

# LECTURERS' PERCEPTIONS OF NEED FOR THE TEACHING OF CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT

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## Abstract

This study is aimed at investigating the lecturers' perceptions of need for the teaching of character development for the fourth semester students at the English Literature Study Program of UNISSULA. There were two aspects being investigated; the perception of need for character development itself and those on character traits that the students were presumed to lack. A survey was done involving all 24 lecturers at the faculty as the respondents. A need analysis was resulted from the description of the survey results. Sets of questionnaire using Lickerts scale were distributed to the sample. The survey resulted the facts that most of the lecturers perceived that (1) teaching a subject means promoting both cognitive skills and social ones, (2) character development is as important as the English communicative competences, (3) character development needs to be paid more attention to at the department, (4) one of the best way in developing the students' character is by integrating the teaching of character development into the syllabus. The lecturers also perceived that there were only seven character traits of the students requiring more attention to develop. The respondents tended to agree that the students of the department lacked the traits of self-discipline, perseverance, creativity, independence, curiosity, communicativeness, knowledge-ability, and responsibility.

**Keywords:** perception, need, character development

## Introduction

Teaching at the Language Faculty of UNISSULA has become the most inspiration for this study. Students at the faculty mostly come from low proficiencies of English with all their non-academic problematic dilemmas. It is not only about their low proficiencies in English that are needed to be improved and developed as English has become their majors of study, it is also about their non-academic problems that are needed to be paid attention to. Many of them are low motivated in their studies. Some of them even confessed that they continued to study at the university because their parents wanted them to do so. Some, even worse, confessed that they went to the university because it was much better than only staying at home doing nothing. These students do not perform themselves as good learners inside and outside the classrooms. They are lazy in doing the assignments, not disciplined, low self-confident, and low-motivated.

Since it is believed that students performing good characters will be more likely to achieve better academic results than those who lack good characters, accordingly, the schools' academic goals are supported and improved through the promotion of character education. Thus, it is clear that we should take the urgency of implementing character education more seriously without neglecting the academic goals.

Lickona (1992) proposes that the moral or character education is designed to accomplish three goals. They are to promote development leaving out self-centered thinking and individualism, and creating cooperative relationships and mutual respect; to enhance of the capacity to think, feel, and act morally; and to develop in the classroom and in the school a moral community based on fairness, caring, and participation. According to Character Education Partnership (CEP) (1999), character education is a national movement creating schools that foster ethical, responsible and caring young people by modeling and teaching good character through emphasis on universal values that we all share.

Implementing effective character education, requires the participation of the entire school community, the entire school curriculum and culture. Effective character education promotes core values in all phases of school life. It includes proactive strategies and practices helping children not only understand core ethical values, but to act upon them. Based on research by the nation's leading character education experts, Character Education Partnership (CEP)'s Eleven Principles of Effective Character Education, provide guidelines for the elements needed for effective, comprehensive character education (as retrieved from [www.freedomforum.org/publications/first /.../ B13. CharacterEd.](http://www.freedomforum.org/publications/first/.../B13.CharacterEd.)).

First, character education must promotes core ethical values. The teaching should integrate values that the society hold. Second, it must teach students to understand, care about, and act upon these core ethical values. Then, these values must be applied in aspects of the school culture.

Fourth, character education should nurture the loving trait between the members of school community. Next, the education of character should offer the school community opportunities to act morally and respectfully.

Then, the process of teaching characters must develops intrinsic motivation and support academic achievement. Once the characters are developed, academic achievement will be consequently improved.

The rests of the guidelines implies the fact that all the process of realizing successful character education forces the participation from all the members of the school and the society. Whole staffs and students must have positive leadership. Finally, there should be assessment and evaluation to strive to improve. (adapted from [www.freedomforum.org/publications/first /.../ B13. CharacterEd.](http://www.freedomforum.org/publications/first/.../ B13. CharacterEd.))

Applying all the guidelines above surely takes great efforts from all the school members and the society, yet the result will be tremendously unbelievable. Creating perfect students of both excellent academic achievement and character becomes something possible to realize.

