



*Leading a National Call to Character*

## **Future Educators for Character Grant**

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## **Preparing Pre-service Teachers for Character Education in Urban Elementary Schools**

This chapter describes the history and process by which the authors and participating faculty at the University of Illinois at Chicago integrated character education within our undergraduate elementary education program. In the chapter we present results of our program evaluation, and our plans for future directions of character education at our institution. Finally, we present lessons learned from our experience that may be of interest to other institutions considering the inclusion of moral and character education within teacher preparation.

### **Background and Context**

The University of Illinois at Chicago is the largest public university in northern Illinois, and the primary producer of new teachers for the Chicago Public Schools. As such, it is a standard bearer for urban teacher education. As with most colleges of education, our pre-service teacher education programs have confined issues of moral growth and character formation to a brief section within courses on educational psychology or child development. The historical lack of systematic integration of character education into the teacher education program at UIC has not been due to resistance to concerns for the moral development of students. Instead, it reflects the primacy that had been placed upon preparation to teach basic academic competencies among the pre-service teachers of urban children. The commitment to urban education, however, meant that the UIC faculty was already engaged in an approach to teacher preparation that emphasized the values dimensions of teaching, and the moral responsibilities that educators have toward students. The Conceptual Framework that guides all teacher preparation at the university includes statements such as: UIC Educators “*Commit to the democratic ideal of developing all students’ potential,*” and “*Seek alternatives to educational inequalities.*” Thus, as is likely to be the case in many colleges of education, the UIC effort at moral development and character education described in this chapter was able to build upon and make explicit the implicit forms of character education already present in the teacher education program.

The UIC approach to urban education places character education within a larger framework that includes engaging our students in a deep understanding of the ethical dimensions of what it means to be an educator in an urban setting. All teaching is an ethical enterprise (Goodlad, Soder, & Sirotnik, 1990). Along with providing novice teachers with the tools of instruction, and the needed information about children’s development, it is essential to challenge the assumptions that aspiring teachers have about the ethical dimensions of their craft, and particularly to sensitize them to the historical and structural dimensions of race and social class that directly impact the lives of the urban students they will be asked to educate (Henry, 1994; Schubert, 1994). This means operating with great sensitivity to challenge the assumptions of aspiring young people to examine their own beliefs and potential biases, and at the same time preserve and build upon the ethical commitments that brought them to a career in the classroom in the first place (Ayers, 2004). Thus, a fundamental aspect of what we included within our

approach to character education built upon the already present elements of the UIC teacher education program that provided students with philosophical, historical, and sociological information relevant to the task of urban education (Tozer, Violas, & Senese, 2001). This approach to character education accepts the challenge put forward over a decade ago by Kevin Ryan (1989) to see the preparation of teachers capable of engaging in character education as something other than simply a matter of methods courses and teaching technique.

### **Research and Theory Framework**

The general context and values of the UIC faculty provided a genial milieu for the construction of a formal and overt programmatic approach to character education within our undergraduate elementary teacher education program. The formal structure of the program is framed by what is referred to as social cognitive domain theory (Turiel, 1983, 1998). Where domain theory offers new insights into moral development and educational practices is in its account of the development of moral and social values. According to domain theory, concepts of social right and wrong are not all of one type, but are organized within distinct conceptual and developmental frameworks. Three basic conceptual frameworks or domains are posited by domain theory: morality, societal convention, and the personal. Concepts of morality address issues of human welfare, rights, and fairness and are constructed out of the child's early social interactions around events such as unprovoked hitting and hurting that have intrinsic effects upon another person (Turiel, 1983, 1998). Morality (defined in terms of justice, welfare, and rights) can be distinguished from concepts of social conventions, which are the consensually determined standards of conduct particular to a given social group. While morality and convention deal with aspects of interpersonal regulation, concepts of personal issues refer to actions that comprise the private aspects of one's life, such as the contents of a diary, and issues that are matters of preference and choice (e.g., friends, music, hairstyle) rather than right or wrong (Nucci, 2001). The distinctions drawn within domain theory among moral, conventional, and personal concepts have been sustained by findings from more than 70 studies published over the past 30 years. Comprehensive recent reviews of this research may be found in Nucci (2001), Smetana (2002), and Turiel (1998).

The importance of domain theory for character educators lies in its ability to provide an account for 1) the age-related changes associated with concepts within a given system, 2) shifts in behavior associated with growth within particular domains, and 3) the forms of social interaction or educational input likely to stimulate growth within a given conceptual system. Moreover, in differentiating among moral and non-moral issues we are able to provide future educators with the analytic tools to address core values of fairness and beneficent treatment of others, rather than conflating such core issues with matters such as dress codes that schools may approach in different ways as a function of local custom and context. Understanding the ways in which morality and convention interact with one another also permits educators to interpret culturally driven interactions among morality and social convention rather than ascribing them to children's developmental stage. For example, Astor (1994) reported that although inner city African-American male elementary and middle school children universally condemned

unprovoked hitting as wrong, they tended to view hitting back in response to verbal insult as a justifiable form of retributive justice. Middle class teachers operating within an urban setting might well misinterpret this tendency toward physical retaliation as evidence of a “lower” level of moral development rather than as a shared view of a morally appropriate response to disrespect. This is not to say that teachers shouldn’t challenge such culturally supported student positions, but rather that one should not misconstrue such moral positions as evidence of developmental delay. Finally, understanding how cultures instantiate overlaps among morality, convention and personal prerogative (e.g., customs or conventions that foster discrimination) allows educators to go beyond the development of “nice children” who are compliant followers of the status quo, toward the development of citizens of character prepared to engage in critical evaluation of themselves and the social system they inherit (Nucci, 2001).

