 13.1% of participants indicated that character education was addressed during their core education courses (N=17), 6.2% of participants indicated that character education was addressed during their specialization area courses (N=8), 7.7% of participants indicated that character education was addressed during their curriculum/methods and core education courses (N=10), 6.2% of participants indicated that character education was addressed during their curriculum/methods and specialization area courses (N=8), 3.8% of participants indicated that character education was addressed during their core education and specialization area courses (N=5), and 1.5% of participants indicated that character education was addressed during their curriculum/methods, core education, and specialization area courses (N=2) (see table 6).

**Table 5: Coursework discussing character education**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Yes	66	50.8	50.8	50.8
No	42	32.3	32.3	83.1
Unsure	22	16.9	16.9	100.0
Total	130	100.0	100.0	

**Table 6: If yes, which courses addressed character education**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Did not answer	64	49.2	49.2	49.2
Curriculum/Methods Courses	16	12.3	12.3	61.5
Core Education Courses	17	13.1	13.1	74.6
Specialization area courses	8	6.2	6.2	80.8
Curriculum/Methods and Core Education Courses	10	7.7	7.7	88.5
Curriculum/Methods and Specialization area courses	8	6.2	6.2	94.6
Core Education and Specialization area courses	5	3.8	3.8	98.5
Curriculum/Methods, Core Education, and Specialization Courses	2	1.5	1.5	100.0
Total	130	100.0	100.0	

Instrumentation

The questionnaire used in this study was the The Character Education Efficacy and Belief Instrument (CEEBI), which was first created by Milson and Mehlig (2002) (Appendix A). In an email communication dated August 5, 2010, Dr. Milson granted permission for the use of this original copyrighted questionnaire (Appendix B). The original instrument was designed to determine personal teaching efficacy (PTE) and general teaching efficacy (GTE), two dimensions of the teacher efficacy scale (TES) which were created by Gibson and Dembo (1984). The questionnaire consists of 24 total statements in which respondents answered on a five-point Likert scale. In the original study, Milson and Mehlig used this instrument to survey a

group of elementary teachers to determine how well prepared they felt for the task of teaching character education. In that study, Milson and Mehlig (2002) described the instrument in the following words:

Gibson and Dembo's original PTE items were revised to create twelve CEEBI items designed to investigate teachers' beliefs about their own abilities regarding character education. Each of these statements uses the first person referent I. The GTE items on Gibson and Dembo's TES were rewritten to create twelve items designed to investigate teachers' beliefs about the ability of teachers in general to exert influence over external factors such as students' family background and home environment. These items use the third-person referent teachers. (p. 49)

Bandura (1997) believed that the benefits of efficacy instruments like the CEEBI were maximized when they attempted to explore a specific task. As he noted, "multi-faceted teacher efficacy scales enable researchers to select those that are most germane to the domain of functioning the research is designed to elucidate" (p. 243). In addition, the research of Deemer and Minke (1999) and Pajares (1996) indicated that efficacy instruments specific to context are more likely to provide valid measurements of efficacy beliefs.

#### Instrument Validity and Reliability

The CEEBI was tested for validity and reliability in the original study conducted by Milson and Mehlig (2002). The following information was reported regarding the reliability of the CEEBI:

A bivariate correlation coefficient of .648 between the PTE and GTE indicates a moderate correlation between the two scales. We expected some degree of correlation between the scales because they measure similar constructs; however, this moderate level of correlation also suggests that the two scales measure distinct aspects of efficacy. We used Cronbach's index of internal consistency to test the reliability of each scale. The reliability

coefficients for PTE ( $\alpha=.8286$ ) and GTE ( $\alpha=.6121$ ) suggest acceptable evidence of the reliability of these scales. (Glass & Hopkins, 1996). (Milson & Mehlig, 2002, p. 49-50).

Cronbach's alpha, or the index of internal consistency, was utilized to measure the reliability of all personal teaching efficacy (PTE) and general teaching efficacy (GTE) items on the CEEBI. This test is extremely important to the researcher because it provides a quantitative measure of the consistency of scores from items within a factor for a given sample (Litwin, 1995). Cronbach's alpha is widely viewed and often utilized in quantitative research studies because it is a reliable way to measure the internal consistency when items result in more than two choices.

Another study which confirmed the reliability and validity of the CEEBI was conducted by Milson (2003). This research study reported similar PTE and GTE reliability coefficients from the previous study. The PTE was reported as ( $\alpha=.8064$ ) and the GTE as ( $\alpha=.6545$ ) in Milson's second use of the CEEBI. In addition, a bivariate correlation coefficient of .690 was reported between PTE and GTE, which was quite similar to the .648 reported during the original study (2002). From this data, Milson drew the conclusion that "the instrument has maintained across administrations similar and acceptable levels of internal consistency as well as correlation between scales" (Milson, 2003, p. 94). For this research study, Cronbach's index of internal consistency revealed acceptable reliability coefficients for PTE ( $\alpha=.7836$ ) and GTE ( $\alpha=.6325$ ). The bivariate correlation coefficient of .693 between these two scales does indicate a moderate correlation between the PTE and GTE scales, very similar to the correlations reported in previous studies using the CEEBI.

### Data Collection and Procedure

The initial step in this research study began by obtaining approval from the University of Central Florida Internal Review Board (IRB) (Appendix C). This procedure consisted of completing an extensive application discussing the purpose, nature, duration, and intended goals of this study. Various documents were completed including human research protocols, participant information sheets, consent forms, as well as information regarding risk/benefits to participants, administration procedures, participant confidentiality, and contact information for the investigator, his advisor, and a representative from the IRB.

The questionnaire was placed on Survey Monkey, which is an online survey instrument that was started in 1999. Placing the questionnaire on this website allowed respondents to complete the questionnaire at their convenience. In order to distribute the questionnaire link to the participants, the researcher contacted the Director of Clinical Experiences. This administrator has the responsibility of overseeing all internship placements in the college of education. Since the researcher could not have access to the participants email addresses, all email communications were provided to the Director of Clinical Experiences and forwarded to the participants from this administrator. The email distribution of the recruitment letter complete with a summary sheet explaining the research project (Appendix D), and a survey monkey link to the questionnaire was sent out a total of five times each semester, once a week (each Wednesday) during weeks two-six of the Fall 2010 and Spring 2011 semesters. The decision was made on the recommendation of the Director of Clinical Experiences not to contact student participants during the first week of the semester because of the variety of activities and confusion which generally accompanies the first week of the final internship experience. The



email distribution dates for Fall 2010 occurred on September 1, 8, 15, 22, and 29, 2010. The email distribution dates for Spring 2011 occurred on January 19, 26, and February 2, 9, 16, 2011. The total time needed to complete the questionnaire ranged from 10-20 minutes. The online program Survey Monkey utilized in this study prevents multiple responses from the same IP address in an attempt to control for participants that may try to complete the questionnaire multiple times from the same computer to skew the data.

On the last page of the questionnaire, the participants were asked to self-report certain demographic information regarding their race/ethnicity, gender, program/major, and coursework in character education. Since some students may have multiple majors or minors, the phrase “Primary Area of Degree/Certification” was included to encourage participants to choose the one program with which they are primarily seeking certification. The demographic response item, “Have you ever received any coursework discussing character education in your undergraduate program” was initially offered as a simple yes or no response. If participants chose yes to this item, then they were asked to identify in which courses they received this instruction. The options on this item included “curriculum/methods course,” “core education courses,” “specialization courses,” or “other.” Directions were provided for participants to “Check all that apply,” with a space being provided next to the “other” option in order for respondents to explain where else they may have received instruction in character education. There was also a space provided for respondents to provide any additional comments or feedback they may have had regarding the questionnaire. Any questionnaires that do not contain all demographic information, including program/major, race, and gender, will be removed from future analysis.

## Data Analysis

The 24 items on the Character Education and Efficacy Belief Instrument (CEEBI) were split into 12 items that addressed PTE, and 12 items that addressed GTE. The PTE items on the questionnaire included 1, 2, 3, 6, 7, 8, 11, 14, 17, 19, 21, and 23. The GTE items included 4, 5, 9, 10, 12, 13, 15, 16, 18, 20, 22, and 24. Participants were asked to rate their responses to each item on a 5-point Likert scale indicating if they: strongly disagree (SD), disagree (D), undecided (U), agree (A), or strongly agree (SA). Each response was given a numerical value on a scale ranging from 1 to 5. For items that were positively phrased on the CEEBI, the scoring method consisted of SA=5, A=4, U=3, D=2, and SD=1. Likewise, negatively phrased items were reversed scored to create a scale of SA=1, A=2, U=3, D=4, SD=5. Positively phrased items were balanced between both the PTE and GTE statements, which included items 1, 3, 5, 7, 9, 11, 12, 14, 18, 19, 23, and 24. The negatively phrased items on the questionnaire included statements 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 13, 15, 16, 17, 20, 21, and 22. Each participant was given a composite score for each of the PTE and GTE items by finding the sum of the 12 items for each teacher efficacy scale (PTE and GTE). Based on the values previously listed, the range of scores for PTE and GTE will be between 12 and 60. Demographic data collected at the end of this questionnaire will be used to identify the independent variables of gender, race/ethnicity, program/major, and character education coursework.

Data collected from the Character Education Efficacy Belief Instrument (Appendix A) was coded and compiled in the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences Software Program (SPSS). Descriptive and inferential statistical procedures were utilized to provide frequencies and statistics in order to build the framework for additional statistical procedures. An analysis of

variance (ANOVA) was used to examine any significant differences that may exist between variables resulting in more than two groups, while T-tests were used for variables resulting in only two groups. In addition, mean scores for each independent variable (gender, race/ethnicity, program/major, and character education coursework) was reported for each individual item on the CEEBI in order to determine an overall sense of efficacy for each item, as well as identify any significant differences that may exist between groups on individual character education efficacy items.

#### Costs and Payments to the Respondents

There was no cost associated with participation in this voluntary study. In addition, there was no compensation for participation in this study.

#### Risks and Benefits to the Respondents

Since this study did not require names or other identifying personal information, there were no risks to participants in this study. Participants may have felt a sense of inconvenience by the time required to complete the questionnaire. However, the participants could have benefited from this study by gaining some valuable insights into the character education responsibilities that they will face in many secondary public schools.

#### Summary

This study utilized quantitative research methods in order to investigate the relationship between pre-service secondary math, language arts, science, and social studies teachers' personal teaching efficacy (PTE) and general teaching efficacy (GTE) for character education at the University of Central Florida. The Character Education and Efficacy Belief Instrument was

created by Milson and Mehlig (2002) and utilized as the primary instrument for data collection in this study. The two topics of questioning in this instrument included PTE and GTE in the field of character education. The demographic portion of the questionnaire was used to gather data for the independent variables examined in the study (program/major, gender, race/ethnicity, and coursework in character education). In addition, an open-ended response area was provided at the end of the questionnaire for participants to provide any comments or concerns they may have had regarding the study.

## CHAPTER 4 FINDINGS

### Introduction

This study of secondary pre-service teachers' was designed to determine if pre-service teachers from different content area disciplines (social studies, mathematics, science, and language arts) have a similar or different sense of efficacy in the field of character education. The secondary pre-service teachers' efficacy beliefs were determined using the personal teaching efficacy (PTE) and general teaching efficacy (GTE) scores generated from completing the Character Education Efficacy Belief Instrument (CEEBI). Participants in this study were placed into groups based on the self-reported demographic variables of a) program/major, b) race/ethnicity, c) gender, and d) coursework completed in character education. This demographic information served as the independent variables in this study to determine if significant statistical differences existed in PTE and GTE scores from the CEEBI.

