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**An Annotated Bibliography of Research Relevant to
Moral and Character Education
2014-2015**

The Humane Society Institute for Science and Policy

**Compiled by Erich Yahner
(All Abstracts and Summaries from Authors or Publishers)**

JOURNAL ARTICLES

Brevetti, M. (2014). Developing a moral compass: Experiences, dialogues, and reflections in parochial schools. *Journal of Religious & Theological Information*, 13(3/4), 59-78.

This qualitative study explored moral experiences from a phenomenological perspective using personal interviews and oral history narratives gathered from adult participants. The research focused on former parochial school students' perspectives of their moral experiences as children in Catholic parochial schools of the 1950s and 1960s. Data collection utilized interviews. The purpose of the study is to seek a deep understanding and describe moral experiences, from adult perspectives, in developing virtue-oriented behavior. Participants were adult volunteers, age fifty-five to seventy-five years old, who had attended Catholic parochial schools. Emergent themes were aggregated from the personal interviews. The results of the study denote that participants' perceptions supported literature on some of the concepts of an educative experience and other learning theories. All participants expressed that their moral experiences, whether negative or positive, were influential in the development of virtue-oriented behavior. The most common theme derived from narrative transcripts of the interviews was how participants felt their moral teachings from the nuns and priests became fundamental to their lives. An unexpected result was the feeling of thankfulness or gratitude that participants felt for their moral education and to the parents and religious teachers, though they articulated many moral challenges in their recollections.

Carr, D. (2014). Four perspectives on the value of literature for moral and character education. *The Journal of Aesthetic Education*, 48(4), 1-16.

No abstract available

Davidson, M. (2014). A character education research perspective for the 21st century. *Journal of Character Education*, 10(1), 77.

The author recommends strategies for the future study of character education based on the diverse experiences of the nonprofit organization, The Institute for Excellence and Ethics. He enumerates several aims of character education, which include developing moral and performance character. He also cites the possibility of identifying and measuring character competencies.

Elias, M. J. (2014). The future of character education and social-emotional learning: The need for whole school and community-linked approaches. *Journal of Research in Character Education*, 10(1), 37.

No abstract available

Freeman, G. G. (2014). The implementation of character education and children's literature to teach bullying characteristics and prevention strategies to preschool children: An Action Research Project. *Early Childhood Education Journal*, 42(5), 305-316.

Bullying behaviors among young children are taking place in preschool classrooms and child-development centers. The author makes a case, based on bullying themes in children's literature and both qualitative and quantitative data collection with young children, for the use of children's picture books to teach character as bullying prevention to 4–6 year old children. Through the reading of picture books and character education activities with a bullying theme preschool children develop a better understanding of bullying characteristics and strategies for dealing with bullying behaviors. Included are the results from questionnaires and interviews with preschool children and an annotated bibliography of children's picture books and activities useful in the instruction and prevention of bullying behaviors.

Gentle-Genitty, C., Jangmin, K., Gauss, C., Cudjoe, T., Karikari, I., & Nichter, S. (2015). Teaching respect: effectiveness of the 'Me Others Property (M.O.P.) Civic Education Program'. *Relational Child & Youth Care Practice*, 28(3), 75-91.

Many factors often undermine the creation of safe and supportive environments for learning, academic, and social development in schools in general. These factors may include the conduct of students as well as that of school staff. The Me Others Property (M.O.P.) civic education program has been implemented for 25 years in local Indiana schools. However, its effectiveness to teach respect has not been evaluated. The program was designed to increase three outcomes, participants' respect for themselves, others, and property. With the main goal of assessing effectiveness of the program properties, we evaluated the three outcomes and assessed differences according to age, gender, and ethnicity. This study highlights the role civic education programs may play in schools in general. It suggests that through these programs students, regardless of their age, gender, and ethnicity, learn values about helping self, others, and property to aid their country. More evaluation of the evidence based properties of civic education programs is necessary.

Graham, S. E., & Diez, M. E. (2015). The complexity of character: an ability-based model for higher education. *Journal of Character Education*, (1), 51.

Character development in higher education is a complex process. This process has often been delegated to a single course on ethics or courses on religion. The authors of this article pose an alternative higher educational process whereby character development is rooted in a series of abilities that are contextualized throughout the entire undergraduate curriculum. These abilities, developed and assessed by faculty who study both the theoretical frameworks and who assess for student learning of these abilities, provided an overall framework for developing character within the context of their discipline and of a liberal arts general education.

Köse, T. Ç. (2015). Character education of adolescents: A case study of a research center. *Education & Science / Eğitim Ve Bilim*, 40(179), 295.

This study describes the theoretical and practical studies at an adolescent research Center in the School of Education at an American university. Additionally, researchers' views are explored regarding the educational environment, activities, and the assessment process in character education. The case study design used in this paper is based on qualitative research methods. The participants comprised 9 researchers who took part in the Center's studies. The data were gathered through semi-structured interviews, and document analysis. Content analysis was applied to analyze the data of the research. Findings of this paper reveal that the research Center conducted studies on the positive aspects of adolescent development. Additionally, educational environment, activities, and assessment processes in character education are explained in light of the participants' views.

