Character and Initial Teacher Education:
A Practical Guide

Catherine Carden, Julie Taylor, Virginia Bower, Hayley Hampson-Stemp, Michael Fullard, Andrew Peterson
The Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues is a unique and leading centre for the examination of how character and virtues impact upon individuals and society.

The Centre was founded in 2012 by Professor James Arthur. Based at the University of Birmingham, it has a dedicated team of academics from a range of disciplines, including: philosophy, psychology, education, theology, and sociology.

With its focus on excellence, the Centre has a robust, rigorous research and evidence-based approach that is objective and non-political. It offers world class research on the importance of developing good character and virtues and the benefits they bring to individuals and society. In undertaking its own innovative research, the Centre also seeks to partner with leading academics from other universities around the world and to develop strong strategic partnerships.

A key conviction underlying the existence of the Centre is that the virtues that make up good character can be learnt and taught, but that these have been largely neglected in schools and in the professions. It is also a key conviction that the more people exhibit good character and virtues, the healthier our society. As such, the Centre undertakes development projects seeking to promote the practical applications of its research evidence.
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What is Character Education?
Michael Fullard and Andrew Peterson

Character Education

The cultivation of young peoples’ character is an obligation shared by all educators and has traditionally been an aim of education and schooling in England and elsewhere. In a broad sense, character education is concerned with helping children and young people to cultivate specific virtues of character – such as honesty, compassion, integrity, curiosity, judgement, and civility – to enable them to understand what is ethically important in life in order that they develop the ability to act ethically and, so that they become more autonomous and reflective in the practice of virtue. If character education is viewed this way, then one of the main goals of character education is the development of good sense, or practical wisdom; the capacity to choose intelligently between alternative courses of action. Practical wisdom involves knowing how to discern and enact the right course of action in difficult situations and is a capacity that develops gradually via experience and habituation. Through the cultivation of virtue and the development of practical wisdom, the ultimate aim of character education is not only to make individuals better persons, but to create the social and institutional conditions within which all human beings can flourish.

Therefore, character education can be viewed as an umbrella term which encompasses a school’s ethos, culture, relationships, curriculum, and enrichment provision. Character education should be planned for and conscious. The Jubilee Centre Framework for Character Education in Schools (2022) distinguishes different character education teaching strategies according to the way in which virtue is acquired; character can be caught, taught, and sought. If a school provides appropriate educational opportunities and experiences, then character caught and taught can develop together, leading to character sought. However, it is important to acknowledge that the character education teaching strategies reported as being used by schools most commonly span across the categories of character caught, taught, and sought, highlighting how the three categories should be viewed as interlinked and mutually supportive of each other.

The Jubilee Centre Framework for Character Education in Schools (2022) sets out the Jubilee Centre’s position on character education and defines:

Character as a set of personal traits or dispositions that produce specific moral emotions, inform motivation, and guide conduct.

Character education as all explicit and implicit educational activities that help young people to develop positive personal strengths called virtues.

Caught... the school community of both staff and students provide the example, culture, and inspirational influence in a positive ethos that motivates and promotes character development.

Taught... the school provides educational experiences in and out of the classroom that equip students with the language, knowledge, understanding, skills, and attributes that enable character development.

Sought... the school provides varied opportunities that generate the formation of personal habits and character commitments. These help students over time to seek, desire, and freely pursue their character development.
If the qualities which contribute towards good character are viewed as a prerequisite of a flourishing life, then these personal qualities can be described as virtues. Virtues are a lasting feature of a person and are empowering as they have a propensity for the person to act in a morally worthwhile way. Virtues play a significant role in human flourishing and, therefore, schools have a responsibility to cultivate, define and list the virtues they want to prioritise, and integrate them into all teaching and learning in and out of school. There is not a definitive list of priority of virtues which can be applied across all schools as the virtues will, to a certain extent, be relative to the particular setting and its community. Indeed, schools may decide to prioritise certain virtues over others considering the school’s history, ethos, location, or specific pupil population.

The Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues encourages schools to choose a selection of priority of virtues from across the Building Blocks of Character. The Building Blocks of Character consists of four categories of virtue: intellectual, moral, civic, and performance. Although virtues can be divided up into the Building Blocks of Character (Figure 1), the four categories form a coherent, mutually supportive whole in a well-rounded life. Indeed, the four categories of virtue cannot be taught in isolation from one another. Character education should integrate all four categories of virtue, guided by the overarching intellectual virtue of good sense or practical wisdom. It is the role of teachers and schools to ensure pupils develop a knowledge and understanding of the virtues and perceive situations involving or standing in need of the virtues; ultimately identifying appropriate situations in which to apply the virtues in their own lives, respecting themselves (as persons of character) and being of service to others.

**Virtues of Character**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Intellectual Virtues</th>
<th>Moral Virtues</th>
<th>Civic Virtues</th>
<th>Performance Virtues</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Character traits necessary for discernment, right action and the pursuit of knowledge, truth and understanding</td>
<td>Character traits that enable us to act well in situations that require an ethical response</td>
<td>Character traits that are necessary for engaged responsible citizenship, contributing to the common good</td>
<td>Character traits that have an instrumental value in enabling the intellectual, moral and civic virtues</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Examples:
- Autonomy
- Critical thinking
- Curiosity
- Judgement
- Reasoning
- Reflection
- Resourcefulness
- Compassion
- Courage
- Gratitude
- Honesty
- Humility
- Integrity
- Justice
- Respect
- Citizenship
- Civility
- Community Awareness
- Neighbourliness
- Service
- Volunteering
- Confidence
- Determination
- Motivation
- Perseverance
- Resilience
- Leadership
- Teamwork

**Practical Wisdom (phronesis)** is the integrative virtue, developed through experience and critical reflection, which enables us to perceive, know, desire and act with good sense. This includes discerning, deliberative action in situations where virtues collide.

**FLOURISHING INDIVIDUALS AND SOCIETY**

**Figure 1: The Building Blocks of Character (Jubilee Centre, 2022)**
The Role of the Teacher

Teachers are influential educators who spend a substantial amount of time with pupils and have the responsibility to ensure the academic and personal development of pupils whilst also having the best interests of the child at heart. In this way, teachers can be thought of as acting in loco parentis – in place of the parent. A teacher’s role carries with it a high degree of public trust, and because of this teachers are considered to shoulder a higher level of moral and ethical responsibility than many other professions. In being entrusted this responsibility, fundamental demands are placed on the character of the teacher. From this viewpoint teaching can be regarded as a moral craft with the teacher being perceived as a moral person, moral educator, and moral exemplar. Therefore, teachers are inevitable role models for pupils whose attitudes, dispositions, and behaviours are constantly on display and under scrutiny. Thus, a ‘good’ teacher is one who possesses more than just the technical skills required to successfully transfer knowledge and information; the ‘good’ teacher is required to be of good character, and ought to be guided by practical wisdom.

Previously the tendency of education reforms to prioritise academic attainment and preparation for employability in schools has led to a lack of clarity around what the role of the teacher encompasses. Due to the dominant discourses around school assessment scores and the accountability of teachers and schools, teachers entering Initial Teacher Education (ITE) would be forgiven for considering that teaching as a profession predominantly is concerned with educating pupils for academic success. Those involved in the provision of ITE should understand that their role is not simply about supporting pupils’ academic attainment or about preparing pupils for the workforce; the role of an educator goes beyond this; education, and by extension teaching, is also fundamentally concerned with the character development of pupils.

Research has shown that the majority of teachers choose to enter the profession due to moral or altruistic motivations (Book and Freeman, 1986; Brookhart and Freeman, 1992; Sanger and Osguthorpe, 2011). Those entering ITE will typically cite the desire to develop good people, to inspire, to foster a love of learning, to attend to the welfare and development of young people, and to ultimately make a difference to children’s lives. In other words, it is very often the desire to support pupils’ character development that underpins why most teachers enter the profession.

