

**COMPARATIVE IMPLICATIONS OF CHARACTER EDUCATION
PROGRAMS IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN ARKANSAS**

JIMMILEA GAIL BERRYHILL, DPHIL

(research completed in partial fulfillment of a Doctor of Philosophy Degree,
Oxford Graduate School, Dayton, Tennessee, 2003)

jimmileaberryhill@earthlink.net

or

drjberryhill@earthlink.net

**Presentation Paper for the International Conference on
Civic Education Research
November 16-18, 2003**

ABSTRACT

This research compared 2 groups of students and teachers in Arkansas schools to evaluate the effect of a school-wide character education program on the behavior of students, on the culture/climate and on the implementation of eleven principles of character. There were measurable differences in the observed assessment of peer behavior in students in PAR schools (school-wide character education implementation) and NONPAR schools (no school-wide character education implementation). There were measurable differences in teacher observed assessment of the culture/climate and the practice of eleven principles of character in PAR and NONPAR schools.

Introduction

This research evaluated character education implementation in Arkansas public schools in the spring of 2003. In recent decades, educators faced public concern for the moral climate of public schools while simultaneously adhering to demands for the separation of Church and State. In answer to national and state concerns about school violence, falling test scores, drug and alcohol abuse, and high percentages of teen pregnancy, Arkansas educators brought character education to the forefront. This research examined student observed assessment of peer behavior in schools implementing school-wide character education programs compared with students in schools with no school-wide character education program. The research examined teacher observed assessment of the culture/climate, and the practice of eleven principles of character (Lickona 1976) in schools implementing school-wide character education programs compared with teachers in schools with no character education program.

Background

National statistics compiled over a period of 30 years indicated an increase of 441% in male adolescent death by homicide and a 479% increase in male suicide. From 1980 to 1990, education spending increased 225% while SAT scores declined by 76 points (Ryan and Greer 1990). Researchers determined that the arrest rates of children less than 18 years old increased eightfold from 1950 to 1990, and births to teenage girls increased by 621% during the same period (Harrison and Anderson 1998). In the early 1990's,

American public education began to revive the teaching of values, character, personal responsibility, and social responsibility. Formal character education, citizenship, service learning, and conflict resolution began to reappear in the educational climate of American schooling (Krajewski & Baily 1999, 34).

Research showed strong support from parents, school employees, and the local community for the development and the implementation of moral and character programs in school. Progressive theorists and conservative sectarians agreed on the need for ethical, moral, and character education, even though philosophical tensions remained (Schaeffer 1997; Huffman 1994, xi; McClellan 1999; Tomlison 1997). Diverse ideological, philosophical and academic components made it difficult, however, for some administrators to choose character education formats that would not present a specific ideology. Some educators believed that lecturing, authoritative teaching styles, and external codes of ethics were useless in promoting good character while others embraced community involvement, peer education, cooperative learning and responsibility development as the way to effectively introduce character training (McDonnell 1997). Most educators agreed that school board members, administrators, faculty, support staff, parents, and the students themselves were all necessary factors in developing core ethical values (Huffman 1994).

Studies on the Behavior of Students

A 1999 study of 79 teachers, 1600 students, 600 parents, and 7 principals provided data to assess the effectiveness of one character education program. There was overwhelming agreement that students were better able to

demonstrate knowledge of courage, honesty, hope, justice, love, loyalty, and respect following character education (Tucker 1999). According to a report by Bulach (2002), studies in Maryland, Michigan, New Mexico, Texas, Iowa and Illinois showed a dramatic decrease in student discipline referrals following character education programs. A 2001 Virginia study of 7,014 elementary students involved in character education programs in public schools found improvement in 24 categories of student behavior. In 2002, a study of 7740 Virginia students noted a greater percentage of improvement in student behavior where character education programs were in place (Bulach 2002).

In Louisiana, 735 teachers reported that character education programs had been successful. Nebraska reported similar results. A 1999 Iowa parent, student, and teacher self-assessment concluded that character education had been effective in Iowa public schools, and in a New Mexico study, 73 per cent of the parents surveyed said they believed character education made a difference in their children's behavior (Bulach 2002). The Georgia Department of Education, with the help of a grant from Character Education Partnerships, distributed monies to 25 Georgia schools to review that state's character education program (Bulach 2002).

