HOW HAS CHARACTER EDUCATION BEEN IMPLEMENTED AT THE SCHOOL LEVEL AT AN ONTARIO SAMPLE SCHOOL BOARD?

by

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Abstract

This paper explores character education policy documents from two Ontario school boards as well as several published articles that report on results from research related to implementation of character education programs in Ontario and the United States. This paper examines the connection between school board documents of two school boards with the Ontario Ministry of Education character education initiative that was put in place during the 2008-09 school year. It also includes interviews with three principals at one school-board as to how they approached implementation of character education and its relationship to the goal of the school and provincial policy directives.
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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

“We must remember that intelligence alone is not enough. Intelligence plus character – that is the goal of true education.” Martin Luther King Jr.

The implementation of character education programs looks very different to three different principals. Although these principals are in the same school board and ‘answer’ to the same character education policy documents, each one has interpreted and implemented their school programs differently.

This study focuses on how character education programs have developed and been implemented in a sample Ontario school board. Part of this study looks at the perspectives of three principals from the same Ontario school board. Their interpretations and implementation strategies will be compared and contrasted in relation to their school board’s character education documents.

As a means to clarify and understand the character education documents of the sample school board, this study will also analyze the character education documents and programs from another Ontario school board. The other school board’s character education program was set up and initiated by the same person with the same priorities which will allow relevant comparisons between the two school boards. As well, because character education is a new Ministry of Education initiative, several previous character education-focused programs in Ontario will be discussed including tried and true character education programs in the United States that provide the model for Ontario programs.
Context of the Study

Policy documents are created by school boards to provide information as to how and why particular actions are required for initiatives and program development in their schools. School boards base their policies on sound research and the policies are often formulated through a series of steps by a number of people, usually those who are experts in the field related to the policy. For a policy to be successful and meaningful it is important for the policy to be read and understood by members of the school community and that the school provide ways to ensure that the policy is being implemented. The implementation stage is the main focus of this paper.

Since the Ontario Ministry of Education has recently launched the new Character Development Initiative for the 2008-09 school year many school boards throughout Ontario are in the early stages of formulating a character education policy. This initiative stems from many years of research and analysis of similar programs throughout the world. Within Ontario, the success of the character education programs with the York Region District School Board (YRDSB) in 1998 and the Kawartha Pine Ridge District School Board (KPRDSB) in 2003 has convinced the Ontario Ministry of Education to develop a broader Character Development Initiative. This initiative has resulted in a mandate for character education programs for all public school boards throughout Ontario. At the Finding Common Ground: Character Development in Ontario School, K – 12 Symposium held in October, 2006, the Ministry of Education announced that all publicly funded school boards in Ontario are required to develop and implement a Character Development Initiative during the 2007 – 2008 school year (Glaze, 2006).

Although many character education initiatives have been introduced within Ontario school boards there has been little research done to determine how the initiatives have been
implemented or whether they have been received positively. This study will provide some light on this grey area of Ontario research.

**Purpose of Study**

Given that character education is a new initiative in Ontario, it has the benefit of leadership from Avis Glaze, currently the Secretariat for Literacy and Numeracy with the Ontario Ministry of Education, who lead the character education initiative with the YRDSB in 1998 and the KPRDSB in 2003. Although these school boards embraced the character education initiative at the time and implemented policy documents to facilitate implementation, limited research has been done to follow up on these initiatives and how they look in practice at the school level thus there is no clear benchmark from which to measure the outcome of the programs.

This study focuses on three principals and their involvement with character education in schools in the KPRDSB where character education has recently been implemented. The study has two main purposes, first to identify factors that contribute to the implementation of a school board’s character education documents at the school level and to determine what the process has been in three schools from the introduction of the program and continuing through its progression and evolution. A second purpose of this study is to determine if the factors that contribute to the implementation of character educations programs within a school are unique to elements within the school itself or are factors that may be adopted by other schools. The analysis of findings related to these purposes will be discussed through outcomes of the data collection as well as analysis of supporting research articles.
The intent of the researcher is to provide information in the form of qualitative data regarding current practices that complement the character education documents outlined by the school board.

**Educational Significance**

Because the Ontario Ministry of Education initiative is so new, many school boards throughout Ontario are in the early stages of developing and implementing character education documents for their schools. The nature of this study will provide information to educational professionals about the process that occurs with the introduction of a policy at school board level and factors that contribute to its implementation at the school level.

One outcome this study is to highlight is the awareness for the need for educators to become deliberately involved in the implementation of character education programs within their school rather than relying on the implementation process to be taken care of at the board level.

**Procedures**

This study includes a document analysis of the character education programs of the KPRDSB policy documents and the YRDSB policy document as well as personal interviews about the process of implementation at three schools in the KPRDSB. To add relevance and meaning to the documents of these two school boards several studies and documents will also be referred to from programs and initiatives in Ontario and the United States.

**Limitations**

The study was limited to one Ontario school board. Within the KPRDSB three principals were interviewed who gave feedback related to one or several character education programs implemented. Two principals are elementary school principals while one principal has been both an elementary school principal and a high school principal. The principals
reflected on character education implementation experiences from present and previous
schools they have been involved with. The results of these interviews could not be used to
assume similar relationships in elementary schools and high schools, nor in other geographic
areas.

The study was conducted by one researcher and was confined to one school board. It
involved the perceptions and personal opinions of three principals’ in relation to the level of
character education implementation in their school or other schools they have been involved
with either as a teacher or a principal. Perceptions of the principals may not be the most
accurate method of judging the levels of character education implementation.

The present study was not longitudinal therefore, the long-term relationship of the
principals’ perceptions and personal characteristics and character education programs were
not studied.

Although character education implementation effectiveness has been addressed in the
review of literature, the value of these programs has not been discussed in this research
paper. Therefore, the study was limited to the principal’s perception of the level of
importance and the level of implementation of the programs. It is hoped that this information
may provide some insight or guidance to other leaders engaged with character education.

Assumptions

For the purpose of this study, the current researcher assumed that:

(1) the principals would answer the interview questions in a candid and thorough
manner;

(2) the interviews would give an accurate account of character education
implementation in schools in one school board in Ontario;

(3) the interviews would give an accurate account of the principals’ perceptions of
character education implementation.
Summary of Study

In this study character education policy documents of YRDSB and KPRDSB were analyzed to determine what the expectations are at the school level for implementation of character education programs. Focus of this analysis is on two school boards who initiated and implemented character education policy before it was mandated by the Ontario Ministry of Education in 2007. As part of uncovering relevant implementation strategies the researcher interviewed three principals from one of the school boards who each interpreted the character education documents in different ways. Through discussion with the principals the researcher has been able to effectively draw relevant relationships and comparisons between various strategies and programs used not only in this particular school board but across various schools and districts in Ontario, Canada and the United States. From this information it may be possible to determine successful character education implementation strategies and programs that will be useful for schools that are currently in the initial stages of planning and initiating programs.
Chapter 2: Methodology

Research Design

This study uses a mixed method approach. It is primarily a document analysis with a small component of qualitative research using a case study approach with the use of interviews of a very small sample group.