One hundred and thirty secondary pre-service teachers from the College of Education at the University of Central Florida participated in this research study. The online questionnaire was distributed to all secondary pre-service teachers in social studies, mathematics, science, and language arts during their final internship II experience in the Fall 2010 and Spring 2011 semesters. Recruitment and reminder emails with a link to the online questionnaire were sent out a total of five times each semester requesting that the secondary pre-service teachers please complete the CEEBI. All students that chose to participate in this study did so voluntarily, knowing that there was no consequence for choosing not to complete the questionnaire. At the

end of the data collection period, a total of one hundred and thirty secondary pre-service teachers completed the CEEBI to form the sample population (N=130). For this research study, statistical significance was set at the .05 level. Tukey's test of honestly different significance was conducted in the event of statistically significant differences reported in the ANOVA. This post-hoc test was chosen because it adjusts for the probability that the significance may be a result of multiple comparisons of the same data (Gall, Borg, & Gall, 1996).

This chapter consists of two sections. The first section presents the results from each hypothesis tested in this research study. The results consist of a restatement of the research question and null hypothesis, an overview of the analysis used, and a decision regarding the hypothesis. The second section examines the mean scores for each item on the CEEBI to determine specific efficacy beliefs for secondary pre-service teachers in mathematics, science, language arts, and social studies. In addition, a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) will be ran for each CEEBI item to determine if significant differences exist between secondary pre-service teachers in mathematics, science, language arts, and social studies. A detailed discussion of each hypothesis and test results will be presented in Chapter 5 "Discussion."

## Research Questions and Results

### Research Question 1

Is there a statistically significant difference in pre-service secondary teachers', in the fields of social studies, mathematics, science, and language arts, sense of personal teaching efficacy (PTE) and general teaching efficacy (GTE) for teaching character education?

## Null Hypotheses

There is no difference in secondary pre-service teachers' sense of personal teaching efficacy (PTE) and secondary pre-service teachers' sense of general teaching efficacy (GTE) for teaching character education in the fields of social studies, mathematics, science, and language arts.

### *Personal Teaching Efficacy by Program/Major*

#### Analysis/Decision

A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted comparing PTE to the four groups of secondary pre-service teachers by their program/major: language arts ( $N=42$ ,  $M=46.21$ ,  $SD=5.18$ ), science ( $N=21$ ,  $M=43.38$ ,  $SD=5.04$ ), social studies ( $N=45$ ,  $M=45.42$ ,  $SD=4.93$ ), and mathematics ( $N=22$ ,  $M=46.32$ ,  $SD=4.35$ ) (see table 7). The ANOVA revealed  $F(3, 126)=1.784$ ,  $p=.154$  (see table 8). As statistical significance was not found, Tukey's pairwise comparisons were not calculated and the null hypothesis, stated above, was unable to be rejected.

**Table 7: PTE Descriptives- Program/Major**

PTE								
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
					Language Arts	42		
Science	21	43.3810	5.04456	1.10081	41.0847	45.6772	35.00	53.00
Social Studies	45	45.4222	4.93360	.73546	43.9400	46.9044	33.00	54.00
Mathematics	22	46.3182	4.34672	.92672	44.3910	48.2454	38.00	53.00
Total	130	45.5000	4.98719	.43741	44.6346	46.3654	29.00	56.00

**Table 8: ANOVA**

PTE

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	130.726	3	43.575	1.784	.154
Within Groups	3077.774	126	24.427		
Total	3208.500	129			

\*This data is significant at the .05 level

*Coding*

1= Language Arts

2= Science

3= Social Studies

4= Mathematics

*General Teaching Efficacy by Program/Major*

**Analysis/Decision**

A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted comparing GTE to the four groups of secondary pre-service teachers by their program/major: language arts ( $N=42$ ,  $M=43.69$ ,  $SD=3.29$ ), science ( $N=21$ ,  $M=43.00$ ,  $SD=3.33$ ), social studies ( $N=45$ ,  $M=41.98$ ,  $SD=3.12$ ), and mathematics ( $N=22$ ,  $M=41.36$ ,  $SD=5.77$ ) (see table 9). The ANOVA revealed  $F(3, 126)=2.447$ ,  $p=.067$  (see table 10). As statistical significance was not found, Tukey's pairwise comparisons were not calculated and the null hypothesis, stated above, was unable to be rejected.



**Table 9: GTE Descriptives- Program/Major**

GTE								
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Language Arts	42	43.6905	3.28699	.50719	42.6662	44.7148	35.00	50.00
Science	21	43.0000	3.33167	.72703	41.4834	44.5166	36.00	48.00
Social Studies	45	41.9778	3.11513	.46438	41.0419	42.9137	36.00	47.00
Mathematics	22	41.3636	5.76975	1.23012	38.8055	43.9218	31.00	49.00
Total	130	42.5923	3.83314	.33619	41.9272	43.2575	31.00	50.00

**Table 10: ANOVA**

GTE					
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	104.347	3	34.782	2.447	.067
Within Groups	1791.045	126	14.215		
Total	1895.392	129			

\*This data is significant at the .05 level

*Coding*

1= Language Arts

2= Science

3= Social Studies

4= Mathematics

Research Question 2

Is there a statistically significant difference in pre-service secondary teachers' sense of personal teaching efficacy (PTE) and general teaching efficacy (GTE) based on gender?

### Null Hypothesis

There is no difference in per-service secondary teachers' sense of personal teaching efficacy (PTE) and general teaching efficacy (GTE) based on gender.

### *Personal Teaching Efficacy by Gender*

### Analysis/Decision

As gender resulted in only two groups, male and female, a t-test was conducted. The t-test resulted in no statistically significant mean difference ( $t = -.057$ ,  $df = 128$ ,  $p > .05$ ) in PTE between males and females. The male means ( $M = 45.46$ ,  $SD = 4.75$ ) were very similar to the female means ( $M = 45.52$ ,  $SD = 5.11$ ).

**Table 11: PTE Descriptives- Gender**

	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
PTE	Male	39	45.4615	4.74534	.75986
	Female	91	45.5165	5.11287	.53597

**Table 12: PTE Independent Samples T-Test- Gender**

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Lower	Upper
PTE Equal variances assumed	.426	.515	-.057	128	.954	-.05495	.95821	-1.95092	1.84103
Equal variances not assumed			-.059	77.155	.953	-.05495	.92987	-1.90649	1.79660

*General Teaching Efficacy by Gender*

As gender resulted in only two groups, male and female, a t-test was conducted. The Levene’s test revealed a violation in the homogeneity of variances assumption. The t-test resulted in no statistically significant mean difference ( $t= -1.785$ ,  $df= 128$ ,  $p>.05$ ) in GTE between males and females. The male means ( $M=41.62$ ,  $SD= 4.29$ ) were slightly lower than the female means ( $M=43.01$ ,  $SD=3.56$ ).

**Table 13: GTE Descriptives: Gender**

Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
GTE Male	39	41.6154	4.28962	.68689
Female	91	43.0110	3.56369	.37358

**Table 14: GTE Independent Samples T-Test- Gender**

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Lower	Upper
GTE Equal variances assumed	4.067	.046	-1.922	128	.057	-1.39560	.72608	-2.83228	.04107
Equal variances not assumed			-1.785	61.532	.079	-1.39560	.78190	-2.95885	.16764

**Research Question 3**

Is there a statistically significant difference in pre-service secondary teachers' sense of personal teaching efficacy (PTE) and general teaching efficacy (GTE) based on race/ethnicity?

**Null Hypothesis**

There is no difference in per-service secondary teachers' sense of personal teaching efficacy (PTE) and general teaching efficacy (GTE) based on race/ethnicity.

## Personal Teaching Efficacy by Race/Ethnicity

### Analysis/Decision

A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted comparing PTE of the secondary pre-service teachers by their race/ethnicity: African American ( $N=23$ ,  $M=47.13$ ,  $SD=5.38$ ), Asian/Pacific Islander ( $N=5$ ,  $M=44.60$ ,  $SD=6.11$ ), Caucasian ( $N=76$ ,  $M=45.25$ ,  $SD=5.07$ ), and Hispanic ( $N=26$ ,  $M=44.96$ ,  $SD=4.08$ ) (see table 15). Since the group for Asian/Pacific Islander was so small ( $N=5$ ), these cases were removed before the ANOVA was ran. The ANOVA revealed  $F(2, 122)=1.499$ ,  $p=.227$  (see table 16). As statistical significance was not found, Tukey's pairwise comparisons were not calculated and the null hypothesis, stated above, was unable to be rejected.

**Table 15: PTE Descriptives- Race/Ethnicity**

PTE

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
African American	23	47.1304	5.37929	1.12166	44.8043	49.4566	37.00	56.00
Asian/Pacific Islander	5	44.6000	6.10737	2.73130	37.0167	52.1833	35.00	51.00
Caucasian	76	45.2500	5.07050	.58163	44.0913	46.4087	29.00	53.00
Hispanic	26	44.9615	4.08393	.80092	43.3120	46.6111	38.00	52.00
Total	130	45.5000	4.98719	.43741	44.6346	46.3654	29.00	56.00

**Table 16: ANOVA**

PTE

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	73.268	2	36.634	1.499	.227
Within Groups	2981.820	122	24.441		
Total	3055.088	124			

\*This data is significant at the .05 level

*Coding*

1= African American

2= Asian/Pacific Islander

3= Caucasian

4=Hispanic

*General Teaching Efficacy by Race/Ethnicity*

Analysis/Decision

A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted comparing GTE of secondary pre-service teachers by their race/ethnicity: African American ( $N=23$ ,  $M=43.78$ ,  $SD=4.04$ ), Asian/Pacific Islander ( $N=5$ ,  $M=43.20$ ,  $SD=4.09$ ), Caucasian ( $N=76$ ,  $M=42.51$ ,  $SD=3.92$ ), and Hispanic ( $N=26$ ,  $M=41.65$ ,  $SD=3.22$ ) (see table 17). Since the group for Asian/Pacific Islander was so small ( $N=5$ ), these cases were removed before the ANOVA was ran. The ANOVA revealed  $F(2, 122)=1.925$ ,  $p=.150$  (see table 18). As statistical significance was not found, Tukey's pairwise comparisons were not calculated and the null hypothesis, stated above, was unable to be rejected.

**Table 17: GTE Descriptives- Race/Ethnicity**

GTE

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
African American	23	43.7826	4.04471	.84338	42.0335	45.5317	36.00	50.00
Asian/Pacific Islander	5	43.2000	4.08656	1.82757	38.1259	48.2741	40.00	49.00
Caucasian	76	42.5132	3.91746	.44936	41.6180	43.4083	31.00	48.00
Hispanic	26	41.6538	3.22419	.63232	40.3516	42.9561	34.00	47.00
Total	130	42.5923	3.83314	.33619	41.9272	43.2575	31.00	50.00

**Table 18: ANOVA**

GTE

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	55.887	2	27.944	1.925	.150
Within Groups	1770.785	122	14.515		
Total	1826.672	124			

\*This data is significant at the .05 level

*Coding*

1= African American

2= Asian/Pacific Islander

3= Caucasian

4=Hispanic

**Research Question 4**

Is there a statistically significant difference in pre-service secondary teachers' sense of personal teaching efficacy (PTE) and general teaching efficacy (GTE) based on coursework in character education?

