# CHARACTER TRAITS IN NEWBERY AWARD LITERATURE 1997-2007

# A Dissertation

Presented to

The Faculty of the School of Education

Liberty University

Lynchburg, VA

In Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

**Doctor of Education** 

By

Julie Beth Bryant

February 2008

# CHARACTER TRAITS IN NEWBERY AWARD LITERATURE 1997-2007

# by Julie Beth Bryant

Dr. Holly Hill-Stanford, Ph.D.

Committee Chair	Dr. Kathie Morgan, Ed.D.
Committee Members	Dr. Scott Watson, Ph.D.

APPROVED:

Dean of Education Dr. Karen Parker, Ed.D.

#### **Abstract**

Julie Bryant. CHARACTER TRAITS IN NEWBERY AWARD LITERATURE 1997-2007. (Under the direction of Dr. Kathie Morgan) School of Education, February 2008. The purpose of this study was to determine the character example elements in the Newbery Award winning books from 1997-2007. Content analysis was used to identify the pertinent character traits identified by the researcher using the acronym C.H.A.R.A.C.T.E.R. These example elements include: (a) caring/compassionate, (b) helpfulness, (c) acceptance, (d) respect, (e) ambition, (f) citizenship, (g) trustworthiness, (h) encouragement, and (i) responsibility. Using a coding system developed for this study, four readers read and discussed the books to attempt consensus as to the character traits identified. The researcher sought answers to the following questions: (a) Do the Newbery Award winning books from 1997-2007 reveal example elements of character education as specified by the acronym C.H.A.R.A.C.T.E.R.? (b) What are the predominant character example elements in the Newbery Award winning books between 1997 and 2007? (c) Who displays these character example elements in the literature? (d) Does the protagonist exhibit certain example elements? (e) How are these character example elements portrayed in the books? (f) What are the frequencies of the positive character traits? (g) What are the frequencies of the negative counterparts of the character traits? (h) How many pages are devoted to expressing the positive character traits? (i) Which books could be recommended for teachers to use to meet guidelines for teaching character education as outlined by federal legislation? Frequency lists were kept for each character trait for the entire sample and for each individual book.

# Acknowledgements

I wish to acknowledge many individuals for their contributions to the completion of this degree. First, I express my sincere appreciation to my chair, Dr. Kathie Morgan, for her invaluable assistance in all aspects of this doctoral pursuit. She has given much support to me, and I appreciate her willingness to lead my committee.

I wish to extend special thanks to Dr. Scott Watson and Dr. Holly Hill-Stanford who also served on my committee. I thank them both for sharing their expertise in research and technical writing, as well as guiding me through the dissertation process.

To Mrs. Tisha Clawson, Mrs. Debbie Gamble, and Mrs. Donna Young, I extend my heartfelt thanks for reading, coding, collaborating, discussing, and bonding together over Newbery books. Their valuable time, energy, and efforts will never be forgotten.

I wish to thank Dr. Judy Bryant and my Southwest Baptist University family for their prayers and confidence along this incredible journey. I wish to extend a big thanks to my students who prayed for me, sent me uplifting notes, and always showed interest in my progress. Appreciation is also extended to Mrs. Jennifer Smith and Cathy Floyd for helping me with mail merges and other technical computer issues. To Dr. Shelley Kilpatrick, I extend my thanks for helping me with the statistical aspects of the dissertation. I also wish to thank the professional development committee for the financial support given to make this degree possible.

I extend my gratitude and love to my family. I thank them for the prayers, the time they spent babysitting, driving us to Virginia, the financial support, and simply

being there for me every step of the way. Additionally, I wish to thank my church family for their prayer support.

More importantly, I wish to thank my precious husband Robbie and our son Jaron. I could never have done this without their love and encouragement. They constantly inspired me with each phase of the doctoral process. I thank them for their belief in me and for all they sacrificed for my success.

Most importantly, I extend my deepest gratitude to my Heavenly Father. I thank Him for blessing me with so much and for His favor. I thank Him for His presence in my life and for calling me to the teaching profession. *Commit thy way unto the LORD; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass. Psalm 37:5* 

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

BSTRACT	ii
CKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iii
IST OF TABLES	ix
HAPTER	
1. INTRODUCTION AND RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY	1
Introduction	1
A. Background.	2
a. Federal Legislation for Character Education	2
b. C.H.A.R.A.C.T.E.R. Elements Selected	3
c. Newbery Award	4
B. Focus of Inquiry	5
C. Purpose of the Study	5
D. Assumptions.	6
E. Definitions of Terms.	6
2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE	9
Introduction	9
A. History of Character Education.	9
B. The Current Need for Character Education in Schools	15
C. Methods of Teaching Character Education	26
Through Children's Literature	
D. Character Traits Found in Children's Literature	34

	E. The Use of Newbery Books by Teachers	37
	F. Similar Research Studies Conducted	41
	G. Summary	43
3.	METHODOLOGY	44
	Introduction	. 44
	A. Content Analysis	.44
	B. How Content Analysis Was Used	. 46
	C. Development of the Coding System	47
	D. Makeup of the Coding System	47
	E. Selection of Readers.	48
	F. Selection of Books	48
	G. Book Assignments	50
	H. Inter-rater Agreement	. 51
	I. Procedures	. 52
4.	DATA ANALYSIS RESULTS	54
	Introduction	. 54
	A. Data Analysis	54
	B. Results	. 57
	C. Quantitative Analysis	. 58
	a. Frequency of Character Example Elements Demonstrate	i
	by Major and Minor Characters	59

	b. Mean of Character Example Elements Demonstrated by	
	Major and Minor Characters 6	51
	F. Qualitative Analysis 6	54
	a. Character Example Elements Directly Mentioned in Text 6	54
	b. Opposite Character Trait Demonstrated in Text 6	56
	c. Character Trait Themes6	57
	d. A Close Look at Each Book	59
	1. The View From Saturday (1997) 6	59
	2. Out of the Dust (1998)	1
	3. Holes (1999)	<b>7</b> 1
	4. Bud, Not Buddy (2000)	<sup>7</sup> 4
	5. A Year Down Yonder (2001)	<sup>7</sup> 6
	6. A Single Shard (2002)	<sup>7</sup> 6
	7. Crispin: The Cross of Lead (2003)	19
	8. The Tale of Despereaux (2004)	31
	9. Kira Kira (2005)	3
	10. Criss Cross (2006)	35
	11. The Higher Power of Lucky (2007)	35
	e. What Some of the Authors Had to Say 8	37
5.	CONCLUSIONS9	Ю
	Introduction 9	Ю
	A Summary 9	90

F	3. Answers to Questions Posed	92
(	C. Conclusions and Implications	95
Ι	D. Limitations of Study	102
I	E. Recommendations for Further Research	102
REFERENC	CES	104
APPENDIX	ES	111
A.	One Sentence Summaries of Newbery Books	111
B.	Questions and Frequencies of Codebook	113
C.	Definitions of C.H.A.R.A.C.T.E.R. Example Elements	114
D.	Codebook	116
E.	Letter to Authors	128
X / I/TF A		120

# LIST OF TABLES

Chapte	er 3 Tables	
1.	Newbery Books from 1997-2007.	49
2.	Reading System for Raters	50
Chapter	4 Tables	
1.	Frequency of Character Example Elements Demonstrated by Major	
	and Minor Characters	60
2.	Mean Frequencies & Ranges of Demonstrated Traits Across All Books	62
3.	Character Trait Directly Mentioned in Text	65
4.	Opposite Character Trait Demonstrated in Text	67
5.	Character Trait Themes Found in Newbery Books	69
6.	The View From Saturday (1997)	70
7.	Out of the Dust (1998)	72
8.	Holes (1999)	73
9.	Bud, Not Buddy (2000)	75
10.	. A Year Down Yonder (2001)	77
11.	. A Single Shard (2002)	78
12.	. Crispin: The Cross of Lead (2003)	80
13.	. The Tale of Despereaux (2004)	82
14.	. Kira-Kira (2005)	84
15.	. Criss Cross (2006)	86

#### CHAPTER 1

#### INTRODUCTION AND RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY

#### Introduction

On April 20, 1999, a tragedy that shook the nation, known as the Columbine Massacre, occurred at a high school in Colorado. Just two years later, on September 11, 2001, our nation reeled with shock as terrorist threats and attacks were made on buildings and innocent people of our country. More recently, on April 16, 2007, the nation once again trembled in grief and sorrow as we mourned the loss of lives from the Virginia Tech Massacre. These examples and so many more have caused widespread concern for the upbringing of American children and the education they receive. Not only are political and educational leaders concerned with the academic education received by students in the United States, but they also are considering the entire well-being of the child, including mind and morals. In the first chapter of his book *Educating for Character: How Our Schools Can Teach Respect and Responsibility*, Thomas Lickona quotes William Kilpatrick: "The core problem facing our schools is a moral one. All the other problems derive from it. Even academic reform depends on putting character first" (1991, p. 3).

Lickona identifies ten indicators that reflect how society is failing to provide for the moral development of the young. These include violence and vandalism, stealing, cheating, disrespect for authority, peer cruelty, bigotry, bad language, sexual precocity and abuse, increasing self-centeredness and declining civic responsibility, and self-destructive behavior (1991, p. 13-18). To combat this, political agendas of past and

current U.S. presidents have reflected the need to reform schools and emphasize values education. Lickona reports that political disagreements occurred as to what kind of values should be taught in schools. Yet, regardless of the political position, political groups agree that there is a growing conviction that, "Schools cannot be ethical bystanders at a time when our society is in deep moral trouble. Rather, schools must do what they can to contribute to the character of the young and the moral health of the nation" (1991, p. 5).

#### Background

Federal Legislation for Character Education.

Martin Luther King Jr. once said, "Intelligence is not enough. Intelligence plus character—that is the goal of true education" (cited in Lickona, 1991). In today's schools, a federal call has been made to include character education in the curriculum. On January 8, 2002, President George W. Bush signed into law his educational reform plan entitled the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* (NCLB). This law, along with a partnership with parents, communities, and schools, will ensure that every child in America receives a superior education in a safe environment that fosters the development of good character and citizenship. The *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* is established on principles of academic achievement and professional success supported by moral strength and civic virtue.

This act encourages giving students a quality education that provides young citizens with the tools they will need to participate fully in their society. Parents and teachers want their children to grow up to be responsible citizens, care about the feelings and needs of others, and honor the democratic ideals upon which this country was established. Margaret Spellings, Secretary of the U.S. Department of Education

supported this statement by saying, "As parents, we all want our children to grow up to be responsible citizens and good people. We want them to learn to feel, think and act with respect for themselves and for other people...We want them to recognize and honor the democratic principles upon which our country was founded. We want them, in short, to develop strong character" (U.S. Department of Education, 2005).

To summarize, teachers and parents want their children to develop strong character. Example elements of character are defined in Subpart 3, Section 5431 of the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001*. It specifically reads: EXAMPLE ELEMENTS-Elements of character selected under this subsection may include any of the following: (a) caring/compassionate, (b) civic virtue and citizenship, (c) justice and fairness, (d) respect, (e) responsibility, (f) trustworthiness, (g) giving, and any others (U.S. Department of Education, 2005).

#### C.H.A.R.A.C.T.E.R. Elements

When analyzing various organizations for what character example elements they deem as pertinent for including in character education curriculum, the researcher noted great diversity, yet some commonality in those studied. As previously noted, the NCLB example elements include caring, civic virtue and citizenship, justice and fairness, respect, responsibility, trustworthiness, and giving. According to Brynildssen (2002), Character Counts! Coalition offers six "pillars" of good character, including trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, and citizenship. *Phi Delta Kappa*'s 2000-2001 Study of Core Values list learning, honesty, cooperation, service to others, freedom, responsibility, and civility. Lickona (1991) suggests responsibility, respect, tolerance, prudence, self-discipline, helpfulness, compassion, cooperation,

courage, honesty, fairness, and democratic values (p. 45). Montessori identifies the virtues and traits of concentration, perseverance, patience, respect for others, empathy, helpfulness to others, responsibility, obedience, and self-discipline (Vardin, 2003). From studying these sources and others, the researcher took those traits in common, as well as others recommended by various authors and created a self-selected list of example elements to form an acronym using the letters in the word C.H.A.R.A.C.T.E.R. These traits include caring, helpfulness, acceptance, respect, ambition, citizenship, trustworthiness, encouragement, and responsibility. These example elements directed the content analysis conducted using the Newbery Award winning books from 1997-2007. *Newbery Award* 

According to the American Library Association, since its founding in 1922, the Newbery Medal has been awarded annually by the American Library Association for the most distinguished American children's book published the previous year.

"Distinguished" is further defined as: (a) marked by eminence and distinction: noted for significant achievement, (b) marked by excellence in quality, (c) marked by conspicuous excellence or eminence, and (d) individually distinct. Each year, the committee also selects additional books worthy of the title of distinguished which do not receive the award. These books are referred to as Newbery Honor books. A complete list of Newbery Award winning and honor books, along with the criteria for selection, can be found at the following website:

http://www.ala.org/ala/alsc/awardsscholarships/literaryawds/newberymedal/newberymedal.htm.

#### Focus of Inquiry

In January, when the Newbery Award winning book is announced, teachers and librarians purchase the book to add to their literature collection. Curriculum guides are made to offer suggestions for teaching lessons centered on the Newbery book. Since many teachers already use the Newbery books in their curriculum, this researcher wanted to determine if the selected Newbery Award books from 1997-2007 could also be used to teach character traits to children. Furthermore, knowing the particular character traits found in each of the Newbery Award winning books and how the character traits are used, might convince teachers of the practicality of integrating character education into the current curriculum. Therefore, the researcher proposed the following problem statement: Do the Newbery Award winning books from 1997-2007 reveal example elements of character education?

### *Purpose of the Study*

The primary purpose of this study was to analyze Newbery Award winning books from 1997-2007 for example elements of character education as specified by the acronym C.H.A.R.A.C.T.E.R. created by the researcher. In addition to seeking the answer to the problem statement, the researcher sought answers to the following questions:

- What are the predominant character example elements in the Newbery Award winning books between 1997 and 2007?
- 2. Who displays these character example elements in the literature?
- 3. Does the protagonist exhibit certain example elements?
- 4. How are these character example elements portrayed in the books?
- 5. What are the frequencies of the positive character traits?

- 6. What are the frequencies of the negative counterparts of the character traits?
- 7. How many pages are devoted to expressing the positive character traits?
- 8. Which books could be recommended for teachers to use to meet guidelines for teaching character education?

#### **Assumptions**

The purpose, methods, and procedures of this study were based on the following assumptions:

- Character education is an integral part of the civic responsibility of society.
- 2. Children can learn character example elements.
- 3. Literature is a powerful tool for presenting character example elements.
- 4. Character example elements in children's literature can be identified through content analysis.

### Definitions of Terms

The following terms should be defined to clarify the study:

*Character*. This refers to a set of qualities or values that shape our thoughts, actions, reactions, and feelings (ed.gov). They are usually defined using terms such as integrity, honesty, courage, sincerity, and truthfulness; when practiced consistently, these qualities are referred to as *virtues* (Krajewski & Bailey, 1999).

*Character Education*. This is a process which involves teaching children about basic human values including honesty, kindness, generosity, courage, freedom, equality, and respect (ASCD website).

Character Example Elements (also called character traits). These are examples of character outlined in the subsection from NCLB and may include any of the following: (a) caring, (b) civic virtue and citizenship, (c) justice and fairness, (d) respect, (e) responsibility, (f) trustworthiness, (g) giving, and others (ed.gov). C.H.A.R.A.C.T.E.R. Example Elements. These are specific traits identified by the researcher for inclusion in the content analysis study which correspond to the acronym making up the word 'character.' Example elements include: (a) caring/compassionate, (b) helpfulness, (c) acceptance, (d) respect, (e) ambition, (f) citizenship, (g) trustworthiness, (h) encouragement, and (i) responsibility.\* Children's Literature. This is defined threefold as: (1) published reading material of a superior quality written for children by expert writers; (2) published reading material of a superior and lasting quality accepted by children and read by them with pleasure; (3) all printed material available for the use of children (Good, Dictionary of Education, 1973). Content Analysis. This is a research method applied to written or visual materials for the purpose of identifying specified characteristics of the material (Ary, 2002). Babbie (2005) defines content analysis as a part of qualitative analysis. He states qualitative analysis is "the nonnumerical examination and interpretation of observations, for the purpose of discovering underlying meanings and patterns of relationships" (p. 394-395). Newbery Award winning books are so named when outstanding books for children and young adults are given the Newbery Medal. The Newbery Medal was named for eighteenth-century British bookseller John Newbery. It is awarded annually by the Association for Library Service to Children, a division of the American Library

Association, to the author of the most distinguished contribution to American literature for children (ALA website).

*No Child Left Behind* is the law signed on January 8, 2002 by President George W. Bush that represents his educational reform plan to change the federal role in education (ed.gov).

\*Definitions of each C.H.A.R.A.C.T.E.R. example element are defined in Appendix C and were included for the readers while coding.

#### CHAPTER 2

#### **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

#### Introduction

This study explores analysis of Newbery Award winning books from 1997-2007 to determine character example elements. Chapter 1 introduced the problem and importance of helping teachers to determine books that are useful for teaching character education as well as integrating it into an already rigorous curricular program. This chapter will review relevant literature in the history of character education, the current need for character education in schools, the methods of teaching character education through children's literature, the character example elements found in children's literature, the use of the Newbery Award books by teachers, and similar research studies that have been conducted in the field of education.

# The History of Character Education

Patricia A. Vardin, a writer for *Montessori LIFE*, states that character education began in public schools dating back to 1642 with the Massachusetts Bay Colony when students studied to become literate for the purpose of Bible reading to learn right from wrong. She noted that the principles upon which this nation were founded were ideals emphasizing good character for citizenship to preserve democracy (2003). Dick Riley states in an article from *Teaching PreK-8* that as the colonies formed a nation, "the rationale for universal education expanded to include civics, as well as biblical values" (2000). Vardin notes that "the Bible continued to be the source book for both moral and religious instruction throughout the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries" (2003).

The 1700s brought Thomas Jefferson and other founders of this nation advocating for training students in democratic citizenship. In fact, documents that shaped this nation, including the Declaration of Independence and the Preamble to the U.S. Constitution, clearly state the moral values and virtues held sacred by this nation:

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness. (Declaration of Independence, 1776)

We the people of the United States, in order to form a more perfect union, establish justice, insure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity, do ordain and establish this constitution for the United States of America. (Preamble of U.S. Constitution, 1787)

Books were written in the 1800s to provide mothers with materials to read to their children. Additional support for mothers' training was provided through the establishment of Sunday schools. In the 1830s, a series was published called the *McGuffey Readers* to teach school children how to read and develop virtues. The series was used well into the twentieth century (Vardin, 2003, p. 32).

In the early 1900s, individuals sought to develop methodologies for teaching character. One example, the Children's Morality Code, outlined ten laws for right living: self-control, good health, kindness, sportsmanship, self-reliance, duty, reliability, truth, good workmanship, and teamwork (Leming, 1993, p. 63). Bob Krajewski and Elise

Bailey reported that in 1918, the Commission on Reorganization of Secondary Education identified seven Cardinal Principles for advancing "all aspects of life" including: health, worthy home membership, command of fundamental academic skills, vocation, citizenship, worthy use of leisure time, and ethical character. Members of the Commission felt that if character education were integrated into the schools, there would not be a need for a formal ethical and moral standard in the curriculum (1999, p. 33). Despite this push to refocus on issues related to character education, a 1927 study by Harshorne, May, and associates revealed that educational efforts did not affect students' behavior or choices (Lockwood, 1997, p. 4) which led to less interest and research on character education.