Domain theory has afforded our faculty a common language for discussions about morality across disciplinary boundaries. It has also allowed us to move beyond the common sticking points over values differences that emerge from the conflation of social convention with core moral values of fairness and human welfare. Finally, the adoption of domain theory as the organizing framework for our efforts at character education, has allowed us to use a common language with our students across courses, and provides a tool for picking up common threads running throughout the pre-service teacher education experience. These would include such things as attention to the social and emotional development of students, awareness of the particular needs and backgrounds of urban learners, and the integration of moral and social values themes through the general curriculum and processes of instruction and classroom management.

Domain theory falls within the broader class of developmental approaches to character education (Berkowitz, 2002; Damon, 2002). Therefore some of the underlying assumptions we incorporate into our teacher education program are similar to those that underlie “best practices” tested over the years in other developmentally based approaches. In particular, we view character education as entailing the development of moral autonomy rather than a process of inculcation of the social norms and values of the status quo. This means that our approach to classroom management and student conduct is consistent with what has been referred to as developmental discipline (Watson, 2003), and an appropriate emphasis on teacher’s use of peer interaction and group processes as a mode of academic instruction. We also view character as the application of moral and social judgment in context, rather than the expression of personal virtues. Thus, our approach emphasizes teacher activities that engage students in reflection and the exercise of moral and social cognition. Finally, we view character education as working hand in hand with the more general processes of social and emotional learning (SEL). At UIC, we are fortunate to have access to the resources of the Collaborative on Academic and Social Emotional Learning (CASEL) and have incorporated SEL activities within our approach to character education.

## **Process of Program Change and Implementation**

The incorporation of character education within the UIC teacher education program is an on-going process. In this section we will describe the evolution of the program over a two-year period. The progress of program changes was captured within the formative evaluation of the project. Two graduate assistants maintained a record of project activities through journals in which they recorded their meetings with the teacher education faculty, and observations of classrooms. In addition to these journals, we developed a record of program artifacts such as course syllabi, and course materials. The latter provided a chronology of basic adjustments in course structures and assignments related to character education. Before describing these changes we will provide a quick overview of the basic structure of the elementary education program at UIC.

### **The undergraduate program in elementary education**

Prior to entry into the bachelor of arts program in elementary education, students must complete 60 hours of coursework (two years of study) in the liberal arts and two foundations courses in the College of Education during their final semester (generally sophomore year) prior to admission into the degree program. One of these courses *Child Development and Elementary Education (EPSY 255)* is used to introduce basic information about moral and social development and serves as the springboard for all subsequent work on character education. The evolution of this course and its current structure will be described in detail below. Students are admitted into the program in the Fall semester of their junior year pending satisfactory completion of all required coursework, passing the State of Illinois test of basic skills ICTS, evidence of 100 hours of service work with children, two writing samples (one impromptu), and an individual interview with program faculty.

Over the next two years, students take courses that focus upon the teaching of language arts, math, science, and social studies, as well as teaching of second language learners and children with disabilities. Throughout the two years as elementary education majors, students are involved in fieldwork that increases incrementally, culminating in the last semester of student teaching. All fieldwork and student teaching is done in Chicago Public Schools. The urban emphasis of the program means that all courses irrespective of academic content deal with issues of cultural diversity, poverty and linguistic minority status, and the fundamental social justice role of urban teachers. The latter orientation factors into the implementation of character education.

### **Year One: Getting Started**

The first phase of the integration of character education into the elementary education program entailed two basic sets of activities. One was to flesh out the social development component of the *Child Development and Elementary Education (EPSY 255)* course. This required course, taken by students in their first semester of the education program provided us with an ideal context to set the stage for subsequent work on character education.

The second was to engage in dialogue with the teacher education faculty to find points of commonality, and to locate appropriate opportunities for the integration of character education. These two aspects of the first phase of program development will be discussed separately.

*Child Development and Elementary Education.* For historical reasons that are unlikely to be unique to the UIC program, issues of social development had been generally left to the courses on human development and educational psychology, while the nitty-gritty of teaching, especially of subject matter instruction took place in subsequent courses. Rather than bemoan that division of labor, we set out to buttress the social development component of this initial course in child development, and use the language and activities of that course to establish the context for the integration of character education in all other courses in the program. In order to do this we expanded the amount of course time spent on social and moral development, and fully integrated those aspects of the course with units on student diversity, student motivation, and classroom management. This expansion of coverage of issues of social, emotional and moral development was achieved through reductions in the amount of time spent on behaviorist theories of learning, and specific attention to content instruction better covered in later courses. Approximately 15% of the total amount of instructional class-time was reallocated to character education. This raised to 40% the amount of instructional time devoted to issues of social and emotional learning, moral and social development, and classroom management. This total does not include the 14% of class time devoted to issues of student motivation and cultural diversity, which are also components of social development, but were not the focus of our efforts to revise this particular course. The sequence of weekly topics and readings included within the revised section on moral development and character education are presented in Table 1.

