ABSTRACT

Passionate Teacher—Virtuous Teaching: Exploring the Relationship between Teacher Calling, Teacher Passion and Character Education

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Inculcating character and morality to our nation’s school children has been of vital importance since the beginning of the first public school in America. Questions as to what morals and values should be taught and what the best way to teach these values and morals remain unanswered. Further, there is no explanation as to why some schools and teachers successfully implement character education and why others seem to have little effect on the children. This research study addressed whether or not the passion and calling of the classroom teacher affected the successful teaching of character education.

This grounded theory, single case study examined this relationship at a rural school district in central Texas. Twenty-three classroom teachers participated in the research project. Teachers shared their points of view regarding how they perceived teaching — as a calling, job or profession. They then shared their beliefs on the teaching of character to their students. The responses gained from the study were informative as well as insightful. Six propositions for further research are presented from the findings.
Passionate Teacher--Virtuous Teaching:
Exploring The Relationship Between Teacher Calling, Teacher Passion
and Character Education

by

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

My grandfather told me when I was a little girl that there were two things in life that no one could take away from me—my music and my education. These were wise words from an uneducated man. I have always enjoyed music, but education has been my passion. My life has been defined by teaching and continued education whether through furthering my education or through striving to assist children and young adults to gain a love for learning.

The completion of this degree marks a new beginning in the lives of my children and me. My four boys are a constant inspiration. Rob and Luke continually offered support and encouragement during my doctoral studies. They frequently told me they were proud of what I was trying to accomplish. Josh and Micah, however, were forced to spend many nights alone and to eat too much fast food because their mom was either in class, studying or writing the dissertation. But whenever I felt guilty about the lack of time I was able to spend with the boys, they too, encouraged me to continue the degree. My success has come completely because of the love, encouragement, and understanding of my wonderful boys.

During the writing of the dissertation I was blessed to meet Mike, my best friend in the whole world. His friendship also motivated me to complete my degree. He provided time away from studies when I needed a break and also pushed me to get busy
and finish when I wanted to whine and complain instead. Without Mike’s friendship, I may never have experienced the joy and happiness that true friendship can bring to a life.

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Thank you all for walking this journey with me. I could not have done it alone.
DEDICATION

To my dad

You always said I could do anything I wanted,
I wish you were here to celebrate!
CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

Background of the Study

The development of a child’s moral character permeated the purpose, curriculum and rituals of early education (McClellan, 1999). Morality and service for the good of the community were fundamental elements of our nation’s first schools. Although the methods of implementation and even beliefs about what character education should include have changed, character education is still a matter of national importance and focus.

President G.W. Bush spoke at the White House Conference on Character and Community on June 19, 2002. President Bush called the teaching of character and citizenship to our nation’s children a high calling. He stated that a good education is the birthright of every American child. Further, he called for schools not only to teach reading and mathematics, but also to teach the basics of character. Listing specific values necessary to lead a successful life as well as function in a democratic society, Bush included the virtues of respect, tolerance, responsibility, honesty, self-restraint, family commitment, civic duty, fairness, compassion, integrity, and idealism. He noted that the teaching of character begins with the family; however, schools are not exempt from teaching character to children. In fact, Bush proclaimed that schools not only teach character, but that it was taught with confidence and conviction. President Bush felt so strongly about the importance of character education that national funding for character education programs was tripled (Bush, 2002, 2003; Langan, 2002).
On October 18, 2002, President Bush proclaimed a National Character Counts Week. In the president’s proclamation speech, he declared

The future success of our Nation depends on our children's ability to understand the difference between right and wrong and to have the strength of character to make the right choices. To help them reach their full potential and live with integrity and pride, we must teach our children to be kind, responsible, honest, and self-disciplined. (Bush, 2002, pg. 1)

This vision of character education is not new to the United States. Benjamin Franklin, Horace Mann, and Thomas Jefferson each spoke of the importance and significance of instilling character in America’s young. Franklin viewed morality as a natural by-product of education (Jensen & Knight, 1981). Mann, like Bush believed that every child had a right to an education. He even argued for Bible reading (without comment) in the public schools (Mann, 1848). Mann’s perspective on morality was quite clear.

Moral education is a primal necessity of social existence. The unrestrained passions of men are not only homicidal, but suicidal; and a community without a conscience would soon extinguish itself. (Mann, 1957, p. 98)

Mann contended that the morality of the populace was in direct correlation to the survival of the community.

Although Thomas Jefferson called for a secular education for the nation’s children, he believed that education was the necessary foundation for citizens to develop habits of reflection and correct action (Fraser, 1999; Nord, 1995; McClellan, 1999). Along with Noah Webster and Benjamin Rush, Jefferson proposed that the schools include virtues that encouraged persons to set aside selfish motives and instead work for the good of the community (McClellan, 1999).
Continuing the discussion on character education was educator and philosopher John Dewey. Dewey viewed character and morality as essential elements of the classroom experience. He stated that the attainment of a moral end was impossible if the regular course of study did not affect the student’s character (Dewey, 1916). Schooling was to provide a balanced experience; character development was not separated from that experience.

During the late 19\textsuperscript{th} century, the purposes and focus of moral education began to change with an emphasis on secular values common to democracy. Character education became tied to specific curriculums and programs as opposed to being an intrinsic part of the classroom experience. Multiple research studies included the topic of character education in some form whether it was to evaluate the effectiveness of a program or a study of how children develop morals.

Lawrence Kohlberg is credited with the first psychological approach to teaching character education, or what he labeled moral education. His theory focused not only on how children develop morally, but also included what strategies and curriculum should be used by teachers to assist in that development (Kohlberg, 1981, 1987). Critics of Kohlberg’s theory stated that the emphasis on moral discussions may lead to intelligent conversations about morality without inspiring children to behave morally (McClellan, 1999).

Other studies have been completed examining many aspects of character education, but Thomas Lickona was the primary educator/thinker associated with character education during the late 20\textsuperscript{th} and early 21\textsuperscript{st} centuries. Troubling youth trends and the moral decline of the nation inspired Lickona to write his landmark text,
Educating for Character: How our Schools Can Teach Respect and Responsibility

(1991). In this text, Lickona presented a three pronged philosophy on character education. “Good character consists of knowing the good, desiring the good, and doing the good – habits of the mind, habits of the heart, and habits of action,” (Lickona, 1991, p. 51). In a later writing, Lickona (2004) stated:

Character education is a good thing, an essential thing for us to do. Focusing on character in our families, schools, and communities will make a difference – has already made a difference – for those involved. If the effort becomes widespread enough, it will make a difference for our whole country and perhaps, to the extent that we become a better people, for the rest of the world. (p. 30)

Lickona also works closely with the Character Education Partnership (CEP). CEP is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, nonsectarian, coalition of organizations and individuals committed to the development and implementation of effective character education in the nation’s K-12 schools. The focus of CEP is to define and encourage the implementation of effective strategies and programs of quality character education. Leaders from the major education organizations, corporate business leaders, and experts from the field of character education as well as school teachers and administrators make up the membership of CEP (CEP Webpage).

There is no doubt that character education is considered vitally important to the success of a democratic society, but this study seeks to answer the question of whether or not the calling and passion of the classroom teacher is linked in any way to the teaching of character education. With the exception of Lickona’s (1991) philosophy that discussed creating a moral environment and Noddings (2002) who mentioned teacher passion as having a positive affect in the classroom, no where else in the literature was this missing element identified.
The literature on teacher calling and teacher passion, though less extensive than the literature on character education, was clear on the fact that some teachers are truly called to teach, however all authors were careful not to provide a list of traits that marked the “called” teacher. Authors used various terminologies – calling, vocation, passion, spirituality. Although the label has changed, all referred to an intrinsic motivation, an inner drive, and a fervent zeal for the field of teaching (Hansen, 1995, 2001; Durka, 2002; Freud, 1987; Mayes, 2002; Noddings, 2002; et.al.).

The called or passionate teacher is one who believes that teaching is leading others to 1) know what they did not know before; 2) to know how to do what they could not do before; 3) to take on attitudes they did not stand for before; and 4) to believe things they did not believe before (Hansen, 1995). The called or passionate teacher finds the work deeply satisfying, has a desire to serve the public well, and believes that to teach is to be full of hope (Cuban, 1995). Perseverance, courage, and imagination sustain a faith in what this teacher does with little or no evidence to support that belief (Hansen, 1995).

The passionate teacher may be passionate about a field of knowledge, issues facing our world or about children. Passionate teachers exhibit no particular style of teaching nor do they hold similar personality types. What unites them is the commitment to active learning and how they approach the mission of teaching (Fried, 1998). Chapter Two further explores what it means to be called and/or passionate about teaching.

The purpose of this study is to identify teachers who voice a calling or passion to teach as well as those who do not express a passion for teaching and then explore whether or not that passion affects the implementation of character education in their classroom.
Specifically, the researcher seeks to determine if there is, in fact a relationship between
the teaching of character education and teacher passion and calling.

Researcher’s Work Setting and Role

The researcher has been a classroom teacher for seventeen years working with
children grades three through eight in five school districts in Texas. The school districts
have served children in rural, suburban, and urban settings. Additionally, the researcher
was employed as an Instructional Specialist and Testing Coordinator in two districts. She
also was Director of Curriculum and consultant for an education consulting firm. The
researcher currently teaches in a rural middle school as well as at a mid-size university in
Texas.

As stated in the introduction, the researcher has viewed teaching as a calling and
through the years has developed a tremendous passion for teaching. Coupled with that
passion for teaching, a passion for helping children develop character and values have
grown. The questions this research study seeks to answer emerged from that passion.

The researcher chose a qualitative research design based on her exposure to
qualitative research during her doctoral studies. After an introductory course on
qualitative research, the researcher was intrigued by this method of study. Additional
classes including ethnography and case study prompted the decision to design a
qualitative research study. Qualitative research is defined by Creswell (1998) as

an inquiry process of understanding based on distinct methodological
traditions of inquiry that explore a social or human problem. The
researcher builds a complex, holistic picture, analyzes words, reports
detailed views of informants, and conducts the study in a natural setting.
(p. 15)
Qualitative research allows the researcher to have a more in-depth understanding of the possible relationship between teacher passion and character education.

Statement of the Problem

Throughout history, the questions of what morality to teach, how to best teach morality and character, as well as the questions of why teach character and morality to our nation’s children were addressed by politicians, educators, philosophers, and psychologists. Though each group of thinkers conveyed different ideas and purposes, all were in agreement that character development was a necessary part of the school curriculum and learning environment.

As character education became linked to an approach or a curriculum, the role of the teacher began to appear in the literature. However this role was strictly limited to the implementation of the curriculum or strategies. Rarely was the role of the teacher viewed as paramount to the infusion of character development. Further, the relationship between teacher calling and teacher passion and the teaching of virtues and morality were not considered of utmost importance. With the exception of Lickona’s (1991) philosophy that discussed creating a moral environment and Noddings (2002) studies that mentioned teacher passion as having a positive affect in the classroom, no where else was this missing element identified.

Though previous research alludes to the fact that teachers play an important role in a child’s development of character, the researcher asserts that the called or passionate teacher creates the learning environment where character and moral living is experienced through the daily activities. Further the called or passionate teacher will be driven to teach character to the children in his/her classrooms.
Significance of the Study

This study is significant to the field of character education for three reasons. First, simply discovering that a relationship exists in a particular context may begin to answer questions as to why some programs work and others do not. This knowledge may also lead to more effective professional development for teachers in character education. Secondly, this study will lead to further studies on teacher passion. Participants will be asked why they entered the field of teaching through journal responses and interview questions. The researcher’s hunch is that many will cite reasons for becoming a teacher that strongly resemble a passion for teaching, even though they no longer speak of being called or passionate. A future study would examine when that passion was lost and what were the contributing factors to that loss. Finally, the findings of this research endeavor could also lead to a study exploring strategies, policy changes, and professional development that may increase teacher passion which in effect will lead to fewer teachers leaving the field because of a loss of passion for teaching.

Definition of Terms

The terms calling, job and profession used in this research study are from Hansen’s 1995 book, The Call to Teach. The definitions are listed below:

1) Calling: Calling is the “sense of being drawn to the kind of work it [the calling] represents” (p. 6)

2) Job: Job is an “activity that provides sustenance or survival” (p.6).

3) Profession: Profession emphasizes the “expertise and the social contribution that persons in an occupation render to society” (p. 8).
The description of a passionate teacher used in this research study is defined by Fried (1998). It is stated below:

4) **Passionate Teacher:** A passionate teacher is “someone truly enamored of a field of knowledge, or deeply stirred by issues and ideas that challenge our world, or drawn to the crises and creativity of the young people who come into class each day – or all of these. To be a passionate teacher is to stop being isolated within a classroom, to refuse to submit to a culture of apathy or cynicism, to look beyond getting through the day” (p. 53).

The term character education used in this research study is defined by CEP. It is stated below:

5) **Character Education:** Character education is the intentional process in our schools and communities to enable children to understand, care about and act upon core ethical and citizenship values. (Character Education Partnership)

Additionally, the term character education will include the following elements as observed by the researcher through current and historic literature as well as through classroom experience.

6) **Character Education:** Character Education is the foundational basis that permeates the entire school environment to allow for the development of the whole child—civil values, democratic values, social values, and emotional values—preparing the child to participate personally and communally in society embracing his/her own worldview while respecting the worldview of others.

**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between teacher calling, teacher passion, and the teaching of character education. Specifically, the study will investigate whether or not teachers who identify themselves as passionate toward teaching exhibit a stronger tendency to teach character education than those who view teaching as a job or profession only. Further the study will examine strategies, behaviors, and beliefs of the called or passionate teacher pertaining to character education and how
those strategies, behaviors and beliefs may be different from those who view teaching as a job or profession only.

**Research Questions**

To carry out the purposes of the study, the following research questions will be examined:

**Category One Questions ~ Passion**

1A. How do teachers who express a passion for teaching integrate character education into their curriculum, classroom management, and pedagogy?

1B. How do teachers who do not express a passion for teaching integrate character education into their curriculum, classroom management, and pedagogy?

**Category Two Questions ~ Calling**

2A. How do teachers who describe teaching as a calling integrate character education into their curriculum, classroom management, and pedagogy?

2B. How do teachers who do not describe teaching as a calling integrate character education into their curriculum, classroom management, and pedagogy?

**Research Design**

A qualitative, bounded, single case study design will be implemented to investigate the connection between teacher passion and character education. According to Yin (2003), case study is the “preferred strategy when ‘how’ or ‘why’ questions are being posed, when the investigator has little control over events, and when the focus is on a contemporary phenomenon with some real-life context” (p.1). The researcher seeks to answer the question of why character education is taught by some teachers and not others and to discover if calling and passion for teaching play a role the effective, comprehensive teaching of character in the classroom.
A defining characteristic of case study research is that the case is bounded in time and/or place (Merriam, 1998; Creswell, 1998; Yin, 2003). The study is bounded by both time and place. A rural AAA school district typical of school districts in Texas will be studied from June through December, 2005. IRB approval was attained. The demographics of the school district selected for the study will be defined in Chapter Three.

Case studies “are designed to bring out the details from the viewpoint of the participants by using multiple sources of data” (Tellis, 1997b, p. 1). Specifically, the researcher used an instrumental case study to define and illustrate the issue of the study (Stake, 1995). Sources of evidence include personal and official documentation, interview transcripts of the teachers, participant observation and other physical artifacts (Yin, 2003). Specifically, an initial letter was sent to all 112 district teachers requesting participation in the research study. Three sampling methods were employed for the selection of participants. First, random self-selection will allow for participants who are interested in the study to nominate themselves. Secondly, the researcher will use a purposeful sample to select teachers that she believes would contribute to the study. Finally, snowball sampling will occur in that throughout the data collection process, other participants may be identified to provide insight into the research questions. Data collection continued until data saturation occurred. Field notes from semi-structured interviews, participant observations, and journal entries from the participating teachers were analyzed using a constant comparative methodology. Because the researcher was interested in the perspective from the teachers’ points of view, analytic induction was also employed. The researcher continually analyzed the data, modified and redefined the
theory and hypothesis, seeking patterns and categories that emerged from the data (Bogden & Biklen, 2003). Additionally, pattern-matching was used for data analysis. Patterns, themes and categories that emerged from the dialogue were analyzed, looking for connections and/or relationships between the data and the research questions.

Selection of Site and Participants

The school district selected is a public school district in the state of Texas. The site was selected because a formal district-wide character education program was not in place, though character education was implemented by individual teachers in the various schools. Additionally, the school and community recently participated in strategic planning. During this endeavor, core values for the school were discussed, however have not been implemented at the time of this writing. This allows for the researcher to ascertain why some teachers are more apt to integrate character education into all aspects of classroom life while others are not.

Description of Participants

The study includes the teachers from the four campuses (Primary, Elementary, Middle, and High schools) of the school district. A stratified purposeful sample was implemented for this study because this sampling method illustrates subgroups and facilitates comparisons (Creswell, 1998). After the initial letter requesting participation in the study was sent to all 112 faculty members in the district, 23 classroom teachers were included in the study. Chapter Three further defines the participant list.
Description of Site

The study was conducted at a rural AAA public school in Texas. The district serves approximately 1600 students in grades pre-kindergarten through twelve. The district is composed of four campuses: an early education through first grade primary campus, a second through fourth grade elementary campus, a fifth through eighth grade middle school campus, and a ninth through twelfth grade high school campus. The elementary, middle, and high school campuses have all achieved “exemplary” status from the Texas Education Agency, though the middle school dropped to “acceptable” during the 2004-2005 school year. Chapter Three further explains the rating and accountability system in the state of Texas.

The overall student population is comprised of 1% African American, 8.5% Hispanic, 0.3% Asian/Pacific Islander, 0.3% Native American, and 89.9% Caucasian. The Special Education classes’ serve 17% of the student body and 9% of the students are enrolled in Gifted and Talented classes. The school is situated approximately 15 miles south of a mid-size city in Central Texas. The district’s mission statement reads as follows:

The mission of … Independent School District, the heart of our hometown where excellence has become tradition, is to ensure that students achieve their highest potential as responsible, self-reliant and unique individuals through a system characterized by engaged and motivated students; passionate dedicated staff; challenging and innovative learning opportunities; state-of-the-art facilities; involved parents and community members; and a safe environment that fosters mutual respect and cooperation. (Strategic Planning Committee Final Summary Report of First Planning Session, 2004)

Chapter Three provides an in-depth description of the selected site.
Data Collection

According to Creswell (1998), case study research requires multiple sources of data collection including interviews, observations, physical artifacts, and archival records. In July, 2005 an initial letter was mailed to every teacher in the district requesting participation in the research project. A personal e-mail was also sent to each teacher at the beginning of the school year. Three sampling methods were employed for the selection of participants. First, random self-selection allowed for participants who were interested in the study to nominate themselves. Secondly, a purposeful sampling method was used to select teachers that the researcher believed would contribute to the study. Finally, snowball sampling occurred throughout the data collection process, in that participants identified others who provided additional insight into the research questions. Data collection occurred until data saturation. Twenty-three of the 112 district teachers continued with the study.

Two semi-structured interviews were conducted allowing the researcher to seek data from the teachers to determine whether or not there is a relationship between teacher calling, teacher passion, and the teaching of character education. The questions allowed the participants to share feelings and beliefs about teaching as a calling or passion as well as gave them an opportunity to articulate their philosophy of character education, its purpose and its value in the classroom.

Following the interviews, participants were asked to complete a journal entry. The researcher chose the use of a journal entry to allow participants time to reflect on their beliefs and attitudes toward teacher calling, passion, and character education. All
thirty participants did not complete the written journal prompt stating they did not have time to complete it.

Finally, classroom observations took place. Participant observations took place following the interview sessions. The researcher looked for attitudes and behaviors that might further answer the research questions about the connection between teacher passion and character education. According to Merriam (1998), observations are useful in qualitative study because “[f]irst observations take place in the natural field setting instead of a location designated for the purpose of interviewing; second, observational data represent a firsthand encounter with the phenomenon of interest rather than a secondhand account of the world obtained in an interview” (p. 94). The researcher observed the following elements: 1) the physical environment; 2) the participants; 3) activities and interactions; 4) conversations; 5) subtle factors; and 6) the researcher’s own behavior (Merriam, 1998).

Each of the documents used for data collection are further discussed in Chapter Three. The journal prompts, interview questions and participant observation template may be viewed in the Appendices. All interviews were audio-taped and transcribed. Field notes collected during the participant observation as well as reflective notes from the interviews were analyzed and coded. All data was stored in a locked filing cabinet in the researcher’s home office.