ITE inevitably influences and shapes the professional practice of student teachers, as well as their understanding of their role. This practical guide aims to provide guidance and support for ITE providers so that they can develop an understanding of and ultimately integrate character education within the preparation of student teachers.
Exploring Character through Interview Questions

Character matters in good teaching (Arthur et al., 2015) and it could be argued that ‘in order to be a good teacher, one needs to be or become a certain kind of person: a person of good character’ (Jubilee Centre, 2022, p.12). As such, assessment of a potential student teacher’s character should be considered within the ITE application process and interview (Arthur et al., 2015); whilst being mindful that there is scope for the virtues that constitute good character to be learnt and developed.

To explore a candidate’s character, the interview process already in place may not need to be radically changed; merely tweaked. Student teachers predominantly enter the profession for altruistic reasons and often describe at the ITE interview stage how they want to make a difference to the life chances of young people; inherently viewing themselves as moral role models for their future class (Sanger and Ogusthorpe, 2011) aspiring to emulate the virtues of the teachers that inspired them at school. Reasons for entering the profession can be explicitly explored at interview to ascertain whether the candidate is wishing to:

- Make a difference
- Develop valued and valuable members of society and active citizens
- Impart wisdom
- Add worth to humanity
- Develop their learning
- Share their learning
- Acquire the benefits of the profession e.g. status, financial security

Where candidates are invited to share their reasons for choosing teaching as a profession, further exploration could take place. For example, if the response relates to wanting to make a difference to the lives of young people, this might be followed up with questions relating specifically to character, such as:

- What character virtues are needed for the ‘good’ teacher who can make this difference?
- How important is it always to take an honest approach when interacting with pupils and how might this make a difference?
- Do you think teachers need to be courageous, to make a difference?

Carefully drafted questions (including potential alternatives), underpinned by the principles of character education, should enable a better understanding of candidates in terms of their meeting of the core requirements for ITE. More importantly though, candidate’s answers will indicate aspects of, or potential for, ‘good character’ and thereby qualities that will enable them to become a ‘good’ teacher, positive role model, and lifelong learner.
Exploring Character through Group Activities at Interview

Often during student teacher recruitment, focus is on performance virtues such as teamwork, resilience, and motivation with the intellectual, moral, and civic virtues left under-explored. An activity during the recruitment process might involve putting the candidates in small groups with copies of the Building Blocks of Character (Figure 1). Candidates could discuss which virtues they feel are the most important to be a ‘good’ teacher and why. Alternatively, each group could have just one category of the Building Blocks of Character to discuss. This could lead to a Diamond 9 activity, with each group of candidates provided with a set of cards; a virtue on each. Together as a group, and within a given time frame, the task would be to create a Diamond 9, with the virtue the candidates feel most important for a ‘good’ teacher at the top and the least important at the bottom. An example can be seen in Figure 2. The candidates are then asked to justify their choices to the other groups and respond to any questions.

Virtues that teachers see as important are likely to change over time and with experience and may be influenced by their career stage (Watts, Fullard and Peterson, 2021). Introducing a Diamond 9 activity including a range of character virtues, offers an opportunity for the candidates to engage in a focussed and critical discussion about the character of a ‘good’ teacher at this very early stage of their career. There is no ‘correct’ answer, of course, but the process will begin to highlight the candidates’ own values as they consider what is important to them. As an observer, the Building Blocks of Character can be used to support an assessment of each candidate by including statements within an assessment criterion that relate to character, e.g., the candidate demonstrates strong character and the virtues that are deemed important to become a ‘good’ teacher or the candidate is able to reflect critically on their own character and those they associate with a ‘good’ teacher.

An alternative small group activity might involve providing each group with one or more statements to discuss (see Table 1), encouraging candidates to consider the meaning behind a statement and the potential challenges for teachers.