Kevin Ryan reports that the decades of 1940s and 50s brought World War II, the Korean War, and the Cold War. With changes in the culture and economy, moral education tended not to change significantly, as schools were expected to reflect the values of the community, including respect for authority and political leaders of the time (1986). The 1960s and 70s brought a decline in the focus of character education in America for various reasons including pluralism, the philosophical idea of moral relativism, school prayer being outlawed in 1963, and permissiveness (Vardin, 2003, p. 32). The results, according to Ryan, include more school vandalism, increase in violent crimes by students, and a rise in teacher absenteeism with a new anti-authority spirit. This led to the educational community prescribing values clarification, Kohlberg's cognitive-developmental moral education, and ethical reasoning in response to the "values crisis" of these decades (Ryan, 1986). French sociologist Emile Durkheim supports an active

effort by the schools to instill values and rules of conduct in a rational manner stating, "To teach morality is neither to preach nor to indoctrinate; it is to explain" (1961, p. 120).

Krajewski and Bailey report the 1980s witnessed the return of schools obtaining the role of developing character (1999). Ryan reports from this decade a return to normalcy after decades of strife with education becoming a priority for the new presidency. Public officials such as William Bennett and Bill Honig returned to traditional ideas and values such as love of country, courage, and respect for adults while encouraging teachers to help children not only become smart, but good (1986).

The 1990s brought advancements in character education. James S. Leming reports that during this time, "a body of research exist[ed] related to the topic of educating for character that can, if utilized and expanded, inform practice and assist in the development of effective programs" (1993, p. 63). Character education of this decade brought an increase in the inclusion of sex and drug education. Assessing for the value of character education in schools became prominent during this decade, as well. Two approaches are explained by Leming for the evaluation of character education programs. The first utilizes informal evaluation such as collecting anecdotal evidence and surveying participating teachers and administrators. The second uses experimental designs, focused on student behavior, compared students in and not in the program, and attempted to control for potential sources of bias (1993, p. 67-68). At the time of publication for the article, Leming stated, "At present, the lack of a coherent approach to research hampers the effort to develop effective character education programs" (1993, p. 70).

Nationally Certified Teacher Jami L. Jones reminds the readers that "throughout history many learned persons, such as Socrates, Aristotle and Thomas Jefferson, believed

that a main purpose of education was to teach character" and that "until the 1900s, character education was the central goal of American education" (2003). Wiles and Bondi (2004) reminds readers of extracurricular programs such as Boy Scouts, 4-H, student government and other clubs formed during the 1920s and 1930s specifically to build good character in youth (p. 183). Another author of an article in *Phi Delta Kappa* notes that schools were a necessary part of training citizens in the "moral values necessary to govern themselves" with early texts unapologetically combining academic and moral lessons (2002). Beginning in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, teaching students right and wrong was replaced with allowing students to discover, for themselves, the difference between right and wrong (Murphy, 1998).

On the contrary, Joel Spring would argue that the legislation's call from *No Child Left Behind* for a "secular character education" (2002) would be "offensive to those who believe that character education requires religious instruction" (Spring, 2004, p. 21). He contends, "Attempts to use public schools to solve social problems will continue to raise problems about what values should dominate character education and how to reconcile secular and religious values" (Spring, 2004, p. 21). He states the use of the term "secular" in the legislation was to make a clear distinction from character education based on religious values and that some Christian fundamentalist groups would refer to this as a form of secular humanism (p. 3-4).

From the previous timeline and discussion of character education throughout history, one can conclude that character education was one of the original purposes of American schools from the colonial time period until the beginning of the twentieth century with an emphasis on absolute values. The gradual move toward more relative

values came during the twentieth century. Although the 1900s offered debate as to how best to do so, a historical precedence was established for teaching children to be both knowledgeable and good. Throughout history, educators and parents have recognized that it is necessary to integrate moral education in order to develop good citizens of good character, to increase academic excellence, and to reverse problems faced by society.

Cletus R. Bulach and Judy D. Butler (2002) conducted a study entitled *The* Occurrence of Behaviors Associated with Sixteen Character Values. From the study, the researchers developed an instrument they claim measured the presence or absence of behaviors associated with 16 character values they had determined. They found that based on the data, a definite need existed for a character education curriculum with the greatest need at the middle and high school levels focusing on the character values of respect, courtesy, forgiveness, and humility. The data at the elementary level recommended an emphasis on courtesy, generosity, and sportsmanship (p. 210). The researchers claimed that using their process would enable school officials and counselors to determine the character values to target, and based upon the scores generated by the instrument, whether the character education training resulted in improvements in behaviors associated with targeted character values (p. 210). The researchers quoted Posey (2000) as stating, "The future impact of character education is dependent on educators, researchers and developers collecting solid evidence of effectiveness based on quality preparation, implementation, and evaluation" (p. 6). The researchers also claimed that as the behaviors associated with character education began to improve, there would also be other positive changes within schools including increase in achievement and

positive school climate as well as decreases in absenteeism and office referrals (Bulach & Butler, 2002, p. 210).

#### The Current Need for Character Education in Schools

Lickona (1996) urges people to look at the crisis around us including violence, love of money, breakdown of family, lack of respect for the life of babies, and loss of faith. He states, "Character education obviously can't solve all these cultural ills or solve any of them completely. But what the current movement is offering, and why it is striking such a responsive chord, is hope" (Lickona, 1999, p. 296). Today, in light of recent events involving school violence, the idea of teaching students principles of character has emerged and has received much attention in legislation at both the state and federal levels (Brynildssen, 2002). Wiles and Bondi suggest in the chapter on designing and developing curriculum for the schools that despite the push toward academic standards, there is also a need for character and citizenship education as a part of the curriculum of schools (2004, p. 183).

Amidst the positive opinions for teaching character education in schools, negative opinions do exist. An argument against teaching character education is that "many schools are leery of engaging in supplementary initiatives that, although worthy, might detract from what they see as their primary focus: increasing academic achievement" (Benninga, et al., 2006). The author goes on to say that despite these aforementioned arguments, schools are mandated to place student character at the core of public education with the purpose of requiring schools to "seek to improve both academic and character education" (Benninga, et al., 2006).

The word "character" comes from the Greek word charassein, which means "to engrave" (Ryan and Bohlin, 1999, p. 5). Therefore, "character traits are those markings engraved upon us that lead us to behave in specific ways" (O' Sullivan, 2004). Ryan and Bohlin (1999) define character as "the sum of our intellectual and moral habits" (p. 9). Dr. Montague Brown, writer of *The One-Minute Philosopher*, writes, "Character refers to a person's virtue or lack thereof. Character may be good or bad. It is not something we inherit. Rather it is the product of our free choices" (2002, p. 5).

Jacques S. Benninga, Marvin W. Berkowitz, Phyllis Kuehn, and Karen Smith state that "character education is the responsibility of adults" and that it is the "duty of the older generation to form the character of the young through experiences affecting their attitudes, knowledge, and behaviors" (2006, p. 448). Krajewski and Bailey reveal the goal of character education is to "help young people know, care about, and act on core ethical values such as fairness, honesty, kindness, respect for others, and responsibility" and that it "helps young people build their own value system to prepare them to address life's moral and ethical problems" (1999). Ryan and Bohlin state that becoming a person of character is the responsibility of the individual, yet that individual needs the guidance of an adult "to understand and acquire the strong moral habits that contribute to good character" (1999, p. 12-13). Since it is important that these traits and virtues be taught to young children, schools are implementing character education which is, "the encouragement of these virtues in our students" (O'Sullivan, 2004). The National Commission on Character Education, formed in 1997, defined character education as "any deliberate approach by which school personnel, often in conjunction with parents and community members, help children and youth become caring, principled and

responsible" (cited in Williams & Schnaps, 1999). Ryan and Bohlin state, "Becoming a person of character is a developmental process. It takes knowledge...effort and practice... support, example, encouragement, and...inspiration. In short, it takes...character education" (1999, p. 13). Ryan and Bohlin (1999) give several reasons why schools should teach character education including that authority figures from history, the founders of our country, and current legal and societal mandates all support character education. Dr. Patricia A. Vardin states, "supporting and encouraging the children to understand right from wrong and helping them to practice it on a daily basis is the responsibility of all parents and teachers" (2003, p. 34). Additionally, developmental theorists such as Piaget, Kohlberg, and Vygotsky stress that children's moral codes develop during their school age years, making it imperative to teach character education at this time. Ryan and Bohlin state, "If we want students to understand virtue, we must teach it" (1999, p. 96).

William D. Edgington (2002) reports that "character education has become the fastest growing school reform movement in the United States." Perhaps this emphasis on including character education in the curriculum of schools comes from the crises reported daily in newspapers and television programs across the nation. *Phi Delta Kappa* reports that "all facets of society, including schools, must work together to help young people develop the strength of character they will need for a productive adulthood" (2002). Leming (1999) conducted a study to review the effects of ten character education programs. His study showed a connection between the character education programs and increases in pro-social behavior, self-esteem, and democratic values. While it might take time to determine conclusive proof from research that character education indeed

produces people of better character, it seems clear that one should be optimistic about the chance for success.

In nearly every piece of literature reviewed, references were given to the many writings of Thomas Lickona. Lickona is often quoted in the literature for his succinct way of defining character as "knowing the good, desiring the good, and doing the good" (1991, p. 51). Therefore, character education includes the intellect, emotions, and the will. It is also centered on cultivating the positive values of our society. Lickona (1991) advocates that the two most important values to teach are respect and responsibility stating, "These values constitute the core of a universal, public morality. They have objective, demonstrable worth in that they promote the good of the individual and the good of the whole community" (p. 43). Lickona states that teaching the academic curriculum is the business of schooling and notes, "We would be wasting a great opportunity if we failed to use that curriculum as a vehicle for developing values and ethical awareness" (1991, p. 163). Lickona defines character education as the "deliberate effort to cultivate virtue," which equates with good human qualities including "commitment to truth, wisdom, honesty, compassion, courage, diligence, perseverance, and self-control" (1999). Lickona (1999) says that, "To be effective, character education must be comprehensive, intentionally making use of every phase of school life as an opportunity to develop good character."

Future teachers play an important role as "character educators" (Jones, Ryan, & Bohlin, 1998); therefore, one should consider the roles that university education programs play in preparing future teachers to emphasize and teach character education. Sheryl O'Sullivan states that "schools of education must once again recognize the

importance of educating future teachers in matters of character and find a multitude of ways for including this within their programs" (2005). O'Sullivan emphasizes teaching pre-service teachers to integrate character into the curriculum through children's literature, highlighting Azusa Pacific University's course entitled *Character Education Through Children's Literature* as an example for using picture and chapter books to teach value (2005). This approach is what Dr. Spencer Kagan would refer to as "the spotlight approach." Kagan says that the Spotlight Approach "is to focus, while using regular academic curriculum, on aspects of the curriculum which promote character development" (2002, p. 1).

A study by Jones, Ryan, and Bohlin concludes that despite the federal mandates to teach good character, "The education teachers receive in this area is below par" (1998). They further note that there are exemplary models such as that highlighted by O'Sullivan, but as a whole, teacher education "needs to do more to convey to prospective teachers that character formation is at the heart of what it means to be a teacher" (Jones, Ryan, & Bohlin, 1998).

DeVries advocates a constructivist approach to character education for teacher education programs and states that "prospective teachers must become aware that schools and teachers do influence character development" (1998). DeVries further states that "faculty and students are partners in working toward better understanding of how to foster children's development" (1998). Jim Mhoon, program director of Focus on the Family's Family Ministry-Parenting Groups, says, "Character gives children a solid foundation of right and wrong that will carry not only in their childhood but into their

adult lives as well" (<u>www.family.org</u>, October 2004). This goal of lifelong learning is a prominent goal of most educational programs.

Pre-service teachers should be taught what character education looks like and feels like, according to the website of the University of Illinois Extension. The authors of their Character Education: Teaching Kids to Care site state, "Character education looks like young people learning, growing, and becoming. It feels like strength, courage, possibility, and hope." The authors go on to write, "Character education presents life with context, inviting students to listen, share, explore, and reflect." Their stated purpose is that they "assist educators in exploring teaching and learning that often reaches beyond the goals, touching the hearts, minds, and lives of students in far-reaching ways that can transform a future of failure to a life of success"

### (www.urbanext.uiuc.edu/SchoolsOnline/charactered.html).

Lickona (1991) defines character education as "the deliberate, proactive effort to develop good character in kids—or, more simply, to teach children right from wrong" (cited in Neill, 2005). He proposes the following facets of character education programs:

- A teacher who acts as a caregiver, model, and mentor,
- A moral community of respect and value within the classroom,
- A democratic learning community which practices moral discipline,
- Values and conflict resolution taught through the curriculum,
- Use of cooperative learning so students help each other and work together,
- Teachers who foster students' academic responsibilities so students value learning and work,
- Moral reflection of reading, writing, discussion,
- A positive moral culture in the school and in the community,
- And parent, student, and community involvement in decisions related to character education programs. (Lickona, 1991, p. 68-70)

In the midst of all the positive findings related to character education, one must also consider the critiques offered about character education. Three recent accounts were

given by James Neill on a website regarding character education through experiential education found at www.wilderdom.com/Character.html. Links were provided to articles by Brookes, 2003; Cornwall, 2005; and Gaimpietro, 2003. Comparisons could be found across the three, but the most recent served as the basis of the argument against teaching character education in schools. Cornwall states that character is "an archaic, quasimetaphysical term" and "with no agreed upon definition, even among proponents of character education that, moreover, confusingly blends personality and behavioral components" (2005). Cornwall contends that because of this, the fundamental problem with character education is there cannot be "accountability for a program that seeks to address something (a quality, ability, aptitude) with no clearly defined or quantifiable attributes and which, therefore, can demonstrate neither need nor success." He continues to remark, "Possibly the most telling indicator that the character education movement builds its educational claims on flawed scientific method and unfounded psychological and social theory is the absence of any study published in peer reviewed journals that would support character education." He asserts that, "Ideologically and politically, it's a fine idea to brandish about nostalgic, unscientific terms like *character*, responsibility, respect, citizenship... But such concerns belong in popular politics and churches, outside the school" (2005).

Despite some negative concern for teaching character education in the schools, most schools comply with federal mandates to include teaching character to students. As previously noted the word "character" comes from the Greek word that means "to mark or engrave." The author of the *Phi Delta Kappa Fastbacks* notes that character traits, then, are impressions "made on a person, an impression that later makes itself known by

the way the person acts" (2002). Whether these impressions are made by society, schools, teachers, or parents, and whether or not it is intentional, children are constantly being engraved upon in this way. It is the responsibility of educators to decide which traits of character should be engraved upon the children and to make sure that the proper engraving occurs. Many programs define the specific traits of the ideal character education program. According to Brynildssen (2002), Character Counts! Coalition offers six "pillars" of good character including trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, and citizenship. *Phi Delta Kappa*'s 2000-2001 Study of Core Values listed learning, honesty, cooperation, service to others, freedom, responsibility, and civility. Lickona (1991) suggests responsibility, respect, tolerance, prudence, self-discipline, helpfulness, compassion, cooperation, courage, honesty, fairness, and democratic values (p. 45).

When considering where character education fits into the curriculum, Ryan and Bohlin say, "The simple answer is this: everywhere" (1999, p. 93). Many methods exist for teaching character traits to students. Kimberly Vess (2003) notes that school systems might opt to "purchase and utilize commercial character education programs such as:

American Promise, Character Works, Character Counts!, and Character Matters."

However, Laura Bryan argues that "character education should not be a discrete curriculum, but should be something children live with every day" (2005). It should be a means for transmitting "core values to children through a variety of educational methods, with the goal of producing adults who behave in virtuous ways" (*Phi Delta Kappa*, 2002). Because of the great responsibility to teach and prepare the next generation, schools should consider a vast array of options for teaching character education.

Throughout the investigation of the literature, most of the authors agree that character education should be fully integrated throughout the entire day and the entire life of the school to have the greatest impact for success (Lickona, 1999; Ryan and Bohlin, 1999; Wynne, 1995). *Phi Delta Kappa* indicates the integrated program should include: strong leadership by the principal and teachers; school policies conducive to building strong character; commitment between the school, parents, and community; virtuous and strong role models in the school community; a positive climate that encourages the practice of virtuous living; and the integration of character education throughout the academic curriculum (2002).

According to *Phi Delta Kappa* (2002), "Some argue that the responsibility for character education should remain with parents or with such community organizations as churches and that schools should not be concerned with this. However, there are many reasons for schools to include character education that works in harmony with parental and community efforts." Further, it states that "It is unreasonable to expect that schools remain value neutral during the course of everyday dealings with children. It also is unreasonable to expect that children will cease to develop morally during these years" (*Phi Delta Kappa*, 2002). Because it takes the involvement and commitment of teachers and parents to make the program successful, the viewpoints of both sides should be considered.

One teacher shares her experience with implementing a character education program into her existing curriculum after considering the impact she had made on the moral development of her students. She states that although she believes that families were the foundation for character development, she also agrees with Thomas Lickona

(1991, p. 5) who states "schools cannot be ethical bystanders at a time when our society is in deep moral trouble." Therefore, rather than revamping her already rigorous curriculum, the teacher looked for ways to shift the focus of her teaching to emphasize themes of character (Singh, 2001). For her particular framework, she utilized the six pillars of character as defined by the Character Counts! Coalition: respect, responsibility, trustworthiness, fairness, caring, and citizenship. To do so, she defined the terms, worked to build a sense of community for her students, actively involved them in the process, incorporated character language into the classroom, and practiced cooperative learning. She says that the results were good for her classroom in that students showed an increase in understanding the six traits and that classroom behavior improved. She further states, "Character education cannot cure all the world's evils, but it can improve our classrooms and influence our students in positive ways, giving them the skills that they will need to be successful adults" (Singh, 2001).

Authors of the article *Character and Academics: What Good Schools Do* (2006) state, "It is clear that well-conceived programs of character education can and should exist side by side with strong academic programs" and that schools should be physically and psychologically safe staffed by teachers who are models of professionalism and caring behaviors toward others. In schools such as these, students achieve academically and "adults understand their role in preparing students for citizenship in a democratic and diverse society" (Benninga, et al., 2006). Their final argument was that their research suggested that "school goals and activities that are associated with good character education programs are also associated with academic achievement," so schools should maintain a rich curriculum that supports all aspects of student development and growth

(Benninga, et al., 2006). Yet when one examines the arguments for implementing character education with a rigorous curriculum, it is necessary to consider the feelings of the educators who will be integrating the two philosophies.

Ryan and Bohlin (1999) reveal that the irony of the very people who enter the profession of teaching with the goal of devoting their lives to the betterment of young people is that they are the very ones who lack preparation for teaching character education (p. 152). A descriptive study by Carla Mathison (1998) regarding how teachers feel about character education involved 150 teachers from four large metropolitan areas in the United States and 137 student teachers. The study queried their general attitudes toward character education, professional responsibilities for character education, degree of preparedness to teach character education, and perceptions of obstacles to character education in the public school. Mathison quoted the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development Panel of Moral Education's definition of moral education as being "whatever schools do to influence how students think, feel, and act regarding issues of right and wrong." She used this definition for character education for her study. General findings were that teachers and student teachers strongly supported the presence of character education in the school. The population reported that discussions about issues of right and wrong were a normal part of classroom instruction. About half of those surveyed reported that discussion of moral issues was a regular part of their childhood school experiences, and nearly 70 percent felt prepared to address moral issues in the classroom with only 13 percent stating it was due to their teacher preparation program. Various reasons were given as obstacles for addressing morality in the

classroom (Mathison, 1998). Perhaps most significantly, 65 percent of those teachers surveyed stated they were unsure of how to put character education into practice.