The increased allocation of classroom time is one indication of the shift in emphasis, but does not capture the entire story. We also sharpened the content of what was covered within the units pertaining to character education, and introduced a major new assignment focusing on the integration of character education with the teaching of academic content.

With respect to the content of what gets covered in this course, we moved away from the brief presentation of theories of moral development and research presented in most texts to an in depth focus upon domain theory as the organizing framework for thinking about classroom practices aimed at social and moral growth. This is not to say, that we ignored coverage of other perspectives. Students were assigned to read the chapter on moral development and character formation covered in their omnibus textbook (McDevitt & Ormrod, 2002). However, in addition to this textbook coverage of the general topic, students read *Education in the Moral Domain* (Nucci, 2001), a book that deals specifically with research on domain theory and its application to educational practice. To reduce the amount of required reading, and to engage the students in a cooperative learning practice associated with character education, students worked in teams of five or six to divide up the chapters comprising the assigned reading. Individuals across reading groups who had read the same chapter met to share notes on the content of their particular

chapter. The original groups then came together and members taught one another the content of each of the assigned chapters. This Jig Saw (Aronson & Patnoe, 1996) reading activity was supplemented through in-class lecture and discussion, as well as a class project that will be described in detail below.

We made a similar decision with respect to classroom management. Rather than limit the treatment of classroom management to an overview of general approaches as covered in the basic textbook (McDevitt & Ormrod, 2002), students were organized in Jig Saw cooperative learning groups to master and teach one another the content of Parts One and Two of *Learning to Trust* (Watson, 2003) a sourcebook on developmental discipline. Continuity with domain theory was accomplished through connections drawn between practices of developmental discipline, and domain concordant responses to classroom transgressions as described in *Education and the Moral Domain*. Lectures and discussions of developmental discipline and domain theory were supported by presentations of videos of interviews with children, and video recordings of elementary school classroom interactions, and discussions of moral issues drawn from regular school curricula.

We also increased the amount of student time devoted to character education by adjustments in student assignments done outside of the class. Students worked in groups of six to construct four moral and social values lessons employing regular academic social studies and literacy curricular materials used in the Chicago Public Schools (CPS) from grades three to eight. Each group worked with two social studies examples and two literacy reading selections from the grade level they were intending to teach. Students preparing for bilingual classrooms were given the option of working with Spanish language materials. Each group produced at least one lesson focused on a primarily moral issue, one primarily conventional, one overlapping moral and conventional issue, and a fourth issue of their choosing. Lessons were posted on *Taskstream* a web-based format that permitted the group members and course instructor to make on-line comments and suggestions throughout the three weeks allotted for the assignment.

*Dialogue With Program Faculty.* During year one, we met with the faculty responsible for teaching subsequent courses in the professional development sequence. The first author provided in-services to faculty on recent research on children's moral and social development, and basic processes for teaching moral and social values. All participating faculty were provided complementary copies of *Education in the Moral Domain* (Nucci, 2001).

We gathered course syllabi, and reviewed places within each course where there were natural points of convergence between course goals and the infusion of character education. Based on those exchanges we developed supporting materials and activities that could be used in those courses in year two. For example, the authors worked with instructors in courses in social studies and language and literacy to discuss ways in which they might adjust assignments for lesson plans to allow students to integrate attention to moral and social normative issues when appropriate. We shared the materials developed in the Child Development and Elementary Education course that provided instruction in

how to identify issues of morality, social convention, or personal prerogative within textbook passages or reading assignments. We worked with faculty to develop handouts to guide students in the construction of discussion questions, role plays, and age appropriate reflective writing assignments that would focus upon issues of morality, social norms and behavioral decisions that arose from content contained within the regular curriculum.

We also collaborated with faculty to make adjustments in the assignments and supporting materials used with field experiences leading up to student teaching. This entailed designing materials to extend the analysis of classroom discourse to include tools to identify domain appropriate and domain inappropriate forms of teacher messages in response to student transgressions (Nucci, 2001). Domain appropriate responses to moral transgressions such as hitting or harsh teasing would focus upon the effects of the act “That really hurt Mike’s feelings” or engage the transgressor in perspective taking “How would you like it if Mike had said that to you?” Domain appropriate responses to violations of convention such as talking without raising one’s hand and waiting for the teacher to call on you focus upon the social rule or effect the act has on social organization: “Cathy, you are supposed to raise your hand before speaking” “It is getting too noisy in here. This is a classroom, not the playground.” Domain inappropriate responses would be ones in which a teacher responds to a moral transgression as if it were a convention and vice versa.

The discussions and in-services with faculty, and our work in developing materials were supplemented by a day-long visit to our college in the Fall semester by Marilyn Watson who did a formal presentation on Developmental Discipline for all of our program faculty and students. That presentation was followed up with an in-depth forum on Developmental Discipline with our program faculty. All participating faculty were provided with complementary copies of *Learning to Trust* (Watson, 2003).

### *Year Two: Full Implementation*

Year two of the project coincided with changes in the personnel teaching the professional sequence courses for two of the five cohorts of students. These personnel shifts were the result of scheduling changes to accommodate the needs of other college programs. Although the new faculty expressed interest in the character education initiative, they were not prepared to carry out the changes that had been made in the prior year. This provided us with a natural experiment in which five cohorts of students would all have participated in the redesigned Child Development and Elementary Education course, but only three of the five cohorts would participate in subsequent courses that included systematic follow-through in the areas of moral development and character education. Thus, we were able to evaluate the effects of fully integrating moral and character education throughout the pre-service program versus simply increasing the time and quality of instruction on moral and character education in a single child development course.