Procedure

The overview of this study includes character education documents from two school boards. Both of these school boards initiated and implemented character education programs in their schools prior to the Ontario government’s character education policy Finding Common Ground introduced in the fall of 2006. These programs served as pilot programs for the province-wide initiative.

Another reason for choosing York Region District School Board and Kawartha Pine Ridge District School Board as the main focus of this study was because both of these programs were initiated and implemented under the direction of Avis Glaze who is currently the Ministry of Ontario’s Literacy and Numeracy Secretariat. In this role she has taken her experience and success from the above mentioned school board’s character education initiatives and launched the Ontario-wide mandate for all schools to have character education programs in place.

By analyzing documents from the two school boards and discussing their initiatives and strategies to similar programs both in Ontario and the United States it becomes possible to determine common and relevant information to present to school boards who are currently in the early stages of initiating such programs.
The sampling used in this study includes three principals currently with the KPRDSB. Each principal has a unique perspective on character education which has made for an interesting discussion with reference to the board’s character education documents.

The interview questions are open-ended and include a range of information gathering including personal perspective on character education, personal involvement with character education and a broader perspective about the programs currently being used within the board. Each principal has unique experience in the elementary school capacity. Kevin Jones has been a principal in the public elementary system for several years. Mr. Jones has been at several schools both as a principal and as a teacher. When Mr. Jones was working as a teacher he was part of the team at KPRDSB that worked with community members to recognize the importance of character education in the school board’s growth. The perspective of the principal Megan Brown was very different from Kevin Jones’s. One factor is that Megan Brown has been in the education system for over 30 years and most of her involvement has been at the high school level both as a teacher and as a principal. Another factor is that Ms. Brown has had the opportunity to spend a few years as an elementary school principal as well as a High School principal. The third principal interviewed was Michelle Smith who at the time of the interview had only been in the role for a few months. Previous to the principal role she spent one year as a vice principal. As a new principal Ms. Smith’s responses were primarily from a teacher’s perspective. In the role of a new principal Ms. Smith hopes to increase character education awareness and participation in her school where it has been lacking the past few years.
Summary of Procedures

The procedure used for this research report provides a comprehensive overview of the character education documents for the two school boards in Ontario who have successfully implemented character education programs. By providing primary research data through interviewing principals from one of the school boards there is a connection made with the written documentation and the reality of the implementation of the documents.
Chapter 3: Analysis of KPRDSB and YRDSB Documents

Introduction

As early as 1999 the Ontario government discussed aspects and initiatives related to character education. In the October 1999 Throne Speech, the Ontario Government stated that:

Parents, students, and teachers want schools to be a safe, secure, respectful environment for learning. Your government wants the education system to teach students the importance of respect for themselves, respect for others and respect for the responsibilities of citizenship. It has already included mandatory community service in the new high school curriculum, but more must be done to foster principles of tolerance, civility and good citizenship among Ontario's youth (Glaze, KPRDSB Character Education: A Vision Statement, 2006, p. 7).

By 2003 the Ontario government was more specific about their support of implementing character education programs. “In its 2003 Speech from the Throne, the government committed to engaging school boards and communities in establishing a character education program designed to strengthen and enhance our students’ educational experience” (Glaze, Zegarac, & Giroux, 2006, p. 2). From this speech all government parties in Ontario supported the character development initiative and in June 2006 a resolution was adopted by all three parties of the Legislature noting:

That, in the opinion of this House, the Government of Ontario should declare the Province of Ontario to be a Province of Character by encouraging the citizens of Ontario to foster a climate which promotes, supports and celebrates excellence in character in its schools, businesses, homes and community-based organizations in order to strengthen Ontario’s families and communities (Glaze et al., 2006, p. 2).
With each Ontario school board now mandated to implement character education programs, the Ministry of Education has developed a team of leaders who will help each board formulate a policy document for their schools. In the Ministry document *Finding Common Ground: Character Development in Ontario Schools, K-12* the Minister of Education Kathleen Wynne notes:

One of the key commitments of this government was to establish a character development program in every Ontario school. This K-12 initiative will involve all members of the school and community in developing the knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviours that students require to become caring and socially responsible members of society, and will affirm the importance of respect in Ontario schools (Glaze, et. al., 2006, p. 1).

School boards are directed by the Ontario Ministry of Education to create policy as a means to implement programs. The ministry has been able to set realistic expectations when developing the provincial initiative because they have documents and results of pilot programs from YRDSB and KPRDSB. Based on these initiatives the Ministry of Education has established key beliefs and principles for implementation of character education in schools in Ontario. Of the twelve beliefs and principles the one that is most relevant to this research study is as follows:

Character development must be a whole school effort with the expectation that all members of staff will be committed to its effective implementation and will model, teach and expect demonstrations of the attributes in all school, classroom and extra-curricular activities (Glaze, et. al., 2006, p. 1).

During the development of this initiative the Ministry of Education also built in Key Components necessary for character development implementation for Ontario schools. The Key Components are expectations to demonstrate implementation of the Character Development Initiatives the Ministry has for all of the school boards. Although all of the
Key Components are crucial to the initiative’s success, the following components are ones that are important to this research study.

- The intentional infusion of the components of the Character Development Initiatives into the policies, programs, practices and interactions within the school and board;
- A school-wide commitment to model, teach and expect demonstrations of the attributes in all school, classroom and extra-curricular activities;
- A deliberate focus on character development in board and school plans with specific alignment with other ministry expectations: for example, Safe Schools, Student Success and other initiatives (Glaze, et. al., 2006, p. 2).

The Ontario Ministry of Education *Finding Common Ground* document also outlines specific “Roles and Responsibilities” for various stakeholders including the Ministry of Education, school boards, school principals, teachers, all board and school staff, and students. The “Roles and Responsibilities” that are relevant to this research paper include:

- The Ministry will release a Character Development Policy and Program Memorandum which will include key principles and expectations following the dialogue and input at the Provincial Symposium and at regional forums;
- School Boards will collaborate with the Character Development Resource Teams to develop the processes and practices necessary for successful implementation;
- Principals will ensure that the Character Development Initiative is aligned with and becomes an integral part of the School Improvement Plan (Glaze, et. al., 2006, p. 2).

**Character Education Programs**

In 1999 the York Region District School Board began plans to build and launch a character education focus into the community and schools as a next step from the Ontario Ministry of Education’s *Choices into Action* document. Led by Dr. Avis Glaze, the Associate Director at the time, character education became the board’s main initiative. Dr. Glaze made a presentation to the board of trustees in the fall of 1999 looking for permission to pursue character education actively. As a means to present this new and important
initiative the YRDSB presented the *Quest for Character* proposal at the International Symposium on Character Education in April, 2001.