Methods of Teaching Character Education Through Children's Literature

Programs that emphasize literature as the core of the reading and language arts curriculum are rapidly increasing (Norton, 1997). A literature-based approach uses authentic children's/young adult's literature to promote literacy and to develop an understanding of and appreciation for literature. According to Heilman, Blair, and Rupley (2002), when teachers use literature to support the curriculum, skills can be taught using authentic literature and students see that the major goal of the reading program is to understand, appreciate, and enjoy literature (p. 380). Advocates of using literature in reading curriculum contend that educators can no longer separate learning to read and reading to learn, because the two are so closely interrelated. Authors of *Principles and Practices of Teaching Reading* suggest using award-winning books and classics with students because, "These books encourage students and teachers to explore and discuss selections considered the best in their fields" (Heilman et al., 2002, p. 384).

Cullinan and Galda (2006) reveal that literature is both a window and a mirror to the world. They state that through literature, students learn about people they may never meet and visit places they could never really go in their lifetimes. Morrow, Gambrell, and Pressley confirm this by saying, "We believe that children must see themselves in books to affirm themselves, and must see others to expand their conception of the world" (2003, p. 168). They advocate that teachers select literature for students based upon four principles: (1) the literary quality is demonstrated by reviews, awards, and trusted word-of-mouth recommendations; (2) aesthetic qualities cover a wide array of genres to elicit

thoughtful responses from children; (3) concepts and ideas are suggested so children can grasp them with guidance; and (4) opportunities are presented to lead children to unique discoveries (2003, p. 173). These authors advocate that teachers discuss literature with students because it "allows all children to look inward to examine their values, beliefs, and behaviors" (p. 177).

Laura Bryan (2005) reports that "Many school districts have implemented 'packaged' programs designed to teach character education. Millions of dollars have been spent on these programs, yet society continues to produce more 'characters' than students 'with character.'" Bulach and Butler (2002) state that many school systems are implementing character education curriculums that were borrowed from other school districts or bought from publishers. This method predetermines which character values are taught and also "imposes an additional curriculum that must be taught," which could lead to backlash from the teachers and parents (p. 203). Bryan proposes that schools should shift their way of thinking from a "programmatic" mindset to a non-packaged one through the use of children's literature. She states, "The use of children's literature to teach skills throughout the curriculum is a widely accepted practice" (2005). She argues that most of the purchased school curriculum packages for teaching character education "are simply teaching children to comply with rules rather than helping them develop strong independent character" (2005).

In a *Fastbacks* article found in *Phi Delta Kappa*, the author states, "Character education is important to our children, and children's books are a powerful way to teach character education" (2002). Sheryl O'Sullivan claims that "one of the easiest ways to integrate character education into the curriculum is through the literature we ask children

to study" (2004). She further states that, "stories provide good role models for behavior as well as rules to live by...as long as teachers choose worthwhile books" (2004). Phi Delta Kappa also sees another benefit to integrating character education through literature: it would not require any additional time during the school day (2002). C.S. Lewis claimed in his book On Stories that books serve "to present what the narrow and desperately practical perspectives of real life exclude" (1982, p. 10). William Edgington states, "The primary reason for using literature in character education is the relevance to the lives of the children that literature can afford" (2002). Lickona (1991) also claims, "Teachers have traditionally looked to literature as a way of instilling a felt sense of right and wrong" (p. 60). Ryan and Bohlin (1999) claim that it takes literature to shape students: "Good stories...enlarge our students' minds and hearts... Stories not only nourish the imagination, they nourish the soul" (p. 103). The authors state that "Young people need to know that developing virtue also brings with it adventure and enjoyment. They need to experience the imaginative side of character education as well as the intellectual one" (p. 101).

In their combined effort, *Books that Build Character*, Kilpatrick, Wolfe, and Wolfe list four reasons why children's books are complementary for teaching character. The first reason is that stories create an emotional attachment to goodness and a desire to do the right thing. Second, stories provide a wealth of good examples. The characters presented are strong role models, not flat or superficial characters. The author of *Phi Delta Kappa* says that the characters are not part of "children's stories specifically designed to highlight a specific virtue; rather, they are the real, blood-and guts characters of high-quality children's literature" (2002). Third, stories help young students become

familiar with the codes of conduct they need for society. They allow children to reflect upon and even debate what is considered correct and right within a particular context. Finally, stories help students to make sense out of life (1994, p. 18). Children can begin to see how they, in their own lives, are powerful and significant. These authors also note that good stories provide codes of conduct (honesty, courage, kindness) and good example (Abraham Lincoln, Harriet Tubman, Joan of Arc). They say, "Stories acquaint us with ideals by which people in our society hope to live, and they give examples of people trying to live by those standards" (Kilpatrick, Wolfe, & Wolfe, 1994, p. 28).

One author, Leticia De Leon, verifies the impact literature has on students when she conducted a study integrating multicultural literature to help develop self-worth in her students. After introducing a particular book to the students, she noted that, "All the students found something about themselves, their families, or neighbors in the book, claiming they never felt so many emotions when reading" (2002). She found that literature proved to be an effective avenue to allow her students to openly discuss ideas about what they read. She said that this was important because, "Their minds are still expanding, their values are still developing, and their humanity is still being shaped" (2002). De Leon concludes that "reading is a very personal activity, one that affects the readers on many levels, not just the academic;" it can touch them personally (2002).

In a publication by the U.S. Department of Education, literature is emphasized for teaching character traits:

Literature can be a very powerful teaching tool. In fact, people in stories, poems and plays can influence children almost as much as the real people who read with them. Therefore, reading to and with children, encouraging older children to read

on their own and talking with children about the books they read are important ways to help children learn about and develop the values of strong character and good citizenship. (2005)

In the *Fastbacks* article in *Phi Delta Kappa*, the author notes children's books, "show moral dilemmas in rich complexity through circumstances that are understandable to a child" (2002). The website for the Josephson Institute of Ethics stresses that good decisions are both ethical and effective in that they are consistent with the pillars of character and they accomplish or advance the intended purposes of the individual (<a href="www.josephsoninstitute.org">www.josephsoninstitute.org</a>). Books usually show children close to the reader's age engaging in moral dilemmas and emerging in a victorious fashion that might be considered both ethical and effective. The author further notes that "Through stories, children learn what is expected of them to lead a virtuous life" and "can learn vicariously the consequences of the choices they make for good or ill" (2002).

The *Fastbacks* article found in *Phi Delta Kappa* offers three principles to guide teachers in using literature to teach character education. First, one must choose good literature and the chosen books should be of exceptional quality with strong literary elements. The characters must be complex and worthy of being a role model. Further, the characters should be close to the students' developmental level. The author specifically states, "To facilitate character education, we must choose books in which the traits we hope to instill are displayed in action. If these traits are in the book, it will be quite easy to bring them into our discussions as soon as we move from the literal to a more critical understanding of the book" (2002). Second, one must move beyond the literal understanding of the literature selected. This means propelling students past the literal

level to one that requires critical thinking, a critical component of character education.

Third, one must be intentional in focusing on the development of values.

Amanda Cain, in her article *Books and Becoming Good*, states the "concept of how a young person learns to take the 'proper pleasure' in acting well might be made more tangible, however, with an example from an actual imaginative work" (2005).

Laura Bryan studied the values found in fairy tales. She notes, "The basic purpose of any fairy tale is to tell an entertaining story. Yet, in a collection of tales such as the ones by the brothers Grimm, elemental truths of moral law and general types of human experiences are presented" (2005). She goes on to say, "These tales provide interesting stories that are designed to catch the attention of young people while alluding to the virtues of kindness, sweetness, love, courage, endurance, obedience, caring, consideration, and loyalty" (Bryan, 2005). Although fairy tales are one avenue, there proves to be a wide variety of literary types for teaching character education. As Otten (2002) states, "It is best to expose students to a wide variety of literature."

Further supporters of exposing children to a variety of literature are authors

Cynthia K. Richey and Doreen S. Hurley, who speak against using Bennett's *The*Children's Book of Virtues and other similar anthologies. They state that books such as those "contain excerpts from books, stories, poems, plays, etc. The disadvantage of such collections is that they consist, primarily of pieces of a whole, and cannot possibly have a long-term effect on a child, let alone leave a life-defining impression" (1996). They argue that "despite their editors' admirable intent, these books do little to inspire or enrich young lives" (Richey & Hurley, 1996). Instead, the authors offer another suggestion: "We know that reading complete, high-quality books can help children in the

development of character, of a strong psyche, of individual and social responsibility" (1996). They strongly advocate using books to help children combat the pressures of society: "Youngsters today are exposed to so many differing ideals as well as social viewpoints that it is sometimes difficult for the adults in their lives to help them sort out and acquire desirable values. Books can and do make a difference" (Richey & Hurley, 1996).

William D. Edgington (2002) offers that over the past thirty years schools have taken four approaches to using character education and literature. These include values inculcation, values clarification, values analysis, and moral reasoning. Values inculcation is "the most traditional approach used in character education" (Edgington, 2002). It is defined as the act of transmitting a predetermined set of values to students. Using literature for this process helps students identify, comprehend, and apply core values.

Values clarification involves having students identify their own individual values preferences. They can reflect on, confirm, or change their value choices. With this method, students use literature to help them define their values preferences and compare them with the core values of society (Edgington, 2002).

The premise of values analysis is to take a logical approach. Students examine alternatives and consequences that might come from them. They use logic and reasoning to make and justify decisions. With this approach, literature is used either individually by students or groups of students, directed by the teacher, to assist in a logical process to make a values decision (Edgington, 2002).

Finally, the fourth approach schools use is moral reasoning, which is based on Kohlberg's premise that making values decisions is a developmental process. With the

moral reasoning approach, teachers do not declare a judgment about the choices made by students or the values that shaped their decisions. According to this type of theory, the "important part of moral reasoning is not the answer given, but the reasoning behind the answer" (Edgington, 2002). For moral reasoning, teachers need to give students the opportunity to explore the perspectives of people found in the literature and the reasoning behind their actions and responses to situations. Edgington concludes that "literature provides an important component to education: relevance to the lives of the students...It provides a more powerful mode of character education than a simplistic 'trait-of-theweek' strategy" (Edgington, 2002). Further, the author emphasizes that the use of literature in character education is applicable to every grade level and ability level. It is simply up to the educator to make it effective.

One teacher, Jami L. Jones, states, "There is no better way to teach character than through literature" (2003). She studied teaching character education and "somebodiness" through an age span range of children's literature from Dr. Seuss to Dr. Martin Luther King. Another teacher of literature, Celia Ann Durboraw, praised the value of the narrative for teaching moral values. In her article *Teaching Moral Values Through Literature*, she discusses how stories teach readers that there are consequences for their actions and how stories ignite empathy in the reader. The author states, "I am sure that there is no better way of presenting universal values and making students truly aware of them than through literature...The protagonist may either resist or yield, but in either case young people are seeing that actions do have a reaction. They are learning cause-effect sequence, that what you do bears consequences as portrayed through the happy or sad ending" (Durboraw, 2001).

Shawna Brynildssen (2002) says, "Merely having students read about exemplary characters making good choices will do little, if anything, to change either thinking or behavior." Therefore, she offers instructional strategies for teachers to use with students that are based upon the ideas of reflection and response. These include discussion, debate, research, role-playing, and essay or journal writing (Brynildssen, 2002).

Teaching values to children in a way that is developmentally appropriate and that does not overcrowd a packed school curriculum is quite challenging. The author in *Phi Delta Kappa* states that "Children's literature is uniquely suited to meet this challenge...[Books] show noble people, usually close to the reader's own age, engaging in these moral dilemmas and emerging stronger, wiser, and victorious in some way. Through stories, children learn what is expected of them to lead a virtuous life and how they might go about doing this" (2002). The author further notes that most books represent more than one value, and that character education through literature provides a "spiraling effect in which most virtues are revisited again and again in different vicarious situations" (2002). Teachers were encouraged by the author to take advantage of the unique opportunity and special duty they have "to work intentionally and with vigor toward helping children develop good character," and that "children's literature is a natural vehicle for this important work" (*Phi Delta Kappa*, 2002).

# Character Traits Found in Children's Literature

Amanda Cain states, "The idea that certain virtues are vulnerable during youth raises a problem for contemporary educators as they consider what and how young people should read (2005). Librarian Judith Rovenger states that her role as librarian and educator is to "provide children with as many opportunities as possible to come into

contact with literature that will help them to speculate, think about, practice, and reflect upon how they want to conduct their lives" (1988, p. 45). She went on to say that she feels it is her responsibility to introduce books that will serve as "moral points of reference" (1988, p. 46). Rovenger further notes that "Recently, more and more books are being published which deal with values clarification and ethical considerations as central themes" (1988, p. 45).

Literature with such themes becomes the heart of curriculum for all ages. Nancy McLaren (1997) explains a certain curriculum entitled *The Art of Loving Well: A Character Education Curriculum for Today's Teenagers* based on quality literature that is specifically designed to help preteens and adolescents learn social and emotional skills to develop responsible sexual values. The idea is that through literature, "Adults and youths can explore fundamental questions about all kinds of relationships and learn from one another without embarrassment as they talk about fictional characters and situations" (McLaren, 1997).

Mary Renck Jalongo shares about using stories to teach "subtle yet significant life lessons" to her students (2004). Particularly, she used high-quality picture books which she claims were "the perfect teaching tool because they deal with powerful emotions, model effective coping strategies, and pen complex concepts in developmentally effective ways that even the youngest child understand" (2004). She also reminds the reader of the debate that comes from discussing character development in the form of objections "raised by those who fear it might preempt family values or venture into religious ground," yet she states that there are "virtues in human beings on which most of

us can agree" and that they must be nurtured in young children "because we prize them in others and strive to develop them in ourselves" (2004).

Jalongo, in her article *Stories That Teach Life Lessons*, presents steps for teachers to take specifically when sharing children's literature to teach character traits. She says, before the teacher reads, he/she should preview the book, carefully considering the sensitivity level of students. Next, the teacher should set a purpose at the outset of story time and share this with students so they are listening purposefully during the story reading. While the teacher is reading, he/she should draw attention to the point of the story by 'wondering aloud' while turning pages. After the reading, the teacher should develop skills in leading discussions based on identification, emotional release, and insight. Jalongo stressed that every child should have an opportunity to comment and participate (2004).

While Jalongo focuses on the youngest readers benefiting from character education through literature, John Blackwell focuses on adults finding benefits from using literature. In his article, *Use of Great Books in the Development of Assertiveness*, the author shows how the principals of schools met together to read the classics of literature to acquire positive assertiveness—the key to "recognizing truth, goodness, and beauty" (Blackwell, 2003). The results were that "principals who had been buried in administration, read literature that they had not touched for years. Some were reading great books for the first time. By their own admission, they were not only challenged, but transformed" (Blackwell, 2003).

Dorothy J. Leal conducted several studies about character traits found in literature. In 1997, she conducted a study of 76 Newbery Medal winning books from

1922 through 1996 to analyze what character messages are being sent through literature. She explained her study and encouraged classroom teachers to conduct similar research, using her coding system, in their own classrooms with quality literature (Leal, 1999). Leal offers suggestions beyond Newbery titles of books that exemplify good character. She notes that "annotated bibliographies of children's and young adults' literature provide a generalized overview of selected literature with identified character traits, while others provide a list of quality literature with moral values according to genre" (2000, p. 51). Additional book lists at various age levels have been identified and labeled with appropriate character traits and are available in several sources including the publication from the U.S. Department of Education *How Can We Help Children Learn About Character?* (2005), O' Sullivan's "books to live by" (2004), Frailick's "Character and Citizenship" (1997), and the author's suggestions found in *Phi Delta Kappa Fastback* for "books teachers should use" (2002).

# The Use of Newbery Books by Teachers

Teacher Richard Barbieri asked what types of books he should read to keep up with his students. He states that, "The answers almost invariably headed me toward Newbery Award winners and nominees" (2000). In his article, Barbieri speaks of the merit of the Newbery since its founding in 1922. When examining the content of the books, he notes, "Hispanics, Native American, and Asian Americans have all been nominated frequently, and a child could tour the whole world, from Africa to Armenia, Iceland to Japan, reading the Newberys" (Barbieri, 2000). Across the decades various themes have emerged. Barbieri pointed out that the 1930s and 1940s tended toward nonfiction and patriotism, while recently, the winners have been largely fiction centered

on genres of historical re-creations, fantasies, and stories of struggle and hardship (2000). He further states that some of the winners focus on "moral issues usually more prominently and directly handled than in adult literature" (Barbieri, 2000).

Mara L. Houdyshell and Janice J. Kirkland (1998) did a study on Newbery books from 1922-1933 and 1985-1996 that centered on how the heroine is portrayed. In several of the books studied, the authors note that "each book presents the central female characters in a positive light to the reader" and that they were portrayed as "independent, self-reliant individuals" of character (1998). Other female characters from the books were found to have self-worth, confidence, compassion, responsibility, and one was even noted as having a "willingness to cope with adversity" (Houdyshell & Kirkland, 1998). Although the focus of their study varied slightly from the Leal and Barbieri studies, the Houdyshell and Kirkland study was still found to contain information for using the Newbery books to teach character traits to females.

From personal experience in working with pre-service teachers, this researcher has concluded that teachers today often are at a loss for exactly what to teach and how to teach most effectively. It would seem safe to conclude that most discussions that involve teachers and students discussing quality literature will eventually center on the topic of character traits. Yet these may be overlooked if they are not specifically targeted during the discussion by the teacher and brought to light in such a way that students have meaningful and personal reflection on the character attributes mentioned in discussion. The author of the *Fastbacks* article suggests that in order to intentionally integrate character education into book discussions, a teacher might consider the use of text sets (*Phi Delta Kappa*, 2002). The author defines these as, "collections of books that are

organized around a common theme, such as courage" and stretch across authors, ability levels, and genres. The author gives ideas for picture books and chapter books centered around themes including courage, responsibility, compassion, and sacrifice (*Phi Delta Kappa*, 2002). Although many titles are suggested, this researcher did observe that the majority of titles for the chapter books were, indeed, Newbery Award winning books across the decades.

In addition to text sets, other articles revealed ideas for using Newbery books in the classroom. Lisa Von Drasek encourages teachers to hold mock elections of Newbery Award winning books. She states, "Participating in a book award process will improve students' awareness of excellence in literature and also give them an opportunity to hone critical thinking, communication, and listening skills" (2003). She recommends that teachers read *Newbery and Caldecott Mock Elections* by Kathleen Simonetta, Nancy Hackett and Linda Ward-Callaghan to obtain ideas, tips, guidelines, and reproducible voting sheets for conducting one's own mock elections in schools. Additionally, Von Drasek suggests teachers visit the website of Theresa Young Brantely who served on the 1999 Newbery committee that chose Louis Sachar's *Holes* as the winner.

Another way to use Newbery books in the classrooms is to help instill in students a true love of literature and to identify with lead characters as they make decisions.

Authors Audrey A. Friedman and Christina A. Cataldo remind readers that over the past couple of decades, young adult literature has become the heart of language arts curriculum in middle schools across America. Rather than using anthologies, worksheets, and textbooks, teachers are shifting their teaching tools to include authentic reading material (2002). Friedman and Cataldo even recognize the influence of the Newbery

books: "Among the most widely read titles in and out of school are books that have won the Newbery Medal" (Friedman & Cataldo, 2002). The authors note that in the Newbery novels, characters close to the same age of their readers face moral dilemmas and as a result "develop insight, independence, and more mature levels of judgment as they meet and overcome the challenges of growing up" (2002). The authors contend that middle readers could vicariously experience these dilemmas, and through personal reflection, arrive at conclusions about decisions they would personally make if facing the same dilemma as the protagonists in the Newbery books. Specifically, Friedman and Cataldo state, "Main characters in these books are dynamic role models for all of us as they reason through difficult dilemmas, making decisions based on their developing processes of inquiry" and cognitive reasoning about "ill-defined problems" (2002).