### Null Hypothesis

There is no difference in per-service secondary teachers' sense of personal teaching efficacy (PTE) and general teaching efficacy (GTE) based on coursework in character education.

### *Personal Teaching Efficacy by Coursework in Character Education*

#### Analysis/Decision

A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted comparing PTE to the three groups of secondary pre-service teachers by their “coursework addressing character education”: Yes ( $N=66$ ,  $M=46.11$ ,  $SD=5.55$ ), No ( $N=42$ ,  $M=45.10$ ,  $SD=4.26$ ), and Unsure ( $N=22$ ,  $M=44.45$ ,  $SD=4.39$ ) (see table 19). The ANOVA revealed  $F(2, 127)=1.111$ ,  $p=.332$  (see table 20). As statistical significance was not found, Tukey’s pairwise comparisons were not calculated and the null hypothesis, stated above, was unable to be rejected.

**Table 19: PTE Descriptives- Coursework in Charter Education**

PTE	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
					Yes	66		
No	42	45.0952	4.26448	.65802	43.7663	46.4241	37.00	51.00
Unsure	22	44.4545	4.39401	.93681	42.5063	46.4027	35.00	51.00
Total	130	45.5000	4.98719	.43741	44.6346	46.3654	29.00	56.00



**Table 20: ANOVA**

PTE

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	55.169	2	27.584	1.111	.332
Within Groups	3153.331	127	24.829		
Total	3208.500	129			

\*This data is significant at the .05 level

### *Coding*

1= Yes, have received coursework addressing the topic of character education in their undergraduate program.

2= No, have not received coursework addressing the topic of character education in their undergraduate program.

3= Unsure, unsure if coursework addressed the topic of character education in their undergraduate program.

### *General Teaching Efficacy by Coursework in Character Education*

#### Analysis/Decision

A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted comparing GTE to the three groups of secondary pre-service teachers by their “coursework addressing character education”: Yes ( $N=66$ ,  $M=42.97$ ,  $SD=3.26$ ), No ( $N=42$ ,  $M=42.21$ ,  $SD=4.77$ ), and Unsure ( $N=22$ ,  $M=42.18$ ,  $SD=3.49$ ) (see table 21). The ANOVA revealed  $F(2, 127)=.647$ ,  $p=.525$  (see table 22). As statistical significance was not found, Tukey’s pairwise comparisons were not calculated and the null hypothesis, stated above, was unable to be rejected.

**Table 21: GTE Descriptives- Coursework in Character Education**

GTE	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
					Yes	66		
No	42	42.2143	4.76540	.73532	40.7293	43.6993	31.00	49.00
Unsure	22	42.1818	3.48652	.74333	40.6360	43.7277	36.00	47.00
Total	130	42.5923	3.83314	.33619	41.9272	43.2575	31.00	50.00

**Table 22: ANOVA**

GTE	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	19.109	2	9.554	.647	.525
Within Groups	1876.284	127	14.774		
Total	1895.392	129			

\*This data is significant at the .05 level

*Coding*

1= Yes, have received coursework addressing the topic of character education in their undergraduate program.

2= No, have not received coursework addressing the topic of character education in their undergraduate program.

3= Unsure, unsure if coursework addressed the topic of character education in their undergraduate program.

Results by Item on the Character Education Efficacy Belief Instrument

The Character Education Efficacy Belief Instrument (CEEBI) consists of 24 items, with each item rated on a five-point Likert scale. The highest possible score on each item was 5.00, with the lowest possible score being 1.00 on each item. Twelve items on the CEEBI measure a teachers personal teaching efficacy (PTE) (1, 2, 3, 6, 7, 8, 11, 14, 17, 19, 21, and 23) while the

other twelve items measure a teachers general teaching efficacy (GTE) (4, 5, 9, 10, 12, 13, 15, 16, 18, 20, 22, and 24). The composite score for PTE and GTE was calculated by adding the cumulative scores of all responses within each given category. This procedure resulted in a range of possible scores from 12 to 60 for each scale. However, additional information regarding the pre-service teacher's efficacy beliefs can be determined by analyzing the mean scores for each item on the CEEBI. Milson (2003) determined that "the mean scores for each item can be used to determine the general level of efficacy exhibited for the item" (p.94). Since Milson used the CEEBI, with the same design and scale mentioned above, he asserted through his study that "mean scores between 1.00 and 2.99 are considered negatively efficacious, those between 3.00 and 3.99 are neither positive nor negative, and those scores above 4.00 are considered positively efficacious" (p. 97). In an attempt to gain a more detailed understanding about the potential differences in PTE and GTE scores between pre-service secondary teachers in mathematics, science, social studies, and language arts, it is necessary to examine mean scores on each item of the CEEBI for each group of secondary pre-service teachers to determine if any differences may exist in efficacy beliefs for each individual item.

#### *Results by PTE Item on the Character Education Efficacy Belief Instrument*

##### *Positively Phrased PTE Item by Program/Major*

Table 23 summarizes the means and standard deviations obtained for each positively phrased personal teaching efficacy item on the CEEBI for pre-service secondary teachers in language arts, science, social studies, and mathematics. Positively phrased items were scored (Strongly Disagree=1, Disagree=2, Undecided=3, Agree=4, and Strongly Agree=5) (see table 23). According to Milson (2003), "mean scores between 1.00 and 2.99 are considered negatively

efficacious, those between 3.00 and 3.99 are neither positive nor negative, and those above 4.00 are considered positively efficacious” (p. 97). These results (see table 23) were identified using the following coding, \*= negatively efficacious, and \*\*= positively efficacious, for the grouping variable “program/major.”

**Table 23: Descriptives- Positively Phrased PTE Items by Program/Major**

Positively Phrased PTE Items		N	Mean	Std. Deviation
1. I am usually comfortable discussing issues of right and wrong with students.	Language Arts	42	4.19**	.804
	Science	21	3.48	1.167
	Social Studies	45	4.18**	.936
	Mathematics	22	3.91	1.065
	Total	130	4.02	.984
3. I am confident in my ability to be a good role model.	Language Arts	42	4.19**	1.065
	Science	21	4.43**	.676
	Social Studies	45	4.47**	.815
	Mathematics	22	4.50**	.512
	Total	130	4.38	.847
7. I know how to use strategies that might lead to positive changes in students' character.	Language Arts	42	3.45	1.064
	Science	21	3.76	.700
	Social Studies	45	3.84	.767
	Mathematics	22	4.18**	.664
	Total	130	3.76	.879
11. I am able to positively influence the character development of a child who has had little direction from parents.	Language Arts	42	3.93	1.045
	Science	21	3.90	.539
	Social Studies	45	4.00**	.564
	Mathematics	22	3.82	.795
	Total	130	3.93	.779

Positively Phrased PTE Items		N	Mean	Std. Deviation
14. When I have a student who lies regularly, I am confident I can convince him/her to stop lying to me.	Language Arts	42	3.07	1.068
	Science	21	2.38*	.973
	Social Studies	45	2.47*	.726
	Mathematics	22	3.14	.941
	Total	130	2.76	.971
19. I will be able to influence the character of students because I am a good role model.	Language Arts	42	4.14**	.926
	Science	21	4.10**	.831
	Social Studies	45	4.24**	.679
	Mathematics	22	4.32**	.568
	Total	130	4.20	.772
23. I am continually finding better ways to develop the character of students.	Language Arts	42	3.79	.925
	Science	21	3.48	.814
	Social Studies	45	3.78	.823
	Mathematics	22	3.64	.902
	Total	130	3.71	.867

### *Coding*

\*= (1.00- 2.99) negatively efficacious

(3.00 - 3.99)= neither positive nor negative

\*\*= (4.00-5.00) positively efficacious

A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted comparing scores for each positively phrased PTE item to the four groups of secondary pre-service teachers by their program/major (language arts, science, social studies, and mathematics) (see table 24). The ANOVA revealed significant statistical differences for three of the positively phrased PTE items. These items included:

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

$$F(3, 126)=3.191, p=.026$$

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

$$\text{character. } F(3, 126)=3.773, p=.012$$

14. When I have a student who lies regularly, I am confident I can convince

$$\text{him/her to stop lying to me. } F(3, 126)=5.499, p=.001(\text{see table 24}).$$

**Table 24: ANOVA**

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1. I am usually comfortable discussing issues of right and wrong with students.	Between Groups	8.821	3	2.940	3.191	.026*
	Within Groups	116.110	126	.922		
	Total	124.931	129			
3. I am confident in my ability to be a good role model.	Between Groups	2.212	3	.737	1.028	.382
	Within Groups	90.319	126	.717		
	Total	92.531	129			
7. I know how to use strategies that might lead to positive changes in students’ character.	Between Groups	8.210	3	2.737	3.773	.012*
	Within Groups	91.398	126	.725		
	Total	99.608	129			
11. I am able to positively influence the character development of a child who has had little direction from parents.	Between Groups	.509	3	.170	.275	.844
	Within Groups	77.868	126	.618		
	Total	78.377	129			
14. When I have a student who lies regularly, I am confident I can convince him/her to stop lying to me.	Between Groups	14.079	3	4.693	5.499	.001*
	Within Groups	107.529	126	.853		
	Total	121.608	129			
19. I will be able to influence the character of students because I am a good role model.	Between Groups	.764	3	.255	.422	.738
	Within Groups	76.036	126	.603		
	Total	76.800	129			
23. I am continually finding better ways to develop the character of students.	Between Groups	1.714	3	.571	.756	.521
	Within Groups	95.178	126	.755		
	Total	96.892	129			

\*This data is significant at the .05 level

As statistical significance was found for items 1, 7, and 14; a Tukey's pairwise comparisons post hoc test was conducted to determine honestly significant differences between groups for these items. The results indicated secondary pre-service science teachers (M=3.48) differed significantly from the language arts (M=4.19) and social studies (M=4.18) groups for the first positively phrased PTE item (see table 25); "I am usually comfortable discussing issues of right and wrong with my students." For the second item tested, "I know how to use strategies that might lead to positive changes in students' character," a significant difference was found between secondary pre-service mathematics teachers (M=4.18) and language arts (M=3.45) (see table 26). The third item tested, "When I have a student who lies regularly, I am confident I can convince him/her to stop lying to me," reported that secondary pre-service teachers in language arts (M=3.07) and mathematics (M=3.14) differed significantly from science (M=2.38) and social studies (2.47) (see table 27).

**Table 25: Multiple Comparisons**

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

(I) What is the primary area of your degree?	(J) What is the primary area of your degree?	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Language Arts	Science	.714*	.257	.031*	.05	1.38
	Social Studies	.013	.206	1.000	-.52	.55
	Mathematics	.281	.253	.682	-.38	.94
Science	Language Arts	-.714*	.257	.031*	-1.38	-.05
	Social Studies	-.702*	.254	.033*	-1.36	-.04
	Mathematics	-.433	.293	.454	-1.20	.33
Social Studies	Language Arts	-.013	.206	1.000	-.55	.52
	Science	.702*	.254	.033*	.04	1.36
	Mathematics	.269	.250	.705	-.38	.92
Mathematics	Language Arts	-.281	.253	.682	-.94	.38
	Science	.433	.293	.454	-.33	1.20
	Social Studies	-.269	.250	.705	-.92	.38

\*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.