YRDSB launched the Character Matters! initiative in 2003 under direction of the Associate Director Dr. Avis Glaze and Director Bill Hogarth. The initial steps involved with getting this initiative under way included diligent research of programs already proven to be successful as well as a positive buy in from the community. Hogarth notes, “Character education is a vision that inevitably extends deep into communities. It is this reality that makes character education about democracy, citizenship, civility and a contribution to society” (Glaze, Hogarth, & McLean, 2003, p.2). Since its implementation the Character Matters! program has been the leading example for other Ontario school boards to follow.

Based on the program initiative Character Matters!, presented by Avis Glaze and Bill Hogarth, a thorough review was written by John Havercroft in October, 2002. The central component of this review document is a list of ten character attributes: respect, responsibility, honesty, empathy, fairness, initiative, perseverance, courage, integrity, and optimism. The document states these values “are universal and transcend religious, ethnocultural and other demographic distinctions.” The policy also assumes “character can be taught and learned through direct teaching of the ten values” (Havercroft, 2002, p. 4). The document takes a predominantly traditional approach to character education that is shared by popular character education initiatives in the United States which will be discussed later in this paper.

Since its initiation in 2003 YRDSB has since put together a supplementary document called *Choices in Action and Character Matters! Working Together* (Kielven & Turnbull, 2003) that provides program support and specific, school-based ideas for implementation.
This document was written as a follow-up to the Character Matters! initiative to provide concrete solutions to implementing character education programs within schools.

Both the *Choices in Action* and *Character Matters!* documents address the development of student character by defining and enabling behaviour expectations that empower youth in all aspects of their school life. The YRDSB believes that by addressing these issues there is the ability to create a closer community within the school. Careful implementation provides the structure for meeting the *Character Matters!* goals as well as “honouring the innate belief of most teachers: academic education is not enough” (Kielven & Turnbull, 2003, p.1). Research has found that social skills and emotional well being are much better predictors of success and happiness than academic intelligence which will be discussed later in this paper.

The *Character Matters!* documents and programs are “based on solid research that demonstrates that when schools implement high quality social emotional learning programs effectively, the academic achievement of children increases, incidences of problem behaviour decrease and the relationships that surround each child are improved” (Kielven & Turnbull, 2003, p.1). The programs were developed with the intent of empowering students with the skills they need to participate in a variety of diverse settings now and in the future. YRDSB developed these programs because they believe schools are “constantly challenged to encourage personal success, strong relationships, social responsibility, and a future democratic social thinking that values human dignity and worth” (Kielven & Turnbull, 2003, p.1). The YRDSB believes that the implementation of *Character Matters!* expectations through character development activities that are provided in the document *Choices in Action*
and Character Matters! Working Together (Kielven & Turnbull, 2003) is one way of moving positively toward these goals.

In 2002 Dr. Avis Glaze left the YRDSB and joined the Kawartha Pine Ridge District School Board (KPRDSB) as their new Director. After the success of the character education initiative at YRDSB Dr. Glaze made introducing character education to the KPRDSB community a priority. In February, 2003 Dr. Glaze presented the executive summary Character Education: A Vision Statement to the Board of Trustees of the KPRDSB. Based on this document, character education was introduced to the KPRDSB community and schools with the goal to infuse character education into the curriculum. Dr. Glaze notes:

Character education is not a new curriculum; it is a way of life. In implementing these strategies, all members of the school community seize the “teachable moments” to reinforce the attributes which will be determined in co-operation with a wide cross-section of the community (Glaze, 2003, p. 1).

In the KPRDSB character education document very specific and relevant direction is presented for initiating and implementing a community-based character education program. Dr. Glaze bases all of the statements and findings on research and previous implementation strategies. From her experience with the YRDSB Dr. Glaze was able to outline a detailed document that includes background information supporting existing programs, academic credibility, and the importance of community support. Within this report Dr. Glaze emphasizes the importance of character education as being incorporated into the existing curriculum and day-to-day activities of the school but also notes that it needs to be done in a systematic manner in order to be effective. The report notes:

Character education is a deliberate effort to nurture the universal attributes that transcend racial, religious, socioeconomic and cultural lines. It is a whole school effort to create a community characterized by qualities such as respect, responsibility, fairness, empathy or self-discipline. It represents personal management skills that are nurtured in an explicit, intentional, focused and
systematic manner. These qualities are promoted explicitly, modeled, taught, expected, celebrated, and consciously practiced in everyday actions (Glaze, 2003, p.2).

So that it is clear that it is not just another academic add-on program, Dr. Glaze also stresses the underlying importance and direction of the character education initiative. This is a reality check in the sense that when a new program is presented to schools there is very often a climate of resistance. This is usually a result of implementation of programs in the past which have not been particularly relevant nor related to student success. In the document Dr. Glaze notes:

Character education is developmental in its approach; it is geared towards prevention and the inculcation and reinforcement of positive attributes. It asserts that acceptable and desirable behaviours can be taught and that we need not wait for the demonstration of unacceptable behaviours in order to intervene. It is a positive and non-punitive approach that affirms and validates the best of who they are as responsible young people, while nurturing the qualities of a good citizen and community member (Glaze, 2003, p. 4).

**Historical Perspective**

The focus of setting up specific character education programs throughout Ontario has for the most part been due to the efforts of Dr. Glaze. Not only was she instrumental in implementing successful and sustainable programs with YRDSB and KPRDSB she went on to influence the Ontario Ministry of Education in the appointment of Secretariat of Literacy and Numeracy.

Within each of the documents Dr. Glaze frequently makes reference to Thomas Lickona’s work which includes numerous studies related to character education over the past few decades. According to Lickona the first step in developing a character education program is to determine what values should be stressed to meet the needs of the school community. He discusses in his book *Character Matters. How to Help our Children*
Develop Good Judgement, Integrity, and Other Essential Virtues the purpose of this step is “to prevent discord and to focus on common values upon which the community could agree” (Lickona, 2004, p. 71). In his book Lickona makes reference to one principal’s perspective of implementing character education programs:

The truth is, if you study twenty different schools…you’ll find twenty different stories, each reflecting the creative ideas of the people who shaped the character effort. But beneath the great diversity of character education success stories are common strategies that can guide any school. Taken together, they provide a game plan for starting, sustaining, assessing, and continually improving a systematic effort to education for character (Lickona, 2004, p. 220).