After providing several examples of Newbery titles, including *Number the Stars* (Lowry, 1989), *Missing May* (Rylant, 1992), *Walk Two Moons* (Creech, 1994), and others, Friedman and Cataldo note, that "although good literature is meant to be simply read and enjoyed, there are several activities that can help young readers to recognize just how special these Newbery characters are and connect to them" (2002). The first idea was doing simulations based on similar dilemmas the protagonist faced in the book. For example, the teacher might challenge students to think about how they would survive if they were facing circumstances like those found in *Maniac Magee* (Spinelli, 1990). The second idea shared for using Newbery books was doing dilemma worksheets. These were created by the authors and were used to "help students organize their thinking about a character's and their own decision making" to develop more mature reasoning. The third idea the authors presented was having philosophical discussions to ponder the pros and

cons of dilemmas so that students could examine their own personal beliefs and convictions on issues presented. In conclusion, Friedman and Cataldo state, "Newbery characters help adolescent readers experience a process of decision making based on sound reasoning, honesty, and compassion" (2002).

Dorothy J. Leal, Catherine H. Glascock, Deirdre Mitchell, and Darlene Wasserman note, "Award winning literature such as the Newbery books have become so prestigious that these books are found in the majority of elementary and middle school classrooms today" (2000, p. 51). Additionally, they note that even though using children's literature is rising in its importance in today's classrooms, "Schools are also becoming more concerned and involved in the moral development of the next generation through character education" (2000, p. 50). Leal and her co-authors advocate the use of Newbery books for teaching character to young students. They note, "Moral reasoning in the form of reading and discovering whether the reader's decisions about certain situations match the character's actions is recognized as a personal value of literature for children" (2000, p. 51). The Leal et al. study concludes that the "Newbery medal books can be counted on as excellent examples of books that can help nurture virtue and morality" (2000, p. 52).

### Similar Research Studies Conducted

A library database search for similar studies conducted revealed many sources to compare to the current research proposed by the researcher. Additionally, the studies have been analyzed to assure that an exact study has not been done so that the current study would have significance and impact on the field of education. One similar study by Marsha Lippincott revealed an analysis of children's literature to examine perceptions of

fear in text and illustrations (2002). Deirdre Ruth Mitchell studied adult and child perceptions of character traits in the Caldecott Medal winning picture books (1999). Carol Yandell, under the supervision of Emilie P. Sullivan (1990), did a study on the spiritual values identified by school children and librarians in the Newbery Medal and Honor books. Rodney E. Warfield (1986) studied love and belonging portrayed in Newbery Award winners from 1960-1985. Ruth Phelps (1985) compared Newbery Award winning books of the first and last decades covering 1922-31 and 1976-85. Gwendolyn Wallace studied changing perceptions of equality and achievement reflected in Newbery Award books between the time period of the two World Wars (1981). Ardyth Moorcroft (1992) investigated the portrayal of girls and women in eight Newbery Award winning books between 1950 and 1990. Carol Jasperse Lautenbach (2004) looked at the kinds of adolescent leaders that were revealed in Newbery books. Janet Powell et al. (1998) looked at the history of gender roles in the Newbery Medal books. Sherron Killingsworth Roberts (1998) wrote about the female rescuer in Newbery books. Kimberly Bartels Martin (1990) studied the portrayal of Jewish and Christian lifestyles in Newbery books from 1960-1990. Kinman and Darwin studied sexism in Newbery books from 1977-1984. Taylor and Napier (1992) identified the portrayal of economic deprivation in thirty Newbery and Caldecott Award winning books. Doris Gary (1984) studied black characters found in Newbery and Caldecott Award winning books.

The most relevant and similar study was conducted by Dorothy J. Leal in which she studied Newbery Award books to analyze for character traits. Leal did her dissertation study on Newbery books through the year 1996. From the study, she advocated the use of Newbery books for teaching character to young students. Leal's

study concluded that the "Newbery medal books can be counted on as excellent examples of books that can help nurture virtue and morality" (2000, p. 52). Since Leal's study concluded with the Newbery Medal book from 1996, this current study continued with the analysis of the books from 1997 to 2007.

### Summary

History reveals attempts at educating children for character from the earliest colonies in 1642 to present day concerns for the moral make-up of America. Currently, the increase in violence occurring in our nation's schools has once again placed character education at the forefront of educational reform legislation such as *No Child Left Behind*. As a result, schools are under much pressure to add character education to an already rigorous curriculum. Several authors, along with the researcher, propose teaching character education through the use of quality children's literature such as that selected by the American Library Association for the Newbery Award medal. Many contend that character traits can be revealed through meaningful discussion of children's literature. Since teachers are mandated to teach character education and most schools and libraries already use Newbery Award winning books, the researcher recognized the need to analyze carefully the Newbery Award winning books from 1997-2007 for examples of character traits that may be revealed.

### CHAPTER 3

### **METHODOLOGY**

### Introduction

In Chapter 2, the literature was reviewed and from this, the researcher determined an obvious need for this particular study. This chapter overviews why content analysis was used, how content analysis was used, the development of the coding system, the selection of readers, the selection of books, the book assignments, the inter-rater agreement, and procedures used for the study. It should be noted that the study made no attempt to examine the effect of the content on the reader. Instead, it was to contribute to the body of knowledge concerned with the portrayal of exemplary character traits in Newbery Award winning books which met the criteria of the study.

# Content Analysis

Ary, Jacobs, and Razavieh (2002), define content analysis as "a research method applied to written or visual materials for the purpose of identifying specified characteristics of the material." Some purposes for educational research are:

- 1. To identify bias, prejudice, or propaganda in textbooks.
- 2. To analyze types of errors in students' writing.
- 3. To describe prevailing practices.
- 4. To discover the level of difficulty of material in textbooks or other publications.
- 5. To discover the relative importance of, or interest in, certain topics.

Babbie (2005) defines content analysis as a part of qualitative analysis. He states qualitative analysis is "the nonnumerical examination and interpretation of observations, for the purpose of discovering underlying meanings and patterns of relationships" (p. 394-395). Babbie encourages researchers to note both frequencies (how often something occurs) and magnitudes (to what level it is displayed) when looking for patterns. Babbie then notes that coding involves "classifying or categorizing individual pieces of data" and can be coding sentences, paragraphs, chapters, or entire books (2005, p. 394-395). Babbie also explains various parts of coding, including open coding, memoing, and using a code book.

Babbie defines open coding as the initial classification and labeling of concepts in qualitative data analysis, and these codes are suggested by the researcher examining the data (2005, p. 395). Memoing is the writing of memos or notes that become part of the data that will be analyzed in qualitative research. These memos help to describe and define concepts or may reveal insight into the researcher's thought processes (2005, p. 397). Babbie (2005) suggests the use of a codebook which is a "document used in data processing and analysis that tells the location of different data items in a data file" (p. 418). It is typically used to identify the locations of items of data and the meaning of the codes used to represent variables. Although content analysis is typically used in qualitative research, Babbie also states that content data can be evaluated quantitatively, but the "coding operation must be amenable to data processing" (2005, p. 335). In other words, the end product of coding must be numerical.

### How Content Analysis Was Used

The researcher used the fifth purpose outlined by Ary et al. (2002), to discover the relative importance of, or interest in, certain topics (2002). The researcher examined text to see the coverage given for example elements of character. Ary et al. (2002), illustrates the steps involved in content analysis including:

- 1. *Specifying the phenomenon to be investigated.* The researcher chose to study character traits.
- 2. Selecting the media from which the observations are to be made. The researcher chose the Newbery books from 1997-2007.
- 3. Formulating exhaustive and mutually exclusive coding categories. The researcher developed a frequency coding system for raters.
- 4. *Deciding on the sampling plan to be used*. The researcher, along with a panel of readers, examined the Newbery medal winning books from 1997-2007.
- 5. Training the coders. The readers participated in a training session on how to use the code book to mark frequencies of occurrences of character traits in the text. The training session was led by the researcher to ensure inter-rater agreement.
- Analyzing the data. The researcher compared the ratings of three raters with her own frequencies in each category. A numerical end product was the result, as defined by using quantitative content analysis according to Babbie (2005, p. 335).

Because the content analysis was based on analyzing subjective content such as values, the researcher sought advice on conducting values-analysis. In an older document,

author Ralph K. White (1951) states, "The purpose of value-analysis is to provide a method by which any kind of verbal data...can be described quantitatively, with a maximum of objectivity and at the same time with a maximum of relevance to the underlying emotional dynamics" (p. 1). He outlines three steps for conducting value-analysis: (1) Put in the margin a symbol corresponding to each goal and each value-judgment that is explicitly stated in the material, or clearly implied by it. (2) Tabulate these symbols. (3) Interpret each numerical result in the light of the picture as a whole, with special attention to the person's possible reasons for conscious concealment or unconscious self-deception (1951, p. 2).

# Development of the Coding System

The coding system was developed by the researcher to address the questions of the study. Ideas for developing the coding system came from comparisons of frequency coding systems used by researchers conducting similar content analysis studies (Adamson, 1981; Bulach & Butler, 2002; Cates, 2002; Edgington, 1996; Groce, 2001; Leal, 1999; and Sullivan & Yandell, n.d.). The coding system consisted of simple frequency recording for each of the character example elements expressed in each book.

# Makeup of the Coding System

The coding system was presented to the readers and was comprised of multiple sections used in reading each book. The first section provided general information such as the reviewer's name, title of the book, year it received the Newbery Award, number of pages, list of the main characters (to be completed while reading), and the theme of the book. The second section was a positive character trait ranking form that was used with each book title. The third section was the negative character trait ranking form that was

used with each book title. The fourth through twelfth sections are similar in format, but the heading of each page changed in relation to the specific character example element. Definitions were given prior to each section for reader clarity when reading. The fourth through twelfth sections followed the same format and can be found in Appendix B. The codebook in its entirety can be found in Appendix D.

### Selection of Readers

More than one rater is known to enhance the reliability and reproducibility in a content analysis study. Therefore, three raters were chosen in addition to the researcher to read and analyze the Newbery Award books using the coding system described. One rater is currently a librarian in an intermediate school where she formerly served as a classroom teacher of third through fifth grade for eight years and used Newbery Award books in her curriculum. The second rater is an instructor of psychology and sociology at Southwest Baptist University. She is a mother of three children ranging in ages from 8-18. The third rater is a university librarian, has been a 5<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> grade teacher, a K-12 school librarian, has four children ranging in ages from 9-23, has read thousands of children's books, and recently completed the first draft of a young adult novel.

# Selection of Books

When selecting the book sample for use in this study, the researcher considered several factors. First, the genre of books chosen should portray protagonists in true life situations where they may or may not be seen as role models for children and young adult readers. Second, the books utilized should be those widely read and recognized as outstanding literature. Third, the books should have been published within a time frame which would make them known and available to professional staff and children. The

Newbery Award winning books from 1997-2007 were selected to study. These books are readily available in school and public libraries and are highly recommended by literary experts for children's reading (Heilman, et al., 2002, p.384; Morrow, et al, 2003, p. 174). In addition, the Newbery books are generally appropriate for intermediate-grade level reading. Table 1 identifies the titles of these books and the year in which the book received the Newbery Award. The information provided in Appendix A contains one sentence summaries of these books.

Table 1

Newbery Books from 1997-2007

1997	View From Saturday
1998	Out of the Dust
1999	Holes
2000	Bud, Not Buddy
2001	A Year Down Yonder
2002	A Single Shard
2003	Crispin: The Cross of Lead
2004	The Tale of Despereaux: Being the Story of a Mouse, a Princess, Some
	Soup, and a Spool of Thread
2005	Kira-Kira
2006	Criss Cross
2007	The Higher Power of Lucky

# Book Assignments

The readers were provided individual copies of the Newbery Award books on a weekly basis. Each book was read and rated by all three of the readers, as well as by the researcher. Table 2 identifies the reading system that was used.

Table 2

Reading System for Raters

	Researcher	Rater #1-3
Practice book	Week 1	Week 1
1997	Week 2	Week 2
1998	Week 3	Week 3
1999	Week 4	Week 4
2000	Week 5	Week 5
2001	Week 6	Week 6
2002	Week 7	Week 7
2003	Week 8	Week 8
2004	Week 9	Week 9
2005	Week 10	Week 10
2006	Week 11	Week 11
2007	Week 12	Week 12

### *Inter-rater Agreement*

Ary et al. (2002) states that qualitative researchers use the term *dependability* rather than *reliability*. The authors note that dependability is defined as consistency that "is looked at as the extent to which variation can be tracked or explained" (p. 455). Several strategies were presented in the text, and the ones pertinent to this study are described. First, Ary et al. recommend that the audit trail is one of the best ways to establish dependability. Audit trails provide a means by which others can determine how decisions were made contributing to the unique qualities of the situation. This is done with thorough, well organized record keeping, and in retrievable form (2002, p. 455). Another recommendation by Ary et al. (2002) is the use of inter-rater agreement methods in which multiple observers are used. The authors suggest one way to obtain a measure of agreement among observers is to calculate the ratio of agreements to total agreements plus disagreements (p. 456). A final suggestion is through investigator triangulation to establish credibility and dependability. This process involves having multiple researchers collect data independently and compare the collected data so that outside reviewers are less likely to question the data (Ary et al., 2002, p. 452-453). Babbie confirms this in stating that replication of the research process increases the validity of the study especially in the cases of subjective evaluations (2005, p. 335). Further, based upon the type of research conducted, the researcher concludes that transferability could occur on various content analysis studies of similar nature (Ary et al., 2002, p. 454).

To help assure inter-rater agreement, *Sarah*, *Plain and Tall* (1985), by Patricia MacLachlan, a former Newbery Award winning book, was read and discussed before the study began to familiarize the readers with the coding system. This book was selected

because it is a short, easy read; is a former Newbery Award winning book; and has been identified by U.S. Department of Education Secretary Margaret Spellings as being a book that "can support character development," including elements of courage, respect, honesty, self-discipline, and good judgment. Because of the subjective nature of character example elements, it was not necessary that readers agree one hundred percent during this study. Instead, the inter-rater agreement was used to note divergent ways of clarifying character example elements. Readers met after reading completion to discuss their observations and character example element ratings found from the books so that consensus could be attempted.

#### **Procedures**

A codebook was developed by the researcher after studying and modifying frequency tables and codebooks developed by other researchers (Adamson, 1981; Bulach & Butler, 2002; Cates, 2002; Edgington, 1996; Groce, 2001; Leal, 1999; and Sullivan & Yandell, n.d.). On a weekly basis, each panel member independently read and evaluated the books based on the definitions of the category system. For each book, raters cited page numbers and direct instances from the text to support their evaluations. Raters were directed to read each book under the assumption that the content would not contain example elements of character until they identified something in the text that fit a character trait description. At the end of each week, the readers conferred on their findings in an attempt to gain consensus. The information gained from each rater was individually reported in the codebook, and a conclusive consensus rating form was also reported after group discussion of each text. Written comments were collected for qualitative study purposes and frequency counts were collected on each book and

reported for quantitative study purposes. Frequency distributions are given to describe the number of times that the various attributes of a variable were observed in a sample (Babbie, 2005, p. 412) and statistical representations of the mean and mode are shared.

### **CHAPTER 4**

### DATA ANALYSIS RESULTS

### Introduction

The primary purpose of this study was to analyze Newbery Award winning books from 1997-2007 for example elements of character education as specified by the acronym C.H.A.R.A.C.T.E.R. created by the researcher. In Chapter 3, the methodology for the study was explained. The researcher presented how a coding system was developed and used to conduct content analysis of the Newbery Award winning books from 1997-2007. Explanation was given as to the selection of the books, the readers, and how the study would be conducted. This chapter will describe the process involved in the data analysis and present the results of the content analysis study. Both quantitative and qualitative analyses will be presented.

### Data Analysis

Beginning in the summer of 2007, the researcher and the panel of readers began to read and analyze each of the Newbery Award winning books from 1997-2007. Enough copies of the books were obtained so that each reader could simultaneously read the specified title for the week, conduct individual content analysis, and meet together to discuss findings and attempt to form consensus. Originally, the group agreed to read one book per week for a total of twelve weeks. The first week was set aside to use a practice book to learn the coding system and agree upon definitions and examples of each character example element. However, in reality, the study took several weeks longer as various life issues forced delays in reading and meeting for consensus.

The process involved each reader obtaining a copy of the code book (see Appendix D) to use for marking frequencies of character example elements revealed when reading. The first page of the code book required each reader to write the title, author, year of the award, number of pages, list of main characters, theme of the book, and comments regarding the selection of the C.H.A.R.A.C.T.E.R. example elements for the theme. Pages two and three of the code book offered definitions and instances of each C.H.A.R.A.C.T.E.R. example element and its opposite trait. Page four presented a table for the reader to tally mark the frequency of times the trait was demonstrated by the major character(s), frequency of times the trait was displayed by the minor character(s), page numbers of best examples, a column for ranking incidences, and a column for ranking the theme.

Readers ranked the quantity of positive character traits in the book on a scale of 0-3. A rank of 0 meant that a positive portrayal of the character example element was not found at all. A rank of 1 meant that a positive portrayal of the character example element was occasionally found. A rank of 2 indicated that a positive portrayal of the character example element was frequently found. A rank of 3 revealed that a positive portrayal of the character example element was abundant.

Readers ranked the portrayal of character example elements as an overall theme for the book on a scale of 0-3. A rank of 0 showed that the character trait was not at all present as a theme for the book. A rank of 1 meant that the character trait was a weak theme in the book. A rank of 2 showed the character trait was a moderate theme for the book. A rank of 3 revealed that the character trait was a strong theme for the book.

The fifth page of the code book was a table for readers to tally frequency of times the negative character trait was demonstrated by the major and minor character(s), a place to mark page numbers of examples, and a column to mark the incident rank. Readers ranked the quantity of negative character traits on a scale of 0-3. A rank of 0 meant that a negative portrayal of the character example element was not found at all. A rank of 1 showed a negative portrayal of the character example element was occasionally found. A rank of 2 represented a negative portrayal of the character example element was frequently found. A rank of 3 meant a negative portrayal of the character example element was abundant.

Pages 6-14 of the codebook followed the same pattern, but were specific for each C.H.A.R.A.C.T.E.R. example element. On each page, the reader was to mark the frequencies and page numbers if the trait was directly mentioned in the text, was shown by the main character(s), was shown by minor character(s), if the opposite trait was shown, and the points or page numbers in the story when the main character(s) learned the importance of the trait. Additionally, a combined total of demonstrations by the major and minor characters were given to reveal a total number of times the example element was displayed in each book.

At the weekly consensus meetings, the readers would share their total frequencies of positive character traits exemplified by major and minor characters, page numbers of best examples, incident ranks, and theme ranks, as well as negative character traits noted by major and minor characters, page numbers of best examples, and incident ranks. The researcher would record the oral contributions of panel members on pages 4 and 5 of the consensus codebook labeled for each individual book. A discussion would follow to

determine which of the C.H.A.R.A.C.T.E.R. example elements best served as a theme for each book. All readers were able to argue their side and consensus would be reached based on the discussion. The collective comments were written on page one of the corresponding consensus codebook and the meeting would adjourn.

Immediately following each consensus meeting, the researcher would analyze pages 6-14 of each reader's codebook for frequencies and page numbers. The researcher charted the findings of each reader based on the way she marked the frequencies and page numbers if the trait was directly mentioned in the text, was shown by the main character(s), was shown by minor character(s), if the opposite trait was shown, and the points or page numbers in the story when the main character(s) learned the importance of the trait. If two or more readers agreed on a particular incident marked, then consensus had occurred and that page number would be marked on the consensus codebook. The information obtained from the consensus codebook was entered into the computer and individual codebooks were created in this same fashion for each of the eleven Newbery Award winning books.