Data Analysis

A constant comparative method of data analysis was utilized. Creswell (1998) describes constant comparative method as a “process of taking information from data
collection and comparing it to emerging categories” (p. 57). The six steps of constant comparative method to develop theory as developed by Glaser (1978) are listed below:

1. Begin collecting data.

2. Look for key issues, recurrent events, or activities in the data that become categories of focus.

3. Collect data that provide many incidents of the categories of focus, with an eye to seeing the diversity of the dimensions under the categories.

4. Write about the categories you are exploring, attempting to describe and account for all the incidents you have in your data while continually searching for new incidents.

5. Work with the data and emerging model to discover basic social processes and relationships.

6. Engage in sampling, coding, and writing as the analysis focuses on the core categories. (cited in Bogden & Biklen, 2003, p. 67)

During the data collection process, evidence was constantly analyzed with each stage of categorizing and coding leading to another trip to the field. Data collection continued until the categories of information became saturated. Creswell (1998) suggests three types of coding following a standard format.

- Open coding: the research forms initial categories of information about the phenomenon being studied by segmenting information.

- Axial coding: the investigator assembles the data in new ways after open coding.

- Selective coding: the researcher identifies a “story line” and writes a story that integrates the categories in the axial coding model. (p. 57)

Pattern-matching was also used for data analysis. Patterns, themes and categories that emerge from the dialogue were analyzed, looking for connections and/or relationships between the data and the research questions. Chapter Three describes the categories and codes in detail.
Limitations

This case study has several limitations. First, because the research study involves a single school district in the state of Texas, the conclusions are only indicative of that particular district. However, since the district is a typical district in the state, the reader may make a determination about the applicability of the study. Further, the researcher will continue the study at other locations following the completion of this site to expand the theory of the connection between teacher passion and character education.

A second limitation involves the possibility of researcher bias. The researcher has been a classroom teacher in this district for four years. However, the researcher only teaches part time in the middle school which limits the amount of time she has had to interact with the other teachers in the school. Member checking, “the sharing [of] interview transcripts, analytical thoughts, and/or drafts of the final report with research participants to make sure [the researcher] [has] represent[ed] them and their ideas accurately” (Glesne, 1999, p. 32) was utilized to prevent researcher bias.

A third limitation to this study is generalizability. Because the researcher is only examining a single school district, the results of this study may not be representative of other sites or participants. The researcher is not seeking to transfer the results to other settings at this time. Because the relationship between teacher calling, teacher passion, and the teaching of character education has not been thoroughly researched, much more study and investigation will be needed before generalizability or transferability will be attained (Yin, 2003).
**Timeline of Project**

The anticipated time frame for the research study is June, 2005 through December, 2005. The initial letter was mailed during the July followed by a personal e-mail to all district classroom teachers. Interviews and journal entries requests were completed during the fall semester. Classroom observations continued during the fall semester of the 2005-2006 school year with all data collection culminating in December, 2005.

**Conclusion**

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship, if any, between teacher calling, teacher passion, and the teaching of character education. Chapter One has presented a background of the problem and a brief overview of the historical and/or significant figures in the character education movement as well as began the framework for the descriptors of teacher calling and teacher passion. This chapter also introduced the study site and study participants. Data collection and data analysis techniques were explained in brief.

The four guiding research questions are:

**Category One Questions ~ Passion**

1A. How do teachers who express a passion for teaching integrate character education into their curriculum, classroom management, and pedagogy?

1B. How do teachers who do not express a passion for teaching integrate character education into their curriculum, classroom management, and pedagogy?

**Category Two Questions ~ Calling**

2A. How do teachers who describe teaching as a calling integrate character education into their curriculum, classroom management, and pedagogy?
2B. How do teachers who do not describe teaching as a calling integrate character education into their curriculum, classroom management, and pedagogy?

Character education is a national movement to create learning environments in America’s schools that foster the development of core values (CEP). Increasing self-centeredness and declining civic responsibility, cheating, stealing, peer cruelty, and disrespect for authority are just a few of the troubling youth trends cited by Lickona (1992) that have precipitated the movement. Character education involves not only teaching children about core values, but also in providing opportunities for them to act and reflect incorporating these values into every aspect of their daily lives.

Calling and passion have been described as elements that motivate a teacher to continue teaching. Freire (1998) suggests that there is “something mysterious, something called ‘vocation,’ that explains why so many teachers persist with so much devotion in spite of the immoral salaries they receive” (p. 126). The question remains, however, as to whether or not this passion or calling of the individual classroom teacher affects how and if character is taught in the classroom.

Chapter Two will present a review of the literature that first focuses on historical and/or significant figures in the character education movement in America followed by the current literature on teacher calling and passion. This framework will illuminate the need for this study in that previous research does not focus on this possible relationship under study by the researcher.
CHAPTER TWO

Review of the Literature

Introduction

To educate a person in mind and not in morals is to educate a menace to society.
- Theodore Roosevelt

Character education is rocket science!
- Marvin Berkowitz

This review of the literature examines whether a relationship exists between character education, teacher calling, and teacher passion. To understand this relationship, first a detailed examination of the character education movement will be discussed highlighting the key themes and issues guiding each philosophical approach. Following this discussion of character education, the literature review will focus on the topic of teacher calling and teacher passion. The purpose of this review is to illustrate not only the background of character education, teacher calling and passion, but also to demonstrate the lack of information regarding the relationship between the teaching of character education and the passion of the teacher. Though previous research alludes to the fact that teachers play an important role in a child’s development of character, the researcher asserts that the passionate teacher creates the learning environment where character and moral living is experienced through the daily activities.

The purpose of this study was to examine whether a relationship exists between teacher calling and/or passion and the teaching of character education. Specifically, the study investigated whether or not teachers who identify themselves as called to teach or
passionate toward teaching exhibit a stronger tendency to teach character education than those who view teaching as a job or profession only. Further the study examined strategies, behaviors, and beliefs of the called or passionate teacher pertaining to character education and how those strategies, behaviors and beliefs may be different from those who view teaching as a job or profession only.

As Chapter Two will demonstrate, there is much literature in the field of character education and the area of teacher calling and passion. However, there is no direct research looking at the relationship between character education and teacher calling and passion to the best of the researcher’s knowledge.

This study is needed to further the field of knowledge in the area of character education pertaining to possible answers as to why some programs or philosophies work and others don’t. Perhaps the calling and passion of the teacher plays a more significant role in the teaching of character education than what has been believed in the past. This study provides a beginning for a longer term study at other sites to further understand the relationship, if any, between the teaching of character education and teacher passion.

The four guiding research questions are:

Category One Questions ~ Passion

1A. How do teachers who express a passion for teaching integrate character education into their curriculum, classroom management, and pedagogy?

1B. How do teachers who do not express a passion for teaching integrate character education into their curriculum, classroom management, and pedagogy?

Category Two Questions ~ Calling

2A. How do teachers who describe teaching as a calling integrate character education into their curriculum, classroom management, and pedagogy?
2B. How do teachers who do not describe teaching as a calling integrate character education into their curriculum, classroom management, and pedagogy?

History of Character Education

Understanding the historical perspective of moral education in our country is the beginning point. Character education is not new. Controversy over religious morals, secular morals, and societal morals have been discussed and argued over since the founding of our nation. As the history of character education is traced, an obvious change in purpose from “why” character must be included in our schools to a focus on “what” morals or values should be included in conjunction with “how” character education should be taught. The emphasis originally included attentiveness to virtuous living, but later switched to character education as a curriculum. Currently, however, the philosophical stance is beginning to center on an embedded methodology that permeates the classroom environment.

A Morality Based on Religious Code

During the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, the great majority of European settlers in the American colonies were deeply committed to moral education which was rooted in their predominantly Christian faith (McClellan, 1999). The Puritans of New England left the most complete account of the purposes and practices of moral education. The primary responsibility for moral education of the young rested with the immediate nuclear family. “[R]eligious and moral education were inextricably intertwined, and next to providing for the basic physical needs of the young, they were the most essential tasks of child rearing” (McClellan, 1999, p. 2). This was true for not only the Puritans, but other Christians of this time period as well.
Though schools were not available to all children during this era, those students who did attend school received lessons in literacy, writing, and figuring, but the lessons were always presented with religious and moral imagery. The New England Primer, or hornbooks as they were called, (paddle–shaped pieces of wood) were used to teach the alphabet with poems such as:

In Adam’s Fall

We sinned all (Cremin, 1970).

All reading passages referred to the teachings of the Protestant Bible. The ritual of prayer and worship were always included in daily lessons. Soon, however, politicians began to push for the education of all students. Various arguments were made as to how all children would be educated as well as to what curriculum and what rituals would be included in the school day.

The teaching of character and morality was embedded into the total curriculum. Although this instruction in character and morality permeated the classroom environment during these early years, the literature does not address whether or not the individual teacher’s attitudes made any affect on how morality was taught by the teacher.

A Morality Based on Service to Others

During the late 18th and early 19th centuries, family and community life was becoming relatively stable in America. The rigid religious moral code was beginning to loosen, however for many; the rules of morality had not changed. Benjamin Franklin, in his book, Proposals Relating to the Education of Youth in Pennsylvania, (1749) stated that morality must be taught. Additionally, he proposed that the “great aim and end of all learning [was] to teach youth to serve mankind, one’s country, friends and family”
Franklin’s view of education was to teach America’s youth to serve one’s country and fellow man and by doing so, the youth would also serve God. Franklin definitely saw morality as a natural by-product of education. Additionally, for Franklin, serving God was the obvious reason for serving one’s country and fellow man. The curriculum was focused on “why” character and morality must be included as opposed to a specific list of “what” values to teach. There was a strong element of service – service to God and service to our fellow man. This idea of service will also appear in the discussion of the passionate teacher.

Horace Mann, a great proponent for public education, wrote that every citizen deserved the opportunity to be educated equally in a nonsectarian environment. Though Mann believed schools must remain nonsectarian, he also was adamant that the schools remain religious – that was, as far as the courts would allow (Nord, 1995). Mann argued in the Twelfth Annual Report to the Massachusetts Board of Education (1848) that every child should hear the Bible read without comment in every Massachusetts school leaving interpretation of the Scriptures to the pulpits and Sunday Schools. He believed this would solve the problem of appropriate religious instruction. Further on the topic of moral education, Mann stated:

Moral education is a primal necessity of social existence. The unrestrained passions of men are not only homicidal, but suicidal; and a community without a conscience would soon extinguish itself. (Mann, 1957, p. 98)

Again, Mann’s purpose of the school was based on “why” morality must be taught, not over “what” morality to teach. Morality was an inclusive part of the school environment, not an add-on piece of the curriculum. So the focus on character as an imbedded aspect of the curriculum continued, but once again, there apparently was an
assumption that the teachers would automatically carry out these purposes. Neither Franklin nor Mann spoke to the question of whether the teachers’ attitudes, strategies, or passions contributed to the children’s internalization of morality.

_A Morality Based on Citizenship_

Thomas Jefferson saw education as a necessary foundation for free people to govern themselves, and to develop habits of reflection and correct action. Jefferson opposed the idea of church control of higher education; he proposed a secular, but scholarly curriculum that was grounded in empirical data, scientific inquiry and a search for truth. This marked the beginning of the secularization of America’s schools (Fraser, 1999; Nord, 1995; McClellan, 1999). Jefferson, Noah Webster and Benjamin Rush proposed that public schools teach the virtues of a democratic society. Virtues that emphasized the “willingness to set aside purely selfish motives and work for the good of the larger society” (McClellan, 1999, p. 12-13). Again the notion of service for the good of the community was a defining element of moral education for the public schools.

Throughout these early decades of American public schools, the importance of teaching character and morals to the school children was evident. The responsibility of imparting these community values, however, remained primarily with the church and the family, especially the mother (McClellan, 1999). The role of the teacher was rarely, if ever mentioned.

By the early 1900’s, the purposes and the focus of moral education in schools began to change. Moral education was replaced with secular character education that emphasized values common to democracy and capitalism. Discussions centered around doing well in school, working hard, and success in life as opposed to the previous
discussions of original sin, repentance, and forgiveness. Questions of “why” to live a moral or virtuous life were now based on success in life and other democratic principles, but, nevertheless, the “why” was still important.

But, in 1918, American schools became focused on what to teach regarding character education as well as on how to teach character education. The National Education Association released seven cardinal principals for secondary schools. Two of these principals were citizenship and ethical character (Jensen & Knight, 1981). Many character education programs were launched during the 1920’s and 1930’s to meet the growing secularization of the public schools. Few, if any, of these projects were successful in America according to the Hartshorne and May (1930) study on character education. Their findings were disappointing in that they found no correlation between improved student behavior and character education programs. Additionally, the study found that good parents influenced child behavior more than school curriculums did. But what about the teachers? Did the teacher’s attitude, calling and/or passion affect the success of the character education of children?

When morality became a curriculum or something to “do” to school children, the schools lost their right, their responsibility, and their role in shaping the moral character of our nation. By 1930, America had truly become secularized as had its public schools. Happiness, not salvation, became the goal for American citizens and religion was forced into the private realm; not to intersect or interfere with public thought or action (Nord, 1995).
A Morality Based on Progressivism

Also during this time, the progressive philosophy of John Dewey had a tremendous impact on education in America. Dewey, like other progressivists believed that relativism should replace absolutism in the realms of morals, physics, and biology. A focus on particular virtues and codes of conduct, the progressivists believed, would not adequately prepare students for the ever-changing modern world (McClellan, 1999). Yet this relativity did not suggest abandonment of the previous generations’ system of values – only that the changing times created new ethical situations.

Of utmost importance to the success of moral education was the school learning environment concerning the relationship between knowledge and conduct. “For unless the learning which accrues in the regular course of study affects character, it is futile to conceive the moral end as the unifying and culminating end of education” (Dewey, 1916, p. 360). Dewey’s morality was closely linked with developing a person who was a worthy member of the society – one who exhibited “[d]iscipline, natural development, culture, [and] social efficiency” (Dewey, 1916, p. 359) all of which he labeled moral traits. Again, the idea of an embedded aspect of character development was called for; however, the issue of the teacher’s attitude and passion was not addressed.

While Dewey often focused on what to teach and how to teach character education, he was always most concerned with the philosophical question of why teach character to children. There was no greater task, Dewey believed, than preparing children to experience life. Schooling was to provide a balanced experience; character development was not separated from that experience. Education was not preparation for life – education was life (Dewey, 1916).
Progressive moral education did not provide a clear vision for classroom or curricular implementation. The challenge of teaching a thinking process without specific content was difficult for many as was the ability to determine the difference between simple conversation and meaningful moral discussions. Because of these factors, the progressive philosophy on moral education often functioned only as an alternative aside one of the many virtue-based programs of the current times (McClellan, 1999).

During this era in moral and character education, a focus was placed on what the teachers should do and what curriculum should be taught to best instill virtue in the children. The social studies curriculum was elevated above the literary discussions that previously had provided the knowledge base for character education (McClellan, 1999). There was no conversation as to whether or not the passion of the teacher impacted the implementation of character and morality in the learning environment.

By the late 1960’s, parents called for a return to moral education in the public schools due to the emotional climate of the decade. In 1975, 86% of the State Departments of Education having working drafts of public school educational goals included at least one goal in the area of moral development (Jenson & Knight, 1981). The demand by the public for the schools to instill a sense of morality in the children created a problem regarding the separation of church and state. Educators were asked to remain neutral in their decisions as to which values to teach.

The shift in philosophy was now complete. The decision to teach character education was totally based on which curriculum to use. “How” to teach morality and “what” morality to teach had become the emphasis of character education in America. The questions regarding why character and morals should be developed in students had
been relegated to *because the public demanded it versus for the moral good of the nation* as in previous decades.

*A Morality Based on Moral Reasoning*

In the mid 1960’s, a psychological approach to character education, or what Lawrence Kohlberg labeled, moral education entered the field. Kohlberg began the research on the connection between moral reasoning and moral action. His theory provided much information as to how children develop as well as providing information on what teachers should teach in the way of moral education. The issue of why to implement moral education was based on the continued belief that the character development of the children would serve the good by benefiting the community, however, Kolhberg’s theory moved away from character education embedded in the total learning environment to one of specific lessons.

Kohlberg’s theory of Cognitive Development used a collection of hypothetical ethical dilemmas to assist students in the development of the six stages of moral reasoning. Though grounded in Piaget’s cognitive development theories, Kohlberg modified the theory to include moral development based on the writings of Socrates, Kant and Dewey (Jarrett, 1991). He asserted that the levels of moral maturity were identifiable and that children progressed through these stages using critical reasoning skills (Jenson & Knight, 1981).

Kohlberg’s reading of Socrates was evident in his theory. Socrates spoke of man as being naturally conflicted and therefore the children must be taught well in order to be turned away from evil and toward the good. He believed that every choice and every action should aim at some good. This idealistic utopian view held that simply knowing
the good would in turn cause good actions to follow in man (Plato, 1968). Kohlberg’s sixth stage represented Socrates view on the good. However, Kohlberg differed with Socrates in that Kohlberg suspected that persons would rarely reach the sixth stage in moral development.

Kohlberg held that a child’s moral reasoning grew through conflict and argument with students at the next higher stage of development. The teacher’s role was to provoke questioning and discussion in the classroom that would allow this cognitive conflict to mature and develop. Hypothetical ethical dilemmas were presented to students with the expectation that they would resolve the dilemmas and defend their positions (Kohlberg, 1987). Moral maturity came not through what was decided, but instead, how the child reasoned through the decision.

Though Kohlberg believed in the connections between moral reasoning and moral action, it was precisely this that brought the strongest criticism to his theory of cognitive development. Critics feared that “the heavy emphasis on moral discussion neglected the problem of motivation and led to a kind of rhetorical sophistication that gave students the ability to rationalize their actions without inspiring them to behave in principled ways,” (McClellan, 1999, p. 86).

Kohlberg argued that a universal definition of morality was thought of “as the form of moral judgments instead of the content of specific moral beliefs” (Kohlberg, 1981). This ethical neutrality also came under attack. The assumption was that the program benefited all and offended none because no one was really called to really live a moral ethical life of character and integrity (Hunter, 2000).
Kohlberg addressed the issue of teacher influence rather harshly in his early writings. He stated first that teachers participated in a “thoughtless system of moralizing [when children] engage in behavior that is personally annoying” (Kohlberg, 1967, p. 299). His second attack on teachers was that when teachers were not moralizing they were simply attempting to “inculcate the majority values, particularly as reflected in vague stereotypes about moral character” (ibid.). Yet in his later writings, he was not as critical of the classroom teacher. Nevertheless, Kohlberg did not consider the impact of teacher calling or passion as an important influence in the moral development of children.

Stemming from Kohlberg’s and Carol Gilligan’s (1982) research, moral dilemmas in everyday life were studied with the purpose of investigating the extent to which people construct moral problems in terms of the structure of the dilemma and in terms of gender orientation. Results showed that participants answered survey questions involving real life situations with more care-based responses whereas survey questions involving hypothetical situations elicited more justice-based responses (Wark & Krebs, 2000).

A similar study was completed based on the above model that further examined moral decision making in real life as well as looking at gender orientation. Again the results showed that people tend to answer questions relating to real life differently than hypothetical questions. Additionally, this study did not support Gilligan’s research on gender differences in moral orientation (Haviv & Leman, 2002).

The question continued to arise in American education as to whose morals or whose values would be taught. Myriad responses can be found for this question. Often character education programs or philosophies included a list of items to embrace. The lists typically incorporated the words core values or citizenship, civility, discipline and
honesty. Teacher, staff, and student behaviors are also included in these lists as well as possible instructional techniques (Sommers, 1993; Lickona, 1998; Benninga & Wynne, 1998). Others suggest the inclusion of various worldviews when selecting the commonly agreed upon virtues or habits of behavior (Glanzer, 1998).

*Morality Based on Values Clarification*

*Values and Teaching: Working with Values in the Classroom* was the first major work in the values clarification movement published by Raths, Harmin and Simon in 1966. Values Clarification was perhaps the oldest and most widely used program due to its ease in implementation. Social studies teachers quickly latched on to the techniques and added them to the existing curriculum, though teachers in other disciplines used the strategies as well (Jarrett, 1991; McClellan, 1999). Values Clarification was not as much a theory of moral development as it was a technique for assisting children in developing their own set of values (Hunter, 2000).

The program maintained that value judgments were essential to everyday life and that the purpose of the program was to teach and guide children through a process to improve their skill in making value judgments. Once the child had clarified the value, then he was fully entitled to hold that value (Jarrett, 1991). Proponents of the program believed that the world we live in was constantly changing providing an ever-increasing range of options for children. Thus it was imperative that schools help youth find a sense of direction and to develop a positive, enthusiastic relationship with society. Classroom teachers were to remain non-indoctrinative and nonjudgmental while emphasizing the personal and individual nature of valuing (McClellan, 1999, Jarrett, 1991).
Teachers were provided with myriad materials to implement the Values Clarification program. Materials included dialogue guide questions to assist students in clarifying their values; value sheets which were written statements describing dilemmas followed by questions for students to answer privately; and group discussion questions organized around pictures without captions, stories and/or scenes from current movies. Teachers were expected to guide students through the process without sharing any of their own personal views or values (McClellan, 1999).