Year two of the project saw the second iteration of the Child Development and Elementary Education course for the new entering class, along with the implementation of character education components in the subsequent professional education courses for three cohorts of students as described above. The most substantial shifts in these courses took place in the classes on the teaching of reading and in the program field components. Lesson building assignments in the literacy courses were altered to include attention to moral and social values. In some cases this entailed refining and extending the lessons constructed in the earlier *Child Development and Elementary Education* course. In most cases this entailed constructing entirely new lessons and units. To aid their students in carrying out these assignments, faculty in the literacy courses provided a review of the information on social development that had been presented in the prior year's Child Development and Education course. Powerpoint presentations for the review were provided by the child development instructors. Moral and social values lessons were guided by handouts that had been developed during the prior year.

In their fieldwork courses students were given assignments in which they were asked to observe and reflect upon how their cooperating teachers made use of opportunities to infuse character education in the classroom. In one case, the instructor dedicated a number of seminar sessions associated with the fieldwork to focused readings on developmental discipline (Watson, 2003), and showed several video clips on classroom teachers' responses to student transgressions. These videos provided examples of teachers engaged in practices consistent with Developmental Discipline and domain appropriate responses to transgressions.

There were two major assignments associated with the fieldwork. These were both designed to heighten students' ability to analyze classroom discourse. Readings used to guide students' thinking about these issues included both traditional classroom discourse analysis literature (e.g., Green, Weade & Graham, 1988; Shuy, 1988) as well as teacher-researcher approaches to classroom discourse (e.g., Cazden, C.B., 1988; Pappas & Zecker, 2001). These readings served as a complement to the information students had received about Developmental Discipline, and the handouts faculty had developed to guide students' analyses of domain concordant responses to student transgressions. The first student assignment entailed recording classroom dialogues in their field settings and then analyzing the extent to which the cooperating teacher's responses to student transgressions employed discourse that was domain concordant. The second assignment was exactly the same type of analysis on a lesson that each student conducted with the public school students.

The second year of the program also included student teaching. Students from field course sections that had implemented the new character education components were encouraged by their student teaching faculty supervisors to implement Developmental Discipline and domain theory based integration of character education within their subject area teaching. The remaining sections completed their student teaching without any specific encouragement with respect to character education. Roughly one month into their student teaching experience, Marilyn Watson made a second visit to the campus and did an interactive presentation with all of the students in the senior year of our program.

## Program Evaluation

### Design

We took two main approaches to assess program impact. One was to generate a qualitative sense of the degree to which the character education initiative impacted faculty behavior and student response to the teacher education program. There were two primary sources of evidence for impact upon faculty: 1. active involvement in the initiative, and 2. alterations in course syllabi or course activities.

Evidence of student reaction to the infusion of additional character education content within coursework was obtained through student course evaluations of Child Development and Elementary Education. We focused upon this course because it had the most extensive alterations in the syllabus and course assignments. Student evaluations and commentaries were obtained for the moral and social values lesson activity, the unit on Social Emotional Learning, the unit on Developmental Discipline, and the overall course evaluation.

The second approach was to obtain an estimate of program impact upon our students. This was done through administration of questionnaire assessments to students to evaluate a) their knowledge of children's social and moral development, and character education practices, and b) their sense of efficacy as character educators.

Our initial design for the latter assessment employed a *control group* comprised of students who had graduated from the program Spring semester 2004. These students would not have experienced any of the shifts in the program begun in the Fall of 2003. As described above, we were able to add a second *yoked control group* comprised of students who had taken the revised Child development and Elementary Education course, but who were in course sections taught by faculty who, because of glitches in course scheduling, were not participants in the character education initiative. This permitted us to assess the efficacy of meeting the goals of character education by simply bolstering the sections on moral and character education in the foundations course in educational psychology, versus carrying the exposure to work on character education throughout the teacher preparation program.

To summarize, the program evaluation had two components: 1) a qualitative record of changes in course syllabi and faculty participation, along with student evaluations of the character education component of the child development course; 2) exit questionnaires of student knowledge and efficacy. The latter assessment included a *control group* comprised of recent graduates; a *yoked control group* comprised of two sections of students who experienced the altered version of the course *Child Development and Elementary Education*, but who did attend subsequent courses or field experiences that emphasized character education; an *experimental group* comprised of three sections of students whose coursework and field experiences were all tied into the character education initiative.

## Measures

The instrument used to assess student knowledge and efficacy, the *UIC Moral Development and Education Questionnaire* contained two parts. A final section allowed us to gather basic demographic information about our students and was not part of the program assessment. The first part titled: *Moral Development and Education Assessment* was comprised of 14 multiple choice questions that asked about basic knowledge of moral development and educational practices. The questions were similar in content to ones that had appeared on exams in the child development course. Thus, they were tailored to the specific emphasis in the UIC program on social cognitive domain theory. An internal consistency analysis of the scale revealed a Cronbach's Alpha of .65.

