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THE EFFECTS OF CHARACTER EDUCATION ON FOURTH GRADE STUDENTS'
ATTITUDES TOWARD IN-SCHOOL BEHAVIOR

By
Jenna S. Snyder

A Thesis

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the
Master of Science in Teaching Degree
of
The Graduate School
at
Rowan University
July 3, 2002

Approved by
Professor

Date Approved July 3, 2002

ABSTRACT

Jenna S. Snyder

The effects of character education on fourth grade students' attitudes toward in-school behavior

2002

Dr. Randall S. Robinson

Rowan University

Master of Science in Teaching

The purpose of this study was to show that students would benefit from learning about character education in a classroom setting. This study used scores from a pre-test and post-test which was designed with character development scenarios taken by fourth grade students in a rural elementary school after they participated in a character education unit.

Eighteen ($n = 18$) participated in this quasi-experimental study. The results were analyzed to find the significance of the relationship between the students' scores on the pre-test and post-test. The Sign test indicated there was no significant change between the scores on the pre-test and the scores on the post-test ($p = 0.582$, $\alpha = .05$). Therefore, it was concluded that students who participated in a character education unit did not show a significant change between their scores on the pre-test and post-test.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iii
LIST OF TABLES	v
CHAPTER	
1 SCOPE OF THE STUDY	1
Introduction	1
Statement of Problem	2
Statement of Hypothesis	3
Limitations of the Study	3
Definition of Terms	4
2 REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE	5
Introduction	5
Is the Responsibility at Home or in the Schools?	6
Character Education Partnership	7
Teacher Training	8
Classroom and Whole School Strategies	8
Successful Character Education Programs	9
Conclusion	12
3 METHODS	13
Introduction	13
Population/Subjects	13
Procedure/Design	14
Description of Instrument	15
4 ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS	18
Introduction	18
Tabulation of Scores	18
Analysis of Data	20
5 SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	23

Introduction	23
Summary of Problem	23
Summary of Hypothesis	24
Summary of Procedures	24
Summary of Findings	24
Conclusion	24
Implications	24
Recommendations	25
REFERENCES	27
APPENDIX A Toy Story Lesson Plan	29
APPENDIX B Respect Lesson Plans	31
APPENDIX C Responsibility Lesson Plans	40
APPENDIX D Cooperative Learning Activities	47
APPENDIX E Understanding Others Activities/Lesson Plans	49
APPENDIX F Culminating Activity-Plays	56
APPENDIX G Pre-test/Post-test	67
VITA	71

LIST OF TABLES

	Page
Table 1: Means and Standard Deviations Per Character Trait For the Pre-test	19
Table 2: Means and Standard Deviations Per Character Trait For the Post-test	20
Table 3: Directional Analysis of Subjects' Scores Between Pre-test and Post-test ..	21

Chapter One
Scope of the Study
Introduction

One of the major concerns society has with children today is their social and moral development. Morals and values should be taught in the home, however, many families do not take the responsibility to teach their children these important lessons. The people who are now responsible for teaching about morals and values are the people in the schools like teachers, principals, bus drivers, aids, and even cafeteria workers. (Schaeffer, Oct. 1999) "All of these adults must model the core values in their own behavior and take advantage of the other opportunities they have to influence the character of the students with whom they come into contact" (Character Education Partnership, 1997-2000, pg. 1).

Teaching character education in schools is one way to ensure that children are learning about social and moral development. This type of education provides several aspects of teaching and learning for personal development including moral and civic education as well as developing character (Otten, 2000). Moral and social development is important for children to learn to assume responsibility for themselves and others(Schaeffer, 1999). Character education can be "the long-term process of helping young people develop good character" (Schaeffer, 1999, p. 30).

Studies have shown that teaching character education in schools has a positive effect on students even though the literature is limited on this subject. One study

researched students with disabilities and their involvement in a character education program. The results included students taking responsibility for their actions, responding to the ideas of teamwork and cooperation, becoming appreciative of diversity and becoming more respectful to authority figures and their peers (Muscott & O'Brien, 1999). The dropout rate of students in an alternative school in San Diego California has decreased from 23.3% to 12.7% since they implemented a character education program. Students who attended Mound Fort doubled their standardized test scores in the eighth grade and improved their reading scores by one grade level in the sixth grade after learning about positive character of students (Smith, 1999).

Schools that have implemented a program on character education have seen positive results academically and socially. Character education may not provide the single answer for academic and discipline problems within schools, however, it is a start in developing a better school community (Schaeffer, 1999).

Statement of Problem

The purpose of this study was to show that students would benefit from learning about character education in a classroom setting. It was also proposed that students would see the importance of exhibiting good character in several different settings and would use it to be successful socially as well as academically. The importance of character education is to develop schools and communities that are caring, civil, and challenging and develop young citizens who are smart, decent, and responsible (DeRoche et al, 1999). Questions this study addressed were: How much did these students know about positive character? Are students aware that having positive character will help make them

a more socially acceptable person? Do students realize that how they act affects how they are looked upon by adults and their peers?

Hypothesis

There will not be a significant change in the scores of a character development scenario pre-test, of fourth grade students who participate in a character education unit about respect, responsibility, cooperation, and acceptance, than the scores of the post-test.

Limitations

There were some variables in this study that the researcher could not control. The following limitations were noted:

Time was one of the limitations to this study. Due to the lack of time, the researcher was only able to discuss four character traits during the unit, however, if there were more time there would be one or two character traits discussed every month of the school year. During the month of this unit students were also preparing for the Elementary School Proficiency Assessment (ESPA) test which decreased the amount of time spent on any given trait.

The number of subjects included in this study was also a limitation. Due to the small number of participants in this study, the researcher could not generalize the results to the entire population of fourth grade students of southern Jersey, however, the results were generalized to the two other fourth grade classrooms within this one school.

Another limitation was that a Character Education Program already existed within the school, which may have caused counteractive results. The program that existed consisted of discussing the character trait for the month one day in an assembly and having bulletin boards displayed in the hallway using the character trait of the month as

its focus. The researcher made a point to have subjects involved with additional character building activities, therefore students would be participating instead of just passively learning.

Definition of Terms

For the purpose of this study, the following definitions have been provided:

Character Education is the study of different positive qualities of a person with good character. It consists of knowing the good, desiring the good, and doing the good habits of the mind, habits of the heart, and habits of action (DeRoche, Sullivan, & Garrett, 1999).

Respect is defined as responding to needs and ideas of others, offering praise and constructive criticism, showing caring for life, property, elders, nature, beliefs, and rights of others, courtesy, politeness, and manners.

Responsibility is being accountable, deserving credit or blame, trustworthy, reliable, involving obligation or duties, and quality of being in control (Author Unknown, 2000).

Cooperating Relationships occur when people are willing to work together with others.

Acceptance is being able to know how someone else would feel or act in different situations. It is also being able to understand and respect opinions and beliefs of others.

Honesty is saying or doing what is true.

Humility is not bragging about yourself.

Best Effort is working your hardest on something that is important to do right.

Compassion is caring about the needs of others.

Open-minded is accepting new information.

Optimistic means finding good or hopeful things about something.

Chapter Two

Review of Literature

Introduction

The idea of character education has been developing since the early decades of the twentieth century. James Leming (1997) believes there have been three significant periods of moral education—1920's and 1930's had a character education movement, the 1970's and 1980's had the values and moral education movement, and then there was the character education movement of the 1990's. During the twenties, schools developed group activities and student clubs as one of the main ways of teaching character. "Children's Morality Code" was a widely used code of conduct that schools attempted to integrate into all aspects of life at school (Leming, 1997) During the 1960s and 1970s, the importance of character education decreased due to Kohlberg's theory of moral development (Milson, 2000). A few other reasons behind the decline of character education were because of logical positivism, moral relativism, and the fear of teaching morality in the schools would mean teaching religion (Cortland, 1994). This type of education resurfaced in the 1980s, however, its importance was realized after the Columbine tragedy in 1999. The interest for teaching character education has also grown out of the public's concern about different trends in youth conduct (Leming, 1997) . "The immediate response was to turn to quick fix, knee-jerk solutions such as beefing up security with armed guards and metal detectors (Schaeffer, 1999, pg. 1)." The long-term solution these schools have been looking for is character education. Schools need to focus

on the causes of violence and anti-social behavior so they can take the necessary steps to create a safe school environment, where these types of behaviors cannot thrive (Schaeffer, 1999). Patricia Harned (1999) states that “through character education a school evolves into a community with shared ideals, common practices, and a healthy respect for the ways individual differences contribute to the diversity of the whole (pg. 26).” This study explored the change between a pre-test and post-test of a Character Education Unit given to fourth grade students.

Is the Responsibility at Home or in the Schools?

When education was first developed, people realized that moral and social development was as important as academic development (Schaeffer, 1999). Tom Lickona in 1993 stated that teachers are usually called on to serve as positive role models and to take opportunities to reflect on moral issues within the curriculum (Milson, 2000). However "some educators and school administrators may erroneously believe that developing the character of our children is not their job. But the reality is they will be shrinking their responsibility if they turn out children who are 'brain smart' but not 'heart smart' (Schaeffer, 1999, p. 2)."