#### Results

The researcher then took the data obtained from the codebooks and entered it into the SPSS computer program. For each book, the following variables were used:

- 1. Frequency of specific example element mentioned in the text
- 2. Frequency of specific example element shown by main character(s)
- 3. Frequency of specific example element shown by minor character(s)
- 4. Frequency of opposite example element displayed

5. Frequency of times the main character(s) learned the importance of the specific example element.

Tables were then created to make sense of the collected data. The remainder of this chapter will present the quantitative and qualitative results from the collected data.

# Quantitative Analysis

The example elements analyzed were based upon the following character traits:

C (also shown as C/C)—caring and compassionate

H—helpfulness

A (also shown as Acc)—acceptance

R (also shown as Rspc)—respect

A (also shown as Amb)—ambition

C—citizenship

T—trustworthiness

E—encouragement

R (also shown as Rspn)—responsibility.

Additionally, it should be noted that when selections are listed by year only, the following titles are assumed:

1997—The View From Saturday

1998—Out of the Dust

1999—*Holes* 

2000—Bud, Not Buddy

2001—A Year Down Yonder

2002—A Single Shard

2003—Crispin: The Cross of Lead

2004—The Tale of Despereaux

2005—Kira-Kira

2006—Criss Cross

2007—The Higher Power of Lucky.

Frequency of Example Elements Demonstrated by Major and Minor Characters

Table 1 shows the number of times each specific character trait was demonstrated by characters in the text. Results reveal that the strongest character trait across all eleven books was that of caring/compassionate. The weakest character trait across all eleven books was that of citizenship.

Table 1

Frequency of Character Example Elements Demonstrated by Major and Minor

Characters

	С	Н	A	R	A	С	T	Е	R
	(C/C)		(Acc)	(Rspc)	(Amb)				(Rspn)
1997	16	24	17	29	8	4	2	8	13
1998	27	27	15	16	16	3	4	18	25
1999	20	26	3	19	12	1	4	27	12
2000	29	30	8	39	5	2	10	10	8
2001	18	22	9	7	3	7	0	3	9
2002	24	26	3	38	26	7	5	10	25
2003	25	25	8	27	5	6	17	14	13
2004	26	9	5	15	25	10	5	16	16
2005	72	44	6	23	24	1	6	12	31
2006	19	33	4	15	13	0	0	11	13
2007	29	14	4	13	12	1	3	7	22

The highest demonstration of caring/compassionate was in *Kira-Kira*, and the lowest demonstration of caring/compassionate was in *The View From Saturday*, although three other titles were within five points. The highest demonstration of helpfulness was in *Kira-Kira*, and the lowest demonstration of helpfulness was in *The Tale of Despereaux*.

The highest demonstration of acceptance was in *The View From Saturday*, and the lowest demonstration of acceptance was in *A Single Shard* and *Holes*. The highest demonstration of respect was in *Bud*, *Not Buddy*, and the lowest demonstration of respect was in *A Year Down Yonder*, with *A Single Shard* only one point behind. The highest demonstration of ambition was in *A Single Shard*, followed closely by *The Tale of Despereaux* and *Kira Kira*, and the lowest demonstration of ambition was in *A Year Down Yonder*, followed closely by *Bud*, *Not Buddy* and *Crispin: The Cross of Lead*. The highest demonstration of citizenship was in *The Tale of Despereaux*, and the lowest demonstration was in *Criss Cross* with no examples. The highest demonstration of trustworthiness was in *Crispin: The Cross of Lead*, and the lowest demonstration was in both *A Year Down Yonder* and *Criss Cross*, both with no examples. The highest demonstration of encouragement was in *Holes*, and the lowest demonstration was in *A Year Down Yonder*. The highest demonstration of responsibility was in *Kira-Kira*, and the lowest demonstration was in *Bud*, *Not Buddy*, followed closely by *A Year Down Yonder*.

Mean Frequencies Demonstrated by Major and Minor Characters

Table 2 shows the book that revealed the highest number of demonstrations of all example elements was *Kira-Kira*, and the lowest number of demonstrations of all example elements was *A Year Down Yonder*. The C.H.A.R.A.C.T.E.R. example element that occurred the most often in all eleven books was caring and compassionate. The C.H.A.R.A.C.T.E.R. example element that occurred the least often in all eleven books was citizenship.

Table 2

Mean Frequencies and Ranges of Demonstrated Traits Across All Books (by trait and by book)

Trait	Mean	Range	Book	Mean	Range
	Frequency			Frequency	
C (C/C)	28	54	1997	13.44	27
Н	25.45	35	1998	16.77	24
A (Acc)	7.45	15	1999	13.77	26
R (Rspc)	21.90	32	2000	15.66	37
A (Amb)	13.54	23	2001	8.66	22
С	3.81	10	2002	18.22	35
Т	5.09	17	2003	15.55	22
Е	12.36	24	2004	14.11	21
R (Rspn)	17	23	2005	24.33	71
			2006	12.00	33
			2007	11.66	28

The mean frequency for caring/compassionate was 28 across all eleven books with a range of 54. The mean frequency for helpfulness was 25.45 with a range of 35, for acceptance was 7.45 with a range of 14. The mean frequency for respect was 21.90 with a range of 32, for ambition was 13.54 with a range of 23, for citizenship was 3.81 with a range of 10. The mean frequency for trustworthiness was 5.09 with a range of 17, for encouragement was 12.36 with a range of 24, and for responsibility was 17 with a range of 23.

The mean frequency for all example elements in *The View from Saturday* was 13.44 with a range of 27, for *Out of the Dust* was 16.77 with a range of 24, for *Holes* was 13.77 with a range of 26. The mean frequency for *Bud, Not Buddy* was 15.66 with a range of 37, for *A Year Down Yonder* was 8.66 with a range of 22, for *A Single Shard* was 18.22 with a range of 35. The mean frequency for *Crispin: The Cross of Lead* was 15.55 with a range of 22, for *The Tale of Despereaux* was 14.11 with a range of 21, for *Kira-Kira* was 24.33 with a range of 71. The mean frequency for *Criss Cross* was 12.00 with a range of 33, and for *The Higher Power of Lucky* was 11.66 with a range of 28.

The book that revealed the highest number of demonstrations of all example elements was *Kira-Kira*, and the lowest number of demonstrations of all example elements was *A Year Down Yonder*. The C.H.A.R.A.C.T.E.R. example element that occurred the most often in all eleven books was caring and compassionate. The C.H.A.R.A.C.T.E.R. example element that occurred the least often in all eleven books was citizenship.

#### Qualitative Analysis

In addition to the collection of quantitative frequencies, tables were also created to show whether the character example elements were directly mentioned in the text, whether the opposite character trait was demonstrated in the text, and which of the character example elements were chosen as themes for each book. This section concludes with a descriptive analysis of each individual book.

Character Example Elements Directly Mentioned in Text

Table 3 reveals whether the character example elements were directly mentioned in the text. The letter X is representation that the character example element was directly mentioned in the text.

The evidence reveals that the word "helpfulness" (or any use of the root word) was mentioned in all eleven books, and the word "ambition" was not mentioned in any of the books. Further, three books directly mentioned six of the example elements. These books were *Holes, The Tale of Despereaux*, and *Kira-Kira*. Additionally, *The Higher Power of Lucky* had the fewest direct mentions of example elements. Specific page numbers for the example elements directly mentioned in the text can be found in the individual codebooks included in the appendix.

Table 3

Character Trait Directly Mentioned in Text

	С	Н	A	R	A	С	T	Е	R
	(C/C)		(Acc)	(Rspc)	(Amb)				(Rspn)
1997		X		X		X		X	X
1998	X	X	X						
1999	X	X	X	X				X	X
2000	X	X					X		
2001	X	X		X					
2002	X	X	X	X					X
2003	X	X	X				X		
2004	X	X		X			X	X	X
2005	X	X	X	X			X	X	
2006	X	X		X				X	
2007	X	X							

Opposite Character Trait Demonstrated in the Text

To help students better understand a positive character trait, it is also often valuable for teachers to present examples of the opposite of that character trait. Doing so reveals the contrast that can be highlighted by the reader to fully illustrate the trait. The following opposite traits are used in Table 4:

C—harshness

H—uncooperative

A—rejection

R—disrespect

A—unmotivated

C—disloyalty

T—dishonesty

E—disheartening

R—unreliability.

The letter X is representation that the opposite character example element was demonstrated in the text. Table 4 reveals that harshness, rejection, disrespect, dishonesty, and unreliability were demonstrated in all of the books. Additionally six books showed demonstrations of all nine opposite character traits. Those titles are *Out of the Dust*, *Holes, A Single Shard, The Tale of Despereaux, Kira-Kira*, and *The Higher Power of Lucky*.

Table 4

Opposite Character Trait Demonstrated in Text

	С	Н	A	R	A	С	T	Е	R
	(C/C)		(Acc)	(Rspc)	(Amb)				(Rspn)
	Harsh	Uncoop	Reject	Disresp	Unmot	Disloy	Dishon	Disheart	Unrel
1997	X	X	X	X			X	X	X
1998	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
1999	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
2000	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X
2001	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X
2002	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
2003	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X
2004	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
2005	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
2006	X		X	X	X		X	X	X
2007	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

# Character Trait Themes

Throughout the study, the panel of readers indicated a ranking for whether each C.H.A.R.A.C.T.E.R. example element represented the theme of the book. During each consensus meeting, the panel discussed and selected the theme of each book based upon

the character trait(s) revealed throughout the book. It should be noted that the consensus theme is not based on the number of times the example element was directly mentioned or upon the frequency of demonstrations by the major and minor characters of the story. The decision for the character traits revealed as themes for each book was based upon the opinion of the panel of readers because often, the true themes were revealed through what individual readers interpreted from the reading and may or may not have been reflected in incidences or demonstrations. Table 5 reveals whether the character example element was selected as a theme of the book.

The letter X is representation that the character example element was chosen by consensus of the panel as a theme for the book. The example element of ambition was selected as a theme for most of the books, while the example element of citizenship was not selected as a theme for any of the books in this study. The remainder of this chapter will reveal additional qualitative analysis for each book title.

Table 5

Character Trait Themes Found in the Newbery Books

	С	Н	A	R	A	С	T	Е	R
	(C/C)		(Acc)	(Rspc)	(Amb)				(Rspn)
1997			X						
1998			X		X				
1999	X	X						X	
2000					X		X	X	
2001	X		X						
2002					X				
2003			X	X	X		X		
2004	X		X		X				
2005	X	X			X				X
2006					X			X	
2007	X								X

## A Close Look at Each Book

The View From Saturday (1997)

E.L. Konigsburg's book contained the main characters Mrs. Olinsky, Noah, Nadia, Ethan, and Julian. Table 6 attests to the positive and negative character traits revealed in this book along with page numbers of significant examples. The panel of readers selected acceptance as the theme for this book. They commented, "This book is a

journey the individual characters, and as a group, take from learning to accept others to respecting them and then taking it a step further to caring for and about them. It is also about creating a family or community—a unified group or team and then thinking with like-mindedness to accept."

Table 6

The View From Saturday (1997)

Positive Character Trait	Page Numbers	Positive Character Trait Theme	Opposite Trait	Page Numbers
Caring/Compassionate	15, 55, 72		Harshness	49, 71, 108, 114, 121, 134
Helpfulness	97		Uncooperative	48, 52-53, 83, 120, 132
Acceptance	80-83, 88, 90	X	Rejection	27-28, 34, 39, 42, 47-50, 63, 65-66, 71-73
Respect	97, 153		Disrespect	5, 13, 25, 49, 51, 69, 71-72, 113- 114, 129, 133-134, 137, 139, 147-148
Ambition	150-154		Unmotivated	
Citizenship			Disloyalty	
Trustworthiness			Dishonesty	44, 50-51, 108, 116, 119
Encouragement	156		Disheartening	71, 124
Responsibility	7-20, 91		Unreliability	50-51, 83, 121

## Out of the Dust (1998)

Karen Hesse's book centered around the main character named Billie Jo. Table 7 identifies the positive and negative character traits revealed in this book along with page numbers of significant examples. Ambition and acceptance were selected by the readers as the themes of this book. The panel stated, "It was decided that responsibility and being helpful and caring/compassionate were a big part of this book, but it was because all of those traits were necessary for survival. As a result, we felt the theme was both negative and positive. The negative theme was disheartening and trying to overcome a feeling of hopelessness. This was done with ambition, our positive trait, in that the characters had to push through their circumstances. Billie Jo showed determination when faced with the problem of the dust storm, her immense loss, and her own injuries. There was also a strong theme of acceptance. Billie Jo had to learn to accept her circumstances, her self, her father, and life's unexpected events."

# Holes (1999)

Louis Sachar's book revealed the cursed adventure of main character Stanley Yelnats. Table 8 identifies the positive and negative character traits revealed in this book along with page numbers of significant examples. The themes selected for this book include caring/compassionate, helpfulness, and encouragement. The panel commented, "Stanley learns to be helpful after Zero's example. They help each other in little and big ways. Throughout, Stanley learns to care for Zero. He shows compassion toward Zero by teaching him, going after him, listening to his story, carrying him up the mountain, etc. Throughout the book, the strongest theme was encouragement. This was revealed through the symbol of the 'thumbs-up' on the mountain to Zero and Stanley often using it to

inspire courage, spirit, bravery and hope. This book relies heavily on hope. In spite of all the bad luck and bizarre circumstances, Stanley looks for things to bring him hope. The story is also about how our decisions and actions can have far-reaching effects. This book reveals how a little help and encouragement go a long way when we are down."

Table 7

Out of the Dust (1998)

Desition Character	D	Positive	On a site Turit	D	NI 4:
Positive Character	Page		Opposite Trait	Page	Negative
Trait	Numbers	Character		Numbers	Character
		Trait Theme			Trait
					Theme
Caring/Compassionate	58, 68, 119-		Harshness	63-64, 70-	
	124, 145,			71, 195	
	205				
Helpfulness	164-165,		Uncooperative	18, 67, 93	
	223-224				
Acceptance	202, 206,	X	Rejection	28, 30, 76,	
_	211, 212-			78, 89, 139,	
	214, 222,			153, 195,	
	224			215	
Respect	135, 211,		Disrespect	12, 24, 29,	
1	224, 225		1	132, 139	
Ambition	49-51, 142-	X	Unmotivated	91	
	144, 225				
Citizenship			Disloyalty	125	
Trustworthiness			Dishonesty	7, 17, 202	
Encouragement	225		Disheartening	26, 32, 39,	X
C				41, 48-49,	
				57, 68, 73,	
				80, 83-84,	
				87, 141,	
				153, 161,	
				174, 185-	
				186, 201	
Responsibility	197-204,		Unreliability	60, 67	
1	206			,	

Table 8 *Holes (1999)* 

Positive Character	Dogo	Positive	Opposite Tesit	Dogg
	Page Numbers		Opposite Trait	Page Numbers
Trait	Numbers	Character		Numbers
C : /C :	147 170 176	Trait Theme	TT 1	14 15 20
Caring/Compassionate	147, 170-176,	X	Harshness	14, 15, 20,
	219			23, 25, 44,
				54, 64, 78,
				82-83, 91,
				104-106, 113,
				115, 122-123,
				134, 139, 206
Helpfulness	96-99, 116-	X	Uncooperative	82, 113, 204,
	117, 119			219-220
Acceptance	53-54		Rejection	36, 103, 109,
				111-112, 114,
				117, 195
Respect	117, 196		Disrespect	17, 19, 23,
			_	43, 46, 58,
				66, 73, 77,
				103, 113,
				117, 132,
				136-137, 139,
				142-143
Ambition	170		Unmotivated	35, 103
Citizenship			Disloyalty	112, 113,
1				115, 145, 184
Trustworthiness	209		Dishonesty	22, 37, 84,
				86-87, 118,
				144, 184,
				208, 214-216,
				218, 220
Encouragement	153, 160-162,	X	Disheartening	23, 45, 55,
	165, 168-169,			159, 171
	210, 219-220			100, 171
Responsibility	210, 217 220		Unreliability	33, 37
Responsibility			Cincilability	33, 31

*Bud, Not Buddy (2000)* 

Christopher Paul Curtis' book focused on the main character Bud Caldwell as he sought to find his family roots. Table 9 identifies the positive and negative character traits revealed in this book along with page numbers of significant examples. The panel selected ambition, trustworthiness, and encouragement as themes for this book. The readers commented, "There were three theme threads that kept intertwining throughout the story. One started when Bud's mother encouraged him that one door doesn't close without another one opening. As a result, Bud was very ambitious to look for the next opportunity to improve his situation and 'get home.' This strand continued until the end when he knew his new squawking saxophone was the sound of another door opening. The second thread was also about ambition and encouragement. Bud had to find his family. He said the idea started as a tiny seed and sprouted into a mighty strong maple tree—all the while pressing him on and encouraging him to keep after the dream of finding his family. The third thread was one of responsibility. It began before his mother's death when she told Bud that he was to be called Bud, not Buddy. As a sign of responsibility, he did as he was told throughout the book and his mother's words proved to be an encouragement to him finding his way home." The raters also believed the story was about developing trust. They said, "Bud shares his Rules and Things for Being a Better Liar with the readers and by the care and compassion shown by others, Bud learns to forgo these and begin trusting others. The many negative character traits revealed in the book were primarily used to reflect the overall state of Americans during the historic time period of the Depression. The dishonesty was used by the author to help reflect a change in Bud from not trusting the world to finding a place of acceptance and love."

Table 9

Bud, Not Buddy (2000)

Positive Character	Page	Positive	Opposite Trait	Page
Trait	Numbers	Character	Opposite Trait	Numbers
Trait	Numbers			Nullibers
	147 170 176	Trait Theme	TT 1	14 15 20 22
Caring/Compassionate	147, 170-176,	X	Harshness	14, 15, 20, 23,
	219			25, 44, 54, 64,
				78, 82-83, 91,
				104-106, 113,
				115, 122-123,
				134, 139, 206
Helpfulness	96-99, 116-	X	Uncooperative	82, 113, 204,
	117, 119			219-220
Acceptance	53-54		Rejection	36, 103, 109,
				111-112, 114,
				117, 195
Respect	117, 196		Disrespect	17, 19, 23, 43,
				46, 58, 66, 73,
				77, 103, 113,
				117, 132,
				136-137, 139,
				142-143
Ambition	170		Unmotivated	35, 103
Citizenship			Disloyalty	112, 113, 115,
1				145, 184
Trustworthiness	209		Dishonesty	22, 37, 84,
				86-87, 118,
				144, 184, 208,
				214-216, 218,
				220
Encouragement	153, 160-162,	X	Disheartening	23, 45, 55,
<i>y</i>	165, 168-169,			159, 171
	210, 219-220			,
Responsibility	,		Unreliability	33, 37

#### A Year Down Yonder (2001)

Richard Peck's book featured Mary Alice and her Grandma Dowdel as the main characters. Table 10 identifies the positive and negative character traits revealed in this book along with page numbers of significant examples. The panel chose themes of caring/compassionate and acceptance. They further stated, "Mary Alice learns many lessons when she spends time with her Grandma Dowdel for a 'year down yonder.' Mary Alice begins to see past the tough exterior of her Grandma Dowdel as she notes that through grandma's harshness, she is often caring and compassionate. This gradual revelation does not occur to Mary Alice until she recognizes that she has begun to exhibit the same traits as her grandma. Mary Alice learns to accept the paradox that is her grandmother with all her eccentricities and peculiarities while Grandma Dowdel lets down her defenses enough to show Mary Alice that she does indeed love her very much."

## A Single Shard (2002)

Linda Sue Park wrote this book about Tree-Ear, the main character, and his journey. Table 11 identifies the positive and negative character traits revealed in this book along with page numbers of significant examples. Ambition was selected as the theme for the book. The panel of readers stated, "From the beginning to the end of this book, Tree-Ear's ambition to be a potter drives his actions. From watching Min from the trees, to offering his work as payment for the destruction of the boxes, to working hard with the goal of someday being able to work on the wheel, his love of beautiful pottery and his desire to make it push Tree-Ear toward his goals. Threads of responsibility and helpfulness also accompany this story of Tree-Ear's journey and determination to learn the art of pottery from Min."