In Indonesia, the Constitution of National Education System (UU SISDIKNAS) refers the primary function of education to one that develops ability and builds character and national civilization of dignity in the process of educating the nation. This constitution has built strong foundation to explore the entire self-potential of an individual as a member of society and nation. Ministry of education has mandated that teaching all subjects should also promote the development of character of the students. Eighteen character traits have been identified as the development focus of character education in Indonesia. They are religious, honest, tolerant, self-discipline, persevering, creative, independent, democratic, curious, good citizenship, nationalism, respect, communicative, peace-keeping, knowledgeable, environmentally caring, compassion and responsibility.

Meanwhile, the promotion of character education in the classroom can occur in a variety of ways. Using literature is one possible way to promote character education.

Literature is possible to be used since it can entertain, inform, engage, and at the same time educate students. It is thus crucial that the teachers make their instruction more meaningful by engaging their students into the classroom activities which promote important moral values reflected from the literature used as the source of material. Engaging the students into the story flow of a novel may become alternatively suitable media for teachers to infiltrate the teaching of moral values through the characters in the story. It is quite possible to teach, to encourage, and to promote character education through literature when students are exposed to literature that are rich of good characters and moral messages.

Furthermore, there are many strategies that teachers can incorporate the teaching of character education into their courses when utilizing literature that have important character building issues. Lake (2001) suggests two steps that teachers should take in doing so. First is selecting. They have to very carefully select the source books that will be used. The books selected should be those conveying moral issues. The next is previewing. Previewing requires teachers to be able to generate the background knowledge of these issues. The moral dilemma involved in a piece of literature is for them to bring into class discussions. Jalongo (2004), further briefly explains, "... teachers should ask questions and provide details that will have students begin thinking about the circumstances or the story's dilemma. Teachers also need to inform the students the purpose that underscores the story's message." These have showed how creative teachers are demanded to be in infiltrating the teaching of morals through the media of literature.

Teachers can create various activities to enable the students in comprehending the important moral values which are embedded in the story's dilemma. Role-playing, using open-ended questions, identifying with characters and their feelings, group discussions, story expansion, and written responses are just some of the different strategies teachers can use in promoting good character in students through literature (Jalongo, 2004). Sanchez, Zam, and Lambert (2009) explore and promote the continuing need for character education taught through the storytelling strategy. The article concludes that storytelling, as one of the oldest and more effective teaching strategies, holds the prospective significance of offering two major benefits in educating characters. First, story-telling is curricularly importance for enduring character education. Second, educators can become proficient in teaching characters through highly effective ancient teaching method. The study suggests that the storytelling strategy is proven to be an effective element for teaching the middle school social studies students character education to be good American citizens. This is in line with the idea that one of the best ways in educating characters is by using stories of interesting and intriguing themes. By this, it means that such stories provide students with dilemmas, problems and their solution to be the reflective media for their own self-introspection.

### ***Perception of Need***

Most of the time, perception and assumption are mistakenly distinguished. Slameto (2010) defines perception as the entry process of messages or information into the human brain. Through the perception, human can make a relation with the environment. This relation is done through the senses. There are sight, hearing, touch, taste, and smell. Thus, perception is a process which is preceded by the sensing process. Perception is the response or reaction about something while assumption is an opinion or impression about something. Based on the Theory of Reasoned Action

(Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010), perception can shape human behaviors. Combined with the first definition, we can draw a conclusion that once an individual perceive something good then he will respond good towards it.

Meanwhile, Hutchinson and Waters in Nation and Macalister (2010) propose three kinds of target needs (what the learners need to do in the target situation). Those are necessities, lacks, and wants. Table 1 presents the methods of need analysis as adapted from Nation and Macalister (2010; p.27).