**Discussion Statements**

Character is ‘the ability to do the right thing in the right way for the right reasons, guided by practical wisdom’

Teachers need to make ‘ethically relevant decisions’

The job of a teacher is to ‘prepare pupils for the tests of life, rather than simply a life of tests’

‘In order to become a “good” teacher, one needs to be or become a certain kind of person: a person of good character who also exemplifies commitment to the value of what they teach’

The best teachers ‘exemplify a set of virtues which they demonstrate through personal example’

**Table 1: Discussion Statements**

Throughout the recruitment process, ITE providers may choose to focus on a selection of key character virtues that they feel are important or focus on character virtues which ITE providers believe student teachers often struggle with. Utilising character virtues within ITE promotional materials and course prospectus will also demonstrate a focus and commitment on the development of the character of student teachers alongside meeting the required Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) benchmarks.
The Initial Teacher Education Curriculum and Character
Catherine Carden, Virginia Bower and Julie Taylor
Why is Character Education Important in ITE Programmes?

Student teachers, Early Career Teachers (ECTs), experienced teachers, and teacher educators – all face what can at times seem like insurmountable challenges, in terms of doing their job in an ethical, rewarding way; enacting their principles through their everyday practice. The Good Teacher research report (Arthur et al., 2015) found that some of these key challenges faced by teachers were lack of time, increasing workload, a prescribed curriculum and pedagogies, and a narrowing of focus in schools on academic attainment at the expense of character. These pressures are mirrored in ITE, and with the concerns that student teachers have about being able to cope in the classroom, the focus is, understandably, on classroom practice and supporting student teachers to meet the Teachers’ Standards for QTS rather than the aspirations of student teachers to become moral educators (Arthur et al., 2015). Where character is explicit, this focus often concentrates overly on performance virtues as also noted in the last section.

Table 2 identifies some of the challenges which teachers face as professionals and the ‘countering virtues’ to these challenges drawn from all four categories of virtues: intellectual, moral, civic, and performance (Jubilee Centre, 2022). These empower us to resist the attempts to erode professionalism and remove moral authority from the teacher’s role (Arthur et al., 2015) and provide a platform from which to refuse to succumb to a reductive technicist model of teaching. The final column includes considerations relating to the potential impact of upholding and living these virtues. These might prove useful as starting points for reflection and discussion with student teachers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Challenges to Being a Good Teacher</th>
<th>Countering Virtues</th>
<th>Countering Considerations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prescribed curriculum (schools and ITE) and lack of control</td>
<td>creativity, critical thinking, autonomy, confidence, honesty</td>
<td>Take control, by making ‘ethically relevant decisions’ (p.9), led by practical wisdom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reduced respect for the profession</td>
<td>compassion, courage, honesty, humility, integrity, community awareness, service</td>
<td>Good teachers ‘exemplify a set of virtues which they demonstrate through personal example’ (p.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instrumental approach to education</td>
<td>curiosity, creativity, critical thinking, judgement, reasoning, courage, motivation, resilience</td>
<td>‘practitioners of an ethic’ (p.8) – professionals rather than technicians</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standardisation and accountability</td>
<td>honesty, courage, fairness, compassion, integrity, critical thinking, resourcefulness</td>
<td>Do we want teaching to be ‘a morally neutral, technical exercise?’ (p.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consumerism</td>
<td>social justice, empathy, judgement, justice, citizenship, community awareness, volunteering</td>
<td>Promoting the moral agency of teachers helps to avoid reliance on reductive, formulaic models</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Countering the Challenges (quotes are taken from The Good Teacher research report (Arthur et al., 2015))
Embedding Character Education into the ITE Curriculum