Five years after the Dayton, Ohio elementary school implemented a comprehensive character education program, the school went from number 28 out of 33 local elementary schools to first place in test scores and student behavior scores. In this inner-city school, 60 percent of the children came from single-parent families and 70 percent came from families on welfare. In

Washington, D.C., a high school plagued by drugs, pregnancies, and violence saw student pregnancies drop to almost zero. The school gained recognition for having the highest academic achievement in the city after implementation of character education (McDonnell 1997). Jackson, Boostrom, and Hansen (1993) studied teacher classrooms 18 public, private, and parochial classrooms over a 3 year period. It was determined that no school operated as a morally free environment, teachers had a strong sense of personal fulfillment in having impacted students' moral development some philosophical form of ethics education occurred in every classroom

Background of the Problem in Arkansas

A study of remediation and grade inflation in Arkansas schools indicated a strong link between grade inflation and the elevated remediation rate for college freshmen who graduated from Arkansas high schools (Melvenon and Thorn 2001). Remediation seemed to reflect a larger moral and ethical crisis in administration, faculty and student response to academic requirements. Public concern about Arkansas schools led to legislative action by state policy makers who agreed that public schools needed to strengthen character and citizenship education to students.¹ The first statewide conference for character-centered teaching met in January 1999 to present a teaching model to Arkansas educators. Eleven principles of character (Lickona 1976) served as the basis for the character-centered teaching initiative.

¹Act 631 of 1997 reads: "The General Assembly finds and acknowledges that, while character and citizenship are primarily a parental responsibility, it must not remain isolated there. The General Assembly further finds that character and citizenship education must be strengthened in public schools to prepare young people for positive dealings with the social order of today."

Statewide conferences, professional development opportunities, and regional quarterly meetings were initiated to give assistance to teachers and administrators planning character education programs in their schools. Character Education Partnership (CEP) Washington, D.C . (<http://.character.org>) invited local schools to apply for federal funds for the development and implementation of character education programs in 5 Pilot schools in Arkansas. Three elementary schools, 1 middle school, and 1 high school became recipients of CEP grant funds. School-wide character education programs involved administrators, teachers, students, parents, and community leaders. For this research, participating schools receiving funding were called PAR schools. No specific character education design was mandated for the implementation of character education programs in PAR schools. However, guidelines from CEP and other character curriculum formats provided resources for the development of individual programs. Schools used for comparison groups were called NONPAR schools. Similarities of PAR and NONPAR schools included: a similar economic base, similar racial percentages, a similar number of students, and similar geographical locations. After identifying schools as possible comparison schools, local administrators were contacted for participation in this study. Surveys were administered by visiting each PAR and NONPAR school.

Purpose of the Research

The research examined the effect of school-wide character education implementation on the behavior of students. Teacher survey scores were examined to determine the effect of school-wide character education on the

culture/climate and the practice of eleven principles of character. There were no studies found that specifically addressing the CEP funded school-wide character education program in schools in Arkansas, therefore this study provided data to local and state educators about the effectiveness of those programs. The research also informed parents of students in PAR schools about the effectiveness of character education programs and provided data to educators planning character education program implementation. The study contributed to the public's knowledge about character intervention programs and informed private business about the effective use of character education in public schools. The research provided information to state educators seeking further funding for program development and implementation.

Research Hypotheses

This social research involved the use of a quasi-experimental design dealing with students and teachers in different environments, PAR and NONPAR schools. The research involved a field design subject to the control techniques implemented in individual school settings.

H_{a1}. There were significant differences in student observed assessment of peer behavior among students in PAR schools compared with students in NONPAR schools.

H_{a2}. There were significant differences in student observed assessment of peer behavior among students in PAR elementary schools compared with students in NONPAR elementary schools.