Proponents of Values Clarification have shared many advantages for the program; however the critics were not convinced. Positive effects have been listed as: 1) people were encouraged to give more time and energy to value related thought; 2) people were encouraged to reflect about their own values and the values of society as a whole; 3) it helped people be more non-judgmental; 4) people had more awareness and a better integration of choices; and finally 5) people continued to grow and learn as they used the valuing process (Hunter, 2000).

Criticisms for the program were many, as well, and most centered on the fact that there was no distinction between moral and non-moral issues. Other criticisms included: 1) there was an emphasis on ethical relativism; 2) children would have difficulty seeing the difference between moral principles and personal preferences; 3) students were encouraged to believe that all positions were equally valid; 4) students would have no sense of how to deal with real moral conflicts; 5) there was a real possibility for an invasion of privacy, emotional manipulation, and moral indoctrination; 6) tremendous emphasis was placed on how one “felt” about things as opposed to what one thought
cognitively and rationally; and 7) there were few, if any, right or wrong answers (Jenson & Knight, 1981; Hunter, 2000; McClellan, 1999).

The Values Clarification program was used extensively into the late 1970’s. However the moral climate in America continued to decay and many moral philosophers and religious fundamentalists believed that Values Clarification was an extension of the problem, not a solution to it. As criticism grew for the program, enthusiasm quickly diminished and Values Clarification lost its hold on American education.

A Morality Based on Virtue

_Educating for Character: How our Schools Can Teach Respect and Responsibility_ was a landmark text by Thomas Lickona (1991) explaining how to teach moral values based on a community understanding of necessary values. “Good character consists of knowing the good, desiring the good, and doing the good—habits of the mind, habits of the heart, and habits of action,” (Lickona, 1991, p. 51).

The underpinnings of Aristotle’s philosophy on the good were evident throughout Lickona’s philosophy. Lickona, like Aristotle (1999), believed that knowing the good was not enough; persons must also do good to be considered a person of moral character. Everything has a purpose – every choice, every action is aimed at some good. Intellectual virtues or academic responsibilities as well as moral virtues were part of Lickona’s program. Lickona’s theory began with an emphasis on why schools should teach morality and virtues to children. Due to the moral decline of the nation, Thomas Lickona created his approach. The nations’ youth were in desperate need for healing and that healing would only come from moral education in our schools. Moral education was the solution to the problem.
What once could have been called an “approach” to character education is now a complete philosophy encompassing the total school community. Lickona’s research has changed the face of character education in America’s schools. An emphasis on “objectively worthwhile, universally agreed-upon values” (Lickona, 1991, p. 38) for not only the school children, but the entire community is advocated. Additionally, assisting the children to “understand, internalize, and act upon such values” (p. 38) as opposed to simply exposing children to a list of values is emphasized.

Character education is a good thing, an essential thing, for us to do. Focusing on character in our families, schools, and communities will make a difference – has already made a difference – for those involved. If the effort becomes widespread enough, it will make a difference for our whole country and perhaps, to the extent that we become a better people, for the rest of the world. (Lickona, 2004, p. 30)

Lickona’s philosophy included the creation of a moral classroom environment and school culture as well as the surrounding community. He provided detailed specifics for the formation of each element. Within the classroom, the teacher has a list of nine objectives she is responsible for. The list includes “duties” such as practice moral discipline, act as a mentor, teach values through the curriculum, and encourage moral reflection (Lickona, 1989). The ideas and standards that were listed assist teachers in creating a moral classroom, but again the question of teacher passion and calling is never asked. In fact, a major criticism of Lickona is that his assumption is that the community will be good and that the teachers will be good (Hunter, 2000).
Another philosophy or view on character education is that of feminist, Nel Noddings, who supported a theory of care ethics and moral reasoning. She described four components for education to contribute to the moral life of students. Dialogue, practice, confirmation, and modeling were essential in making education moral. Modeling involved teachers showing in their behavior that they care. Dialogue helped children explore the great questions children frequently ask while practice allowed them to actually execute caring communication. The final component, confirmation, involved revealing to the student the ethical and intellectual truth about himself – confirming that he was cared for. Noddings’ care ethics does not simply focus on character, but instead, focused on the “other” and how the community (the learning environment) related to the “other” (Bergman, 2004; Noddings, 1984, 1995, 2002). Noddings “alternative” approach was very similar to Lickona’s philosophy of community. She advocated a community that not only cared for each other, but also cared for and about others.

The importance of real conversation was also an element in Nodding’s care theory. The significance of the teacher as a role model led to the analogy of the teacher as an artist. “In teaching, a wide repertoire of stories, careful planning, and passionate interest seem vital” (Noddings, 2002, p.144-145). The first actual reference to the importance of teacher passion in connection with moral conversations (though it was one sentence in the whole book) was made with the feminists’ care ethics philosophy.

The Character Education Partnership (CEP) was incorporated in 1993 as a nonprofit, nonpartisan, nonsectarian organization providing national advocacy and
leadership for the character education movement. CEP focuses on defining and encouraging effective practices for character education in the nations K-12 schools. The CEP mission is “dedicated to developing moral character and civic virtue in our young people as an essential way of promoting a more compassionate and responsible society” (http://www.character.org). Over 1,000 organizations and individuals are involved in CEP including major corporate leaders, leading experts in the field of character education, classroom teachers and university professors, as well as community members.

CEP recently published the Eleven Principles of Effective Character Education™ (Lickona, Schaps, & Lewis, 2003). The principles incorporate the entire learning community – parents, students, faculty, staff, administrators, and extended community. Character education includes thinking, feeling and behavior. Students are provided with opportunities for moral action as well as a meaningful and challenging academic curriculum. Finally, a measure for evaluation is included. Evaluation of the character of the school, the character of the school staff, and the character of the students are all vital components of the assessment measure.

The Eleven Principles of Effective Character Education developed by CEP are listed below.

1. Promotes core ethical values as the basis of good character.
2. Defines “character” comprehensively to include thinking, feeling, and behavior.
3. Uses a comprehensive, intentional proactive and effective approach to character development.
4. Creates a caring school community.
5. Provides students with opportunities for moral action.
6. Includes a meaningful and challenging academic curriculum that respects all learners, develops their character, and helps them to succeed.
7. Strives to foster students’ self-motivation.
8. Engages the school staff as a learning and moral community that shares responsibility for character education and attempts to adhere to the same core values that guide the education of students.
9. Fosters shared moral leadership and long-range support of the character education initiative.
10. Engages families and community members as partners in the character-building effort.
11. Evaluates the character of the school, the school staff’s functioning as character educators, and the extent to which students manifest good character. (Character Education Partnership, 2003)

A Morality of Virtuous Living

President G.W. Bush spoke at the White House Conference on Character and Community on June 19, 2002. President Bush called the teaching of character and citizenship to our nation’s children a high calling. In fact, he stated that a good education is the birthright of every American child. Further, he called for schools to not only teach reading and mathematics, but also to teach the basics of character. Listing specific values necessary to lead a successful life as well as how to function in a democratic society, Bush included the virtues of respect, tolerance, responsibility, honesty, self-restraint, family commitment, civic duty, fairness, compassion, integrity, and idealism. He noted that though the teaching of character begins with the family, schools are not exempt from the teaching of character to children. In fact, Bush proclaimed that schools not only teach character, but that character is taught with confidence and conviction. President Bush considered the importance of character education so strongly that national funding for character education programs was tripled. (Langan, 2002, p. 1)

On October 18, 2002, President Bush proclaimed a National Character Counts Week. In the president’s proclamation speech, he declared

The future success of our Nation depends on our children's ability to understand the difference between right and wrong and to have the strength of character to make the right choices. To help them reach their full potential and live with integrity and pride, we must teach our children to be kind, responsible, honest, and self-disciplined. (Bush, 2002, p.1)
After reviewing the educators and philosophers who have developed theories on moral and character education, there definitely appeared to be an attempt to move towards a greater purpose in teaching than simple pre-packaged curricula to help manage children. The importance of using real life activities with children has also received much attention as has providing children with opportunities for service (Kuçeradi, 2000). Interactions in life are complicated and simple slogans and good habits are not enough to address the daily complexities. Students want more. Students need more. “To treat adolescents as delicate flowers unable to act and think is as patronizing as it is wasteful” (Sizer & Sizer, 1999, p. 187).

As character education became linked to an approach or a curriculum, the role of the teacher began to appear in the literature. However this role was strictly limited to the implementation of the curriculum or strategies. With the exception of Lickona’s philosophy that discussed creating a moral environment and Noddings who mentioned teacher passion as having a positive affect in the classroom, no where else was this missing element identified in past or current literature to the best of the researcher’s knowledge. But before determining if the passion of the teacher significantly affects the teaching of character to children, the concept of teacher calling and passion must now be identified and examined.

Teacher Calling and Passion

The literature on teacher calling and teacher passion, though less extensive than the literature on character education, was clear on the fact that some teachers are truly called to teach, however all authors were careful not to provide a list of traits that marked
the “called” teacher. Authors used various terminologies – calling, vocation, passion, spirituality. Although the particular label changed, all authors referred to an intrinsic motivation, an inner drive, and a fervent zeal for the field of teaching when discussing the called or passionate teacher. Before moving any further, a look at some very basic definitions of the four words will provide a fundamental understanding for the framework of teacher calling and passion.

According to the American Heritage Dictionary, Second College Edition (1985), calling refers to an inner urge or a strong impulse or simply an occupation, profession or career. Calling generally has religious overtones implied in today’s society; however religion was not listed as part of the definition. Vocation, on the other hand, was equated with religion. An urge or predisposition to undertake a certain kind of work, especially a religious career was the definition for vocation that fits the purposes of this paper. The other definition referred to a specialized trade, occupation or profession for which one is especially suited such as carpentry or mechanics. The two definitions have quite different meanings in that the second describes one who is just “trained” for a specific trade or occupation while the first definition defines one who has an inner urge or perhaps a penchant for a particular kind of work.

Boundless enthusiasm; fervor, zeal, ardor; strong forceful devotions to a specific cause expressing a driving attraction to something that grows out of motivation or attitude defines the word passion. Great feeling and emotion as well as motivation and attitude are linked with the word passion. Spirituality is also used when discussing the teacher who will be referred to from this point on as the passionate teacher. Spirituality
is simply defined as the state, quality or fact of being spiritual. Spiritual, however means having the nature of spirit; not tangible or material; concerned with or affecting the soul.

The passionate teacher is marked by these four definitions – she is one who feels an inner urge to teach, she feels almost predestined to teach, great feeling and emotion are involved in the daily work of teaching, and she knows that teaching not only affects the soul of the students she works with, but it also touches her soul. Exploring these elements of the passionate teacher will illustrate the link between passionate teachers and virtuous teaching.

*On the Passionate Teacher*

At the mention of the word “teacher”, many examples come immediately to mind. While there are some teachers unfortunately who view teaching as merely a job, those are not the ones of interest in this research study. The passionate teacher is one who believes that teaching is leading others to 1) know what they did not know before; 2) to know how to do what they could not do before; 3) to take on attitudes they did not stand for before; and 4) to believe things they did not believe before (Hansen, 1995). She finds the work deeply satisfying, has a desire to serve the public well, and believes that to teach is to be full of hope (Cuban, 1995). Perseverance, courage, and imagination sustain a faith in what she does with little or no evidence to support that belief (Hansen, 1995).

Teaching is a way of life for the passionate teacher. The role of teacher cannot be divorced from her sense of identity or her sense of self (Hansen, 1995). The passionate teacher is ever-mindful of the potential impact she has on those with whom she comes in contact. She is less concerned about the personal sacrifices she must make and is willing to accept the extra duties required to meet the needs of those in her care. She is
committed to the mission of teaching (Bullough, Mayes, & Patterson, 2002; Fried, 1998; Serow, 1994).

Sophie Freud, the grand-daughter of the great Sigmund Freud, wrote of the transformation that teaching made on her life. She had a quite successful career as wife, mother, social worker and therapist, but “suddenly had a vivid image of self-fulfillment…I wanted to enrich [teachers’-in-training] lives and the lives of the people with whom they worked” (Freud, 1987, p. 125). She said that when she began teaching, only then did her work become “emotionally significant and a source of self-esteem” (Freud, 1987, p. 134). Like Freud, the passionate teacher has a sense of calling, a “sense that one has something to contribute, that one can make a difference, and that one can shape the world and not just be shaped by it” (Hansen, 1995, p. 90).

On Calling and Vocation

The notion of vocation and calling are witnessed in the everyday convictions of the passionate teacher. Vocation and calling are

essential to the sustained practice of teaching – a combination of public service and personal fulfillment becomes the central concept that explains why many competent teachers (neither heroes nor saints) not only stay in teaching but relish the challenge and treasure the personal freedom they have to shape what occurs in their classrooms. (Cuban, 1995, p. x)

Vocation and calling draw people into teaching and enable them to find success despite adversity and difficulty. A magnetic pull toward a life of service is exemplified in the idea of vocation and calling. (Hansen, 1995).

Not all teachers are necessarily called to teach, nor do all view teaching as a vocation, but for those that do, teaching is a calling that makes a claim on the soul (Durka, 2002). Some are called to teach while others discover the sense of call after
years of service, but in both cases, the call either deepens or will be lost (Bullough, Mayes, & Patterson, 2002).

Teachers, however, cannot, nor should not be forced to regard their work as a calling. Additionally, simply being called to teach does not imply that one will excel or even be good at it. Viewing teaching as a vocation does not preclude the need for exceptional and ongoing preparation for the task of teaching (Durka, 2002; Hansen, 1995, 2001). Because a teacher is called, there can be no assumption that intelligent reflective and critical thinking will ensue (Bullough, Mayes, & Patterson, 2002). For these reasons, the phrase passionate teacher as opposed to called teacher is developed.

*On Passion*

Teacher education programs have been remiss in sufficiently attending to the spiritual matters of teaching (Mayes, 2002). These spiritual matters deal with the existential questions of why one chooses to teach as opposed to how one will maintain classroom order and discipline and impart grade level skills and knowledge.

A teacher who ‘really knows and believes’ that teaching is worthwhile will likely conduct him- or herself differently from a teacher who has lost faith in the endeavor or who resorts to expediency in the face of challenge…. (Hansen, 2001, p. 56)

The passionate teacher knows it is her role to assist students in finding emotional stability, existential identity and spiritual awareness (Mayes, 2002). She invites engagement and energizes imagination (Bullough, Mayes, & Patterson, 2002).

The passionate teacher may be passionate about a field of knowledge, issues facing our world or about children. Passionate teachers exhibit no particular style of
teaching nor do they hold similar personality types. What unites them is the commitment to active learning and how they approach the mission of teaching (Fried, 1998).

We all need to find something about our teaching that matters deeply to us, get passionate about it, and share that passion. When we discover and explore our passions about teaching and learning and begin to share them with others, doors are opened, and the possibilities are endless. (Olson, 2003, p. 305)

Passion is what makes a difference in the quality and depth of student learning (Fried, 1998). The passionate teacher transfers that passion to students by her example (Olson, 2003).

Teaching is difficult work – often lonely work. Answering the call to teach often motivates one to continue teaching, but Sophie Freud argues that it is a “passion for our work” (Freud, 1987, p. 134; Durka, 2002, p. 68) that moves and inspires one to persevere.

[Teaching] demands total devotion to its subject-matter, as well as providing rich and varied life experiences. It demands tight self-discipline and loose creativity. It demands openness to people and absorption with ideas, protection of time and energy, as well as endless commitment to students. It demands both solitude and many human encounters. (Freud, 1987, p. 134)

To understand why passion is chosen as a descriptor as opposed to calling, a brief return to the definitions is needed. Passion is marked by boundless enthusiasm; fervor, zeal, ardent; strong forceful devotions to a specific cause expressing a driving attraction to something that grows out of motivation or attitude. Calling is simply an inner urge or a strong impulse. A teacher may feel the inner pull or impulse to teach, but she may never act on it or may act on it grudgingly. Calling does not imply expertise. Passion, on the other hand, is full of energy, forceful enthusiasm for a cause, a fervent driving attraction towards something. This fervor, zeal, and driving attraction toward teaching, children or
a particular subject matter are what motivate the passionate teacher to excel. The passionate teacher is

someone truly enamored of a field of knowledge, or deeply stirred by issues and ideas that challenge our world, or drawn to the crises and creativity of the young people who come into class each day – or all of these. To be a passionate teacher is to stop being isolated within a classroom, to refuse to submit to a culture of apathy or cynicism, to look beyond getting through the day. (Fried, 1998, p. 53)

The passionate teacher is the one who makes a difference in the lives of children.

Passion is not a goal of education, but instead when children encounter the passionate teacher, they find a bridge that connects the intensity of their thoughts and real life experiences. Students always know they are in the presence of someone who is devoted to learning and teaching. Students know when they are in the presence of the passionate teacher (Fried, 1998). “[T]his caring about ideas and values, this fascination with the potential for growth within people, this fervor about doing things well and striving for excellence” (Fried, 1998, p. 54) is what makes a teacher unforgettable.

On Virtuous Teaching

The passionate teacher is one who truly knows and believes in what she does. With this understanding, comes a way of life. She makes this belief part of herself and her orientation to the world (Hansen, 2001). The passionate teacher believes that teaching is not only an intellectual endeavor, but a moral endeavor as well (Durka, 2002; Hansen, 1995, 2001; Lickona, 1991). Teaching involves touching not only the minds of children, but the heart of children. The passionate teacher is “not afraid to speak [her] truth in the face of soft forms of cultural relativism” (Bullough, Mayes, & Patterson,
This brings the connection between the passionate teacher and character education or virtuous teaching.

Aristotle wrote of the importance of teaching the young the difference between right and wrong. “To be a competent student of what is right and just, …, one must first have received a proper upbringing” (1999). Children were taught what is right and just for the good of the community. In today’s society, however, children come to school without this “proper upbringing” that Aristotle speaks of. Thomas Lickona (1991) asserts that the problem may be that children are amoral, not immoral suggesting that the community has failed to provide the knowledge of what is right and just.

Many teachers now recognize that failing to do their job of inculcating moral principles exacts a price that is paid by bewildered students who are being denied a structured way to develop values. The result is moral relativism. Students deserve better. (Durka, 2002, p. 53)

The drive that the passionate teacher exhibits for her own moral life has the capacity to stir the hearts and minds of the students in her care (Durka, 2002).

Virtuous teaching requires moral vision. Moral vision requires

…seeing the moral significance of social interactions and even small events, imagining the long-range effects of children’s experience and school on their values and character and the kind of society they will someday help to create, seeing teaching as it was once seen — … a “moral craft”. (Tom, 1994, p. 10)

If in fact, teaching is seen as it once was seen, as a moral craft, could this not also refer to the notion of service to the community as an element of this moral craft? Franklin, Jefferson, Mann, Webster, even Dewey all included the teaching of morals and values as a way to serve others and to serve the community. The obligation to serve is an integral factor in the literature on calling, vocation and passion (Bullough, Mayes, & Patterson, 2002; Durka, 2002; Freid, 1998; Freud, 1987; Hansen, 1995, 2001; Lickona, 1991;
Olson, 2003). What is the link between the passionate teacher’s moral obligation to serve the community and the obligation to teach children a morality entrenched in service to others and the community?

These obligations make virtuous teaching an ever-demanding task. Freud (1987) understood this task as “a way of sharing myself, of making an impact on the world” (p. 133). Virtuous teaching allows the passionate teacher the means to “work out the inner desire to contribute to the transformation of the world” (Durka, 2002, p. 6). The passionate teacher positions herself “to enter and to help sustain a world of human flourishing. That entry and that ongoing task, will call upon the teacher’s person, conduct, and moral sensibility” (Hansen, 2001, p. 40).

Passionate teacher – virtuous teaching is the essence of one who possesses a passion for teaching and for promoting the morality of society’s children. This passion is a driving force, an all-encompassing devotion, a fervor that defines the life and mission of this teacher. The passionate teacher not only concerns herself with the intellectual development of her students, but the moral development as well.

This basic hunger for goodness makes claims on us as teachers and lures us to teach what is more than conceptual knowledge or emotional skills, namely, how to live well. We realize that we do what we do because we feel called to do it. It is for us a source of joy. (Durka, 2002, p. 80)

Virtuous teaching is a source of joy for the passionate teacher. But even more importantly, virtuous teaching is a source of joy for the students of the passionate teacher. The passionate teacher understands that character education must permeate the entire learning environment. But, that learning environment, alone, does not build character in students. It is the researcher’s premise that this combination of the passionate teacher and virtuous teaching are the essential
elements that foster character and promote the growth and moral maturity in our school children necessary to sustain society.