**Table 26: Multiple Comparisons**

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

(I) What is the primary area of your degree?	(J) What is the primary area of your degree?	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Language Arts	Science	-.310	.228	.527	-.90	.28
	Social Studies	-.392	.183	.145	-.87	.08
	Mathematics	-.729*	.224	.008*	-1.31	-.15
Science	Language Arts	.310	.228	.527	-.28	.90
	Social Studies	-.083	.225	.983	-.67	.50
	Mathematics	-.420	.260	.373	-1.10	.26
Social Studies	Language Arts	.392	.183	.145	-.08	.87
	Science	.083	.225	.983	-.50	.67
	Mathematics	-.337	.222	.427	-.91	.24
Mathematics	Language Arts	.729*	.224	.008*	.15	1.31
	Science	.420	.260	.373	-.26	1.10
	Social Studies	.337	.222	.427	-.24	.91

\*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

**Table 27: Multiple Comparisons**

14. When I have a student who lies regularly, I am confident I can convince him/her to stop lying to me.  
Tukey HSD

(I) What is the primary area of your degree?	(J) What is the primary area of your degree?	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Language Arts	Science	.690*	.247	.030*	.05	1.33
	Social Studies	.605*	.198	.015*	.09	1.12
	Mathematics	-.065	.243	.993	-.70	.57
Science	Language Arts	-.690*	.247	.030*	-1.33	-.05
	Social Studies	-.086	.244	.985	-.72	.55
	Mathematics	-.755*	.282	.041*	-1.49	-.02
Social Studies	Language Arts	-.605*	.198	.015*	-1.12	-.09
	Science	.086	.244	.985	-.55	.72
	Mathematics	-.670*	.240	.031*	-1.30	-.04
Mathematics	Language Arts	.065	.243	.993	-.57	.70
	Science	.755*	.282	.041*	.02	1.49
	Social Studies	.670*	.240	.031*	.04	1.30

\*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

*Negatively Phrased PTE Items by Program/Major*

Table 28 summarizes the means and standard deviations obtained for each negatively phrased personal teaching efficacy item on the CEEBI for pre-service secondary teachers in language arts, science, social studies, and mathematics. Negatively phrased items were scored (Strongly Agree=1, Agree=2, Undecided=3, Disagree=4, and Strongly Disagree=5) (see table 28). The mean scores on each item can be used to determine specific groups’ general efficacy beliefs for each item. The results (see table 28) were identified using the following coding, \*= 1.00-2.99 (negatively efficacious), and \*\*= 4.00-5.00 (positively efficacious), for the grouping variable “program/major.”

**Table 28: Descriptives- Negatively Phrased PTE Items by Program/Major**

Negatively Phrased PTE Items		N	Mean	Std. Deviation
2. When a student has been exposed to negative influences at home, I do not believe that I can do much to impact that child's character.	Language Arts	42	4.21**	.782
	Science	21	4.14**	.910
	Social Studies	45	4.07**	.580
	Mathematics	22	3.86	.889
	Total	130	4.09	.762
6. I am usually at a loss as to how to help a student be more responsible.	Language Arts	42	4.26**	.627
	Science	21	4.00**	.447
	Social Studies	45	4.02**	.657
	Mathematics	22	4.18**	.853
	Total	130	4.12	.659
8. I am not sure that I can teach students to be honest.	Language Arts	42	3.71	.918
	Science	21	3.86	1.014
	Social Studies	45	3.96	.767
	Mathematics	22	4.14**	.834
	Total	130	3.89	.874
17. I often find it difficult to persuade a student that respect for others is important.	Language Arts	42	3.98	.680
	Science	21	3.62	.973
	Social Studies	45	3.51	.968
	Mathematics	22	3.50	.913
	Total	130	3.68	.891
21. I sometimes don't know what to do to help students become more compassionate.	Language Arts	42	3.29	1.088
	Science	21	2.24*	1.044
	Social Studies	45	2.89*	1.229
	Mathematics	22	3.14	.941
	Total	130	2.95	1.154

*Coding*

\*= (1.00- 2.99) negatively efficacious

(3.00 - 3.99)= neither positive nor negative

\*\*= (4.00-5.00) positively efficacious

A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted comparing scores for each negatively phrased PTE item to the four groups of secondary pre-service teachers by their program/major (language arts, science, social studies, and mathematics (see table 29). The ANOVA revealed significant statistical differences for one of the negatively phrased PTE items. This item was, “I sometimes don’t know what to do to help students become more compassionate,”  $F(3, 126)=4.407, p=.006$ .

**Table 29: ANOVA**

Negatively Phrased PTE Items		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
2. When a student has been exposed to negative influences at home, I do not believe that I can do much to impact that child’s character.	Between Groups	1.859	3	.620	1.069	.365
	Within Groups	73.034	126	.580		
	Total	74.892	129			
6. I am usually at a loss as to how to help a student be more responsible.	Between Groups	1.661	3	.554	1.283	.283
	Within Groups	54.370	126	.432		
	Total	56.031	129			
8. I am not sure that I can teach students to be honest.	Between Groups	2.847	3	.949	1.250	.294
	Within Groups	95.645	126	.759		
	Total	98.492	129			
17. I often find it difficult to persuade a student that respect for others is important.	Between Groups	5.758	3	1.919	2.501	.062
	Within Groups	96.673	126	.767		
	Total	102.431	129			
21. I sometimes don’t know what to do to help students become more compassionate.	Between Groups	16.307	3	5.436	4.407	.006*
	Within Groups	155.416	126	1.233		
	Total	171.723	129			

\*This data is significant at the .05 level

As statistical significance was found for item number 21, “I sometimes don’t know what to do to help students become more compassionate.” A Tukey’s pairwise comparisons post hoc test was conducted to determine honestly significant differences between groups for this item. The results indicated secondary pre-service science teachers (M=3.48) differed significantly from the language arts (M=4.19) and mathematics (M=4.18) groups (see table 30).

**Table 30: Multiple Comparisons**

21. I sometimes don’t know what to do to help students become more compassionate.  
Tukey HSD

(I) What is the primary area of your degree?	(J) What is the primary area of your degree?	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Language Arts	Science	1.048*	.297	.003*	.27	1.82
	Social Studies	.397	.238	.346	-.22	1.02
	Mathematics	.149	.292	.956	-.61	.91
Science	Language Arts	-1.048*	.297	.003*	-1.82	-.27
	Social Studies	-.651	.294	.124	-1.41	.11
	Mathematics	-.898*	.339	.044*	-1.78	-.02
Social Studies	Language Arts	-.397	.238	.346	-1.02	.22
	Science	.651	.294	.124	-.11	1.41
	Mathematics	-.247	.289	.827	-1.00	.50
Mathematics	Language Arts	-.149	.292	.956	-.91	.61
	Science	.898*	.339	.044*	.02	1.78
	Social Studies	.247	.289	.827	-.50	1.00

\*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

*Results by GTE Item on the Character Education Efficacy Belief Instrument*

*Positively Phrased GTE Item by Program/Major*

Table 31 summarizes the means and standard deviations obtained for each positively phrased general teaching efficacy item on the CEEBI for pre-service secondary teachers in language arts, science, social studies, and mathematics. Positively phrased items were scored (Strongly Disagree=1, Disagree=2, Undecided=3, Agree=4, and Strongly Agree=5) (see table 31). The mean scores on each item can be used to determine specific groups' general efficacy beliefs for each item. The results (see table 31) were identified using the following coding, \*= 1.00-2.99 (negatively efficacious), and \*\*= 4.00-5.00 (positively efficacious), for the grouping variable "program/major."

**Table 31: Descriptives- Positively Phrased GTE Items by Program/Major**

Positively Phrased GTE Items		N	Mean	Std. Deviation
5. When a student shows greater respect for others, it is usually because teachers have effectively modeled that trait.	Language Arts	42	3.69	.715
	Science	21	3.43	.676
	Social Studies	45	3.67	.769
	Mathematics	22	3.73	.631
	Total	130	3.65	.714
9. When students demonstrate diligence it is often because teachers have encouraged the students to persist with tasks.	Language Arts	42	3.60	.767
	Science	21	3.71	.561
	Social Studies	45	3.58	.690
	Mathematics	22	4.32**	.646
	Total	130	3.73	.734
12. If parents notice that their children are more responsible, it is likely that teachers have fostered this trait at school.	Language Arts	42	3.98	.715
	Science	21	3.76	.889
	Social Studies	45	3.60	.780
	Mathematics	22	3.64	1.093
	Total	130	3.75	.845
18. When a student becomes more compassionate, it is usually because teachers have created caring classroom environments.	Language Arts	42	3.83	.908
	Science	21	3.81	.750
	Social Studies	45	3.62	.614
	Mathematics	22	3.73	.550
	Total	130	3.74	.732
24. Teachers who encourage responsibility at school can influence students' level of responsibility outside of school.	Language Arts	42	4.17**	.853
	Science	21	3.90	.625
	Social Studies	45	4.42**	.621
	Mathematics	22	3.73	.935
	Total	130	4.14	.795

*Coding*

\*= (1.00- 2.99) negatively efficacious

(3.00 - 3.99)= neither positive nor negative

\*\*= (4.00-5.00) positively efficacious

A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted comparing scores for each positively phrased GTE item to the four groups of secondary pre-service teachers by their program/major (language arts, science, social studies, and mathematics (see table 32). The ANOVA revealed significant statistical differences for two of the positively phrased GTE items. These items were, “When students demonstrate diligence it is often because teachers have encouraged the students to persist with tasks,”  $F(3, 126)=6.578, p=.000$ ; and “Teachers who encourage responsibility at school can influence students’ level of responsibility outside of school,”  $F(3, 126)=4.905, p=.003$ .

**Table 32: ANOVA**

Positively Phrased PTE Items		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
5. When a student shows greater respect for others, it is usually because teachers have effectively modeled that trait.	Between Groups	1.240	3	.413	.808	.492
	Within Groups	64.483	126	.512		
	Total	65.723	129			
9. When students demonstrate diligence it is often because teachers have encouraged the students to persist with tasks.	Between Groups	9.422	3	3.141	6.578	.000*
	Within Groups	60.155	126	.477		
	Total	69.577	129			
12. If parents notice that their children are more responsible, it is likely that teachers have fostered this trait at school.	Between Groups	3.446	3	1.149	1.632	.185
	Within Groups	88.677	126	.704		
	Total	92.123	129			
18. When a student becomes more compassionate, it is usually because teachers have created caring classroom environments.	Between Groups	1.095	3	.365	.676	.568
	Within Groups	68.013	126	.540		
	Total	69.108	129			
24. Teachers who encourage responsibility at school can influence students’ level of responsibility outside of school.	Between Groups	8.523	3	2.841	4.905	.003*
	Within Groups	72.984	126	.579		
	Total	81.508	129			

\*This data is significant at the .05 level



As statistical significance was found for items number 9 and 24; a Tukey's pairwise comparisons post hoc test was conducted to determine honestly significant differences between groups for these items. The results indicated secondary pre-service mathematics teachers (M=4.32) differed significantly from the language arts (M=3.60), social studies (M=3.61), and science (M=3.71) groups for the first positively phrased GTE item, "When students demonstrate diligence it is often because teachers have encouraged the students to persist with tasks" (see table 33). For the second item tested, "Teachers who encourage responsibility at school can influence students' level of responsibility outside of school," a significant difference was found between secondary pre-service secondary social studies teachers (M=4.42) and the mathematics group (M=3.73) (see table 34).

