CHARACTER TRAITS IN CALDECOTT AWARD-WINNING LITERATURE FROM 2002-2012: A CONTENT ANALYSIS

by

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Liberty University

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

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CHARACTER TRAITS IN CALDECOTT AWARD-WINNING LITERATURE FROM 2002-2012.

**ABSTRACT**

This study examined children’s books that were honored with the Randolph Caldecott Medal for the most distinguished American picture book from 2002-2012, in an attempt to analyze examples of character elements in these books. Modeled after two previous dissertations in which Newbery books were analyzed, I used similar methodology to further their research to books honored with the Caldecott Medal. Therefore, content analysis was used to determine the presence of the sample character traits, following the acronym C.H.A.R.A.C.T.E.R., developed by researcher Bryant (2008). These elements included: (a) caring/compassionate, (b) helpfulness, (c) acceptance, (d) respect, (e) ambition, (f) citizenship, (g) trustworthiness, (h) encouragement, and (i) responsibility. A coding system was developed in Bryant’s (2008) study and adapted by Bones (2010); I utilized that same system with a team of 5 readers. Through the coding, reading, and discussion of the texts, the readers attempted to develop consensus as to the character traits found in the texts and ultimately the usefulness of the text in incorporating character education into the general curriculum.

*Keywords*: character, character education, Caldecott Award, literature, moral education
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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Former American President Theodore Roosevelt once said, “To educate a person in mind and not in morals is to educate a menace to society” (as cited in Lickona, 1991, p. 3). This quote supports the notion that schooling should, at its heart, instill goodness as well as intellect. In fact, Plato said, “Education in virtue is the only education which deserves the name” (as cited in O’Sullivan, 2004, p. 640). According to O’Sullivan (2004), even the founders of the United States held the belief that character was the bedrock of democracy. Democracy, itself, was considered “unworkable without an educated and morally responsible populace” (O’Sullivan, 2004, p. 640).

Widespread concern over the moral health of the nation and its children continues to haunt educators and policy-makers. Even before the tragic school shootings in Kentucky (1997), Colorado (1999), and Virginia Tech (2007), the United States Department of Education, in 1995 had established guidelines reminding schools that, while they must remain religiously neutral, they were “obligated to actively impart civic values and a unifying moral code” (O’Sullivan, 2004, pp. 640-641). Wilhelm and Firmin (2008) quote Ferguson’s suggestion that “across the country, schools... are turning to programs of character education in hopes of inoculating kids with the values of civility and integrity, against the depredations of a popular culture that often seems to reward neither” (p. 182).

Institutions responsible for children all day long cannot simply ignore the moral aspects of children’s development. Lickona (1991) states it this way: “Schools can no longer be ethical bystanders” (p. 5). Morality will be learned. The question no longer becomes whether to teach character education, but rather if it should be done carefully and intentionally or just inadvertently (Wilhelm & Firmin, 2008).
Background

What legislation has been enacted regarding character education? Is it mandated or merely encouraged at the federal and/or state levels across the United States? This section will explore the current legislation for character education. Also, the character elements highlighted in major character education organizations and the history of the Caldecott Award for children’s literature will be briefly addressed.

Legislation for Character Education

On January 8, 2002, a federal call sounded to include character education in the curriculum of schools. President George W. Bush, on that date, signed into law his educational reform plan, Public Law PL 107-110, commonly known as the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB). This law—working in tandem with parents, communities, and schools—sought to ensure highest-quality education for all students through safe environments that foster growth of moral strength and civic virtue. Although this law is no longer fully implemented, it has elements of character education built into it.

In a brochure published by the U.S. Department of Education’s (DOE) Office of Communication and Outreach, former DOE Secretary Margaret Spellings is quoted saying, “A quality education provides citizens with the tools to participate fully in their society” (U.S. DOE, 2005, Foreword section, para. 2). The document goes on to quote research findings that show children with strong, positive values are best able to balance their own personal needs against those of others in order to positively contribute to society as well as in the classroom. Most parents and teachers want children to grow up to be responsible citizens. The goals that the U.S. Department of Education has for students through character education are explicitly stated within the brochure. It reads:
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. DOE, 2005, p. ii)

In light of the impact of character on both societal contribution and academic performance, NCLB Subpart 3, Section 5431 entitled, “Partnerships in Character Education Program,” provides monetary support in the form of grants for the implementation of character education programs. Example character elements are expressly listed in this section. It specifically reads: “EXAMPLE ELEMENTS- Elements of character selected under this subsection 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 (h) any other elements deemed appropriate by the eligible entity” (No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, 2002).

Many states are utilizing legislation to mandate or encourage character education initiatives. According to the official website of Character Education Partnership (2010), “a nonprofit, nonpartisan, nonsectarian coalition of organizations and individuals committed to fostering effective character education in our nation's schools,” 18 states mandate character education (para. 1). An additional 18 states encourage—through legislation—the implementation of character education while seven states support character education without legislation. The researcher’s home state of Georgia is one of the 18 states that mandate instruction in values. In 1997, Georgia legislation required that character education based on 27 traits centering on citizenship and respect is included in the Georgia curriculum.


Many noteworthy organizations exist in the character education community. Each
organization has its own character elements it deems significant for inclusion in character education curriculum. When analyzing these elements, the researcher noted that while great variety exists, commonalities also emerge. For example, Character Counts! Coalition emphasizes six “pillars” of good character: trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, and citizenship (Josephson Institute, 2010). Lickona (1991) suggests teaching the two “foundational moral values” of respect and responsibility, while also emphasizing “honesty, fairness, tolerance, prudence, self-discipline, helpfulness, compassion, cooperation, courage, and a host of other democratic values” (p. 45).

The research after which this study is modeled involves a self-selected list of character elements based on common traits from various sources. The elements chosen by researcher Bryant (2008), a former researcher on character education in children’s literature, form an acronym using the letters in the word C.H.A.R.A.C.T.E.R. These traits respectively include caring, helpfulness, acceptance, respect, ambition, citizenship, trustworthiness, encouragement, and responsibility (Bryant, 2008). For the purposes of this study, caring refers to having or showing compassion, and feeling interested or concerned. Helpfulness is willing to give service or assistance; cooperative. Empathy, or showing an approval of differences, defines acceptance in this research study, and respect is the act of treating in high regard. Ambition is a strong desire for success or achievement. Citizenship is defined as showing loyalty to one’s own country. Trustworthiness is honest, dependable, and able in which to place confidence. Finally, encouragement is defined as inspiring courage, spirit, and hope, while responsibility is explained as dependability and accountability. Each of these C.H.A.R.A.C.T.E.R. elements is defined further in Appendix A. These character elements directed this content analysis study of Caldecott Award Winning books from 2002-2012.
**Caldecott Award**

The Randolph Caldecott Award, established in 1937, is annually bestowed upon the illustrator of the most distinguished American picture book for children published during that year. Honor books are also named for additional books that are “truly distinguished” (Horning, 2009, p. 5). Under the definition of terms for the Caldecott Award, a “picture book for children” is set apart from a mere book with illustrations due to its provision of a “visual experience” with a “collective unity of story line, theme, or concept, developed through a series of pictures of which the book is comprised” (Horning, 2009, p. 5). This prestigious award is given through the Association for Library Services to Children (ALSC), a division of the American Library Association, by a 15 member committee.

**Problem Statement**

Yearly, many teachers and librarians anxiously await the announcement of the year’s Caldecott and Newbery Award winners. They flock to purchase the books and add them to the collection to be used with students. Most teachers, even in the upper elementary grades, enjoy the rich experiences that come with sharing a great picture book with the class. Since the use of Caldecott winning books in classrooms is already a recurring practice, this researcher chose to investigate these books as a springboard into character education discussions. Furthermore, this knowledge of the character traits evident in Caldecott winning books might convince teachers of the practicality of seamlessly incorporating character education into the current curriculum. In short, the researcher proposed the following problem statement: The Caldecott award-winning books from 2002-2012 cannot be used as character education instructional tools until it is first determined whether or not these books reveal example traits of character education.
Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative content analysis study was to analyze Caldecott Award winning books from 2002-2012 and determine if the characteristics of caring, helpfulness, acceptance, respect, ambition, citizenship, trustworthiness, encouragement, and responsibility are exhibited by the characters in the book. These example character elements are those specified by the acronym C.H.A.R.A.C.T.E.R. created by Julie Beth Bryant (2008), a former researcher on character education in children’s literature.

Significance of the Study

High-quality picture books can be very effective teaching tools because they can “present complex concepts in developmentally effective ways that even the youngest child can understand” (Jalongo, 2004, para. 2; O’Sullivan, 2002; Zeece, 2009). Albert Bandura’s Social Cognitive Theory emphasizes that learning can occur through direct experience or observation of models—either live or via some form of media, such as books (Bandura, 1999, 2000). Because of the powerful visual images in picture books, indelible impressions can be made. This potent tool can be used to teach the lessons in character that teachers struggle to incorporate into their time-crunch time-crunched school days. This research seeks to aid teachers, librarians, and parents by informing them of the character traits evident in these books. Furthermore, this knowledge of the character traits evident in Caldecott winning books might convince teachers of the feasibility of merging character education into the current curriculum.

Whereas previous studies have been completed analyzing Newbery Award-winning books for character example elements, this study adds to the body of research through the avenue of picture books. Most Newbery winners are chapter books, which, according to a study of Newbery winners from 1922 to 1997 completed by Leal and Chamberlain-Solecki (1998), are written at an average 6.8 grade level readability. Thus, a study of character traits in Caldecott
books broadens the potential for the use of literature as an aid in character education, expanding it to include even the youngest of age groups.

**Research Questions**

The following questions guided this study:

**RQ 1:** What are the predominant character example elements as specified in the acronym C.H.A.R.A.C.T.E.R. in the Caldecott Award winning books between 2002 and 2012?

This research study centers on a decade of highly-accessible children’s literature receiving the Caldecott Award. This question was designed to help identify the prominent character example elements from these texts so that determinations could be made regarding their use in teaching character education in the classroom; instruction, which research shows, is beneficial (Wilhelm & Firmin, 2008).

**RQ 2:** What are the frequencies of the positive versus negative character traits utilizing C.H.A.R.A.C.T.E.R. as the focus elements?

Information gleaned from this research question provided quick reference for educators who choose to show students “both sides of the coin.” According to Powell (1986), the human tendency is to “polarize experience and judgment” through thinking in opposites (p. 617). By contrasting both positive and negative character traits, students can more accurately understand desirable virtues (Malik & Hukam, 2010; Powell, 1986).

**RQ 3:** Which books could be recommended for teachers to use for teaching character education?

The crux of the study lies in this third research question. Researchers agree that literature is an excellent avenue for leading character education discussions and allowing students to see character in action (Cain, 2005; Cates, 2002; Friedman & Cataldo, 2002; Leal, 1999; Lewis, Robinson, & Hayes, 2011; O’Sullivan, 2004). Since teachers are interested in the practical
implementation possibilities, they want to know, “How can the knowledge from this study facilitate character education in the classroom?” Book recommendations to accompany the various character elements only make implementation that much easier for the already-busy educator.

**Delimitations**

Delimitations are intentional decisions made by the researcher in order to define the boundaries of a study. The nature of this study required that the researcher make some of these purposeful decisions to limit the study. For example, there are countless children’s picture books that could be studied for C.H.A.R.A.C.T.E.R. example elements, including years of Caldecott winners. This researcher chose, therefore to limit the number of books studied to those of the most current full decade, 2002-2012. In addition to this delimitation, the number of character education virtues to be examined were narrowed down to those that follow the acronym C.H.A.R.A.C.T.E.R. where the letters stand respectively for caring, helpfulness, acceptance, respect, ambition, citizenship, trustworthiness, encouragement, and responsibility.

**Research Plan**

This qualitative content analysis examined the children’s picture books that were named as winners of the Randolph Caldecott Award from 2002-2012 to determine the presence of example elements of character education as specified by the acronym C.H.A.R.A.C.T.E.R. Content analysis is a valid research design for this investigation because it is the “study of recorded human communications” of which books are one form (Babbie, 2011, p. 356). Using content analysis, a team of five educational professionals served as readers or coders to record frequency counts and page numbers for the occurrences of both positive and negative character traits in the books. A codebook for content analysis was created for use in exploring the texts (see Appendix A). Information gathered served to further inform readers as they gave narrative
support for their ideas regarding central conflicts and themes. The team of coders then conferred
to determine consensus and discuss findings. After this gathering, coders individually completed
values in a classroom setting.

Summary

Chapter One provided a general overview of the research presented in this dissertation. It
included background and a development of the problem, purpose, and significance of the study.
Three research questions were introduced, as well as a discussion of the delimitations of the
study and a look at the research plan. In Chapter Two, a thorough review of the existing
literature is conducted.
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

The word *character* actually derives from a Greek word meaning “to engrave.” So character traits are literally markings engraved upon humans, which compel them to act and react in certain ways (O’Sullivan, 2004). Character can be defined in various ways. It can also be used differently in colloquial speech. For example, someone who acts in atypical fashion is deemed “a character.” The term “having character” is often referenced, but can be characterized as “good” or “bad.” In character education, the desire is not to create a “bunch of characters” but to produce individuals with sociomoral competency (Berkowitz & Bier, 2004). Hersh, Miller, and Fielding (1980) state:

> Education has always been thought to contain an essential “moral” component . . . The American educator has always been a moral educator. Whether from the austere Puritan or the indulgent romantic, children have traditionally received moral training. What is new about current perspectives on moral education is not their explicit concern for morality but their awareness of moral complexity. (p. 25)

The purpose of this research study, to examine Caldecott Award-winning books from 2002-2012 for C.H.A.R.A.C.T.E.R. example elements, was featured in Chapter One. A detailed account of the methodology used, including the use of a codebook for content analysis, will be explored in Chapter Three. Chapter Two is a review of the literature, dedicated to exploring the existing information in the world of research. It begins by establishing the theoretical framework that guided the study—Bandura’s social cognitive theory. In this theory, Bandura postulates that learning can occur through observation as well as experience. Next, I will explore the need for character education with the inclusion of statistics from a number of studies involving both teenagers and young students. The argument is made through the work of various researchers that character and virtue are acquired traits, not ones that are innate to all people. Since students
spend a great deal of time in schools, it is that institution’s duty to embed character education into all aspects of school life. This chapter then delves into the history of character education in the United States and the three most prevalent theories of character education. Picture books are discussed followed by the current uses of children’s literature in teaching character education. Finally, the chapter looks at the history of the Caldecott Award beginning with its inception in 1937.

**Theoretical Framework**

The Social Cognitive Theory was the framework that guided this dissertation. Primarily developed from the work of Albert Bandura, this theory has greatly assisted our understanding of how social behavior is learned. It emphasizes that learning occurs in a social context and can be influenced through direct reinforcement (both external and intrinsic) or through observational learning (Bandura, 1999). Bandura (1999) writes, “If knowledge and competencies could be acquired solely by direct experience, human development would be severely retarded, not to mention exceedingly tedious and hazardous” (p. 25). Human beings have an advanced capacity for acquiring new knowledge and skills through observation of modeling influences. Under the social cognitive theory, observational learning occurs in watching the actual behavior of other people and the consequences for them (Bandura, 1999).

Bandura’s (1999) theory contains three main principles. First, people learn through the observation of others. This observation includes the results that accompany behaviors, attitudes, and reactions of the models—live, an actual person, or symbolic, represented by media. A second aspect of the social cognitive theory involves the assumption that learning can occur with or without alteration of behavior. Bandura (2002) states that psychological theories of morality have focused very heavily on moral reasoning to the neglect of moral conduct. Finally, Bandura’s (1999, 2000) work also focuses on the cognitive capabilities that contribute to the
learning of social behaviors. This cognitive awareness includes the expectation of reinforcements and punishments that can accompany courses of action. Many social learning theorists consider this cognitive component the key feature in social development. Thus, Bandura’s Social Cognitive Theory has “far reaching implications for explaining learned social behavior and subsequently for teaching social behavior” (Simpson, 2008, p. 101).

