HistoryofCharacter

KEY INFLUENCES AND INITIATIVES FROM 4,000 B.C. THROUGH 2020

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Introduction

A *History of Character Education* is a guide through the many key influences and initiatives that led to modern comprehensive character development. It is a compilation of research taken from scholarly articles, studies, and academics, that highlights the vibrant past of character development and illustrates how comprehensive character development came to be known as the best means of well-rounded education in the 21st century.

Character education is not new. In fact, it is one of the oldest forms of education in existence. According to Thomas Lickona, "education has two great goals: to help young people become smart, and to help them become good" - to cultivate confident and compassionate students who become successful learners, contribute to their communities, and serve society as ethical citizens.

Since 4,000 B.C.

- The focus on teaching people to "be good" has been evidenced throughout all cultures, societies, and eras, though it rose to popularity in the time of the Greeks.
- Virtues education has been used by civilizations for centuries, dating all the way back to 4,000 B.C.
  - The Jewish people first taught virtues from 4,000 – 1,000 B.C.,
  - The Chinese dynasty taught virtues in the mid-2,000 B.C. era,
  - The Greeks, Plato and Aristotle, really established the cornerstone of virtues training in 500 – 350 B.C. with the Cardinal virtues.
  - Many other sects and civilizations of people have also taught virtues: Romans, Hindus, Buddhists, and Christians. Today, even atheists have virtues. Among all these different sources, there are overlapping virtues that are beneficial for all of humanity to learn.

1620: Early Colonist/Protestant Moral Education

- "As common school spread throughout the colonies, the moral education of children was taken for granted. Formal education had a distinctly moral and religious emphasis" ("Moral Education").
- "The early colonists, particularly Protestants from northern Europe, brought with them a strong commitment to the moral task of child rearing. The doctrine of original sin meant that every individual had to be trained to overcome the inherent savage impulses through discipline. The student was to be indoctrinated, by force, if necessary, into the norms of society" (Fairchild, 2006 p. 11-12).

1700 - 1790

- "Colonial schools taught values based on Christian principles. In 1776, school textbooks were exclusively limited to morals and religious content" (Mulkey, 1997).

- Ben Franklin believed that morality should be taught in public schools, asserting that the best way to teach morals was through history. Learning from the mistakes of the past could teach children about the importance of character for the future. That way, schools would ensure a successful democracy by educating students about character, relationships, and citizenship (Watz, 2011).

- The American Founders believed character education was necessary to create a successful democracy. Therefore, it was important for Americans to develop "democratic virtues," such as:
    - Respect for the rights of individuals,
    - Regard for law,
    - Voluntary participation in public life,
    - and concern for the common good.

- Character education is about developing and strengthening virtues, values, universally accepted principles, and the ability make wise choices that result in a well-rounded life and a thriving society. "They taught what they called the "natural" virtues of honesty, kindness, courage (fortitude), thriftiness, bravery, patriotism, and hard work" (Davidson, 2010).

- "John Locke, the 17th-century democratic philosopher, believed that learning was secondary to virtue" (Skinner, 2004).

1800's

- Horace Mann (1796-1859), an American educational reformer, was a major advocate for quality, universal public education. He believed a quality education included moral and character education. Mann was progressive for his day, believing that women should also receive education, as they would raise the future generation (Watz, 2011).

- "The Bible was the source book of both moral and religious instruction. When disputes arose over whose Bible to use, William McGuffey offered his McGuffey Readers, as a way to teach school children the "natural virtues" of honesty, hard work, thriftiness, kindness, patriotism, and courage" (Davidson, 2010). Values and education were inseparable in his mind, and character education would be reflected in health and happiness of American society (Watz, 2011).

- 1885: The era of progressive education begins. Many felt that traditional moral education, which had deliberately religious overtones and focused on the individual's relationship with God, was too sectarian. Educators still felt that morality was a to achieve a well-rounded education. Moral teaching was rebranded as "character," "which was seen as a "universally acceptable educational goal" that could "somehow bridge the ideological differences of America's new pluralism" ("Character Education in the US Over Time Timeline")

1900's

1900: The rise of corporate America affects education expansion. "The expansion of education for the corporate segment was spurred on by a desire to discipline a newly created middle management sector in society. As well, corporate America still saw the need to Americanize a growing Asian American immigrant population. In the meantime, 'educators were attempting to restructure their framework of moral instruction in light of the demands of a distinctly modern society'" ("Character Education in the US Over

Time Timeline").