**Table 33: Multiple Comparisons**

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

(I) What is the primary area of your degree?	(J) What is the primary area of your degree?	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Language Arts	Science	-.119	.185	.917	-.60	.36
	Social Studies	.017	.148	.999	-.37	.40
	Mathematics	-.723*	.182	.001*	-1.20	-.25
Science	Language Arts	.119	.185	.917	-.36	.60
	Social Studies	.137	.183	.878	-.34	.61
	Mathematics	-.604*	.211	.025*	-1.15	-.06
Social Studies	Language Arts	-.017	.148	.999	-.40	.37
	Science	-.137	.183	.878	-.61	.34
	Mathematics	-.740*	.180	.000*	-1.21	-.27
Mathematics	Language Arts	.723*	.182	.001*	.25	1.20
	Science	.604*	.211	.025*	.06	1.15
	Social Studies	.740*	.180	.000*	.27	1.21

\*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

**Table 34: Multiple Comparisons**

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

(I) What is the primary area of your degree?	(J) What is the primary area of your degree?	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Language Arts	Science	.262	.203	.573	-.27	.79
	Social Studies	-.256	.163	.402	-.68	.17
	Mathematics	.439	.200	.131	-.08	.96
Science	Language Arts	-.262	.203	.573	-.79	.27
	Social Studies	-.517	.201	.054	-1.04	.01
	Mathematics	.177	.232	.870	-.43	.78
Social Studies	Language Arts	.256	.163	.402	-.17	.68
	Science	.517	.201	.054	-.01	1.04
	Mathematics	.695*	.198	.003*	.18	1.21
Mathematics	Language Arts	-.439	.200	.131	-.96	.08
	Science	-.177	.232	.870	-.78	.43
	Social Studies	-.695*	.198	.003*	-1.21	-.18

\*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

*Negatively Phrased GTE Items by Program/Major*

Table 35 summarizes the means and standard deviations obtained for each negatively phrased general teaching efficacy item on the CEEBI for pre-service secondary teachers in language arts, science, social studies, and mathematics. Negatively phrased items were scored (Strongly Agree=1, Agree=2, Undecided=3, Disagree=4, and Strongly Disagree=5) (see table 35). The mean scores on each item can be used to determine specific groups' general efficacy beliefs for each item. The results (see table 35) were identified using the following coding, \*= 1.00-2.99 (negatively efficacious), and \*\*= 4.00-5.00 (positively efficacious), for the grouping variable "program/major."

**Table 35: Descriptives- Negatively Phrased GTE Items by Program/Major**

Negatively Phrased GTE Items		N	Mean	Std. Deviation
4. Teachers are usually not responsible when a child becomes more courteous.	Language Arts	42	4.07**	.558
	Science	21	3.86	.727
	Social Studies	45	3.84	.737
	Mathematics	22	3.91	.921
	Total	130	3.93	.717
10. Teachers who spend time encouraging students to be respectful of others will see little change in students' social interaction.	Language Arts	42	4.26**	.497
	Science	21	4.05**	.669
	Social Studies	45	3.44	1.099
	Mathematics	22	3.32	1.129
	Total	130	3.78	.964
13. Some students will not become more respectful even if they have had teachers who promote respect.	Language Arts	42	2.14*	.977
	Science	21	2.38*	.740
	Social Studies	45	2.13*	1.014
	Mathematics	22	2.32*	.995
	Total	130	2.21	.954
15. If students are inconsiderate, it is often because teachers have not sufficiently modeled this trait.	Language Arts	42	3.64	1.032
	Science	21	3.81	.512
	Social Studies	45	3.56	1.035
	Mathematics	22	3.55	1.371
	Total	130	3.62	1.029
16. If responsibility is not encouraged in a child's home, teachers will have little success teaching this trait at school.	Language Arts	42	3.93	.947
	Science	21	3.43	.926
	Social Studies	45	3.62	1.173
	Mathematics	22	3.09	1.109
	Total	130	3.60	1.083
20. Teaching students what it means to be honest is unlikely to result in students who are more honest.	Language Arts	42	2.24*	.821
	Science	21	2.57*	1.028
	Social Studies	45	2.31*	.793
	Mathematics	22	2.23*	.922
	Total	130	2.32	.863
22. Teachers are often at fault when students are dishonest.	Language Arts	42	4.14**	.872
	Science	21	4.29**	.463
	Social Studies	45	4.18**	.716

Negatively Phrased GTE Items	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
	Mathematics	22	3.82
Total	130	4.12	.768

*Coding*

\*= (1.00- 2.99) negatively efficacious

(3.00 - 3.99)= neither positive nor negative

\*\*= (4.00-5.00) positively efficacious

A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted comparing scores for each negatively phrased GTE item to the four groups of secondary pre-service teachers by their program/major (language arts, science, social studies, and mathematics (see table 36). The ANOVA revealed significant statistical differences for two of the negatively phrased GTE items. These items were, “Teachers who spend time encouraging students to be respectful of others will see little change in students’ social interaction”  $F(3, 126)=8.919, p=.000$ , and “If responsibility is not encouraged in a child’s home, teachers will have little success teaching this trait at school,”  $F(3, 126)=3.255, p=.024$  (see table 36).

**Table 36: ANOVA**

Negatively Phrased GTE Items		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
4. Teachers are usually not responsible when a child becomes more courteous.	Between Groups	1.290	3	.430	.833	.478
	Within Groups	65.086	126	.517		
	Total	66.377	129			

Negatively Phrased GTE Items		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
10. Teachers who spend time encouraging students to be respectful of others will see little change in students' social interaction.	Between Groups	21.014	3	7.005	8.919	.000*
	Within Groups	98.955	126	.785		
	Total	119.969	129			
13. Some students will not become more respectful even if they have had teachers who promote respect.	Between Groups	1.324	3	.441	.479	.697
	Within Groups	116.068	126	.921		
	Total	117.392	129			
15. If students are inconsiderate, it is often because teachers have not sufficiently modeled this trait.	Between Groups	1.084	3	.361	.336	.799
	Within Groups	135.447	126	1.075		
	Total	136.531	129			
16. If responsibility is not encouraged in a child's home, teachers will have little success teaching this trait at school.	Between Groups	10.875	3	3.625	3.255	.024*
	Within Groups	140.325	126	1.114		
	Total	151.200	129			
20. Teaching students what it means to be honest is unlikely to result in students who are more honest..	Between Groups	1.799	3	.600	.802	.495
	Within Groups	94.270	126	.748		
	Total	96.069	129			
22. Teachers are often at fault when students are dishonest.	Between Groups	2.752	3	.917	1.577	.198
	Within Groups	73.279	126	.582		
	Total	76.031	129			

\*This data is significant at the .05 level

As statistical significance was found for items number 10 and 16; a Tukey's pairwise comparisons post hoc test was conducted to determine honestly significant differences between groups for these items. The results indicated secondary pre-service language arts teachers (M=4.26) differed significantly from the social studies (M=3.44) and mathematics group (M=3.32); while the science group (M=4.05) also differed significantly from the mathematics group for the first negatively phrased GTE item, "Teachers who spend time encouraging students to be respectful of others will see little change in students' social interaction" (see table 37). For the second item tested, "If responsibility is not encouraged in a child's home, teachers will have little success teaching this trait at school," a significant difference was found between secondary pre-service secondary language arts teachers (M=3.93) and the mathematics group (M=3.09) (see table 38).

**Table 37: Multiple Comparisons**

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

Tukey HSD

(I) What is the primary area of your degree?	(J) What is the primary area of your degree?	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Language Arts	Science	.214	.237	.802	-.40	.83
	Social Studies	.817*	.190	.000*	.32	1.31
	Mathematics	.944*	.233	.001*	.34	1.55
Science	Language Arts	-.214	.237	.802	-.83	.40
	Social Studies	.603	.234	.054	-.01	1.21
	Mathematics	.729*	.270	.039*	.03	1.43
Social Studies	Language Arts	-.817*	.190	.000*	-1.31	-.32
	Science	-.603	.234	.054	-1.21	.01
	Mathematics	.126	.231	.947	-.47	.73
Mathematics	Language Arts	-.944*	.233	.001*	-1.55	-.34
	Science	-.729*	.270	.039*	-1.43	-.03
	Social Studies	-.126	.231	.947	-.73	.47

\*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.



**Table 38: Multiple Comparisons**

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

(I) What is the primary area of your degree?	(J) What is the primary area of your degree?	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Language Arts	Science	.500	.282	.291	-.23	1.23
	Social Studies	.306	.226	.531	-.28	.90
	Mathematics	.838*	.278	.016*	.11	1.56
Science	Language Arts	-.500	.282	.291	-1.23	.23
	Social Studies	-.194	.279	.899	-.92	.53
	Mathematics	.338	.322	.721	-.50	1.18
Social Studies	Language Arts	-.306	.226	.531	-.90	.28
	Science	.194	.279	.899	-.53	.92
	Mathematics	.531	.275	.219	-.18	1.25
Mathematics	Language Arts	-.838*	.278	.016*	-1.56	-.11
	Science	-.338	.322	.721	-1.18	.50
	Social Studies	-.531	.275	.219	-1.25	.18

\*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

## CHAPTER 5 DISCUSSION

### Introduction

This study was designed to investigate if differences existed between pre-service secondary teachers' personal teacher efficacy (PTE) and general teacher efficacy (PTE) based on the self-reported demographic variables of a) program/major, b) gender, c) race/ethnicity, and d) coursework in character education. The data was collected utilizing the Character Education Efficacy Belief Instrument (CEEBI) developed by Milson and Mehlig (2002).

Section one of this chapter includes a discussion of conclusions for each of the research questions. After a discussion of findings for each research question, section two addresses the limitations of the study. Section three examines the implications of this research study. The fourth section contains recommendations for future research, followed by a summary of the research study in the fifth section.

### Discussion of Findings

#### Research Question 1

Is there a statistically significant difference in pre-service secondary teachers', in the fields of social studies, mathematics, science, and language arts, sense of personal teaching efficacy (PTE) and general teaching efficacy (GTE) for teaching character education?

### *Teacher Efficacy and Program/Major*

The first research question explored whether a difference in PTE and GTE existed between secondary pre-service teachers' in the fields of social studies, mathematics, science, and language arts. The PTE means were similar for language arts ( $M=46.21$ ,  $SD=5.18$ ), science ( $M=43.38$ ,  $SD=5.04$ ), social studies ( $M=45.42$ ,  $SD=4.93$ ), and mathematics ( $M=46.32$ ,  $SD=4.35$ ). GTE means were lower than PTE means for each of the groups, but GTE means were still quite similar among language arts ( $M=43.69$ ,  $SD=3.29$ ), science ( $M=43.00$ ,  $SD=3.33$ ), social studies ( $M=41.98$ ,  $SD=3.12$ ), and mathematics ( $M=41.36$ ,  $SD=5.77$ ) pre-service teachers. It is important to note that the mathematics group had the highest mean of any group for PTE, and the lowest mean of any group for GTE. This indicates that pre-service secondary mathematics teachers participating in this study feel more confident in their own abilities to instruct in character education than they do about teachers in general.