Standards of right and wrong are adopted by all individuals and serve as guides or deterrents for conduct. During this process, people monitor their conduct and judge it according to their developed moral standards. At times, people use forms of moral disengagement such as moral justification, displacement of blame, and distortion of consequences in order to minimize reprehensible conduct (Bandura, 2002). This occasional disconnect between reasoning and conduct is a result of the mind. Bandura (1999) proposes, “The human mind is generative, creative, proactive, and self-reflective not just reactive” (p. 23).

Bandura (2000) postulated five basic cognitive capabilities which human beings possess that serve to determine behavior: symbolizing capability, vicarious capability, forethought capability, self-regulatory capability, and self-reflective capability (Simpson, 2008). According to Bandura (2000), these five cognitive capacities are the characteristics that are distinctly human.

**Symbolizing Capability**

The capacity to represent events and their relationships in symbolic forms allows humans to give meaning and form to their experiences and environment. Using this symbolic capacity, people gain understanding, using it to generate alternative solutions to problems, evaluate likely outcomes, and pick viable options. Language is the primary human symbol though others include gestures, imagination, mathematics, and art (Bandura, 2000; Simpson, 2008).
Vicarious Capability

There are two primary modes of learning: through experience and through the power of social modeling. Virtually all learning from direct experience (behavioral, cognitive, and affective) can also be achieved vicariously through observation of others’ actions and consequences. This learning can occur either purposely or unintentionally via the models in one’s environment or in the symbolic environment of the mass media. The process of modeling, according to Bandura (2000), is not merely a process of mimicry. Modeling, instead, plays a prominent role in allowing one to evaluate and refine preexisting ideas in order to cultivate new competencies (Bandura, 2000; Simpson, 2008). This vicarious learning can be intentional or accidental with either a positive or negative outcome.

Forethought Capability

Yet another distinctive human characteristic is the ability to anticipate the outcomes of behavior. This capacity is known as forethought and can strongly influence decisions. Bandura (2000) writes, “Future events cannot be causes of current motivation and action because they have no actual existence. However, by being represented cognitively in the present, foreseeable future events are converted into current motivators and regulators of behavior” (p. 330).

Self-Regulatory Capability

People have the ability to recognize when actions are not producing the desired result. They are self-reactors with a capacity for self-direction which can serve as a guide, motivator, or deterrent. Most theories on self-regulation are founded on a negative feedback system, but this thought leaves out the fact that humans are proactive organisms that aspire to achieve. Being motivated to form goals, hone skills and resources, and work to achieve one’s dreams is the other side of this human capacity for self-regulation (Bandura, 2000).
Self-Reflective Capability

The self-reflective capacity states that people are not merely “agents of action, but self-examiners of their own functioning” (Bandura, 2000, p. 331). The capacity to reflect upon one’s thoughts and actions is distinctly human. Through self-reflection, individuals can evaluate motivation, values, and meaning behind life pursuits. Central to the concept of self-reflection is an individual’s beliefs in his/her ability to exercise some control over the events in his/her life, which is known as self-efficacy. This belief in personal or collective efficacy is foundational. Unless people believe that they have some measure of control over desired outcomes based on actions, there is no incentive for action (Bandura 2000, 2001).

Bandura’s theory is an appropriate guide for this study, which seeks to identify texts for use during instruction in character. Children learn through their surroundings, including the books they read and the images therein. Kortenhaus and Demarest (1993) state that conversations with adolescents whose parents had read to them during their preschool years could still give the title of their favorite children’s book, recall accurately the story content, and express enjoyment in the memory. Kortenhaus and Demarest (1993) believe, “Given this long-term influence of books, there can be no doubt that the characters portrayed in children’s literature mold a child’s conception of socially accepted roles and values” (p. 220). The use of texts that spark discussion on character elements can be a catalyst to the development of moral reasoning. Although this learning can occur without an immediate change in action, if moral reasoning is lacking, then moral conduct will be also.

Need for Character Education

In a study conducted by the Josephson Institute of Ethics (2011), half of high school students, 50 percent, admit to bullying someone in the past year, and 47 percent say that they themselves have been bullied, taunted, or teased in an upsetting way in the past year. The study
also found that one-third of students say that violence is problematic in their school while one in four admits to feeling unsafe at school (Josephson Institute, 2011). On stealing, the survey found that one in three boys and one in four girls admitted to having stolen from a store in the past year (Josephson Institute, 2011). Eight of ten teenagers admitted to lying to a parent over something significant, and 59 percent confessed to cheating on a test in the past year (Josephson Institute, 2011).

But these staggering statistics are not limited to the older student. McAdams and Foster (2008) report that in a national survey of school administrators, the frequency of organized and premeditated aggression has doubled in middle and high schools and tripled in elementary schools in the past 20 years. Researchers in Seattle, Washington surveyed third, fourth, and fifth graders, finding that 22% of those children were involved in bullying as either a victim, bully, or both (Anonymous, 2006). This increase in bullying is a worldwide epidemic. The estimated rates of bullying and victimization range from 15% to 25% in Australia, Austria, England, Germany, Norway, and the United States (Veenstra, et al., 2005). Furthermore, Elmore (2010) adds that while instances of school shootings by ostracized students has diminished in recent years, many instances of cyber bullying have resulted in increases in suicide among teens. Bryan (2005) questions, “Is it possible that many youngsters suffer from a form of moral illiteracy?” (p. 3).

Bones (2010) asserts, “As the moral foundation of our society appears to crumble, the clarion call for character education in America’s schools continues” (p. 16). In fact some would argue that in these times of intolerance and intentional misunderstanding, school-based character education is more relevant than ever (El-Bassiouny, Taher, & Abou-Aish, 2008; Elias, 2010; Fenstermacher, Osguthorpe, & Sanger, 2009; Lintner, 2011; Revell & Arthur, 2007; Smith, 2006). Four socialization agents are most often identified by psychologists and sociologists as
serving to transfer values and develop character: the family, peers, the school, and mass media (Kane, 2000). The literature suggests that the increase in many vices in America’s youth, such as gang behavior, teen pregnancies, violence, cheating, and stealing can be partially resolved through character training in public education (Benninga & Wynne, 1998; Bryan, 2005; Lickona, 1999, 2004; Wilhelm & Firmin, 2008). According to Wilhelm and Firmin (2008), “In order for students to attain moral astuteness, they must see it modeled and thereby reproduced in the process of learning” (p. 191). They continue to argue that deliberate instruction in right and wrong are necessary for the moral messages to become “embedded into the fiber of children’s lives” (p. 184). With schools responsible for children all day, it is unacceptable for any to ignore such a prominent portion of that child’s development. Character education goes beyond addressing the symptoms of behavior seen in youth. It attacks the very root of the problem, the character of the individual (Lickona, 2004).

Benninga and Wynne (1998) concur that virtue is not innate; it must be acquired. Learning, practice, and repetition are required in order for values to be internalized. As a result, they stress that schools should embed character elements into many typical school activities. Lickona (1999) agrees and goes on to add that character education should be comprehensive and intentionally make use of every phase of school life. This comprehensive plan for character education should seek to foster virtuous character through teacher example, curricular content, academic rigor, extra-curricular activities, discipline, and school climate. In essence, all areas of life and therefore school are affected by one’s moral perspective. Definite changes in personality and life style can result from the promotion of universal values in schools (El-Bassiouny et al., 2008). Berkowitz and Bier (2004, 2007) concur as well and further found that when character education programs are interactive and use real-world examples in facilitated peer discussions, students tend to show accelerated moral reasoning development. Lewis, Robinson, and Hayes
(2011) believe that for this reason one example of an effective method of character development would lie in discussions of multicultural literature. They assert that character education should be the “norm of the school climate” woven through the school-wide curriculum, rather than a finite program with mere temporary effects on the school culture (Lewis, Robinson, & Hayes, 2011, p. 231).

Lickona (1999) contends that the efforts to return character education to a central place in American schools emphasize our “common moral ground—what unifies us rather than divides us” (p. 23). Virtues, Lickona (1999) argues, are objectively good human qualities and they are beneficial for the human community because they enable us to coexist in harmony and productivity. Wilhelm and Firmin (2008) cite a study by C.S. Lewis (1947) where, in an attempt to support the Biblical framework for character, Lewis (1947) researched various cultures—ancient Egyptians, Babylonians, Hebrews, Chinese, Indians, and Greeks. Lewis (1947) found certain common values, which he deemed “commonality of morality,” such as kindness, honesty, justice, mercy, courage, loyalty, and an obligation to the poor, sick, and less fortunate (Wilhelm & Fermin, 2008, p. 189). It seems that Lickona’s (1999) statement and Lewis’s (1947) findings support one another—morality is the item that makes one human, and a common morality can bring the species together.

Many educators are leery of introducing another curricular area upon which teachers must focus. The fear is that with teachers’ focus divided, what is deemed as education’s primary goal—increasing academic achievement—will fall by the wayside (Allen-Hughes, 2013; Benninga et al, 2006). However, Benninga, Berkowitz, Kuehn, and Smith (2006) cite a growing body of research that suggests character education programs can enhance academic achievement. “It is no surprise that students need physically secure and psychologically safe schools, staffed by teachers who model professionalism and caring behaviors and who ask students to
demonstrate caring for others” (p. 452). The goal of education, after all, is “not acquiring knowledge alone, but developing the dispositions to seek and use knowledge in effective and ethical ways” (Shields, 2011, p. 49). According to the U.S. Department of Labor Secretary’s Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS), schools must teach a new set of work force skills in order to be successful. These “21st Century Skills” include “Basic Skills, Thinking Skills, and Personal Qualities,” where “personal qualities” include responsibility, self-esteem, sociability, self-management, and integrity/honesty” (Allen-Hughes, 2013, p. 20). When the character of the learner, rather than the content to be learned is the focus, one addresses those things which are more likely to remain—sustained through both time and circumstance (Shields, 2011). Society will be much better off when schools produce fewer “characters” and more students “with character” (Bryan, 2005).

**History of Character Education in the United States**

Benninga and Wynne (1998) point to the voices of the past that recognize humans’ natural propensity is not for good. They quote James Madison, who stated, “If men were angels, no government would be necessary,” and Horace Mann, the founder of American public education, who believed that “moral education is a primal necessity of social existence” (Benninga & Wynne, 1998, p. 439). Ellenwood (2007) quotes Mark Twain, who observes, “It is noble to be good; it is still nobler to teach others to be good—and less trouble” (p. 23).

**Early American Influences on Character Education**

The above mentioned individuals and numerous others from American history were influential in the development of the educational landscape in America, as well as the rise of character as an integral part of that education. Benjamin Franklin (1706-1790), Horace Mann (1796-1859), and William McGuffey (1800-1873) were all substantially involved in the legislation and foundation of public schools in America, in addition to the strong ties they held in
post-secondary institutions (Watz, 2011). Franklin espoused the writings of John Locke and proposed that morality and education “were intricately conjoined” (Watz, 2011, p. 37). He wrote specifically about the need for values to be taught in the context of history with its many opportunities to delve into issues of “right and wrong” and “justice and injustice” (Watz, 2011, p. 38).

The most significant influence on character development in early American schools was Horace Mann, an outspoken proponent of education as an opportunity to enhance the development of America’s youth, physically, mentally, and spiritually. Like Franklin, he held the conviction that students would greatly benefit from a focus on character in all facets of the school environment. Watz (2011) writes about Mann’s posit that the “unquestionable reality and danger of current educational pedagogy, which was reflected in society, was not that students were lacking in proper factual instruction, but rather that students were lacking in something much more significant to the community; moral reasoning” (p. 38). Mann targeted the teacher as the “purveyor of character in the classroom” (Watz, 2011, p. 39). Mann argued the need for quality, knowledgeable, and moral educators who could inspire students to achieve success of mind, body, and heart. He considered the profession a sacred privilege and responsibility.

Yet another important individual in early the American character education movement was William Holmes McGuffey. He was an educator whose convictions were strikingly similar to both Franklin and Mann in that he felt values and education were inseparable. He believed that the development of character in students would carry through and reflect to American society in general. “His series of textbooks, the most popular in history, were specifically designed to help students learn to read, while introducing and solidifying character development” (Watz, 2011, p. 43). According to Andrews (1994), half of America’s school children learned to read from McGuffeys between the years of 1836 and 1920. Over 122 million copies were sold
of these books with their emphasis on ethics and character traits during those years (Mitchell, 1999). And then one hundred and fifty years after its initial appearance, the series saw a resurgence of popularity due to the back-to-basics movement, and in 1985, an additional 217,000 copies were sold (Mitchell, 1999).

**Early Focus of American Public Schools**

European schools laid the foundation for America’s formal system of education, as well as the roots for education in character (Allen-Hughes, 2013; Watz, 2011). This foundation, as well as the work of individuals like Ben Franklin, Horace Mann, and William McGuffey, led to American education’s long history of teaching values in schools. It has come in waves, however, as both a formal and informal aspect of American education (Allen-Hughes, 2013; Watz, 2011). In fact, the primary purpose of colonial schools was to create youth who could perpetuate the belief system of the adults (Yandell, 1990). Literacy was a primary focus for the purpose of Bible reading (Bryant, 2008). The predominant text was *The New England Primer*, which contained numerous biblical quotes and references (Bones, 2010; Yandell, 1990).

In the 1800s, during the infancy of the American nation, educators began to shift from a strictly religious view of morality to the more secular notions of virtue (Brimi, 2009). As the population of the young country grew, both in numbers and diversity, educational policy shifted to American values especially beneficial for factory workers, such as promptness, respect, and dependability (Brimi, 2009; Leming, 2000). A series of books called the *McGuffey Readers* developed by William McGuffey aided in this cause. Brimi (2009) suggests that these texts, which focused on the values of the country’s earliest patriots, were a “merge between Christian and middle class ideas” (p. 126). The books utilized historical documents in the form of poems, essays, stories, and the Bible to assist in students “visualizing morality in practice and drawing personal connections to the material” (Watz, 2011, p. 43). The tales of heroism and virtue
therein captured the imagination of the young. Through the stories, character education, while limited, was very much a part of American schools (Edgington, 2002; Lickona, 1991).

With states passing compulsory school attendance laws in the late 1800s, education began to become more secular than religious. It maintained, however, the realization that basic principles of virtue, although no longer portrayed through a religious framework, were still imperative for the education of children. Researcher Sharon Andrews (1994), in her historical study of textbooks spanning 200 years, found that from the end of the nineteenth century and into the beginning of the twentieth, references to religious and Biblical characters continued to abound, but the teachings were less direct, and focused “on human exemplars of values and character traits, rather than on a relationship with the divine” (Andrews, 1994, p. 68).

In this early history of American schools, one sees the “power of schools to teach students values not solely for the betterment of the individual, but more importantly, for the stability of the society” (Brimi, 2009, p. 127). Character education continued to maintain a prominent role in public education until the mid1900s when the teachings of Darwin and Einstein shook the underpinnings of the public’s view on moral issues (Lickona, 1991). According to Darwinism, biological life was a product of evolution. This idea led people to see morality, among other things, as evolving instead of “fixed and certain” (Lickona, 1991, p. 7). Einstein’s theory of relativity affected thinking regarding moral behavior even though it was intended to explain only the behavior of physical matter (Lickona, 1991). Rather than thinking something is right or wrong, many began to think that ideas are all relative to one’s point of view (Lickona, 1991). As society began to deem morality as relative to the individual rather than absolute truth, public schools retreated from their former role as moral educators for fear that instruction in morality would be equated with instruction in religion (Lickona, 1991; Skaggs & Bodenhorn, 2006). Andrews (1994) also notes this shift through the change in textbooks during
that time. Textbook research from Andrews (1994) suggests that “only four percent of readers published between 1921 and 1940 make reference to morals and religion” (p. 68). A movement had begun towards more secular stories with a moral and the morals emphasized social values. By the 1930s, this shift was evident and away from direct reference to God as the source of human life and towards fables and stories with a moral. Although reference to things religious had not entirely disappeared from school books, it was no longer the mainstream of instruction in values (Andrews, 1994).