Beginning in 1966, two highly moral education models were introduced, which were values education and moral reasoning. These two approaches have many differences, but they both emphasized that moralizing was not part of the teacher's role as a moral educator (Leming, 1997). Both models kept the family and community separate from the school. The main message was “that moral development was best promoted by skilled educators, without parental involvement (Leming, p. 3, 1997).” During this time period there was a lot of pressure for teachers to make sure students were resolving issues

of moral conflict properly (Leming, 1997). The Character Education Partnership (1997) believes there should be a comprehensive approach that promotes the core values in the phases of school life. The different aspects of school include the discipline policy, the academic curriculum, assessment of learning, relationships with parents, etc. Ronald Thomas (1991) has found that the belief of the last several years “a prime responsibility of the schools is not only to make children smart, but to make them smart and good (p. 51).”

Unfortunately, a poll was taken by the *American Family Research Council* showing that children spend 33 hours a year on average having meaningful conversations a year versus 1,500 hours watching television (Schaeffer, 1999). If children do not talk with their parents often then how are they learning the appropriate characteristics needed for social fulfillment? The schools have a responsibility to stand for good values and help students form character revolved around those values (Cortland, 1994).

Character Education Partnership

The New Jersey Department of Education has developed a Character Education Partnership. They developed eleven principles of effective character education that should be incorporated within the schools. These principles include: promoting core ethical values; must include thinking, feeling, and behavior; school must be a caring community; students need opportunities to exhibit good behavior; has a challenging curriculum that helps students to succeed; developing intrinsic motivation, and parents as well as people of the community need to work together with the school to promote character education (CEP, 2000). If a school is committed to developing character, the core values from the Character Education Partnership are treated as something that must

be taught. The school makes it obvious that the basic values transcend religious and cultural differences and express our common humanity (CEP, 1997). In 2001, the Governor of New Jersey had a budget of \$4.75 million dollars to donate to public school districts and charter schools to be devoted to implementing a character education program during the 2000-01 school year (NJCEP, 2001).

Teacher Training

Another issue teachers see with character education is that there are limited amounts of opportunity for training. All the members of the school need to be prepared for their roles in teaching character education (Deroche, 2000). However, the NJCEP has set up well-known speakers, authors, and researchers who present character education workshops. There have also been a variety of programs and services that discuss the character trait of the month, how to resolve conflicts, and social emotional learning; as a few examples (NJCEP, 2001). There have also been in-services arranged and some teachers get together for staff development, the best workshop attended was the character education reading group in Pattonville High School (Schaeffer, 1999). Professional development time should be used to identify the school core values that will be the most beneficial to the students and meet the consensus of the school community (Harned, 1999).

Classroom and Whole School Strategies

There are many ways of integrating character education into the daily classroom routine. Tom Lickona (1991) developed a 12-point comprehensive approach to character education in his book Educating for Character. His ideas included having teachers be seen as a caregiver, model, and ethical mentor, having a democratic classroom

environment, and working in cooperative groups as part of the learning process. For the entire school he recommended using role models to inspire positive behavior and have parents and the community work as partners to build positive character within the schools.

Heroes can also be used in teaching students different characteristics. History, fiction, and current events are just a few sources that can be used to exemplify character traits such as honesty, civility, courage, perseverance, loyalty, etc. The person does not even have to be famous, just someone who expresses values through self-sacrificing acts that benefit others and the community (Sanchez, 1998).

Wynne (1985/1986); Greer and Ryan (1989) say that good character should not be knowing what the right thing is but on doing the “right” things or acting in an appropriate manner. “Character education should focus on real-life, day-to-day situations instead of placing students in unrealistic or fantasy situations” (Thomas, p.52, 1991).

Successful Character Education Programs

A few studies have been done that show the success of character education within the schools when it is implemented. Thomas (1991) found that there is a direct and positive relationship between high standards of academic responsibility and character education. Andrew Milson ran a case study in the Cravens Middle School near Atlanta, Georgia. The researchers built their program revolving around Lickona's influence from 1991. He says:

"Effective character education helps make schools more civil and caring communities; reduces negative student behavior such as violence, pregnancy, substance abuse, and disrespect for teachers, parents, and peers; improves academic performance; and prepares young people to be responsible citizens and productive members of society (2000, p.2)."

The researchers came up with a trait of the week with four lessons to go with it. They used heroes, quotes, and personal stories about people within the school to discuss these character traits. They found that the most useful character education lessons are when the teachers model the traits they are teaching and when the students have the opportunities to practice good character through activities in the classroom, service learning, or conflict resolution (Milson, 2000).

Tony Sanchez (1998) wrote an article about using heroes to teach values. They can be used in history, fiction, and current events to show different character traits like honesty, civility, courage, perseverance, loyalty, etc. A booklet was written by Edward DeRoche, Betty Sullivan, and Sherrye Dee Garrett called "Character Matters" that gives worksheets and lesson plan ideas for teaching character education by using a newspaper. Students can find heroes who may not be considered to be famous as long as the person expresses values through self-sacrificing acts that benefit others and the community. These stories can also be used to inspire students (Sanchez, 1998).

The idea of teaching character education in the schools is to establish a set of traits that match the ideals of schools. These attributes should become a part of the daily routine informally and formally. The values should be demonstrated throughout the school by bulletin boards, artwork, written papers, etc. Lessons can be taught about a hero that shows morality, students can perform skits, write stories about specific traits in their own lives (Harned, 1999).

A program called Community of Caring integrated values into a school community. It involved the entire school community, the families, and the full outside community. The main goal was for students to understand the values of family, respect,

trust, responsibility, and caring and how they may affect life choices and their behavior. The school made a point to have communication with the parents of the students. There are eight components that were needed for its success that go from teacher and staff training to service learning. Within a two year period, students who were a part of this program found that they felt stronger about helping others, they paid more attention to health issues when it came to drugs, alcohol, and sex, they had stronger family relationships, and longer lasting peer relationships. (Jones & Stoodley, 1999). Other research results that were found about Community of Caring are that students' grade point averages increased, there were fewer behavior problems, and students gained knowledge about the consequences and risks of early sexual activity, which resulted in postponement of sexual activity and the amount of teen pregnancies were reduced (Leming, 1997).

A literature based, read-aloud elementary level program was developed by the Heartwood Institute called "An Ethics Curriculum for Children". The basic goal of the program is to help children learn attributes that will help them become caring, responsible, adults. Courage, loyalty, justice, respect, hope, honesty, and love are the attributes that are taught throughout this program. The research study had a sample of 965 first to sixth graders at two different school districts. All participants were given a pre-test during the second week in September of 1995 and a post-test was given during the third week of May 1996 (Leming, 2000). There are few results that indicate significant improvement in student's character. The most consistent and strongest effect was found in the cognitive outcomes (Leming,2000). A few teachers who implemented the program into their classroom reported that there was an increase of caring and sharing

in the classroom. (Leming, 1997) The researchers did complete follow-up interviews 5 years later with the teachers in the study. They found that the teachers relied less on the Heartwood curriculum, but demonstrated a high level of commitment to character education (Leming, 2000).

Another program that has been used within schools is called Lions-Quest, which is a K-5 curriculum designed to have children learn important life and citizenship skills from parents, community members, and educators. It is believed that children are at a higher risk of developing problem behaviors in today's society. There has been one study that found there have been statistically significant differences on at least one test at each grade level across the five units taught within the curriculum in favor of the Lion's Quest program (Leming, 1997).

Conclusion

Schaeffer (1998) states: "effective character education creates a more compassionate society and a true sense of community and it can help improve academic learning as well. Students who feel they belong will *want* to be in school (p. 32)." Leming (2000) says "if character education programs are to be improved they should be developed and evaluated from clear perspectives regarding the nature of character and how it is learned.

Chapter Three

Procedure and Design

Introduction

This study examined the effects of a Character Education Unit on a group of fourth grade students. It was determined that there would be no difference in the scores on a character development test after they participated in a unit that included respect, responsibility, cooperating relationships, and tolerance than before the unit. The purpose of this study was to see if students' attitudes would improve towards positive behavior after learning about a variety of character traits. Some of the limitations were time, number of subjects, and that a Character Education Program already existed in the school where the study took place.

Population/Subjects

The study was conducted in a fourth grade class at an elementary school in a rural part of southern New Jersey. Fourteen of the eighteen subjects had the same teacher last year as they had when this study was conducted. The participants were nine and ten years of age. Ten subjects were nine years old and eight subjects were ten years old. Three of the subjects were African American while the rest were Caucasian. The subjects came from a lower to middle class background. All students spoke English as their first language. There were eight females and ten males that participated in the study.

Procedure/Design

The study was a one group quasi-experimental study. The research project took six weeks to complete, which included administrating the pre-test and the post-test to the subjects. The lessons for the unit occurred at the same time, four days a week for five weeks. The lessons were about 30-40 minutes long.