The second section of the instrument was the *Moral Development and Character Education Belief Instrument*. This scale was adapted from the teacher efficacy instrument developed by Milson (Milson, 2003; Milson, & Mehlig, 2002). The adapted form of the measure contains 32 questions that get at how confident or prepared the respondent feels when it comes to teaching children for moral development and character. The questions refer to beliefs about classroom management practices, teacher and parent influences on children, and the teacher's impact on children through the curriculum. Participants respond to these questions using a 5-point Likert scale where 1 = Strongly Agree to 5 = Strongly Disagree. Items are counter balanced in their wording to control for a positive response bias. Some items on the instrument were adapted from their initial socialization language to be consistent with the constructivist orientation of the UIC program. For example item 7 in the Milson (2003) instrument: "I know how to use strategies that might lead to positive changes in students' character." was changed to: "I know how to use strategies that might lead to changes in students' concepts of fairness and concern for others." Other items were inserted to reflect the particular emphases in the UIC program on domain theory and Developmental Discipline. Examples would be item 10: "I feel unprepared to use violations of classroom procedural rules as a context in which to develop students' understanding and appreciation of social conventions." and item 27: "Encouraging students to resolve moral disputes in school results in children who will be better able to resolve moral conflicts outside of school." The internal consistency of this revised version of instrument (Cronbach's Alpha .90) was similar to that reported by Milson (2003).

## Procedures

Control group responses to the *UIC Moral Development and Education Questionnaire* were obtained by mail from graduates of the Bachelor of Arts program in elementary education, Spring 2003. Mailings were done in the Summer months using addresses available to the College of Education Office of Student Services. Graduates were sent a cover letter, a consent form, and a copy of the instrument to be returned in a prepaid envelope. A total of 61 mailings were sent. However, by the time of the mailing only 42 of the addresses proved to be valid. Follow-up phone calls were attempted, and 31 graduates were reached in this way. A total of 25 students (59.5% of those with accurate contact information) returned completed questionnaires.

Students in the experimental and control groups filled out the instrument in their student teaching seminars in the next to the last class session. A portion of this class session had been set aside by the college as a time to obtain student program evaluations. Thus, the instrument employed in the present study fit within the normal routine of the college program. Consent forms were obtained from students prior to distribution of the instrument. All students in the classes gave their consent and completed the questionnaires. A total of 85 students (53 experimental; 32 yoked control) completed the instrument.

## **Outcomes**

### *Faculty Participation*

All faculty members involved in the undergraduate elementary education program were invited to participate in the initiative. No one expressed disinterest or objection to the effort to integrate character education throughout the program. Moreover, no one objected to the use of domain theory as the organizing framework for the program. Nearly everyone found it compatible with their own views of children's development. This was despite the fact that as a research faculty, there was a diversity of opinion regarding the precise meanings of terms such as morality or character, as well as diversity surrounding exact practices for engaging in character education. Despite these differences, the overarching commitment to constructivist and student centered approaches to teaching meant that what differences might have existed among faculty were not an obstacle to program implementation. Seven faculty members took an active role in the program. Three of them were core faculty who handled the fieldwork and student teaching components of the program. The cohort selections for the designation of the experimental groups was based around those three core faculty members.

### *Impact on Courses and Student Products*

By the second year of the program, character education components had been integrated within the following courses: Child Development and Elementary Education, Foundations of Literacy Learning and Teaching, Reading and Writing Through the Elementary Grades, Social Studies and Literature in the Elementary Grades, Fieldwork in Elementary Education and Student Teaching. The only required courses in the program that did not insert a character education component were: Teaching and Learning of Mathematics, Teaching and Learning of Science, and Characteristics of Exceptional Children. Typical changes entailed the adjustment of assignments. For example, language arts lesson plans included lessons that identified and focused upon moral and social conventional issues, thus building from the activities initiated in the course on child development.

In the pre-student teaching seminar, the class assignments/fieldwork projects were dramatically and qualitatively different than in previous years. Most students evidenced an increased sensitivity toward issues of character education, and usage of domain theory constructs to reflect upon classroom interactions. This became even more apparent in

their reflections during student teaching. At seminar, most notably, there were frequent references to their earlier coursework in educational psychology as well as the subsequent readings and lectures on developmental discipline. In the example that follows, a student teacher illustrated how she wove her understanding of the importance of establishing a good atmosphere before she began the lesson. Further on she analyzed how the notion of empathy is a conscious decision she made prior to the lesson implementation.

My goal for this language arts lesson was to make it as authentic as possible, just as Oakes and Lipton define “*authenticity* means that students should engage in literacy activities that allow them to communicate about real things of interest and that have relevance beyond school” (2003, p. 171). I began by calling a meeting to the carpet and having the children settle into their seats. I wanted my lesson to be a comfortable and casual situation for the students while we work together to understand the task I had in mind for them. Therefore, I shared with them the agenda of my lesson and began a wonderful conversation with my students.

Later, she continued with a discussion of how her knowledge of domain theory constructs entered into her lesson and interpretations of her students’ reactions. The lesson was designed to develop her students’ persuasive writing skills. Thus, her description also illustrated the basic principle of integrating moral and character education into the regular academic curriculum rather than as a separate aspect of the school day. In many cases our students’ employed formal assigned readings to accomplish these objectives. For example one student teacher employed An Na’s (2001) “A Step From Heaven” to engage her fifth grade class in a lesson on social convention and social structure. This was an embellishment of a lesson she and her group had started in their child development course. In the example that follows, however, this teacher’s moral lesson made use of children’s direct experiences to discuss the moral issues associated with eating the Thanksgiving turkey.