Without a strong push for instruction in morality and a surge for personalism, which celebrates the autonomy of the individual, it did not take long for problems to arise (Lickona, 1991). The 1960s and 70s saw a growth in discipline problems and general rebellion against authority. This time period gave birth to a new form of moral education called “values clarification” (Lickona, 1991; Yandell, 1990). Though stressed prior to this movement, since its inception, efforts to reform moral education have continued to be a hot topic. Both the 1980s and 90s saw a great resurgence of interest in the issue, and it continues to the present (Brimi, 2009).

Although formal instruction in values has waxed and waned, Straughan (1988) concludes that, “Teachers have always attempted to transmit values to their pupils” (p. 14). Straughan (1988) goes on state, “What must be considered as a significant recent development, however, has been the growing recognition that teachers and schools may be to a greater or lesser extent self-consciously aware of their inevitable role as values-transmitters” (p. 14). A teacher’s behavior towards both colleagues and pupils can assert a powerful, unintended influence upon the moral attitudes of students. The realization of this impact that teachers and schools can exert upon the beliefs, attitudes and behaviour of students, has prompted many teachers to “reflect upon their role as value-transmitters and also has led, by way of reaction, to a very different and
more distinctive approach to moral education” (Straughan, 1988, pp. 14-15).

Though individual self-reflection and self-awareness have influenced the development of moral education, actual scientific studies, however, have only sporadically been implemented regarding character education’s effectiveness. It is more a practice and not a science (Berkowitz & Bier, 2004). In fact, what is prescribed for schools tends to be based on intuition, marketing, or chance (Berkowitz & Bier, 2007).

**Theories of Character Education**

Although many theories of character education exist, there are three predominant ones: values clarification approach, moral reasoning approach, and core values approach (Bones, 2010; Simon, Howe, & Kirschenbaum, 1973). In the 1930s, research suggested that the character education programs in place at that time had little influence on student behavior. This ineffectiveness paved the way for these three principal approaches (O’Sullivan, 2002). Beginning with the values clarification movement, one approach gave way to the next. In this section, each of the approaches is described.

**The Values Clarification Approach**

The values clarification movement, developed by Raths, Harmin, and Simon (1966), argued vigorously that it is impossible to remain value-neutral. Taking growth in the 1970s, this approach to moral development led the charge as the term *character* fell from the lexicon in favor of the terms *values* and *morals* (Nucci & Narvaez, 2008). Ellenwood (2007) further asserted that schools had made a “grave error in severing schooling from the rest of life” (p. 27). As the name implies, the values clarification movement assumed that children have appropriate values inside them, and the task for educators was to help “clarify” them, as opposed to evaluating or refining the values. Adults in this method had only Socratic roles of bringing out the already preexisting values (Wynne, 1995). The concern of this approach was not “the
content of people’s values, but with the process of valuing” (Simon, Howe, & Kirschenbaum, 1973, p. 19). People could basically believe anything they would like as long as they sincerely believed it (Bones, 2010; Straughan, 1988). Obviously this approach has major shortcomings, including but not limited to, the fact that students were left believing that any decision could be considered “right” as long as it was justifiable. Furthermore, students had no guide on understanding the complexities of what to do when values conflict (Ellenwood, 2007; Straughan, 1988). Perhaps most flawed about values clarification is the greater interest in an individual’s response to hypothetical moral situations rather than the actual application of those values and changes in conduct. This approach is now relatively discredited as a viable approach to moral education (Wynne, 1995).

**The Moral Reasoning Approach**

Psychologist Lawrence Kohlberg (1981) developed his own theory of moral development in reaction to the values clarification movement. His ideas on values education was heavily based on the work of John Piaget’s stages of cognitive development. Kohlberg’s (1981) highly logical approach defined six stages, divided into three levels. The first two stages are known as preconventional thinking, in which decisions are made based on fear of punishment or attraction of reward (Ellenwood, 2007; Straughan, 1988). Stages three and four are known as the conventional thinking. These early adolescent decisions are primarily made based on conformation to norms or a sense of duty to maintain social order. The highest two stages are the post-conventional thinking levels. Here decisions are made with consideration to what is democratically agreed upon or based on one’s personal values (Ellenwood, 2007). According to Gilligan (1980), Kohlberg’s protégé, in order to truly “understand the child’s conception of morality, it is necessary to understand not only the logic of the child’s thought but also the experiences of which he is attempting to make sense” (p. 501). While the Kohlberg model has
much to recommend it, his technique centers on rather extreme ethical dilemmas rather than
providing simple training in everyday opportunities to determine right from wrong (Bones,
2010). Straughan (1988) submits that it should be noted that Kohlberg seems to radically change
his mind regarding the implications of his moral development theory in his later works.
Kohlberg (1978) concedes that the moral educator “deals with concrete morality in a school
world in which value content as well as structure, behaviour as well as reasoning, must be dealt
with [. . .] The educator must be a socializer, teaching value content and behaviour, not merely a
Socratic facilitator of development” (p. 84).

The Core Values Approach

One current trend in moral education is a method called the core values approach. This
approach “recognizes the importance of complexity and subtlety in real-life interactions or in
relationships between characters in literature” (Ellenwood, 2007, p. 35). The focus has shifted
to the virtue itself and how an individual can be virtuous as opposed to merely acting virtuously
(Bohlin, 2005). This developing an understanding of core values and the reinforcement of
standards of decency is the essence of the core values approach (Ellenwood, 2007). According
to Ellenwood (2007) and Bohlin (2005), one of the most effective vehicles for observing
relationships between characters is in literature, particularly fiction and biographies. Ellenwood
(2007) further states that utilizing literature:

. . .brings student the experience of people who steadily demonstrate true
character. . . When students experience the texture of a course of actions in a believable
situation, they gradually come to understand the intricate interplay of rational, humane,
caring, courageous, and cultural factors in judgments and decisions. (p. 35)

Such a level of complexity is not always available or emphasized in other approaches.
Picture Books

Picture books are more than merely an age-related phenomenon which serves as a prop for sustaining and supporting beginning readers. “Picturebooks are highly sophisticated aesthetic objects, worthy of study and research by readers and viewers of all ages” (Sipe, 2012, p. 4). They are more challenging and provocative than many would think and often contain material that is anything but childish or frivolous (Owens & Nowell, 2001). They combine “meaningful illustration, subtle language, humor, and an intellectual challenge for the reader” (Jordan, 1996, p. 49). Marriott (1998) argues people often hold the conviction that “the crutches the picture book affords can be cast aside as the child’s increasing expertise in decoding the printed word unaided enables him or her to dispense with them” (p. 2). An implicit belief exists that children’s behavior should soon resemble that of an adult reader, which is seen as “routinely and skillfully absorbing pages of unbroken and unillustrated print” (Marriott, 1998, p. 2). Sadly enough, children often also hold this belief and reject picture books on the grounds that they are childish. However, Marriott (1998) goes on to argue that such a perspective fails to address a variety of questions:

By what mechanism, through what mental process, does illustration enable readers to comprehend the written word more competently? Do pictures truly support the efforts of the beginning reader or do they in fact, [...] distract his or her attention from a proper concentration on decoding print? Does not the real reading behavior of competent adults include texts which incorporate both words and pictures such as newspapers, magazines, advertisements, road signs, maps, plans and diagrams, as well as illustrated books about cookery or gardening or DIY or whatever? (Marriott, 1998, p.2)

This perspective which views any text with pictures as less complex than those without is skewed in its logic because authentic, real-world reading requires attention to both the visual and
the verbal aspects in print. Picture books support the skills that readers must develop in order to be successful in life.

Kiefer (1995) defines picture books as “a unique art object, a combination of image and idea that allows the reader to come away with more than the sum of the parts” (p. 6). In a picture book, the visual images are an integral part of the text. This intertwining of the pictures and text is critical and defines the very nature of picture books (Browne, 1998; Hughes, 1998; La Roe, 2003; Marriott, 1998; Nodelman, 1981; Sipe, 1998; Sipe, 2012). Sipe (1998) states that “the essence of the picture book is the way the text and the illustrations relate to each other: this relationship between the two kinds of text—the verbal and the visual texts—is complicated and subtle” (p. 97). Browne (1998) offers an author and illustrator’s point of view. He explains:

Making a picture book, for me, is not like writing a story then painting some picture to illustrate what’s going on. Nor is it a question of making some images and adding words to make the story clearer. No, it is more like planning a film, where each page is a scene that includes both words and images inextricably linked. What excites me about the next stage is working out the rhythm of the story and seeing how much is told by the pictures, how much by the words, and how much by the gap between the two. (p. 194)

Thus the artful crafting of a picture book that intricately weaves together the various elements of the story, including both written and visual images, is a complex undertaking that, when employed correctly, appears effortless and easy.

Marriott (1998) states that picture books are “inescapably plural” and “inherently ideological” (p. 4). This idea of picture books being ideological refers to “a network of beliefs, values and social practices which are explicitly espoused by or more often implicitly sustained within the text” (Marriott, 1998, p. 4). Therefore, picture books have great potential as a medium through which to transmit beliefs, values, and social practices. These texts are unique in
that their potential and purpose is best reached with human interaction, as another human being engages a young child in the reading and sharing of the picture book (Spitz, 1999). “Often, young children are provided with some of their earliest takes on morality, and basic cultural knowledge, including messages about race, gender, class, and values, through picture books” (LaRoe, 2003). The potential for picture books to transmit values is the primary reason for studying them (Braboy 1999; Mitchell 1999).

**The Power of the Story**

Storytellers have long been a fundamental means of society transmitting traditions, events, and experiences to its young. Traditional literature, such as myths, folktales, fables, and epics have been retold and adapted to reflect the culture and values of individual societies for generations (Adamson, 1981; Andrews, 1994; Glaspey, 1995; Jalongo, 2004; Kortenhaus & Demarest, 1993). In fact, “the ability to create, share, and respond to stories is one of our defining characteristics as human beings” (Jalongo, 2004, p. 36). Andrews (1994) writes, “Human beings are storytellers—we ‘story’ our lives” (p. 185). Listening to stories read from books, particularly picture books, is a common experience for preschoolers. Studies show that even these young children have story schema and often delight in having their favorite books read over and over again (Kortenhaus & Demarest, 1993). Jesus, the greatest Teacher, chose often to use stories—parables—to emphasize his messages and imprint them in the minds of his followers. Glaspey (1995) shares that “traditional cultures have always used epics, stories, and fairy tales to pass on their cultural values” but he further claims that these forms are no longer used effectively by modern educators and parents (p. 161). Rather these adults allow television and popular music to influence and in fact shape children’s moral values. Glaspey (1995) writes:

Nietzsche was right when he suggested that people are more easily moved by beauty than by argument. Our aesthetic sense, when aroused, can significantly shape our views of the
world. Hitler used this truth very effectively. By wrapping his vision for Germany in theatricality and splendid ceremony, he was able to draw into his view of things those who would be repulsed at his ideas were they stated in a simple didactic manner. People are drawn to a fully formed view of existence which can be articulated with beauty and vigor. (p. 162)

He goes on to note that literature can provide these models of ethical behavior. According to Andrews (1994), “story is the most powerful means for understanding human experience and for assigning value to it; there is no more basic vehicle for values articulation than telling a story” (p. 185). Through the centuries, however, the rich oral tradition of the past has given way to a “written tradition,” in which contemporary storytellers share through the printed page (Adamson, 1981).

Sullivan and Yandell (1990) write that “in tracing the history of the transmission of basic values from adult society to its offspring, one may note that literature, particularly fiction written for children, has been a vehicle for instilling basic religious and spiritual values” (p. 12). In fact looking at the history of character education in the United States earlier in this chapter, it was determined that the texts of the age were even then using literature to transmit core values to the young. What does literature offer that makes it a most desirable method for inculcating students in values education? Edgington (2002) suggests that relevance is the key. Literature is full of dynamic role models, compelling characters facing ethical dilemmas and the challenges of life (Friedman & Cataldo, 2002; Glaspey, 1995; Lewis, Robinson, & Hayes, 2011). Readers, in effect, live alongside the characters in books, experiencing with them, and at times desiring to be like them. These recognitions are eventually externalized as ideals to guide behavior long after the reading is complete (Cain, 2005). “Literature, then, does not merely tell us about an experience, but rather presents experiences as living realities” (Glaspey, 1995, p. 157). Jones
(1997) describes it this way, “The characters from children’s literature usually become a vital part of our imaginations [. . .] and will linger in memory, where they will continue to amuse and inspire” (p. vii). He goes on to state that readers “face significant questions about identity and values” through an experience with children’s literature” (p. vii). Cates (2002) suggests that this strong values content of the story “renders it memorable and powerful” and therefore makes an indelible impression on students (p. 5). Glaspey (1995) describes it beautifully:

[. . .] Stories give us room to breathe. They have the ability to sneak up behind us and draw us in. They touch us in our hearts, in our places of vulnerability. They catch us off guard and leap past our defenses. (p. 163)

Leal (1999) and Sullivan and Yandell (1990) both agree and add that intertwining literature with character education through student discussion has even further potential “to develop critical thinkers in the classroom” (Sullivan & Yandell, 1990, p.248). O’Sullivan (2004) claims these concurrent goals—character education and critical thinking—are achievable with a wide variety of children’s literature given that teachers “choose worthwhile books, move beyond literal to critical understanding of these books, and are intentional in focusing on the development of character during literature study” (p. 641). Jordan (1996) adds that picture books work to develop children’s thinking. They deal with important human issues, including themes which concern adults as well as children: jealousy, anger, fear, friendship, family relationships and death. Because of the complexity in these aspects of life, when situations involving these themes are presented they invite discussion and are open to interpretation. “In this way the books encourage the exploration of moral issues, and help readers to understand differing points of view and come to terms with strong emotions” (Jordan, 1996, p. 50).

Andrews (1994) notes a change in the use of stories in recent years and calls for “reclamation project on children’s literature” (p. 185). She holds that storytelling in schools has
most recently been utilized as a way to encourage literacy. But she argues that “great stories are not primarily for learning how to read, for causing children to become ‘strategic readers,’ for providing models of specific kinds of writing, or for obtaining free pizzas” (p. 185). Their purpose is much larger. Great stories have “always functioned to connect us to the worthy undercurrents and overriding moral imperatives of human life” (p. 186).

Kilpatrick (1993) puts it this way, “Stories can also help us on the path of virtue” (p. 196). He goes on to write that when parents invest time reading meaningful stories to their children, they are encouraging character development. He states:

Stories help to make sense of our lives. They also create a desire to be good. Plato, who thought long and hard about the subject of moral education, believed that children should be brought up in such a way that they would fall in love with virtue. And he thought that stories and histories were the key to sparking this desire. No amount of discussion or dialogue could compensate if that spark was missing. (p. 27)

Finally, Kilpatrick stresses that stories “allow us to identify with models of courage and virtue in a way that ‘problem-solving’ or classroom discussion does not” and thus they are one of the most effective ways to instill the desire to be good (p. 28).