The pre-test was given the day before the researcher began teaching the unit. The four themes that were studied within this character education unit were respect, responsibility, cooperating relationships, and tolerance. On the first day of the unit instruction the researcher gave definitions for each theme that would be discussed for the following five weeks. As an initiating activity for the unit, the subjects watched the movie Toy Story (2 days for 40 minutes) to get their attention focussed on different characteristics like cooperation and acceptance (see appendix A for lesson plan). After the movie, there was a discussion about the positive and negative characteristics portrayed by the different characters.

Throughout the first week subjects were taught about respecting themselves and others. They completed worksheets and applied different concepts within the classroom and in the community. These different concepts were honesty, humility, best effort, and compassion (see appendix B for lesson plan).

During the second week subjects were taught about taking responsibility for their actions. They completed worksheets and developed a castle using materials the subjects brought in from home as part of their homework assignment (see appendix C).

During the third week subjects were placed in situations in which they had to work in cooperating groups to complete different assignments. Some assignments were part of the academic curriculum in social studies, science, mathematics, and reading that took place throughout the entire unit. There were a few specific group activities that included group decision making and working with others to achieve a common goal (see appendix D).

Throughout the fourth week the subjects were taught about acceptance of others. They had discussions about being open-minded to new people and new things and being optimistic about different situations. The subjects created a collage about themselves using words from a newspaper and magazine, they completed worksheets, and discussed different scenarios where these concepts could be applied (see appendix E).

During the fifth week subjects put on a play for their school that showed the different characteristics that were studied (see appendix F).

After the play was completed students were tested to see if there was a change of their understanding of character between before the unit was taught and after the unit was completed.

Description of Instrument

Sixteen scenarios were taken from Darlene Mannix's book that was used for testing before and after the character education unit. This test was developed from assessment pages in Character Building Activities for Kids (see appendix G). The assessments were used to test the subjects' knowledge of good character before and after the character education unit. The test questions stated different scenarios and the subjects had to pick the appropriate response for the answer.

The test was in an objective format, multiple choice, with up to four possible answers from which the subjects were to choose. The scenarios were taken from each section of the unit: honesty, humility, responsibility, best effort, compassion, acceptance of others, open-mindedness, and optimism. These traits all fall under the four themes of respect, responsibility, cooperating relationships, and acceptance. The subjects received a point value for correct answers. If the subjects selected the correct response, they received two points. If the response was incorrect than they would receive zero points.

The measuring tools were reviewed by a variety of elementary and special education professors to establish face validity. The Kuder-Richardson test was used to determine internal consistency of the questionnaire that was scored dichotomously.

The researcher used the sign test to see if there was a change in the before and after testing of the subjects. The same test was used for the pretest and posttest. The sign test is used to compare ordinal or nominal results in any type of dichotomy relationship. In this case the researcher wanted to see if there was a change in subjects' understanding of good character. This instrument answers the question of how often the subjects understanding of good character changed before and after they participated in the unit on character education.

If the subjects answered a question correctly on the pre-test but got the same type of question on the post-test incorrect, they would receive a (-) for that question. If the subjects answered a question incorrectly on the pre-test, but got the same type of question correct on the post-test then they would receive a (+) for that particular question. If there was no change between the pre- and post-test questions, then the subjects would receive a (0) for those questions.

After all of the questions were marked, the researcher counted the number of pluses, minuses, and zeros separately to determine if there was a change from before and after the subjects participated in the unit. If there were more pluses then there was a positive change, if there were more minuses than there was a negative change, and if there were more zeros then there was no change.

Chapter Four

Analysis of Findings

Introduction

Character education is a type of curriculum that supports the teaching of social skills. Some schools have implemented specific programs in their district. Teachers are being asked to teach values and morals within their classrooms to help improve behavior and academic scores. This study analyzed pre-test and post-test scores taken by fourth grade students before and after they participated in a unit on character education. The researcher hypothesized that there would not be a significant difference between the two assessments. The importance of this study was to see if students would benefit from learning about positive character traits in a school setting. The traits taught were honesty, humility, best effort, and compassion, which all were an aspect of respect. Responsibility, optimism, open-mindedness, and cooperating relationships were other traits that were discussed throughout the 5-week unit.

Tabulation of Scores

Eighteen subjects took part in the character education unit. All students took the pre-test and post-test (n = 18). The tests were made up of 16 scenarios that related to one of the eight character traits taught throughout the unit. There were two questions for each character trait. The two questions for each character trait were combined, therefore the subjects could receive up to four points for each trait, 32 points for the entire test.

Table 1 shows the means and standard deviations for the raw scores of the pre-test. The character trait responsibility has the highest mean (3.1) and best effort has the lowest mean (1.2). The mean for the entire test was 17.3 for all of the subjects combined.

table 1

Means and Standard Deviations Per Character Trait For the Pre-test

Pre-test Traits	Mean	Standard Deviation	n
Optimism	2.78	3.0	18
Understanding Others	2.78	1.0	18
Open-minded	3.0	2.0	18
Responsibility	3.11	6.0	18
Best Effort	1.22	5.0	18
Honesty	2.33	9.0	18
Humility	2.67	1.0	18
Compassion	2.22	2.0	18
Total (Σ)	17.33	5.69	18

Table 2 shows the means and standard deviations for the post-test. The character trait with the highest mean on the post-test was optimism (3.4) and the lowest mean was (1.4) for best effort. The total mean was 18.9, which was an increase of 1.5 from the pre-test to the post-test.

table 2

Means and Standard Deviations Per Character Trait For the Post-Test

Post-test Traits	Mean	Standard Deviation	n
Optimism	3.44	3.0	18
Understanding Others	2.78	1.0	18
Open-minded	3.11	4.0	18
Responsibility	3.22	3.0	18
Best Effort	1.44	9.0	18
Honesty	2.56	11.0	18
Humility	3.1	3.0	18
Compassion	2.0	1.0	18
Total (Σ)	18.9	4.56	18

Analysis of Data

The sign test was used to find the probability of occurrence of the values under H_0 of $p = 0.124$. Table 3 analyzes the difference of direction for each character trait between the pre-test and the post-test. This table compares all 18 subjects' scores to analyze if their scores increased, decreased, or stayed the same. The first column is the list of character traits that were being analyzed. The second column is the number of subjects that had an increase in their score. The third column is the number of subjects that had a decrease in their score. The fourth column shows the number of subjects' scores that stayed the same. The fifth column gives the probability of occurrence under H_0 is equal to or less than $\alpha = .05$.

None of the character traits were statistically significant with $p \leq .05$ (see table 3).

To find the significance for each character trait and the entire test, x = the number of fewer signs, and n = the number of subjects who showed differences between the pre- and post-test. For the last row (Σ), $x = 5$ and $n = 13$. Subjects who did not have a change of score between the pre- and post-test were considered to be a tie, therefore were not counted for analysis for that specific character trait. Table 3 shows that for $n = 13$, $x \leq 5$ has a two-tailed probability of occurrence under H_0 of $p = 0.582$. Only three subjects had a difference in their score for responsibility making $n = 3$. The chart where the p values were found begins with $n = 4$, so the p value was not listed leaving it as insufficient data

table 3

<u>Directional Analysis of Subjects Scores Between Pre-test and Post-test*</u>				
Character Traits	Number +	Number -	No Change	p value
Optimism	4	0	14	0.124
Understanding Others	4	5	9	1.492
Open-minded	2	2	14	1.376
Responsibility	2	1	15	Insufficient
Best Effort	3	1	14	0.624
Honesty	4	2	12	0.688
Humility	5	2	11	0.454
Compassion	3	4	11	1.546
Total (Σ)	8	5	5	0.582

* $X_{pre} \leq X_{post} = +$, $X_{pre} \geq X_{post} = -$, $X_{pre} = X_{post} = 0$

According to the sign test, there was a change in fourth grade students' scores between the pre-test and the post-test on an individual basis as well as a whole group. However, these changes were not statistically significant at the .05 probability level. Therefore, the null hypothesis was not rejected.

Chapter Five

Summary, Conclusion, and Recommendations

Introduction

Teaching character education in schools has been found to have a positive effect on students and is one way to make sure they are learning about social and moral development. Schools that have implemented a character education program throughout their curriculum have seen positive results academically and socially. This study looked at the scores on a character development scenario pre-test and post-test of fourth grade students who participated in a unit on character education. The four main themes discussed in this unit were respect, responsibility, cooperating relationships, and understanding others. According to the data from this study, teaching character education within schools does not have a significant impact on students' attitudes towards behavior.

Summary of Problem

Schools are supposed to teach academics and guide students in making good decisions. Character education is becoming more popular within schools as a way for students to develop positive character. Students are not aware of the importance of how their behavior affects how they may be looked at by their peers and authority figures. This is one of the main reasons why it is important to teach character education in the classroom. Children need to feel that they are socially accepted into society and one way to ensure this is to learn about positive character.

Summary of Hypothesis

The hypothesis of this study was that there would not be a significant change in the scores on a character development scenario pre-test and post-test of fourth grade students who participated in a character education unit.