Table 10

A Year Down Yonder (2001)

Positive Character Trait	Page Numbers	Positive Character	Opposite Trait	Page Numbers
Time	1 (dillocis	Trait Theme		TVallioeis
Caring/Compassionate	51-53, 68-73,	X	Harshness	12, 13, 17,
	118, 121, 123			24, 26, 83-92,
Halnfulnass	51 64 127		Unacaparativa	107, 121 14, 83
Helpfulness	51, 64, 127		Uncooperative	, ,
Acceptance	64, 88, 110,	X	Rejection	3, 10, 11, 12,
	123, 130			28, 56, 57,
				69, 89, 91,
				116
Respect	49		Disrespect	8, 10, 13, 29,
				30, 36, 44-46,
				49, 78, 83,
				86, 89, 120
Ambition			Unmotivated	
Citizenship			Disloyalty	7, 21, 26
Trustworthiness			Dishonesty	16, 17, 31-33,
				45, 47, 83,
				87, 93, 118
Encouragement			Disheartening	7, 9, 10
Responsibility			Unreliability	26, 45

Table 11

A Single Shard (2002)

Positive Character Trait	Page Numbers	Positive Character Trait Theme	Opposite Trait	Page Numbers
Caring/Compassionate			Harshness	16, 18, 25, 42, 66, 102, 122-125, 136
Helpfulness			Uncooperative	25, 102
Acceptance	56, 91, 143, 146, 147		Rejection	45-46, 60, 95, 136
Respect			Disrespect	25, 45-46, 66, 121, 123, 125-126
Ambition	52, 67, 98, 99, 147-148	X	Unmotivated	98
Citizenship			Disloyalty	122
Trustworthiness			Dishonesty	16, 58, 67
Encouragement	The Royal Commission		Disheartening	20, 25-26, 32, 36, 39, 42-44, 55, 85, 87, 95, 125-126, 142-145
Responsibility	34, 126		Unreliability	40

Crispin: The Cross of Lead (2003)

Avi authored this book about the main character, Crispin, Asta's son. Table 12 identifies the positive and negative character traits revealed in this book along with page numbers of significant examples. The panel identified acceptance, respect, ambition, and trustworthiness as themes for the book. Panel members concluded, "While Crispin must learn to respect and accept Bear and himself for who he is and his ambitious pursuit to better himself and his lot in life, a more important theme emerges in this book. Crispin's learning to trust is the most difficult feat for him to accomplish. Feeling betrayed by his poor dead mother who kept important secrets from him, being declared a wolf's head unjustly, and being betrayed by people who say they wish to help him all make Crispin uncertain of just who he can and should trust. Eventually, Crispin learns to trust again, and in the process learns the importance of being worthy of others' trust as well. Additionally, the book is set against the backdrop of a historical time period when individuals followed blind citizenship—ruled by tyrants leading to dishonesty, harshness, and disrespect. Crispin discovers that honoring what is right before God, rather than man, is the true path to acceptance and respect."

Table 12

Crispin: The Cross of Lead (2003)

Positive Character	Page	Positive	Opposite Trait	Page Numbers
Trait	Numbers	Character		
		Trait		
		Theme		
Caring/Compassionate	249-255		Harshness	3-4, 9, 15, 25, 45,
				48, 55, 66-67, 69-
				70, 76, 78, 89, 92,
				95, 100, 107, 109,
				127, 170, 177-178,
				204, 209-210, 216,
				220, 239, 244, 256-
				257, 259
Helpfulness	108		Uncooperative	223, 230
Acceptance	101, 221,	X	Rejection	1, 2, 11, 41, 77, 83,
	239, 241,			87, 220, 239
	261, 262			
Respect	70-71,	X	Disrespect	2, 11, 78, 93, 97,
	105, 221,			103, 106-107, 158
	262			
Ambition	65, 114	X	Unmotivated	
Citizenship	29-36		Disloyalty	3, 10, 65, 89, 176,
				183, 184, 201
Trustworthiness	138, 177-	X	Dishonesty	10, 11, 24, 39, 42-
	181, 189,			44, 63, 73, 88-89,
	260			100, 118, 125, 128,
				159, 191, 253, 256
Encouragement	56		Disheartening	4, 36, 41, 48, 52, 58,
				78, 80, 92, 99, 132-
				133, 211
Responsibility	53, 138,		Unreliability	4, 159, 182, 196-197
	231, 260			

*The Tale of Despereaux* (2004)

Kate DiCamillo's book had the main characters of Despereaux, Roscuro, and Miggery Sow because each of these characters had his/her own section of the book. However, although not coded as a main character, the panel decided that the Princess Pea was also a significant character to the story. It should also be noted that the narrator and the reader of the book become characters in the book. Notes were made as to the extent of this, but the characters of the narrator and reader were not figured into the frequency coding. Table 13 identifies the positive and negative character traits revealed in this book along with page numbers of significant examples. The panel selected caring/compassionate, acceptance, and ambition as themes of the book. They said, "The story revolves around three characters that have been rejected by their families and communities. Despereaux has been rejected because of the differences that make him feared by the other mice. Roscuro is rejected because of his obsession with light. Miggery Sow is rejected by her father for reasons we do not know. All three of these rejected individuals have an ambitious quest that centers around the Princess Pea. Depereaux wants to love and serve her, Roscuro wants to punish her, and Mig wants to be her. All three show tremendous determination to fulfill their purpose. It is Pea, who by searching her heart honestly for both darkness and light that dwells there, is able to offer with care and compassion what each of these three souls need to be redeemed. Despereaux is given the love of friendship. Roscuro receives the comfort of light, beauty, and soup. Mig is given understanding of the sorrow and grief that comes with loss. Pea's acceptance for the three characters speaks to the greatness of her heart and the great measure of light it holds."

Table 13

The Tale of Despereaux (2004)

Positive Character	Page	Positive	Opposite Trait	Page Numbers
Trait	Numbers	Character	Opposite Truit	r age r amoers
		Trait		
		Theme		
Caring/Compassionate	32, 37, 41,	X	Harshness	18, 34-35, 39-40,
	254, 263-			49, 54, 56, 64, 69,
	264, 267			86-90, 92, 100-102,
				113, 116, 118, 120,
				129, 137-138, 151,
				177, 179, 183, 187,
				249, 254, 263
Helpfulness	267		Uncooperative	20, 21, 28, 86, 214
Acceptance	208	X	Rejection	13, 16-18, 24, 26,
				32-34, 40-41, 43-
				44, 47, 51-52, 54,
				96, 109, 113, 126,
				130, 137, 154, 200,
				213, 252, 264
Respect	48-56		Disrespect	87, 134, 137, 175,
				252
Ambition	215, 218,	X	Unmotivated	152
	236-237			
Citizenship	262		Disloyalty	39, 44, 47, 54, 56,
				100, 141, 163, 224
Trustworthiness			Dishonesty	43, 89, 191, 242-
				244
Encouragement	61, 134,		Disheartening	11-12, 15, 58, 64-
	237			65, 69, 73, 75, 77-
				78, 126, 181-182,
				201-202, 223, 240
Responsibility	215, 217		Unreliability	21, 153, 154

#### *Kira-Kira* (2005)

Cynthia Kadohata's story about sisters Katie and Lynn reveals strong instances of many character example elements. Table 14 identifies the positive and negative character traits revealed in this book along with page numbers of significant examples. The panel selected themes of caring/compassionate, helpfulness, ambition, and responsibility. The panel noted, "Katie said of her sister Lynn, 'She was going to be the best in the world and live at the top of everything, and she was going to bring her family with her. This was one of the themes of my sister's life' (218). Lynn saw the way her family had to struggle and work long, hard hours to earn a living and she was determined to be a blazing success in order to better her life and the lives of her family. She insisted on Katie sharing this dream and goal with her. This is the story of a family—their care and compassion for one another and how that love is expressed in such a way that they will do anything possible to help the other in their time of need. It is about sacrifice, devotion, loyalty, and service. Helping one another, being responsible hard-working parents, or children behaving responsibly toward one another and helping their parents maintain their home are also strong themes in this book. However, it is Lynn's raw ambition to be a success, to help her family, to own a house, that drives this story. When the family loses this ambitious young lady, Katie accepts the burden and responsibility that her dying sister lays upon her shoulders. Katie keeps Lynn's ambitions and dreams alive by making the ambitions and dreams her own, which keeps her sister's spirit and presence a part of the family."

Table 14

Kira-Kira (2005)

Positive Character Trait	Page Numbers	Positive Character Trait Theme	Opposite Trait	Page Numbers
Caring/Compassionate	133, 169, 178, 222, 228	X	Harshness	13, 28, 37, 131-132, 147, 163, 173, 182, 209, 232, 234
Helpfulness	59, 226, 227	X	Uncooperative	14, 19-21, 26
Acceptance	50, 56		Rejection	27-28, 30, 34, 50-51, 55-56, 88-89, 130, 132
Respect	235		Disrespect	27-28, 37, 52-55, 131, 147
Ambition	45, 115	X	Unmotivated	64, 117, 118, 226
Citizenship			Disloyalty	13, 171
Trustworthiness			Dishonesty	7, 158, 170- 171, 188, 212
Encouragement	229		Disheartening	117, 124, 157, 184, 199-200
Responsibility	46, 102-103, 112, 227/229, 232, 235	X	Unreliability	102, 108, 112, 186-187

#### Criss Cross (2006)

Lynne Rae Perkins wrote this book about main characters Debbie, Hector, Lenny, and Phil. Many secondary characters were coded as minor characters, including Patty, Rowanne, Mrs. Bruning, Dan, Russell, Peter, and Pastor Don. Table 15 identifies the positive and negative character traits revealed in this book along with page numbers of significant examples. Ambition and encouragement were selected as the themes of this book. The panel concluded, "This book is about four young friends as they ambitiously pursue the journey between childhood and adulthood along individual paths that continuously criss-cross. All of them are questioning their place in the universe, wondering what life will hold for them in the future, opening to new experiences, and feeling the first signs of love. As they mature, they begin to leave behind the egocentricity of childhood and enter into the wider fellowship of humanity. They learn that their actions have consequences for other human beings, and that they can have a positive impact by encouraging one another on their quest to adulthood."

## *The Higher Power of Lucky (2007)*

Susan Patron's book was about Lucky, the main character of the story. Additional characters that were important to the story, but who were coded as minor characters, include Brigitte, Lincoln, and Miles. Table 16 identifies the positive and negative character traits revealed in this book along with page numbers of significant examples. The themes of caring/compassionate and responsibility were selected by the panel. They stated in regard to the theme, "Brigitte is a perfect model of one who is caring/compassionate. She leaves the life she knows to raise a complete stranger. From this model and example, Lucky learns to overcome her meanness gland to show

caring/compassion toward Miles. This is also a story about responsibility. One young daughter feels her mother was irresponsible because she did not watch for danger after the storm and was electrocuted, her father refuses to take responsibility for his child upon the death of her mother, and one woman comes to care for the child until appropriate care can be found. Throughout, Brigitte responsibly cares for Lucky: she feeds her, washes her clothes, makes sure Lucky has cool tea to drink. By doing so, Brigitte is trying to teach Lucky to be responsible as well: to keep bugs off the table, to keep her backpack off the floor, to help with tasks, to care for herself, and to work at her job."

Table 15

Criss Cross (2006)

Positive Character	Page	Positive	Opposite Trait	Page
Trait	Numbers	Character		Numbers
		Trait Theme		
Caring/Compassionate	Chapter 37		Harshness	22, 243, 292
Helpfulness	174, 188-189,		Uncooperative	22, 83, 252,
	257-258			321, 328
Acceptance	152, 288			79, 245-246,
				252, 292
Respect	39, 113, 133			177
Ambition	19	X		
Citizenship				21, 43-44, 48,
				98-99, 103-
				104
Trustworthiness				91, 125, 155,
				255, 294
Encouragement		X		
Responsibility	196-199, 223,			
	228-232			

Table 16

The Higher Power of Lucky (2007)

Positive Character	Page	Positive	Opposite Trait	Page
Trait	Numbers	Character		Numbers
		Trait Theme		
Caring/Compassionate	65, 131-132	X	Harshness	11, 30-34, 83,
				88-89, 100-
				101, 105
Helpfulness	105		Uncooperative	13, 82-83
Acceptance			Rejection	11, 40, 67,
				85, 87, 100-
				101
Respect	11-116, 130		Disrespect	19, 36, 91
Ambition	132		Unmotivated	58
Citizenship			Disloyalty	22-24, 54, 72
Trustworthiness	131-132		Dishonesty	57, 78, 87,
				91, 97, 103
Encouragement			Disheartening	54, 71, 79-80,
				84, 101, 107,
				109, 117
Responsibility	112	X	Unreliability	45, 49, 105

# What Some of The Authors Had to Say

The researcher wrote a letter to each of the authors of the eleven Newbery Award winning books to ask them to make a statement in regard to the C.H.A.R.A.C.T.E.R. example elements they felt were the themes of their books. Although an attempt was made to reach all eleven authors, response was received by only five of the authors. A copy of the researcher's letter is included in Appendix E.

Author Karen Hesse, who wrote *Out of the Dust*, sent the researcher a handwritten card with a copy of her acceptance speech. On the fourth page of her speech, the theme is

revealed in her words, "Young readers are asking for substance. They are asking for respect. They are asking for books that challenge, and confirm, and console. They are asking for us to listen to their questions and to help them find their own answers. If we cannot attend always to those questions, to that quest for answers, whether our work is that of librarian, writer, teacher, publisher, or parent, how can they forgive us? And yet they do, every day. Just as Billie Jo forgave Ma. Just as Billie Jo forgave Daddy. Just as Billie Jo forgave herself. And with that forgiveness Billie Jo finally set her roots and turned toward her future."

Author Richard Peck, who wrote *A Year Down Yonder*, sent a letter that stated his story is "about the love of a grandmother for her grandchildren, expressed always in (unexpected) deeds, rarely in words...It's the portrait of a woman who becomes the unlikely role model for her granddaughter because her compassion arises from self-reliance."

Avi, author of *Crispin: The Cross of Lead*, sent a letter stating that in regard to his book, "I suppose those traits you indicate—caring/compassion, helpful, acceptance, respect, ambition, trustworthy, encouragement, and responsibility, may all be found therein. Citizenship is not relevant since national identity, as we think of it today, did not exist in 1377."

Kate DiCamillo, author of *The Tale of Despereaux*, stated in a brief handwritten note at the bottom of the researcher's letter, "From the above list of character traits, I guess I would say that Despereaux embodies, most of all, caring and compassion."

Author of *The Higher Power of Lucky*, Susan Patron, responded by way of email. She took a different approach and did not point out a specific character trait for the theme

of her book. Instead, she stated, "I believe that my job is to write the book. If I've done that well, the reader will absorb content that expresses positive character traits, with no further explanation necessary from the author. In fact, I believe it would detract from the book for me to elaborate on it in an analytical way."

## CHAPTER 5

#### CONCLUSIONS

#### Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to examine the implications of the previously described research pursuit. This chapter contains a brief summary of the study, answers to the questions posed by the researcher in the first chapter, conclusions and implications of the study, and recommendations for further research based on the findings of this investigation.

### Summary

The primary purpose of this study was to analyze Newbery Award winning books from 1997-2007 for example elements of character education as specified by the acronym C.H.A.R.A.C.T.E.R. created by the researcher. In addition to seeking the answer to the problem statement, the researcher sought answers to the following questions:

- 1. What are the predominant character example elements in the Newbery Award winning books between 1997 and 2007?
- 2. Who displays these character example elements in the literature?
- 3. Does the protagonist exhibit certain example elements?
- 4. How are these character example elements portrayed in the books?
- 5. What are the frequencies of the positive character traits?
- 6. What are the frequencies of the negative counterparts of the character traits?
- 7. How many pages are devoted to expressing the positive character traits?

8. Which books could be recommended for teachers to use to meet guidelines for teaching character education?

Ary, Jacobs, and Razavieh (2002), define content analysis as "a research method applied to written or visual materials for the purpose of identifying specified characteristics of the material." Babbie (2005) further defines content analysis as a part of qualitative analysis. He states qualitative analysis is "the nonnumerical examination and interpretation of observations, for the purpose of discovering underlying meanings and patterns of relationships" (p. 394-395). Content analysis by way of a coding system was done for this study, and the Newbery Award winning books from 1997-2007 were selected to analyze.

The coding system was developed by the researcher to address the questions of the study. Ideas for developing the coding system came from comparisons of frequency coding systems used by researchers conducting similar content analysis studies (Adamson, 1981; Bulach & Butler, 2002; Cates, 2002; Edgington, 1996; Groce, 2001; Leal, 1999; and Sullivan & Yandell, n.d.). The coding system consisted of simple frequency recording for each of the character example elements expressed in each book. Three raters were chosen in addition to the researcher to read and analyze the Newbery Award books using the coding system described.

The researcher met weekly with the panel of readers to discuss the individual coding of books and to come to consensus on the themes of the books. Data was collected on each book and the information was compiled, typed into the computer and saved as codebooks for each book analyzed. Further statistical analysis was conducted using the

SPSS software program. Tables were then made by the researcher to help with interpretation of the data.

### Answers to the Questions Posed

The problem statement for this study was: Do the Newbery Award winning books from 1997-2007 reveal example elements of character education? Additionally, answers were sought to eight questions. The conclusive answers will follow each question:

Question 1: What are the predominant character example elements in the Newbery

Award winning books between 1997 and 2007?

**Answer:** The researcher concludes that all example elements that made up the acronym C.H.A.R.A.C.T.E.R. were predominant character example elements in the Newbery Award winning books from 1997-2007. All of the books contained characters who demonstrated at least seven of the nine character traits that made up the acronym.

Question 2: Who displays these character example elements in the literature?

Answer: Table 1 of the fourth chapter shows the frequency of character example elements demonstrated by major and minor characters. In all eleven books, the major and minor characters demonstrated the most examples of caring/compassionate, followed closely by helpfulness. The least frequent example shown by the major and minor characters across the eleven books was the example element of citizenship.

Question 3: Does the protagonist exhibit certain example elements?

**Answer:** Although Table 1 of Chapter 4 reveals the frequencies of demonstrations by major and minor characters added together, each codebook has separate frequencies given for the major and the minor character(s). Caring/Compassionate and helpfulness were the elements shown the most frequently by the main character(s) in *Kira-Kira*.

Acceptance was revealed the most by the main character(s) in *The View From Saturday*. The main character in *Bud*, *Not Buddy* showed the greatest example of respect. The main characters of *The Tale of Despereaux* showed the best example of ambition. Citizenship was displayed the most by the main character(s) in *A Year Down Yonder*. Trustworthiness was equally revealed by the main character(s) in *Bud*, *Not Buddy* and *Crispin: The Cross of Lead*. Encouragement was revealed strongest by the main character in *Out of the Dust*. Responsibility was most displayed by the main character in *A Single Shard*.

**Question 4:** How are these character example elements portrayed in the books?

Answer: The character example elements are sometimes directly mentioned in the text. Table 3 of Chapter 4 displays which trait is directly mentioned in each book. Other times, as stated in questions 2 and 3, the major and minor characters actually demonstrate the character trait. This is displayed in Table 1 of Chapter 4. Still, the example elements are seen as overarching themes for the books and these can be seen in Table 5 of Chapter 4. It is often important for the reader to view the opposite side of a character trait in order to fully understand how the example element is portrayed, and to do so, one must consult the findings of Table 4 found in Chapter 4.