Oppenheimer, M. F., Fialkov, C., Ecker, B., & Portnoy, S. (2014). Teaching to strengths: character education for urban middle school students. *Journal of Character Education*, (2), 91.

Traditionally, educational practices in the United States have revolved around the identification and remediation of student deficits, with much less focus given to the identification and development of student strengths of character. A focus on strengths could equip students with the skills to not only overcome obstacles, but to

flourish in the face of challenges. The present study examined well-being among urban adolescents through the use of a school-based character strengths program. Participants included 70 eighth-grade students from an urban middle school assigned to either an intervention group or a comparison group. Through a series of activities, students identified and built upon character strengths. Consistent with predictions, participants in the intervention reported an overall increase in well-being from the start to the conclusion of the 5-day intervention as measured by the EPOCH Measure of Adolescent Well-Being (Kern & Steinberg, 2012). Implications for educational practice and future research are discussed.

Russell, W. B., & Waters, S. (2014). Developing character in middle school students: A cinematic approach. *Clearing House*, 87(4), 161-167.

The middle school years are a critical time in the physical, intellectual, and moral growth of young adolescents. This article examines how film can be used to engage students in moral-dilemma discussions to promote critical thinking and character development. The authors argue that the use of film in the classroom can challenge students to expand and analyze their own values and beliefs by examining moral dilemmas in popular films. In addition, the article provides readers with a filmography of useful character education-related films for the middle school classroom. The primary focus of this article is to provide teachers with an engaging and dynamic form of instruction to help middle school students become responsible citizens of character.

Suissa, J. (2015). Character education and the disappearance of the political. *Ethics & Education*, 10(1), 105.

In this article, I explore some contemporary versions of character education with specific reference to the extent to which they are viewed as constituting a form of citizenship education. I argue that such approaches often end up displacing the idea of political education and, through their language and stated aims, avoid any genuine engagement with the very concept of the political in all but its most superficial sense. In discussing some of the points raised by critics of character education, I defend the need for a more robust and radical conception of the political as a basis for a form of political education.

Walker, D. I., Roberts, M. P., & Kristjánsson, K. (2015). Towards a new era of character education in theory and in practice. *Educational Review*, 67(1), 79-96.

The authors use a Bourdieuan framework of “legitimizing principles” and the “symbolic capital” of dominant “discursive themes” to explore (a) the genealogy and (b) the current state of the discourse on “character education” (understood broadly as any approach to moral education that foregrounds the cultivation of moral character and moral virtue). After tracing the genealogy of the legitimating principles for the cultivation of pupils’ characters, from the “sinful pupils” of the eighteenth century to the “flourishing pupils” at the beginning of the twenty-first, the authors argue that although the battle for the symbolic capital of character education may be winning at the theoretical level and the level of empirical school-based practice, there is still a battle for legitimating principles that needs to be won – and which has barely begun – at institutional levels. Research findings and academic advances in current character education need to be adapted to the language used in official policy. To achieve that aim, character educationists must act as “knowledge brokers”, repackaging information in an effective way to legitimate changes in teacher training and educational policy.

BOOK CHAPTERS

Zeidler, D. L., Berkowitz, M. W., & Bennett, K. (2014). Thinking (scientifically) responsibly: The cultivation of character in a global science education community. In *Assessing schools for Generation R (Responsibility)* (pp. 83-99). Springer Netherlands.

What does it mean to think in scientifically responsible ways? What does it mean to think globally and act locally if words and deeds are to be viewed in a global context? Do normative expectations of morality hinder or facilitate the development of character? Is the exercise of prudence and virtue commensurable with a global perspective of science education? This chapter explores the issues surrounding these and related questions as they impact policy and practice in science education. The conundrum of what it means to think responsibly in a pluralistic society is both an academically interesting challenge and a task that greatly impacts the quality of our physical, organic, and social world. Here, we need to consider the notion of western dominant science,

indigenous science, and scientific worldviews. We will analyze and evaluate the boundaries that we place between these concepts in order to reveal the common threads that flow through them. By viewing our ever-fluctuating context through a lens grounded in the inspection of common social tapestries (structures), we will begin to understand what it means to think responsibly as human beings in the modern world and in turn formulate a foundation for responsible scientific thinking. This framework has the potential to guide and inspire policymakers and science educators toward creating a dynamic environment conducive to formation of character.

BOOKS

Kristjánsson, K. (2015). *Aristotelian character education*. Routledge. ISBN: 9781138804753

No summary available.

Lockwood, A. L. (2015). *The case for character education: A developmental approach*. Teachers College Press. ISBN: 9780807749234

Look at the state of character education. This book assesses its strengths and weaknesses and finds fault with leading advocates for failing to respond to sound critiques of their work. It argues that contemporary character education can be improved by using key principles from established theories and research on developmental psychology.

Nucci, L. P., Krettenauer, T., & Narváez, D. (2014). *Handbook of moral and character education*.

The second edition of the Handbook of Moral and Character Education is a comprehensive update of the original text from 2008. Edited by leading scholars and bringing together a wide range of researchers and practitioners, this 553-page book is a valuable, state-of-the-art resource.