The strategies mentioned here can be summed up as staff involvement, student involvement, and parent involvement. They are the three groups whose participation is crucial to the success of a school’s character education initiative.
Chapter 4: Review of Research and Literature

Historical Perspective: Ontario

Before the Ontario government mandated Character Education programs in Ontario public schools there have been various programs implemented over the years that in some way address character education. One of the first character-focused programs was the Roots of Empathy program founded by Mary Gordon in 1996. When this program began it focused on inner-city schools in Toronto with six schools and about 150 students. By 2004 this program was running in 1,141 classrooms across 8 provinces in Canada reaching 28,525 elementary school children from kindergarten to Grade 8. The ‘root’ of this program focused on students learning how to articulate their role as part of a civil society by understanding and responding to the needs of others. This was done by teaching emotional literacy where children learned the names of feelings and were encouraged to reflect on their own experiences and feelings by using music, art, and writing as a means for self-exploration. (Gordon, 2005). Mary Gordon notes in her book Roots of Empathy (2005), “When children understand how others feel, they are less likely to hurt each other through bullying, exclusion and violence. In the Roots of Empathy program children learn how to challenge cruelty and injustice” (Gordon, 2005, p. 5).

In 1999, the same year that York Region District School Board began its journey towards a character education initiative another character education-focuses program was underway in Ontario called Together We Light the Way. This was a school-based early intervention project designed to “build resiliency and responsibility” in young children. The project was developed to help young students aged four to fourteen who experience difficulties in school and engage in anti-social behaviour. As this program progressed the term “social capital” became a common phrase among researchers and it lead to a three-year
The study by the National Prevention Centre. The goal of the study was to “support, assess and disseminate information about effective interventions to reduce youth anti-social behaviours and to build resiliency in at-risk children and youth” (Dean, Leithwood, & Leonard, 2004, p. 110). In 1999 four schools from three school boards were selected as pilot sites to implement the project. The project brought together interested individuals from not only the school staff and school communities involved but from business and community service groups and local police. Together they worked together in a variety of ways to improve student learning, employability, non-violent responses, attitudes, values and behaviour among students (Dean, et al, 2004).

The Together We Light the Way model consists of a series of guiding principles, pillars, cultural components, specific programs and overlaying strategies. The evaluation of the three-year study showed a number of distinct and positive outcomes based on these principles and strategies that have provided a foundation for the community to build on. For example, analysis of the data collected from the four pilot schools revealed that over the three year period incidents of bullying decreased and academic results met or exceeded expected grade equivalent growth. These results, as mined from the interviews of the stakeholders, showed a number of specific themes that emerged specific to how the program was implemented.

(1) A culture of respect was built in the school and community through the use of a common language of respect and shared beliefs in the Together We Light the Way guiding principles.

(2) A school-wide focus on the use of the goal-setting process helped students to achieve their goals and articulate their learning, growth and development.

(3) The increased involvement of parents, businesses and community partners had a positive impact on the behaviors of students and others involved in the programs.
(4) Shared leadership resulted in students, teachers, non-teaching staff, parents, businesses and community partners all taking responsibility for the education and well-being of the students.

(5) Teachers and administrators viewed the data collection and assessment components as “user-friendly” tools for making informed decisions (Dean et al., 2004, p. 114).

**Historical Perspective: U.S.A.**

Although character education is a recent Ontario Ministry of Education mandate for Ontario public schools, character education programs have been around for a very long time in the United States (U.S.). Many school boards throughout the United States now have character education policy documents firmly in place which has provided significant research related to implementation of various character education programs. From this research it can be seen what factors have contributed to successful programs including connection to policy documents, program implementation strategies within individual schools, and the method of initiation. Based on these findings it will be possible to make comparisons with the programs in place at the school boards that are the focus in this study.

As early as the 1840s one of the original education reformers, Horace Mann, began advocating that character development is as important as academics is in schools. It was not until more than 100 years later in 1994 that the United States Congress authorized a grant offering program called the Partnerships in Character Education Program. School boards in the U.S. have access to this through an application to design and implement a character education program that is able to be; “(a) integrated into classroom instruction and is consistent with state academic content standards and (b) carried out in conjunction with other education reform efforts” (Character Education Partnership (CEP) website, 2008).

In response to this program, the U.S. Character Education Partnership (CEP) developed The Eleven Principles of Character Education Effectiveness based on an
extensive, nation-wide survey developed by Thomas Lickona and Matthew Davidson in conjunction with the Center for the Advancement of Ethics and Character (CAEC). The principles have become the foundation of the Character Education Quality Standards that outlines the key components of character education and allows schools and districts to evaluate their efforts in implementing character education programs in relation to these criteria. The Eleven Principles provide a means for schools to review their current practices, identify program objectives, and implement or improve a strategic plan. Using the principles as guidelines many school boards are able to implement effective and meaningful character education programs.

From the article *Eleven Principles of Effective Character Education* Lickona notes: “The School itself must embody good character. It must progress toward becoming a microcosm of the civil, caring, and just society it seeks to create. Character education is about becoming a school of character, a place that puts character first” (Lickona & Lewis, 1997, p.29). Below are the Eleven Principles of Effective Character Education as discussed in the article of the same name as well as in Lickona’s book *Character matters. How to Help our Children Develop Good Judgment, Integrity, and other Essential Virtues*.

**Eleven Principles of Effective Character Education**

1. Character education promotes core ethical values as the basis of good character.
2. "Character" must be comprehensively defined to include thinking, feeling, and behavior.
3. Effective character education requires an intentional, proactive, and comprehensive approach that promotes the core values in all phases of school life.
4. The school must be a caring community.
5. To develop character, students need opportunities for moral action.
6. Effective character education includes meaningful and challenging academic curriculum that respects all learners and helps them succeed.
7. Character education should strive to develop students' intrinsic motivation.

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

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

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

11. Evaluation of character education should assess the character of the school, the school staff's functioning as character educators, and the extent to which students manifest good character (Developed by the Character Education Partnership 1996 as cited in Lickona, et al, 1996 and Lickona, 2004).

The original Character Education Partnership program along with the Eleven Principles of Effective Character Education became officially known as the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 of which notes: “...one of the six goals of the Department of Education is to promote strong character and citizenship among our nation's youth” (U.S. Department of Education website). To reach this goal, the United States Department of Education worked with various state education agencies and school districts across the U.S. to provide support and leadership to set up and implement character education in public schools. Principles from the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 are now used as the foundation that numerous character education programs throughout the United States are based. Programs range from community based to school district mandates.

In 1997 Robert Freado conducted a study and wrote a related report called *The Eleven Principles Survey (EPS) of Character Education Effectiveness*. The goal of this study was to determine what strategies or elements of the process of implementing a comprehensive character education program are considered by principals to be important. Freado’s main research question was: "To what extent is the school implementing the Eleven Principles of Effective Character Education?" Freado used the data from this survey as a means of formative assessment of a school's character education program. Freado found
that schools implementing character education will be at varying stages of implementing the principles outlined in the survey but that educators relied on them as an ideal for “comprehensive character education to work toward.” (Freado, 1997). Freado found that information provided by the EPS assessment is a useful planning tool and framework guide for schools as a means to strengthen a school’s character education initiative (Lickona, Schaps, & Lewis, 1994 in Freado, 1997).