**Question 5:** What are the frequencies of the positive character traits?

Answer: This depends on whether one is looking for frequencies of demonstrations by the characters, frequencies of direct mentions in the text, or frequencies of themes for each book. Once again, specific answers can be found by consulting Table 1, Table 3, and Table 5, respectively in Chapter 4.

**Question 6:** What are the frequencies of the negative counterparts of the character traits?

Answer: Nearly all of the eleven books studied revealed characters demonstrating the negative character traits. Table 4 of Chapter 4 identifies whether or not the opposite character trait was demonstrated in each book. For the reader to more closely analyze the opposite traits, Tables 6-16 can be studied because they present page numbers (therefore also revealing frequencies) of the opposite character traits for each book.

**Question 7:** How many pages are devoted to expressing the positive character traits? **Answer:** Tables 6-14 of Chapter 4 of the study show demonstrations by the major and minor characters, as well as page numbers in which the major character(s) learn the importance of the example element.

**Question 8:** Which books could be recommended for teachers to use to meet guidelines for teaching character education?

Answer: The conclusions of the study reveal that all eleven of the books contain direct mentions of the C.H.A.R.A.C.T.E.R. example elements, demonstrations of the example elements by major and minor characters, opposite traits to develop further understanding of the meaning of each positive trait, and example element themes. The specific tables (6-16) were designed to give educators, librarians, teachers, and parents a quick reference to the positive traits strongly displayed in each book, page numbers for specific examples, themes identified by consensus of the panel, and opposite traits with page numbers that are displayed in each book.

## Conclusions and Implications

This study used content analysis to examine the Newbery Award winning books from 1997-2007 for example elements as specified by the researcher. The purpose, methods, and procedures of this study are based on the following original assumptions, as stated in Chapter 1:

- 1. Character education is an integral part of the civic responsibility of society.
- 2. Children can learn character example elements.
- 3. Literature is a powerful tool for presenting character example elements.
- 4. Character example elements in children's literature can be identified through content analysis.

In Chapter 2, the researcher reviewed the relevant literature in the history of character education, the current need for character education in schools, the methods of teaching character education through children's literature, the character example elements found in children's literature, the use of the Newbery Award books by teachers, and similar research studies that have been conducted in the field of education. After researching the literature, the researcher concluded a need for careful analysis of the Newbery Award winning books for examples of character traits. An acronym was created by the researcher using the letters in the word C.H.A.R.A.C.T.E.R. with each letter representing a positive character trait. A panel of four readers used a codebook developed by the researcher to mark frequencies and determine themes for each of the eleven Newbery Award winning books from 1997-2007.

An analysis of the study implies that all of the titles selected for the study can be used to teach character example elements. However, certain titles seem to be better than

others for demonstrating specific traits. The best titles for teaching the example element theme of caring/compassionate are *Holes*, *A Year Down Yonder*, *The Tale of Despereaux*, *Kira-Kira*, and *The Higher Power of Lucky*. The titles that best exemplify the theme of helpfulness are *Holes* and *Kira-Kira*. The best titles for teaching the theme of acceptance are *The View From Saturday*, *Out of the Dust*, *A Year Down Yonder*, *Crispin: The Cross of Lead*, and *The Tale of Despereaux*. The best title for displaying the theme of respect is *Crispin: The Cross of Lead*. The theme of ambition can be taught with the titles *Out of the Dust*; *Bud*, *Not Buddy*; *A Single Shard*; *Crispin: The Cross of Lead*; *The Tale of Despereaux*; *Kira-Kira*; and *Criss Cross*. The panel did not choose any titles for the theme of citizenship. The theme of trustworthiness was most evident in *Bud*, *Not Buddy* and *Crispin: The Cross of Lead*. The three titles that best demonstrate the theme of encouragement are *Holes*; *Bud*, *Not Buddy*; and *Criss Cross*. Finally, the theme of responsibility is best shown through *Kira-Kira* and *The Higher Power of Lucky*.

At the conclusion of the study, the researcher interviewed each of the readers for her input as to the outcome of the study. The first question was "What did you learn about the books we studied?" The first reader responded, "As a librarian and classroom teacher, I have often recommended the Newbery books as quality literature to students and parents, but have taken little of my own time to read and analyze the books. I was amazed at the genre, character and plot variety that had been chosen as winners over the last ten years. There is something to be learned in each book and with that variety, I now have a wealth of information to encourage students in their character development along with their own personal reading journey."

In response to the same question, the second reader stated, "I don't think it is possible to put into words all that I learned. My favorite book of the lot is still *A View From Saturday*. I love the challenge and puzzles in the book. That aside, I was exposed to a world of children's literature I had not read before. I enjoyed most of what I read, met new writers and characters along the way, and gained the opportunity to participate in a research project that thoroughly interested me. Further, I learned to read these children's books at a deeper level than I have ever needed to as a mom. There is a book entitled, *Some of My Best Friends are Books*. I have concluded that I have made some new friends. Raising three gifted girls, I have found that finding good quality children's literature has been a very challenging endeavor. It is refreshing to encounter so many high quality books that can challenge them in both character development and vocabulary."

The third reader responded, "I found it most interesting to observe the character development of the main character(s) of any one book. The whole idea of a book or story, I think, is to have your character affected by the events brought about by the conflict of the story. If your character does not develop, hopefully for the better, then the story is not very satisfying. This gives us a person who has not learned anything, has not grown in any way, and certainly does not improve as a human being. This does not always happen in adult literature, where it seems to be more acceptable for characters to endure tragedy and sorrow without personal growth. This is, to me, the greatest contribution of children's literature, the expectation that something good or positive will come out of the conflict and events which the character experiences or endures, and that there will be some hope or redemption at the end of the story along with the individual's

new found strength of character. I especially found interesting how, in many of the books, a particular trait or traits were modeled at the beginning of the book by some other character, either an older, wiser adult, or child, and then, as the story progressed, to see the character begin to incorporate the trait more and more until it becomes a part of who they are."

The second question asked was "What did you learn about the C.H.A.R.A.C.T.E.R example elements?" The first reader replied, "The Newbery Medal, while given for excellence in writing, often highlights books that are exemplary at showing positive character traits. I was surprised at the depth of the quality of the character traits that were demonstrated throughout the Newbery winners over the last ten years."

To that question, the second reader responded, "I think it is amazing how much can be taught with children's literature. Although I love to read and have shared that love with my daughters, I really haven't thought about teaching them character traits with their reading. I shared books with them as they were growing up that I thought they ought to read, but not with a teaching message in mind. The character lists were a great check list. Every time I read the books, I saw more and more character traits pop out. The first time of reading, I saw a lot of the surface or obvious examples. Second and third readings helped me to see the ingrained traits that would be more challenging for a child to see without directed study."

The third reader stated, "I am a very intuitive reader. When I have finished a book, I know that I enjoyed it, and I can explain why. But, I do not usually get caught up in analytical reading. I am satisfied with the 'sense' of what the book was about, and can

enjoy and appreciate a story without concentrating too much on minutia. Reading these particular books in this particular way really forced me to slow down and examine things like character, motivation, how the action affected the character and motivated them to make the choices they made. Things that I would not have noticed had I not been reading to observe these traits, became more apparent. I would sometimes read a passage several times, knowing that something important was being communicated to me, before being able to identify what was happening, and which character trait was being used to further the story. Much of the writing was quite subtle. I believe that much of what a writer does is on an unconscious level, and when a reader is reading, they also pick it up in that way, knowing without knowing, an underlying communication between author and reader that is difficult to put into words. Reading at this level of observation helped me to consciously hear the hints and whispers left by the writer, either consciously or unconsciously, that I would not have caught before."

The third question asked was "How will this study benefit you as a librarian/teacher/mom/professor?" The first reader noted, "As a librarian in a public school setting, the study will benefit me by providing a solid base on which to recommend books to teachers to read aloud to their class along with providing a great guide for recommending positive books to students and parents. As a mom, I am excited about the genre range of books I have to pull from that will allow me to encourage a variety of positive character traits in my own children's lives."

In response, the second reader replied, "As a mom, I think it changes the way I view several of these books. I doubt I would have ever read a couple of these, but now I find myself watching for them in book orders and recommending them to my daughter.

Typically my youngest child and I read aloud several nights a week. I also pick books that are above where she is reading for pleasure or classics that will challenge or strengthen her reading skills. Several of these books will now be on our list of future 'reads.' I know our home library will continue to expand. As a college instructor, thought not in the field of Education, I have little opportunity to use children's literature in the classroom. But I am integrating more passages into my power points such as little quotations or references from my readings that demonstrate sociological concepts or topics that I think my students can relate to and will challenge them to look for sociological examples in the world around them."

The third reader said, "Since I am no longer teaching professionally, I think my most important teaching moments occur as a mom, so that is how I'll address this question. One of the things that impressed me about these books is how often people do not behave in a way that is consistent with their character. Many times we have to look beneath the surface, or past the appearance of what people want us to believe about them to what is really the essence of their character. That requires us to not make judgments, as they most likely will not be accurate. I would encourage my children to look deeper, to try and know someone, and to try and know their circumstances before judging them, and to look beyond a person's obvious shortcomings to the soul beneath which requires patience and compassion. I would also guide my children to observe and contemplate the behavior of those characters who exhibit qualities of goodness, kindness, hopefulness, selflessness, and nobility and to encourage them to emulate that kind of behavior, for the world can be a dark place, reader, and we are called to be a light in dark places (last thought taken from *The Tale of Despereaux*)."

The final question asked was, "If you could change something about the way we did this study, what would it be and why?" The first reader stated, "Reading the books to analyze them for character traits with no guidance as to what might be a central theme was very difficult. I often felt, while reading, that I was marking insignificant details and yet at the end of the text worried that I had missed something that may have been significant. If we could start over, I would have each member read the book through once and meet to discuss the character traits we noticed in an initial reading and come to an agreement on what we saw as the central character theme. Then, we could re-read the books focusing on highlighting the instances when that character trait was demonstrated. I realize we would not have the variety of traits marked for each text but I feel that our focus would have enabled us to better analyze for a main character theme."

The second reader stated in response, "I wish we had more time to interact with the others on the panel regarding the books. As we used *Sarah*, *Plain and Tall* for our walk-through, it was very obvious that as a sociologist, I 'see' things differently than the educators in the group. One example is my view of acceptance and ambition. I picked up cultural traits in *Bud*, *Not Buddy* that seemed less obvious to the other panel members, but they influenced the way I interpreted subsequent passages of the text. I benefited from seeing the 'other' views on these issues."

The third reader replied, "I think the main thing I would change would be counting the number of times the word appeared in the story. Many times, the word was used in a way that was counter to the purpose of the project, as in 'with all due respect,' when the character was expressing disrespect. The word 'help' especially seemed to fall in this category being used many times in a way that was not definitive of the character

trait of helpfulness. I think this particular bit of quantitative data was least supportive of the study. I also found it frustrating, since our anagram C.H.A.R.A.C.T.E.R., did not include every good or desirable character trait possible, to not be able to acknowledge traits like courage and determination, which many of our characters exhibited. I found myself trying to figure out where to put some traits that I observed, but had no exact word that I could use."

### Limitations of Study

The sample of books selected for use in this study was the Newbery Award winning books from 1997-2007. It should be noted that the Newbery Award is given to one book each year, although several may be nominated and receive an honor award for nomination. However, the researcher specifically chose titles from 1997-2007 for which the Newbery medal was granted. The researcher chose these instead of other titles to limit the number of books studied and to focus the study on titles that might be selected in current curriculum already used in schools. Additionally, a similar Newbery Award content analysis was conducted by Dorothy J. Leal that concluded with the book selected in 1996, and this study resumed with the following year and added to that research. It should further be noted that no attempt was made to evaluate the quality of the books since it is assumed that the books are of excellent literary quality as defined by the criteria for selection of the Newbery Award.

#### Recommendations for Further Research

Since the Newbery Award is given annually, a logical recommendation for further study would be to continue with this same study each year. In January of each year, the

American Library Association announces the winning book. The panel of readers could reconvene to analyze the new winner each year.

A further, more in-depth study could also be done with the addition of the Newbery Honor books. Each year, a few books are chosen to be nominated for the Newbery Award. The selected book receives the award and the other nominated titles become the Honor books. The same study could be done on the Newbery Honor books from 1997-2007.

It could also be recommended that this same study be done throughout the various decades to compare the character trait themes, direct mentions, and demonstrations. The Newbery Award began in 1922. A study could be done to compare the Newbery Award winning books of the 20s, 30s, 40s, 50s, 60s, 70s, 80s, and 90s to the books of this present decade.

A further recommendation that came from a comment of one of the readers would be to conduct the same study using different character traits. The example elements that were selected by the researcher were fitting for the C.H.A.R.A.C.T.E.R. acronym. However, many other example elements would also merit further study, such as courage, kindness, integrity, and others.

Finally, another recommendation for study would be to conduct the same study on a different type of honored book. For the state of Missouri, an award selected by children is called The Mark Twain Award. The state of Texas has an equivalent award called The Bluebonnet Award. Perhaps teachers in various states could conduct studies on the books awarded for their appropriate state.

#### References

- Adamson, L.G. (1981). A content analysis of values in Rosemary Sutcliff's historical fiction for children. (Doctoral dissertation, University of Maryland College Park, 1981).
- American Library Association (2006). Retrieved September 8, 2006 from http://www.ala.org
- Ary, D., Jacobs, L.C., & Razavieh, A. (2002). *Introduction to research in education* (6<sup>th</sup> ed.). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.
- Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development. Retrieved September 8, 2006 from http://www.ascd.org
- Babbie, E. (2005). *The basics of social research* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). Belmont, CA: Thompson Learning, Inc.
- Barbieri, R. (2000). The darker the Newbery. *Independent School*, 69(1).
- Benninga, J.S., Berkowitz, M.W., Kuehn, P., & Smith, K. (2006). Character and academics: What good schools do. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 87(6), 448-452.
- Blackwell, J. (2003). Use of great books in the development of assertiveness. Education, 123(3).
- Brookes, A. (2003). Character building. Why it doesn't happen, why it can't be made to happen, and why the myth of character building is hurting the field of outdoor education. Paper presented at the 13th National Outdoor Education Conference, Marion, South Australia.

- Brown, M. (2002). The one-minute philosopher. The Fourth and Fifth Rs, (8)3, 5.
- Bryan, L. (Spring 2005). Once upon a time: A Grimm approach to children's literature. *Journal of Social Studies Research*, 29(1), 3-6.
- Brynildssen, S. (2002). Character education through children's literature. ERIC

  Clearinghouse on Reading English and Communication Bloomington, IN: Family

  Learning Association. Retrieved May 4, 2007 from

  <a href="http://www.ericdigests.org/2003-3/character.htm">http://www.ericdigests.org/2003-3/character.htm</a>
- Bulach, C.R., & Bulter, J.D. (2002). The occurrence of behaviors associated with sixteen character values. *Journal of Humanistic Counseling, Education and Development* 41, 200-214.
- Cain, A. (June 2005). Books and becoming good: Demonstrating Aristotle's theory of moral development in the act of reading. *Journal of Moral Education*, *34*(2), 171-183.
- Cates, A.L. (2002). More than just imaginative: A qualitative study of values in literature for young children from the 20<sup>th</sup> century. (Doctoral dissertation, Indiana State University, 2002).
- (2002). Character education through children's literature. *Phi Delta Kappa Fastbacks* 49, 7-49.
- Cornwall, K. (2005). The problem with character education. *Patriotism for All*. Retrieved May 10, 2007 from <a href="http://members.cox.net/patriotismforall/character\_ed.html">http://members.cox.net/patriotismforall/character\_ed.html</a>
- Cullinan, B., & Galda, L. (2006). Literature and the child. (6th Ed.) Fort Worth: Harcourt Brace.

- De Leon, L. (Winter 2002). Multicultural literature: Reading to develop self-worth. *Multicultural Education*, 10(2), 49-51.
- DeVries, R. (1998). Implications of Piaget's constructivist theory for character education. *Action in Teacher Education*, 20(4), 39-47.
- Durboraw, C.A. (Fall 2001). Teaching moral values through literature: Melding "us" and "them." *The Delta Kappa Gamma Bulletin*, 68(1), 58-59.
- Durkheim, E. (1961). Moral education: A study in the theory and application of the sociology of education. The Free Press of Glencoe.
- Edgington, W.D. (1996). Teaching character education: The values in John R. Tunis's sports books for children and adolescents. (Doctoral dissertation, Oklahoma State University, 1996).
- Edgington, W.D. (May/June, 2002). To promote character education, use literature for children and adolescents. *The Social Studies*, 133-116.
- Fralick, K.G. (1997). Character and citizenship: An annotated bibliography of children's and young adults' literature. *Teaching K-8*, 50-52.
- Friedman, A.A., & Cataldo, C.A. (October, 2002). Characters at crossroads: Reflective decision makers in contemporary Newbery books. *The Reading Teacher*, 56(2), 102-112.
- Giampietro, P. J. (2003). *Character education: Another look*. Character Education Grant, University of New Hampshire.
- Good, C. (1973). Dictionary of Education.

- Groce, E.C. (2001). An analysis of recent Newbery award winning and honor books for themes regarding the representation of female protagonists. (Doctoral dissertation, Texas A&M, 2001).
- Heilman, A.W., Blair, T.R., & Rupley, W.H. (2002). *Principles and practices of teaching reading*. (10<sup>th</sup> Ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education..
- Houdyshell, M.L., & Kirkland, J.J. (1998). Heroines in Newbery medal award winners: Seventy-five years of change. *Journal of Youth Services in Libraries*, 11(3), 252-262.
- Jalongo, M.R. (2004). Stories that teach life lessons. *Scholastic Early Childhood Today*, 19(2), 36-43.
- Jones, E.N., Ryan, K., & Bohlin, K. (1998). Character education and teacher education:

  How are prospective teachers being prepared to foster good character in students?

  Action in Teacher Education, 20(4), 11-28.
- Jones, J.L. (November/December, 2003). Character and somebodiness: Teaching Dr. King through Dr. Seuss. *Knowledge Quest*, 32(2), 43-44.
- Kagan, S. (2002). The structural approach to character education. *The Fourth and Fifth Rs*, 8(3).
- Kilpatrick, W., Wolfe, G., and Wolfe, S. (1994). Books that build character: A guide to teaching your child moral values through stories. New York: Simon & Schuster.
- Krajewski, B., & Bailey, E. (October, 1999). Caring with passion: The "core" value.

  National Association of Secondary School Principals, NASSP Bulletin, 83(609),
  33-39.

- Leal, D., Glascock, C., Mitchell, D., & Wasserman, D. (2000). Reading character in children's literature: A character trait study of Newbery medal books. *The Ohio Reading Teacher*, *34*(1), 49-56.
- Leal, D.J. (1999). Engaging students' minds and hearts: Authentic student assessment of character traits in literature. *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy*, 43(3), 240-249.
- Leming, J.S. (November, 1993). In search of effective character education. *Educational Leadership*, 63-71.
- Lewis, C.S. (1998). On stories. New York: Harcourt Brace.
- Lickona, T. (1991). Educating for character: How our schools can teach respect and responsibility. New York, NY: Bantam Books.
- Lickona, T. (1996). The decline and fall of American civilization: Can character education reverse the slide? *The World and I*, 285-307.
- Lickona, T. (1999). Religion and character education. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 81(1), 21-24.
- Lockwood, A.T. (1997). *Character education: Controversy and consensus*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.
- Mathison, C. (1998). How teachers feel about character education: A descriptive study.

  \*\*Action in Teacher Education, 20(4), 29-38.
- McLaren, N. (1997). Teach loving relationships through literature. *The Education Digest*, 63, 66-68.
- Morrow, L.M., Gambrell, L.B., & Pressley, M. (2003). *Best practices in literacy instruction*. (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). New York: Guilford Press.