- 1900: YMCA was brought to the US, which helped develop moral and performance character in American middle-class youth (Watz, 2011).
- 1910: The Boy Scouts of America created. Employ a step-by-step system that develops character traits in middle class boys. (Watz, 2011).
- 1937: New York criticizes the social studies curriculum in public schools. After conducting thorough research, it was recommended that social studies curricula should include moral and character components to provide students with core character traits that would lead to better citizens and increased societal competence (Watz, 2011).
- 1962: Supreme Court outlaws prayer in public schools ("Character Education in the US Over Time Timeline").
- 1963: Supreme Court outlaws reading the Bible over school intercoms ("Character Education in the US Over Time Timeline").
- 1960 - 1970: As academics became the central focus of public education, character development fell by the wayside ("History of Character Education").
- 1960 - 1980: Public schools prioritized academic education over moral education. Christian schools filled this void by offering academic education founded in character and religious instruction, "which led to a spike in enrollment. This brought the need for character education back to the forefront of public education (Watz, 2011)" ("History of Character Education").
- 1968: The Character Education Institute of San Antonio began developing the 'Character Education Curriculum.' This was the first curriculum for character education that was widely implemented in schools across the US of at least 60,000 schools (Mulkey, 1997).
- 1960 – 1970: Character education taught virtues through educational stories, the teacher's example, and discipline and was integral to the mission of public schools until the 1960's. Character education lost support as a result of:
  o "Darwinism introduced a new metaphor—evolution—that led people to see all things, including morality, as being in flux" (Lickona, 1993).
  o "The rise of logical positivism ('There is no moral truth, no objective right and wrong') and moral relativism ('All values are relative')" (Davidson, 2010).
    ➢ "The philosophy of logical positivism, arriving at American universities from Europe, asserted a radical distinction between facts (which could be scientifically proven) and values (which positivism held were mere expressions of feeling, not objective truth). As a result of positivism, morality was relativized and privatized—made to seem a matter of personal "value judgment," not a subject for public debate and transmission through the schools" (Lickona, 1993).
  o "Personalism – 'Each person should be free to choose his own values; who are we to impose our values?' (Davidson, 2010).
    ➢ 1960's: "a worldwide rise in personalism celebrated the worth, autonomy, and subjectivity of the person, emphasizing individual rights and freedom over responsibility. Personalism rightly protested societal oppression and injustice, but it also delegitimized moral authority, eroded belief in objective moral norms, turned people inward toward self-fulfillment, weakened social commitments (for example, to marriage and parenting), and fueled the socially destabilizing sexual revolution" (Lickona, 1993).
  o Increasing pluralism - the secularizing of society and the fear that teaching morality in the schools would mean teaching religion (1960's):

> "The rapidly intensifying pluralism of American society (Whose values should we teach?) and the increasing secularization of the public arena (Won't moral education violate the separation of church and state?), became two more barriers to achieving the moral consensus indispensable for character education in the public schools. Public schools retreated from their once central role as moral and character educators" (Arjoon, 2008).

- 1970's: Values education returned in new forms: values clarification and Kohlberg's moral dilemma discussions. "Values clarification said, don't impose values; help students choose their values freely. Kohlberg said, develop students' powers of moral reasoning so they can judge which values are better than others. Each approach made contributions, but each had problems. Values clarification, though rich in methodology, failed to distinguish between personal preferences (truly a matter of free choice) and moral values (a matter of obligation); Kohlberg focused on moral reasoning, which is necessary but not sufficient for good character, and underestimated the school's role as a moral socializer" (Lickona 1993.)

- "The idea of teaching character and values in school was regaining prominence. But rather than prescribe a set of common values to be taught, popular programs of the time would "contribute to the development of the student in six areas of human interaction: communicating, empathizing, problem-solving, assenting and dissenting, decision making, and personal consistency" (Casteel and Stahl, 1975). "In such a program, the teacher would serve simply as the facilitator, with a mandate not to impose his or her own values on students" (Skinner, 2004).

- 1980's Resurgence of Traditional Character Education – "Educational leaders described a serious moral decline in society. Bennett referred to crime, illegitimate births, single-parent homes, and divorce as exploding "social pathologies." Lickona remarked on "ten troubling trends in youth character", among them - peer cruelty, a resurgence of bigotry, sexual precocity and ethical illiteracy. Such character education leaders successfully launched a public moral crusade" ("Character Education in US Schools Over Time Timeline").