Yet another who stresses the use of literature in the transmitting of values is Glaspey (1995). “A story first draws them in, then captures their interest and imagination, and finally, subtly, begins the process of transformation” (p. 164). He writes about helping children develop a “moral imagination” through reading and telling stories (p. 156). He states that “[t]he imagination is profoundly connected to the will. If we can imagine the right response, we are well on our way to making it” (p. 157). He then goes on to list five ways for literature and stories to assist children in the learning of moral values:

1. Stories allow us to expand our range of experiences, and growth in character comes
mainly through our experiences.

2. Stories exercise our “moral muscles.” When we vicariously experience moral quandaries and difficult situations in books, our moral muscles become “toned.”

3. Stories help us to grow in moral sensitivity. The multiplying experiences we read about in literature give us the opportunity to empathize, to feel with the pains and humiliations of the characters.

4. Stories provide us with a powerful vision of goodness. The philosopher Alfred North Whitehead once said that, “moral education is impossible apart from the habitual vision of greatness” (as cited in Glaspey, 1995, p. 159). Biographies and stories provide us with visions of the fascinating character of goodness.

5. Stories help us see ourselves as we really are (pp. 158-159).

Helterbran (2009) writes to the potential of using picture books to promote “global citizenship” which involves extending character education for the purpose of advancing global understanding and cooperation. She further argues that “children must see the sameness in humankind, but understand that differences do exist and that they add richness and texture to the human experience (Helterbran, 2009, p.71). Bones (2010) and Bryant (2008) both studied the possibility of teaching character through the use of Newbery Award-winning books. Each researcher looked at the presence of positive and negative character traits in these texts and found them to be rich in possibility for instruction in character.

Additional research has been conducted in utilizing this and other media, expressly film, in character education (Herrington & Emmans, 2002; Kane, Taub, & Hayes, 2000; Prior, Wilson, & Martinez, 2012; Russell & Waters, 2013). Kellner and Share (2005) argue the importance of indicating how media culture can advance sexism, racism, and other forms of prejudice, as well as misinformation and questionable values. In fact Herrington and Emmans (2002) assert that if
it is true that youth reflect the character and conduct of society, one must accept media as a primary influence. Kane, Taub, and Hayes (2000) argue for the teaching of character through visual media by stating that people can usually recall information learned through the visual modality with around 98% accuracy. This argument also supports the use of children’s picture books for teaching character, as they rely heavily on pictures to enhance and oftentimes tell the story. In fact, Agosto describes picture books as stories told twice, “once through text and once through illustration” (1999, p. 267).

**The Language of Art**

Barasch (1997) states that the 18th century German writer Wilhelm Wackenroder coined the phrase “language of art.” He goes on to explain that works of art are created to “convey a distinct message. In considering art as a language, the main emphasis, then, is placed on what may be called the communicative function of the work of art” (1997, p. 5). British author and illustrator Anthony Browne (1998) states that he deliberately makes his books so that they are open to various interpretations. Thus, Rosenblatt’s (1968) reader-response theory is applicable in the reading of both visual and written text. In this theory, Rosenblatt (1968) proposes that readers interact with text, bringing both previous experience and background knowledge, resulting in a new construction of personal meaning.

Goodman (1998) states that she ponders “the role of illustration in the reader’s construction of meaning” any time she listens to children read (p. ix). She notes, however, that little is ever done in classrooms or art education programs to help enhance readers’ construction of understanding. “Teachers are so often overly focused on teaching children to read that they forget that learning is taking in and interpreting the meanings of the whole, not just the print in books” (p. xi). Stewig (1992) writes, “Despite the fact that children’s literature experts make much of the necessary integral relation between words and pictures in picture books…very little
or nothing is done in many classrooms with half of this combination: the pictures” (p. 11). He suggests that this is in part due to the fact that most classroom teachers are lacking in their own visual education, describing it as “spotty at best” (p. 11).

Agreeing that there has been an upsurge in visual literacy and an explosion of interest in visual culture are Mitchell (1995) and Evans (1998). Evans (1998) cites Fairclough who states that writers on post-modernism claim that visual images are “ousting language” (p. 27). They are referring to post-modern culture as post-linguistic. This argument is supported by the existence of numerous social media outlets that are so visually driven, such as Instagram and Pinterest. It has even been stated that children are more visual learners than at any other time in the past; this fact may be due to the influence of television, video games, and computers (Marantz & Marantz, 1997). “As a result, they often think in visual terms and respond best to instruction that has strong visual components [. . .] The visual arts can spark disciplined inquiry in many students, especially those who do not respond well to language-only lecture-type instruction” (National School Boards Association, 1992, p. 7).

Evans (1998) states that “Illustrations have a crucial role to play in enabling children to gain meaning from books” (p. 28). Visual literacy is a cross-curricular skill, used in every area of the curriculum and in the world. Hughes (1998) refers to the vital skill of reading pictures and points out eight features of visual literacy:

- Reading images in the world around us—often commercial.
- Reading pictures in books.
- Using visual images to support reading of simple texts.
- Reading signs, symbols and pictures in the school/class environment designed to promote literacy.
• Creating meaningful visual images to record understanding of tasks.
• Using pictures in non-fiction texts to support learning of subject knowledge.
• Using pictures in fictional texts to support learning of subject knowledge.
• Reading the page—different ways in which text and pictures may be presented. (p. 116)

Supplementing, Hughes (1998) adds that a majority of the strategies for teaching young children to read incorporates heavily illustrated books in which children are encouraged to use pictures in order to “find out what is in the text: ‘They are therefore reading pictures before they read the print’ . . . Reading is the key to educational success, so picture reading is part of that key” (p. 117).

**History and Significance of the Caldecott Award**

Frederic G. Melcher (1879-1963), an influential publisher, bookseller, and editor of *Publisher’s Weekly*, suggested in 1919 the idea of a Children’s Book Week. He proposed that it be sponsored by the American Booksellers Association, of which he was an officer. The event received support from schools, libraries, bookstores, and newspapers and became a “significant stimulant to the development of children’s literature (Huck, Hepler, Hickman, & Kiefer, 1997, p. 102). Bolstered by the success of the Book Week, “Melcher, a book lover since childhood, contemplated ways to promote the appreciation of quality children's literature” (Mitchell, 1999, p. 41). In 1921, Frederic G. Melcher became the father of the John Newbery Award when he proposed to the American Library Association (ALA) that an award be given annually to the most distinguished American children’s book (Parravano, 1999). He further suggested that it be named for the eighteenth-century bookseller, John Newbery. The idea was enthusiastically accepted. Then, in 1937, Melcher suggested yet another award be bestowed yearly to artists of American picture books. This medal, the Caldecott Award, was named for nineteenth-century
English illustrator Randolph J. Caldecott (American Library Association, 2011). The American Library Association Executive Board approved the idea, and Melcher donated the funds for the medal, as he had for the Newbery (Roginski, 1982). The medals continue to be donated by the Melcher family over sixty years later.

The Caldecott Award has been called by Lanhan (2001) the “most prestigious in children’s literature” (p.1). According to the American Library Association, since the inception of the Caldecott Medal in 1937, this bronze award has been annually awarded to the artist of the most distinguished American picture book for children published during that year (American Library Association, 2011). “Distinguished” is further explicated through the ALA criteria for the Caldecott Medal, which includes:

- marked by eminence and distinction; noted for significant achievement
- marked by excellence in quality
- marked by conspicuous excellence or eminence
- individually distinct. (American Library Association, 2011, para. 4)

In addition to annually choosing a winner of the Caldecott Medal, the committee also chooses additional noteworthy books that could have also received the award. These books are known as Caldecott Honor Books.

The Newbery and Caldecott Awards, according to Huck, et al. (1997), “have had great influence in raising the standards of writing and illustrating in children’s books. They also gave prestige to the idea of creating books for children” (p. 103). The goal seal on the front of a Newbery or Caldecott book brings instant recognition and credibility. The “effect is immediate and significant” (Fein, 1992, para. 3). These prestigious awards are of great significance to the author, illustrator, and publisher because they drive up more than just the book’s stature and
notoriety, but they also drive up sales. Most children’s book publishers agree that the Caldecott Medal will virtually assure minimum sales of 100,000 in the first year and continued strong sales for years to come (Fein, 1992). Libraries and bookstores order multiple copies to meet the demand. Winning this award “ensures a title a solid place in the annals of children’s literature” (Mitchell, 1999, p. 46).

**Caldecott Medal Books in the Classroom**

In Jim Trelease’s (2013) book *The Read-aloud Handbook, 7th edition*, he declares that “a picture book should be on the reading list at every grade level” (p. 63). Most picture books that are used in classrooms are primarily confined to elementary schools, and particularly the lower grades, despite the fact that children’s literature in high schools can be a valuable resource (Coughlin & Desilets, 1980; Richardson & Miller, 1997). As a matter of fact, according to a study by Chamberlain and Leal (1999), 66% of the Caldecott Medal books have a readability level of 5th-7th grade. Suggestions vary regarding the use of Caldecott winning picture books in elementary schools, so much so that entire books have been dedicated to the topic. These applications range from visual literacy to bibliotherapy to mentor texts and much more.

In utilizing Caldecott books during art education, a focus is placed in the area of visual literacy, introducing visual elements such as form, space, texture, color, line, and shape (Marantz, 1994; Richardson & Miller, 1997). Englebaugh’s (1994) book entitled *Art Through Children’s Literature: Creative Art Lessons for Caldecott Books* offers lessons that center on these key art concepts and various mediums, including pencil, collage, and watercolor, to name a few. Frohardt (1999) uses children’s literature as examples for teaching elements of art (line, shape, texture, value, color, and space) as well as principles of design and artistic style in her book *Teaching Art with Books Kids Love: Art Elements, Appreciation, and Design with Award-Winning Books*. 
Texts written by Moen (1991) and Novelli (1998) offer a multitude of activities and suggestions for using the Caldecott Medal books in cross-curricular lessons. From science to history, these texts can be wonderful springboards for discussion and critical thinking. Richardson and Miller (1997) mention examples for use in teaching geography, citizenship, mathematics, music, environmental awareness, and physical education. “The Caldecott Medal books provide a first-rate combination of appeal to student interest and range of readability levels. . .” Through their use “teachers can help ensure that their students have a successful engagement with high-quality and interesting books” (Chamberlain & Leal, 1999, p. 901).

Another purpose for the use of Caldecott books in classrooms is as mentor texts in writing exercises. Giorgis (2013) cites specific Caldecott books and offers classroom suggestions in using these as springboards for writing opinions, supporting opinions through citing evidence from texts, and mimicking writer’s craft as seen in these high-quality texts. Chamberlain and Leal (1999) mention encouraging children to “echo” but not copy the ideas in the books as ways to extend their learning.

Bibliotherapy is defined by Davis and Wilson (1992) as “the process of growing toward emotional good health through the medium of literature” (p. 2). In their article *Bibliotherapy and Children’s Award-winning Books*, Davis and Wilson note that this practice can be used by teachers “who wish to sensitize their student to each other and to either potential or realized problems that occur during life…in order to instill positive attitudinal and behavioral changes” (p. 2). They state that books have the opportunity to augment and enrich one’s life as a source of information, comfort, and pleasure. Moulton, Heath, Prater, and Dyches (2011) state, “A good story invites children to identify with characters, become emotionally invested, express emotions, and apply new insights to personal situations” (p. 122). Books often provide opportunities to develop critical thinking and analysis skills, as well as help build coping skills.
(Moulton et al., 2011). Moulton et al. continue that, “Carefully selected stories open classroom discussion, normalize challenges, reduce isolation, model coping strategies, define behavioral expectations, and offer hope” (p. 122). Davis and Wilson mention that books written specifically for bibliotherapy are often limited in scope and poorly written, but the Caldecott and Newbery award-winning books “are a logical and an excellent source as therapeutic themes are interwoven in to the fabric of the stories” (p.6).

Despite the widespread use of Caldecott books and the numerous publications suggesting further applications into the curriculum, research is lacking on utilizing these specific texts in the teaching of character. None of the books on using Caldecott Medal books in the classroom focus on the message of character. With these books so widely used in the nation’s classrooms, this gap in the research is disturbing.

**Summary**

In chapter two, the review of literature revealed a need for character education in American schools. A look into the history of character education indicates that values education in America goes as far back as colonial times. Modern-day instruction in values falls under three primary theories which include the values clarification approach, the moral reasoning approach, and most recently, the core values approach. It has been determined that literature is a successful tool in imparting character education lessons because of the universal language of shared experience. Among literature, picture books are a universally appreciated medium not just for the young, but also the young at heart. Finally, this section broached the topic of the history of the Caldecott Award along with the multiple criteria for receiving the distinguished award.

Chapter Three introduces the methodology of this research. It begins by delineating the research design as a qualitative content analysis. Each of the three research questions is then restated along with an explanation as to how the study will answer them. Book selection, reader
selection, and the researcher’s role are then discussed. Data Analysis and data collection are examined in detail, followed by discourse on ethical considerations and the trustworthiness of the research.
CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

This section provides a detailed account enumerating the reasons for the choice of content analysis as a methodology. The coding system, reader selection, book selection, inter-rater agreement, and procedures are also discussed. This study, like its predecessors, planned to make no attempt at examining the effects of content on readers. But rather, the purpose was to contribute to the body of knowledge concerned with existence of exemplary character traits in Caldecott winning books.

Research Design

This research study was a qualitative content analysis. According to Ary, Jacobs, Razavieh, and Sorenson (2006) “qualitative researchers seek to understand phenomenon by focusing on the total picture rather than breaking it down into variables. The goal is a holistic picture and depth of understanding, rather than a numeric analysis of data” (p. 31). A qualitative research design best fit this study because the focus of this inquiry was to study the literature as a whole, regarding its usefulness as a character education tool. Quantitative methods could have been primarily employed; however, as qualitative research assumes that human behavior is always context bound and relying on the human research gatherer as the primary data collection instrument, it was a better fit for this study.

The primary qualitative method utilized in this study of Caldecott Winners is one for examining printed materials in order to identify specific characteristics of the material. The method is known as content analysis, which, according to Ary et al. (2006), is widely used in education for the following purposes:

1. Identification of bias, prejudice, or propaganda in texts
2. Analysis of types of errors in student writing
3. Description of prevailing practices

4. Discovery regarding the level of difficulty of material in textbooks and other publications

5. Discovery of the relative importance of, or interest in, certain topics

Originating in the United States, content analysis was a technique developed by academic researchers for analyzing the content of newspapers. The methodology was soon adapted to other types of texts (Scott & Morrison, 2005). According to Babbie (2011), appropriate forms for study using content analysis include “books, magazines, web pages, poems, newspapers, songs, paintings, speeches, letters, email messages, bulletin board postings on the Internet, laws, and constitutions” (p. 356). This research method, as an observation mode, is unobtrusive. This characteristic is an advantage because the observer’s presence in no way affects the observed (Ary et al, 2006). Rather, content analysis requires a “thoughtful handling of the ‘what’ that is being communicated” (Babbie, 2011, p. 357). As this research analyzed specific elements of printed material, content analysis was a plausible method. Numerical data in the form of frequency counts were collected along with the qualitative narrative descriptions of observations recorded by readers.

As stated earlier, the following questions guided this study:

**RQ 1:** What are the predominant character example elements in the Caldecott Award winning books between 2002 and 2012?

Readers used a coding system to determine the presence of character example elements in the literature.

**RQ 2:** What are the frequencies of the positive versus negative character traits?

A codebook, adapted from the original research studies upon which this study was based, was utilized to collect data under the coding system. It contained questions regarding the direct
and indirect appearance of character example elements in the texts. This data was compiled and analyzed for consensus and was then converted into numerical data.

**RQ 3:** Which books could be recommended for teachers to use to meet guidelines for teaching character education?

Once again using the information from codebooks, the researcher descriptively analyzed each book and the character elements therein to determine books with strong occurrences of character example elements, which are possibly suitable for use in classroom instruction for character.