A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted for PTE and the independent variable "program/major," as well as GTE and "program/major." The ANOVA for PTE  $F(3, 126)=1.784$ ,  $p=.154$  and GTE  $F(3, 126)=2.447$ ,  $p=.067$  revealed no significant statistical difference in efficacy beliefs between secondary pre-service teachers participating in this study based on academic program. However, the data collected retains relevance for a variety of reasons. For instance, PTE and GTE means were low for all four content areas, indicating that secondary pre-service teachers in these core content areas are unsure about their own abilities and the abilities of teacher's in general to be effective character educators. In addition, these findings are particularly problematic for teacher educators in the fields of social studies and

language arts because these subject areas often acknowledge the strong connection between character education and the academic content (Milson, 2003; Hoge, 2002).

#### *Teacher Efficacy by CEEBI Item*

In order to gain a more detailed understanding of possible differences between pre-service secondary teachers in language arts, science, social studies, and mathematics; the researcher compared the mean scores of each group for the individual items on the CEEBI. Milson (2003), explained how these scores can be used to determine the general efficacy level for each item. As the range of possible scores for each item was 1.00 (lowest possible score) to 5.00 (highest possible score), Milson concluded that “scores between 1.00 and 2.99 are considered negatively efficacious, those between 3.00 and 3.99 are neither positive nor negative, and those scores above 4.00 are considered positively efficacious” (p. 97).

The majority of responses for secondary pre-service teachers in the language arts, science, social studies, and mathematics fell into the category of being “neither positive nor negatively efficacious” (see table 39). This implies that many secondary pre-service teachers in this study have some uncertainty about their role in character education and how influential teachers can be in the lives of students within these programs. This finding supports the claims of many character education advocates who believe that teachers are ill prepared for their duties in the moral domain (Lickona, 1993; Berkowitz, 1998; Milson & Mehlig, 2002; Milson, 2003).

**Table 39: Program/Major mean efficacy responses for each CEEBI Item**

Program/Major	Positively efficacious responses (M=5.00-4.00)	Neither positively nor negatively efficacious responses (M=3.99-3.00)	Negatively efficacious responses (M=2.99-1.00)
Language Arts	N=9	N=13	N=2
Science	N=6	N=14	N=4
Social Studies	N=8	N=12	N=4
Mathematics	N=6	N=16	N=2

Three items on the CEEBI resulted in positively efficacious beliefs for all of the content area groups. PTE item number three, “I am confident in my ability to be a good role model,” PTE item number six, “I am usually at a loss as to how to help a student be more responsible,” and PTE item number nineteen, “I will be able to influence the character of students because I am a good role model.” As all of these items fall under the PTE scale, it can be concluded that secondary pre-service teachers in this study feel a strong level of confidence about their own abilities to be a good role model, influence the character of students, and how to help students become more responsible.

Two items on the CEEBI resulted in negatively efficacious beliefs for all of the content area groups. GTE item number thirteen, “Some students will not become more respectful even if they have had teachers who promote respect,” and GTE item number twenty, “Teaching students what it means to be honest is unlikely to result in students who are more honest.” As both of these items fall under the GTE scale, it can be concluded that secondary pre-service teachers in this study feel that some students will not be respectful regardless of the teacher’s actions. This

finding has significance because it implies that the participants in this study believe some students' cannot be influenced to be more respectful by the teacher. In addition, the aforementioned findings also indicate that most of the secondary pre-service teachers in this study may struggle to teach in urban schools, which often lack strong community support and resources. Also, the finding that secondary pre-service teachers participating in this study did not believe that teaching students the meaning of honesty would result in students who are more honest; directly contradicts the beliefs of many character education programs and character education mandates. Since many character education programs and mandates include the teaching of specific character traits as part of a successful program, the lack of support by secondary pre-service teachers in this study should raise questions about the direct teaching of specific character traits. Across the board, all groups of pre-service secondary teachers in this study did not believe direct instruction on the meaning of a character trait would result in a student that exhibited the same trait. This lack of confidence could be a strong factor in why many secondary teachers feel less confident in the effectiveness of character education, especially when compared to their elementary counterparts (Milson & Mehlig, 2002).

An ANOVA was run comparing the mean scores for each group of secondary pre-service teachers (language arts, science, social studies, and mathematics) for each of the twelve PTE items on the CEEBI. The results yielded statistical significance between secondary pre-service teachers on four PTE items. These included the following items:

*PTE Items*

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

$$F(3, 126)=3.191, p=.026$$

7. I know how to use strategies that might lead to positive changes in students' character.  $F(3, 126)=3.773, p=.012$
14. When I have a student who lies regularly, I am confident I can convince him/her to stop lying to me.  $F(3, 126)=5.499, p=.001$
21. I sometimes don't know what to do to help students become more compassionate.  $F(3, 126)=4.407, p=.006$ .

PTE item number one identified a significant difference between secondary pre-service science ( $M=3.48, SD=1.167$ ) teachers and the language arts ( $M=4.19, SD=.804$ ) and social science ( $M=4.18, SD=.936$ ) teachers on their comfort level discussing issues of right and wrong with students. This could indicate that pre-service secondary science teachers need additional support and guidance regarding how exactly to facilitate discussions on critical social issues within the context of their classroom. PTE item number seven revealed a significant difference between students majoring in mathematics ( $M=4.18, SD=.664$ ) and language arts ( $M=3.45, SD=1.064$ ) regarding their knowledge of strategies that might lead to positive character changes in student's character. An interesting aspect of this finding revolved around the fact that mathematics was the only group to score positively efficacious to this item. Since all of the participants tested were in the same college of education, with very similar core education courses, it could be determined that mathematics majors received some form of character education instruction during their content methods courses, which are the courses directly dealing with classroom teaching strategies.

PTE item number fourteen acknowledged a significant difference between language arts ( $M=3.07, SD=1.068$ ) and mathematics ( $M=3.14, SD=.941$ ) when compared to their science ( $M=2.38, SD=.973$ ) and social studies ( $M=2.47, SD=.726$ ) counterparts. Tukey's test of honestly

significant differences showed that pre-service language arts and mathematics teachers were more confident in their ability to convince a student who lies regularly, to stop lying, than pre-service science and social studies teachers. While none of the mean scores were particularly high for any group of the pre-service teachers in this study, it should be noted that the low scores for social studies and science teachers resulted in negatively efficacious beliefs that needs to be addressed. If pre-service teachers in these fields do not feel confident that they can keep students from lying to them, then these same teachers could experience a great deal of difficulty and frustration once they begin their teaching careers. The final PTE item of statistical significance was number twenty one, which had very similar results to PTE item number fourteen. This item discovered a significant difference between language arts ( $M=3.29$ ,  $SD=1.088$ ) and mathematics ( $M=3.14$ ,  $SD=.941$ ) when compared to their science ( $M=2.24$ ,  $SD=1.044$ ) and social studies ( $M=2.89$ ,  $SD=1.229$ ) counterparts. Tukey's test showed that pre-service language arts and mathematics teachers felt significantly more confident in their ability to help students become more compassionate than pre-service science and social studies teachers. The negatively efficacious scores for science and social studies once again identified a lack of confidence among these group participants in their ability to directly instruct students in a key character trait. It could be inferred through these results that secondary pre-service teachers in science and social studies participating in this study need additional training in how to incorporate direct instruction on specific character traits to impact student behavior and character development.

An ANOVA was also run comparing the mean scores for each group of secondary pre-service teachers (language arts, science, social studies, and mathematics) for each of the twelve GTE items on the CEEBI. The results yielded statistical significance between secondary pre-service teachers on four GTE items. These included the following items:



*GTE Items*

9. When students demonstrate diligence it is often because teachers have encouraged the students to persist with tasks.  $F(3, 126)=6.578, p=.000$
10. Teachers who spend time encouraging students to be respectful of others will see little change in students' social interaction.  $F(3, 126)=8.919, p=.000$
16. If responsibility is not encouraged in a child's home, teachers will have little success teaching this trait at school.  $F(3, 126)=3.255, p=.024$
24. Teachers who encourage responsibility at school can influence students' level of responsibility outside of school.  $F(3, 126)=4.905, p=.003$ .

GTE item number nine identified a significant difference between secondary pre-service teachers in mathematics ( $M=4.32, SD=.646$ ) when compared to language arts ( $M=3.60, SD=.767$ ), science ( $M=3.71, SD=.561$ ), and social studies ( $M=3.58, SD=.690$ ). Pre-service mathematics teachers in this study were the only group to have positively efficacious beliefs about a teacher's ability, in general, to influence a student's diligence directly through teacher encouragement to persist with a task. This finding could be due to the nature of secondary mathematics courses, which are often difficult for many secondary students. Secondary math teachers may feel the need to use encouragement techniques to keep students from becoming frustrated with difficult concepts. GTE item number ten revealed a significant difference between secondary pre-service language arts ( $M=4.26, SD=.497$ ) when compared to social studies ( $M=3.44, SD=1.099$ ) and mathematics ( $M=3.32, SD=1.129$ ). Also, science ( $M=4.05, SD=.669$ ) teachers differed significantly from the mathematics group. The language arts and science groups were the only two that had positively efficacious beliefs about a teacher's ability, in general, to influence students' social interaction by encouraging respect in the classroom.

GTE item number sixteen discovered a significant difference between pre-service teachers in language arts ( $M=3.93$ ,  $SD=.947$ ) and mathematics ( $M=3.09$ ,  $SD=1.109$ ). While neither of these groups scored positively on the efficacy beliefs for this item, there was a significant difference in pre-service language arts and mathematics teachers' beliefs that responsibility can be a trait successfully taught by teachers even if it was not encouraged in the child's home. GTE item number twenty four revealed a significant difference between pre-service teachers in social studies ( $M=4.42$ ,  $SD=.621$ ) and mathematics ( $M=3.73$ ,  $SD=.935$ ) regarding their beliefs in a teachers ability, in general, to influence a students' level of responsibility outside of school by encouraging responsibility in the classroom. It should also be noted that pre-service teachers in social studies and language arts were the only groups to score positively efficacious beliefs for this particular item. This finding was the third in which pre-service mathematics teachers differed significantly from either language arts or social studies teachers in regards to the effectiveness of character education lessons, in general, to extend beyond the classroom walls. It appears that, while the pre-service mathematics teachers in this study have some positively efficacious beliefs about their own abilities to influence character development in students within the classroom, there seems to be some doubt about teachers' abilities in general to overcome environmental influences.

#### Research Question 2

Is there a statistically significant difference in pre-service secondary teachers' sense of personal teaching efficacy (PTE) and general teaching efficacy (GTE) based on gender?