- "Amid the widespread concern over students' poor academic achievements and behavior, educators rediscovered the word character. Moral education had a religious tinge, which made many uneasy. Character with its emphasis on forming good habits and eliminating poor habits struck a popular and traditional chord. The word character has a Greek root, coming from the verb "to engrave." Thus, character speaks to the active process of making marks or signs (i.e., good habits) on one's person. The early formation of good habits is widely acknowledged to be in the best interests of both the individual and society" ("Moral Education").

- 1981-1989: "President Reagan expressed the importance of developing character in schools. Raised awareness and money to support character education in public schools (Watz, 2011)" ("History of Character Education").

- 1981: Homeschooling on the rise - John Holt's book, "Teach Your Own: A Hopeful Path for Education," adds momentum to the homeschooling movement (Sass, 2016). As people became disenfranchised with public education, many were opting to homeschool and reclaim their role in reinforcing their own family values.

- 1987: The Josephson Institute of Ethics was founded to improve the ethical quality of society by advocating principled reasoning and ethical decision-making (Geren, 2001). The Josephson Institute created Character Counts! to advance character education by teaching trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, and citizenship.

- 1987: "The National School Boards Association proposed to the United States Department of Education a project, "Building Character in the Public Schools," designed to enhance character development in the schools through involvement of more than 15,000 local school boards in this

country. The project had two overall goals:

- o   to heighten national awareness of the importance of character development programs in local public schools to the continued success and stability of American society; and
- o   to encourage the establishment and improvement of character development programs in public elementary and secondary schools" (Huitt, 2004).

- 1980 – 2000: Increasing numbers of people across the ideological spectrum believed that our society was in deep moral trouble. The disheartening signs were everywhere:
  - o   breakdown of the family;
  - o   deterioration of civility in everyday life;
  - o   rampant greed at a time when one in five children were poor;
  - o   an omnipresent sexual culture that filled our television and movie screens with filthiness, beckoning the young toward sexual activity at ever earlier ages;
  - o   enormous betrayal of children through sexual abuse;
  - o   the 1992 report of the National Research Council stated the United States is now the most violent of all industrialized nations.

- As societal moral problems worsened, the feeling grew that schools could not be ethical bystanders. As a result, character education began to make a comeback in American schools. These assertions became apparent:
  - o   Adults realized that the young needed moral direction and parents and teachers have a responsibility to provide it — to pass on a moral heritage.
  - o   School has a responsibility to stand for good values and help students form their character around such values.
  - o   Character education is directive rather than non-directive; it asserts the rightness of certain values — such as respect, responsibility, honesty, caring, and fairness — and helps students to understand, care about, and act upon these values in their lives.

- 1988: "Personal Responsibility Education Process (PREP) - Sanford N. McDonnell leads the foundation of PREP, as a project of Cooperating School Districts of Missouri. The name was later changed to CharacterPlus. In 1992, the U.S. Department of Education awarded PREP a large grant to advance character education as an integrated, essential part of learning. In 1993, the concept of PREP was taken to a national level as McDonnell established the Character Education Partnership (CEP) and was appointed to its Board" ("Character Education in US Schools Over Time Timeline").

- 1990: As other modern scholars came along, they continued to teach virtues, but varied in which ones were the most important to teach. The Josephson Institute talks about the "Six Pillars of Character" – trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring and citizenship. Dr. Michele Borba teaches the 7 essential virtues of moral intelligence: empathy, conscience, self- control, respect, kindness, tolerance, and fairness. And Dr. Thomas Lickona, a leading expert in

  the field of character development, stresses 10 essential virtues: wisdom (prudence), justice, fortitude, self-control, love, positive attitude, hard work, integrity, gratitude, and humility.

- 1990's: Character education, as it is known today, began to appear. A 1991 book by Thomas Lickona, *Educating for Character*, reintroduced the idea that there is a set of common beliefs and values upon which all people can agree. A year later, a group of educators, ethicists, and scholars met in Aspen, Colorado, for a gathering that resulted in the Aspen Declaration and the beginning of the Character Counts Coalition.

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  - o   "In the early 1990s, the federal government embraced the idea of offering character education in public schools and made grants available to states interested in piloting new character education programs in their schools. In response, for-profit and nonprofit

organizations developed character programs for schools, districts, and states. First lady and former teacher Laura Bush promoted the use of character education in schools, saying that 'reading and writing are not all we need to teach our children. Respect and responsibility are just as important, and we need to make sure we're teaching our children to be responsible citizens who have good values and ethics" ("Moral Education").