Summary of Procedures

Eighteen fourth grade students in a rural elementary school participated in a character education unit that took six weeks to complete. They were given a pre-test before the researcher started the unit. Students were taught a lesson four days a week. The four themes that were taught were: respect, responsibility, cooperating relationships, and tolerance. The culminating activity was a play about character education. When the play was completed, the students were tested once again. The assessments were collected and the results were tabulated.

Summary of Findings

According to the sign test, there was no significant difference at the .05 probability level between the pre-test and post-test of the character education unit.

Conclusion

According to the data in this study, teaching a character education unit does not influence fourth grade students' attitudes towards positive behavior. Therefore, the hypothesis of this study, that there would not be a significant change in the scores before or after a character education unit was taught, has been supported by this research.

Implications

The sign test did show that there was no significant change between the scores of a pre- and post-test after fourth grade students participated in the unit on character

education. According to the data, none of the scores for the character traits were significant. There was a slight increase of scores for the entire test between before and after the unit that if there had been more time allowed for each characteristic and a larger sample group, there would have been significance between scores.

This study implies that teaching character education in schools has little to no effect on students' attitudes towards positive behavior. This suggests that students' academic achievement and social development will not be positively or negatively effected if teachers incorporated character education lessons throughout their regular curriculum.

Recommendations

Paper and pencil assessments are not always the best for researching something as abstract like behavior and attitudes. If the researcher were to do this study again, character education would be taught throughout the entire year with a variety of activities and allow for at least three weeks for one character trait. There would be a way of observing positive changes in behavior for each student implemented because that can be done daily where a written assessment is usually only completed twice.

Some of the concepts discussed may have been too abstract for this age group like honesty and best effort. It would be beneficial to be trained to teach character education by a professional before bringing it into your own classroom because there are specific techniques on how to hold good discussions when discussing personal and abstract ideas.

A study observing how students act with peers in relation to character would be interesting. This study could observe teaching character education and the affects it has

on the way students play and act with their friends. Are children who exhibit positive character more socially accepted than those who do not show positive character?

Although this study showed that there was no significance with teaching character education within the classroom, teachers should still include some social skill lessons throughout their curriculum. Teaching character education could be the key to students' success in the future.

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APPENDIX A
TOY STORY LESSON PLAN

Movie Lesson Plan

Objective: At the end of the lesson, the students will be able to discuss different character traits after watching the movie Toy Story.

A.S.: Remind the students that we will start discussing character education daily when we get back from break.

Procedure:

- 1) Tell the student they are going to watch the movie Toy Story.
- 2) As they watch the movie, they need to look for examples of responsibility, respect, best effort, open-minded, optimistic, acceptance, cooperation, compassion, humility. I will give brief definitions of these terms.
- 3) I will give students 5 minutes to write down any examples from the movie in their journals.
- 4) The day after the movie, we will have a discussion relating the movie and character education. We will sit in a circle and all students will be expected to participate with at least one example from the movie.

APPENDIX B
RESPECT LESSON PLANS

Respect Lesson Plans

Objective: At the end of the lesson, the students will be able to discuss and apply the concept of honesty within the classroom and when completing worksheets.

A.S.: Raise your hand if you ever lied to someone? Did you feel guilty? Did that person ever find out? Did you feel really bad if they did find out?

Procedure:

- 1) Discuss the concept of honesty-saying or doing what is true.
- 2) Explain tact-having a sense of what to do or say in order to maintain good relations with others or avoid offense.
- 3) Explain having an honest reputation-what other people say about you, based on what you have done. Students want to have a positive reputation.
- 4) Students will act out short skits. (1 group will act it out in a rude way while another group will act it out in a tactful way)
- 5) Tell students that from now on, when someone does something that annoys you or wears something you don't like-think of a TACTFUL way of telling them to stop. I will be paying attention from now on-students will be rewarded for positive behavior.

Conclusion: Complete Being More Honest and What About You? Worksheets pages 15-19.

Name _____

Date _____

I-2C. Being More Honest

Review

Honesty means _____ or _____ what is
_____. The opposite of honesty is _____.

Directions: Read each situation below. Decide how the person involved could be more honest in his or her response. Write your answer on the line.

1. Debbie bought three things at the store, but the clerk only charged her for two. Debbie didn't mention it to the clerk.

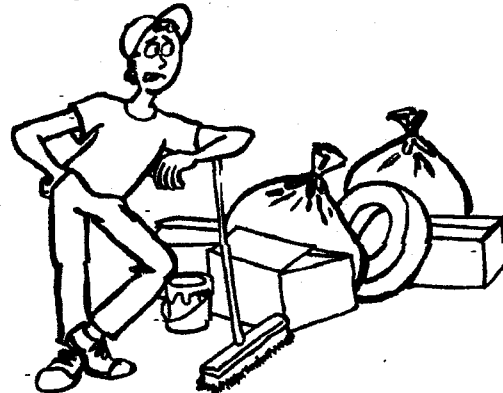
2. Felix was supposed to answer all of the questions in his reading book, but he forgot. When the teacher asked about it, he said he didn't understand the assignment.

3. Jenny asked her friend Liz if Jason liked her as a girlfriend. Liz knew that Jason couldn't stand her, but she didn't want to hurt her feelings so she said yes.

4. There was some loose change on a table in the gym and no one was around, so Anthony took the money. Later a boy came back from class looking for his money. Anthony pretended he didn't know anything about it.

5. Rudy was supposed to work for two hours cleaning out the garage on Saturday. He was tired after an hour, so he stopped. When his mother asked if he was finished cleaning, he said yes.

6. Mr. Arthur, the teacher, couldn't find his answer key to the math test. He asked the class if anyone knew where it was. Kaila had seen another student take the test, but she didn't say anything.



Name _____

Date _____

I-3B. What About You?

Review

Honesty means _____.

The opposite of honesty is _____.

Directions: How honest do other people think you are? What do you think other people would say about you if you were honest? Complete the balloons to write what you think these people would say.



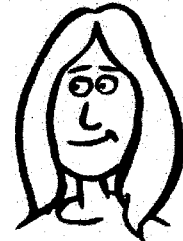
Your father or mother

An aunt/uncle or other relative



A neighbor

A friend



Your teacher

Your bus driver/
coach/other adult
leader



Your brother or sister

Your principal



Objective: At the end of the lesson, the students will be able to discuss and apply the concepts of humility within the classroom setting and when completing worksheets.

A.S.: Raise you hands if you have ever gotten annoyed at someone for bragging about something?

Procedure:

- 1) Discuss the meaning of humility-not bragging about yourself.
- 2) Tell students it is important to consider your audience when talking about your accomplishments. Ask the question; Is it okay for someone else to brag about your accomplishments?
- 3) Students will be divided into groups of 2 or 3.
 - a) I will explain that each group will be given a situation to role-play in front of the class to demonstrate the character trait of humility.
 - b) Each group will have 2-3 minutes to choose roles and rehearse lines.
 - c) Discuss how well the character skill of humility was portrayed in each skit.

Conclusion: Students will complete Ways I Can Show Humility with at least three examples for each column. Worksheet pg. 61

Name _____

Date _____

I-9A. Ways I Can Show Humility

Review

Humility means _____

The opposite of humility is _____

Directions: Think of times when you wanted to brag about something or had someone else brag about you. What are ways that you could show humility?

Things I Could Brag About...

Ways I Could Show Humility...

Things I Could Brag About...	Ways I Could Show Humility...

Objective: At the end of the lesson, the students will be able to demonstrate how to use best effort by completing worksheets and selecting one activity or job they feel they could apply more effort towards to gain success.

A.S.: All students will write one subject or aspect that they know they can improve either behaviorally or academically.

Procedure:

- 1) Discuss the meaning of best effort-working your hardest on something that is important to do right.
- 2) Explain that working hard towards something makes it easier to achieve goals. Many achievements do not come easy.
- 3) Ask: Why do you think some people really do accomplish unlikely things, even when some people say they can't? Does hard work make a difference?
- 4) Are there any examples where it is okay not to show best effort? Rough drafts, shopping lists, etc..
- 5) Now, list three ways you can apply best effort for what you have written in the journal.

Conclusion:

- 1) Students will carry out their best effort idea. They will write how they are achieving this and if they did better.
- 2) pg. 100- How Do I Do?

Name _____

Date _____

I-15A. How Do I Do?

Review

Best effort means _____

The opposite of best effort is _____

Directions: Consider each of these tasks that you may have to do. Write how you presently perform these jobs. Then think of ways you could improve your performance, if necessary, to show best effort.

	Right Now	Best Effort
1. writing a paragraph		
2. making your bed		
3. organizing your desk or closet		
4. participating in a sport		
5. making a card or gift for someone		
6. washing your bike or your parent's car		
7. taking care of your hair		
8. doing a project for school		

Objective: At the end of the lesson, the students will be able to define compassion and apply it by working on an individual project that will benefit an organization.

A.S.: 1) Raise your hand if you have ever done volunteer work to help others-tutor, help the elderly by mowing their lawns, carrying groceries, or raised money?

2) How did it make you feel?

Procedure: 1) Discuss the definition of compassion –means caring about the needs of others.