**Book Selection**

Several factors were considered in choosing the books to be analyzed in this study. The most salient factor was the suggestion of Bones (2010) and Bryant (2008) to study winners of different honor books for character example elements. Both Bones (2010) and Bryant (2008) had previously studied Newbery Award winning books for character elements. Second, the books would need to be widely read and recognized as outstanding children’s literature. Finally, the publication dates would need to be current enough for both professional staff and children to have easy access to the literature. In considering these three criteria, the Caldecott Award winning books from 2002-2012 were selected to explore (see Appendix B). These books are accessible in school and public libraries and are highly recommended by literary experts for children’s reading.

**Participants and Readers**

Qualitative researchers speak of dependability rather than reliability (Ary et al., 2006). Dependability refers to the trustworthiness of the data and findings were the study to be repeated. It also includes the extent to which variation of results could be tracked or defended. According
to Ary et al. (2006), some strategies for exploring dependability include the use of “an audit trail, replication logic, stepwise replication, code-recoding, interrater comparisons, and triangulation” (p. 509). In order to enhance and maintain the dependability of this study, the researcher has chosen two of these methods: an audit trail and interrater comparisons. The audit trail is described more fully in a subsequent section. For interrater comparisons, I utilized five raters, with myself serving merely as a facilitator and data collection agent, for reading and analyzing the Caldecott winning books using the coding system. In a way, this multiple rater format also adds triangulation to the study. The raters, though a convenience sample, were carefully selected because of their multifariousness. Each rater brings such varied backgrounds and viable opinions or perspectives to the texts. Though individually approached and asked to participate, each rater had to agree to participate. Discussion groups were held in order to bring consensus which further strengthens the data.

Rater #1 is currently an elementary school media specialist. The 2012-13 school year was her eighth in this role, having served at two different schools in this capacity. Prior to her job as a media specialist, rater #1 was an elementary school classroom teacher for 19 years, weaving the use of children’s literature into all aspects of the curriculum. She has two children currently in 8th and 9th grades.

Rater #2 is an elementary school teacher in her 30th year, having taught at three different schools in the North Georgia area. She has taught Kindergarten through 5th grade, including three years as the Early Intervention Program teacher for struggling readers. Her love of using children’s literature in a holistic manner to teach character began early in her career. She has traveled and given seminars in the area on this manner of using literature in the classroom. She is also a mother and an avid reader of both adult and children’s books.
Rater #3 is a teacher in the early years of her profession with a fresh and innovative perspective of teaching style and methodology. She is completing her 7th year as an elementary school general education teacher, recently out of college and graduate school. She avidly reads children’s books for both pleasure and also for the entertainment of her young daughter. She incorporates her passion for children’s literature into her teaching day, spanning all subject areas.

Rater # 4 is an early childhood educator in the middle of her career as she began her teaching after her two college-aged children had started school. She has 17 years’ experience in grades 2-4. She has a Bachelor of Science and a Masters of Early Childhood Education. Her classroom is a literacy-rich environment, as she has a passion for literacy and the teaching of reading. She serves as the reading teacher for half the students on her current grade level.

Finally, rater # 5 is a literacy coach and early-intervention teacher. She has nine years of classroom experience. Seven of those years were spent in a general education homeroom of first or second grade. The two remaining years, she has taught special education and early intervention program (EIP) for at risk students. This rater worked for ten years in the private sector in network administration and software training before entering the teaching profession. She has her reading and teacher leader endorsements and participated in a group presentation at the Georgia Reading Conference on using multiple intelligences to teach reading. Each reader provided a differing perspective in regards to her number of years in the profession, age, and personal background.

**Researcher’s Role**

I did not participate on the panel of readers/coders, but helped facilitate the panel discussions and record consensus data during the weekly discussion groups. This decision was made in order to eliminate any form of bias from the study, as the researcher facilitated the discussion groups and questioned the coders without introduction of personal opinion.
The sole responsibility for data collection did not fall upon this one “human instrument” but on the team of readers (Ary et al., 2006, p. 453). Having five coders and weekly meetings to discuss findings and come to a consensus helped to eliminate any biases. At the conclusion of the weekly meetings, the researcher collected all codebooks from the week to further analyze the narrative data provided therein.

**Data Collection**

The first step in data collection was to obtain International Review Board (IRB) approval for the conducting of research. Appendix C contains that secured written consent. Since this study centers on the analysis of documents, no informed consent was necessary. Data was collected from all five readers. The group met the first week to read a sample book, practice coding, and establish inter-rater reliability. The sample book was *Joseph had a Little Overcoat* by S. Taback (2000), the 2000 Caldecott winner. During this first discussion group, the panel established protocols for each reading session and each discussion group meeting. The protocols for the discussion group meeting served to ensure that no one reader monopolized the conversation or adversely swayed group opinion towards that individual’s one specific idea. All raters were given a laminated copy of the coding instructions and definitions of the C.H.A.R.A.C.T.E.R. example elements on colored paper for easy accessibility. Each panel member independently read the texts while coding frequency of C.H.A.R.A.C.T.E.R. example elements. The group then convened for weekly discussion groups to confer and develop consensus.

**Codebooks**

The coding system for use in this research was adapted from two former studies. The first was originally developed by Bryant (2008) for use in her research study on character example elements in Newbery Award winning books. She developed the system through
comparisons of frequency coding systems used in similar studies. The system consists of simple frequency recording for each character example element in the books.

Bones’ (2010) codebook served as a model for this study. Bryant (2008) was a model for Bones’ research as well. Bones (2010) and Bryant (2008) recorded frequency counts and page numbers for the character elements explored. However, Bones (2010) also employed a method of requiring coders to supply narrative descriptions of character trait identification and reflections on changes in character.

The coding system is comprised of multiple sections for use with each book. The first provides general information regarding the book, the rater’s name, the year of receiving the Caldecott Medal, the list of main characters, the number of pages, and the theme of the book. The second section of the coding system is a list of the C.H.A.R.A.C.T.E.R. example elements and their definitions for reader reference, as well as an instruction sheet on how to code the books. The third section of the code book is a frequency table for charting C.H.A.R.A.C.T.E.R. traits found in the book. Section four provides the coder an opportunity to describe in rich detail, explanations and rationales behind her observations. Finally, section five is a character rating form where coders can rate the frequency and intensity of the character elements in the texts (see Appendix A).

**Weekly Discussion Groups**

In accordance with the reading schedule provided, readers read two texts each week for seven weeks and then met to discuss findings and determine consensus (see Appendix D). During these weekly discussion groups, the team of coders looked at the data collected, developed consensus, and then once all discussion had taken place, completed the final page in the codebook by ranking the frequency and intensity of the character traits to determine the overall suitability for using the text in teaching the character traits.
Data Analysis

Both qualitative data and descriptive statistics were collected in this study. The descriptive statistics were in the form of frequency counts for the positive and negative character elements. This data was synthesized into charts for easy viewing and analysis. Further data in the form of individual rankings regarding the texts’ usefulness in teaching individual character traits was also be analyzed through computing a simple mean score.

The qualitative data consists of the narrative accounts from the codebook page entitled “Rich Narrative Description.” On this page, readers shared their findings regarding opportunities to explore values, occasions for use in the classroom for character instruction, and thematic message. Readers each participated in the technique of memoing, which is writing memos or notes to oneself while working on the project (Babbie, 2011). These memos, along with comments during the weekly discussion meetings, were analyzed through open coding. Babbie (2011) defines open coding as “the initial classification and labeling of concepts in qualitative data analysis” (p. 426). When utilizing open coding, the researcher’s examination of the data suggests the codes that are applied. In returning to audio recordings of the discussion groups, memos written by the raters, and rich narrative descriptions completed as part of the rating, open coding was applied to determine similarities, differences, and overarching themes from the texts. All of this data, having been analyzed individually, were synthesized to provide rich description of the findings for each text.

Frequency Counts

Following the discussion group’s weekly meeting and using the numerical findings, the researcher processed the data by creating tables. Both positive and negative depictions of the character traits were provided through the readers’ codebooks. Two tables were created for each book depicting the character traits found therein, as well as the page numbers on which the
examples of that trait can be found. One of the tables lists page numbers for the positive and negative character traits from the C.H.A.R.A.C.T.E.R. acronym as readers recorded both. Also in this chart a frequency total allows for quick reference on the total number of teaching points, positive and negative, in that text.

**C.H.A.R.A.C.T.E.R. Elements Ranking Form**

As another part of the codebook, readers completed a holistic rating scale after the initial reading of the book and group discussion. Readers offered an overall impression of the text through assigning it two different scores per C.H.A.R.A.C.T.E.R. element in terms of the frequency and intensity that trait serves as a theme from the book. From the score furnished by each rater, the researcher computed a simple mean per book for each trait in order to rank the relevance of each trait in the book.

**Rich Narrative Description**

The codebook also afforded readers the opportunity for reflective journaling on each text through both the cover sheet and the section entitled “Rich Narrative Description.” Babbie (2011) states that the “key process in the analysis of qualitative social research data is coding—classifying or categorizing individual pieces of data—coupled with some kind of retrieval system” (p. 425). One form of coding used in this research was open coding, where the codes were suggested by the researcher’s examination and questioning of the data.

**RQ 1:** What are the predominant character example elements in the Caldecott Award winning books between 2002 and 2012?

Using the empirical data gathered from all researchers on the frequency table, it was easy for the researcher to present quantitative results for occurrences of traits. Furthermore, each coder’s ranking form was used to give a mean score for the text’s potential for teaching each of the C.H.A.R.A.C.T.E.R. elements.
**RQ 2:** What are the frequencies of the positive versus negative character traits?

The data directly addressed this issue via the frequency chart. Coders marked negative character traits on the frequency chart and circled them to distinguish the difference. Raw data answered this research question.

**RQ 3:** Which books could be recommended for teachers to use for teaching character education?

In studying the rich detailed descriptions that readers provided regarding the text’s character education potential and the discussion from the weekly meetings, the researcher was able to provide recommendations for teachers on their use of Caldecott winning books in the classroom to integrate character education lessons.

**Trustworthiness and Ethical Considerations**

Research should be ethical, trustworthy, and honest. Since qualitative research employs the researcher having an active role in the collection and interpretation of data, it is imperative that certain standards be addressed. Ary, Jacobs, Razavieh, and Sorenson (2006) quote four standards for rigor in qualitative research: creditability, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. These four standards can ensure the trustworthiness of research. In addition, no ethical issues of confidentiality existed as the raters used pseudonyms on all of their documentation. All data and records were maintained by the researcher for safe-keeping.

**Credibility**

Credibility refers to the accuracy or truthfulness of the findings. In qualitative research, one way this accuracy can be determined is through consensus. In order to address this issue, the readers collected their data separately and met weekly to discuss findings. When two or more readers agreed on an issue involving a character trait, discussion followed. When the team agreed to consensus, the data were kept on an additional consensus codebook for reporting findings.
Transferability

Transferability is the ability for findings in a study to be generalized to other contexts or groups. It is the responsibility of the qualitative researcher, asserts Ary et al. (2006), to “provide sufficiently rich, detailed, thick descriptions of the context so that potential users can make the necessary comparisons and judgments about similarity and hence transferability” (p. 507). This study does not deal with transferability to other contexts but merely on studying a particular set of books. However, the researcher has attempted to include ample details regarding the readers and the timeline for the data collection.

Dependability

Dependability is the qualitative equivalent to the quantitative term reliability—consistency of behavior should the study be replicated. According to Ary et al. (2006), one way to account for this trustworthiness of findings is through an audit trail. This trail involves detailed documentation of how the study was conducted, as well as all raw data gathered and discussed. The researcher has maintained the written accounts of all data collection—all codebooks and memoing—along with audio recordings of each weekly meeting where discussions were conducted and consensus was determined.

Confirmability

Finally, confirmability is the concept that research be free of bias. It refers to objectivity of the procedures and results interpretation. Ary et al. (2006) state that “the audit trail is the main strategy for demonstrating confirmability. By providing a complete audit trail, the researcher enables another researcher to arrive or not arrive at the same conclusions given the same data and context” (p. 511).

Summary

Chapter 3 outlines the methodology of the research study. It examines the choice of
content analysis as a research design and reiterates the research questions. In addition, the chapter explains book selection, background of the readers, and the process of data collection. Finally, the analysis of data and trustworthiness of the study were discussed to ensure ethical uprightness.
CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

The aim of this study was to analyze Caldecott Award winning books from 2002-2012 in order to determine the presence of example character elements as specified in the acronym C.H.A.R.A.C.T.E.R. Three guiding questions helped to focus the analysis and determine suitability for the use of these texts in character education in schools. Chapter Three detailed the methodology employed in the study. Specifics that were included involved book selection, qualifications of the readers/coders, description and creation of the codebooks, and data collection and analysis processes. Both qualitative data and descriptive statistics will be presented in Chapter Four.

Research questions 1 and 2, “What are the predominant character example elements, as specified in the acronym C.H.A.R.A.C.T.E.R., in the Caldecott Award winning books between 2002-2012?” and “What are the frequencies of the positive versus negative character traits, utilizing C.H.A.R.A.C.T.E.R. as the focus elements?” were answered through empirical data collected and agreed upon by the team of readers. This data of both positive and negative character traits were recorded on frequency charts and will be presented in this chapter. The third guiding question, “Which books could be recommended for teachers to use for teaching character education?” was addressed by means of numerical data in conjunction with the reader-provided rich narrative descriptions. This data were a result of the readers’ close analysis of the texts as well as a more holistic evaluation thereof. Tables have been provided expressing reader impressions on frequency and strength of the example character elements in the texts. Focused summaries of the books are furnished, as well as narrative summaries that detail the points of discourse and debate when the team of readers held their discussion groups.

Data Analysis

Beginning in the fall of 2013, the panel of readers began collecting data through reading
and analyzing the Caldecott Award winning books from 2002-2012. Enough copies of the books were obtained so that the readers could simultaneously read the same two titles during the week, collect individual content analysis, and then meet together to discuss their findings and form consensus. The original plan involved reading two books per week for a total of 7 weeks with the first week set aside for learning the coding system, definitions, and protocols through a practice book. However, in reality, the study took several weeks longer than anticipated due to various life issues, which forced delays in reading and meeting for consensus with discussion groups.

In addition to being provided copies of the texts, readers were each given a codebook for recording her findings, a laminated copy of coding instructions and definitions on blue colored paper and a list of the Caldecott books to be read throughout the course of the study on yellow paper. Because most of the picture books did not list page numbers and readers were asked to record pages where the character elements are references or inferred, a solution was required and achieved at the initial discussion meeting for the sample book. Also at the first meeting, protocols were established for discussion group meetings as well as for coders when reading and rating texts. The formalities agreed upon for discussion groups included continual reference to the character example elements’ definitions, a solution to the page numbering dilemma, and collection and maintenance of audio recording of the dialogue of discussion groups. The group decided that in all books without page numbers, the title page would be considered page 1 with the subsequent pages following sequentially. Regarding protocol for individual reading, a short video was created for readers to watch prior to any reading and coding session. In this video, coders were reminded to continually reference their blue colored sheet with the definitions of the character example elements as well to keep attentive for the negative counterparts of the
elements. In addition, coders were reminded of the agreed-upon manner for recording page numbers.

Results

2002 Caldecott Award: The Three Pigs by D. Wiesner

The Three Pigs: Plot summary. The three pigs set out to seek their fortunes in the time-honored manner of the three little pigs. Once the wolf enters the story, however, the traditional plot shifts. The pigs use their imaginations and find a way out of their story to escape the wolf. They travel to different stories and help other story characters in need. They even save a dragon while on their adventure. Once they return to their story, the dragon and the “Hey Diddle Diddle” cat aid them in scaring off the wolf, so the five new friends can live happily ever after.