In a study and report named *The Relationship Between the Levels of Character Education Implementation, the Principals' Personal Characteristics, and the Principals’ Perceptions of Character Education in Georgia Middle Schools* Ellison (2002) also discusses the Eleven Principles of Character Education in relation to effectiveness of a program based on the amount of importance the principal places on it. Ellison found that the level of character education implementation did vary by the amount of training the principal had in relation to character education which in turn affected the importance placed on the program (Ellison, 2002).

In a similar study and report named *The Impact of Personality Type and Time in Service of Building Leaders on the Effective Implementation of a Character Education Program*, Richardson (2001) examined a possible link between personality type and time in service of leaders [principals, teacher-leaders, etc.] related to the effective implementation of a character education program. Using the Eleven Principles Survey he found that all personality types (measured through cognitive, affective and cognitive aptitude) have an equal level of positive correlation on the level of implementation of a character education program. While in relation to time in service of the leaders, Richardson found that the longer the length of time the leader was in education will have a positive correlation on the level of implementation of the character education program.
Similar to the Eleven Principles Survey the CHARACTERplus project in Missouri was initiated in 1988. As stated on the CHARACTERplus website, the main focus of this program has been about doing something about the “deterioration of basic values they see in the students.” This program now dominates the Missouri and Illinois area involving more than 600 schools in over 100 districts, including more than 25,000 teachers and 300,000 students throughout. In comparison to the Eleven Principles Survey, this project also developed a set of essential characteristics that helps schools build consensus about what values or character traits to teach and which programs to use. The What is CHARACTERplus® webpage notes “Using the CHARACTERplus Process, each school develops a character education curriculum and program that meets its community’s unique needs. The Ten Essentials of the process include: Community consensus, Character education policy, Identified and defined traits, Integrated curriculum, Experiential learning, Evaluation, Adult role models, Professional development, Student leadership, and Sustaining the program” (2008, http://www.characterplus.org).

In a study and report by Forlow (2002) called Teachers’ Perceptions of Character Education: Implications for Staff Development, it was found that “in order for teachers to adopt an innovation, in this case character education, the learning process had to be individualized to meet that particular teacher’s needs.” Teachers in this study agreed that character education was important but noted that due to varying years of teaching experience everyone’s ability to effect implementation goals of character education would be different. Because of this there needs to be various levels of implementation accordingly.

A study and report by Denbow (2004) also found that having a defined and focused vision and mission can help implementation of a character education program but did not necessarily support the findings that professional development was a strong indicator of
implementation. This study and report, The Role of School Culture in the Implementation of a Character Education Program, found significant correlations between all of the factors of school culture as measured by the School Culture Survey, developed Gruenert and Valentine in 1998 at the University of Missouri-Columbia, and all of the factors of character education implementation, as measured by the CHARACTERplus Degree of Implementation Scale. The sections of the School Culture Survey that showed positive feedback included; Learning Partnership, Unity of Purpose and Collaborative Leadership and factors of character education implementation. Teacher Collaboration and Professional Development showed to be the weakest predictors of character education implementation.

Similar studies focusing on the principal’s influence on implementation of character education programs have been done by Williams (1999) who writes in the article The Relationship between the Principal’s Preferred Leadership Styles and Levels of Implementation of Character Education Programs in Kanawha County Schools: “In order for a character education program to succeed, the principal must view the program as important and convince the staff members of its importance” (Kellerman, Northouse, & Sergiovanni, 1994 as cited in Williams, 1999, p. 6). Within this study Williams comments on Northhouse’s findings that “the principal of the school sets the vision or the direction in which the staff members will move towards” (Northouse, 1997 as cited in Williams, 1999, p. 9). Williams also comments on work by various other researchers who in one form or another noted that in order for the school to achieve its goals, the principal must set the example (DePree, 1988; Ryan, 1995; Williams, 1993). Williams agrees with Northhouse’s work and comments: “the principal gives the school direction and a program will not be successful unless it has the support of the principal.” Tying all of William’s findings together Cherniss (1998) notes:
“To be successful the principal must meld the many personalities of the staff into working relationships” (Cherniss, 1998 as noted in Williams, 1999).

In research by DeGraffenreid (2004) *The Relationship Between Character Education Implementation and the Middle-level Administrators’ Perceptions of Character Education* it was found that a relationship between the success of implementation of a character education program was directly related to the level of training the principal had specific to character education. His study found that in most cases when the principal was responsible for facilitating the development of a character education program the program was only as good as the principal’s enthusiasm of the program. If the principal was not interested, the school’s character education program was minimal while in schools with principals who were well educated in character education programs were well defined and implemented. This agrees with similar studies by Williams, 1999 and Ellison, 2002 discussed earlier in this paper.

The evolution and recognition of character education programs in the United States has shown educational researchers in Ontario the importance of developing and implementing programs. It is due to the development and policy building of character education programs that subsequent research connected to it has enabled the Ontario Ministry of Education to create policy for character education in Ontario.
Research Connection and Influence of Thomas Lickona

Looking again at the Ontario character education programs, it is important to note that all three of the programs, York Region District School Board, Kawartha Pine Ridge District School Board and the Ontario Ministry of Education initiative were initiated and developed by Dr. Avis Glaze. Because these initiatives were initiated by the same person with the same direction in mind, an assumption can be made that a similar approach was taken to develop the documents and policies to support each character education program. With this, it is necessarily to note that in all three cases the character education documents were influenced primarily by the work of Thomas Lickona. Thomas Lickona is a developmental psychologist and professor of Education at the state university of New York at Cortland where he has done award winning work in teacher education and currently directs the center for the fourth and fifth Rs (Respect and Responsibility). Lickona’s research and subsequent writing specific to character education is based on years of personal research as well as numerous reference and analysis of others work also related to character education in the United States. Because of the importance of Lickona’s and other researchers work on the influence of character education policies established in Ontario school boards being analyzed in this study, it is important to take the time to look at what aspects of his research relate to successful implementation of character education.

Lickona found that when a principal takes the time to be involved with the professional development for character education and is the initial leader of the initiation of character education programs, there is a better chance that character education will be implemented in that school. He also emphasizes that the principal does not need to remain the leader throughout the implementation phase of a program but rather to establish a solid and committed group who form a specific character education focus team (Lickona, 2004).
Lickona found that developing a school of character requires a leadership team to plan and sustain implementation. He notes in the book *Character Matters* (2004) that “Our experience in working with schools over the past decade leads us to make four recommendations in this area:

1. Make use of the school’s existing infrastructure – is there a school improvement committee or other team that could head the character effort of form a subcommittee to do so?