I wrote up a creative persuasive letter from *Tom the Turkey* trying to persuade the students to not eat turkey for Thanksgiving because he and/or his relatives may get eaten and they should eat other foods such as macaroni and cheese. In an “animated” sense of the moral domain, the issue of eating or not eating Tom the Turkey caused the children to consider his feelings and question their actions on this holiday. For example, Santino has a reaction to the idea of the letter being from a turkey’s perspective and tells the class “I would probably eat it if it wasn’t a turkey talking”. According to Professor Nucci’s study on the moral domain, ‘focus is upon the effects of the action on others, perspective taking, and consideration of the feelings of the other’ and here students are writing back to Tom with consolations of, ‘don’t worry because I won’t eat you Tom!’ My students were given the option of writing back to Tom persuading him that turkey should be eaten on Thanksgiving or writing to the cook in their family persuading them to not cook turkey. I enjoyed hearing the positions each of them took.

The impact of the character education initiative was also evidenced in the student accounts of their efforts to implement Developmental Discipline. In what follows, we use excerpts from two of our senior students' work during the student teaching semester. We have not edited the selections from journal entries, and they have some minor grammatical errors reflecting the fact that these entries were made on site directly after completing a day's instruction. In the first example, the student kept a journal that she termed behavior briefs. Only a few entries are highlighted here to illustrate some of this student's thoughtfulness and interpretation of developmental discipline within her second grade classroom.

**January 13, 2005**-Allison and Khari are on the rug and interrupt my lesson. Allison has kicked Khari for taking her chapstick top. Khari has hit her back. Ms. F. has Allison move from the carpet and stand by the board- she begins to cry. Khari stays on the rug. I decide that I can't continue my lesson b/c it wasn't fair- Khari shouldn't stay either. I have Khari go back to his seat and write about what happened- he doesn't do it. I ask the students what would have been a better way to solve their problem. The lesson continues. Allison eventually goes back to her seat.

**Jan 21, 2005**

Santino and Mario were to be suspended but Dr. S told Ms. F it was too late for her to accept the discipline forms so Dr. S will be dealing with them about their behavior.

After lunch I took them to the bathroom and they would NOT behave at all in line! I told them I had it and I was very disappointed in them. I had them straighten out their line and waited for them to be quiet. When I saw that someone was ready to go in the room I let them pass, while the rest had to control themselves.

We came in class, did math and then the last 20 minutes of class time I had them sitting around me and we went over the class rules! It was great! I had them give me examples of how each rule can be broken (they used examples of what they've done throughout the week and to each other) and what can be done to prevent it. It was a great reflection for them and I felt like they were realizing things. It was a nice talk that I feel was beneficial.

**Great**- two boys were having a hard time sharing a bean bag and I heard Mario (often the cause of my problems) mock me in a good way by telling them 'to problem solve!' What was more amazing is that N'ne did that first! I heard him and then Mario followed to tell them the same thing. I was doing something else but overheard this. I loudly said, 'very smart boys!' They were surprised to see that I knew what was going on since I was involved in something else.

### **January 31, 2005**

Students were throwing paper balls during library. I returned in the room and asked people to raise their hand if they will admit they threw paper balls- to just be honest. Students immediately began fussing and blaming and pointing fingers- I had them immediately settle down by being calm and telling them that I will let one person at a time speak. I listened to a few students and then said 'Whoever would like to follow the rules of respect and being honest, they can go to the writing center and write down what they did and why- an honesty letter.' Khari, R. R., Paris, N'ne, Justus, and Malik voluntarily began writing! It was a great feeling of accomplishment and they then joined in for a math activity. However, I question, is an honesty note a replacement for consequences- should I have still reprimanded these students in some way for their behavior or was it okay that I just accepted their honesty notes and moved on?

### **April 7, 2005**

I am proud to admit that I was finally able to step back and see a dramatic change in their behavior during my time here. This is not to say that there doesn't need to be more work but together, students and I, run a manageable class and my hard work and dedication to this goal has shown through!

As can be seen in the above excerpts, the process of managing an urban classroom using Developmental Discipline did not come easily or readily to our students. This is consistent with the reports from even experienced teachers (Watson, 2003). The student teacher inherited an unruly classroom accustomed to an authoritarian classroom environment. Over time, the student's persistent engagement in community building, respectful dialogue, and problem solving resulted in a classroom based upon trust rather than raw teacher power. Her classroom became not only better behaved, but also evidenced the beginnings of student-teacher and student-student exchanges in which students engaged in self-monitoring rather than compliance to coercive force. This was not without incident, nor without second thoughts by our novice teacher.

Beyond responding to children's transgressions our student teachers struggled all semester with creating kind and meaningful classroom atmospheres for all students. The fundamental tenet of Developmental Discipline is that children's social and emotional growth is contingent upon creating communities of trust (Watson, 2003). The impact our program had on the thinking of our student teachers is shown in the following excerpt from another of our student teachers. The situation concerns one student of color who felt unaccepted by the rest of the children. What follows is an example of how the student teacher attempted to establish a community of care and fairness for this student.