- Murphy, M.M. (1998). *Character education in America's blue ribbon schools*. Lancaster, PA: Technomic.
- Neill, J. (2005). Character education through experiential education. *Wilderdom*. Retrieved May 4, 2007 from <a href="http://www.wilderdom.com/Character.html">http://www.wilderdom.com/Character.html</a>
- Norton, D.E. (1997). *The effective teaching of language arts*. (5<sup>th</sup> Ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Merrill/Prentice Hall.
- O'Sullivan, S. (2004). Books to live by: Using children's literature for character education. *The Reading Teacher*, *57*(7), 640-645.
- O'Sullivan, S. (2005). The soul of teaching: educating teachers of character. *Action in Teacher Education*, 26(4), 3-9.
- Otten, E.H. (2002). Developing character through literature. Bloomington, IN: ERIC Clearinghouse on Reading, English, and Communication and The Family Learning Association. Retrieved May 4, 2007.
- Richey, C.K., & Hurley, D.S. (1996). The right stuff: Books that help children develop a moral code by which to live. *The School Library Journal*, 54-55.
- Riley, D. (2000). Champions of a cause. Teaching PreK-8, (30)5, 6.
- Roberts, P.L. (2005). Family values through children's literature and activities, grades 4-6. Scarecrow Press.
- Rovenger, J. (1988). Children's literature as a moral compass. *School Library Journal*, *34*, 45-46.
- Ryan, K. (1986). The new moral education. Phi Delta Kappan, 68(4), 228-233.
- Ryan, K., & Bohlin, K. (1999). Building character in schools: Practical ways to bring moral instruction to life. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

- Singh, G.R. (October, 2001). How character education helps students grow. *Educational Leadership*, 46-49.
- Spring, J. (2004). American education. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Sullivan, E. P. (n.d.) What are the religious/spiritual values in children's books? Do children get the messages? (Doctoral dissertation, University of Arkansas).
- U.S. Department of Education. (2005) Helping your child become a responsible citizen.
  Office of Communications and Outreach, Washington, D.C. Retrieved September
  29, 2006 from <a href="http://www.ed.gov/print/parents/academic/help/citizen/index.html">http://www.ed.gov/print/parents/academic/help/citizen/index.html</a>
- Vardin, P.A. (2003). Character education in America. Montessori LIFE, 15(2), 32-34.
- Vess, K.A. (2003). Character education: What counselor educators need to know. ERIC Clearinghouse on Counseling and Student Services. Greensboro, NC. Retrieved May 4, 2007 from <a href="http://www.ericdigests.org/2003-5/character.htm">http://www.ericdigests.org/2003-5/character.htm</a>
- Von Drasek, L. (2003). May the best book win. Teaching PreK-8, 33(4), 58-60.
- White, R. K. (1951). *Value-analysis: The nature and use of the method*. Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues.
- Wiles, J., & Bondi, J. (2004). *Supervision: A guide to practice*. Columbus, OH: Pearson Merrill Prentice Hall.
- Williams, M., & Schnaps, E. (Eds.) (1999). Character education: The foundation for teacher education. Washington, DC: Character Education Partnership.

### Appendix A

Konigsburg, E.L. (1997). The view from Saturday.

Four students (Noah, Nadia, Ethan and Julian) are chosen to participate in an academic trivia competition by their paraplegic teacher, Mrs.Olinski.

Hesse, K. (1998). Out of the dust.

Set in Oklahoma during the Dust Bowl, this is the story of 14 year old Billie Jo told through her own diary written in free-verse poetry of life in the winter of 1934-1935.

Sachar, L. (1999). Holes.

Stanley must endure the consequences of a crime he did not commit, and simultaneously learns of crazy stories from local history and his own family while making a special friend.

Curtis, C. P. (2000). Bud, not Buddy.

Set during the Great Depression, ten-year-old Bud sets out on an adventure to find his father who he believes is well-known Big Band leader H.E. Calloway.

Peck, R. (2001). A year down yonder.

Set in 1937, and a sequel to *A Long Way From Chicago*, fifteen-year-old Mary Alice takes the train to spend a year with her Grandma in her small hometown.

Park, L. S. (2002). A single shard.

Set in 12th century Korea, orphaned Tree-ear who lives under a bridge with his disabled older friend, Crane-man, hopes to learn the potter's craft and become an apprentice.

Avi. (2003). Crispin: The cross of lead.

The thirteen-year-old boy from 14<sup>th</sup>-century England always called "Asta's son," discovers his real name is Crispin and desires to find who he really is.

DiCamillo, K. (2004). The tale of Despereaux: Being the story of a mouse, a princess, some soup, and a spool of thread.

Despereaux Tilling is a little mouse with big dreams for himself and he learns that even a small mouse can be a brave knight.

Kadohata, C. (2005). Kira-Kira.

In 1956, Lynn and Katie move from a Japanese community in Iowa to Chesterfield, Georgia where they learn about discrimination, poverty, terminal illness, and a 'kira-kira' life.

Perkins, L. R. (2006). Criss cross.

A group of childhood friends face the crossroads of life and how they wish to live it.

Patron, S. (2007). The higher power of Lucky.

A young girl searches to find her higher power to permanently keep her with her guardian.

# Appendix B

1.	Was	(specified character example element) directly mentioned in the
	text?	
Freq	uencies and	page numbers:
2.	Was	(specified character example element) shown by the main
chara	acter(s)?	
Freq	uencies and	page numbers:
3.	Was	(specified character example element) shown by someone other
than	the main ch	aracter(s)?
Freq	uencies and	page numbers:
4.	Were the	re some point(s) when the main character learned the importance of
	(spe	ecified character example element)?
Freq	uencies and	page numbers:
5.	Was the	opposite of (specified character example element) shown?
Freq	uencies and	page numbers:
6.	Total nur	mber of times that (specified character example element) is
displ	ayed in this	book:

### Appendix C

### Definitions and Instances of C.H.A.R.A.C.T.E.R. Example Elements\*

Caring/Compassion—to have or show compassion, to feel interested or concerned about (emotion)

The opposite is harshness.

- The character feels sorry for others having a problem.
- The character helps another who is being picked on.
- The character listens to another's problems.
- The character comforts another who has a problem.

Helpfulness—cooperative, to give service or assistance, to be willing to help

The opposite is uncooperative.

- The character helps another child.
- The character helps the teacher.
- The character works well in groups.

Acceptance—empathetic, approving, to show an understanding or approval of differences

The opposite is rejection.

- The character accepts students who have a different religion.
- The character accepts differences of opinion.
- The character accepts others who are from a different race or background.
- The character makes an effort to understand others who are different.

Respect—an act of giving particular attention, to treat in high regard, to take care of someone or something (duty)

The opposite is disrespect.

- The character recognizes the authority of others.
- The character takes care of personal property.
- The character takes care of the property of others.
- The character is positive about himself.
- The character takes care of his own body.

Ambition—strong desire for success and achievement, an inner drive, to be motivated

The opposite is unmotivated.

- The character shows determination when faced with a problem.
- The character works hard to succeed.
- The character finishes work within the allotted time.

Citizenship—patriotism, to show loyalty to one's own country

The opposite is disloyalty.

- The character is positive about his/her country.
- The character is positive about the rules and laws of the land.
- The character cares about his/her school and community.
- The character volunteers services to help his/her school, community, country.

Trustworthiness—honest, dependable, to place confidence in

The opposite is dishonesty.

- The character tells the truth.
- The character can be trusted.

Encouragement—to inspire courage, spirit, and hope; to spur on

The opposite is disheartening.

- The character inspires others to be brave.
- The character inspires others to try their best.
- The character is hopeful.

Responsibility—dependability, accountability, to have good judgment and the ability to act correctly

The opposite is unreliability.

- The character can be trusted to do what he/she says.
- The character does what the adult asks without having to be reminded.
- The character completes and turns in work on time.
- The character accepts the consequences of his/her decisions.

\*The format and definitions came from the researcher's modification of the following: (a) Webster Merriam's and Cambridge's Online Dictionaries, (b) an article by Cletus R. Bulach and Judy D. Butler entitled *The Occurrence of Behaviors Associated With Sixteen Character Values* (2002), and (c) an article by Dorothy J. Leal entitled *Engaging Students' Minds and Hearts: Authentic Student Assessment of Character Traits in Literature* (1999).

# Appendix D

# Character Traits in Newbery Award Literature 1997-2007

## Codebook for Character Trait Analysis

Title of Newbery Award Book
Author
Year of Newbery Award
Number of Pages
List of Main Characters:
Theme of the Book
Comments:
Name of Rater

#### Positive Character Trait Ranking Form

Trait	Frequency of times noted	Page numbers with best examples for theme ranking	Incident rank	Theme rank
Caring/compassionate				
Helpfulness				
Acceptance				
Respect				
Ambition				
Citizenship				
Trustworthiness				
Encouragement				
Responsibility				

Incident Rank—

Rank the quantity of positive character traits in this book on a scale of 0-3:

- 0 means that a positive portrayal of the character example element was not found at all.
- 1 means that a positive portrayal of the character example element was occasionally found.
- 2 means that a positive portrayal of the character example element was frequently found.
- $3\ means$  that a positive portrayal of the character example element was abundant.

Theme Rank—

Rank the portrayal of the character example element as an overall theme for this book on a scale of 0-3:

0 means that this character trait is not at all present as a theme in this book.

- 1 means that this character trait is a weak theme in this book.
- 2 means that this character trait is a moderate theme in this book.
- 3 means that this character trait is a strong theme in this book.

Comments:

#### Negative Character Trait Ranking Form

Trait	Frequency of times noted	Page numbers with best examples for theme ranking	Incident rank	Theme rank
Harshness-lacking compassion				
Uncooperative- not being helpful				
Rejection- lacking acceptance				
Disrespect-lacking respect				
Unmotivated-lacking ambition				
Disloyalty-lacking citizenship				
Dishonesty-lacking trustworthiness				
Disheartening-lacking encouragement				
Unreliable-lacking responsibility				

Incident Rank—

Rank the quantity of negative character traits in this book on a scale of 0-3:

0 means that a negative portrayal of the character example element was not found at all.

- 1 means that a negative portrayal of the character example element was occasionally found.
- 2 means that a negative portrayal of the character example element was frequently found.
- 3 means that a negative portrayal of the character example element was abundant.

Theme Rank—

Rank the portrayal of the character example element as an overall theme for this book on a scale of 0-3:

0 means that this character trait is not at all present as a theme in this book.

- 1 means that this character trait is a weak theme in this book.
- 2 means that this character trait is a moderate theme in this book.
- 3 means that this character trait is a strong theme in this book.

Comments:

# Caring/Compassionate

Caring/Compassion—to have or show compassion, to feel interested or concerned about (emotion)

The opposite is harshness.

- The character feels sorry for others having a problem.
- The character helps another who is being picked on.
- The character listens to another's problems.
- The character comforts another who has a problem.

•	Was caring/compassionate directly mentioned in the text?
•	Frequencies and page numbers:
•	Was caring/compassionate shown by the main character(s)?
•	Frequencies and page numbers:
•	Was caring/compassionate shown by someone other than the main character(s)?
•	Frequencies and page numbers:
•	Were there some point(s) when the main character learned the importance of
	caring/compassionate?
•	Frequencies and page numbers:
•	Was the opposite of caring/compassionate shown (harshness)?
•	Frequencies and page numbers:
•	Total number of times that <i>caring/compassionate</i> is displayed in this book:

## Helpfulness

Helpfulness—cooperative, to give service or assistance, willing to help

The opposite is uncooperative.

- The character helps another person.
- The character helps the teacher.
- The character works well in groups.

•	Was helpfulness directly mentioned in the text?
•	Frequencies and page numbers:
•	Was helpfulness shown by the main character(s)?
•	Frequencies and page numbers:
•	Was <i>helpfulness</i> shown by someone other than the main character(s)?
•	Frequencies and page numbers:
•	Were there some point(s) when the main character learned the importance of
	helpfulness?
•	Frequencies and page numbers:
•	Was the opposite of <i>helpfulness (uncooperative)</i> shown?
	was the opposite of neipjuiness (uncooperative) shown:
•	Frequencies and page numbers:

Total number of times that *helpfulness* is displayed in this book: \_\_\_\_\_

### Acceptance

Acceptance—empathetic, approving, to show an understanding or approval of differences

The opposite is rejection.

- The character accepts students who have a different religion.
- The character accepts differences of opinion.
- The character accepts others who are from a different race or background.
- The character makes an effort to understand others who are different.

•	Was acceptance directly mentioned in the text?
•	Frequencies and page numbers:
•	Was acceptance shown by the main character(s)?
•	Frequencies and page numbers:
•	Was acceptance shown by someone other than the main character(s)?
•	Frequencies and page numbers:
•	Were there some point(s) when the main character learned the importance of
	acceptance?
•	Frequencies and page numbers:
•	Was the opposite of acceptance (rejection) shown?
•	Frequencies and page numbers:

Total number of times that *acceptance* is displayed in this book: \_\_\_\_\_

### Respect

Respect—an act of giving particular attention, to treat in high regard, to take care of someone or something (duty)

The opposite is disrespect.

- The character recognizes the authority of others.
- The character takes care of personal property.
- The character takes care of the property of others.
- The character is positive about himself.
- The character takes care of his own body.

•	Was respect directly mentioned in the text?
•	Frequencies and page numbers:
•	Was respect shown by the main character(s)?
•	Frequencies and page numbers:
•	Was respect shown by someone other than the main character(s)?
•	Frequencies and page numbers:
•	Were there some point(s) when the main character learned the importance of
	respect?
•	Frequencies and page numbers:
•	Was the opposite of respect (disrespect) shown?
•	Frequencies and page numbers:

Total number of times that *respect* is displayed in this book: \_\_\_\_\_

### Ambition

Ambition—strong desire for success and achievement, an inner drive to be motivated.

The opposite is unmotivated.

- The character shows determination when faced with a problem.
- The character works hard to succeed.
- The character finishes work within the allotted time.

•	Was ambition directly mentioned in the text?
•	Frequencies and page numbers:
•	Was ambition shown by the main character(s)?
•	Frequencies and page numbers:
•	Was ambition shown by someone other than the main character(s)?
•	Frequencies and page numbers:
•	Were there some point(s) when the main character learned the importance of
	ambition?
•	Frequencies and page numbers:
•	Was the opposite of ambition (unmotivated) shown?
•	Frequencies and page numbers:

• Total number of times that *ambition* is displayed in this book: \_\_\_\_\_

## Citizenship

Citizenship—patriotism, to show loyalty to one's own country

The opposite is disloyalty.

- The character is positive about his/her country.
- The character is positive about the rules and laws of the land.
- The character cares about his/her school and community.
- The character volunteers services to help his/her school, community, country.

•	Was citizenship directly mentioned in the text?
•	Frequencies and page numbers:
•	Was citizenship shown by the main character(s)?
•	Frequencies and page numbers:
•	Was <i>citizenship</i> shown by someone other than the main character(s)?
•	Frequencies and page numbers:
•	Were there some point(s) when the main character learned the importance of
	citizenship?
•	Frequencies and page numbers:
•	Was the opposite of citizenship (disloyalty) shown?
•	Frequencies and page numbers:

Total number of times that *citizenship* is displayed in this book: \_\_\_\_\_

## Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness—honest, dependable, to place confidence in The opposite is dishonesty.

<ul><li>The character tells the truth.</li><li>The character can be trusted.</li></ul>
• Was <i>trustworthiness</i> directly mentioned in the text?
• Frequencies and page numbers:
• Was <i>trustworthiness</i> shown by the main character(s)?
Frequencies and page numbers:
• Was <i>trustworthiness</i> shown by someone other than the main character(s)?
Frequencies and page numbers:
• Were there some point(s) when the main character learned the importance of
trustworthiness?
Frequencies and page numbers:
• Was the opposite of <i>trustworthiness</i> ( <i>dishonesty</i> ) shown?
Frequencies and page numbers:

Total number of times that *trustworthiness* is displayed in this book: \_\_\_\_\_

## Encouragement

Encouragement—to inspire courage, spirit, and hope; to spur on

The opposite is disheartening.

- The character inspires others to be brave.
- The character inspires others to try their best.
- The character is hopeful.

•	Was encouragement directly mentioned in the text?
•	Frequencies and page numbers:
•	Was encouragement shown by the main character(s)?
•	Frequencies and page numbers:
•	Was <i>encouragement</i> shown by someone other than the main character(s)?
•	Frequencies and page numbers:
•	Were there some point(s) when the main character learned the importance of
	encouragement?
•	Frequencies and page numbers:
•	Was the opposite of encouragement (disheartening) shown?
•	Frequencies and page numbers:

Total number of times that *encouragement* is displayed in this book: \_\_\_\_\_

## Responsibility

Responsibility—dependability, accountability, to have good judgment and the ability to act correctly

The opposite is unreliability.

- The character can be trusted to do what he/she says.
- The character does what the adult asks without having to be reminded.
- The character completes and turns in work on time.
- The character accepts the consequences of his/her decisions.

•	Was responsibility directly mentioned in the text?
•	Frequencies and page numbers:
•	Was responsibility shown by the main character(s)?
•	Frequencies and page numbers:
•	Was responsibility shown by someone other than the main character(s)?
•	Frequencies and page numbers:
•	Were there some point(s) when the main character learned the importance of
	responsibility?
•	Frequencies and page numbers:
•	Was the opposite of responsibility (unreliability) shown?
•	Frequencies and page numbers:

Total number of times that *responsibility* is displayed in this book: \_\_\_\_\_

### Appendix E

#### Letter to the Authors

July 14, 2007

E.L. Konigsburg Scholastic Inc. Simon and Schuster Children's Publishing Division 555 Broadway New York, NY 10012

Dear Ms. Konigsburg,

I am an Instructor of Education at Southwest Baptist University in Bolivar, MO where I have the privilege and pleasure of teaching pre-service elementary teachers. One of my passions is training my students to instill within their students values through children's literature. This passion has led me to do research in the area of children's literature and character education.

Currently, I am working on a doctorate degree in educational leadership, curriculum and instruction, and reading through Liberty University in Lynchburg, VA. My doctoral dissertation research focuses on the character traits revealed in the Newbery Award winning books from 1997-2007. I am conducting a content analysis on each book specifically to identify the positive character traits of caring/compassionate, helpfulness, acceptance, respect, ambition, citizenship, trustworthiness, encouragement, and responsibility.

I am writing to see if you could provide a personal statement about your Newbery Award winning book and what you see as a strong character trait theme from the list I have included. I am sure that this is an unusual request, and I trust you are busy with your writing endeavors. However, it would mean so much to me if I could include a personal testimony of the character traits you feel are included in your book. I am confident this would establish credibility for my study. If you could please just share a sentence or two about your book, I would be grateful. I am including a self-addressed stamped envelope for you and would appreciate your reply by the first of September.

Thank you so much for your time,

Julie B. Bryant
Instructor of Education
Southwest Baptist University
Bolivar, MO 65613
Jbbryant@sbuniv.edu

#### **VITA**

Julie Beth Bryant was born July 22, 1975 to Deryl and Judy Tinsley. She attended public schools in Bolivar, Missouri, and graduated from Bolivar High School in 1993. She received a B.S. degree in Elementary Education and Early Childhood Education from Southwest Baptist University (1997) and a M.S. Ed. degree in Curriculum and Instruction from University of Missouri—Columbia (1999). She taught in the public schools at School of the Osage in Lake Ozark, Missouri for five years before moving back to Bolivar, Missouri where she is currently employed at Southwest Baptist University as an Instructor of Education. Through the distance learning program at Liberty University in Lynchburg, Virginia, she completed her Ed.D. degree in Educational Leadership, Curriculum/Instruction, and Reading (2008). Julie has been married to Robbie Bryant for nearly 8 years and they have one son, Jaron. They are happily awaiting the birth of their second child in July.