The Three Pigs: Character theme. The predominant theme of helpfulness was unanimously identified by the readers in this book. The pigs are very cooperative, helping one another to escape the wolf as well as assisting other story characters with their own dilemmas. The definition of helpfulness in this study is “cooperative; to give service or assistance; willing to help” (see Appendix A). The pigs utilize courage and cooperation to overcome fear and bullies in their paths.

Two additional strong themes from this text are acceptance and caring/compassion. The pigs upon entering all stories are accepting of the different characters. They even go so far as to accept the “bad guy” dragon from one story by helping him to escape his deadly fate. When looking from the wolf’s perspective in the story, the negative counterpart for caring can come into discussion since it is not very compassionate to blow down one’s house.

The Three Pigs: Numerical data. Table 1 shows that helpfulness was the character element most frequently appearing in the text as well as the one with the most intensity. Both acceptance and ambition were depicted with moderate frequency though the intensity was not as
prevalent. Table 2 was created by consensus. Readers individually read and coded the texts, noting page numbers for both positive and negative C.H.A.R.A.C.T.E.R. traits. During discussions, readers shared their individual findings and developed consensus regarding which character element was exemplified. This consensus was determined through the subsequent exchange of ideas and debate that often returned to the definitions of the example elements. Data in Table 2 further substantiates helpfulness as the most frequent character represented in *The Three Pigs*. Oddly, ambition falls second in terms of most frequent depictions in the text, yet readers rated it, according to Table 1, as a weak or minor theme for use in character education.

Table 1

*The Three Pigs: C.H.A.R.A.C.T.E.R. Elements Ranking—Average Frequency and Intensity*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Character elements</th>
<th>Mean Frequency</th>
<th>Mean Intensity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Caring/compassion</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helpfulness</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Acceptance</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respect</td>
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<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ambition</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Citizenship</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trustworthiness</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encouragement</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responsibility</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2

*The Three Pigs: C.H.A.R.A.C.T.E.R. Elements Depiction Frequency*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Character elements</th>
<th>Page # of positive Depictions</th>
<th>Page # of negative depiction</th>
<th>Total Overall Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Caring/compassion</td>
<td>7, 29</td>
<td>5, 7</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helpfulness</td>
<td>7, 8, 13, 23, 28, 29, 38, 39</td>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Three Pigs: Character education recommendations. The readers unanimously agree that this book would be a great choice in helping students explore the C.H.A.R.A.C.T.E.R. elements of helpfulness and cooperation as well as acceptance. Some comments include: “It’s funny and an entertaining way to teach kids how to work together to help others.” “It’s a creative way to teach acceptance and helpfulness.” “This is an example of cooperation and using individual strengths of others to achieve a goal.” None of the coders had any reservations about the text but raved over the creative nature of the story and pictures. One reader mentioned that even deeper discussions could be held about making choices; for once the first pig realizes that he can change his outcome by leaving the “story,” the events from the traditional story are subverted and the plot takes a very different direction.

2003 Caldecott Award: My Friend Rabbit by E. Rohmann

My Friend Rabbit: Plot summary. Mouse and Rabbit are friends. Rabbit means well, but trouble seems to follow. Mouse and Rabbit are playing with a toy plane, and Rabbit gets it stuck in a tree. Being a helpful friend and problem-solver, Rabbit devises a plan, going to extreme measures, to retrieve the plane. However, this plan only leads to more trouble.

My Friend Rabbit: Character theme. Friendship is the theme of this text. The two C.H.A.R.A.C.T.E.R. example elements most clearly expressed through this theme of friendship are acceptance and helpfulness. One reader stated, “True friends are always there for you; and
no matter their differences, they are always accepting.” Childhood friendships are precious, and things happen that require problem-solving strategies. Such strategies are required in this book, and though Rabbit’s plan leads to quite the chaotic conclusion, his friend Mouse recognizes and accepts that, to quote one reader, “Rabbit’s heart is in the right place.”

*My Friend Rabbit: Numerical data.* The data in Tables 3 and 4 indicate helpfulness and ambition as the most frequently represented character elements; however, helpfulness and acceptance were rated as the strongest themes in *My Friend Rabbit.* Interestingly enough, although acceptance was rated as a prevalent theme, Table 4 indicates that its actual appearance in the text is minimal, occurring only once. On the other hand, ambition is frequently seen throughout the text, but the readers felt that its representation as a theme was less enduring. Notice that no negative C.H.A.R.A.C.T.E.R. example elements were found within this tale.

Table 3


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Character elements</th>
<th>Mean Frequency</th>
<th>Mean Intensity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Caring/compassion</td>
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<td>1.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Helpfulness</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>Acceptance</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respect</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ambition</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Citizenship</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
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<td>Trustworthiness</td>
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<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responsibility</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>1.4</td>
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</table>

Table 4

### Character Elements Table

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Character elements</th>
<th>Page # of positive depictions</th>
<th>Page # of negative depiction</th>
<th>Total Overall Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Caring/compassion</td>
<td>5, 7, 32</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helpfulness</td>
<td>7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20</td>
<td></td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acceptance</td>
<td>28</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Respect</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ambition</td>
<td>7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20</td>
<td></td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Citizenship</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trustworthiness</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encouragement</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responsibility</td>
<td>7, 32</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**My Friend Rabbit: Character education recommendations.** The data from the readers show that they feel very strongly about using this book to teach friendship, acceptance, forgiveness, and helpfulness. “This is a great example of friendship that shows going above and beyond to support your friend.” One reader commented, “What a great example of forgiving others and that acceptance is needed for a strong relationship.” The main character, Rabbit, is not perfect. The entire plot of the book has the various animals helping Rabbit get the toy plane out of a tree although Rabbit’s mistake put the plane there in the first place. Mouse especially shows acceptance of his friend’s imperfections realizing that his buddy means well.

**2004 Caldecott Award: The Man Who Walked Between the Towers by M. Gerstein**

**The Man Who Walked Between the Towers: Plot summary.** The Man Who Walked Between the Towers is the true story of Phillipe Petit, a street performer who is always up for a daring new challenge. Petit has the idea of stringing a cable and performing an aerialist tight rope act between the two under-construction towers of the World Trade Center. He knows this act is against the law but decides to work toward this goal despite the dangers and legal
consequences. He works hard, enlists the help of his friends, and overcomes many challenges in order to accomplish his goal. In the end, he is successful and faces his consequences with grace.

**The Man Who Walked Between the Towers: Character theme.** Determination of the predominant character theme was unanimous for the readers. All raters felt that book centered upon the courage, determination, and ambition necessary in order to take risks. The main character overcame many obstacles to achieve his goal even though achieving his goal would break the law. He continued pursuit of this goal despite disapproval from others. He was tenacious and hardworking.

**The Man Who Walked Between the Towers: Numerical data.** The data in Table 5 corroborates the readers’ assertion that ambition is the predominant character theme, both in frequency and intensity. The data also points to helpfulness as abundantly prevalent in the story since Pierre’s friends helped him achieve his goal; however, coders rated its intensity as a secondary theme. Interestingly enough, respect is rated as moderately frequent in this text, but looking at Table 6, one notices in fact that all instances of respect point to its negative counterpart of disrespect.

Table 5


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Character elements</th>
<th>Mean Frequency</th>
<th>Mean Intensity</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Caring/compassion</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helpfulness</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acceptance</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respect</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ambition</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Citizenship</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trustworthiness</td>
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</tbody>
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Table 6


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Character elements</th>
<th>Page # of positive depictions</th>
<th>Page # of negative depiction</th>
<th>Total Overall Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td></td>
</tr>
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<td>Helpfulness</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acceptance</td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respect</td>
<td>9, 10, 26, 27</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ambition</td>
<td>6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19</td>
<td>14</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Citizenship</td>
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<tr>
<td>Trustworthiness</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encouragement</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responsibility</td>
<td>28, 30</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

_The Man Who Walked Between the Towers: Character education recommendations._

When asked if readers would recommend this book for use in exploring C.H.A.R.A.C.T.E.R. example elements, the team was split. Two of the readers felt that the text was a strong example of working hard to achieve one’s goals, but they acknowledged that teachers would have to address the lack of respect for authority and laws of the land. The three remaining coders felt that the defiant and disrespectful actions of the main character overshadowed the positive element of ambition. They acknowledged that the character accepted responsibility and consequences for his actions, and that the text might be useful for discussing the pros and cons of risk-taking. They did maintain reservations about its use.
2005 Caldecott Award: *Kitten’s First Full Moon* by K. Henkes

**Kitten’s First Full Moon: Plot summary.** Kitten sees the full moon and thinking it is a bowl of milk, persistently she chases it. She tries many different ways to reach the moon. Finally, after unsuccessfully reaching the moon she returns home to find an actual bowl of milk waiting just for her.

**Kitten’s First Full Moon: Character theme.** Ambition and the determination required to attain one’s goals are the predominant themes in this book. The kitten tries and tries to secure her goal—the moon. However, there is a point when she abandons her target and returns home unsuccessful.

**Kitten’s First Full Moon: Numerical data.** Data supports two moderately frequent character themes in this text. However, the intensity of these two example elements are somewhat disputed. Both in discussions and in final rankings of intensity, coders disagreed about the prevalence of caring and compassion in the text. Two readers argued that every time “poor kitty” was written, the narrator was demonstrating compassion for the kitten’s failed attempts at grabbing the moon and the disappointment that followed. The other three coders agreed, and this acknowledgement led to the noting of six instances of caring/compassion—more than any other trait. But, contrastingly, these readers felt that it was a very mild example of the character trait and thus not worthy of a higher overall intensity ranking.

Table 7

**Kitten’s First Full Moon: C.H.A.R.A.C.T.E.R. Elements Ranking—Average Frequency and Intensity**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Character elements</th>
<th>Mean Frequency</th>
<th>Mean Intensity</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Caring/compassion</td>
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<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helpfulness</td>
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<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 8

*Kitten’s First Full Moon: C.H.A.R.A.C.T.E.R. Elements Depiction Frequency*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Character elements</th>
<th>Page # of positive depictions</th>
<th>Page # of negative depiction</th>
<th>Total Overall Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Caring/compassion</td>
<td>5, 9, 12, 17, 22, 30</td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Helpfulness</td>
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<tr>
<td>Acceptance</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respect</td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ambition</td>
<td>13, 16, 20, 21</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
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<td>Citizenship</td>
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<tr>
<td>Responsibility</td>
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*Kitten’s First Full Moon: Character education recommendations.* Four of the five readers felt that *Kitten’s First Full Moon* was a book they would recommend for exploring the trait of ambition. One reader stated, “Kids love animals which will gain their interest immediately.” Yet another stated, “It is a simple way to show that you should try to reach your goals, and only good can come from your positive determination.” On the other hand, the dissenting reader felt that this book was not a strong example for any of the character traits. She felt that even the predominant theme for this book was still weak in overall ability to teach the trait.
2006 Caldecott Award: The Hello, Goodbye Window by N. Juster

The Hello, Goodbye Window: Plot summary. There is a window at Nanna and Poppy’s house that serves as a “getaway” for their granddaughter. It is their “Hello, Goodbye” window, which is the first place she visits when arriving and the last place she goes when leaving. Everything fun and exciting that happens is near that “magical” window. While at Nanna and Poppy’s house, they all love and care for one another as a loving family would. When the little girl leaves, she finds that she is both happy and sad.

The Hello, Goodbye Window: Character theme. All readers agree that The Hello, Goodbye Window centers on a theme of caring for one another within the family unit. Three raters noted that the text emphasizes the unmistakable bond and special relationship between grandparents and their grandchildren along with the special memories made during their visits. They make up stories for her, feed her, blow her kisses, and generally take care of her. Two raters also mentioned the adventure and discovery of childhood through imagination and curiosity as a theme in the text. However, this theme does not fit into the C.H.A.R.A.C.T.E.R. example elements under examination in this study.

The Hello, Goodbye Window: Numerical data. Four character elements in this text ranked moderately to abundantly frequent in the book. Caring/compassion, helpfulness, acceptance, and respect all ranked high in frequency; in addition, all of those with the exception of helpfulness ranked strong in intensity. The traits of encouragement and responsibility were ranked very differently by the raters even after discussion of the books and traits. The mean scores for these traits calculated out to 1.4 and 1.6, respectively in both frequency and intensity; raw scores, show two raters ranking each the highest possible and the lowest possible score. The
fifth rater with a more moderate ranking swayed the score slightly from the midpoint. All readers did agree that both citizenship and trustworthiness were not to be found in the text.

One interesting discussion point came up about helpfulness when working through the text. Two raters recorded helpfulness on page 16 when Poppy was making breakfast. Another rater commented how fascinating that when the man was making breakfast; he was deemed “helpful,” but if the woman had been making breakfast, it would probably not have been noted at all because it would be expected. Perhaps the grandfathers of those two raters never made breakfast or cooked, an instance where prior knowledge definitely affects one’s perspective on a text.

Table 9

*The Hello, Goodbye Window: C.H.A.R.A.C.T.E.R. Elements Ranking—Average Frequency and Intensity*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Character elements</th>
<th>Mean Frequency</th>
<th>Mean Intensity</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Caring/compassion</td>
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<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Helpfulness</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Acceptance</td>
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<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respect</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ambition</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Citizenship</td>
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<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trustworthiness</td>
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<td>Encouragement</td>
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Table 10


<table>
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<th>Character elements</th>
<th>Page # of positive depictions</th>
<th>Page # of negative depiction</th>
<th>Total Overall Frequency</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Caring/compassion</td>
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<tr>
<td>Helpfulness</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acceptance</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respect</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ambition</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Citizenship</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>Trustworthiness</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Encouragement</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responsibility</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Hello, Goodbye Window: Character education recommendations. All but one of the coders would recommend this book without any reservations for discussing caring, compassion, and family love. One reader stated that “not much conflict occurs in this book.” The family shows respect and caring for one another throughout. The one rater who disagreed with the group’s recommendation felt that the book was very sweet and enjoyable but did not display enough examples to warrant use in character education.

2007 Caldecott Award: Flotsam by D. Wiesner

Flotsam: Plot summary. An inquisitive boy goes to the beach and discovers a camera that has washed up on the shore. He develops the film and finds stories in the pictures of the camera, revealing secrets of the sea. He realizes there have been many others throughout various times and places that have discovered and photographed themselves with this camera. The boy does the same then returns the camera to the sea to continue its journey and be discovered by another.

Flotsam: Character theme. The raters really enjoyed this text; a great majority of the discussion group time was spent praising the author’s creativity and unique perspective of storytelling. When it came time to discuss theme and character elements, the raters were
somewhat at a loss for determining the relevance of this text to the task at hand. Many struggled to identify the theme from the story, particularly in tying it to one of our C.H.A.R.A.C.T.E.R. example elements. Only one of the five readers felt that it could loosely be themed around responsibility. One reader felt the theme centered more on curiosity, which was not one of the example elements.

**Flotsam: Numerical data.** As the data suggest, this book did not provide frequent examples of character education within. It is a wordless book, so inference is the primary storyteller in this text. Of the traits, respect and responsibility were most prominent though still averaging out between infrequent and moderate in occurrence and weak in intensity as a theme.

Table 11

**Flotsam: C.H.A.R.A.C.T.E.R. Elements Ranking—Average Frequency and Intensity**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Character elements</th>
<th>Mean Frequency</th>
<th>Mean Intensity</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Caring/compassion</td>
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<tr>
<td>Helpfulness</td>
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<tr>
<td>Acceptance</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respect</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ambition</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Citizenship</td>
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<td>Trustworthiness</td>
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<td>0.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Encouragement</td>
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<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Responsibility</td>
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<td>1</td>
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</table>

Table 12

**Flotsam: C.H.A.R.A.C.T.E.R. Elements Depiction Frequency**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Character elements</th>
<th>Page # of positive depictions</th>
<th>Page # of negative depiction</th>
<th>Total Overall Frequency</th>
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</thead>
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<tr>
<td>Helpfulness</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
The Hello, Goodbye Window: Character education recommendations. Only one of the five raters felt that she could recommend this book for use in character education. She felt that the book centered on responsibility and the main character’s perception of continuing the camera’s journey as his personal responsibility. In character education lessons, she mentioned that discussion could surround the question, “What would happen if the boy ignored the camera and failed to pass it on?” All other raters felt that this text was a weak example of character education, and they could not recommend it to teachers. One rater mentioned the book’s theme of curiosity, but as that was not a character element under study in this research, she felt it was not an ideal character education choice.