- H_{a3} There were significant differences in student observed assessment of peer behavior among students in 1 PAR middle school compared with students in 1 NONPAR middle school.
- H_{a4} There were significant differences in student observed assessment of peer behavior in 1 PAR high school compared with students in 1 NONPAR high school.
- H_{a5} There were significant differences in teacher observed assessment of the culture/climate in PAR schools compared with teachers in NONPAR schools.
- H_{a6}. There were significant differences in teacher observed assessment of the practice of eleven principles of character in PAR schools compared with teachers in NONPAR schools.
- H_{a7}. There were significant differences in student academic performance in PAR elementary schools compared with students in NONPAR elementary schools.

Research Design

The research design compared two groups, PAR and NONPAR within the population of the study to measure student behaviors associated with specific character traits and to examine character education implementation in PAR schools compared with NONPAR schools. The number of completed student surveys was 739, (376 students in PAR schools and 363 students in NONPAR schools). In addition to a general comparison, surveys were divided by grade level. Elementary (grade 4) PAR student scores were compared with elementary

(grade 4) NONPAR student scores. Middle school (grade 8-9) PAR student scores were compared with middle school (grade 8-9) NONPAR student scores and high school (grades 10-12) PAR student scores were compared with high school (grades 10-12) NONPAR student scores. Elementary student scores were compared to Arkansas Academic Performance Scores (<http://ark.edu>), of PAR and NONPAR elementary schools for 2002.

Data collected from teachers represented teacher observed assessment of the culture/climate in PAR and NONPAR schools and the practice of eleven principles of character in PAR and NONPAR schools. Teachers in PAR schools completing the survey totaled 14. Teachers in NONPAR schools completing the teacher surveys totaled 16. The level of significance for data in this research was set at .05. Because the study involved multiple grade levels in student and teacher survey results for hypothesis 1 (H_{a1}), 5 (H_{a1}), and 6 (H_{a1}) a .02 level of significance was also considered. Student survey completions were 93% while teacher survey completions were 79.5% of the total receiving surveys.

Limitations of the Study

Grade 4, elementary level students were representative of all elementary students for this study. Level four is approximately the mid-point of elementary learning and the reading level of the instrument used in the study began at level four. Arkansas elementary school designs included K-6, K-5, and K-4 levels. The PAR schools were K-4 schools, limiting the research to that level. Limitations at the middle school level confined the research to grades 8 and 9. Mandated grade units are not present in the Arkansas system, therefore schools

are divided by grade in different ways. For this research, grades 8 and 9 were representative of grades 6-9 at the middle school level. There was only one PAR middle school thus limiting the number of students for comparison to one middle school. At the high school level, one PAR school was compared to one NONPAR high school. Grades 10, 11, and 12 represented high school students.

Normal differences in multiple samples attributed to the limitations of the study. Although attempts were made to use samples that were similar, school populations in different locations revealed diversity of gender, race, prior understanding, teacher influence, parental influence, and school culture/climate. Other limitations included the number of students in the study, limited by predetermined PAR school enrollment. A similar number of students in similar schools were target populations for comparison research, PAR and NONPAR. Several schools declined the invitation to participate in the study and some schools were not candidates for the research because they were involved in character education programs funded by alternative sources. Anxiety over the future of certain school programs, school consolidation warnings, and state and federal mandated test scores created an apprehensive environment in several schools.

Some PAR schools included the program in a fully integrated fashion while others used more pedagogical methods to implement character education. Some schools consistently implemented character education program implementation, others experienced gaps in character education implementation when a teacher or counselor responsible for the program left or changed

positions in the school. One PAR school had set aside much of the emphasis on character in order to focus on preparations for upcoming benchmark exams. It was not feasible to produce exact comparisons between PAR schools as each school enjoyed the freedom to develop and execute a character education program for that population.

Another limitation of the study was the mobility of students and teachers. Some students in NONPAR schools had been involved in previous character education programs. Teachers and/or students may have moved from a PAR school to a NONPAR school. Also, individual teachers in NONPAR schools may have employed principles of character training in individual classrooms. The limitation of 1 PAR middle school and 1 PAR high school emphasized the need for more commitment to character education at the middle school and high school level. One NONPAR high school classroom did not participate in the study reducing the number of comparison NONPAR student scores. Additional limitations were that some teachers were unable to complete the survey in the allotted time, some were involved with student relations and did not have an opportunity to respond to the survey, and some teachers did not wish to respond to the survey. Although the survey was written at grade 4 level, limited word recognition or poor English skills required assistance for a few students.