2) Maybe talk about Penn State Dance Marathon-how thousands of students raise money for children with cancer and give up their weekends to participate in this event. (Pennies for Unicef, Jump-A-Thon, and Math-A-Thon)

3) Having respect for others-it is important especially when you want to be treated properly.

4) Students will make cards for Spring for the elderly in Nursery Homes. Some of these people do not have anyone and they enjoy getting mail from people, it makes their day.

Conclusion: If somebody needs help or is having a bad day-take a moment to say something thoughtful to them and or help them out to make them feel better. You would want the same treatment.

APPENDIX C
RESPONSIBILITY LESSON PLANS

Responsibility Lesson Plans

Objective: At the end of the lesson, the students will be able to take responsibility to bring in an item and work cooperatively to build a trash castle.

A.S.: Go over responsibility again-If students do their classroom jobs they will receive a WOW for responsibility.

Procedure: 1) The night before, each student will be asked to bring in a specific item from their house. They will be split into groups of 4 and 5.

- Items will include- an empty jar or can, a paper or plastic bag, a section of the newspaper, 2 or 3 pinecones, string, cereal boxes, shoe boxes, etc...

2) If someone forgets their item, they will lose 10 points automatically for their project.

3) Students will have 15-20 minutes to make a trash or junk castle using their materials. I will supply a few items to include in their project. Students need to get along or points will be taken off.

Conclusion: When people rely on you for something-it is important to get it done. It is your responsibility.

Objective: At the end of the lesson, the students will be able to define responsibility and discuss the importance of following directions and understanding your job after completing worksheets.

A.S.: What does responsibility mean?

Procedure:

- 1) Define responsibility-understanding your job and doing it.
- 2) Ask: Why is it for someone to follow directions when given a job?
- 3) Read a story while students look at a group of pictures, The Lemonade Stand. Questions will be asked regarding responsibility.
- 4) Explain that parents took the responsibility to vote and because they did that we will have a new school.

Conclusion: Students will interview someone who has given them a job from home. How Responsible Am I-complete worksheet with questions.

For the Teacher

(Script for Worksheet I-10C, The Lemonade Stand)

Follow along with the pictures as I read you a short story about two children who want to start a little business. Every once in a while I will stop and ask you some questions about the story.

(Picture 1) April and Danny want to have a lemonade stand in the summer. It is a really hot week and they think they can make some money. Besides, it would be fun. They decide they both will each get what is needed, work together to sell the lemonade, and split the money. April tells Danny, "Get some money from your mom and then I'll go buy the lemonade mix. I can get a big cardboard box for our stand." "OK," says Danny, "and I will make a big sign to hang up, too." The children hurry off to get what they need.

STOP. What is April's responsibility? (*get lemonade mix*) What is Danny's responsibility? (*get money and a sign*)

(Picture 2) Danny's mother gives him some money, but she tells him he has to replace it when they are done with their sales. He says OK. He goes into the garage and finds a board to make a sign. His mother says he may have it, but if he uses paint, he has to work outside and be sure to put the covers back tightly on the can so the paint does not dry out.

STOP. What is Danny's job now? (*replace the money; put paint can lids on tightly*)

(Picture 3) Meanwhile, April gets a big cardboard box and sets it up in front of her house. Her mother says they should have a trash can for empty paper cups so people won't throw them on the ground. "It's OK if you have a stand here," she says, "but don't let it get messy. Pick up all the trash."

STOP. What is April's job now? (*get a trash can; clean up all trash*)

(Picture 4) Finally, they are ready for business. The sign is up, the lemonade is made, cups are filled, and they are ready to go! It is a hot day, and people are coming from all over to have a glass of cold lemonade. But look at what people do with their cups...

STOP. What problem do you see? (*cups all over yard*) Whose responsibility is it to keep the yard clean? (*April's*)

(Picture 5) One of the customers is Danny's older brother. "Boy are you in trouble," he tells Danny as he gulps down the lemonade. "Why?" asks Danny. "Because you didn't put the lids on the paint can, my dear little brother," he tells Danny. "Dad's going to be mad when he gets home!" Danny looks at April. "I better get home right now," he tells her. "If I stir the paint and get the lids on, it might be all right." Before she can open her mouth, Danny is gone.

STOP. What is the problem now? (*Danny didn't take care of the paint cans and he left April to run the stand*)

(Script for Worksheet I-10C, continued)

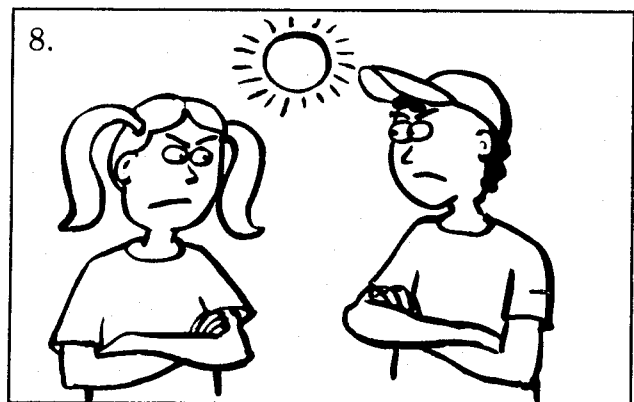
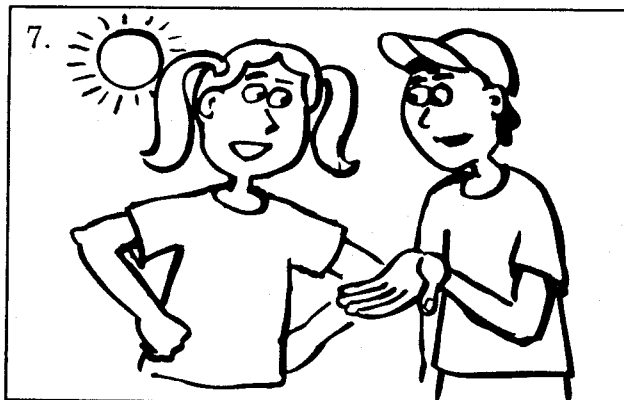
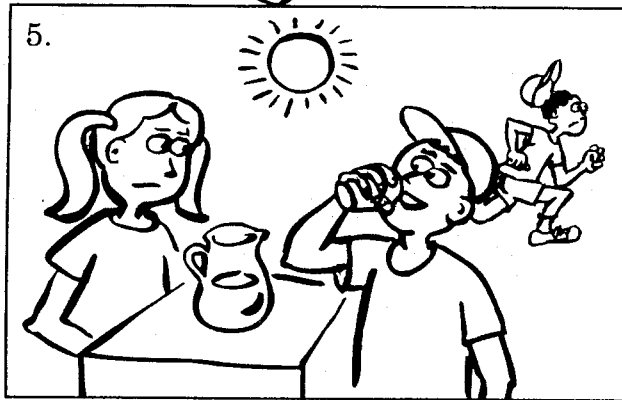
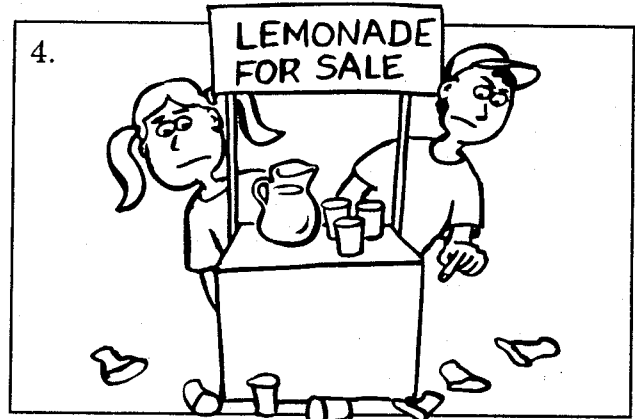
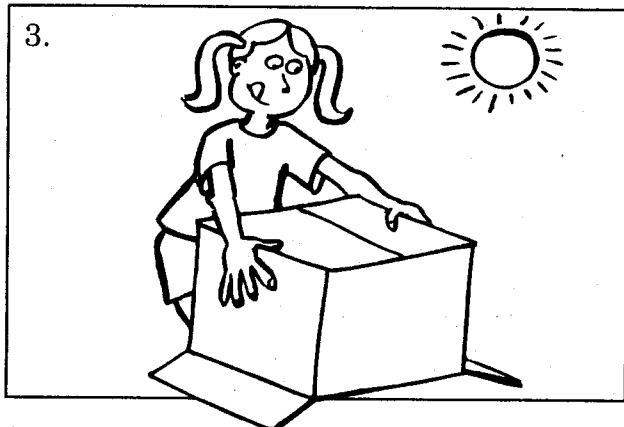
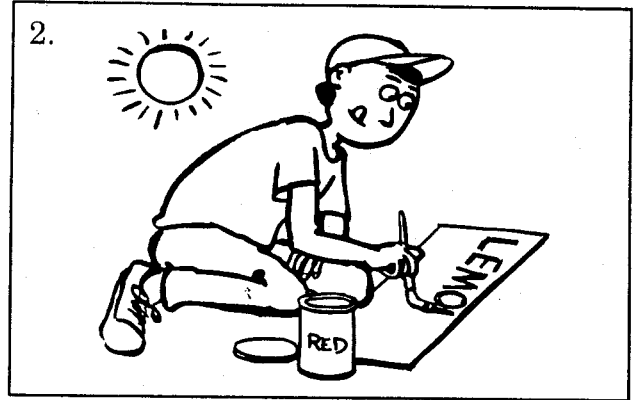
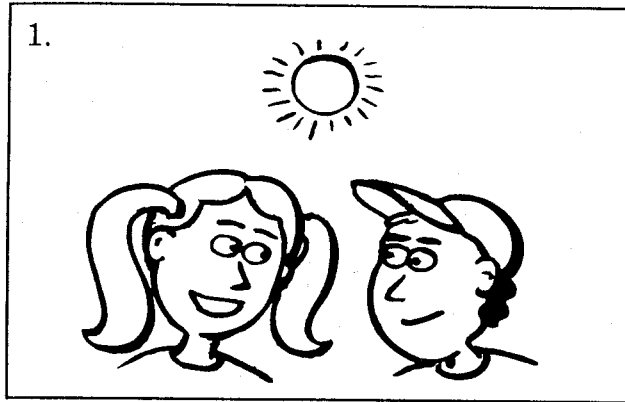
(Picture 6) April makes a lot of money that day because everyone likes her lemonade. When it is afternoon, she closes up shop. She picks up the paper cups and puts them in the trash can. She puts away the sign.