Some days Ayanna would be very cooperative and even a bit too clingy. She would not want me to leave her side, she would ask me to take her home or to the movies, and she would want me to always hold her hand. I had conversations with her about why those requests were inappropriate. I

would also recognize her cooperative behavior and would tell her that I thought she was a very smart girl, because she is, and that I knew she could cooperate all of the time and complete all of her work. Other days, however, Ayanna would be very nasty towards me and other students. She would not want any help from me, she would not listen to anything I would say, and on one occasion she called me a jerk. She was the complete opposite of the girl I just described. None of this made sense to me and these ups and downs were exhausting. I thought that the activities were helping, but I was not sure. I was trying to give Ayanna the attention she needed without giving her too much attention.

Around this time it was mid-February and we had a conference at UIC to listen to Marilyn Watson speak. The things she was talking about made complete sense to me and I was able to relate what she had taught me to the situation within my classroom. I wanted Ayanna to feel more comfortable in my classroom and I wanted her to feel like she was accepted by her peers. The major thing I gained from hearing Watson's advice on my situation was something that I had never thought of. I informed her that Ayanna was not very popular in class and that she did not have any friends. She told me to try and do things to enhance Ayanna's reputation to the rest of the class. I thought about this for a while and her suggestion made perfect sense. If I could discreetly try to enhance her reputation to the class, I would be helping her out tremendously. From that day forward I tried to focus on as many good things as possible. For instance, one day Ayanna told me that she was afraid to take off her hood because her hair was 'nappy' and she thought it was ugly. I told her that her hair looked great and I commented to her so that other students could hear, that I thought she was lucky because she could have her hair stay in so many different places. I know this was a small thing to do, but I feel like it definitely gave Ayanna a bit more confidence. Ayanna loves to draw. Whenever she would make a nice drawing I would show it to the class and comment on Ayanna's talent - keep in mind that I try to do these motivating type things to all of my students, not just to Ayanna.

### *Student Evaluations*

In addition to the observed changes in course syllabi, supporting materials, and student products, we attempted to gauge program impact through student evaluations of the character education components that had been added to the Child Development and Elementary Education course. Student course evaluations obtained from of Child Development and Elementary Education are presented in Table 2. Students provided ratings on a 5-point scale where 1 is the lowest and 5 the highest rating. The scores represent combined averages obtained for all sections of the course (a total of 85 students) taught by three different instructors. As can be seen in Table 2, the course itself receives very high ratings  $M = 4.00$ ,  $SD = .69$ . A series of  $t$  tests for related samples

revealed that two of the character education components were rated as high or higher than the overall course rating. The unit on Developmental Discipline was rated significantly higher than the course as a whole  $M = 4.34$ ,  $SD = .73$ ;  $t(58) = 4.29$ ,  $p < .001$ . The ratings of the moral and social values lesson activity were not significantly different from the course as a whole  $M = 4.16$ ,  $SD = .71$ , but were significantly lower than the ratings given to the unit on Developmental Discipline  $t(58) = 2.13$ ,  $p < .05$ . The scores provided for the unit on Social Emotional Learning, however, were significantly lower than each of the other character education course components as well as the overall ratings given to the course  $M = 3.55$ ,  $SD = .91$ ;  $t(58) = 3.79$ ,  $p < .001$  (for comparison with the course). These results indicate that with the exception of the SEL unit, students responded well to the course components focusing character education.

## **Student Impact**

### *Student Knowledge*

As was described above, we assessed the impact of our program on students' knowledge of moral and social development and character education classroom practices through the *Moral Development and Education Assessment*. A one-way ANOVA comparing the control group (students who had graduated prior to the program), yoked control (students who experienced the revised Child Development course only) and experimental groups (student who experienced the entire program) revealed a significant overall effect for group  $F(4, 105) = 5.82$ ,  $p < .001$ . Post hoc analyses employing the Tukey HSD revealed no significant differences in knowledge scores between between the control group and either of the yoked controls. Thus, there was no significant impact in the knowledge of students who graduated prior to the character education initiative, and those students who had the enriched course in child development without the subsequent follow-up in character education content in their subsequent field courses or student teaching. However, both experimental groups scored significantly higher than the control group (all  $ps < .01$ ).

### *Student Efficacy*

The impact of the program upon student self-assessments of their own ability and readiness to engage in character education was assessed through the *Moral Development and Character Education Belief Instrument*. A one-way ANOVA comparing the control, yoked control and experimental groups revealed a significant overall effect for group  $F(4, 105) = 3.86$ ,  $p < .01$ . As was the case with the assessment of knowledge, post hoc analyses (Tukey HSD) revealed no significant differences in efficacy scores between the control group and either of the yoked controls. Both experimental groups attained significantly higher efficacy scores than the control group (all  $ps < .05$ ).

## **Conclusions and Future Directions**

In this chapter we have recounted the implementation and short-term outcomes of one attempt to integrate moral and character education within the pre-service preparation of

undergraduate elementary teacher education majors. The results of that experience indicate that one can successfully incorporate preparation to teach character education within an already existing teacher preparation program. We were able to adjust course syllabi and student field experiences in ways that were consistent with the broader goals of the teacher education program. Student course evaluations and outcome measures of student knowledge and efficacy indicated that the changes brought about in the program were well-received by the pre-service teacher education majors, and effective in raising their knowledge of moral development and educational practice, and self-perceptions of their preparedness to engage in character education. We will now discuss these outcomes in some greater detail and offer suggestions for future research.