Research Methodology

School administrators were contacted for and survey dates and times. Elementary grade 4 students and their teachers received surveys and scan forms either in individual classrooms or as a group. They were given brief instructions

on completing the surveys. Grade 8 and grade 9 students and their teachers were handled similarly. At the high school level, grades 10, 11 and 12 were given surveys and scan forms in individual classrooms. At each location, a teacher, counselor, or other faculty member helped in the distribution and collection of the surveys. The research was conducted in a 2 week period during the spring semester of 2003.

Population

PAR Schools

- J.J. Izard Elementary School had mixed racial student body with 23% Hispanic students. Surveys completed: 62 students, 1 teacher.
- Lakewood Elementary School, located in a middle class urban area, had a racially diverse population. Surveys completed: 36 students, 1 teacher.
- Oaklawn Visual and Performing Arts Magnet School, located in a resort city in central Arkansas, was racially mixed. Surveys completed: 70 students, 5 teachers.
- Eudora Junior High School, located in an economically distressed delta farming area, was predominately Afro-American. Surveys completed: 100 students, 2 teachers.
- Corning High School, located in a low income farming community in northeastern Arkansas, was primarily Caucasian students. Surveys completed: 108 students, 5 teachers.

NONPAR Schools

- Angie Grant Elementary School was predominately Caucasian, some Afro-American and Hispanic students. It was located in a suburban community near Little Rock. Surveys completed: 49 students and 1 teacher.
- Oak Park Magnet Elementary School predominately African-American, was located in urban Pine Bluff. The middle to lower income population in this school district was racially mixed, with Caucasian, Hispanic, and Afro-American students. Surveys completed: 106 students and 5 teachers.
- Lakeside Middle School, located in the delta farming area of southeastern Arkansas, was predominately Afro-American. Surveys completed: 139 students and 6 teachers.
- Piggott High School, located in low income rural farming community in northeastern Arkansas, was predominately Caucasian. Surveys completed: 69 students and 4 teachers.

Instruments

The Behavioral Characteristics of Students Survey consisted of 4 questions about demographics and 96 behaviors (95 at the elementary level which omitted one question about sexuality) aligned with 16 sets of character traits. Students responded to each of the 96 behaviors on a five-point Likert scale ranging from “never” to “always”. “Never” was scored as a one and “always” was scored as a five. A Cronbach alpha was used to measure the

internal consistency/reliability of the instrument. In the pilot study for this instrument, the reliability coefficient for 222 high school students in a pilot study was .96, for 210 middle school students in the pilot study the reliability coefficient was also .96. For 30 third grade students in the pilot study, the reliability coefficient was .97 (Bulach 2002).

The Instructional Improvement Teacher Survey consisted of 96 behaviors about a school's culture and climate and included 4 anonymous demographic questions about the individual responding to the survey (Bulach and Malone 1994). The cultural variables measured were: group openness, group trust, group cooperation, and group atmosphere. Climate variables included discipline, instructional leadership, classroom instruction, expectations, parent/community involvement, assessment/time on task and a sense of mission. The instrument, Instructional Improvement Survey, had an overall reliability of +.95 as measured by the Cronbach alpha. Teachers responded to each of the 96 behaviors on a five-point Likert scale ranging from an answer of "completely disagree" to one of "completely agree". "Completely disagree" was scored as a one (1) and "completely agree" was scored as a five (5). An "agree" response scored as a 4.0. A score of 32 ($4 \times 8 = 32$) was considered strong; scores below 32 were considered areas needing improvement. The Eleven Principles Survey grouped 45 character practices into eleven principles believed to be necessary for a strong character education program (Lickona 1976). Teachers were asked to respond to each behavior according to a five-point Likert scale ranging from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree". Three factors were measured by the

survey; school community relations' behaviors, curriculum related behaviors, and internal relations' behaviors (Bulach and Malone 1994). Reliability of this instrument was +.90, measured by the Cronbach alpha. Data from the 45 behaviors were scored according to three factors, community relations, curriculum and internal relationship principles. The instruments used for this research contributed to similar research in over 200 schools in the United States, Australia, and, Malaysia (Bulach 2002).