Conclusion

This review of the literature has traced the history of the difference in philosophical approaches of the character education movement since the early 1600’s. The development of the character of the nation’s school children has and continues to be an integral part of the school’s curriculum. Moving from religious purposes to democratic purposes, character education has been viewed as necessary and vital to continue the success and integrity of America.

Further, this chapter examined the literature in regard to teacher calling and teacher passion. Though the literature is not as extensive on these two topics, researchers are beginning to look at teacher calling and the effects that calling or passion may have on classroom teaching and the attitudes about teaching. Teaching has been called a profession, an occupation, a vocation and a calling. These terms were defined in this chapter as was the word passion as it described the attitudes and behaviors of a called teacher.

What remains to be found; however is a single research study that focuses on the connection between teacher calling, teacher passion and the teaching of character education. Some author’s have alluded to the possible connection between teacher passion and successful teaching while others have suggested that the teacher has a role in character education programs. However, in each of the documents on character education, the role of the teacher was only briefly mentioned and usually only as a facilitator to carry out the specific program. Educators have not yet looked at this
possibility of teacher passion being connected to the successful implementation of character education programs or philosophies. This study, then, examined the existence of a possible relationship.

The significance of studying this relationship between passion and character education, if one does exist, will further the field in several ways. First, simply discovering that a relationship exists may answer questions as to why some programs work and others do not. This knowledge may also lead to more effective professional development for teachers in the field of character education. Secondly, this study may lead to further studies on teacher calling and teacher passion. Participants will be asked why they entered the field of teaching through journal responses and interview questions. The researcher’s hunch is that many will cite reasons for becoming a teacher that strongly resemble a calling or passion for teaching, even though they no longer speak of being called or passionate. A future study would examine when that calling or passion was lost and what the contributing factors were for that loss. Finally, the findings of this research endeavor could also lead to a study exploring strategies, policy changes, and professional development that may increase teacher passion which in effect will lead to fewer teachers leaving the field because of a loss of calling or passion for teaching. Additionally, providing a work environment that encourages and values the role of the teacher will enhance the learning environment for the children leading to greater success and fulfillment for the students.

The four research questions to be examined are:

Category One Questions ~ Passion

1A. How do teachers who express a passion for teaching integrate character education into their curriculum, classroom management, and pedagogy?
1B. How do teachers who do not express a passion for teaching integrate character education into their curriculum, classroom management, and pedagogy?

Category Two Questions ~ Calling

2A. How do teachers who describe teaching as a calling integrate character education into their curriculum, classroom management, and pedagogy?

2B. How do teachers who do not describe teaching as a calling integrate character education into their curriculum, classroom management, and pedagogy?

The answers to these questions will provide insight as to whether or not teachers who identify themselves as called or passionate toward teaching exhibit a stronger tendency to teach character education than those who view teaching as a job or profession only. Further the study will identify strategies, behaviors, and beliefs of the called or passionate teacher pertaining to character education and how those strategies, behaviors and beliefs may be different from those who view teaching as a job or profession only. These answers are important because the character education of our children is vital to the success of our nation. Identifying strategies, beliefs and attitudes of those who teach character education passionately will provide a framework or model for other educators. Plus, administrators can use this framework to provide for a working environment that is conducive to furthering these strategies, beliefs and attitudes fostering teacher satisfaction.

Chapter Three provides a thorough explanation of the methodology and data analysis techniques involved in the study. Information about data collection as well as a detailed description of the chosen site and participants of the study will be included. The research instruments will be discussed regarding their purpose and connection to the research questions.
CHAPTER THREE

Methodology

Introduction

Character education has become a growing concern for America’s schools. What was once an integral element of a child’s education, then removed from the schools due to secularization, is now returning to conversations regarding curriculum and instruction. Character education programs are numerous. Many schools have incorporated core values and/or specific programs into the school day, especially at the elementary school level. But as the Hartshorne and May (1930) study on character education uncovered, there is no direct correlation between improved student behavior and character education programs alone. The findings of their study could lead simply to the creation of better character education programs; however, it may also suggest that the role of the teacher may significantly affect the teaching of character education. Hartshorne and May did not study the role of the teacher.

The purpose of this study is to examine whether a relationship exists between teacher calling, teacher passion and the teaching of character education. Specifically, the study will investigate whether or not teachers who identify themselves as called or passionate toward teaching exhibit a stronger tendency to teach character education than those who view teaching as a job or profession only. Further the study will examine strategies, behaviors, and beliefs of the called or passionate teacher pertaining to
character education and how those strategies, behaviors and beliefs may be different from those who view teaching as a job or profession only.

As discussed in Chapter Two, there is much literature in the field of character education and the area of teacher calling and passion. However, there is no research looking at the relationship between the teaching of character education and teacher calling or passion.

This study is needed to further the field of knowledge in the area of character education pertaining to possible answers as to why some programs or philosophies work and others do not. Perhaps the calling and passion of the teacher plays a more significant role in the teaching of character education than what has been believed in the past. This study will provide a beginning for a longer term study at other sites to further understand the relationship, if any, between the teaching of character education and teacher calling and passion. The four research questions guiding this study are as follows:

Category One Questions ~ Passion

1A. How do teachers who express a passion for teaching integrate character education into their curriculum, classroom management, and pedagogy?

1B. How do teachers who do not express a passion for teaching integrate character education into their curriculum, classroom management, and pedagogy?

Category Two Questions ~ Calling

2A. How do teachers who describe teaching as a calling integrate character education into their curriculum, classroom management, and pedagogy?

2B. How do teachers who do not describe teaching as a calling integrate character education into their curriculum, classroom management, and pedagogy?
Design

Qualitative Design

A qualitative research design was chosen for several reasons. First, this type of inquiry allows the researcher to examine in detail the connections between character education and teacher calling and passion. Second, a qualitative approach is appropriate because the research questions attempt to answer questions about people’s experiences; inquiry into the meanings people make of their experiences; studying a person in the context of her or his social/interpersonal environment; and research where not enough is known about a phenomenon for standardized instruments to have been developed (or even to be ready to be developed). (Patton, 2002, p. 33)

This study seeks to examine if teachers who define themselves as called or passionate about teaching also feel called to teach character education. The literature on teacher calling and passion discusses the fact that teaching is a moral endeavor. Hansen (1995) states that the “relationship between a teacher and students is invariably a moral one” (p. 11). That relationship can either be one that is warm and caring or cold and indifferent, but nevertheless, the relationship will impact the students. There has been, however, no research that actually connects the passion and calling of the teacher with the actual teaching of character education. This study will allow the researcher to observe what methods and strategies are used to teach character education by the passionate teacher versus the teacher who may view teaching as a job or profession only.

Third, an emphasis on the researcher’s role as an “active learner who can tell the story from the participants’ view rather than as an ‘expert’ who passes judgment on participants” (Creswell, 1998, p.18) is important because the researcher seeks to find meaning in the participants’ story, not evaluate effectiveness. Finally, qualitative
research is naturalistic. The actual setting of a classroom is the “direct source of data and the researcher is the key instrument” (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003, p. 4). The case being studied is in a school district where character education is not mandated and therefore teachers have the option of implementing character education into the curriculum or classroom environment. By viewing the actual setting of the classroom through participant observation and semi-formal interviews, the researcher can make connections between what the participants say and what they do in relation to the teaching of character education.

The research is concerned with context, not sterile numbers of how many do or do not teach character education. The question of whether or not a calling or passion drives them to teach character education cannot be uncovered using quantitative measures. Quantitative research would answer questions regarding how many teach character education as well as how effective teachers are in the teaching of character education. Deep inquiry as to why teachers teach character education and how teacher calling and passion affect that teaching can only be accomplished through qualitative research.

As previously stated, the purpose of this study is to examine whether a relationship exists between teacher calling and passion and the teaching of character education. Additionally, the study will examine strategies, behaviors, and beliefs of the passionate teacher pertaining to character education and how those strategies, behaviors and beliefs may be different from those who view teaching as a job or profession only.

Case Study Design

A case study design was embraced for the purposes of this research study. A case study is “an exploration of a ‘bounded system’ or a case (or multiple cases) over time
through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information rich in context (Creswell, 1998, p. 61). The case is bounded by both time and place. According to Yin (2003) case study is the “preferred strategy when ‘how’ or ‘why’ questions are being posed, when the investigator has little control over events, and when the focus is on a contemporary phenomenon with some real-life context” (p.1). More specifically, an instrumental single case study which focuses on an issue or issues where the case being studied is used instrumentally to illustrate the issue will be implemented. (Stake, 1995). For these reasons, the case study design is an appropriate design for this study.

**Theoretical Framework**

*Grounded Theory*

Though case study was chosen as the most appropriate design, grounded theory will be utilized for data analysis. Grounded theory is especially powerful when theory is inductively generated from fieldwork, that is, theory that emerges from the researcher’s observations and interviews out in the real world rather than in the laboratory or the academy. (Patton, 2002, p.11)

While the purpose of the study is not to develop theory, the researcher is open to emerging theory that may arise from the data collected. Creswell (1998) suggests that grounded theory is useful to discover a theory that relates to a particular situation. Because the literature does not discuss in any depth the relationship between teacher calling, teacher passion and the teaching of character education, there is the possibility that a beginning theory will surface.

Grounded theory was developed by Glaser and Strauss (1967). Later Strauss and Corbin (1998) worked together to create a different approach to grounded theory
methodology emphasizing that “analysis is the interplay between researchers and data, so what grounded theory offers as a framework is a set of coding procedures to help provide some standardization and rigor to the analytical process (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 13). This methodology will provide coding procedures to categories and themes assisting the researcher in data analysis. The table below illustrates what Creswell (1998) calls the “Data Analysis Spiral”. This spiral includes procedures and examples for each or the data collection process.

Table 1

*The Data Analysis Spiral*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Procedures</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Data Collection</td>
<td>Interviews, Observations, and Documents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data managing</td>
<td>File Folders, Index Cards, or Computer Files</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading, Memoing</td>
<td>Reflecting, Writing Notes, Asking Questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Describing, classifying interpreting</td>
<td>Categories, Context, and Comparisons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Representing, visualizing</td>
<td>Matrix, Chart, Written Text</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Adapted from Creswell, 1998

The following are possible categories that may emerge from the data collection process. These categories will be changed and adapted as the research continues depending on what the data reveals.
1. Demographics
   1.1 Ethnicity
   1.2 Position
   1.3 Gender
   1.4 Years in District
   1.5 Years in Profession

2. Concepts
   2.1 Definition of Character Education

3. Principles and Beliefs
   3.1 About character education
   3.2 About teaching and passion
   3.3 About teaching and calling

4. Themes
   4.1 Relationships between character education and teacher passion
   4.2 Professional development relating to character education

5. Language
   5.1 Terminology
   5.2 Character education integration
   5.3 Self-reflection

Research Environment

The study was conducted at a rural AAA public school in Texas. School districts in Texas are ranked by size for academic and athletic competition by the University Interscholastic League (UIL). The school district is ranked as a 3A district according to the UIL regulations. Table 2 reveals the number of school districts within each UIL category.

The district serves approximately 1600 students in grades pre-kindergarten through twelve. The district is composed of four campuses: an early education through first grade primary campus, a second through fourth grade elementary campus, a fifth through eighth grade middle school campus, and a ninth through twelfth grade high school campus.
The elementary, middle, and high school campuses have all achieved “exemplary” status from the Texas Education Agency (TEA) although the middle school dropped to “acceptable” status following the 2004-2005 school year. Table 3 explains the accountability ratings used by TEA.

Table 3

*TEA Accountability Ratings*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exemplary</th>
<th>Recognized</th>
<th>Acceptable</th>
<th>Low-Performing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>At least 90% passing each subject area (all students &amp; each student group)</td>
<td>At least 80% passing each subject area (all students &amp; each student group)</td>
<td>At least 55% passing each subject area (all students &amp; each student group)</td>
<td>Below 55% passing any subject area (all students or any student group)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. Texas Education Agency (http://www.tea.state.tx.us/perfreport/account/2002/manual/table1.html)*

Table 4 displays the student demographics of the district. The school is situated approximately 15 miles south of a mid-size city in Central Texas. The district’s mission statement reads as follows:
The mission of … Independent School District, the heart of our hometown where excellence has become tradition, is to ensure that students achieve their highest potential as responsible, self-reliant and unique individuals through a system characterized by engaged and motivated students; passionate dedicated staff; challenging and innovative learning opportunities; state-of-the-art facilities; involved parents and community members; and a safe environment that fosters mutual respect and cooperation. (Strategic Planning Committee Final Summary Report of First Planning Session, 2004)

Table 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Demographics of Research Site</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Population</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian/Pacific Islander</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native American</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caucasian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gifted/Talented</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: * … ISD Strategic Planning: Vital Statistics

The district recently participated in a year-long Strategic Planning endeavor. In conjunction with the community, parameters, objectives, and strategies for the education of the children were developed. These parameters, objectives, and strategies as described in the 2004 Strategic Planning Committee Final Summary Report of First Planning Session are listed below:

*The parameters are boundaries within which the organization will accomplish its mission; they are self-imposed limitations. Our parameters are:*

- We will make all decisions based on the best interest of the student.
- We will practice participatory decision-making throughout the district.
- We will never compromise excellence.
- We will always expect the best of everyone.
• We will honor the dignity of each person.

*Objectives are an uncompromising commitment to achieve specific, measurable, observable or demonstrable results that exceed its present capacity. Our objectives are:*

• All students will excel at the next level of any endeavor.
• Every graduate will have the foundation to be successful in the career of his/her choice.
• All students will be among the top 10% of their peers as measured by validated state and national tests.
• All students will possess exemplary moral character.

*Strategies are bold resolutions that dedicate the organization’s resources and energies toward the continuous creation of systems to achieve the extraordinary as expressed in the mission and objectives. Our strategies are:*

• We will provide unlimited learning opportunities that will ensure student success consistent with our mission and objectives.
• We will guarantee the effectiveness, growth, and accountability of our administrators, instructional staff, and support personnel.
• We will achieve full family participation.
• We will develop a culture of respect, safety, and security.
• We will achieve full participation and support from the community in order to enhance the success or our students at all levels.
• We will guarantee open communication among all district stake-holders.
• We will develop and implement a comprehensive plan that ensures state-of-the-art facilities.

Seven sub-committees were formed to fulfill the parameters, objectives, and strategies of the district. Each sub-committee then presented an action plan to the Strategic Planning Committee. The seven sub-committees are listed below:

1. Communication
2. Community Involvement
3. Family Participation
4. Learning Opportunities
5. State-of-the-Art Facilities
6. Safe and Secure Environment
7. Staff Effectiveness

Character education was included in the Learning Opportunities Action Plan and was voted as a year one district goal. The action plan declares that “[t]he district will include
Character Education at all levels to instill positive moral attributes and promote ethical behavior. The implementation of the Strategic Planning Committees goals will begin during the 2005-2006 school year” (Strategic Planning Committee Action Plan Recommendations, 2005).

Site Choice

The Character Education Partnership (CEP) has developed Eleven Principles of Effective Character Education. These principles are:

1. Promotes core ethical values as the basis of good character.
2. Defines “character” comprehensively to include thinking, feeling, and behavior.
3. Uses a comprehensive, intentional proactive and effective approach to character development.
4. Creates a caring school community.
5. Provides students with opportunities for moral action.
6. Includes a meaningful and challenging academic curriculum that respects all learners, develops their character, and helps them to succeed.
7. Strives to foster students’ self-motivation.
8. Engages the school staff as a learning and moral community that shares responsibility for character education and attempts to adhere to the same core values that guide the education of students.
9. Fosters shared moral leadership and long-range support of the character education initiative.
10. Engages families and community members as partners in the character-building effort.
11. Evaluates the character of the school, the school staff’s functioning as character educators, and the extent to which students manifest good character. (Character Education Partnership, 2003)

Although these characteristics, the researcher agrees, are necessary elements of an integrated character education program, the chosen site for the study does not intentionally implement them currently. This is important because the researcher is not studying teacher effectiveness per se, but instead looking for teacher attitudes that may cause him/her to implement character education in the classroom without a district
mandate. For this reason, the selected district will serve the purposes of the research study.

The researcher initially looked at a site where character education was implemented on all campuses following intensive professional development including administrators, teachers, auxiliary and support staff, and students. The researcher believed the data may be skewed at this site because of the significant focus on character education at this particular district. This site, however, may be selected for future research on the relationship between teacher calling and passion and the teaching of character education.

A second reason for the selection of this site was accessibility. Because one of the action plan goals for the district is a focus on character education, district administrators were interested in the study. This interest provides an opening into all campuses with little or no opposition. As Glesne (1999) points out, backyard research is attractive because the research has “relatively easy access; the groundwork for rapport is already established; the research would be useful for their professional or personal life; and the amount of time needed for various research steps would be reduced” (p. 26).

The researcher is aware, however, of the dangers in doing research at an institution where she is involved and therefore the negative aspects must also be acknowledged. Studying in one’s own institution “establishes expectations for data collection that may severely compromise the value of the data; individuals might withhold information, slant information toward what they want the researcher to hear, or provide ‘dangerous knowledge’ that is political and risky for an ‘inside’ investigator (Creswell, 1998, p. 114). As stated in Chapter One, the researcher has been a part-time
advanced reading teacher at one of the schools in the district for four years. She teaches four classes back to back allowing little time for conversations with other school personnel. For these reasons, the researcher believes that the data will not be compromised since she is on only one campus for such a short time everyday and has not established close relationships with any of the faculty and staff. Additionally, because the purpose of the study is to look for connections between character education and teacher passion, not teacher effectiveness, the responses provided by the participants will not be politically risky for their employment. Further, district administrators are interested in participating in the study because of the researcher’s knowledge of character education—not to seek information as to whether particular teachers are implementing character education in the classroom. For these reasons, the researcher believes that the selected site provides a friendly environment, open to academic research that will provide important data to begin the exploration of connections between teacher calling, teacher passion and the teaching of character education.

*Sampling Procedures.* As discussed in Chapter One, this study is the beginning of the researcher’s quest to determine whether or not there is a relationship between teacher calling and passion and the teaching of character education. Because the literature is virtually silent on the research topic, the researcher chose not to study the entire faculty in the district. If there were evidence that a connection existed between teacher passion and character education, then the study of the entire faculty would be appropriate. But with this research study, the researcher was looking for in-depth information that may shed light on the research questions listed on page two of this chapter.
Three sampling methods were employed for the selection of participants. First, random self-selection allowed for participants who were interested in the study to nominate themselves. Secondly, a purposeful sampling method was used to select teachers that the researcher believed would contribute to the study. Finally, snowball sampling occurred throughout the data collection process, in that participants identified others who provided additional insight into the research questions. Data collection occurred until data saturation.

Twenty-three of the 112 district teachers asked to participate continued with the study. Each of the four campuses was represented though the focus of the study was to look at teacher attitudes in general, not whether the grade level taught affected the said attitude.

The terms calling, job and profession used in this research study are from Hansen’s 1995 book, *The Call to Teach*. The definitions are listed below:

1) **Calling**: Calling is the “sense of being drawn to the kind of work it [the calling] represents” (p. 6)

2) **Job**: Job is an “activity that provides sustenance or survival” (p.6).

3) **Profession**: Profession emphasizes the “expertise and the social contribution that persons in an occupation render to society” (p. 8).

The description of a passionate teacher used in this research study is defined by Fried (1998). It is stated below

4) **Passionate Teacher**: A passionate teacher is “someone truly enamored of a field of knowledge, or deeply stirred by issues and ideas that challenge our world, or drawn to the crises and creativity of the young people who come into class each day—or all of these. To be a passionate teacher is to stop being isolated within a classroom, to refuse to submit to a culture of apathy or cynicism, to look beyond getting through the day” (p. 53).
The term character education used in this research study is defined by CEP. It is stated below:

5) **Character Education**: Character education is the intentional process in our schools and communities to enable children to understand, care about and act upon core ethical and citizenship values. (Character Education Partnership)

Additionally, the term character education will include the following elements as observed by the researcher through current and historic literature as well as through classroom experience.

6) **Character Education**: Character Education is the foundational basis that permeates the entire school environment to allow for the development of the whole child—civil values, democratic values, social values, and emotional values—preparing the child to participate personally and communally in society embracing his/her own worldview while respecting the worldview of others.

**Data Collection**

As stated by Yin (2003), a major strength of case study is in the use of multiple sources of data. The use of multiple sources of evidence allows the researcher to address “a broader range of historical, attitudinal, and behavioral issues” (Yin, 2003, p. 98).

Further, this use of multiple sources ensures credibility and reliability and is referred to as triangulation. The researcher employed semi-structured interviews, participant observation, journal reflections, and the viewing of teacher lesson plans. Data was collected from June 2005 through December 2005.