Table 1. Methods of Need Analysis

Type of need	Focus	Method
Necessities	Proficiency	Self-report, proficiency testing
	Situations of use	Self-report, observation and analysis, review of previous research, corpus analysis
Lacks	Proficiency	Self-report, testing
	Situations of use	Self-report, observation and analysis
Wants	Wishes	Self-report
	Use	Observation

Necessities attempts to answer the question of what is considered to be necessary in the learners' use of language. It refers to the process during the examination such as whether the examination requires students to answer verbally or by writing. Lacks refers to the question of what learners lack. The lack here means what aspects of language skills of the learned language which are not practiced during the learning process. Wants of need is meant to answer the question of what the learners wish to learn (Nation & Macalister, 2010)

In conclusion, important concerns in need analysis are objective needs and subjective needs. Generally assuming, lacks includes present knowledge, necessities required knowledge, and wants subjective needs. (Nation & Macalister, 2010). Because it is possible that so many needs might occur, it is consequently crucial to give priority only to certain needs. Richards (2001, p.66) asserts that it is also significant to consider different views on needs concerning the need tendency to be more subjective rather than objective. In this study, the course for carrying out need analysis was based only on teachers' view. The first type of need, necessities, refers to the demands of the target task (Nation & Macalister (2010); p. 27). In lack of need, the investigation is based on teachers' view. The last type of need is the wants in which the investigation is based on students' view.

Purwaningrum (2012) in her final project involved 30 teachers as the sample of the population of in-service English teachers in state senior high schools in Semarang. They were selected to fill in the questionnaire then five of which were interviewed. The study yields several results that participants of the study were aware of the incorporation of character education into the English classroom, relationship building with students and colleagues, intrinsic motivation through classroom discussion, and modeling goodness. The result also showed that in relationship building, parents' involvement in the English classrooms was minimal. Several factors such as age, gender and teaching experience of teachers as well as personal expectations influence the teachers' perceptions. This previous study contributes to the design of this study in terms of conducting a preliminary research for need analysis.

Through her study, Purwaningrum has showed how important the perception of teachers toward character education is. The more significant they perceive the teaching of character education is, the more they are motivated in creating more applicable teaching techniques and strategies in educating characters in their classes. It also has showed the importance of investigating teachers' perception or view as the base for doing need analysis before we are determined to apply a particular method in teaching innovation, especially in a more complex and complicated one such as teaching character education.

This study attempted to analyze the need for the teaching of character education for students at UNISSULA English Literature Study Program. Involving 24 lecturers as the respondents, the study focused on finding out the lecturers' perceptions of need for the teaching of character education at the department and the students' character traits out of eighteen as mandated by the Ministry of Education that were believed to need such development being the primary focus of character education at the department.

### **Methodology**

Based on the characteristics of this study, this preliminary research is a qualitative and descriptive approach in nature. Qualitative approach is used to reveal the perception of need for the teaching of character education for the students at the department and also the students' character traits assumed to need such development. Simple quantification was done to support the description of the study result discussion.

### ***Instrument for Data Collection***

The first set of questionnaire was aimed at figuring out the need perception of the lecturers for the teaching of character education. This first set consisted of 10 rating scale questions which had five options: Strongly Agree (SA) credited 5 points, Agree (A) 4 points, Undecided (U) 3, Disagree (D) 2, and Strongly Disagree (SD) 1.

The questionnaire was developed based on the Moral Vitality of Character Educators (MVCE) Survey by Hauer (2010). The survey involved teachers in schools which was in the effort of promoting character education. It is claimed that MVCE Survey demonstrated adequate content validity and reliability (Purwaningrum, 2012).

The first five items of the questionnaire dealt with the perceptions on the importance of the teaching of character education, the character development of the students at the faculty, and the integration of character education into the course syllabus. The last five items dealt more specifically with the perception on the idea of learning character development through literary analysis.

The second instrument to collect the data was a set of questionnaire consisting of eighteen rating scale questions of which the items were based on the list of character traits as mandated by the Indonesian Ministry of Education. Using a Likert-type scale, the items of the questionnaire each had five options: Strongly Agree (SA) credited 5 points, Agree (A) 4 points, Undecided (U) 3, Disagree (D) 2, and Strongly Disagree (SD) 1.