2. Create several small committees, each with a different task. This divides the labor and gets more people involved. The broader the participation, the broader the ownership.

3. Extend an invitation to all, including potential naysayers. Reach out to recruit influential individuals, including persons who might be skeptical about or even opposed to the character effort.

4. Make sure all groups are represented. All the key groups that make up the school community – administrators, teachers, professional support staff, other support staff, students, and parents – should be represented on or another of the character education committees (Lickona, 2004, p. 224).

In his book *Character Matters* (2004), Lickona notes: “The best education is education we do with students.” He found that when students are in “visible leadership roles”, and when students “have a voice and a stake in the character education effort”, the adults involved, whether the administration, teachers, or members of the community, will achieve greater success with promoting good character than if they ran the initiative alone. “Indeed, character education without this kind of active student involvement will ultimately prove to be a frustrating and disappointing exercise” (Lickona, 2004, p. 246).
Lickona provides ideas for guidelines to promote a successful character education program that specifically involve students within the school as listed below:

1. Involve students in planning and leading the character education program
2. Use class meetings to give kids a voice and responsibility.
3. Involve students in participatory schoolwide student government
4. Provide informal opportunities for student input.
5. Challenge students to mount a schoolwide campaign
6. Establish a mentoring system
7. Establish a Character Club or committee
8. Recognize Student Leadership


One of the most common questions that arise when implementing a new program is whether it will actually improve student learning. Lickona was faced with this question frequently in his research, particularly because of the nature of character education and its often intangible evidence of success. Lickona (2004) provides some answers in his book *Character Matters* but steeped with conditions of specific implementation strategies which may result in a variety of outcomes:

We can confidently answer yes, academic learning will improve, if (1) the school’s character education program improves the quality of human relationships between adults and kids and kids and each other, thereby improving the environment for teaching and learning; and (2) the character education effort includes a strong academic program that teaches students the skills and habits of working hard and making the most of their education (Lickona, 2004, p. 122).

The next question that usually follows is “what is the evidence to support this?” Lickona provides this evidence through the analysis of data from individual schools as well as from specific and controlled research studies. In the case of individual schools, Lickona found that many schools initially started character education programs as an attempt to boost low student achievement and frequent discipline problems. More often than not, as a result
of the implementation of character education programs schools achieved improvement in test scores and a decline in discipline problems.

An example from Lickona’s book *Character Matters* (2004) talks about the experience of one particular school that implemented the “3 Rs” character program that focused on “respect, responsibility, and the right to learn.” Follow up to this program showed that discipline referrals declined steadily during the first and second years and there was a noted increase in academic achievement during year one, then grew significantly during year two, especially at the high school level. Of particular interest was that even as the county’s poverty rate rose from 46.5 to 50 percent. O’Connell notes, “Creating a safe and orderly environment that honors [sic] respectful and responsible behaviour is the foundation on which sustainable academic success gets built” (Lickona, 2004, p. 124).

Other studies have also found that in schools that have implemented a quality character education program, students often outperform students in a school that is comparable in makeup but has not implemented such a program. Much of the data to support this particular claim can be found in the 2004 report *What Works in Character Education?* which is a review of character education research conducted for the *Character Education Partnership* by University of Missouri at Saint Louis.

One of the main themes that is consistent through the research is the necessity of enthusiastic support by the principal or a comparable person of authority for implementation to be successful. Although the research has found this to be the key ingredient in the success of a new program, it may not be evident to the principal involved. Through interviews with three principals at the same school board some interesting perspectives will be unveiled which will undoubtedly convince school boards of the importance of ensuring greater involvement on their part to ensure a greater success of a new program.
Chapter 5: Interviews with Principals and Data Analysis

The interviews conducted with the three principals already engaged with the character education initiative, revealed implementation was very school-centered and principal driven. Once the school board promoted and launched the initiative it became the responsibility of individual schools to follow through with the board’s program guidelines. This responsibility ultimately rested on the principal’s shoulders.

Each principal not only discussed their role in relation to the board’s policy documents, but their personal opinion on the responsibility of implementation. The three principals who were interviewed all had very different perspectives on the character education initiative and supported different features of the character education documents.

Introduction to Principals

Kevin Jones has been a principal in the public elementary system for several years. Mr. Jones has been at several schools both as a principal and as a teacher. When Mr. Jones was working as a teacher he was part of the team at Kawartha Pine Ridge District School Board (KPRDSB) that worked with community members to recognize the importance of character education in this school board’s growth. As a member of this development team Mr. Jones was involved with the selection of particular character traits that defined specific character traits of the KPRDSB community. While his experience was at the initial stages of implementing character education into the schools and several years have passed, he believes character education is still quite alive and well throughout the school board. In Mr. Jones’ current school the responsibility of implementing character education programs lies with each teacher and is not a school-wide effort. Although Mr. Jones supports any character education programs a teacher may decide to use, he does not necessarily believe it needs to extend beyond the classroom. When discussing Mr. Jones’ perspective in relation to the
KPRDSB character education documents he noted that because of his initial involvement with development the documents, he believes he is honouring the document’s true intent - that the character education program is meant to become woven into the curriculum intrinsically rather than something that needs to be pointed out and highlighted. This is why Mr. Jones holds to his belief that the responsibility is ultimately up to the teacher to implement character education programs within their classroom.

Mr. Jones perspective is in line with the ultimate goal of the character education initiative presented by the school board as well as research findings of Lickona discussed earlier in this paper. The KPRDSB character education initiative presented in Character Education: A Vision Statement (2003) promotes weaving character education into everyday life. Avis Glaze states:

Character education is not a new curriculum; it is a way of life. In implementing these strategies, all members of the school community seize the “teachable moments” to reinforce the attributes which will be determined in co-operation with a wide cross-section of the community (Glaze, 2003, pg. 1).

An important part of the board’s character education document is a focus on particular attributes such as respect and responsibility. The document also discuss the assumption that the different character attributes can be taught and learned through direct teaching.

The perspective of the principal Megan Brown was very different from Kevin Jones’. One factor is that Megan Brown has been in the education system for over 30 years and most of her involvement has been at the high school level both as a teacher and as a principal. Another factor that contributes to differences in perspective between these two principals is that Ms. Brown has had the opportunity to spend a few years as an elementary school principal and can see the perspective of both school levels. After spending a few years in the
elementary school setting Ms. Brown returned to a principal position at a high school. When Ms. Brown responded to the character education questions she leaned towards a high school setting perspective but showed obvious influences from her time in the elementary setting. She saw the principal’s leadership as important for implementing new board initiatives including the character education initiative. She noted that because the nature of teaching is so different between elementary and high school settings teachers are not always available or have time to initiate new programs. The age of the students also contributes to the implementation differences between elementary and high school students. Although the intermediate aged students may be old enough to take on the responsibility of character education programs, they still may not have the maturity to recognize what programs may be effective therefore it is imperative for the students to have guidance from the principal or a teacher-leader.