Data Related to H_a1

The t-test for independent groups revealed a t-score of 4.01 ($p < .001$) for Hypothesis 1 (H_a1) indicating a statistically significant difference between PAR and NONPAR students (see table #1). Research hypothesis 1 (H_a1) was supported at the acceptance level of .05. In consideration of the multiplicity effect of three levels of students (elementary, middle, and high school) a .02 level of significance was also considered. There was significant difference in student perception of peer behavior in PAR and NONPAR students at the .02 level.

Table #1

A comparison of PAR and NONPAR character survey results for elementary, middle, and high school students (H_o1)

Group	Mean	SD	t-score	d f	p
PAR	3.0614	.83898	4.01		
NONPAR	2.7999	.77345			

N=739

Data Related to H_o2

Hypothesis 2 (H_a2) compared PAR elementary student scores with NONPAR elementary student scores. The t-test for independent groups revealed a t-score of 5.22 ($p < .001$) indicating a statistically significant difference in the observed assessment of peer behavior between PAR and NONPAR elementary students at the acceptance level of .05 (see table #2).

Table #2

A comparison of PAR and NONPAR character survey results for elementary students (H_o2)

Group	Mean	SD	t-score	d f	p
PAR	3.5125	.1759	5.22	30	
NONPAR	3.1594	.2065			

value

$p < .001$

N=374

Data Related to H_a3

Hypothesis 3 (H_a3) compared PAR middle schools student scores with NONPAR middle school student scores. The t-test for independent groups revealed a t-score of 2.4 ($p < .023$) indicating a statistically significant difference in the observed assessment of peer behavior between PAR and NONPAR students at the .05 acceptance level (see table #3).

Table #3

A comparison of PAR and NONPAR character survey results for middle school students (H₀3)

	Group	Mean	SD	t-score	df	p
f	p value					
023	PAR	2.845	.182	2.4	30	p < .
	NONPAR	2.675	.2178			

N=239

Data Related to H_a4

Hypothesis 4 (H_a4) compared PAR high school student scores with NONPAR high school student scores. The t-test for independent groups revealed a t-score of 2.37 (p < .025) indicating a statistically significant difference in the observed assessment of peer behavior between PAR and NONPAR students at the .05 level (see table #4).

Table #4

A comparison of PAR and NONPAR character survey results for high school students (H₀4)

	Group	Mean	SD	t-score	df	p
value						
p < .025	PAR	2.8169	.102	2.37	30	
	NONPAR	2.7088	.1517			

N=177

Data Related to H_a5

Hypothesis 5 (H_a5) compared the culture/climate teacher scores in PAR schools with the culture/climate teacher scores in NONPAR schools. The t-test for independent groups revealed a t-score of 2.31 ($p < .032$) indicating a statistically significant difference in teacher observed assessment of the culture/climate in PAR schools compared with NONPAR schools at the .05 level (see table #5). However, in consideration of the multiplicity effect of teachers from three levels (elementary, middle, and high school), a .02 level of significance was applied. PAR and NONPAR teacher scores did not support the research hypothesis at a .02 level of significance. There was no significant difference in teacher observed assessment of the culture/climate in PAR and NONPAR schools when applying a .02 level of significance.

Table #5

A comparison of PAR and NONPAR culture/climate survey results for teachers in elementary, middle, and high schools (H_o5)

Group	Mean	SD	t-score	d f	p
PAR	29.9573	3.2446	2.31	20	p < .032
NONPAR	26.887	2.9939			

N=29

Data Related to H_a6

Hypothesis 6 (H_a6) compared teacher scores for the practice of eleven principles of character in PAR schools with teacher scores in NONPAR schools. The t-test for independent groups revealed a t-score of 10.1 ($p < .001$) indicating a statistically significant difference between PAR and NONPAR teachers at the .05 level (see table #6). In consideration of the multiplicity effect of teachers from three grade levels (elementary, middle, high school) a .02 level of significance was applied. There was a significant difference in the teacher observed assessment of the practice of eleven principles of culture at the .02 level.