### *Impact Upon Program Structure*

With respect to our impact upon the teacher education program, the coordinated effort to integrate character education resulted in a substantial increase in the amount of time students spent dealing with issues of social and emotional development, and specific pedagogy related to classroom practices associated with social and moral growth. These program changes were guided by a specific theory and research-based account of social and moral growth, and therefore resulted in a set of coherent messages and associated activities experienced by students as they progressed through the teacher education program. Student evaluations of the character education components of the Child Development and Elementary Education course indicated that students readily accept, and rate highly those components that dealt with moral and social development and character education. The one exception was the unit dealing with classroom practices for Social and Emotional Learning. The particular unit we used was based on examples described within a formal pull-out program. Written comments from students included in their course evaluations indicated that the low ratings reflected the students' concerns that the pullout approach was disconnected from the regular curriculum, and thus viewed by them as having less relevance than the infusion approaches taken with the other aspects of character education they had been introduced to in the course.

By the second year of the project all but three of the required courses provided some degree of exposure to moral and character education. These included the field-based courses and student teaching. Achieving this degree of coherence and program integration depended on three factors.

1. Availability of faculty expertise in moral development and character education to provide the theoretical and empirical framework for the program. In this case the expertise came from a professor of educational psychology (the first author) whose area of scholarship is children's moral and social growth.
2. Coherence between the theoretical framework guiding moral education, and the goals and assumptions about pedagogy maintained by the broader teacher education program. The *Conceptual Framework* of the UIC College of Education defines its approach to teaching in constructivist and student-centered terms, and anchors its mission in critical inquiry and the

furtherance of social justice. These basic philosophical assumptions were compatible with the social cognitive domain theory underpinnings of the approach to character education. It is unlikely that a more traditional version of character education would have been similarly embraced by the faculty at this institution.

3. Support of the College administration. The Dean of Education at UIC took an active role in encouraging faculty to participate in the program. This included financial support for faculty in-services during Summer months. It is unlikely that the changes witnessed in the two years of this project would have occurred without the support of the College Dean.

### *Impact upon Student Outcomes*

The results of our program evaluation surveys indicated that the program had a statistically significant impact upon pre-service teachers' knowledge and their sense of efficacy with respect to the implementation of character education in the classroom. As reported in prior work (Milson, 2003), this sense of efficacy is predictive of classroom teachers' success in implementing teaching practices. The program evaluation did not include follow-up measures of teacher behavior subsequent to graduation from the program. Thus, we can not state with any certainty that our graduates have translated what they have learned in the course of the teacher education program into character education practices in their current teaching. We have anecdotal evidence from observations of a small number of graduates that they are indeed continuing to employ the character education practices they evidenced during student teaching. However, any definitive conclusions regarding the impact on classroom practices will have to wait for follow-up research.

Perhaps the most interesting result of our exit questionnaires is that the impact upon student knowledge and efficacy occurred only among those students whose program experiences included exposure to character education throughout their program, rather than being limited to the child development course. This occurred even though the child development course spent a substantial amount of time on issues of moral and social development, and included practical experience in lesson creation. This raises serious questions about the standard reliance upon a single course, such as educational psychology, to achieve an impact upon student capacity for character education. One factor that may mitigate against this conclusion is that the control conditions did not include students receiving no exposure to moral development and character education in their coursework. All UIC students have received some exposure to moral development and character education in their educational psychology courses going back at least two decades. Nonetheless, the findings of this program evaluation are consistent with Lickona's (1993) admonitions regarding the complexity entailed in providing character education, and indicate that there is considerable value in the full integration of moral development and character education throughout teacher preparation.

### *Limitations and Future Directions*

We have already alluded to the need to conduct follow-up research on the effectiveness of our teacher education program on our graduates' actual classroom practices. Our observations of small number of recent graduates have been promising. However, systematic research is needed to explore this issue. In addition, we need to extend our program alterations to include the behaviors of our cooperating teachers who are providing the role models for classroom practices for student during field work and student teaching. With the Dean's support we have begun providing in-services to our cooperating teachers. However, this set of activities needs to be expanded.

### **General Conclusions**

In sum, the results of this program to integrate moral development and character education within pre-service teacher preparation has been largely positive. Participating faculty and students have evaluated the program positively. Exit surveys have indicated that the program has been effective in raising graduates' knowledge about moral development and character education practices, and has raised student self-efficacy with respect to the engaging in character education. Further work is needed exploring efforts at other colleges and universities to determine if this is a site specific accomplishment or something that can be readily replicated. The initial success of this program bodes well for such future efforts.

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Table 1

*Child Development and Elementary Education: Revised Moral Development and Character Education Segment Topics*

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Week 8	Social Development and Values Formation: Overview of theories
Week 9	Social Development and Values Formation: Applications to curriculum and classroom practices
<i>Week 10</i>	<i>Construction of moral and social values lessons (In class activity)</i>
<i>Week 11</i>	<i>Social Emotional Learning and Interpersonal Relations</i>
<i>Week 12</i>	<i>Developmental Discipline</i>
<i>Week 13</i>	<i>Moral and social values lessons due</i>

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NOTE: Italicized topics and activities added as part of the character education initiative.