(Picture 7) Then Danny shows up. "Where's my half of the money?" he asks. "I need to pay back my mom." April shakes her head. "You didn't work all afternoon like I did. You ran home to take care of that paint thing. I did all the work."

(Picture 8) April and Danny glare at each other. How can they ever work this out?

STOP. What do you think should happen next? How could these two work out the problem? Is one person entirely right and the other wrong? Did they each take the responsibility? What are some possible solutions?

I-10C. The Lemonade Stand



Name _____ Date _____

I-12B. How Responsible Am I?

Review

Responsibility means _____

My responsibility is _____

A person involved in giving me this responsibility is _____

Interview Questions

1. What is involved in completing this job properly? (list steps materials needed, etc)
2. Do I understand the job?
3. Can I do the job? (Any reasons why you can't do it?)
4. Do I usually or always do this job without reminders?
5. What problems might happen if I don't do this job correctly?
6. Have I ever forgotten to do the job or done it incorrectly?
7. What are some ways I can improve my job performance?
8. How would I rate myself on this job?
9. How would the person I am interviewing rate me?
10. Do I agree or disagree with the person? Why or why not?

APPENDIX D
COOPERATIVE LEARNING ACTIVITIES

Cooperation Activity

Objective: At the end of the lesson, the students will be able to problem solve while putting together a puzzle in-groups of 4 and 5 students.

A.S.:

- 1) How many of you have ever completed a puzzle.
- 2) Tell students that they will be working in groups to complete a puzzle.

Procedure:

- 1) Randomly split groups in to 4-5 people per group by Popsicle Sticks (student's names are on them).
- 2) Tell students what the rules are:
 - a) NO TALKING at all or that person is out of the group. The more people, the quicker you can complete the project.
 - b) In the puzzle box, there will be two envelopes that have numbers of groups on them. You will designate somebody to find your group's envelopes because there are pieces that you need to complete the puzzle.
 - c) The group that has the most completed when time is up wins the competition.

Conclusion: After the activity, we will have a discussion or students will write in their journal about how well students worked together and how they felt.

APPENDIX E

UNDERSTANDING OTHERS ACTIVITIES/LESSON PLANS

Understanding Others Lesson Plans

Objective: At the end of the lesson, the students will be able to show their understanding of others by completing worksheets.

A.S.: How do you show that you understand other's differences?

Procedure: 1) Define understanding of others-knowing how someone else would feel or act in certain situations.

2) Discuss- do people have to be exactly alike or interested in the same things to get along or be friends? Why or why not?

3) Will complete the Tell Me About Yourself Activity on pg. 227.

Conclusion: 1) Share results with class.

2) Hopefully we will be more accepting of each other's differences.

Name _____

Date _____

II-15B. Tell Me About Yourself

Review

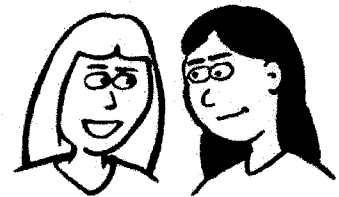
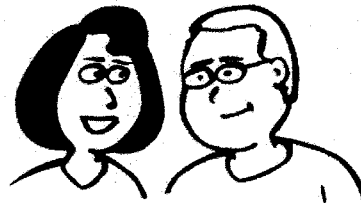
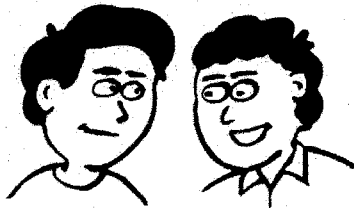
Understanding others means _____

The opposite of understanding others is being _____

Directions: Pair students with a partner (this could be someone in the class or someone from another class so that participants don't know each other). Each person in the pair talks for 3 minutes about herself or himself while the other listens without interrupting. Then they switch. When finished, have students take turns telling the class things they learned about their partners.

Did you find out:

- What kind of clothes he/she likes to wear?
- What is the last book he/she read?
- What subject in class is hard/easy/fun/dull?
- Who is his/her best friend?
- What is his/her favorite game?
- If he/she is right handed?
- What he/she had for breakfast?
- What is his/her favorite food?
- When his/her birthday is and how old he/she is?
- How many people are in his/her family?
- What his/her favorite music groups are?



Objective: At the end of the lesson, the students will be able to define open-minded, will complete worksheets, and play a game.

A.S.: Do a sample of not being open-minded in front of the students. Ask students if they thought I handled the idea incorrectly. Tell them that they cannot turn their nose up to something if they have never tried it. It is important to be open-minded.

Procedure:

- 1) Define open-minded-accepting new information
- 2) Discuss that people are always learning new things and part of growing up is learning to make good decisions about things based on good information. (Voting is a good example of this)
- 3) Students will complete Ways to Become More Open-Minded on pages 318 and 319.
- 4) The following day, they will play a game called Consider the Source on page 321.

Conclusion: Make sure you are informed when making big decisions. Be open to new ideas-it helps you grow as a person.

Name _____ Date _____

III – 9B. Ways to Become More Open-Minded

Review

Open-minded means _____

The opposite of being open-minded is _____

Directions: Use your responses to worksheet III-9A to complete this exercise in becoming more open-minded.

Part 1: I have made up my mind about...

1. Choose one of your ideas. Write it here: _____

2. Give reasons why you believe this so strongly. _____

3. Is there any information about this idea that would ever make you change your mind?
If so, what?

Part 2: I am open-minded about...

4. Choose one of your ideas. Write it here: _____

5. What thoughts do you have about this idea that need more exploring? For example,
what aren't you sure about? What information would help you find out more?

6. What sources could you go to that would help you make up your mind or form a
definite opinion about this idea?

Part 3: I have given little or no thought to...

7. Choose one of your ideas. Write it here: _____

8. Do you think this idea is important enough to find out more about it?

9. How does it effect you and your life? _____

10. What are some good sources who/that could help you learn more about this idea?

Part 4: Partner Activity

After you have completed Parts 1–3, pair up with a partner and discuss the following questions:

11. Have your partner choose one of the ideas you listed in Part 1. Explain to your partner why you feel very strongly about this idea. What happened in your life or thoughts to make you feel so strongly? Trade roles and question your partner about one of his or her ideas.

12. Have your partner choose one of the ideas you listed in part 2. Together, come up with at least five sources of information that might help you form a more definite opinion about your idea. Then trade roles again.

13. Have your partner choose one of the ideas listed in Part 3 that you think is important. Together, come up with at least five sources of information that might help you form a more definite opinion about this idea.

Do you think this topic will become more important to either of you now? Why or why not?

Objective: At the end of the lesson, the students will be able to create a poster with pictures of themselves by cutting out words from a newspaper or magazine that represent their age, gender, heritage, feelings, likes, dislikes, talents, attitudes, hobbies, race, religion, and family.

A.S.: Students will be asked to bring in a newspaper or magazine ahead of time.

Procedure: 1) Students will create a collage using magazines or newspapers that tell about themselves.

2) I will ask for volunteers to explain their collage.

Conclusion: They will be hung up outside in the hallway.

APPENDIX F
CULMINATING ACTIVITY – PLAYS

Culminating Activity

Students are going to put on a series of mini plays for the the other fourth grade students. They will be taken from a workbook called "Spotlight on Character: PLAYS THAT SHOW CHARACTER COUNTS!" Students will be working together to get these plays organized, which goes under cooperation. The three other plays that will be used deal with respect, responsibility, and one that deals with acceptance of a new student. The plays are called: "No Room For Rumors", "Dear Diary", and "Little Bit".