Ms. Brown noted that character education was alive and well in the high school with a continuous implementation of programs. She believes that the main reason for more enthusiasm at the high school was the simple fact that the students are older and willing to be more involved with activities. She also noted that many times the initiatives surrounding character education were fun and involved working with other students which helped student’s motivation. Research by Lickona also found this to be true. He notes in the book *Character Matters* (2004):

When students are in visible leadership roles, and when all students have a voice and a stake in the character education effort, adults will be far more effective in promoting good character than they can ever be acting alone. Indeed, character education without this kind of active student involvement will ultimately prove to be a frustrating and disappointing exercise (Lickona, 2004, pp 247).
Ms. Brown invariably maintains the importance of leadership either from the principal or a teacher-leader who has been assigned by the principal to ensure the implementation and success of a character education program.

The third principal interviewed was Michelle Smith who at the time of the interview had only been in the role of principal for a few months. Previous to that she spent one year as a vice principal. As a new principal Ms. Smith’s responses were primarily from a teacher’s perspective. In the role of a new principal Ms. Smith hopes to increase character education awareness and participation in her school where it has been lacking the past few years. Although Ms. Smith is very democratic in the approach to delegating responsibility, she made it clear that it is the ultimate responsibility of the principal to create opportunities and support for character education programs. This perspective is similar to that of what Lickona found during his research and notes in the book *Character Matters* (2004):

> The priorities of the principal are usually the priorities of the staff. - we’ve found that when the principal attends at least part of our institutes (Lickona’s guiding principals outlined earlier in this paper) as a member of the school’s team, there’s a much better chance that character education will be implemented in that school (Lickona, 2004, p. 220).

It is interesting to note the different interpretations of the KPRDSB character education documents by each principal. Although each has a sound understanding and opinion of the document that in itself does not ensure successful implementation at their school. For example, at Mr. Jones’ school there is very little evidence of character education programs in place. Because Mr. Jones believes that the programs are the responsibility of each teacher, he has only teachers who are interested and taken upon themselves to take professional development to assist implementation in their own classroom. Because he has been involved with this initiative from the very beginning, it might be possible that he is at a different level of understanding and assumes everyone else is at that same level.
Chapter 6: Discussion of Findings, Recommendations and Conclusions

Discussion of Findings

The review of literature, the analysis of the Kawartha Pine Ridge District School Board, York Region District School Board, the Ontario Ministry of Education Character Education documents and interviews with school principals all agree that the main components of character education ultimately aim to make character education a way of life rather than a prescribed task. The bottom line is that by purposefully incorporating character education programs into the day to day activities and curriculum of the school, students will achieve a solid foundation of the character education qualities to become moral and successful ‘characters’ of the greater community.

Schools are being asked to achieve a particular level of implementation of character education. Both the KPRDSB and YRDSB outline expectations for implementation of their respective character education programs. Each school board presents the implementation process in a different way. The YRDSB has developed two character education specific documents outlining expectations for implementation while the KPRDSB takes an overall, holistic approach to implementation. The first one, Character Matters! is the document that provides direction and policy for the board-wide program of the same name. It outlines expectations of the school board, schools, principals, teachers, students and communities in terms of academic skills, social emotional learning and life long learning. YRDSB’s second document Choices into Action and Character Matters! Working Together “defines and enables behaviours expectations that empower youth in all aspects of their school life.” It is this document that specifically outlines implementation strategies based on the focus outlined in the Choices into Action (CIA) released by the Ontario Ministry of Education in 1999. The second document notes: “Careful implementation provides the structure for meeting CIA
requirements as well as honouring the innate belief of most teachers: academic education is not enough” (Kielven & Turnbull, 2003, p. 1).

The implementation strategies that are outlined in the second document are set up in two different ways. The first format is as a list of ideas and activities that represent ‘culture building’ as a means to create a learning environment that will support and nurture the goals that have been set out in the CIA document. The list of ideas and activities are set up in order from ‘awareness’ to ‘deeper implementation’ stages. For example some of the ‘awareness’ strategies listed include overtly teaching the meanings of the character attributes or using a game within the context of the curriculum to discuss ethical issues. For ‘deeper implementation’ some strategies include having students explicitly link particular character attributes to their daily lives or to have students create posters with specific character attributes connected to things going on in the school and the community and post them throughout the school and community.

The second format that the YRDSB uses to outline implementation strategies is with an extensive chart specifically connected to the Ontario Ministry of Education curriculum documents. The chart is set up with the CIA focus on one side of the chart and the corresponding Character Matters activity on the other side of the chart as shown in the example chart in Appendix B. The CIA category is further broken down into subsections to include Areas of Learning and grade competencies while the Character Matters section specifies Activities Which Support Competency. The chart is very comprehensive and provides teachers with a very extensive list of strategies to assist in implementation of character education program.
The Kawartha Pine Ridge District School Board program, in contrast, describes the initial steps of promotion and development of a character education clearly articulates who should be involved and how. In the only comprehensive document issued by KPRDSB specific to the character education policy, *Character Education: A Vision Statement* (2003), all details of character education are outlined including the definition, importance, research connections, community involvement and suggestions for implementation of programs. The suggestions are specifically tied to previous programs throughout the world that have proven to be successful. Avis Glaze notes in this document:

Character education can be accommodated within the existing curriculum and the life of the school. It is not an add-on. Rather, it is a strategy that incorporates guiding principles into existing curriculum. Character education is the development of a culture (Glaze, 2003, pg 1).

With reference to the current Ontario Ministry of Education curriculum documents, specifically the language and math documents which are mandatory subjects throughout the majority of a student’s academic tenure, the teacher is expected to abide by these documents while teaching various curriculum to the students. For example the language curriculum document (2006) states:

Language development is central to students’ intellectual, social, and emotional growth, and must be seen as a key element of the curriculum. Language is a fundamental element of identity and culture. As students read and reflect on a rich variety of literary, informational, and media texts they develop a deeper understanding of themselves and others and of the world around them (Ontario Ministry of Education Language curriculum document, 2006).

At the time of writing his paper the KPRDSB does not have a specific list of activities and strategies similar to the YRDSB’s documents for teachers to assist in implementation of a character education program. Based on the wording of the KPRDSB documents such activities and strategies are not necessary if the teacher is indeed presenting the curriculum as
expected and mandated, the teacher then is following the protocol of accommodating character education within the curriculum. Of course this is quite arbitrary and it is no doubt an intangible measurement of actual implementation. It ends up being a subjective decision made by the teacher and their personal desire and ability to accommodate accordingly. Research of various implementation situations has made it clear “that district, board, and school administrators are the main determinants of whether or not change is implemented. Without their continued and visible support, change has little chance to succeed” (Stiegelbauer, 2008, p. 118).