Applying purposive sampling method, the survey was done during April 2015, involving 24 lecturers both permanent lecturers and guest ones. After the data being collected, the quantification was done simply by counting the average (mean) of each option of an item. Since the lecturers as the respondents were supposed to respond what character traits that they considered the students majoring in English Literature at the faculty still lacked, consequently the more an item got the total score of positive response, the more important it was to develop the character trait the item represented.

## Findings and Discussion

### *Survey on Need Perception*

This first set of questionnaire that was intended to find out the how lecturers perceive the importance of teaching character education at the department yields several results.

Table 4.1 Mean Distribution of Teacher's Perception towards Character Education

NO	Indicators	Mean
1	Teaching all subjects should promote both cognitive skills and social ones.	4.21
2	Character education is as important as the English communicativeness competences.	4.21
3	Character education needs to be paid more attention to at this department.	4.04
4	I perceive the importance of developing the students' characters at this department.	4.17
5	I believe character education integration into the course syllabus is one of the best ways in developing students' characters	4.08
6	I assume learning through narratives is one of the most effective ways in character development.	3.67
7	I believe that one of the best ways in learning character development is through literary analysis.	3.75
8	I believe a good story book is the one with moral values in it.	3.88
9	I assume assigning students to read a story book, then to make a report and review out of it can lead them to get involved in the story dilemma.	3.79
10	I believe students can learn the goods and the bads from the characters and the conflicts of the story.	4.21

The result of the questionnaire shows that most of the lecturers agreed with the first two items asking about their perceptions on the general idea of character education and the importance of character education compared to the English communicativeness competences. Only few of them disagreed with the statements.

Statements number three also obtained more than 50% of agreement compared to 6% of disagreement. More than half of the lecturers agreed that it was needed to pay more attention to character education at the department.

Statements number three and four each obtained 3% and 9% of undecided. Most respondents agreed with the idea of the importance of students' characters development at the department, and that one of the the best ways in developing students' characters is by integrating character education into the course syllabus.

The last five items of the questionnaire tried to find out the lecturers' perception on the possibility of developing characters more specifically through narratives and literary analysis. There were 27% of the lecturers chose undecided for statement number six, 17% for statement number seven, and 16% for statement number eight.

Specially for statement number nine, 70% of undecided showed that most of the lecturers probably did not have a clear view on the technique and strategy on how to assign the students to make a report and review out of the book they were assigned to read. This is understandable since some of the lecturers specialize on the fields of study other than English Literature.

The last item of the questionnaire asked for the lecturers' perceptions if students could learn the goods and the bads from the characters and the conflicts of the story, meaning the story of the book assigned for them to read. The result was indeed unbelievable. All of the lecturers agreed with the statements. This indicates that providing the students with books of stories which are rich in lively characters and interesting conflicts is believed to get the students to learn about good traits, bad ones, and moral values.

Bottom line, the results of the first set of questionnaire delivered to the lecturers have showed that character education is perceived necessary to be paid attention to at the department, that character development is as important as competence improvement, and that the teaching of character education is possible to be integrated into the teaching of a course.

Table 2. The distribution of the percentage of students' character traits.

No	Character Traits	Total Score	Mean	Percentage (%)				
				SA	A	U	D	SD
1	Religious	52	2.17	0.00	0.00	40.38	57.69	1.92
2	Honest	66	2.75	30.30	12.12	36.36	15.15	6.06
3	Tolerant	62	2.58	16.13	32.26	19.35	25.81	6.45
4	Self-Discipline	77	3.38	38.96	46.75	7.79	7.79	3.90
5	Persevering	78	3.25	12.82	53.85	11.54	5.13	3.85
6	Creative	103	4.29	77.67	11.65	8.74	1.94	0.00
7	Independent	79	3.29	31.65	50.63	7.59	5.06	5.06
8	Democratic	69	2.88	28.99	23.19	26.09	17.39	4.35
9	Curious	77	3.21	32.47	36.36	19.48	7.79	3.90
10	Good Citizenship /civilized	68	2.83	22.06	29.41	26.47	17.65	4.41
11	Nationalistic /patriotic	62	2.58	16.13	25.81	29.03	22.58	6.45
12	Respectful	70	2.92	35.71	34.29	4.29	20.00	5.71
13	Communicative	81	3.38	37.04	44.44	7.41	7.41	3.70
14	Peace-keeping	66	2.75	15.15	36.36	18.18	27.27	3.03
15	Knowledgeable	92	3.83	38.04	39.13	22.83	0.00	0.00
16	Environmentally Caring	73	3.04	27.40	38.36	16.44	13.70	4.11
17	Compassionate	64	2.67	15.63	37.50	18.75	22	6.25
18	Responsible	89	3.71	39.33	49.44	3.37	7	1.12