- o "Most character education programs in use today are based on the traits developed from the civic virtues found in the U.S. Constitution and the United Nations charter—as well as common civil and moral values such as honesty, courage, and respect for others. Advocating that honesty is better than dishonesty, or that free speech is better than censorship, rarely invites controversy" ("Moral Education").

- o "The impetus and energy behind the return of character education to American schools did not come from within the educational community. It was fueled, first, by parental desire for orderly schools where standards of behavior and good habits are stressed, and, second, by state and national politicians who responded to these anxious concerns of parents" ("Moral Education").

- 1992: "CHARACTER COUNTS! was created with a coalition of 17 nationally prominent youth serving and educational organizations. Today there are hundreds of member organizations and CC! serves millions of children and their families every year. It is, by a significant margin, the largest character development organization in the world. The program, initially focused exclusively on the development of core ethical traits - trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring and citizenship (the Six Pillars of Character) – has continually evolved reflecting current research and best practices to become a comprehensive student development program embracing academic, social and emotional skills and traits as well as the Six Pillars." (CHARACTER COUNTS!).

- 1993: The Character Education Partnership (CEP) was established as a national nonpartisan coalition whose goal was to place character education at the top of the national educational agenda (Lickona, 1993). Dedicated to developing moral character and civic virtue in young people as a way of promoting a more compassionate and responsible society, CEP continues today as the most prominent entity that provides leadership and advocacy for character worldwide. Their list of "Key Topics" includes academic achievement and integrity, bullying prevention, school climate and service learning. Activities include a national clearinghouse, community programs, school support, publications, annual and regional forums, and media campaign. CEP recently (2015-2017) redefined their mission to expand beyond youth to communities, families and business entities, to include "people everywhere who are educated,

inspired and empowered to be ethical and compassionate citizens." under the new title of Character.org.

- o The Character Education Partnership created the 11 principles of effective character education that schools used to guide their efforts. The principles include the advice that the term "character" must be well-defined, that the program must be integrated into the curriculum, and that all stakeholders - parents and community members must be involved (Lickona, T., Schaps, E., and Lewis, C., no date). The final principle is the need to assess the progress of the school involved in the program.

- "During his presidency (1993–2001), William Clinton hosted five conferences on character education. President Clinton discussed the importance of character education and brought it to the forefront of education by tripling the funding allotted to it in public schools (Watz, 2011)"

- o "February 4, 1997: President Clinton's first State of the Union address: Clinton rolled out "Call to Action for American Education" based on 10 principles. The 6th dealt specifically with character. In describing it, he said, "Character education must be taught in our schools. We must teach our children to be good citizens, and we must continue to promote order and

discipline, supporting communities that introduce school uniforms, impose curfews, enforce truancy laws, remove disruptive students from the classroom, and have zero tolerance for guns and drugs in school" ("Character Education in US Schools Over Time Timeline").

- o October 16, 1994: "Character Counts! Week - President Bill Clinton proclaimed the week of October 16, 1994 as "Character Counts!" week. In his proclamation speech, he talked about, "setting high standards of compassion, understanding, and community involvement" and redoubling "efforts to improve student learning, responsibility, and sense of belonging." Every year since then, every administration has proclaimed the third week in October as "Character Counts!" week" ("Character Education is US Schools Over Time Timeline").

- President George W. Bush (2001 – 2009) asked Congress to again triple the money allotted to character education (Watz, 2011). President Bush expanded on the programs of the previous administration and made character education a major focus of his educational reform agenda.

- "One of the politically appealing aspects of character education, as opposed to moral education with its religious overtones, is that character education speaks more to the formation of a good citizen. A widely repeated definition (i.e., character education is helping a child to know the good, to desire the good, and to do the good) straddles this issue. For some people the internal focus of character education comfortably can be both religious and civic and for others the focus can be strictly civic, dealing exclusively on the formation of the good citizen" ("Moral Education").

- 1994: The Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL) was formed with the goal of establishing high-quality, evidence-based social and emotional learning (SEL) as an essential part of preschool through high school education. From the beginning, CASEL was comprised of a distinguished national leadership team that identified key issues to advance the science and practice of SEL ("SEL Research").

  - o Both CASEL and the term "social and emotional learning" emerged from a meeting in 1994 hosted by the Fetzer Institute. Meeting attendees included researchers, educators, and child advocates involved in various education-based efforts to promote positive development in children. These SEL pioneers came together to address a concern about ineffective school programming and a lack of coordination among programs at the school level

  - o Schools were being inundated with a slew of positive youth development programs such as drug prevention, violence prevention, sex education, civic education, and moral education, to name a few. SEL was introduced as a framework that addresses the needs of young people and helps to align and coordinate school programs and programming.