Table #6

A comparison of PAR and NONPAR survey results for teachers in elementary, middle, and high schools (H_o6)

Group	Mean	SD	t-score	d f	p
PAR	4.2333	.0808	10.1	4	$p < .001$
NONPAR	2.1333	.3508			

N=29

Data Related to H_a7

Hypothesis 7 (H_a7) compared elementary student survey scores in PAR and NONPAR schools with Academic Performance Scores published by the Arkansas Department of Education (<http://ark.edu/>) for the PAR and NONPAR elementary schools participating in the survey. There was a significant difference

in the Academic Performance Scores, 2002, of PAR elementary schools compared with NONPAR elementary schools at the .05 level of significance.

Table #7

A comparison of PAR and NONPAR academic performance scores for elementary students (H₀7)

Group	Mean	SD	t-score	d f	p
PAR	78.0	9.8489	3.66	3	0.035
NONPAR	45.0	9.8995			

N=374

Discussion

Discussion of Student Character Scores

Mean scores for PAR schools ranged from 4.09 at J. J. Iazard elementary School to 2.81 for students at Corning High School. NONPAR mean scores ranged from 3.28 at Oak Park Elementary School to 2.66 at Lakeside Middle School. Mean scores for elementary students in PAR and NONPAR elementary schools reflect a .34 difference (Graph #2). NONPAR student scores were below PAR students on all 16 behavior traits addressed by the Behavioral Characteristics of Students Survey. Elementary scores for PAR and NONPAR students were above 3.0, however, indicating positive behaviors happened sometimes.

The highest score for the PAR middle school was “tolerance” with a score of 3.13. Whereas the traits of respect, honesty, and patriotism were strong at the

elementary level, with the exception of “respect”, other high scores at PAR elementary schools were absent. NONPAR middle school students had only 2 scores above 3.0 indicating that peer students seldom practiced behaviors associated with that trait (reverse scored for negative behaviors). The .35 difference in scores of PAR and NONPAR students at the elementary level was reduced to .17 at the middle school level and to a .11 difference between PAR and NONPAR students at the high school level. There was only one score of 3.0 or above at the high school level.

Discussion of the Culture/Climate Teacher Scores

The next part of the research question asked if a school-wide character education program in 5 pilot schools in Arkansas significantly change the culture/climate of a local school. The mean of all PAR teacher scores was 31.53 compared to a mean of 28.92 for NONPAR teacher scores. The greatest difference in PAR and NONPAR scores was the “sense of mission”. PAR teachers scored 33.68 while NONPAR teachers scored 28.46, a difference of 5.22. There appeared to be a correlation between “sense of mission” and the overall culture/climate of a school. Higher scores on all culture/climate factors seemed to indicate that the overall culture/climate was more positive in schools implementing school-wide character education programs and involving teachers in the implementation of those programs.

Discussion of the Practice of Eleven Principles of Character Teacher Scores

The Eleven Principles of Character Implementation Survey scores were best understood when reviewed in three categories, “community relations”,

“curriculum related principles”, and “internal relations”. In all three categories, PAR teachers scored higher than NONPAR teachers. The observed assessment of teachers in PAR schools was that the practice of these principles was more likely to occur in environments with school-wide character education programs. In “community relations”, PAR teachers scored 4.03 compared to a score of 3.11 for NONPAR teachers a difference of .92. In “curriculum” PAR teachers scored 4.09 and NONPAR teachers scoring 2.80, a difference of 1.28. In the “internal relations” category PAR teachers scored 4.30 while NONPAR teachers scored 3.35, a difference of .95. These score indicate that the practice of the eleven principles of character in school environments is effective in community relations, in curriculum, and in internal relationships. The observed assessment of teachers in PAR was that the practice of these principles was more likely to occur in environments with school-wide character education programs.