The table yields several conclusions. The calculation shows that out of the eighteen character traits, only eight reach the means above three. Even only one item reaches more than four. This means that there are only eight character traits perceived to need more attention to develop. The respondents tended to agree that students still lacked self-discipline, perseverance, creativity, independence, curiosity, communicativeness, knowledge-ability, and responsibility.

The numbers were somehow beyond prediction. It was predicted that most of the item would reach the means of more than four. For the first character trait, religious, it can be seen from the table that more than half of the lecturers disagreed with the item. Presumably, most of the lecturers believed that the students of the department did not have any issues on religion.

As one of the big Islamic universities in town, UNISSULA has been known for its campaign on Islamic Academic Culture (BUDAI = Budaya Akademik Islam). The campaign encourages all the members of the university to perform good moslems' habit and customs, such as congregational praying movement, "no smoking" campaign in every corner of the university, Islamic code of conduct, and Islamic code of fashion. All the process of teaching and learning, administrative stuffs, and the other kinds of activity must be stopped by the time the praying call starts. Every one will spring out to the mosque. Only few stay in their places.

The other eight character traits which obtained the mean of three or less such as honest, tolerant, democratic, civilized, nationalistic, respectful, peace-keeping, environmentally caring, and compassionate were believed to be found in the students' personalities. Most of the students at the department do not really have serious issues on attitude and behavior with their lecturers, friends and the department. They might have some sort of moral problems within themselves but not necessarily with the environment surrounding them.

This discussion is meant to give a quick look at the background behind the reasons why the respondents chose the options other than Strongly Agree or Agree. The undecided option was chosen probably because the respondents were not really sure that the students had the issues on certain character traits.

## **Conclusion**

The conclusion reveals that the teaching of character education for the fourth semester students of English Literature Study Program at UNISSULA should focus on the eight character traits out of eighteen. They are self-discipline, perseverance, creativity, independence, curiosity, communicativeness, knowledge-ability, and responsibility. It then can be assumed that the integration of character education into the teaching of all subjects should infiltrate the teaching of developing these eight character traits within the students.

The infiltration of character development might be presented in the materials or the activities during the teaching learning process. Surely, it requires great efforts of the teacher to pick up the best method, prepare, facilitate, evaluate, and anticipate everything during the class session. Although the results of developing characters in students cannot just be instantly seen, the efforts are believed to pay off after some period of time if all the process is done simultaneously and continuously involving all the academicians in the department.

It is suggested that teachers or lecturers should be aware of their professional development so that they become more competent in the practices for character education. It surely demands hard-work in promoting character education in school for it requires all the members of the school to participate in it. The success of promoting character education takes a collaborative work of the academic community. It is also necessary to conduct further studies dealing with the integration of character education into the teaching of any particular courses to provide more positive results which are possible to have significant impact to Educational field.

Finally, this study credits all the respondents for being responsive and cooperative during the data collection process. The results of this study is dedicated to the department to be developed, implemented, and evaluated to reach the real goal of character education.

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Several points in this study are as well taken from the following websites:

[http://www.usoe.k12.ut.us/curr/char\\_ed/](http://www.usoe.k12.ut.us/curr/char_ed/)

<http://www.learningpt.org/pdfs/literacy/young.pdf>

[http://www.freedomforum.org/publications/first/findingcommonground/B13.Character Ed.pdf](http://www.freedomforum.org/publications/first/findingcommonground/B13.CharacterEd.pdf)

<http://www.ala.org/yalsa/yalsa>