**Individual Interview**

Two semi-structured interviews were conducted with the participants. The interviews further sought data from the teachers to determine whether or not there was a connection between teacher passion and character education. The questions allowed the
participants to share feelings and beliefs about teaching as a calling or passion as well as
gave them an opportunity to articulate their philosophy of character education, its
purpose and its value in the classroom. The interviews took approximately 30 minutes
each and were audio-taped and transcribed.

Many of the research questions on calling and passion were generated from
Hansen’s (2001, 1993) studies on teacher calling. Others were generated by the
researcher based on her own experiences in the classroom and from information received
at the 2004 annual Character Education Partnership conference. The second interview
dealt with follow-up responses to the first interview. An interview matrix was used
noting answers as well as body language and researcher insights. The interview
questions are listed below with a notation as to whether the statement focuses on (C)
calling; (P) passion; (CE) character education, or to a particular (RQ: 1A, 1B, 2A, 2B)
research question.

Interview questions for the first interview were as follows:


2) What words or phrases describe you as a teacher? (P, C, RQ: 1A, RQ: 2A)

3) How do you describe character education? (CE)

4) Is there a difference between teaching character and character education? (CE)

5) Respond to this quote: “A teacher who ‘really knows and believes’ that teaching
is worthwhile will likely conduct him- or herself differently from a teacher who
has lost faith in the endeavor or who resorts to expediency in the face of challenge
rather than considering alternative approaches, [or] consulting with others”
(Hansen, 2000, p. 56) (C, P, RQ: 1A, 1B, 2A, 2B)

Interview questions for the second interview were as follows:

6) How important is the teaching of character education? (CE, RQ: 1A, 1B, 2A, 2B)
7) How do you teach character education in your classroom? (CE, RQ: 1A, 1B, 2A, 2B)
8) Why did you choose those strategies to teach character education in your classroom? (CE, RQ: 1A, 1B, 2A, 2B)
9) What professional development have you participated in related to character education? (required or on own) (CE, RQ: 1A, 1B, 2A, 2B)
10) Why do you or do you not teach character education? (CE, RQ: 1A, 1B, 2A, 2B)

These questions allowed the researcher to hear the teachers’ beliefs and philosophy of teaching and whether or not they viewed character education as an important part of the curriculum. The interview questions were analyzed with the journal questions which were similar in nature. Participants were given the opportunity to both articulate verbally and in writing their beliefs and attitudes about why they teach and their beliefs about the inclusion of character education. The first interview followed the completion of the journal questions. This allowed the participants to have reflected on their own beliefs prior to the interview.

**Participant Observation**

Following the journal responses and at least one individual interview, the researcher visited each participant’s classroom for an unobtrusive participant observation. The researcher looked for attitudes and behaviors that might further answer the research questions about the connection between teacher passion and character education.

According to Merriam (1998), observations are useful in qualitative study because “[f]irst observations take place in the natural field setting instead of a location designated for the purpose of interviewing; second, observational data represent a firsthand encounter with the phenomenon of interest rather than a secondhand account of the world obtained in an interview” (pg. 94). The researcher observed the following elements: 1) the physical
environment; 2) the participants; 3) activities and interactions; 4) conversations; 5) subtle factors; and 6) the researcher’s own behavior (Merriam, 1998).

The researcher’s presence in the classroom has the possibility of altering the way the participant and/or the participant’s students may respond. Since evaluating teacher effectiveness is not an element of this research study, the participant should be more at ease with the researcher in the classroom. Additionally, visitors, other teachers, and administrators visit the classrooms regularly in this school district so the students are relatively used to having outsiders in the classroom. Fieldnotes from each observation were recorded and transcribed.

The researcher used an observation protocol to record behaviors of the teacher (both in instruction and interacting with students) as well as language connected to character education based on CEP’s Eleven Principles of Effective Character Education (2003). Also strategies that the participant may use to teach character education were noted. The researcher transcribed and reflected on the observation notes within twenty-four hours while the information was still fresh and not affected by further data collection.

Documents

Documents were an additional form of data collection. Documents provide “both historical and contextual dimensions to your observations and interviews. They enrich what you see and hear by supporting, expanding, and challenging your portrayals and perceptions” (Glesne, 1999, pg. 59). At minimum, two forms of documents will be collected. First, participants were asked to complete a journal entry focusing on teaching as a calling or a passion and on beliefs about character education. The journal entries
allowed the participants to reflect on their personal beliefs and philosophy about their life as a teacher and their views on character education, its importance and its meaning. Participants may be able to share their feelings and beliefs through writing better than in the individual or group interview. The two journal questions are listed below:

- Describe when you first knew you wanted to be a teacher. Include people, places, and events that may have influenced your decision. What words or phrases describe you as a teacher?

- How does your campus implement the teaching of character education? Is the teaching of character viewed as an important part of the curriculum? Discuss how you implement character education into your classroom? How do you feel the community views the teaching of character in the school district?

A second form of documentation will be the participants’ lesson plans as well as any other examples of their teaching that they are willing or interested in sharing with the researcher. The lesson plans, however, may not adequately show whether or not character education is implemented in the participant’s teaching. If the participant implements character education into the total school day, he/she may not actually include that information in the daily lesson plans. However, strategies and activities may provide insight into how the participant implements character education into the classroom experience.

Data Analysis

A constant comparative method of data analysis was utilized. Creswell (1998) described constant comparative method as a “process of taking information from data collection and comparing it to emerging categories” (p. 57). The six steps of constant comparative method to develop theory as developed by Glaser (1978) are listed below:
1. Begin collecting data.

2. Look for key issues, recurrent events, or activities in the data that become categories of focus.

3. Collect data that provide many incidents of the categories of focus, with an eye to seeing the diversity of the dimensions under the categories.

4. Write about the categories you are exploring, attempting to describe and account for all the incidents you have in your data while continually searching for new incidents.

5. Work with the data and emerging model to discover basic social processes and relationships.

6. Engage in sampling, coding, and writing as the analysis focuses on the core categories. (cited in Bogden & Biklen, 2003, p. 67)

During the data collection process, evidence was constantly analyzed with each stage of categorizing and coding leading to another trip to the field. Data collection continued until the categories of information became saturated. Creswell (1998) suggested three types of coding following a standard format.

- Open coding: the research forms initial categories of information about the phenomenon being studied by segmenting information.

- Axial coding, the investigator assembles the data in new ways after open coding.

- Selective coding, the researcher identifies a “story line” and writes a story that integrates the categories in the axial coding model. (p. 57)

Through unstructured interviews, written response, and journal entries, the researcher continually analyzed the data, modifying and redefining the theory and hypothesis, seeking patterns and categories that emerged from the data (Bogden & Biklen, 2003). Pattern-matching was also used for data analysis. Patterns, themes and categories that emerged from the dialogue were analyzed, looking for connections and/or relationships between the data and the research questions.
Purpose of the Study

As presented in Chapter Two, character education has been essential to the growth and development of our nation’s children since the founding of our public school system. Originally based on the Protestant Christian traditions, morality and character development were integrated throughout the curriculum and daily practices including a time for daily prayer and worship. As America became secularized, religious education was removed from the schools. Troubling youth trends, discipline problems in the classroom, and a change in family dynamics have all led to a new focus on developing character education programs for our schools. The problem remains, however. While many districts around the country are adopting goals for the addition of character education, there appears to be a missing link into the successful implementation. The researcher has observed that some teachers seem to be quite successful with the instilling of values with their students, while others are not successful or simply do not see the importance of character education. The researcher asserts that the missing link is somehow connected to teacher calling and/or teacher passion. This research study was designed to examine whether a relationship exists with this issue of teacher calling and passion and the teaching of character education.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to examine the existence of a relationship between teacher calling, teacher passion and the teaching of character education. Chapter One presented a background of the problem illustrating how the researcher became involved in the teaching of character to her students finally leading to her doctoral studies in the field of teacher passion and character education. An in-depth review of the literature was
presented in Chapter Two. Detailing the historical roots of character education in our country as well as examining major philosophical assumptions regarding the teaching of character was presented to allow the reader to have a complete background into the history of character education in America. Further, the researcher established the philosophical views on teacher calling and teacher passion.

In this chapter, the researcher has offered a detailed explanation of how the research study was designed, as well as how the data was collected and analyzed. The researcher laid aside any preconceived notions she might have had about any connections between character education and teacher passion, allowing the participants to speak and share, letting the data speak for itself. This is an important study that could, in fact, further the field of knowledge in that no other study has been done linking teacher calling and passion with the successful teaching of character education to the best of the researcher’s knowledge. The remaining chapters include the actual data, the interpretation of data, and finally offer conclusions and assertions as to the findings in this study.
CHAPTER FOUR
Research and Data Analysis

Introduction

Throughout history, the teaching of character, morals and values has been viewed as vital not only for the education of America’s children and youth, but also to the survival of our nation. Programs and curricula supporting the multiple philosophies of character education have been developed and marketed since the inception of the public school. Some school districts have specific programs or strategies identified for the teaching of character education, while other districts do not. Chapter Two traced the historical roots of character education in America, highlighting the changes that occurred in philosophy beginning with a morality based on religious code to one of citizenship and democratic living to finally, a philosophy based on community and virtuous living (McClellan, 1999; Lickona, 1998; Bush 2003; CEP, 2003).

Chapter Two also reviewed the literature on teacher passion and teacher calling. As presented previously, rarely does current literature – or past literature – link the effective teaching of character education with the passion or calling of the classroom teacher. One exception is Durka (2002) who suggests that the called teacher will innately teach character or how to live well.

This basic hunger for goodness … lures us to teach what is more than conceptual knowledge or emotional skills, namely, how to live well. We realize that we do what we do because we feel called to do it. (Durka, 2002, p. 80)
Chapter Four presents the data findings collected during this research study as well as the analysis of the data. The chapter is presented in five parts. First, an introduction to the research participants including demographics establishes the background for the remainder of the chapter. After this introduction of participants, Part Two presents a discussion of character education as perceived by the teachers participating in the study. Research questions 1A and 2A follow the character discussion in Part Three expressing how teachers who articulate a passion and/or calling for teaching integrate character education. Part Four reflects the responses to research questions 1B and 2B referring to teachers who do not express passion or describe teaching as a calling in relationship to the teaching of character education. Part Five discusses the professional development in character education of all 23 participants. Chapter Five will then present propositions, assertions and implications for further study.

**Part I - Introduction of Participants**

The entire faculty at the chosen site was invited to participate in this research study focusing on a possible connection between teacher calling, teacher passion and the teaching of character education. Initially a letter was sent to each faculty members’ home followed by an email three weeks later requesting that the teachers self-nominate for the study. Following this initial contact, three of the 112 teachers responded desiring to be included in the study however, only one of those three actually participated. The other two did not want to be interviewed and never returned the questionnaire.

Six weeks into the school year, the researcher selected 23 teachers to receive a second email. These teachers were asked to participate based on either the researcher’s experience with the teacher because he/she taught her children or because of their
perceived attitudes toward teaching and/or their known teaching of character. Of these 23, six did not respond and three agreed to participate but did not wish to be interviewed because of time constraints and did not return the questionnaire. The remaining 14 continued with the study.

The researcher personally contacted an additional 14 teachers who were nominated by either campus administrators, parents, students, or colleagues. Eight teachers responded and continued with the study, three did not respond, and three agreed but did not schedule an interview or return the questionnaire. A total of 23 teachers representing each of the four campuses participated in the research study. Table 5 illustrates the sampling method of the participants and whether they took part in personal interviews or by completing the interview questions in writing using the interview questionnaire.

Following the identification of the research participants, each was given a pseudonym to allow the teachers to remain anonymous. Table 6 lists the pseudonym, degree earned, subject taught and years of experience as well as age and gender of each participant. The campus abbreviations are PS: Primary School, ES: Elementary School, MS: Middle School, and HS: High School. The participants held at least one of the following degrees: BA – Bachelor of Arts, BS – Bachelor of Science, B.Ed – Bachelor of Education, BME – Bachelor of Music Education, or M.Ed. – Master of Education. All 23 participants held at least a Bachelor’s degree with three of the participants also holding graduate level degrees. The average years of teaching experience was 17.7 years and the average years in the district was 10.2 years. Ages of the teachers ranged from 27 to 61 with the average age being 46.7.
Table 5

*Research Participant Selection Method*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Campus</th>
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<th>Data Collection Method</th>
</tr>
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<td>Q - 12/04/05</td>
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<td>Q - 12/05/05</td>
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<td>IL; IE; OR; PR</td>
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Key to Table 5

**Sampling Method:**
- IL – Initial letter mailed to entire faculty requesting participation in research study
- IE – Initial email sent to entire faculty requesting participation in research study
- SE – Specific email sent to select faculty requesting participation in the research study
- PR – Personal request by researcher requesting participation in the research study
- OR – Other recommended for participation in the research study
- SN – Self nominated

**Data Collection Method**
- I – Interview by the researcher
- Q – Interview questionnaire completed by participant
Table 6

**Individual Case Demographic Profiles**

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<tr>
<th>Pseudonym</th>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age</th>
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<th>Grade</th>
<th>Subject Taught</th>
<th>Degree</th>
<th>Years Taught</th>
<th>Years Experience</th>
<th>Years in District</th>
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<td>Barbara D.</td>
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<td>F</td>
<td>44</td>
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<td>BA</td>
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<td>M11</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>MS</td>
<td>5-8</td>
<td>Resource</td>
<td>BS</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wanda S.</td>
<td>M12</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>MS</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>BA</td>
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<td>Bonnie B.</td>
<td>M13</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>MS</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>History</td>
<td>BS</td>
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<td>Mary R.</td>
<td>M14</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>MS/HS</td>
<td>5-12</td>
<td>Choir</td>
<td>BME</td>
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<td>Greg S.</td>
<td>M15</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>MS</td>
<td>5-8</td>
<td>Technology</td>
<td>BA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wilma K.</td>
<td>M16</td>
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<td>45</td>
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<td>M.Ed.</td>
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<td>Hillary R.</td>
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<td>F</td>
<td>47</td>
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<td>H2</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>HS</td>
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<td>Becki J.</td>
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<td>F</td>
<td>27</td>
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<td>BS</td>
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<tr>
<td>Brenda K.</td>
<td>H4</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>HS</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>BS</td>
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Interviews and Interview Questionnaires

Face-to-face interviews were requested of each of the participants, however only six of the teachers were willing to be interviewed. The teachers expressed the lack of time due to the new computer attendance and grade book program implemented in the district. Additionally, teachers expressed hesitation about being taped while they spoke of their personal feelings regarding teaching. Because of the participant responses, the researcher provided the remaining 17 teachers with the interview questions listed as an open ended questionnaire to be completed and returned to the researcher.

Part 2 – Interview Questions 3 & 4

Participant Understanding of Character Education

Interview questions 3 and 4 asked the participants to clarify their understanding of character education followed by the themes and responses from the participants. Interview questions 3 and 4 are listed below.

3. How do you describe character education?

4. Is there a difference between teaching character and character education?

The research site does not have a formal character education program in place, however all 23 participants expressed similar viewpoints on what character education entails. Ten teachers mentioned the teaching of values and morals to children as a key element to character education. Two shared that families no longer taught character or morality to their children and therefore the schools were required to take over that responsibility. Barbara even stated that character education was “teaching children
values they should have learned at home.” All teachers voiced strong opinions about the teaching of character in our schools.

Susi said that “[c]haracter education is the foundation for all other academic successes.” Olivia and Cassie both added that character education provided the necessary elements needed to succeed in life. In President Bush’s 2002 White House Conference on Character and Community, he stated that the teaching of character and citizenship to our nation’s children was the highest calling. Similarly, Horace Mann asserted that “[m]oral education is a primal necessity of social existence” (1957, p. 98). He believed that a community without a moral conscience would extinguish itself. The teachers in the research study validated both of these positions regarding the importance of character education in America’s schools.

In addition to teaching morals and values, Candy and Hillary both stated that teaching real life lessons was a central component of character education. These real life lessons allow children to not only learn about the values to make one a better person, but they also provide opportunities for the children to practice acting in moral, ethical ways. Lickona (1989) wrote in depth about the importance of children being given the opportunity to practice, utilizing the virtues and values learned in school. He also communicated that teaching and practicing character developed the whole child. Betsy shared this view by stating the character education was “training the soul not just behavior – training the soul and the heart of a child.”

Another frequent reply dealt with the necessity of teacher modeling. Nine teachers commented that modeling of high character and discussing character issues was central to the teaching of character education. Betty described character education as
“constantly and consistently teaching good character – showing the students by our example.” Greg, a middle school technology applications teacher, gave an impassioned response when asked to define character education. The teacher, he felt, was the most important component of any character education program stating that how the teacher interacts with his/her students would make a lasting impression on them.

I believe having character as a teacher is very important. Kids are very smart. I think kids are a lot smarter than we think they are. You know you can’t put on a front with kids, they know who you are and they know what your character is. And so I really believe that you should have a good character about yourself to be a teacher. Kids are going to know that and kids are going to learn from your character and the character they are going to possess is from what they learn in school and from their teachers, the people they are surrounded by everyday. Honestly if a teacher doesn’t have a good character about themselves, the students are going to know that – you can’t put up a front, you can’t fool kids. They know when you are upset and when you are not yourself and they know the type of person that you are and they are going to learn from that. And if a teacher is always unfriendly to the students and not having a good quality of character, then the students are going to lie to themselves and think that’s okay. And really at this age, students are so impressionable that the character part of what they learn is from the people they are around right now because they are so impressionable and especially from adults and role models that they look up to – maybe I’m way off, but I really believe that we make a lasting impression on the students and it goes back to how they interact with us. Our character really determines how they interact with the teachers.

Greg does not just talk about the importance of teachers displaying high character and integrity; his beliefs are quite obvious in his interactions with students. He is one of few teachers who waits outside his classroom between each period to greet and chat with students as they walk by. Students of all grade levels will smile and speak to Greg as they move between classes. Greg also is very aware of the students’ actions and interactions with each other. He is quick to notice if one is not acting his/her usual self and will stop them and ask what is going on. Alternatively, if a student displays improper
behavior in the hallway, Greg will pull that student aside and discuss the importance of acting in appropriate ways, again modeling character to the students.

Though all teachers agreed that character education was a necessary component in our schools, Rose shared an observation about students that other teachers did not mention. She said, “Character education should definitely be taught these days. Many students ‘act’ like they have character – wearing [B]ible verses, etc. proudly on their T-shirts. I have found that means little!” This supports the notion of the community-based philosophy of character education that students must practice ethical character – not just talk about it or wear a T-shirt.

After the participants articulated their beliefs about character education, they were asked if there was a difference between teaching character and character education. Most stated they viewed character education as a program, syllabus, or formal curriculum, but that teaching character is what is done constantly in the classroom. Only Belinda and Barbara said there was no difference.

Teachers shared that character is taught non-stop; students will observe positive and negative behaviors in their teachers whether the teachers are aware or not. Betsy, a middle school resource teacher, again cited that character is taught constantly. She articulated that

[w]e teach character in everything that we do. We model it, not only with our words, but with our lives, with our responses. Character education to me is a more formal curricula. We are teaching character all the time – modeling it, speaking it, by the way we live, by the way we respond, our words – so – maybe one would be more lifestyle – teaching character would be more what we do in our lifestyle not only in our profession – in our curriculum – ya – character education is a more formal program or curriculum.
Bonnie shared that

I think that anybody can read a pamphlet, see a commercial, hear a sermon preached. You know all that, but to watch me and to be an example – I’m living the moment. If I am a witness to what I already know is character ed, then that is better than just open your book to page 45 – there’s a lesson on citizenship – now do what it says. I just feel like I’d rather teach it and be a role model.

Supporting this view that character education is different than teaching character, Mary, a secondary music teacher, said

Teaching character means that you have to be an example. Character education means here are the qualities that we would hope you would have, this is what they are, this is what they mean, now go out and see if you can be a part of that - teaching it rather than just presenting it – teaching means you live it.

Cassie, who teaches at the elementary school agreed. She responded that

Teaching character is being a role model, making good choices yourself where the kids are watching and taking mental note. I think of character ed. as a curriculum that has been in the schools for the past few years.

High school teacher, Brenda, shared that character education was important, but that true character was only developed through real life experiences.

Character can be improved though character education but true character is developed through living and experiencing life and its trials. Character education can only give students the tools to “survive” while developing their characters.