### *Teacher Efficacy and Gender*

The second research question examined whether a difference in teacher efficacy for character education existed between males and females. The PTE means were very similar for both male ( $M=45.46$ ,  $SD= 4.75$ ) and female ( $M=45.52$ ,  $SD=5.11$ ) participants. Female participants did have a slightly higher mean ( $M=43.01$ ,  $SD=3.56$ ) for GTE than male participants ( $M=41.62$ ,  $SD=4.29$ ). A t-test was conducted for PTE and gender, as well as GTE and gender. The t-test for PTE ( $t= -.057$ ,  $df= 128$ ,  $p>.05$ ) and GTE ( $t= -1.785$ ,  $df= 128$ ,  $p>.05$ ) revealed no significant differences in efficacy beliefs for pre-service secondary teachers participating in this study based on gender. These findings are consistent to other studies utilizing the CEEBI (Milson and Mehlig, 2002; Milson, 2003; Ledford, 2005), which also found no significant difference in efficacy beliefs among males and females. The findings of this study reiterate the broad based support for character education and how this support has the ability to transcend gender. However, the mean scores for PTE and GTE were fairly low for both males and females in this study. This indicates that perhaps pre-service secondary teachers of both genders are unsure about character education and what their role will be as a moral instructor once they enter into the classroom.

### Research Question 3

Is there a statistically significant difference in pre-service secondary teachers' sense of personal teaching efficacy (PTE) and general teaching efficacy (GTE) based on race/ethnicity?

### *Teacher Efficacy and Race/Ethnicity*

The third research question investigated whether a difference existed between pre-service secondary teachers PTE and GTE based on the self-reported demographic variable of “race/ethnicity.” The one hundred and thirty participants of this research study consisted of 17.7% African Americans (N=23), 3.8% Asian/Pacific Islander (N=5), 58.5% Caucasian (N=76), and 20% Hispanic (N=26). Since the group for Asian/Pacific Islander was so small, it was removed from the statistical analysis for this question. The PTE means were quite similar for African Americans (M=47.13, SD=5.38), Caucasians (M=45.25, SD=5.07), and Hispanics (M=44.96, SD=4.08). GTE means were lower than the PTE means for every group, but the GTE means were also very similar for African Americans (M=43.78, SD=4.04), Caucasians (M=42.51, SD=3.92), and Hispanics (M=41.65, SD=3.22).

A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted for PTE and race/ethnicity, as well as GTE and race/ethnicity. The ANOVA for PTE  $F(2, 122)=1.499, p=.227$  and GTE  $F(2, 122)=1.925, p=.150$ , revealed no significant differences in efficacy beliefs for pre-service secondary teachers participating in this study based on race. These findings are similar to those reported by Milson and Mehlig (2002) and Milson (2003), but contradictory to Beachum (2002). Beachum’s study utilized the CEEBI to examine pre-service teachers, K-12, at a university in the mid-west and found a significant difference between Caucasians and African Americans. Beachum believed that the differences between races could have been attributed to the lack of diversity in the area where the sample population attended school. The lack of significant differences between races in this study could be contributed to the diverse population of the area

and institution from which the population sample was drawn. Although there were no significant differences between races for PTE and GTE, it is important to note that the mean scores were fairly low for all races on both teacher efficacy scales. This indicates that pre-service secondary teachers of all races are somewhat unsure about their own abilities as a moral educator and about the overall impact a teacher can have on a student's character development regardless of environmental factors.

#### Research Question 4

Is there a statistically significant difference in pre-service secondary teachers' sense of personal teaching efficacy (PTE) and general teaching efficacy (GTE) based on coursework in character education?

#### *Teacher Efficacy and Coursework in Character Education*

The fourth research question examined whether a difference existed between pre-service secondary teachers PTE and GTE based on the self-reported demographic variable of "coursework in character education." For the one hundred and thirty participants in this research study, 50.8% (N=66) indicated that they had received coursework discussing character education in their undergraduate program, 32.3% (N=42) reported that they did not receive coursework discussing character education in their undergraduate program, and 16.9% (N=22) were unsure if they had received coursework addressing character education in their undergraduate program. The PTE means were similar for participants with coursework in character education (M=46.11, SD=5.55), without coursework (M=45.10, SD=4.26, and those who were unsure (M=44.45, SD=4.39). The GTE means were lower than the PTE means for every group, but the GTE means were also similar among those who reported having coursework in character education

( $M=42.97$ ,  $SD=3.26$ ), those without coursework, ( $M=42.21$ ,  $SD=4.77$ ), and those who were unsure if they had coursework addressing character education ( $M=42.18$ ,  $SD=3.49$ ).

A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted for PTE and GTE with the independent variable “coursework in character education.” The ANOVA for PTE  $F(2, 127)=1.111$ ,  $p=.332$  and GTE  $F(2, 127)=.647$ ,  $p=.525$ , revealed no significant differences in efficacy beliefs for pre-service secondary teachers participating in this study based on whether or not they had coursework addressing character education during their undergraduate program. These findings are similar to the original study utilizing the CEEBI conducted by Milson and Mehlig (2002) and the follow up study done by Milson (2003). While there was no significant difference between PTE and GTE scores for secondary pre-service teachers based on coursework in character education, the data obtained provides some valuable insights to the field of character education and teacher preparation. For instance, only 51% of secondary pre-service teachers in this study reported that they had received coursework addressing character education during their undergraduate program. This statistic is consistent with the literature that suggests teacher preparation programs are not doing an adequate job in training future teachers about their role as character educators. The Character Education Partnership (CEP) conducted a nation-wide survey of college deans in 1999. This study found that 90% of college deans believed that “core values can and should be taught in schools,” but fewer than 15% of these leaders provided character education training in their teacher preparation programs (Berreth & Ernst, 2001, p.7). The clear disconnect between support for character education and the amount of training pre-service teachers receive in this field during their teacher preparation programs could represent one of the major reasons why teachers, especially at the secondary level, feel unprepared and lack confidence in their abilities as moral instructors.

### Limitations of Study

As is the case when conducting any type of research, there were several limitations within this study. When interpreting data from this study, the reader should be aware of the limitations of this research in order to better understand the implications of the study. The following brief list of limitations are offered so that readers can have a more complete picture of this research study and some of the problems faced throughout this process.

1. This questionnaire went out to secondary pre-service social studies, mathematics, science, and language arts majors at one university in the state of Florida. Therefore, results of this study may not be generalizable to pre-service teachers outside of this program. Also, since this school is one of the top ten largest institutions in the country in terms of student population, the results may not be generalizable to smaller colleges or universities that boast smaller class sizes and programs.
2. This study focused only on pre-service secondary content area teachers in the fields of social studies, mathematics, language arts, and science, thereby excluding other important future school personnel including foreign language, exceptional education, physical education, art, music, and teachers of other elective courses offered in secondary schools.
3. Since character education is a rather broad term, encompassing several different meanings and definitions, each participant in the study may have a slightly different interpretation of character education. Since the researcher did not provide a uniform definition of character education for study participants, the pre-service teachers will be responding to the character education questions based on their own interpretation of the term and their unique experiences with this topic.

4. As the population sample of this study consisted of pre-service secondary teachers, their lack of experience in the field could have made it difficult for them to understand the actual meaning of teaching efficacy and the implications of this factor on their teaching beliefs and practices.
5. It should also be noted that the correlation between the PTE and GTE scales (.693) was higher than the reliability of one of the scales (GTE,  $\alpha=.6325$ ). This does indicate that perhaps the GTE scale needs additional modification when administered to secondary pre-service teachers.
6. The study was limited by the honesty and reliability of the individuals providing answers to the questionnaire.

### Implications

#### *Implications for Teacher Education*

The results of this study have implications for teacher educators in language arts, science, social studies, and mathematics; as well as department chairs, deans, and other administrative faculty members in charge of teacher preparation programs at colleges and universities. Although this study was designed to look for potential differences in PTE and GTE among pre-service secondary teachers in language arts, science, social studies, and mathematics; it should be noted that all of these groups exhibited rather low scores on both scales. In addition, the lack of consensus regarding positive efficacy beliefs among these groups supports the notion that secondary teachers may in fact have different feelings regarding character education and their role as a moral instructor. Also, it was interesting to see that all groups of pre-service teachers in this study felt negatively efficacious beliefs about the ability of teachers in general to affect



students' level of respect and honesty through the explicit instruction of these traits. These findings are problematic for many character education programs and state legislatures that routinely include specific character traits to be taught in the schools. If teachers lack confidence in the ability of direct instruction on character traits to influence student development, then character education may have a much more difficult time succeeding at the secondary level. Teacher preparation programs may need to consider strategies for helping pre-service secondary teachers with the direct instruction of specific character traits, particularly in states, like Florida, where specific traits are mandated as part of a teacher's responsibilities.

The findings of this study also indicated that only 51% of secondary pre-service teachers reported receiving coursework that addressed character education. This statistic supports the claim of many character educators that teachers are not receiving proper training in the character development aspect of their craft (Lickona, 1993; Mathison, 1998; Berkowitz, 1998). Berkowitz (1998) discussed several obstacles to including character education in teacher preparation programs, such as time constraints in the curricula, disagreement over the definition and nature of character education, and ambivalence of college faculty members towards character education. Although the findings of this study do not determine exactly why character education was not addressed as part of the participants' undergraduate coursework, it does however support Berkowitz's claim that the topic of character education remains largely ignored at the university level.

As with Milson and Mehlig's (2002) research, the results of this study indicate that secondary pre-service teachers appear less efficacious for character development statements addressing teacher's ability, in general, to change specific character traits in students. Negatively

efficacious responses were found for secondary pre-service teachers in this study, as well as the elementary teachers of Milson and Mehlig's (2002) study, for the statements "some students will not become more respectful even if they have had teachers who promote respect," and "teaching students what it means to be honest is unlikely to result in students who are more honest." These findings indicate that teachers at a variety of levels, practicing and pre-service, elementary and secondary, have their doubts about the overall effectiveness of character education to improve specific character trait development within students.

### *Implications for Character Education*

Since this study was the first ever to utilize the CEEBI solely for the purpose of examining potential differences between secondary pre-service teachers by their content area, the findings are significant to character educators. Although no statistically significant difference was found between PTE and GTE scores for secondary pre-service teachers based on content area, there were some important conclusions drawn from this study. For example, the PTE and GTE scores for all content area groups were low, indicating a level of uncertainty among the pre-service teachers regarding their own abilities and the abilities of teachers in general to effectively foster character development in the classroom. Milson and Mehlig (2002) suggest that "the literature on character education typically identifies teachers as a crucial factor in the development of character in youth" (p. 51). As teachers play a role in character development, researchers need to understand how confident these teachers feel in their abilities to foster student character development not only once they are in the classroom, but also while they are still in their undergraduate training programs. The findings from this study show that pre-service secondary teachers from all content areas expressed relatively neutral (neither positive nor

negative) PTE and GTE efficacy beliefs. If character education truly wants to experience success at the secondary level, then more focus should be paid on this aspect of teaching during undergraduate coursework in an attempt to positively influence future teacher's beliefs about character education in the classroom.

Secondary pre-service teachers grouped by content area in language arts, science, social studies, and mathematics all averaged positively efficacious responses to PTE items regarding their ability to be a good role model. These items on the CEEBI address how pre-service secondary teachers feel (knowledgeable, comfortable, confident, etc.) regarding character education. They are not directly linked to a performance outcome such as item twenty "teaching students what it means to be honest is unlikely to result in students who are more honest," which resulted in a negatively efficacious outcome. This could reflect that secondary pre-service teachers are relatively comfortable with character education, but that they are lacking the skills necessary to "convince" a student to be more honest.

#### Recommendations for Future Research

Recommendations for future research are one of the most encouraging and important aspects of research studies because it offers thoughts and opinions regarding the expansion of a research topic to gain a better understanding of the field. Although the field of character education continues to be well researched in some areas, there is still much room for growth and more in depth understanding of this topic. The following list of recommendations for future research is provided based on the findings and results of this research study.