Stiegelbauer notes in the article *The Dimensions of Implementation* (2008) that “Teachers are guided by the practicality ethic. They want to know that a change is practical for them to use and will produce beneficial outcomes for them and their students” (Stiegelbauer, 2008, p. 119). With this in mind, although KPRDSB depends heavily on teacher’s ideal implementation of the curriculum documents, it is important for teachers to realize the benefits of the accommodations they are expected to make. In the KPRDSB document Glaze refers to results of research conducted in the United States and other parts of the world noting benefits of incorporating character to include a decrease in both major and minor discipline problems, a decrease in suspensions, a decrease in tardiness, the near disappearance of violence, a decrease in referrals to administrators, a dramatic increase in scores on achievement tests, an improvement in reading scores, and an improvement in attendance and punctuality (Glaze, 2003, p. 3).

Although the character education documents for both school boards outline particular implementation protocols the next obvious question is if implementation is actually taking place at the school level. Through the interviews with the principals at KPRDSB and
reflection on the related research presented in this paper it is clear that successful implementation is achievable with the support of the principal or similar administrative support person. Of the three principals interviewed two of the three seem to genuinely understand the importance of this factor. In the case of Mr. Jones, the principal who has been involved with character education with the board from the beginning stages, it appears he has lost sight of the importance of providing his support during at the very least the early stages of implementation of a program or finds it unnecessary. As a new principal with recent memories of being in a position as a teacher expected to implement a new program, MS. Smith recognizes the importance of solid support from the principal for a program to be successful. With this perspective it is clear that she is a strong advocate that providing that necessary support will result in a strong and successful program. In the case of Ms. Brown who has spent most of her time in a high school setting, she clearly recognizes the importance of strong support of the principal for the implementation of a program to be successful. Although she has the advantage of working with high school students who are able to be involved at a more independent level than elementary students, she is aware that the students still require the backing of an influential adult to stay focused and remain motivated. Stiegelbauer (2008) notes: “Without a certain amount of pressure, nothing happens; without support to tailor change to the needs of individuals and school contexts, not much happens. How leaders do this – and whether the leader is a principal, a district facilitator, a teacher-leader, or a team – depends on the capacity of the organization for belief in action-in-common” (Donaldson, 2006, p.105 as noted in Stiegelbauer, 2008, p. 118). While these findings are only an indicator of the success or style of implementation of character education, they describe how principal’s approaches might affect outcomes.
Suggestions for Future Study

Findings in this study show that the effect of policy is subjective based on the choice of programs and perspectives of principals therefore further study should be done to determine specific indicators of the success of a character education program. As well, given specific indicators it would be useful to investigate a tangible connection between the influence the principal has on the implementation and sustainability of the character education program within a given school. While this study focused on implementation of character education, future studies may not necessarily need to focus on one particular initiative but rather on the success on any new program or an evident change in the system that affects teachers and students. As noted by Stiegelbauer (2008) in the article “The Dimensions of Implementation”, the role of a leader, whether a principal or a teacher-leader is key to successful implementation of a new program.

Conclusion

It is clear that character education is an effective means of developing respectful, responsible and motivated students. Through this study the issue of implementation was examined in two school boards in Ontario and compared to previous or existing programs. The Ontario Ministry of Education policies as well as the documents of the school boards discussed in this paper are primarily based on various models of programs implemented in the United States (U.S.). Although similar models were used as a basis for setting up character education programs, no specific indicators for success were built into the model but rather a hope of success based on the success of the U.S. programs which has left a lot of room for subjective measurement. In answer to the claims of research and the nature of character education, Glaze clarifies that successful character education is not something that can be easily measured. She says that “Character education is developmental in its approach;
it is geared towards prevention and the inculcation and reinforcement of positive attributes. It asserts that “acceptable and desirable behaviours can be taught and that we need not wait for the demonstration of unacceptable behaviours in order to intervene” (Glaze, 2003, p. 3).

Another potential concern is that the character goals chosen by each board were not the same which may change outcomes and make it difficult to determine relevant success of a program when used in comparison. Further, one school board, York Region District School Board, provides specific goals and directives for implementation while the Kawartha Pine Ridge District School Board leaves the decision of how to implement a program up to the principal of individual schools. In turn, a principal may leave the decision of how a program may be implemented up to classroom teachers which not only will vary based on experience but will vary based on knowledge of programs and motivation to implement a program. With these choices and variances, the outcomes may vary across a school board and make it difficult to determine indicators for success. Without more specific guidelines for program implementation and relevant indicators for success of a program, the outcomes of character education programs in Ontario may not achieve the same level of success as the U.S. models used by the Ontario Ministry of Education and the school boards.
Appendix A

Interview Questions

1. What does the phrase *character education* mean to you?

2. Are you familiar with the character education documents distributed through the board office?

3. Who is responsible at your school for interpreting and implementing character education documents received from the board office?

4. Who is responsible in your school for implementing the character education programs?

5. How much input has there been from other people in the school towards implementation strategies of the programs?

6. Are there specific programs your school has implemented related to character education?

7. What programs have you personally implemented related to character education?

8. Are the programs school-wide or classroom centered? (please elaborate)

9. Does your school have a way to analyze programs for effectiveness? Outcomes?

10. What other character education programs are you aware of that are being implemented throughout the school board?
## Appendix B

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area of Learning</th>
<th>Grade 1 - 9 Competencies</th>
<th>Activities Which Support Competency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student Development</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Learning skills, preferences, and strategies (e.g., memorizing, working independently, assessing themselves, managing their time)</td>
<td>* demonstrate their understanding of and use learning skills and strategies in their classroom learning</td>
<td>* Find literature that directly shows this expectation in action</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>* demonstrate the ability to follow school and classroom rules and routines</td>
<td>* Literature as mirror / challenge to the student</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>* Make it clear that students have a responsibility to learn, that parents have a responsibility to promote respect for learning at home.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>* Ask students to generate a list of benefits of learning</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>* Overtly teach the skills for gentle and realistic learning self assessment. How do I know I'm doing well, what are the signs I am doing poorly, how can I improve...</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>* Encourage students to find the courage to overcome their learning difficulties</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>* Encourage students to be optimistic in school; their grades are likely to climb from this angle</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>* Encourage students to learn collaboratively effectively - teach the skills overtly - listening, paraphrasing, disagreeing agreeably and so on.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>* Encourage students to self monitor the collaborative skills they have learned</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>* When a student is in difficulty, point out the character attribute that might have prevented the problem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>* When a student is in difficulty, ask the student which character attribute might have prevented the problem</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>* Class rules and procedures should include the character attributes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>* Class rules and procedures are derived collaboratively and are based on the character attributes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>* Teacher creates 'look fors' for the attributes and discusses with class</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


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