Becki, a high school English teacher, first said there was no difference in teaching character and character education, but as she developed her thoughts, she too, said character education required a curriculum. She answered

no – I guess we all teach some sort of character – I mean we are examples whether we are good examples or bad examples so we all teach some sort of character. When I think of character education I think of a certain laid out syllabus - something that you’re going to teach - how to be patient one week. I think that is something you do at a lower level, but I think we need something at the high school level, too.
The teachers in this research study shared many similar responses about the differences between teaching character and character education. Additionally, most were adamant about the importance of teaching character to students on a regular basis. Using real life experiences, modeling, and discussing choices were key elements communicated by the participants. Their responses are supported by the research done by Wark and Krebs (2000) and Haviv and Leman (2002) stating that people presented with real life situations will answer with care-based responses as opposed to a knowledge-based response as hypothetical situations seem to elicit. Lickona’s (1991, 1998, & 2004) philosophy on the importance of modeling and providing students’ opportunities to practice ethical living is also supported by their responses. Additionally, Lickona’s and Noddings’ (1995, 2002) writings about the importance of the classroom and school environment are evidenced with the responses of the teachers. Twenty-two of the 23 participants spoke to the fact that teachers demonstrate their character everyday and that students will be affected by their actions.

Part 3 – Research Questions 1A & 2A

The participants in the study were asked how they viewed teaching and then to share words or phrases that described them as a teacher. Those who responded using the terms called or passionate outnumbered those who viewed teaching as simply a job or profession. The remaining sections of Chapter Four will highlight their responses to interview questions 1 and 2 followed by their responses to interview question 5. Research questions 1A and 2A are as follows:

1A: How do teachers who express a passion for teaching integrate character education into their curriculum, classroom management, and pedagogy?
2A. How do teachers who describe teaching as a calling integrate character education into their curriculum, classroom management, and pedagogy?

Interview questions 1-2 and 5 are listed below and refer to the participants’ viewpoint of teaching.


2. What words or phrases describe you as a teacher?

5. Respond to this quote: “A teacher who ‘really knows and believes’ that teaching is worthwhile will likely conduct him- or herself differently from a teacher who has lost faith in the endeavor or who resorts to expediency in the face of challenge rather than considering alternative approaches, [or] consulting with others” (Hansen, 2000, p. 56).

Responses from the teachers who used the terminology of calling or passion are discussed first. The fourth section of Chapter Four discusses responses by those who did not use the terminology of calling or passion.

*Teaching as Calling or Passion*

When the teachers were asked how they viewed teaching, 16 of the 23 participants said it was a calling. Olivia responded, “ALL ABOVE! It is a blessing, Who I am” and Perry said, “Teaching is a way of life. It is a job and profession, but a person must understand it is more than a job or profession. You can not leave and forget about work. It is always with you or on your mind.” Though these two teachers did not use the specific terminology of “calling”, they were included in the group who classified themselves as called. Barbara shared that it was a calling at first, but now is just a job and Rose also responded that it was a calling at first, but then continued

…but recently with all the difficulties in school finance, etc. and the way teachers are treated, I have started feeling that I’ve spent my life doing something that is no longer valued. When I was young, I always felt that teachers were to be
respected and that you did what they told you to do – but that is no longer the case. The students don’t respect teachers and the students’ parents don’t either.

Barbara and Rose are included in the group that does not view teaching as a calling leaving 18 teachers in the called category and five in the category of viewing teaching as a job or profession.

Susi and Mary both spoke of their desire to teach as coming from a higher power. Susi shared that it was “God’s calling for my life.” Mary stated that teaching was both “a calling and a passion – a calling because for years I fought it and finally realized that this is where God wanted me. And once I understood that, then I was able to really embrace what God wanted me to do and what I needed to do.” These were the only two teachers who spoke of a higher power, although Harry used terminology synonymous with vocation. He said, “A profession is a line of work and a calling is what you were ‘meant to do.’ I am a professional 3x over so I could be doing other things, but I do have the feeling of a special talent or ability to do this and help others (young people).” Harry’s terminology for calling references the definition listed in Chapter Two connecting calling with one who has a penchant for a particular kind of work (American Heritage Dictionary, 1985).

Other teachers spoke of this feeling that teaching was the only profession they could have. Hillary said, “I know that I tried to do anything but teach; however, everything seemed to fall in place for me to complete my certification along with my BA, and when I stepped into the classroom for the first time, I felt that I was home.” Brenda responded, “I cannot think of anything I would rather be doing as a vocation.” Becki also held the belief that she had to teach. She commented that
…when I actually started doing it [teaching], it was more of a calling. I realized that was where I was made to be. I think the personal connection with the students is what made me realize the impact you have on individual students and that you see you can affect their lives and not that it’s just somewhere you go for work.

Betty and Cassie both shared that you had to love teaching. Betty said, “[teaching] is a calling because you have to desire to teach. You have to live what you do.” Cassie added that, “You need to love [teaching] and be a ‘natural’ teacher and lover of children to do a good job.”

Greg also commented that those who are called view teaching differently than those who view it as a job.

I view it as a calling. It’s a passion. Those who view it as a job are those who probably – they are the ones who do most of the complaining. I’m not one of the complainers – except for when it comes to the state, but when it comes to the kids, it’s a passion. I love working with the kids.

The teachers were also asked to determine words or phrases that defined them as a teacher. All of the teachers who viewed teaching as a calling also used words that demonstrated care and emotion as opposed to words related to skill or talent. Eight of the participants remarked that they were caring and/or compassionate and six used the word passionate to describe themselves. Table 10 displays the descriptions teachers used that defined them as teachers and the number of times each response was given.

Other words used only one time by participants were approachable, respectful, patient, nurturing, loving, supportive, conscientious, determined, emotional, and unorganized. Olivia also used the words overworked and overwhelmed. Olivia is the team leader for her grade level. She is quite organized and cares deeply about her students. In conversations with Olivia, she constantly speaks of wanting to do more for
her students. She puts in many hours past the regular school day which may explain the use of overworked and overwhelmed.

Table 7

*Words and Phrases Defining Participants as Teachers*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Descriptive Words</th>
<th>Number Times Used</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Caring</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passionate</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enthusiastic/Energetic</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inspiring/Motivating</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funny</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compassionate</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Firm/Strict</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flexible</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concern for Students</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dedicated/Devoted</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Active/Engaging</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motherly</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dependable</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledgeable</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

With the exception of the words knowledgeable and perhaps dependable, all of the descriptions used by these teachers dealt with emotions and feelings. Through classroom observations and discussions with the teachers, their knowledge of subject matter and teaching acumen were apparent, but when these teachers who felt called to teach reflected over what defined them as teachers, knowledge and skill did not emerge. Instead, they described themselves by how they related to the students. The words used by teachers who do not describe teaching as a calling are presented on pages 98 of Part 4. The type of words used by the participants who view teaching as a calling or passion is
quite different than those who view teaching as a job or profession. The teachers in this second group tended to use words of skill and knowledge.

Interview question 5 asked the participants to respond to a quote by David Hansen. Hansen writes clearly and passionately about the purposes of teaching. In his book, *Exploring the Moral Heart of Teaching*, (2000), he described teaching as a moral and intellectual practice. Further, he portrayed the teacher as a growing person guided by conduct and moral sensibility. Hansen described the called teacher as

A person who really knows and believes something understands it and lives by it. The person takes it into the self, makes it part of the self’s orientation to the world. …A teacher who ‘really knows and believes’ that teaching is worthwhile will likely conduct him- or herself differently from a teacher who has lost faith in the endeavor or who resorts to expediency in the face of challenge rather than considering alternative approaches, consulting with others and so forth. I do not mean that a teacher genuinely engaged in the work understands it fully. On the contrary, such a teacher doubtless discovers time and again how much there is to learn about successful practice and also experiences his or her share of failure and frustration. The idea of responsibility as outlined here, points to a harmony of word and deed, thought and action, belief and conduct. (p. 56)

Linda had no response for the quote, but the other 17 participants agreed with the quote, some with quite lengthy responses. Olivia replied, “People who have the ‘heart’ or desire to teach will always conduct themselves differently than those who teach for convenience. The children know the difference.” Brenda and Becki also commented that students know which teachers really care and which ones are just there for the job.

Brenda answered

I truly believe that there are teachers who should never have entered the profession, and there are teachers who should leave the profession because they no longer ‘enjoy’ teaching and interacting with students. I believe that it is obvious to both students and co-workers when someone does not enjoy their teaching assignment.
Becki’s response was

Yea and you’ve seen the teachers – I guess I’ve sometimes seen the teachers who are …who are…I guess one example, I had a student come to me the other day and said ‘I have this teacher that you can tell that doesn’t care about us, that they are just here to make money’ and knowing the teacher, I knew that was probably – I mean its just true. And its - I really think its true that they know I consider alternate approaches and its not just a job – and then you can tell who wants to be at school I think. And I think the kids can tell who wants to be at school for a job or because they love it – so I think it’s obvious in our actions.

Perry and Candy used the terms of “just going through the motions of teaching” when describing the teacher who has lost faith in the endeavor. Perry also explained that “Teachers who view teaching [as] worthwhile will find creative ways to help kids develop and learn. They will build self-esteem in kids using whatever they can find.’ Candy shared that, “The teacher who has a strong belief in her job will put more energy and effort into the lesson.”

During face-to-face interviews, Mary, Greg and Betsy all had strong reactions when the researcher read the quote by Hansen. There answers are listed below in full.

Betsy:

Wow! – That is good. A teacher that really knows and believes that teaching is worthwhile will like … (reads quote out loud). That is excellent! Ok, once again we see the calling in this – um – if you believe it is worthwhile then you would have to see that it is something bigger than a job and bigger than right now – something bigger than me – so it’s certainly worthwhile. So, if I believe that what I’m doing in teaching is worthwhile and has an eternal or a long-term effect on my students, then I am going to try to find the most effective way to teach and not just the most convenient way. I’m going to be more willing to go to more extreme effort to teach, to communicate to a child what I want to communicate, to make that difference because I would see it having a lasting impact rather than just checking something off my list. I didn’t say that in a very succinct way – but this would include consulting with others – whether its reading on the topic and finding the most effective way to teach or finding someone who knows more than I do about what I’m trying to teach or what I’m trying to do and that takes time and preparing.
Mary:

Amen – and that is my response and I do believe that along the way – even those that have a passion for teaching, sometimes get bogged down, but if you look in the face and remind yourself when you get to those points - that I’m not here for the money, I’m not here for me because it’s a job, I’m here for – its like a business – its like a clientele – and its my job to pull me together everyday to my fullest and to be an example, hopefully a positive example to those that I am trying to lead.  I don’t think that teaching is so much teaching as leading and if you lead in a positive way, those that are meant to pick up what you are sharing with them, will pick it up and hopefully, others will at least have fun along the way.

Greg:

I think that – I think he [Hansen] hits the nail on the head with that.  I think he is absolutely right and again that goes back to the teacher who conducts himself passionately and what I said earlier.  You know the person you are talking about where it says “A teacher who ‘really knows and believes’ that teaching is worthwhile” are the teachers who have that passion and the others have lost faith and approach it as a job – you know as just an 8 – 5 or 8 - 4 job daily.  And they come to work daily and they do their job.  Teachers with passion - they approach things differently – they want to know the students, they want to be involved with the students - so ya I think its perfect to me – the way I approach things.  I mean I could name names – but I mean the way I approach things here at this school are different from some teachers who approach things here at this school as just a job.  I have a passion, like I said, I am enjoyable, I am approachable.  There are probably teachers who look down on my teaching style and say “What’s that?” because that’s not how they approach it.  They approach it as a job – they come here and it’s going to be this way and there’s no alternative – that’s just how they are going to do it.

The terminology of burn out was mentioned by six of the 18 participants when elaborating on the quote by Hansen.  Hillary and Cassie both believed that these teachers were actually harmful to their students.

Hillary

Teachers who have lost faith in the endeavor and who are unwilling to be open to new ideas need to retire from the profession.  These teachers are more harmful to students than those who are just beginning and know little about teaching.  A good teacher must at all times believe that what he or she is doing is worthwhile, or nothing will be accomplished with the right attitude!  Certainly consulting
others, especially experienced teachers and administrators is important in maintaining a positive teaching attitude. No man is an island!

Cassie

I certainly feel that some teachers have given up. They don’t see how they are making a difference. They are frustrated and tired and lazy. They give up and just baby-sit and discipline without respect. All children suffer and learning stops.

And finally, Bonnie shared that after 24 years of teaching, she still felt like a new teacher.

She stated

I know that I haven’t lost – um – I’m still there! I still feel like after 24 years [of teaching] I am still a new teacher. I haven’t figured it [teaching] out. I haven’t hit burn out because I’m still willing to try new things and still learn new things from my colleagues. And I think that it still shows that I’m still eager and I’m not burned out. I mean I get tired out and the doldrums of the everyday mundane things, but all in all, I believe that that’s true. Most of us in the trenches still fight for the cause because we’re certainly not here for the money.

_Importance and Integration of Character Education_

Interview questions 1, 2, and 5 allowed the participants to describe how they viewed teaching, how they described themselves, and the opportunity to respond to current literature regarding calling and passion. During the second interview, they were asked to share their beliefs, strategies, and practices regarding the teaching of character in their personal classrooms. Interview questions 6 – 9 are listed below.

6. How important is the teaching of character/character education?

7. How do you integrate character education in your curriculum?

8. Why did you choose those strategies to teach character education in your classroom?

9. How do you integrate character education as part of your classroom management strategies?
Interview question 6 will be addressed first in isolation. Participant responses to the three remaining questions in conjunction with each other will follow. Again, the teachers who described themselves as called to teach and/or passionate about teaching gave similar responses about the importance of teaching character in the classroom. Answers included, “It’s the most important thing”, “It’s at the top of my list”, “It is vital”, and “It’s extremely important”. Teachers also commented that many students today do not know right from wrong and therefore character education must be the responsibility of the teacher. Thomas Lickona (1991, 2004) also wrote about this condition of our nation’s children. He said that one of the problems facing society today was that our children were not immoral, but amoral. They have never been taught the difference between right and wrong which demands that our schools teach character.

Harry stated that character education “becomes increasingly more important as we see less character in society.” Wilma also spoke to the decline in morality. She said:

I think it is extremely important. It seems as if character is something parents ignore. Students come to school with no concept of what is right or wrong because no one cares. It’s unbelievable what some students see and go through each day. How can teachers not teach character?

Becki spoke at length about the importance of character education.

I don’t know because I’m torn between whether it’s a parent’s job to teach character ed or whether it’s the school’s job to teach character ed and think it has to start at home. I mean we can teach and we can be examples, but I think it matters what’s going on at home. What was the question?

Interviewer:

It was how important is character education?

Becki:

I think it’s very important. I mean we’re training the next generation and they have all sorts of bad influences. I mean they have more media influences, they
have more Internet, so if we teach it [character] and have a positive influence, somewhere, I think that would be good - so it is important.

Interviewer:

And you said something earlier about the difference between what’s needed at the elementary school and what’s needed at the high school, because there is more that has been developed for elementary, so what kinds of things, being a high school teacher, do you think would need to be included in teaching character – whether it’s a program or just what’s done in the classroom

Becki

One major problem that I see, and this is just in English, is they don’t understand what lying is – even something as simple as that. Like plagiarism is cheating and if you know that just not being honest about something is not right – it’s not ethical. We may think that cheating isn’t that big a deal now, like copying someone’s homework, but what happens to people when they are in the real world and get caught cheating like Martha Stewart? I mean they go to jail and I don’t – it’s hard to make that connection with them, but I try – especially with the plagiarism thing. I think that’s a huge problem in our schools – and I think that’s a character issue. I mean all the plagiarism I’ve seen isn’t because kids need to do it, it’s because they think it’s easier. I mean it’s a character issue and they don’t see it as lying. And sometimes the parents don’t see it as lying or cheating – so I would want something more geared toward that.

Becki has only taught school for four years, but has very quickly become aware of the problems facing her students regarding character. She tries to use real life examples with her students to help them see the consequences of their actions.

Another common theme dealt with the lack of parental guidance in teaching children values and morals. Several teachers commented that parents are simply too busy with job and home responsibilities while others felt that parents just don’t care and expect the teaching of character to be done in the schools. Brenda replied that character education was extremely important because “sometimes the school is the only place where students may have the opportunity for character education.”
Bonnie replied that character education is “right there at the top. I hate to say that teachers have to do that but it seems like there’s no one else to do it and I spend more time with them than their parents for the most part so I guess I have to step up to the plate.” Wanda responded that character education is very important, especially now days. Kids don’t seem to be getting enough of it at home. I’m not sure how you know what values you teach and where you draw the line as far as stepping on parents toes or whatever because now days you see all that stuff, but I think it is very important.

Mary and Greg also spoke of the lack of parental responsibility in teaching character.

Mary:

110+% - it’s absolutely a must. It has to happen. I wish that today, I felt like our children overall (and there are a lot of children that fall into this category that their parents do help them with their character), but I think more and more the responsibility is falling on those people that are with those children 8 hours a day as opposed to parents who have to go off to their jobs and come home and prepare meals and clean the home and run children here and there. I wish it were more with parents – like it was when I was a child – but it is just absolutely – it’s a total requirement of the job. It’s my job as a teacher, regardless of what the field is, whether it be reading or music or science or anything – I have to teach character along with it.

Greg:

That goes back to my whole spiel earlier. I think it’s important. I think it’s important, that especially in this time and day, where kids aren’t getting character education at home. I mean you know, they come to school and there is no discipline at home and they are expected to get their character education at school or their discipline so really, in today’s day and time, a lot of what kids get, falls upon the shoulders of the educators. So I think it’s really important for teachers to really model and demonstrate and teach character to our students.

And finally, Betsy, who spoke of character education as changing the heart and soul of a child, added in her statements that one cannot teach apart from teaching character.

I think for education to have a lifelong effect on a child, you have to teach character because if you are just trying to change behavior or if you’re just trying to cause a child to complete a task or do what we tell them to do, then we haven’t really changed his heart or his soul and we’re probably not going to have a lasting
effect. If we have shaped the soul or heart of a child—if I have shaped the soul or the heart of a child then he will be shaped forever—he will be changed forever. I don’t think you can separate being a good teacher and teaching character—I don’t think you can do that. I don’t think you teach a part from teaching character. I don’t think you can teach well a part from teaching character.

Like Betsy, the teachers who stated they were called to teach, all agreed that teaching character was of the utmost importance. The answers they provided to interview questions 6 – 9 echo these same sentiments. The remainder of this section will provide the teachers responses to how and why they integrate character into their curriculum and classroom management practices.

Lesson plans of each of the teachers were examined to ascertain whether or not specific lessons on character were included. Cassie and Maggie both included the daily “thought of the day” as a journal writing prompt. Character education lessons were not found anywhere else. Harry explains:

Well, its not like I sit down and plan them (differing values) – although, for example, I know when I’m going to give a personal experience story and talk about stealing, shoplifting (I didn’t do this at 14 – its really innocuous) – when we talk about the Boston Tea Party.

Harry also said he taught character through “historical imagination – noting what ‘wrongs’ were done and how wrong choices were made and/or harm was done.” When asked why he chose this method, he simply said, “Because they seem to work! [Students] really seem to connect when you relate things to their lives.”

Perry responded similarly when asked why he used the strategies he did. He responded, “Personal trial and error over 23 years as an educator and knowing what has worked for me.” He explained that he stressed that every member of the class was equally important. They discuss goal-setting and the fact that everyone is an individual
and will have different goals. He believes self-confidence and self-esteem will be built by assisting students to reach their goals.

Wilma also replied that she did not plan lessons on character purposefully. She answered, “I choose stories that teach a lesson. I even ask questions like, ‘Was this the right thing to do? Is it ever all right to not tell the truth?’ I don’t really have lessons – it just happens!”

Becki, Candy, Mary, and Olivia each mentioned that lessons on character happened daily—whether discussing a unit topic or dealing with behavior issues that occurred—they believed that character education was a natural part of the school day. Five teachers did state, however that they selected particular novels and/or writing prompts in order to deal with specific character issues. Cassie, Hillary, Bonnie, Brenda, and Wanda used literature. Wanda explained how she incorporated *The Boxcar Children* with her students.

I read *The Boxcar Children* to the kids every year and I’m always pointing out to them how the Boxcar Children – how their values are so different from kids in books and movies today – responsible, hard-working, polite and deferential to authority – that kind of thing. I try to make those points and then try to model that behavior in the classroom as well.

Betty and Maggie also said they used puppets and role-play when discussing character issues. Susi, who spoke of teaching as God’s call on her life, said she used Biblical principals to deal with the daily opportunities that present themselves in the classroom.