Discussion of Elementary Scores Compared to Academic Performance

A comparison analysis was completed for elementary students in PAR and NONPAR schools. Survey results were compared with Arkansas published academic scores for elementary students in PAR and NONPAR schools. The data supported the research hypothesis of this study, that there was a significant difference in student academic scores in PAR elementary schools compared with NONPAR elementary schools. Upper level scores are reported differently than elementary scores, therefore to remain consistent, only elementary scores were considered for hypothesis 7 (H_{a7}).

Serendipitous Findings

An important result of this study was not included in the hypotheses. It was found that the correlations between culture/climate scores and academic performance scores were strong, a finding that perhaps should be considered for further study. Other serendipitous findings involved personal observations at each school. The atmosphere of the schools seemed to correspond to the survey data. PAR schools were generally neat and clean although several of the facilities were quite old. NONPAR schools were less polished in appearance, even in newer facilities. Although the commitment of teachers was evident in both environments, the atmosphere in PAR and NONPAR schools was noticeably different. There appeared to be a degree of frustration among the faculty at some NONPAR schools.

The research seemed to indicate that school-wide character education programs implemented with administrative enthusiasm and faculty cooperation resulted in measurable differences in student observed assessment of peer behavior and teacher observed assessment of the culture/climate and practice of character in schools. It could not be stated with certainty that implementation of character education programs in all public schools in Arkansas would result in higher character scores, and/or academic scores. However, scores in PAR and NONPAR schools with similar geographic, racial, and economic settings were significantly different. PAR schools did reveal higher scores for the observed assessment of student peer behavior, for teacher observed assessment of the

culture/climate, and for teacher observed assessment of the practice of eleven principles of character. At the elementary level, there was a significant difference in the 2002 Academic Performance Scores of PAR schools compared with NONPAR schools.

WORKS CITED

- Bulach, C. R. 2000. Paper presented at the Character Education Partnership Conference in Philadelphia, PA. 10-20-2000. Evaluating the impact of character education curriculum. Abstract. www.westga.edu/~bulach.
- Bulach, C. R. 2002. Paper presented at the "Building School Communities of Character Conference" at Charleston, WV. 11-20-2002. Four Distinct School Cultures for Shaping Character-Related Behavior. Abstract www.westga.edu/~bulach.
- Bulach and B. Malone. 1994. The relationship of school climate to the implementation of school reform. ERS SPECTRUM: Journal of School Research and Information 12 (4), 3.9.
- Harrison, B., V. Anderson. 1998. Scamming is a popular teen rebellion. *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, A9-10.
- Huffman. 1994. "Developing a character education program: One school's experience". Available from Dialog, ERIC, ED 377 574.
- Jackson, P.W, R. E. Boostrom, and D. T. Hansen. 1993. *The moral life of schools*. San Francisco, CA. Jossey-Bass, Inc.
- Krajewski, B, and E. Bailey. 1999. Caring with passion: The "core" value. *Ubulletin*, Vol., 83, 609.
- Lickona, T. 1976. *Moral development and behavior*. New York, NY: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.
- McClellan, E.B. 1999. *Moral education in America*. New York. Teachers College Press.
- McDonnell, Sanford N. 1997. A virtuous agenda for education reform. *Wall Street Journal*, February 18.
- Mulvenon, Sean, and Antoinette Thorn. 2001. Remediation rates and grade point averages: Is there grade inflation in Arkansas. Ed.D diss. University of Arkansas.
- Ryan, K., and P. Greer. 1990. Putting moral education back in schools. *The Education Digest*.

Schaeffer, Esther. 1997. Character education: Focus for the future. *Social Studies Review*. Vol 37 n 1. p82-84.

Tomlison, John. 1997. "Values: The curriculum of moral education". *Children and Society*. V11 n4. Online. <http://ericae.net/ericdb/EJ559913.htm>.

Tucker, Sara Alice. 1999. The effects of a character education program on the understanding of ethics of fourth graders at Lakeview Academy, a non-denominational, college-preparatory day school: A case study. Ed.D. dissertation. Wilmington College.