  - o In 1997 CASEL, and the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD) partnered on Promoting Social and Emotional Learning: Guidelines for Educators. This groundbreaking book provided practical strategies for educators to create comprehensive and coordinated SEL programming from preschool through grade 12. This was the first book of its kind, and it laid the foundation for the country to begin addressing the "missing piece" in education.

- 1997 – 2017: Critical research and initiatives, both from CASEL and collaborators, have advanced our evidence base, provided guidance to educators, and grown the community of scientists and educators committed to this important work. For CASEL, this has included setting standards for evidence-based programs from preschool through high school, understanding and advancing implementation in districts and schools, and conducting research linking SEL to academic achievement and other positive outcomes for students.

- CASEL continues to collaborate toward advancing science, practice, and policy related to social and

emotional learning. The 2015 release of the Handbook of Social and Emotional Learning: Research and Practice demonstrates just how much the field has grown, with nearly 100 contributors covering all aspects of social and emotional learning.

- 1994: "One of the great education reformers, Horace Mann, in the 1840s, helped to improve instruction in classrooms nationwide, advocating that character development was as important as academics in American schools. The United States Congress, recognizing the importance of this concept, authorized the Partnerships in Character Education Program in 1994" (Character Education…Our Shared Responsibility").

- 1998: "Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) has been defined, described, and studied ever since its introduction in the reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Act (1997). The Office of Special Education Programs Technical Assistance Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) was initially funded in 1998. PBIS is an implementation framework that is designed to enhance academic and social behavior outcomes for all students by (a) emphasizing the use of data for informing decisions about the selection, implementation, and progress monitoring of evidence based behavioral practices; and (b) organizing resources and systems to improve durable implementation fidelity. PBIS is a process in which schools create a social-culture that will encourage positive behaviors and interactions, while discouraging problem behaviors. This social-culture will lead to a safe environment where our children and youth achieve academically and build positive relationships with each other and with adults" ("PBIS About Us")

2000's

- 2001: "No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) - NCLB funds the Partnerships in Character Education Program. The fund was designed to support, by award of grants, the design and implementation of Character Education programs, supporting "core ethical values such as respect, justice, civic virtue and citizenship, and responsibility for self and others." Critics of NCLB say its focus on high-stakes testing leaves little time and resources for character education. Obama defunds the initiative in 2009, citing redundancy with other programs" ("Character Education is US Schools Over Time Timeline").

  o The federal No Child Left Behind Act* of 2002 (NCLB) renews and re-emphasizes Horace Mann's tradition—and substantially expands support for it. One of the six goals of the Department of Education is to "promote strong character and citizenship among our nation's youth" (Strategic Plan 2002-2007). To reach this goal, the Department of Education joined with state education agencies and school districts across our country to provide vital leadership and support to implement character education. ("Character Education is US Schools Over Time Timeline").

  o "The NCLB required that schools offer students a broad array of services and youth development activities, drug and violence prevention programs, counseling, and character education programs that are designed to reinforce and complement the regular academic program" (Character Education…Our Shared Responsibility").

- In the early 2000's, State education agencies, through a collaborative community process, chose to incorporate character education into their school improvement plans and state standards. Some states chose to implement character education through official state policies such as the Michigan State Board of Education Policy on Quality Character Education. Many schools chose to incorporate character education into their plans for Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities. From state to state, the following were common threads in character education agendas:

  o Involvement of the whole community in designing and implementing character

education for itsschools;