Betsy and Greg both spoke again at length, about how they included character education into the daily activities. They talked of teachable moments and the importance of modeling rather than discussing a character trait of the day or week.
Betsy:

I take teachable moments because we all will make mistakes – I make mistakes. One thing that I do that is kind of a practical thing is rather than cover up my mistakes (and I’ve had teachers that tried to make me think they are perfect and that they don’t make mistakes – I can remember that) but I encourage my students to catch me making a mistake and if they do, I reward them for that. That’s just an example. So I think I am teaching them by my modeling a teachable skill. I want them to know that I don’t want to be prideful or boastful; I think that teaches humility. But when we mess up - they mess up or I mess up – by saying something we shouldn’t say or doing something we shouldn’t do – I try to address it right then with a child, and if its appropriate, with the other students. Rather than planning a lesson on honesty, I try to take an opportunity when a child is honest – pointing that out to the class. I never or seldom have I planned in my math lesson to teach a character quality, but there are opportunities everyday to teach. Not that a curriculum isn’t necessary, but I think a good teacher, who feels called, will take opportunities to teach character – informally – you know – spontaneously.

In classroom management I try to use as much positive as I can. When a child displays self-control, I use lots of positive reinforcements for that self-control. I think that is one that middle school kids really need, so I incorporate that a lot into my classroom management. There’s honesty and integrity that can be addressed in classroom management. I think just rewarding kids for good behavior is part of classroom management and the other students want that same – most other students want that same sort of recognition.

I don’t know if this is a good place, but I’ve been thinking a lot about self-esteem and I think that self esteem is in our culture. We think every child – or everybody deserves self esteem and I don’t know if I really agree with that. I really wonder if we are doing them a disservice by making them think that they should feel good about themselves even if they have not shown good work ethic or if they have been dishonest or whatever. I think that self-esteem is something that we earn and so you know, I try to reinforce self esteem and encourage it when they have done well and when they’ve shown good character, but I’ve tried to not just tell them they are wonderful just for the sake of hearing it. Taking responsibility builds self-esteem.

Greg:

I hope that the way I teach - my interaction with students, and my one-on-one with my students, and my open door policy, and my approachability, and the way I model myself around the kids, and the way I present myself to the kids. Everyday is my way of teaching it and I really believe that they’ll get more from that than having someone up at the board trying to write out what character
education is. Modeling a behavior is much more important than just writing on the board.

It’s [character] a part of my environment when they walk in the door. That’s just who I am. I have no other reason than that’s just who I am. I think I use those strategies because I enjoy what I do, I like working with kids and I want kids to not necessarily remember Coach [Greg], but to remember something that they got from my classroom and you know that’s who I am. I want to be a positive effect—you know there’s a quote and I can’t remember it verbatim right off the top of my head, but there’s a quote that says it doesn’t matter how many cars you’ve had, how many houses you’ve had, how many degrees you’ve had—blah blah blah, but if you can make a difference in the life of one child, that’s far greater than anything you can do in life and I believe in that. And my goal isn’t (and this is part of my philosophy for my classroom, for who I am, and for my teaching), but my philosophy is that I don’t look to impact the life of one student that walks across my classroom, I look to change every student that walks across my classroom.

I know that teachers walk down the hall all the time and look into my classroom and think “wow—this guy has no control and this guy has no classroom management” and that’s not true. I mean I have control and the kids know I have control. My classroom management is to be relaxed and for them to be able to interact, and be able to voice their opinions, and to communicate with each other without putting each other down. As long as it’s a safe environment, but when it becomes an unsafe environment, that’s when I take over the control and I step in and voice my concern. And again that goes back to me modeling character to them and saying this is not how we do this. You know we never make someone be threatened. My classroom management is very relaxed, it’s very open, its very student friendly—its not—the classroom is not about Coach [Greg] having control or about me, you know being a dictator. My classroom is about students feeling relaxed and having a good time while at the same time learning.

These teachers who voiced a calling and or a passion for teaching incorporate character education and the teaching of character into their daily lessons. They have a classroom environment that is grounded in respect and responsibility and in making right choices. They use real life examples as well as examples through literature to assist students in understanding the difference between right and wrong. The teaching of character seems to permeate their classroom environment.
Teaching as Job or Profession

The remainder of Chapter Four will examine the data collected from the five teachers who viewed teaching as a profession or a job. Responses to Interview questions 1 – 2 and 5 (see p. 82) will be presented first followed by Interview questions 6 – 9 (see p. 89) describing how these teachers viewed the importance of character education and how they integrate character into their curriculum. Research questions 1B and 2B are displayed below.

1B. How do teachers who do not express a passion for teaching integrate character education into their curriculum, classroom management, and pedagogy?

2B. How do teachers who do not describe teaching as a calling integrate character education into their curriculum, classroom management, and pedagogy?

Rose’s answers were shared in the original discussion determining the two research groups. She stated she had previously “viewed teaching as a profession and a calling” but because of school finance problems and the lack of respect from students and parents, she feels like she has “spent my life doing something that is no longer valued.” Oprah had similar comments about teaching. She said

I viewed teaching as a profession when I began 26 years ago. Today, I am still passionate about my students learning and being excited about learning, but I am discouraged by the political aspects that have affected teaching the past ten or so years. Each year, teachers have become more second rated. I truly believe that our government wants to do away with public education.

While Barbara did not elaborate, she, like Rose, answered that teaching was no longer a calling. She simply replied, “First 10 years a calling; now a job!” A discussion on this loss of calling will be addressed in Chapter Five.
The other two participants defined teaching as a profession. Debbie said, “A profession because I chose this career. It is something I could see myself doing for many years. I enjoy being around children and I truly love to teach most of the time.” Belinda replied, “A profession. I try to be as professional as possible when teaching my classes and working with my peers.”

As with the teachers who used calling and/or passion, these teachers were also asked to share words or phrases that would define who they are as a teacher. The words used by these teachers were quite different than the first group. The teachers who used the terminology of job or profession used words in general that pertained to knowledge, skill, or a negative emotion. Their responses are listed below.

Belinda: “hard working, very busy, knowledgeable of subject matter”
Debbie: “fair and firm with students. Take my job very serious, but like to have fun.”
Oprah: “dependable would be the word to describe me as a teacher. I never want to let my students down.”
Barbara: “tired, DISRESPECTED, underpaid and underappreciated
Rose: “According to my students, I am probably boring, a true stick in the mud. I feel that we need to quit ‘entertaining’ and start ‘educating’ again. Unfortunately, not everything in life can be ‘fun’.”

Responses to the quote by David Hansen seemed to match these teachers’ sentiments about teaching. Belinda simply said, “I agree!” while Barbara said, “I can not understand this long quote.” Belinda and Barbara both spoke of being busy and/or overworked which may explain the brevity of their responses. Debbie, Rose, and Oprah all alluded to teacher burn out. Debbie’s response was, “I agree with this quote.”
Teachers suffering burn out are usually less flexible and innovative. They are no longer in the profession for the right reason.”

Oprah responded

The quote, “A teacher who really know and believes that teaching is worthwhile will always conduct him or herself differently from a teacher who has lost faith in the endeavor.” That is why we have so many young teachers that are leaving the profession. Most of the younger teachers that come in see this as too much WORK for the pay that they are receiving. If you just look at the work, you will wither as a teacher. You must look at the students to see the true essence of teaching.

Oprah’s comments about looking at the students to see the true essence of teaching relate back to the words she used to describe herself saying she never wanted to let her children down. Rose agreed that teachers were leaving the profession, but for different reasons than stated by Oprah.

I believe this quote is true, but these days it is very difficult not to “lose faith” on some days. The students are becoming more and more of a challenge. Many don’t value education at all. They want the quick, easy way out and so do many of their parents. I believe that parents often want it easy for their children, because they don’t want to accept the responsibility that THEY may not have done everything correctly!

*Importance and Integration of Character Education*

The remainder of Part 4 responds Interview questions 6 – 9 which can be reviewed on page 89. Interview question 6 asked the participants how important the teaching of character or character education was in their perspective. Three teachers answered that it was very important. Barbara, however, replied that “Our need to teach this is taking valuable time away from the curriculum.” Oprah answered, “I believe a devoted teacher will utilize both teaching of character and character education into their lessons.” Debbie responded with an answer that was more similar to the teachers in the
called group. She said, “More important than ever in the times we live in. I want my students to not only be successful, but also good productive citizens.”

Belinda’s and Rose’s comments corroborated their previous responses dealing with frustration and burn out. Rose said, “Very important! But often I think the kids don’t take any of it very seriously.” Belinda believed that teaching character was very important “because many students spend too much time in front of the T.V, etc. and are not learning it at home.”

Continuing with Belinda and Rose, their responses to the interview questions asking how they integrated character education and why they chose those specific strategies are presented next. Belinda said she modeled it, but that it was difficult to do with math. She also said that she tries to be positive and treat each child equally and fairly. Rose spoke of integrating character into her curriculum, but also felt frustrated by the students’ lack of effort. She responded:

> From time to time I have the students write about different things or even copy different things. For example, I have a wonderful Ann Landers column on Maturity that I wish I could make the students take seriously. And I have a great essay on the difference between a pupil and a student. And in Multimedia, etc., I try to tell them that “breaking copyright laws” is not the right thing to do, but unfortunately I lose that battle often.

> My subject ties in closely with “good work habits” and those things just fit with good work habits. I find that students are more often than not; developing very poor work habits and have no desire to develop good ones.

When Barbara, who also voiced feelings of burnout, was asked how she implemented character education, she responded, “I don’t. I conduct my classroom behaviors using positive character traits.” Then she added, “RESPECT – use it, you’ll get it.”

Again, Debbie and Oprah shared answers more in line with the teachers who used calling and passion to define teaching. Debbie replied that she tries to set an example for
the other students, but that she does give consequences for poor behavior choices. She also requires that students speak respectfully to adults and each other. When asked why she chose these strategies, she remarked, “It is just in me. That is how I was brought up.”

Oprah shared that she utilized material from classroom discussions and writing assignments. She mentioned that “Making assignments become personal commitments rather than assignments of just putting down words on paper” allowed her students to share experiences with classmates. She then explained why.

Teaching is not just the book material and TEKS. It is the process in which you model for the student’s behavior, attitude, friendship, devotion, and structure for the students. Sometimes this is the only time someone really takes an interest in these young students.

Oprah’s comments again resonate with her earlier answers that she did not want to let her students down. Her response about modeling behavior, attitude, friendship, devotion and structure aligns her more with the teachers who view teaching as a calling as opposed to a profession or job. In other conversations with Oprah, she is very professional in her interactions with colleagues and is also very organized and efficient. These traits may explain her definition of teaching as a profession.

**Part 5 - Professional Development**

Interview question 10 asked the teachers about the professional development opportunities they have participated in either on their own or through their district. Interview question 10 is as follows.

10. What professional development have you participated in related to character education? (Required or on your own.)
Twelve of the 23 teachers in the research study reported they had not attended conferences or in-service pertaining to character education. Mary and Olivia stated that the previous school districts they worked in provided multiple workshops in character education, but that the current district had offered none with the exception of possibly motivational speakers to begin the school year.

Six participants stated they had attended conferences on their own. Harry said that he attended the Baylor Institute for History Teachers last summer and that heavy emphasis was placed on the teaching of values and character education. Other programs mentioned were WAIT Training from McCap, Make These Kids Behave from the regional education service center, TRIBES, and a Respect and Responsibility workshop. Susi stated that “[Character education] is ongoing at my home church.” Betty also spoke of reading various books on her own to help increase her knowledge and awareness of teaching character in the classroom. Additionally, she said she attended a workshop on dealing with students who were oppositional-defiant.

When Maggie was asked about professional development, she replied, “After so many years, I guess I have had some workshops, but really, I have done these things because I think they are important. I care about my kids and I want them to have all the advantages to be successful.” Alternatively, Rose responded to the same question by saying, “I read a lot of ‘ideas’ on the Internet that help enforce different ideas. I just feel like most students do not take them seriously at all. I am afraid that we are not really holding students responsible for learning as we should be.” Rose’s answer again reflects her frustration with the teaching field at this time.
Conclusion

Chapter Four has presented the findings of the research study seeking to examine the question of whether teacher calling and teacher passion affect the successful teaching of character education. The demographics of the research participants were presented to assist in the interpretation of the qualitative study. The participants were divided into two groups. Group one defined teaching as a calling or passion while group two defined teaching as a job or profession. Eighteen teachers defined teaching as a calling or passion and five defined teaching as a job or profession. Their responses to the importance of character education as well as how they integrated character into their classroom were then presented. The teachers who used calling and/or passion had similar responses, however those who viewed teaching as a profession answered somewhat differently than those who viewed teaching as a job. Those who viewed teaching as a profession described themselves differently than those who viewed teaching as a job. Additionally, character education was deemed important, but those who taught as a job were less hopeful of the benefits of character education than those who taught as a profession. Part 5 addressed the opportunities for professional development in character education. Although the majority of the teachers believed character education was important, few had received professional development in the area.

Chapter 5 will present qualitative propositions, assertions and implications for further study based on the data findings of the research study. The teachers who viewed teaching as a calling or passion definitely spoke with more zeal and excitement than those who viewed teaching as a job. The three who stated it was a profession were more business-like in their responses, but their answers, though not as passionate as the called
group, displayed care and concern for students. The two teachers who said they had lost their calling and teaching was now a job spoke with great frustration and hopelessness regarding students, parents and the public school system. This, too, will be addressed in the following chapter.
CHAPTER FIVE

Qualitative Propositions, Assertions and Implications

Introduction

This research study attempted to ascertain whether or not there was a relationship between the teaching of character and the calling or passion of the classroom teacher. The researcher has been an educator for 24 years. She has worked in the public schools, in the School of Education at a local university, and as an educational consultant. For 18 of those years, classroom environment and the teaching of character to students have been of vital interest and concern. This study is an outgrowth of that concern. After teaching in five school districts, working with student teachers and consulting with teachers across the state, she observed extreme differences in how teachers viewed teaching and how they related to students. The results of this study, lend some answers to those observations.

Chapter One presented an overview of the problem in that the current literature did not speak to the importance of the classroom teacher where character education was involved. Lickona’s (1991) philosophy of a community based approach to character education seems to assume that both the teacher and the community will be good, but he never directly speaks to the affect teacher calling or passion have on the teaching of character. Noddings (2002) discussed the use of existential discussions with children in teaching character and said that the teachers who are most successful with this type of teaching are those who exhibit “[p]ractice, sensitivity, and a love for what they are doing”
(p. 144) alluding to the passion of the teacher. She also stated that the use of “a wide repertoire of stories, careful planning, and passionate interest” (p. 144-145) are vital.

The Character Education Partnership (CEP) defined eleven elements needed for the successful and effective teaching of character education. Like Lickona, the assumption is that the teachers and school staff will be individuals of character. They address how well the faculty and community understand character education and whether or not they are committed to carrying out the purposes of character education with the students. CEP does not, however, refer to any difference between teachers who are called or passionate about teaching and those that view it as a job or profession and how they integrate character into the curriculum or classroom environment.

Chapter Two continued with an in-depth analysis of the literature on character education and teacher calling and passion. The historical roots of character education through the current views on character education were presented. The literature review illustrated the changes in philosophy that have occurred over the past 300 years of American education. The teaching of character and morality was first based on Protestant religious beliefs. During the late 18\textsuperscript{th} century, morality became based on service to others, but by the early 1900’s, morality became focused on citizenship. This was the beginning of secularization in America; that secularization quickly moved to the schools determining how character and morality should be presented to students.

By the 1960’s, a new philosophy regarding moral education emerged. Kohlberg (1967) presented his theory based on moral reasoning and the use of hypothetical questions. His theory began additional research in to how people react to moral situations. The current and most common approach to character education is now one
based on community and habit. Thomas Lickona and the Character Education Partnership have provided important research and leadership regarding the teaching of character to our nation’s children. Following this discussion of character education in America, Chapter Two also presented the research connected to teacher calling and teacher passion.

The literature on teacher calling and passion was not as extensive as that of character education, but it clearly demonstrated that teachers who are called and or passionate approach the work of teaching differently than those who view teaching as a job or profession. Calling can occur at any time in a teacher’s life just as it can be lost along the way (Hansen, 2001; Bullough, Mayes, & Patterson, 2002). This fact was observed in the research study in that several teachers replied that teaching had now become a calling and others replied they had lost their calling. Others, of course, have felt called for as long as they can remember. Descriptions of the called and passionate teacher were further explored in Chapter Two. Those descriptions will be connected with the research participants of this study.

Chapter Three presented the detailed methodology for the study. The case study design as well as the research site and participants were clearly defined as was the sampling methods. Data collection methods and analysis methods were also explained. Chapter Four presenting the data collected during a five month period. The implications of that data will now be explained in Chapter Five.
Limitations of the Study

The findings in this research study suggested that the teachers studied who feel called or are passionate about teaching were more driven to teach character to their students. Teachers who described teaching as a profession also shared that character education was important, but did not appear to integrate it as often as those who were called. Conversely, the teachers who viewed teaching as a job either viewed the teaching of character as an interruption to the prescribed curriculum or that it had no affect on today’s children. These results are suggestive; however the number of research participants was too small to generalize these findings to all teachers.

Additionally, the use of the interview questionnaire seemed to limit how much detail the teachers were willing to contribute. Face-to-face interviews provided more insight into how the teachers viewed teaching and character education as well as how they integrated it into their daily lessons. The teachers at the chosen research site were hesitant to participate in the face-to-face interviews citing they feared they had nothing to say or that they were concerned about their responses being recorded. Teachers also commented that they had many new responsibilities on their campus that took time away from teaching and planning. They spoke of a new grade book and attendance software program that required additional hours learning the program. They also said they were required to create a new curriculum guide connecting their lessons with the TEKS (Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills) and that this took a great deal of time.

As mentioned in Chapter Three, the researcher is a part-time teacher in the district. Though she has little opportunity to socialize with the other teachers, the researcher believes that some of the teachers did not participate because she was an
employee of the district. And finally, the research site is in a small rural community where little if any, educational research has been collected. Several teachers who did not participate said they were not interested in educational research, that they were just interested in teaching. These factors suggest the importance of continuing the research at other locations before concluding that there definitively is a relationship between teacher calling the teaching of character. That being said, however, the remainder of this chapter will present six propositions based on the data findings.

**Propositions**

*Proposition 1: Teachers who view teaching as a calling or passion relate on a more emotional level to their students than those who view teaching as a profession or job.*

Rachael Kessler (2000) writes about the importance of connecting with students on a spiritual and emotional level. “Many classrooms are ‘spiritually empty,’ not by accident, *but by design*” (p. xii). She continues that many teachers do in fact, serve the emotional, spiritual, moral and social needs of children, but that when schools and teachers systematically exclude heart and soul, students in growing numbers become depressed, attempt suicide, or succumb to eating disorders and substance abuse. Students struggle to find their motivation to learn, to stay in school, or to keep their attention on what is before them. Welcoming soul into the classroom is not a panacea for all these ills; but it is crucial for addressing the suffering of our youth. (p. xii)

Betsy mentioned that teaching was impacting the heart and soul of children, not just imparting knowledge. The teachers who viewed teaching as a calling all spoke of truly reaching the students, impacting their character, and making a difference in their lives. They described themselves with words and phrases that reflected how they related to
their students, not about their intelligence or teaching ability. These teachers believed it was their responsibility to meet the emotional needs of their students.

Several teachers reported that teaching character to children was more important than academics and that improving character would in effect; provide the means for their students to be successful in the classroom, but more importantly, in life. Daniel Goleman (1994) wrote that “emotional intelligence” was a greater predictor of academic success than was intelligence. He introduced the concept of “emotional literacy” defining it as a “shorthand term for the idea that children’s emotional and social skills can be cultivated, and that doing so gives them decided advantages in their cognitive abilities, in their personal adjustment, and in their resiliency through life” (p. 33).

The called teachers cited many examples of how they discussed real life experiences with their students. They believed that allowing the students to focus on situations that dealt with character and ethics was important, even if it took time away from the regular curriculum or lesson plan. These teachers commented that they wanted their students to really know that they were in a safe environment and that their voice was important. These beliefs are commiserate with Durka (2002) who also wrote that the called teacher was concerned with the moral development of her children in addition to intellectual development.

The research findings showed that the teachers who viewed teaching as a job or profession used terminology relating to their knowledge base and teaching ability or pertained to negative emotions. Their responses to the other interview questions were brief and to the point. They defined themselves as being strict and treating every student the same. The called teachers spoke of treating every child as an individual and getting
to know them on an individual level. Again, this supports the notion that called teachers relate on a more emotional level than do teachers who do not feel called to teach. Only five of the 23 teachers fell into the non-called category, therefore more research is required to confirm this observation. Betsy did elaborate on whether one could truly be an effective teacher and not be called. Her response is worthy of noting and somewhat relates to Proposition 1. She said

>We’ve talked at lunch about whether you can be a good teacher and not be called or passionate and I’ve thought about that. I think that you could maybe communicate a topic well – but I don’t know, once again, if you can change that child’s life to where he would want to be a sharp learner or if you weren’t called – if you didn’t feel like this was having some sort of eternal purpose – that if you didn’t communicate that to a child – so – no – I don’t think you could really be a good teacher a part from being called. I don’t think you could be an effective teacher. I may be wrong. There are people, who thoroughly understand a subject or a topic and are able to explain it, but they feel no passion about whether you learn it or not so it would almost be like writing it on a slate and the slate would be erased. I don’t know – but then we learn from, you know, we learn from nature, we learn from everything and nature is not passionate about teaching. I mean an inanimate object can even communicate – so I don’t know. But I don’t think that a teacher could teach without feeling a calling – effectively – a teacher couldn’t each effectively.