1. This study should be replicated at a different university in a different state to see if similar results are found for secondary pre-service teachers in language arts, science, social studies, and mathematics.
2. A longitudinal study following a group of secondary pre-service teachers into their teaching careers should be conducted to examine how their perceptions on character education change over time.
3. A study to investigate to what extent colleges and universities, from states mandating character education, teach courses or cover material directly pertaining to character education.
4. A qualitative study should be done to take a deeper look at how some teacher educators are utilizing character education strategies in their college courses and how successful these methods are in preparing pre-service teachers to be character educators.
5. A quantitative study should be done to see if there is a relationship between universities with specific character education training programs and the efficacy beliefs of their secondary pre-service teachers versus the efficacy beliefs of secondary pre-service teachers from universities with a specific character education training program.
6. A research study should be done to investigate the perceptions of character education from the perspectives of teachers who leave the profession.
7. A research study should be done to investigate the perceptions of character education from the perspectives of K-12 school counselors.

8. Since many new teachers may have participated in character education programs as a K-12 student, it would be interesting to examine if teachers experiencing character education programs as a student have similar perceptions of character education as teachers who did not participate in character education programs as a K-12 student.

### Summary

Character education has long been one of the most popular, controversial, and debated topics in the field of education. Arguments arise over the best ways to address the topic in the classroom; the definition of the term, and even if character education should be a part of the public school curriculum at all. Regardless of individual feelings towards the topic, it is undeniable that character education is an aspect of contemporary K-12 public school education. Whether schools are addressing character education explicitly through specific programs or initiatives, or implicitly through faculty interactions with students and each other, the students are undoubtedly learning character lessons at the school.

A review of literature identifies moral development of children as one of the primary purposes of public schools championed by Horace Mann. Moral instruction traditionally consisted of teachings from the Bible, with teachers expected to serve as role models to students in the process of forming their own values and beliefs. Although many things have changed over the years, contemporary teachers are still being called upon to serve as positive role models for students and guide them in the process of character development for the betterment of society. As pressure continues to rise on teacher's to increase student test scores during the era of high stakes testing, it is important that educators and researchers spend some time examining how the expanding presence of high stakes tests is impacting teacher efficacy beliefs in the values

domain. This research and exploration should begin with pre-service teachers that are still in teacher preparation programs in order to identify potential weaknesses in efficacy beliefs towards character education before these teachers enter into the field and are asked to take on the task of being moral educators.

As the focus of this study was teacher efficacy for teaching character education among secondary pre-service teachers, personal teaching efficacy (PTE) and general teaching efficacy (GTE) by various self-reported demographic variables (program/major, gender, race/ethnicity, and coursework in character education) were examined utilizing t-test and one-way analyses of variances (ANOVA). Although the study revealed no statistically significant differences between PTE and GTE scores based on the demographic variables, there were some important differences identified between different “program/major” groups on individual items of the Character Education Efficacy Belief Instrument (CEEBI).

This study found that secondary pre-service teachers in all content areas examined retained a moderately low sense of PTE and GTE. The overall low scores for each group tested (language arts, science, social studies, and mathematics) likely contributed to the lack of statistical differences within these groups. However, it was found that secondary pre-service teachers in language arts and social studies had more positively efficacious responses to individual CEEBI items than their science and mathematics counterparts.

Results from this study revealed that a challenge still exists for teacher preparation programs and universities to better prepare teachers for the task of character education and to make this objective more explicit in undergraduate coursework. Only 51% of secondary pre-service teachers in this study responded that they did receive coursework addressing the topic of

character education. This means that nearly half of all secondary pre-service teachers graduating from this teacher preparation program did not receive any coursework that addressed character education or were unsure if their coursework addressed this topic. Although there was no statistical significance found in PTE and GTE scores based on this coursework, it should still be alarming for a teacher preparation program, in a state that mandates specific character traits be taught in K-12 public schools, is graduating nearly 50% of its secondary teachers with no clear coursework addressing character education. Universities with teacher education programs can benefit from the results of this study because it clearly indicates an overall lack of confidence in secondary pre-service teachers efficacy towards character education. Perhaps universities may begin to consider a more explicit connection between character education at the secondary level in order to help increase future teachers confidence in their skills as character educators, as well as the overall importance of character education in the classroom.

## APPENDIX A: CHARACTER EDUCATION EFFICACY BELIEF INSTRUMENT



# Character Education Efficacy Belief Instrument

**Instructions:** Please circle one answer for each statement below.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
SD	D	U	A	SA
↓	↓	↓	↓	↓

## START HERE...

1. I am usually comfortable discussing issues of right and wrong with students.	1	2	3	4	5
2. When a student has been exposed to negative influences at home, I do not believe that I can do much to impact that child's character.	1	2	3	4	5
3. I am confident in my ability to be a good role model.	1	2	3	4	5
4. Teachers are usually not responsible when a child becomes more courteous.	1	2	3	4	5
5. When a student shows greater respect for others, it is usually because teachers have effectively modeled that trait.	1	2	3	4	5
6. I am usually at a loss as to how to help a student be more responsible.	1	2	3	4	5

<b>7. I know how to use strategies that might lead to positive changes in students' character.</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>8. I am not sure that I can teach students to be honest.</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>9. When students demonstrate diligence it is often because teachers have encouraged the students to persist with tasks.</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>10. Teachers who spend time encouraging students to be respectful of others will see little change in students' social interaction.</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>11. I am able to positively influence the character development of a child who has had little direction from parents.</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>12. If parents notice that their children are more responsible, it is likely that teachers have fostered this trait at school.</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>13. Some students will not become more respectful even if they have had teachers who promote respect.</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>14. When I have a student who lies regularly, I am confident I can convince him/her to stop lying to me.</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>15. If students are inconsiderate, it is often because teachers have not sufficiently modeled this trait.</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>16. If responsibility is not encouraged in a child's home, teachers will have little success teaching this trait at school.</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>

17. I often find it difficult to persuade a student that respect for others is important.	1	2	3	4	5
18. When a student becomes more compassionate, it is usually because teachers have created caring classroom environments.	1	2	3	4	5
19. I will be able to influence the character of students because I am a good role model.	1	2	3	4	5
20. Teaching students what it means to be honest is unlikely to result in students who are more honest.	1	2	3	4	5
21. I sometimes don't know what to do to help students become more compassionate.	1	2	3	4	5
22. Teachers are often at fault when students are dishonest.	1	2	3	4	5
23. I am continually finding better ways to develop the character of students.	1	2	3	4	5
24. Teachers who encourage responsibility at school can influence students' level of responsibility outside of school.	1	2	3	4	5

**Instructions:** Please write in the following demographic information.

**Gender:** Male  Female

**Race/Ethnicity**

- African American
- Asian/Pacific Islander
- Caucasian
- Latino/Latina
- Native American
- Multiracial
- Other (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_

**Program/Major (Primary Area of Degree/Certification):**

Please choose only **ONE**

- Art
- Language Arts/English
- Science
- Math
- Social Studies
- Foreign Language
- Exceptional Education
- Physical Education
- Elementary Education
- Other (please identify) \_\_\_\_\_

**Have you ever received any coursework discussing character education in your undergraduate program?**

- Yes
- No

**If yes, please indicate in which classes you addressed the topic of character education. (Check all that apply.)**

- Curriculum/Methods course
- Core Education courses

- Specialization area courses
- Other (please explain):\_\_\_\_\_

**Please provide any additional comments or feedback that you may have regarding this questionnaire in the box below.**

**Thank you very much for your time in completing this questionnaire!**

Note: This questionnaire was reproduced with the permission of the original researchers Andrew Milson and Lisa Mehlig from their study *Elementary School Teachers' Sense of Efficacy for Character Education* (2002).

## APPENDIX B: PERMISSION FROM THE AUTHOR

**From:** "Milson, Andrew" <milson@uta.edu>  
**To:** "kswaters@mail.ucf.edu" <kswaters@mail.ucf.edu>  
**Date:** 8/5/2010 12:32 PM  
**Subject:** RE: Character education efficacy belief instrument

Hi Stewart,

Yes, you certainly have my permission to use the CEEBI as needed for your research. I wish you the best of luck with your study.

I've lost touch with Lisa Mehlig so I don't have a current email address for her.

Take care,  
Andy

Andrew J. Milson, Ph.D. | Professor, Social Science Education & Geography  
University of Texas at Arlington | Box 19777, Arlington, TX 76019  
milson@uta.edu | 817.272.5604

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From: Kevin Waters [kswaters@mail.ucf.edu]  
Sent: Thursday, August 05, 2010 11:20 AM  
To: Milson, Andrew  
Subject: Character education efficacy belief instrument

Hello Dr. Milson,

My name is Stewart Waters and I am a Ph.D candidate at the University of Central Florida. I am about to begin my dissertation study and was really hoping that I may be able to utilize the Character Education Efficacy Belief Instrument that you and Dr. Mehlig used in your previous study. I have not changed any of the items on the questionnaire at all and I am attaching a copy of the instrument for you to examine if you wish. I would really appreciate the opportunity to use your instrument in my study and if any other information is required please let me know and I will be happy to send it to you. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Also, I have tried to find Dr. Mehlig's email address and have been unsuccessful in my attempts. If you happen to have a current email address for Dr. Mehlig that you would not mind sharing with me so that I might gain both authors permission, that would be greatly appreciate. Again, thank you for your time, I know you are extremely busy and I appreciate any consideration you could provide me.

Sincerely,

Stewart Waters, M.Ed.  
Doctoral Student, Social Science Education  
Editorial Assistant, Journal of Social Studies Research  
Co-Coordinator for ISSS Conference  
University of Central Florida  
College of Education, Suite 115E  
P.O. Box 161250  
Orlando, FL 32816-1250  
kswaters@mail.ucf.edu

APPENDIX C: INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL





University of Central Florida Institutional Review Board  
Office of Research & Commercialization  
12201 Research Parkway, Suite 501  
Orlando, Florida 32826-3246  
Telephone: 407-823-2901 or 407-882-2276  
[www.research.ucf.edu/compliance/irb.html](http://www.research.ucf.edu/compliance/irb.html)

### Approval of Exempt Human Research

From: UCF Institutional Review Board #1  
FWA00000351, IRB00001138

To: Kevin Waters Jr.

Date: August 17, 2010

Dear Researcher:

On 8/17/2010, the IRB approved the following activity as human participant research that is exempt from regulation:

Type of Review: UCF IRB Initial Submission Form  
Project Title: A study of pre-service secondary social studies teachers' efficacy towards character education: A comparative study.  
Investigator: Kevin Waters Jr.  
IRB Number: SBE-10-07054  
Funding Agency: None

This determination applies only to the activities described in the IRB submission and does not apply should any changes be made. If changes are made and there are questions about whether these changes affect the exempt status of the human research, please contact the IRB. When you have completed your research, please submit a Study Closure request in iRIS so that IRB records will be accurate.

In the conduct of this research, you are responsible to follow the requirements of the Investigator Manual.

On behalf of Joseph Bielitzki, DVM, UCF IRB Chair, this letter is signed by:

Signature applied by Janice Turchin on 08/17/2010 02:32:48 PM EDT

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Janice Turchin'.

IRB Coordinator

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