A student reading a story or poem that goes with character education will separate each play. Students will work on lines from the play. We will create a setting or "back-drop". Students will be dressed in certain clothes depending on their play. Everyone should be in jeans or khakis with a specific color shirt.

RESPONSIBILITY

Little Bit

CAST OF CHARACTERS

Kaitlyn A fifth grader
Dad Kaitlyn's father
Alexis and Jeffrey Friends of Kaitlyn
Kyle and Bobby Boys at park
Christina Girl with kitten
Extras Kids playing in the park

SCENE ONE: Kitchen at Kaitlyn's house. There is a full trash bag near the back door.
A bowl and can of cat food are on the counter.

Enter Dad holding a hammer and pliers.

Dad *(calling)* Kaitlyn!

Enter Kaitlyn.

Kaitlyn Yes, Dad?

Dad Honey, I have to work on the leak under the bathroom sink. Would you please take out the trash and feed the cat?

Kaitlyn Okay.

Exit Dad at side of stage. Kaitlyn goes to back door.

Kaitlyn Here, Little Bit! Here kitty, kitty! *(She waves to someone offstage)* Hi Alexis.

Enter Alexis and Jeffrey carrying roller-blades.

Alexis Hi, Kait. We were going to go to the park to roller-blade. Do you want to go with us?

Kaitlyn Sure. Let me ask my dad. *(She calls at side stage.)* Dad, Alexis and Jeff are here. Can I go roller-blading with them at the park?

Dad *(offstage)* All right, as soon as you finish your chores.

Kaitlyn Cool.

Jeffrey *(holding up his roller-blades)* Did you see these? I just got them for my birthday.

Alexis What chore do you have to do?

Kaitlyn Ummm... oh yeah. I have to take out the trash. My roller-blades are on the porch.

Kaitlyn grabs the trash bag.

Jeffrey Let's go.

The children exit. A moment later, the sound of a cat meowing hungrily.

SCENE TWO: The park.

Kyle and Bobby enter roller-blading.

Kyle Bonzai!

Enter Kaitlyn, Jeffrey, and Alexis. Kyle and Bobby roller-blade over.

Bobby Hi, guys. Cool blades, Jeff!

Jeffrey Thanks. They're fast, too. Wait 'til you see them in action!

Kaitlyn, Alexis, and Jeffrey sit down to put on their roller-blades. Jeffrey finishes and begins roller-blading.

Alexis Wait up.

Alexis and Kaitlyn also begin to roller-blade. The five kids blade around for a few seconds. Enter Christina with a kitten in a basket.

Alexis Hi, Christina. What have you got? *(She roller-blades over and looks in the basket.)* Oh, how sweet- a kitty. Can I hold it?

Christina Yes, just be very careful. She's only eight weeks old.

Christina hands the kitten to Alexis. The other kids skate over.

Kyle She's really cute. Is she yours?

Christina Yes. My sister's cat had five kittens. My mom said I could keep this one if I feed her and brush her. I don't mind though, I like to take care of her.

Jeffrey *(to Kaitlyn)* She's the same color as Little Bit.

Kaitlyn nods but she seems to be thinking about something else.

Christina Would you like to come over to my house to see the rest of the kittens?

Kyle Sure.

The children start to follow Christina, but Kaitlyn lags behind.

Alexis Come on, Kaitlyn.

Kaitlyn I can't. There is something important I forgot to do at home. I'll see you all later.

Exit-all- Jeffrey, Alexis, Bobby, Kyle, and Christina in one direction, Kaitlyn is another.

SCENE THREE: The kitchen of Kaitlyn's home.

*Enter Kaitlyn. She goes to a counter and opens the can of cat food and puts it in a bowl.
Enter Dad.*

Dad Hey, I thought you went to the park with your friends.

Kaitlyn I did, but I remembered I hadn't fed Little Bit.

Dad I guess I could have done that for you.

Kaitlyn It's my job, Dad. Little Bit depends on me.

Dad I'm glad to hear you say that. It lets me know that I can depend on you, too. I'm proud of you. *(He puts an arm around Kaitlyn's shoulder)* Now, lets go find Little Bit.

Exit Dad and Kaitlyn.

RESPECT

DEAR DIARY

CAST OF CHARACTERS

Haley A fourth grader
Chelsea Haley's sixth grade sister
Mark, Robin, and Cassidy Friends of Haley
Garrett A friend of Chelsea
Mother Mother of Haley and Chelsea (off-stage voice)
Extras Children on playground

SCENE ONE: The bedroom that Chelsea and Haley share

Enter Haley. She picks up a sweater from a chair and puts it on, looking at herself in the mirror. Enter Chelsea.

Chelsea *(angrily)* What are you doing with my new sweater?

Haley *(taking the sweater off)* I was just trying it on.

Chelsea Don't mess with my stuff without asking. Look, you got chocolate on the cuff.

Haley I'm sorry, I didn't mean to.

Chelsea *(grabbing sweater)* I don't mind sharing a room with you, but we have a deal. Anything on that side of the room is yours and you can do whatever you want with it. If something is on my side of the room, don't touch it!

Exit Chelsea

Chelsea *(offstage)* Mom, look at what Haley did to my sweater!

Haley *(to herself)* What a brat. I didn't hurt that dumb sweater.

Haley crosses to a small table in the center of the room and picks up a book, then tosses the book on Chelsea's side of the room.

Haley *(to herself)* Keep your stupid diary on your own side of the room. *(She pauses.)* Wait a minute. *(She picks up the diary)* If it's on my side I can do whatever I want with it.

Exit Haley with diary.

SCENE TWO: On the playground at school. Haley is sitting at a table with Mark, Robyn, and Cassidy. Haley is holding the diary.

Cassidy She'll kill you if she finds out you have it.

Haley *(smugly)* No she won't. We have a deal and it was on my side of the room, so I can read it if I want to.

Haley opens the diary and begins to read.

Robyn What does it say?

Haley She sure doesn't like her teacher.

Haley shows a passage to others.

Cassidy *(laughing)* I think she's right! He probably is from another planet.

Robyn Look Mark, your brother Garrett is in here.

Mark Where?

All the children lean in and read silently together, then giggle.

Cassidy Ooooooh, she thinks he's cute!

Haley She told me she didn't like him at all.

Mark Wait until I tell Garrett.

Haley *(uneasily)* No, Mark. You can't tell. This is her private diary.

Mark If it's so private, why did you bring it to school? Look, there's Garrett.
(He calls offstage) Hey Garrett!

Enter Chelsea from the opposite side. No one sees her.

Haley No, Mark, don't!

Mark *(calling again in a teasing voice)* Hey cutie, you've got to see this.

Enter Garrett. He jogs to a stop.

Garrett What do you want? Hi, Chelsea.

Haley, Robyn, Cassidy, and Mark all turn in surprise to see Chelsea standing nearby. Chelsea is staring at Haley.

Haley Chelsea, I didn't know you were... I'm sorry. I didn't mean to...

Chelsea walks up to Haley and takes the diary.

Chelsea *(coldly)* I think this is mine.

Exit Chelsea

Cassidy Uh oh. Haley, you'd better hide your diary when you get home.

Robyn Yeah, what would you do if she read yours to get revenge?

Haley silently watches Chelsea walk away. The bell rings. Exit all.

Scene Three: Chelsea and Haley's bedroom. Chelsea is sitting in a chair. She is sniffing because she has been crying.

Enter Haley holding a book. She holds the book out to Chelsea.

Haley Chelsea, I'm really sorry. What I did was wrong. Here. This is my diary. You can look in if you want.

Chelsea I don't want to read your dumb diary.

Haley And I never should have read yours. I was mad at you for telling Mom about the sweater.

Chelsea That didn't make it right for you to take my private things.

Haley I feel really bad about what I did. From now on it doesn't matter what side of the room something is on. If it is yours I will always ask first before I touch it. What can I do to make up for this?

Chelsea *(smiling slightly)* You can do the dishes for a week, even when its my turn.

Haley *(smiling back)* I guess that's fair.

Offstage a telephone rings. Pause, then mother's voice.

Mother *(offstage)* Chelsea, it's for you. It's somebody named Garrett.

Chelsea and Haley look at each other in surprise.

Chelsea *(calling out)* I'll get it.

Exit Chelsea. Haley races after her.

CHARACTER COUNTS

No Room for Rumors

CAST OF CHARACTERS

Leah A fourth grade girl
Christopher, Melissa, and Becky Friends of Leah
Joslyn The new girl
Mr. Guerrero Leah's teacher
Mr. Watts The school librarian
Extras Kids at school

Scene One: Mr. Guerrero's classroom. A bell rings.

Enter Leah, Christopher, Melissa, Joslyn, Becky, and extras. They take their seats.

Christopher I don't know what happened to my new keychain. I had it in my backpack yesterday, but when I got home, it wasn't there.

Melissa Yeah, I can't find my markers. I was sure they were in my desk.

Leah There's been a lot of stuff disappearing in the last two weeks. We can't all be losing things all of a sudden.

Christopher So? What's different about the past couple of weeks.

Becky *(leaning over)* I know something that's different. It's her. *(She points to Joslyn.)* Things have been getting lost a lot more since she came home.