- o Commitment to making character education an integral part of the education process.
- The United States Congress and the Department of Education expanded support for character education for more than a decade (1995 – 2005), enabling schools across our nation to implement character education in a variety of ways. The Department of Education provided grants to state and local education agencies to support the development of character education. During this time, through the Partnerships in Character Education Program (www.ed.gov/programs/charactered/index.html), the Department awarded 97 grants to assist in designing, implementing and sustaining high-quality opportunities for students to learn and understand the importance of strong character in their lives. (Character Education…Our Shared Responsibility").
- Since 2002, the Partnership for 21st Century Skills has been the leading advocacy organization in the United States focused on infusing 21st century skills into education. Its Framework for 21st Century Learning, the result of a consensus among hundreds of stakeholders, describes the skills, knowledge, and expertise students need to succeed in work and life.
  - o 21st Century Education was founded on the beliefs that:
    - ➢ education is a universal right and that most current educational systems need to experience a transformation to meet the needs of a global society; and schools have the mission and rational obligation to provide their students with a learning environment that is conducive to their growth, development and learning, to help them master the multi-dimensional skills required of them in the 21st century; to ensure 21st century readiness for every student.
  - o What should students learn for the 21st century? (in the age of Artificial Intelligence, Robotics, etc.) The mission of the Center for Curriculum Redesign (CCR) is to answer this timely question, and openly propagate its recommendations and frameworks on a worldwide basis. The CCR brings together non-governmental organizations, jurisdictions, academic institutions, corporations, and non-profit organizations including foundations.
  - o "The last major changes to curriculum were effected in the late 1800's as a response to the sudden growth in societal and human capital needs. As the world of the 21st century bears little resemblance to that of the 19th century, education curricula need to be deeply redesigned for the four dimensions of Knowledge, Skills, Character and Meta- Learning. Adapting to 21st century needs means revisiting each dimension and the interplay between them. ("Center for Curriculum Redesign").
  - o The Millennium Project shares, facing the challenges of the 21st century require a deliberate effort to cultivate in students' personal growth and the ability to fulfill social and community responsibilities as global citizens. The Millennium Project tracks 30 variables globally to discern the State of the World and identifies "where we are winning, losing, and unclear/little change." Areas where humanity is losing are largely ethical (environmental issues, corruption, terrorism, income inequality). At the same time, advances in science and technology are a double-edged sword. Although they provide more opportunities for global collaboration and progress, they also create new ethical challenges such as the use of nuclear energy, pesticides, genetic modification and more broadly a paradigm of material progress. On a practical level, their exponential growth is also rapidly compounding problems via automation and offshoring, which are producing social disruptions. In addition, they share:
    - ➢ It is through a sense of personal and ethical responsibility that students, the citizens of the future, will be able to make knowledgeable and wise decisions that address the challenges above. These are the broad aims of character

education:
- to build a foundation for lifelong learning;
- to support successful relationships at home, in the community, and in the workplace; and
- to develop the personal values and virtues for sustainable participation in a globalized world.

➢ Research has shown that students' capacities beyond academic learning of knowledge and skills are important predictors of achievement and that it proves useful once in the workforce. While knowledge and skills may or may not be used in future jobs, character qualities will invariably be applicable to a wide range of professions.

- 2002: The Science of Positive Psychology Introduced - A formal shift in psychology's focus toward a more positive science was initiated in 2002. Positive psychology is devoted to studying the flourishing human life beyond the mere absence of illness - wellbeing, happiness, flow, personal strengths, wisdom, creativity (virtues), imagination and characteristics of positive groups and institutions. Flourishing has several positive correlates such as academic achievement, mastery goal setting, higher levels of self-control and continued perseverance (Howell, 2009). Thus, a science that

focuses on the development and facilitation of flourishing environments and individuals is an important addition to the psychological sciences and character education.

- o The ability to know, measure and cultivate those elements that contribute to such a life is transforming many fields. The emerging applied field of positive education is using the findings of positive psychology to more effectively educate for psychological well-being alongside that of traditional academic learning. One crucial area of study in positive psychology is character strengths. Individuals who are not only cognizant of their strength profile but also use their strengths daily are happier, higher achieving, more resilient and more satisfied with their lives. These findings give new life and scope to what schools might call "character education".
- o Over the past 15 years, principles of positive psychology have been embedded in classrooms. Accessible, empirically-based, and well-integrated curricula have been developed to bring to scale the work of positive psychology. Promoting robust, cross-curricular learning in our students and professional training for teachers fosters positive character education.