Again, this is one response, but this response suggests that called teachers do relate differently to students than those who are not called.

Proposition 2: Teachers who view teaching as a job feel apathetic or hopeless about changing the character of their students.

Teaching is a difficult task, and often a lonely task. The perspective a person has on the act of teaching seems to greatly affect how they view the world. “Teaching is bound to fail when conducted in a spirit of pessimism –and, certainly, of hopelessness. Teaching presupposes hope” (Hansen, 1995, p.160). Hansen continues to share a story.
from a research study on calling. He cites how Mr. Peter’s, his research subject, explains the possibility of frustration and hopelessness.

I can see that [teaching high school] could become very difficult, tedious, personally frustrating. Because kids often don’t learn the way you want them to learn. They don’t take that bank of knowledge en masse and just stick it into their heads the way you would like them to. If you’re just looking for that, I can see all kinds of room for frustration. (Cited in Hansen, 1995, p.60)

Barbara and Rose both viewed teaching as a job and both voiced extreme frustration and hopelessness in the endeavor. Both teachers believed that character education was important, but that it was either unnecessary or a waste of time to be integrated into the classroom environment or curriculum. Rose had completely given up on the belief that she could impact the heart and soul of a child. She said that students didn’t care and parents had abandoned their responsibility where character was concerned. Barbara, on the other hand stated that character education took time away from teaching the mandated curriculum. She said she did not need to integrate character as part of her classroom management stating that if you demand respect you will get it.

As mentioned earlier, these are just two voices of teachers who view teaching as a job. Sadly, they both said they entered teaching because they felt called to do so. At what point in their profession did they lose that calling and become disheartened with teaching? Because their views were so strong and consistent with each other, the researcher believes they are worth noting. Additional research should focus on this question of how or why they lost their calling. Perhaps the school environment has an effect or it may simply be life experiences not necessarily related to teaching that destroyed that calling. But regardless of the cause, this proposition deserves further study.
Proposition 3: Teachers who view teaching as a calling or passion are more intentional about integrating character into the classroom environment.

Proposition 3 is the foundational question in this research study. As evidenced through the review of literature, there is no intentional link between teaching calling and the deliberate teaching of character education. The assumption has been that the classroom teacher will include character education, but how the teacher views teaching is not addressed. The data findings of this study clearly show a relationship between teaching character and how they view the field of teaching.

Every teacher in the study that described teaching as a calling or as a passion presented detailed explanation as to how they incorporated character into the classroom. These teachers also articulated the need for character education to permeate the classroom environment, not to be presented as a character lesson. They shared the importance of dealing with life issues daily, whether or not the prescribed curriculum was interrupted. Further, they explained how they chose stories, novels, and historical events to assist in their students’ understanding of character, virtue, and moral living. Oddly, these teachers did not write actual character lessons in their plan books which support the notion that they did not view teaching character as a separate lesson, but instead, a natural outflowing of teaching.

Alternatively, as presented in Proposition 2, the teachers who viewed teaching as a job felt hopeless about effecting students’ character or did not see it as part of their job description. The three teachers who viewed teaching as a profession did agree that teaching character to children was important; however they did not speak as emphatically as did the teachers who felt called to teach. These three teachers also did not seem to integrate character education into the total classroom environment, but instead discussed
character as it came up. These teachers also were more business-like in their responses and spoke of being a professional when dealing with students, parents, and colleagues. This professionalism, at times, could be viewed as aloofness. There was obvious concern for students, but the deep care and compassion exhibited by the called teachers was not apparent.

The researcher believes this relationship between calling and the effective teaching of character to students must receive further study. However simply discovering that called, passionate teachers do, in fact, effectively and consistently integrate the teaching of character to their students is not enough. Additional research must be completed to discover how our schools of education can prepare pre-service teachers to enter the world of teaching as called, or at least passionate. Further, the atmosphere of our schools including administrative and parental actions should be studied to inquire as to their affect on the calling and passion of classroom teachers.

Proposition 4: The school environment and the attitudes of the administration affect the attitudes of the teachers, possibly preventing the loss of calling and passion.

If the classroom environment affects the learning of the students, then the school environment and the attitudes of the administration should affect the attitudes of the teachers employed at that particular school. This possibility was not researched through the literature review; however, several teachers spoke to importance of the school atmosphere. After the second interview, Wanda made the following comment.

I just think that we need to have character ed integrated – but it has to start with – the way I’ve seen it at this school is not necessarily character ed, but the way [principal] handles the teachers. I think it flows down to how we handle our students because the previous principal who had a lot of distrust for the teachers, who was condescending and not supportive. The teachers tended to be that way more to the students. I think that’s one reason why I have changed my attitude as
far as the kids because I have support, I have a principal who treats me like a professional and that’s how I like to be treated and I pass that on to my kids. It has to filter down from the top down. I’ve done a 360 degree turn as far as what kind of a teacher I am and even a person – character has to come from the top and filter down.

Maggie also mentioned the school principal on her journal response. She said, “The thought for the day is at the very beginning of the lesson to set the tone. Kudos to [principal] for allowing this to be a part of our day.” Oprah mentioned the principal as well.

At [school] character and responsibility are not necessarily taught like a subject but modeled. We begin our day with the “Thought for the Day” that begins with our principal giving words to think about in building character. Our classrooms have structure in the care of others. At the beginning of school, I always begin with the motto: If one fails we all fail.

Only the participants at the middle school mentioned the principal as having an effect on their attitudes about teaching. Additionally, the majority of the research participants were from the middle school. Whether these two factors are related cannot be proven at this time; however it does suggest more research about the influence of the school environment. Important to note, one of the two teachers who viewed teaching as a job is also a middle school teacher, again suggesting the need for more research.

*Proposition 5: Intentional, district-wide professional development will increase the understanding of and implementation of character education.*

As presented in Chapter Three, Site Description, the research site is involved in community wide strategic planning, setting short and long term goals for district improvement. The implementation of character education was listed as a year one goal. Year one is the 2005-2006 school year. As stated by the research participants, the only character education professional development they have received has been on their own.
The district has provided motivational speakers that address character, but intensive in-service has not yet been offered. The fact that all of the participants viewed character education as vital suggests that they would attend professional development on character education if it were offered. In fact, several even commented that after so many years of teaching, they were surprised they had not attended something in that area.

If the district desires that character education be a central focus in all district classrooms, then consistent professional development must be offered to the teachers. Teachers would never be expected to teach reading or math or history, or even physical education without the proper training and certification. If schools desire their students possess strong moral character leading to democratic citizens, then why are teachers not provided with the tools to allow for excellent and consistent teaching of character to those students?

**Proposition 6: Teacher calling and passion greatly affect student learning.**

One additional proposition that was not actually studied, but deserves attention is the observation that teacher calling and passion greatly affect student learning. During face-to-face interviews and on the interview questionnaire document, several teachers commented that the students knew which teachers cared and which ones didn’t. Several cited stories from their students about a teacher who didn’t seem to even like the job or her students. Others mentioned that teachers who saw teaching as a job were actually harming their students because of their negativity; while others suggested that those who were not called or passionate should actually leave the profession because the students knew they did not care.
In addition to these comments, the researcher experienced a conversation with students regarding this same issue. The students in the researcher’s class hold a class meeting weekly to discuss school and classroom issues that need to be dealt with. During this particular meeting, the students brought up the fact that there were teachers who they knew didn’t like teaching. They went on to say that this fact made it more difficult to pay attention in the classroom and that they, as students, did not desire to do their best because the teacher did not care. Actual responses will not be shared because the students were not part of this research study, however because of the participants’ comments about teacher attitudes and the comments of students during a class meeting; the researcher strongly believes that this too, should receive further research. That particular research study, however, should include students and parents as well as teachers.

Implications for Future Research, Assertions, and Conclusion

Implications for Future Research

The findings of this research study are significant because no other research has been completed searching for the relationship between teacher calling, teacher passion, and the teaching of character education. Although the study included only 23 teachers, the results demand further inquiry. As shown in Chapter Four, the teachers who described teaching as a calling or a passion where also called to teach character to their students. Those who viewed teaching as a profession valued the importance of character education, but did appear to include character discussions on a daily basis. Those who viewed teaching as a job felt hopeless about impacting a student’s character and felt it
took time away from teaching the required curriculum. The implication that there is, in fact, a connection between calling and the intentional teaching of character education suggests the need for several other studies before a generalization can be made.

The six propositions from this study and the suggested continued research are listed below.

**Propositions**

1. Teachers who view teaching as a calling or passion relate on a more emotional level to their students than those who view teaching as a profession or job.

2. Teachers who view teaching as a job feel apathetic or hopeless about changing the character of their students.

3. Teachers who view teaching as a calling or passion are more intentional about integrating character into the classroom environment.

4. The school environment and the attitudes of the administration affect the attitudes of the teachers, possibly preventing or causing the loss of calling and passion.

5. Intentional, district-wide professional development will increase the understanding of and implementation of character education.

6. Teacher calling and passion greatly affect student learning.

**Future Research Needed**

Based on the findings from this research study, the researcher suggests five areas of future research. These five areas of study will further the field of knowledge relating to teacher calling and passion, the implementation and integration of character education and the effects of the total school ethos in regards to student learning.

*Loss of Calling and Passion.* A study designed to interpret how teachers “lose” their calling or passion for teaching may uncover specific experiences that cause teachers to lose their desire to teach. Specifically, examining the school environment may help
determine how environment affects the satisfaction level of teachers or if outside factors contribute to this loss of calling and passion?

*Teacher Preparation.* A study designed to discover how our schools of education can prepare pre-service teachers to enter the world of teaching as called, or at least passionate may better equip new teachers for a rewarding life as a teacher. This study may increase teacher satisfaction and longevity, possibly increasing student satisfaction and success.

*School Atmosphere.* A study designed to determine how the atmosphere of our schools, including administrative and parental actions, affects the calling and passion of classroom teachers. This study, as well, may help understand the necessary elements needed for individual teachers to retain their passion and calling as teachers.

*Professional Development.* A study designed to determine how the amount of professional development in the area of character education affects the successful implementation of the teaching of character in the classroom would benefit school districts who wish to incorporate character education in the school curriculum. This study would also address the current research by Berkowitz (2004) detailing what actually works in character education leading to productive professional development.

*Affects on Student Learning.* A study designed to ascertain to what degree teacher calling and passion affect student learning may lead to understanding why students may be more or less successful depending upon the teacher.

**Assertions**

This grounded theory case study has examined the possible relationship between teacher calling, teacher passion and the teaching of character education. Creswell (1998)
suggests that grounded theory is useful to discover a theory that relates to a particular situation. Further, Patton (2002) states that grounded theory is especially powerful when theory is inductively generated from fieldwork, that is, theory that emerges from the researcher’s observations and interviews out in the real world rather than in the laboratory or the academy. (p. 11)

As evidenced by the data presented in Chapter Four, a distinct relationship between teacher calling, teacher passion and the teaching of character education began to emerge. Clearly, the teachers who defined teaching as a calling or passion exhibited a greater tendency, almost a calling or passion, to also teach character to their students. Further, these teachers believed that modeling and exhibiting high moral character in their own lives was of the utmost importance. They stated consistently that the teaching of character permeated their classroom environment. Conversely, those teachers who viewed teaching as a job believed that character education had little or no impact on students and that the responsibility of teaching character should not lie with the schools.

While the literature does not directly speak to this relationship between calling and character education, there are instances where this relationship is alluded to. The called teacher is ever-mindful of the potential impact she has on those with whom she comes in contact. She is less concerned about the personal sacrifices she must make and is wiling to accept the extra duties required to meet the needs of those in her care (Bullough, Mayes, & Patterson, 2002; Fried, 1998; Serow, 1994). The called or passionate teacher believes that teaching is not only an intellectual endeavor, but a moral endeavor as well (Durka, 2002; Hansen, 1995, 2001; Lickona, 1991). Teaching involves touching not only the minds of children, but the heart of children.
The participants in this research study who stated they were either called to teach or passionate about teaching also stated with conviction about the importance of teaching character to their students. These teachers also freely articulated examples and strategies for the implementation of character into their particular curriculum or course of study. These teachers emulated the words of Durka (2002)

Many teachers now recognize that failing to do their job of inculcating moral principles exacts a price that is paid by bewildered students who are being denied a structured way to develop values. The result is moral relativism. Students deserve better. (p. 53)

The participants who defined teaching as a job did not express a passion for teaching character to their students. In fact, they voiced concern that character education took valuable time away from the prescribed curriculum.

As stated in the limitations on page 108 and 109 of this chapter, the findings in this study are significant; however the number of research participants is too small to transfer these findings to all teachers. Additionally, because only two participants defined teaching as a job, though their answers were consistent, an increased number of non-called teachers must be interviewed to determine if these two participants are typical or anomaly. Based on these findings, the research questions examined in this study definitely merit additional investigation.

Conclusion

Theodore Roosevelt wrote years ago, “To educate a person in mind and not in morals is to educate a menace to society.” His thoughts still ring true in 21st century America. The literature is clear that character education must be taught by our nation’s schools to prepare our children for life outside of the classroom. President Bush even
stated that the success of our nation depended upon the morality of our children (Bush, 2002). If the character and morality of our children is to be positively affected, our schools must take on the responsibility of including character education. And not just character education as a curriculum, but character must permeate the total environment of our nation’s schools. Our schools of education must work to instill calling and passion to our pre-service teachers before they enter the classroom. Our communities must support the schools and the teachers to allow teaching to be a virtuous act. Our students will thrive when they encounter passionate teachers every day. Passionate teachers and virtuous teaching will change the future of American education. This change can only take place if we have the courage to put character once again into our curriculum.
APPENDICES
APPENDIX A

Certification of Informed Consent
CERTIFICATION OF INFORMED CONSENT

Lorena Independent School District Classroom Teacher

This form asks for your consent to participate in education research. This study will investigate the connection, if any, between teacher passion and the teaching of character education. For this study you will be asked to first participate in a survey. You may be asked to participate in a Focus Group (peer discussion group), individual interviews, journal responses, and classroom observations. The Focus Groups will last approximately two hours and the interview sessions will each take 30 – 45 minutes. Focus Groups and interview sessions will be audio-taped. Your signature on this form signifies your consent to having your Focus Group dialogue and interviews submitted as data for an education research study.

This study is important for several reasons. First, simply discovering that a correlation exists will answer questions as to why some programs work and others do not. This knowledge may also lead to more effective professional development for teachers in character education. Secondly, this study will lead to further studies on teacher passion. Finally, the findings of this research endeavor could also lead to a study exploring strategies, policy changes, and professional development that may increase teacher passion which in effect will lead to fewer teachers leaving the field because of a loss of passion for teaching.

This study meets the American Psychological Association’s standards for “Minimal Risk,” and poses no major risks or dangers for you as a participant. There will be no physical, psychological, or emotional risks at any time. You may elect, either now or at any time during the research period, to withdraw your participation, with no penalty or loss of benefits. You have been selected to participate in this procedure based upon your employment as a classroom teacher in the Lorena Independent School District. Your compliance is completely voluntary and your participation or lack of participation, in this study will not affect your employment with the district. However, should you choose to contribute to the study, your participation will afford you an opportunity to provide original input that will inform education professionals at Baylor University and abroad about the connection of teacher passion and the teaching of character education.

We have no interest in knowing how a specific individual responds to the interview items or Focus Group dialogue. Pseudonyms may be used to retain confidentiality. All participant responses will be kept in a locked file cabinet in the researcher’s office. Data will be reported using the pseudonyms only.

Responses to the interview questions and Focus Groups will be analyzed and used to inform the researcher about the link between teacher passion and the teaching of character education. A summary of the responses will be published and participants may receive a copy by contacting Laurie Ann Jones. A copy of this consent form is available to participants.

All inquiries can be directed to either Dr. Tony Talbert or Laurie Ann Jones. Dr. Tony Talbert, Dissertation Chair, Department of Curriculum and Instruction, School of Education, Baylor University can be reached by mail at P.O. Box 97314, Waco, TX 76798-7314. Dr. Talbert can also be reached by phone at (254) 710-7417. Laurie Ann Jones, Doctoral Student, Department of Curriculum and Instruction, School of Education, Baylor University can be reached by mail at P.O. Box 97314, Waco, TX 76798-7314 or by phone at (254) 710-6136.

If you have any questions regarding your rights as a subject, or have other questions related to this study, please contact the Baylor University Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects in Research, Dr. Matthew S. Stanford, Department of Psychology and Neuroscience, P.O. Box 97334, Waco, Texas 76798-7334, Dr. Stanford may also be reached at (254) 710-2811.

I have read and understood this form, am aware of my rights as a subject and have agreed to participate in this study.

_________________________________ _________________________________ _________
Signature of Participant    Campus      Date

__________________________________ _________________________________ _________
School Official    Title     Date
APPENDIX B

Journal Question Response Sheet
Passionate Teacher – Virtuous Teaching: Exploring the Relationship between Teacher Calling, Teacher Passion and Character Education

Journal Question Set

Date: ___________   Time:  ____________  Place:  _______________________________________

Describe when you first knew you wanted to be a teacher. Include people, places, and events that may have influenced your decision. What words or phrases describe you as a teacher?

How does your campus implement the teaching of character education? Is the teaching of character viewed as an important part of the curriculum? Discuss how you implement character education into your classroom? How do you feel the community views the teaching of character in the school district?
APPENDIX C

Interview Question Set One
### Teacher Interview Question Set One

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<td>R:</td>
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<tr>
<td>P, RQ: 1</td>
<td>IQ: 2 - What words or phrases describe you as a teacher?</td>
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<td>P, RQ: 1</td>
<td>IQ: 3 - Why did you become a teacher? What motivates you to continue teaching?</td>
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<td>P, RQ: 3</td>
<td>IQ: 4 - What is your ultimate aim or goal as a teacher?</td>
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<td>P, RQ: 1, 4</td>
<td>IQ: 5 - Respond to this quote: “A teacher who ‘really knows and believes’ that teaching is worthwhile will likely conduct him- or herself differently from a teacher who has lost faith in the endeavor or who resorts to expediency in the face of challenge rather than considering alternative approaches, [or] consulting with others” (Hansen, 2000, p. 56)</td>
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APPENDIX D

Interview Question Set Two
### TEACHER INTERVIEW QUESTION SET TWO

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<td>CE, RQ: 2, 4</td>
<td>IQ: 6 - How important is the teaching of character education?</td>
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<tr>
<td>CE, RQ: 2, 3, 4</td>
<td>IQ: 7 - How do you teach character education in your classroom?</td>
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<td>P, CE, RQ: 2, 3, 4</td>
<td>IQ: 8 - Why did you choose those strategies to teach character education in your classroom?</td>
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<tr>
<td>CE, RQ: 4</td>
<td>IQ: 9 - What professional development have you participated in related to character education? (required or on own)</td>
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<td>P, CE, RQ: 1, 3</td>
<td>IQ: 10 - Why do you or do you not teach character education?</td>
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APPENDIX E

Blank Interview Protocol
# TEACHER INTERVIEW QUESTION SET

**Date:**
**Place:**
**Time:**
**Interviewer:** Laurie Ann Jones
**Interviewee:**

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Form to be used for additional questions/responses that may arise during interview.
APENDIX F

Interview Question Response Sheet
PASSIONATE TEACHER – VIRTUOUS TEACHING:
EXPLORING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TEACHER CALLING, TEACHER
PASSION AND THE TEACHING OF CHARACTER EDUCATION


2. What words or phrases describe you as a teacher?

3. How do you describe character education?

4. Is there a difference between teaching character and character education? Why or why not?

5. Respond to this quote: “A teacher who ‘really knows and believes’ that teaching is worthwhile will likely conduct him- or herself differently from a teacher who has lost faith in the endeavor or who resorts to expediency in the face of challenge rather than considering alternative approaches, [or] consulting with others” (Hansen, 2000, p. 56).
6. *How important is the teaching of character/character education?*

7. *How do you integrate character education in your curriculum?*

8. *Why did you choose those strategies to teach character education in your classroom?*

9. *How do you integrate character education as part of your classroom management strategies?*

10. *What professional development have you participated in related to character education? (required or on own)*
APPENDIX G

Participant Observation Protocol
**PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION**

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APPENDIX H

References
REFERENCES