2008 Caldecott Award: The Invention of Hugo Cabret by B. Selznick

The Invention of Hugo Cabret: Plot summary. Hugo has been orphaned by his parents and then his uncle. He lives in the walls of a train station where he was trained to maintain the station clocks. He continues this work of keeping the clocks running in order to avoid being sent to an orphanage. In his spare time, he is desperately trying to fix an automaton that his father found which requires a special key. In Hugo’s quest to find the special key, he meets a shopkeeper and his daughter. These new acquaintances unlock adventures and mysteries that have been hiding right in front of him. The Invention of Hugo Cabret is a distinctive Caldecott
winner because it, unlike most, is a chapter book. This text tells the story through a unique combination of both pictures and text.

**The Invention of Hugo Cabret: Character theme.** The discussion team had great difficulty settling on one particular theme within *The Invention of Hugo Cabret*. Family, perseverance, ambition, trustworthiness, and responsibility were all at the forefront of the discussion. Consensus determined that this text displays multiple themes with numerous and varied character education discussion points. It affords great potential for teachers to hold class dialogues on moral dilemmas ranging through the sample themes listed earlier in this paragraph.

**The Invention of Hugo Cabret: Numerical data.** The data support the discussion group’s determination that multiple themes exist in strong intensities, including caring/compassion, respect, ambition, trustworthiness, and responsibility. Helpfulness, acceptance, and encouragement even rank as secondary themes within the book. Acceptance only lists one page number with that trait as an occurrence, yet its frequency and intensity are both ranked moderately. Discussion led to these rankings as the raters mentioned this trait weaving quietly in the background throughout the book.

Table 13

*The Invention of Hugo Cabret: C.H.A.R.A.C.T.E.R. Elements Ranking—Average Frequency and Intensity*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Character elements</th>
<th>Mean Frequency</th>
<th>Mean Intensity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Caring/compassion</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helpfulness</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acceptance</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respect</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ambition</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Citizenship</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trustworthiness</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Character elements</td>
<td>Page # of positive depictions</td>
<td>Page # of negative depiction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caring/compassion</td>
<td>222, 265, 365, 406, 478, 492, 494</td>
<td>60, 82, 125, 454, 455</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helpfulness</td>
<td>103, 147, 148, 222, 319, 343</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acceptance</td>
<td></td>
<td>338</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ambition</td>
<td>76, 82, 130, 139, 165, 303, 322, 324, 325, 326, 327, 328, 329, 330, 331, 332, 333, 334, 335, 336, 369</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Citizenship</td>
<td>222</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trustworthiness</td>
<td>76, 150, 165</td>
<td>50, 51, 234, 267, 282, 283</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encouragement</td>
<td>115, 131, 133, 360, 363, 390</td>
<td>135, 138, 139, 298, 299</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responsibility</td>
<td>80, 131, 142, 265, 268, 384</td>
<td>338</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**The Invention of Hugo Cabret: Character education recommendations.** The raters feel that this story offers teachers a very strong opportunity to discuss various character education topics, from trustworthiness and ambition to respect and responsibility. They also feel that this book offers many interesting discussion opportunities, as the main character, Hugo, faces numerous moral dilemmas. He often must break the law and thus a moral code in order to survive. One sees, however, that he does not want to do this. Hugo wants to purchase his necessities when he has the money, rather than always resort to stealing for survival. Finally, the
book offers more counter-examples than any other in this research study, which provides teachers with a chance to truly delve with students into the depths of these character traits through both positive and negative examples.

**2009 Caldecott Award: The House in the Night by S. Swanson**

_The House in the Night: Plot summary._ The House in the Night follows a little girl as she reads a book in her room. She goes in and out of the book which features a bird with a song. Each page takes the reader deeper and closer to details and then out again. The little girl imagines flying on the bird to the moon and back. After her imaginative story, her mother tucks her into bed.

_The House in the Night: Character theme._ Four of the five raters stated that they felt the primary theme of this book centers on dreams and imagination. These topics, however, are not related to this research. None of the coders felt that any of the C.H.A.R.A.C.T.E.R. elements manifested themselves in this book at all, much less as a theme therein.

_The House in the Night: Numerical data._ With only one documented instance of a character example element within the book, The House in the Night rankings reflect a very weak and inexistent presence of C.H.A.R.A.C.T.E.R. example elements. Caring/compassion and helpfulness are the only traits with any ranking, and those were minimal.

Table 15


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Character elements</th>
<th>Mean Frequency</th>
<th>Mean Intensity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Caring/compassion</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helpfulness</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acceptance</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respect</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Ambition 0 0
Citizenship 0 0
Trustworthiness 0 0
Encouragement 0 0
Responsibility 0 0

Table 16


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Character elements</th>
<th>Page # of positive depictions</th>
<th>Page # of negative depiction</th>
<th>Total Overall Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Caring/compassion</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helpfulness</td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acceptance</td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respect</td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ambition</td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Citizenship</td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trustworthiness</td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encouragement</td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responsibility</td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*The House in the Night: Character education recommendations.* The raters do not recommend this text for teachers’ use in character education. Not one of the five felt that the book has any character traits exemplified within, but rather that it focuses on a child’s imaginative journey.

**2010 Caldecott Award: The Lion and the Mouse by J. Pinkney**

*The Lion and the Mouse: Plot summary.* A mouse is captured by a lion that plans to eat her. The lion, however, takes mercy on the mouse and releases her. When the lion is later captured by poachers, the mouse hears his cries and comes to his rescue to repay the kindness shown to her.
The Lion and the Mouse: Character theme. Caring/compassion were unanimously determined by all readers as the predominant theme in this story. One rater stated, “The moral of this story shows that no act of kindness is ever wasted.” Both main characters in the story have compassion on one another, starting with the lion’s initial act of mercy and then continuing with the mouse’s repayment of the kindness. Closely related to this character element is the trait of helpfulness, as seen in the act of mercy. The characters are helping each other to escape. Compassion is the underlying motivator that results in acts that are helpful to one another.

The Lion and the Mouse: Numerical data. The rankings data from this book strongly supports the themes determined by the raters. Caring/compassion, helpfulness, acceptance, and respect are the highest ranked in both frequency and intensity. Citizenship and encouragement were ranked “not present” by all coders. When looking at the frequency chart which records specific C.H.A.R.A.C.T.E.R. element instances within the text, one finds that responsibility has the second highest number of instances, being found seven times in the book, yet it was ranked highly in neither frequency nor intensity.

Table 17

The Lion and the Mouse: C.H.A.R.A.C.T.E.R. Elements Ranking—Average Frequency and Intensity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Character elements</th>
<th>Mean Frequency</th>
<th>Mean Intensity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Caring/compassion</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helpfulness</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acceptance</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respect</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ambition</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Citizenship</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trustworthiness</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encouragement</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Responsibility 1.4 1.4

Table 18

The Lion and the Mouse: C.H.A.R.A.C.T.E.R. Elements Depiction Frequency

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Character elements</th>
<th>Page # of positive depictions</th>
<th>Page # of negative depiction</th>
<th>Total Overall Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Caring/compassion</td>
<td>12, 13, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29</td>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helpfulness</td>
<td>17, 25</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acceptance</td>
<td>12, 13</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respect</td>
<td>12, 13</td>
<td>9, 17</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ambition</td>
<td>25, 26, 27, 28, 29</td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Citizenship</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trustworthiness</td>
<td>12, 13, 25</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encouragement</td>
<td>30</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responsibility</td>
<td>22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29</td>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Lion and the Mouse: Character education recommendations. Consensus determined that all readers advocate strongly for this text as a character education option. One reader states, “It shows clearly that compassion and acceptance for others pays off in the end.” Yet another rater wrote, “Even though the two characters are natural enemies, they accept each other and show compassion and respect for one another.” No reservations or concerns were stated by any of the discussion group regarding the use of this text in classrooms. The group felt that all C.H.A.R.A.C.T.E.R. attributes evident in the text were crucial to the underlying message of the book.

2011 Caldecott Award: A Sick Day for Amos McGee by P. Stead

A Sick Day for Amos McGee: Plot summary. Amos McGee is a dependable, hard-working zookeeper. Although he has a lot of work to do at the zoo, he always makes time for his
special friends—the elephant, tortoise, penguin, and rhinoceros. One day, a cold keeps him out of work. The zoo animals surprise Amos with a special visit and return the compassion that he has shown to them so many times.

*A Sick Day for Amos McGee: Character theme.* Friendship, though not one of the C.H.A.R.A.C.T.E.R. attributes of this study, is the primary theme in *A Sick Day for Amos McGee.* Within the relationship (a friendship) built between the zookeeper and his animals, one very strikingly sees the traits of compassion and caring. Through Amos’s daily acts of service and the animals’ labors to care for him in his sickness, examples of the trait of compassion can be found on almost every page of the story.

*A Sick Day for Amos McGee: Numerical data.* Numerical data unanimously point to caring/compassion and helpfulness as abundantly frequent in the text as well as a strong theme for the book. All other traits in this book find the readers of very different opinions regarding frequency and intensity. Mean scores calculate to midrange numbers, such as 1.2 and 1.6, but raw scores vary significantly with ratings ranging from 0 to 3 by readers. These rankings do not necessarily match with the number of instances recorded in the frequency table. In discussion, readers gave specific page numbers for caring/compassion and acceptance but felt that these traits were found throughout the book as a whole.

Table 19

*A Sick Day for Amos McGee: C.H.A.R.A.C.T.E.R. Elements Ranking—Average Frequency and Intensity*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Character elements</th>
<th>Mean Frequency</th>
<th>Mean Intensity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Caring/compassion</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helpfulness</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acceptance</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respect</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Character elements</td>
<td>Page # of positive depictions</td>
<td>Page # of negative depiction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caring/compassion</td>
<td>8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 14, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helpfulness</td>
<td>8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acceptance</td>
<td>10, 12, 30</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respect</td>
<td>8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ambition</td>
<td>16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Citizenship</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trustworthiness</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encouragement</td>
<td>23</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responsibility</td>
<td>3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A Sick Day for Amos McGee: Character education recommendations. “With friendship comes compassion, helpfulness, acceptance, respect, encouragement, and responsibility” wrote one rater. This book, which focuses so strongly on the friendship between the zookeeper and his animals, is a prime example for delving into these character traits. The zoo animals were able to “show” compassion instead of always “receiving.” Another coder suggests, “Caring/compassion offers easy and obvious examples, but teachers could set a purpose for reading by having students identify some of the less obvious traits such as ambition and trustworthiness.”
2012 Caldecott Award: *A Ball for Daisy* by C. Raschka

*A Ball for Daisy: Plot summary.* Daisy is a dog who plays, cuddles, and walks with her owner. Her favorite possession is a red ball that she plays with in the park. One day while at the park, another dog gets ahold of her ball and it pops. Daisy still tries to play with the popped ball, but realizes it is no use. Her owner throws the ball away and does not appear to care until she realizes how sad her dog is. The next day, they return to the park where the other dog and his owner have bought Daisy a new ball. Daisy and the brown dog play together, and Daisy is happy. Now Daisy has a new ball and a new friend.

*A Ball for Daisy: Character theme.* Raters stated a few different themes as prevalent in *A Ball for Daisy.* The most agreed upon lesson from the story is “righting your wrongs” and the idea that one must take responsibility for one’s actions even if it is an accident. The brown dog and his owner replaced the busted ball even though its popping was an accident. Additional themes stated by the readers include respect for others’ property, forgiveness, and compassion for the feelings of others.

*A Ball for Daisy: Numerical data.* Numerically caring/compassion is seen as the prevailing C.H.A.R.A.C.T.E.R. example elements with the highest mean frequency and intensity as well as the most total overall frequency. Oddly, the raters only slightly mentioned caring and compassion when writing about the theme of the text. Rather, respect and responsibility were deemed more compelling themes for this wordless book in the narratives about theme. This fact does not match with their rankings for respect or responsibility in frequency, scored as moderately frequent for both traits, or in intensity, which barely tipped the halfway score between a weak and secondary theme.

Table 21

*A Ball for Daisy: C.H.A.R.A.C.T.E.R. Elements Ranking—Average Frequency and Intensity*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Character elements</th>
<th>Mean Frequency</th>
<th>Mean Intensity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Caring/compassion</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helpfulness</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acceptance</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respect</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ambition</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Citizenship</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trustworthiness</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encouragement</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responsibility</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Table 22


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Character elements</th>
<th>Page # of positive depictions</th>
<th>Page # of negative depiction</th>
<th>Total Overall Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Caring/compassion</td>
<td>20, 21, 25, 26, 27</td>
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<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helpfulness</td>
<td>27</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acceptance</td>
<td>27</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respect</td>
<td>9, 27</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ambition</td>
<td>15</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Citizenship</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trustworthiness</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encouragement</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>18, 19</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responsibility</td>
<td>9, 27</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A Ball for Daisy: Character education recommendations. Raters for this book unquestioningly recommend it for use in character education. One reader states, “Teaching with A Ball for Daisy is a great way to reinforce sharing, caring, and taking care of others’ property. It also demonstrates making up for your mistakes.” Others agree. “I think this book would be good to show students how their selfish and disrespectful actions affect others and how you should always right your wrongs.” Yet another coder stated, “Wordless books are great to
provoke deep thoughts regarding characters and trying to determine themes. Students really have to rely on the illustrations and think to support their assertions.”

Summary

This chapter detailed the results of content analysis on 11 Caldecott award-winning picture books. Results demonstrating examples of C.H.A.R.A.C.T.E.R. were explained and reported by book. Chapter Five looks at the results of the research in answering the three research questions. In addition, it explores the themes most common across all texts. Finally, it discusses the implications of these findings as well as recommendations for future research on the subject.
CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION

Chapter Five’s purpose is to further discuss the findings and examine the implications of this research. The chapter begins with a brief summary of the study through reviewing the guiding research questions. It will then look to deduce any overall conclusions, identify limitations of the study, and offer recommendations for future research.

Guiding Research Questions

The salient purpose of this study was to determine the presence of the example character elements of caring, helpfulness, acceptance, respect, ambition, citizenship, trustworthiness, encouragement, and responsibility, as specified in the acronym C.H.A.R.A.C.T.E.R., through analyzing the Caldecott Award winning books from 2002-2012. Three guiding research questions served to guide the inquiry:

RQ 1: What are the predominant character example elements as specified in the acronym C.H.A.R.A.C.T.E.R., in the Caldecott Award winning books between 2002 and 2012?

RQ 2: What are the frequencies of the positive versus negative character traits utilizing C.H.A.R.A.C.T.E.R. as the focus elements?

RQ 3: Which books could be recommended for teachers to use for teaching character education?

Summary and Discussion

Addressing the primary purpose of the study warrants an in-depth look each research question in turn. Drawing conclusions, the researcher utilized numerical data reported in Chapter Four, studied participants’ codebooks, and reviewed all audio recordings of group discussion meetings. Taken in sum the following suggestive answers were derived.

Looking at the first research question, it states “What are the predominant character example elements, as specified in the acronym C.H.A.R.A.C.T.E.R., in the Caldecott Award
winning books between 2002 and 2012?" Table 23 depicts a holistically determined summary of the main themes from the texts when organized by C.H.A.R.A.C.T.E.R. traits. Both the coding and the rich narrative summaries were utilized in making these designations.