- 2004: "The Values in Action (VIA) Inventory of Strengths (VIA-IS), formerly known as the "Values in Action Inventory", was created; VIA-IS is a psychological assessment measure designed to identify an individual's profile of character strengths" (Petersen, 2004).
    - o VIA-IS was created by Christopher Peterson and Martin Seligman, well-known researchers in the field of positive psychology, in order to operationalize their Character Strengths and Virtues Handbook (CSV). The CSV is the positive psychology counterpart to the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM) used in traditional psychology. Unlike the DSM, which scientifically categorizes human deficits and disorders, the CSV classifies positive human strengths. Moreover, the CSV is centered on helping people recognize and build upon their strengths. This aligned with the overall goal of the positive psychology movement, which aims to make people's lives more fulfilling, rather than simply treating mental illness. Notably, the VIA-IS is the tool by which people can identify their own positive strengths and learn how to capitalize on them.
    - o As a relatively new field of research, positive psychology lacked a common vocabulary for discussing measurable positive traits before 2004. Traditional psychology benefited from the creation of the DSM, as it provided researchers and clinicians with the same set of language from which they could talk about the negative. As a first step in remedying this disparity between traditional and positive psychology, Peterson and Seligman set out to identify, organize and measure character.
    - o Peterson & Seligman began by defining the notion of character as traits that are possessed by an individual and are stable over time but can still be impacted by setting and thus are subject to change. The researchers then started the process of identifying character strengths and virtues by brainstorming with a group of noted positive psychology scholars. Then, Peterson & Seligman examined ancient cultures (including their religions, politics, education and philosophies) for information about how people in the past construed human virtue. The researchers looked for virtues that were present across cultures and time. Six core virtues emerged from their analysis: courage, justice, humanity, temperance, transcendence and wisdom.
    - o The Classification of Strengths are as follows:
        - Wisdom and Knowledge: creativity, curiosity, judgment, love of learning, perspective
        - Courage: bravery, perseverance, honesty, zest
        - Humanity: love, kindness, social intelligence
        - Justice: teamwork, fairness, leadership
        - Temperance: forgiveness, humility, prudence, self-regulation
        - Transcendence: appreciation of beauty and excellence, gratitude, hope, humor, spirituality

- 2007: The concept of a growth mindset was developed by psychologist Carol Dweck and popularized in her book, *Mindset: The New Psychology of Success*. In recent years, many schools and educators have started using Dweck's theories to inform how they teach students.
    - Dweck's delineation between fixed and growth mindsets has potentially far-reaching implications for schools and teachers, since the ways in which students think about learning, intelligence, and their own abilities can have a significant effect on learning progress and academic improvement.
    - If teachers encourage students to believe that they can learn more and become smarter if they work hard and practice, Dweck's findings suggest, it is more likely that students will in fact learn more, and learn it faster and more thoroughly, than if they believe that learning is determined by how intelligent or unintelligent they are.
    - Her work has also shown that a "growth mindset" can be intentionally taught to students. Teachers might, for example, intentionally praise student effort and perseverance instead of ascribing learning achievements to innate qualities or talents— e.g., giving feedback such as "You must have worked very hard," rather than "You are so smart."
- January 1, 2009: "President Obama defunds the Partnership in Character Education (NCLB) program, citing economic crisis and tightening of fiscal belts" (Character Education in US Schools Over Time Timeline").
- 2009: The state-led effort to develop the Common Core State Standards was launched in 2009 by state leaders, including governors and state commissioners of education from 48 states, two territories and the District of Columbia, through their membership in the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices (NGA Center) and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO). State school chiefs and governors recognized the value of consistent, real-world learning goals and launched this effort to ensure all students, regardless of where they live, are graduating high school prepared for college, career, and life. ("Development Process," 2012).
    - The Common Core State Standards is a challenging set of content specific expectations and practice standards that increase rigor, relevance, and focus on acquisition of 21st century global skills students need for success in a global economy and world. Ironically, the Standards do not identify the dispositions, qualities of character and social- emotional learning skills required of students for success within this rigorous set of standards. Schools must identify and explicitly teach the knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary for students to achieve success in a post-secondary setting. The Common Core State Standards goals include preparing students for college, career, and civic readiness. Character development and social-emotional skills are the critical foundation students need to meet those goals.
- 2010: "A Federal Study Report from the Social and Character Development Research Program concluded that, on average the seven programs that were implemented and assessed did not improve student's social and emotional competence, behavior, academic achievement and student and teacher perceptions of school climate.
    - Mr. Berkowitz, (a professor of character education at the University of Missouri, St. Louis), among other experts in the field, cited weaknesses in that research
    - According to Marvin Berkowitz and Melinda Bier, University of Missouri research scientist, "research for character education is mounting". At this time, 69 studies of 33 different character education programs were identified that had scientific evidence supporting their effectiveness in enhancing the academic goals of schools. A 2011 meta-analysis of school-based social and emotional learning programs published in Child Development found significant improvements in academic achievement, behavior, and

attitudes compared with control groups" ("Social Character Development Research Consortium, 2010).