Melissa You're right. I never thought about it, but she is the new kid. We don't know a lot about her.

Leah That's true, but we shouldn't make up our minds about her because of that.

Mr. Guerrero In case you didn't notice, class, the bell has rung. You will be spending this morning in the library working on your history projects. I have some work to do here first, then I will come down to the library in case you have any questions. Before we go, I have an announcement. The junior high school will be putting on the play *The Little Mermaid* next month. A flyer will go home about it tonight. Becky, it says here that your sister will be in the lead role.

Becky Yes, Mr. Guerrero

Mr. Guerrero You must be very proud of her.

Becky Sure.

Mr. Guerrero Okay, don't forget your books. And, remember, this is to be a study period, not a social hour.

Everyone stands and gathers their things. Exit all but Joslyn. Fade.

SCENE TWO: School library.

Enter all. Joslyn enters last.

Melissa *(to Leah)* Did you notice that? Joslyn was the last one out of the classroom.

Joslyn sits at a far table and puts her backpack on the floor.

Leah So?

Melissa I think Becky is right. I think Joslyn is stealing. We need to prove it.

Leah How?

Christopher We could check her backpack.

Leah That's not right. You can't do that just because you want to.

Melissa Look, Leah, if you're too chicken to help us, just stay out of it. I'm going to do something about this.

Joslyn stands and goes to the shelves, leaving her backpack. Melissa walks over and sneaks a peak inside. She takes something out and brings it over.

Melissa Look. It's a marker just like mine.

Leah There's probably a million markers like that. That doesn't mean anything.

Christopher It's good enough for me. We'd better warn the other kids.

Christopher and Melissa stand and walk to another table.

Leah *(walks to the librarian's desk)* Mr. Watts, I need to speak to Mr. Guerrero. It's important. May I have a pass to go back to the classroom?

Mr. Watts Of course, Leah. He might be busy, though. Becky just asked for a pass, too.

Mr. Watts hands Leah a pass/ Exit Leah.

Scene Three: Mr. Guerrero's classroom. There is no one there.

Becky turns to go and walks toward the door, then stops. She sees something and goes to one of the desks. She picks up a bookmark, then turns to slip it into her pocket. Enter Leah.

Leah Becky, what are you doing?

Becky Nothing, I was just looking at Paul's bookmark.

Leah You were going to take it. You have been taking all the things that are missing. Why?

Becky I just wanted some nice stuff. My sister gets all the good things at home and nobody gets me anything. You won't tell on me, will you?

Leah *(putting her hand on Becky's shoulder)* I won't have to. I'll walk you to the counselor's office. You can talk to her and she'll help you figure out what to do. Then I have something to do.

Exit Becky and Leah

SCENE FOUR: The Library. The class is still at work. Joslyn is sitting at a table alone. Several students are staring at her and whispering.

Enter Leah. She walks over and sits at Joslyn's table.

Leah Hi Joslyn.

Joslyn Hi.

Leah I was wondering if you would like to come over to my house on Saturday and watch a video.

Joslyn I'd love to. Thanks.

Leah Don't thank me. I owe you an apology.

Joslyn Really. Why?

Leah I should have tried to make friends sooner. Welcome to our school.

Fade.

APPENDIX G
PRE-TEST/POST-TEST

Name _____ Date _____

Pre-test/Post-test

Directions: Read each situation and all of the choices. Then circle the best answer.

1. Richard's team is behind in softball, 5-0, with one inning left. What could he say?
 - a. "I hope it's all over soon!"
 - b. "That team is just too tough for us."
 - c. "The inning isn't over yet-there's still a chance!"
 - d. "I think I should switch to basketball."

2. Mrs. Clark lets her children get a puppy, but she tells them they have to train the dog. The children could...
 - a. Spend time every day working with the puppy to be obedient.
 - b. Read a book on dog training.
 - c. Take the dog for walks every day.
 - d. Play with the puppy every day.

3. Your little brother is supposed to go to the doctor for a check-up. He is crying and screaming, saying that he does not want to go. You tell him you have been to the doctor many times and there is nothing to be afraid of. The older brother feels that the younger brother...
 - a. Wants to play instead.
 - b. Thinks the doctor looks like a mean man.
 - c. Is afraid he might get a shot.
 - d. Is just being silly.

4. A new neighbor has moved in next door to you. You see a lot of kids and animals running around and are afraid that you are going to have noisy neighbors. You could...
 - a. Go over to meet them to find out who your neighbors are.
 - b. Spy on them to see how many are going to stay there.
 - c. Leave a note that they better be quiet and keep the dogs tied up.
 - d. Turn up the your music really loud so they do not disturb you.

5. Zeke's neighborhood friends want to play soccer the next day. Zeke says he will get two more people to come, bring the soccer ball, and meet everyone at the park at noon to play. Zeke could...
 - a. Bring a football instead and say that it would be more fun.
 - b. Call some friends the night before to make sure they can come.
 - c. Decide that he does not want to play after all.
 - d. Show up at 1:30, but have several people with him.

6. Sharon is having dinner at a friend's house. She does not like vegetables, but finds several of them on her plate. She could...
 - a. Put them on the side of her plate and not eat them.
 - b. Try a little bite of each one.
 - c. Tell her friend that she is allergic to all vegetables.
 - d. Tell her friend that she might throw up if she eats them.

7. Annie missed an easy word on the oral spelling test and the kids are laughing at her. You...
 - a. Tell Annie you missed an easy word too and it's not a big deal.
 - b. Laugh, but very quietly.
 - c. Hit the kids who are laughing at her.
 - d. Tell Annie that there are tutors available who can help her after school.

8. You are babysitting for the neighbors and the kids are awful. Upon her return home, the mother asks how the kids were. You would:
 - a. Honestly tell her they were horrible.
 - b. Say they were angels so she would not feel bad.
 - c. Say they could have been better and then wait to see if she wants more information.
 - d. Say they were okay.

9. Daniel loves to draw and his painting won a blue ribbon at the county art show. His painting is displayed in the front of the school where everyone can see it when they come into the building. Rick also loves to draw, but no one noticed his charcoal drawing that he spent weeks working on. When they were in art class together, the teacher said to Daniel, "Your art project was tremendous. You showed a lot of creativity and hard work in that project." What could Daniel say or do to show humility?
 - a. "I like to draw. So does my friend Rick."
 - b. "It's fun to be the best drawer in the school."
 - c. "That ribbon will go in my scrapbook."
 - d. "I worked hard on that project. I deserved to win."

10. Denisha has piano lessons every Thursday at 5 o'clock, but to get there on time she needs to leave by 4:30. It always takes her awhile to find her music, get the money to pay the teacher, and walk three blocks to the lesson. She knows she will be busy after school this Thursday. She could...
 - a. Call her father at the office to give her a ride so she won't be late.
 - b. Make sure she has her piano materials packed and ready the night before.
 - c. Run the three blocks as fast as she can.
 - d. Call the piano teacher and ask if she can switch lessons with someone else.

11. Rachel can't find her little black kitten that wandered away in the morning. What would she say?
 - a. "I guess the kitten found a better home."
 - b. "I'll keep looking for her all over the neighborhood."
 - c. "I bet someone stole her."
 - d. "I wish my friends would help me search for her."

12. Donald had a button fall off his favorite shirt. He picks up the button off the floor and takes it home. He could...
 - a. Give the button and shirt to his mother to sew back on.
 - b. Pin the button on the shirt with a safety pin.
 - c. Carefully sew the button back onto the shirt.
 - d. Use tape to close the shirt.

13. The Red Rockets is the name of the girls' soccer team that meets on weekends to play other teams. They are in first place in their division. What could they say to each other to get psyched up to play before the game?
 - a. "We will play hard and play fair and follow the rules!"
 - b. "We will kill our opponents! Watch out!"
 - c. "We are mean and rough and tough and we eat other soccer players for breakfast!"
 - d. "We will do anything short of cheating to win this game!"

14. Whenever Tommy is asked to read aloud in school, he misses a lot of really easy words, repeats the words and stops and gives up. What response would show that you understand how Tommy feels.
 - a. Tommy is stupid because he can't read.
 - b. Tommy doesn't pay attention to what he is doing.
 - c. Tommy can't see the words in the book.
 - d. Tommy does not know how to read very well and is embarrassed.

15. You borrow your friend's expensive video game and accidentally drop it. You realize it is not working right. You would:
 - a. Apologize for dropping it and offer to pay for it.
 - b. Say you don't know why it doesn't work.
 - c. Tell your friend that there was something wrong with the game when you got it.
 - d. Say someone else knocked into you so it wasn't your fault.

16. It's really cold out and a girl in your class has no mittens to wear for outside recess. You...
 - a. Take yours off and give them to her.
 - b. Tell the teacher that everyone needs to bring in money to buy her some mittens.
 - c. Tell her you are very sorry that she does not have any mittens.
 - d. Ask if she would like you to go with her to check the lost and found for an extra pair.

VITA

Name: Jenna S. Snyder

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Elementary School: Long Beach Island Schools
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High School: Southern Regional High School
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