Caring/compassion, helpfulness, and ambition are most represented in the Caldecott texts from 2002-2012. Note that some books are listed under multiple character elements while other books under review are not listed at all. For example, *The Lion and the Mouse, My Friend Rabbit,* and *The Invention of Hugo Cabret* are all listed multiple times because the coding and narratives ranked these traits equally strong as themes. On the other hand, *Flotsom* and *The House in the Night* are not listed on the table at all as both the codebooks, discussion, and data pointed to themes not represented in the C.H.A.R.A.C.T.E.R. framework.

Table 23

*Main Themes of Caldecott Award Books—By Character Trait*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trait/Theme</th>
<th>Caldecott Award Book</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Caring/compassion</td>
<td><em>The Hello, Goodbye Window</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>The Lion and the Mouse</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>A Sick Day for Amos McGee</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>The Invention of Hugo Cabret</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helpfulness</td>
<td><em>The Three Pigs</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>My Friend Rabbit</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>A Sick Day for Amos McGee</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acceptance</td>
<td><em>My Friend Rabbit</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respect</td>
<td><em>The Lion and the Mouse</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ambition</td>
<td><em>The Man Who Walked Between the Towers</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Kitten’s First Full Moon</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>The Invention of Hugo Cabret</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Citizenship</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trustworthiness</td>
<td><em>The Invention of Hugo Cabret</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Supplementing this information, Table 24 ranks traits for each book by the most intensely-rated themes. Only those C.H.A.R.A.C.T.E.R. elements that were ranked as a secondary theme or higher are included. It is interesting that neither Flotsam nor The House in the Night have any C.H.A.R.A.C.T.E.R. themes, which were scored as strong enough to mention, yet The Invention of Hugo Cabret lists all traits except for citizenship. It should be noted that unlike all the other texts in this study, The Invention of Hugo Cabret, although having won the Caldecott Award for its illustrations, is in fact a chapter book. This fact allows for a more complex plot that delves into various issues.

Table 24


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Book Title</th>
<th>3 (Strong Theme)</th>
<th>2 (Secondary Theme)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Three Pigs</td>
<td>Helpfulness (3)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My Friend Rabbit</td>
<td>Helpfulness (3)</td>
<td>Acceptance (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Man Who Walked Between the Towers</td>
<td>Ambition (3)</td>
<td>Helpfulness (2.4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kitten’s First Full Moon</td>
<td></td>
<td>Ambition (2.6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Hello, Goodbye Window</td>
<td>Caring/compassion (3)</td>
<td>Acceptance (2.6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flotsam</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Invention of Hugo Cabret</td>
<td>Caring/compassion (3)</td>
<td>Helpfulness (2.6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Respect (3)</td>
<td>Encouragement (2.6)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The second research question compares the frequencies of positive versus negative character traits. Referencing Table 25 one can see that positive character traits are overwhelmingly more prevalent than their negative counterparts. Oftentimes, the negative depictions were determined utilizing the pictures and thinking from various characters’ points of view.

Table 25

*Total Positive and Negative Depictions of C.H.A.R.A.C.T.E.R. Elements by Text*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>The Three Pigs</em></td>
<td>24</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>My Friend Rabbit</em></td>
<td>34</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>The Man Who Walked Between the Towers</em></td>
<td>26</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Kitten’s First Full Moon</em></td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>The Hello, Goodbye Window</em></td>
<td>14</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Flotsam</em></td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The third and final research question addresses which books would be recommended for teachers to use for teaching character education. The conclusions of the study reveal that of all eleven books only Flotsam and The House in the Night would not be recommended for use in teaching character education. All other texts have varying degrees of C.H.A.R.A.C.T.E.R. elements present within their plots and characters. For teachers wanting to address specific character traits in their classroom, Tables 24 and 25 give a succinct starting place. The more detailed tables and descriptions under each book in Chapter Four can additionally answer their questions of which books meet their needs.

With this data, which confirms the existence of character education traits in the Caldecott Award-winning literature from 2002-2012, educators can seek to easily implement character instruction in their classrooms. Bandura’s (1999) Social Cognitive Theory, as discussed in Chapter Two, suggests that people learn through observation. This observation can occur via direct modeling or through media such as books (Bandura, 1999). Previous research on character education, also cited in Chapter Two, indicates that literature is a very effective means for observing character interactions and relationships with the purpose of studying values (Andrews, 1994; Bohlin, 2005; Ellenwood, 2007; Glaspey, 1995; Kilpatrick, 1993; Leal, 1999; Sullivan & Yandell, 1990). Therefore, the use of these Caldecott Award-winning texts can offer
teachers and students a non-threatening outlet in which to explore situations involving character, both positive and negative, as well as the consequences that accompany those situations (Bohlin, 2005; Ellenwood, 2007; Jordan, 1996).

**Limitations of the Study**

In a research study, limitations refer to any factors that may negatively impact the results or generalizability of the study. Therefore, they describe potential weaknesses of the study that cannot be controlled (Ary, et al., 2006). The qualitative nature of the study meant that the human instrument would be the salient limitation of the research. Volunteer coders were utilized, and while variance was accounted for through age and experience, each of the five are females who live in the same geographic region of Georgia and therefore share certain cultural similarities. All readers currently work in the same school system in North Georgia and have fairly conservative, Christian values. Attempts by the researcher to add some diversity to the team came in the form of age and experience. The readers ranged in age from the late twenties to the early fifties. The panel members also ranged in teaching experience from seven to 30 years. Personal ideas about the C.H.A.R.A.C.T.E.R. example elements were decreased through providing clear definitions for each of the example elements and requiring coders to refer back to these descriptions often. However, some raters may have had unidentified biases towards the books which could have skewed the results.

Another limitation includes the texts chosen. Only 11 years of Caldecott Award Winning books were analyzed. Each year, only one book is awarded the medal, although numerous high-quality texts are awarded “honor” status. The depth and breadth of this study was purposely limited to the medal winners from 2002-2012 due to a number of factors, one being time constraints. Using the character traits from the acronym C.H.A.R.A.C.T.E.R. meant that this study failed to account for the presence of many universal values in the books evaluated.
Finally, all analysis of literature has a subjective nature to it; however, qualitative research embraces and accounts for that fact.

**Implications for Practitioners**

As the research has shown, picture books, with their rich visual images, can be appropriate tools for instruction in character. Their potential is obvious as discussion sparks, though some character traits are more represented than others in the texts. When looking for a time-saving tool in the important task of character education instruction, look no further than the highly-visible Caldecott award winning texts in your local library.

**Recommendations for Future Research**

As the Randolph Caldecott Medal is an annual award that has been presented since 1938, one logical recommendation for future research would be to continue this research each year as a new winner is chosen as well as to look back and analyze all past winners. In looking back through all the decades of winners, one would be curious to see if certain trends exist through studying the winning books throughout the years. Do any trends seem to correlate with events occurring in the nation and world at the time?

Additionally, one could expand the research by broadening the study to include Caldecott Honor books. Each year as a winning book is chosen, the American Library Association also commends books that deserve honorable mention. Future study could look at honor books from 2002-2012 or at all honor books since the award’s inception in 1938.

Many different awards are given yearly to exceptional children’s literature. This study was modeled after a study evaluating Newbery Award winning books; therefore, the same study could be conducted on an even different set of literature. The ALA also honors books through the Coretta Scott King Book Award, the Theodor Seuss Geisel Award, and many other awards (American Library Association, 2011). Furthermore, many states bestow a book award each
year that is chosen by children. For example, the Missouri Association of School Librarians annually award The Mark Twain Award while this researcher’s home state of Georgia presents the Georgia Children’s Book Award each year (Missouri Association of School Librarians, 2014; Georgia Children’s Book Award, 2013). Similarly, the Texas Library Association gives the Bluebonnet Award (Texas Library Association, 2014). Any of these book sets could be analyzed for C.H.A.R.A.C.T.E.R. example elements.

Finally, in this study, the character traits following the acronym C.H.A.R.A.C.T.E.R. were investigated. By limiting the character elements, the study itself was also limited. Future researchers could choose to explore a different set of values, such as integrity, courage, and piety. The list of potential character traits for study continues and provides endless opportunities for future study and assistance for teachers in character education instruction.

**Conclusion**

Literature can serve an integral role in molding people’s dreams, thoughts, and actions. In short, it can change lives. Bryant (2008) and Bones (2010) both found that many Newbery Award-winning books were appropriate tools for instruction in character education. They called for future research involving different sets of award-winning children’s books. This research has answered that call and found that Caldecott books can also serve as an avenue for instruction in character. A monthly character trait discussed on the morning announcements or a bumper sticker and pencil embossed with the month’s character trait cannot impact the lives of children. Zealous teachers, equipped with great literature that reveal deep truths and demonstrate virtue, make that difference.
REFERENCES


Russell III, W.B. & Waters, S. (2013). "Reel" Character Education Using Film to Promote


Zeece, P. (2009). Using current literature selections to nurture the development of kindness in

doi:10.1007/s10643-009-0306-3
APPENDIX A: CODEBOOK FOR ANALYSIS


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reviewer’s Name:</th>
<th>Date:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Book Title:</td>
<td>Author:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year of Caldecott Award:</td>
<td># of Pages:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Main Characters:

Brief Plot Summary

Main Theme of the Book
C.A.R.T.E.R. Traits/Definitions & Coding Instructions
Adapted from Bryant (2008) and Bones (2010)

**Caring/compassion**—to have or show compassion, to feel interested or concerned about (antonym: harshness)
- Feels sorry for others with a problem
- Helps another being picked on
- Listens to others’ problems
- Comforts another with a problem

**Helpfulness**—cooperative, to give service or assistance, willing to help (antonym: uncooperative)
- Helps another person
- Works well in groups

**Acceptance**—empathetic, approving, to show an understanding or approval of differences (antonym: rejection)
- Accepts students of different religions, races, or backgrounds
- Accepts differences of opinion
- 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 (antonym: disrespect)
- Recognizes the authority of others
- Takes care of personal property as well as the property of others
- Positive about self & takes care of own body

**Ambition**—strong desire for success and achievement; an inner drive to be motivated (antonym: unmotivated)
- Shows determination when faced with a problem
- Works hard to succeed
- Finishes work within the allotted time

**Citizenship**—patriotism; to show loyalty to one’s own country (antonym: disloyalty)
- Positive towards country
- Positive about rules/laws of the land
- Cares about school & community
- Volunteers services to help out school, community, country

**Trustworthiness**—honest, dependable, to place confidence in (antonym: dishonesty)
- Tells the truth
- Can be trusted

**Encouragement**—to inspire courage, spirit, and hope; to spur on (antonym: disheartening)
- Inspires others to be brave
- Inspires others to try their best
- Hopeful

**Responsibility**—dependability, accountability, to have good judgment and the ability to act correctly (antonym: unreliability)
- Can be trusted to do what he/she says
- Does what adult asks without being reminded
- Completes work on time
- Accepts the consequences of his/her decisions
**Coding Instructions:** Each week you will receive two texts to read and a codebook for each. Follow the instructions below for each book.

1. **Read the book.** While reading, note on the Frequency Table page numbers and instances that characters exemplified positive C.H.A.R.A.C.T.E.R. traits or their negative counterparts. If the example you found is negative, please circle it.

2. **As you are reading,** take note of any opportunities a teacher might have to discuss one or more of the C.H.A.R.A.C.T.E.R. example elements based on specific passages/texts. Note that this is subjective, since you bring your own prior knowledge and perspectives to the exercise, just as you would in a classroom. Please continuously refer to the definitions listed above to ensure the uniformity of the team’s definitions.

3. **View the texts holistically.** What is the main theme or character lesson, if any, that could be drawn? For example, focus on values that are best explored, being aware to not miss subtle but important points. Also be cognizant of avoiding the easy distraction of minutiae. Remember the purpose of the research is to provide guidance for classroom teachers who wish to use literature as an aid. Draw from your own experience as an educator and/or parent to find teachable moments in the texts.

4. **Please jot down thoughts and quotations from the text** if you find any particularly vivid examples. You do not need to do this for every example.

5. **Complete the section entitled “Rich Narrative Description”**.

6. **After our group discussion/meeting,** complete the final section, “Character Trait Ranking Sheet.”
Frequency Chart

Record page numbers next to the appropriate character trait to mark its appearance in the text. Also record instances of the negative counterparts on the chart and circle them.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Caring/ compassion</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Helpfulness</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acceptance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respect</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ambition</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Citizenship</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trustworthiness</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encouragement</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responsibility</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Rich Narrative Description

After you read the novel, please answer the following questions, supplying explanations and rationales when applicable.

1. Did the central conflict in this book involve one or more of the C.H.A.R.A.C.T.E.R. traits?

2. Was there a turning point in the book where a character came to a new understanding or changed for the better in one of the C.H.A.R.A.C.T.E.R. traits?

3. What kinds of explanations did the characters displaying these traits make for their behaviors?


6. Would you have any concerns about using this book in the classroom to help explore character education? Explain.
C.H.A.R.A.C.T.E.R. Elements Ranking Form

FREQUENCY
To what extent does this book offer an opportunity for students to discuss this character trait?
How frequently does this theme appear in the text?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>0--</th>
<th>1--</th>
<th>2--</th>
<th>3--</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>not present</td>
<td>infrequent</td>
<td>moderately</td>
<td>abundantly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caring/compassion</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helpfulness</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acceptance</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respect</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ambition</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Citizenship</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trustworthiness</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encouragement</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responsibility</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

INTENSITY
What is the strength or intensity with which this theme is treated in the text? To what extent is this a main theme, regardless of the frequency with which it may appear?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>0--</th>
<th>1--</th>
<th>2--</th>
<th>3--</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>not present, minor theme</td>
<td>weak or secondary theme</td>
<td>strong/main theme</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caring/compassion</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helpfulness</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acceptance</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respect</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ambition</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Citizenship</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trustworthiness</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encouragement</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responsibility</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX B: CALDECOTT WINNER BOOK LIST 2002-2012


APPENDIX C: IRB APPROVAL LETTER

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

August 21, 2013

Staci Ladd Wagner
IRB Application 1656: Character Traits in Caldecott Award-Winning Literature from 2000-2010

Dear Staci,

The Liberty University Institutional Review Board has reviewed your application in accordance with the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP) and Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulations and finds your study does not classify as human subjects research. This means you may begin your research with the data safeguarding methods mentioned in your approved application.

Your study does not classify as human subjects research because your study does not involve human subjects.

Please note that this decision only applies to your current research application, and that any changes to your protocol must be reported to the Liberty IRB for verification of continued non-human subjects research status. You may report these changes by submitting a new application to the IRB and referencing the above IRB Application number.

If you have any questions about this determination, or need assistance in identifying whether possible changes to your protocol would change your application’s status, please email us at irb@liberty.edu.

Sincerely,

Fernando Garzon, Psy.D.
Professor, IRB Chair
Counseling

(434) 592-4054

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY

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## APPENDIX D: READING SCHEDULE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating week</th>
<th>Title (year won Caldecott)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week 2</td>
<td>The Three Pigs (2002)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 2</td>
<td>My Friend Rabbit (2003)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 3</td>
<td>The Man Who Walked Between the Towers (2004)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 3</td>
<td>Kitten's First Full Moon (2005)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 4</td>
<td>The Hello, Goodbye Window (2006)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 4</td>
<td>Flotsam (2007)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 5</td>
<td>The Invention of Hugo Cabret (2008)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 5</td>
<td>The House in the Night (2009)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 6</td>
<td>The Lion &amp; the Mouse (2010)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 7</td>
<td>A Sick Day for Amos McGee (2011)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 7</td>
<td>A Ball for Daisy (2012)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>