- 2012: "The Social, Emotional, Character Development (SECD) standards, adopted at the meeting of the Kansas State Department of Education, are designed to help keep children safe and successful while developing their academic and life skills. With support from the U.S. Department of Education's Partnership in Character Education Grant Program (PCEP), Kansas is the first state to develop such standards.
    - o A committee was charged with ensuring the standards aligned with other state and federal initiatives, including college and career readiness, Multi-Tier System of Supports (MTSS), 21st Century Skills and Kansas Common Core Standards.
    - o The purpose of the Social, Emotional, and Character Development Standards is to provide schools a framework for integrating social-emotional learning (SEL) with character development so that students will learn, practice and model essential personal life habits that contribute to academic, vocational and personal success. It is about learning to be caring and civil, to make healthy decisions, to problem solve effectively, to value excellence, to be respectful and responsible, to be good citizens and to be empathetic and ethical individuals." ("School Counseling - Social, Emotional and Character Development, 2012).
- 2013: Current Funding for Character Education - Many schools pay for character education materials and training with federal funding under Titles I and II for professional development, or through Title IV Safe and Drug Free Schools. Some states set aside funds for character education. Other resources include non-profit organizations, private endowments, and corporate sponsorship. ("Character Education in US Schools Over Time Timeline").
- 2013 – 2016: Character Counts! continues to focus on its evolving educational strategy, including the introduction of Critical Educational Outcomes: The Josephson Institute's Model Standards for Academic, Social, Emotional, and Character Development. Making the Common Core easy. This was revised (2016: Character Counts! 5.0) to place a greater emphasis on establishing a positive school climate and instilling critical academic, social emotional skills as well as core character traits - introducing the Four Wheels of Success. This fully integrated student development framework incorporates the most critical research findings and current theories from all major research and evidence-based strategies to instill academic, social, emotional and values, mindsets and character traits to help students:
    - o Reach their academic potential and have the ability to succeed in school (including college or other post-secondary school education).
    - o Succeed in the workplace and their careers.
    - o Live happy, worthy and fulfilling personal lives.
    - o Become engaged responsible and productive citizens.
- CHARACTER COUNTS! is a framework, not a scope and sequence program nor a curriculum. It provides practical strategies and tools to braid CC! strategies with other academic support, pro school climate and anti-bullying programs as well as behavior modification programs including PBIS to foster positive climate change to produce exceptional results in the academic, social, emotional and character development domains by infusing six core ethical and performance values and traits into the DNA of the organization.
    - o Positive Behavioral Intervention System (PBIS) continues to be a common intervention program for schools, assists students in learning prosocial behavior through, modeling, shaping, cueing, and dialoguing in an environment that is respectful of individual student

needs.

- 2014: The Strategy Brief shared – Many states have enacted laws or administrative policies addressing character issues either related to the character of teachers or to the content of public education. These originated from the earliest establishment of public education as a responsibility of each state. There are currently 18 states that mandate character education. There are 18 states that encourage character education, 7 states that support character education, but don't have any legislation concerning this topic, and 8 states that don't have any legislation on the topic today be considered components of character education. ("Strategy Brief

- 2017: Presently, education pushes stand-alone character curriculums such as CHARACTER COUNTS!, Heartwood Program, Center for the 4th and 5th R's, etc. (Watz, 2011).

- Over the last decade, the word character development has grown to subsume character education while also adding many important advancements and developments, such as social emotional learning (SEL), interpersonal skills, positive psychology, positive youth development, whole child movement, positive school culture and climate, restorative practices, leadership, growth mindset, academic improvement, and workplace readiness. These very broad initiatives today are referred to as "comprehensive character development" initiatives and are intended to cover all important bases in a single program. As a result, today's comprehensive character development initiatives, in response to scientific research and discoveries, as well as the needs of our schools and society, intentionally incorporate a much broader curriculum focus as well as utilizing greatly improved and more efficient and effective implementation technologies.

- 2020: Character.org publishes the CSED (Character and Social Emotional Development) Model Standards as a way to fuse together character and social-emotional development. The first section of the standards identifies and explains the different character strengths within four areas of character: moral, performance, intellectual, and civic. The second section of the standards identifies and explains the five areas of social emotional learning (SEL): self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, interpersonal/relationship skills, and responsible & ethical decision-making. The CSED Model Standards are an opportunity for states, school districts, and individual schools to adopt and use the most comprehensive framework – one that supports, nurtures, and fosters the whole child. The standards are developmentally appropriate and provide a roadmap for school leaders and teachers to help children and teens understand, care about, and consistently practice the character strengths and SEL skills that will enable them to flourish in school, in the workplace, and as citizens

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