The ITE curriculum is already ‘packed’ with content and prescribed learning, with the expectation that all accredited providers from 2024 onwards deliver the expectations set out by the Department for Education (DfE) and ensure The Core Content Framework (CCF) (DfE, 2019) is embedded into the curriculum offer. Adding yet another dimension into the curriculum – the developing of student teachers’ moral character – may not seem feasible at a time of significant change and challenge (Arthur et al., 2015). However, with most student teachers being driven by a moral purpose and a desire to want to engage with character-related content, it could be argued that it is paramount to ensure throughout the ITE process that the student teacher’s character is developed and that regular opportunities for student teachers to clarify and reconnect with their sense of purpose are offered (Jubilee Centre, 2020). Indeed, rather than being something further to add to the curriculum, the focus on teachers’ character, particularly in terms of the moral virtues – justice, honesty, humility, courage, compassion, and integrity – will increase student teachers’ moral agency and allow them to challenge the reductive, formulaic approaches they are likely to encounter, and, importantly, sustain their early enthusiasm and motivation for entering the profession.

As with good character education in a school setting, any character content in the ITE curriculum would ideally encompass the acquisition of virtue across the four virtue categories: intellectual, moral, civic, and performance and give opportunities to address the Components of Virtue: virtue perception; virtue knowledge and understanding; virtue emotion; virtue identity; virtue motivation; virtue reasoning; and virtue action and practice (Jubilee Centre, 2022, p.10). The Components of Virtue can be applied to the character development of the student teachers themselves and embedded throughout the taught programme to aid student teacher understanding of their moral responsibilities as a teacher, including how to develop the character of the pupils they are teaching.

Providers may choose to focus on specific virtues within their curriculum, based upon observations of their own student body, feedback from partner schools, or to respond to objectives within their self-evaluation. Table 3 shows how one institution mapped the virtues they had chosen to focus on within their curriculum to the CCF (DfE, 2019).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Core Content Framework Area</th>
<th>Virtues</th>
<th>Critical Thinking</th>
<th>Justice</th>
<th>Community</th>
<th>Resilience</th>
<th>Autonomy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High expectations</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How pupils learn</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subject and curriculum</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom practice</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adaptive teaching</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managing behaviour</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional behaviours</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3: Mapping Chosen Character Virtues to the CCF

An initial workshop, introducing character education, at an early stage of the taught programme can be very beneficial in helping student teachers to understand what character education is and to clarify why it is of significance to a teacher’s role. Even incorporating a workshop into the course as a standalone session can impact on a student teacher’s preparedness to develop the character of their pupils (Arthur et al., 2018). However, as with good character education in schools, the impact will be greater if there is a conscious effort to embed character-related content across other aspects of the ITE curriculum, ensuring it is ‘intentional, planned, organised and reflective, rather than it being assumed, unconscious, reactive and random’ (Harrison, Morris and Ryan, 2016, p. 101). Case Study 1 exemplifies an approach one ITE provider has taken to introduce character education into their ITE curriculum, explicitly exploring how moral virtues are integral to effective teaching whilst also supporting the development of these virtues in their student teachers.
Case Study 1: Embedding Character Virtues in the ITE Curriculum

Provider A had decided to focus on the character virtues of resilience, curiosity, and justice. Having introduced character education to its student teachers via a core workshop, the teaching of these virtues were embedded into key sessions.

It was decided that:
- Resilience would be specifically explored and reflected upon within the teaching sessions focussed on classroom management, teacher wellbeing, reflective practice, and preparation for placement.
- Curiosity would be embedded within their subject sessions “exploring the importance of curiosity in…” and opportunities to reflect on how student teachers would encourage curiosity within their own pupils.
- Justice would be a golden thread running through the session focused on the philosophy of education and professionalism continually returning back to the virtue of justice.
- During these sessions, student teachers had the space to critically reflect upon and evaluate their character virtues and how these virtues might apply to their role as a teacher.
Developing Character and Character Education in Professional Practice

A key dimension of the student teacher’s experience are school placements, and this is an ideal opportunity for student teachers to continue to develop the character virtues taught throughout the ITE curriculum. Student teachers can be supported in preparing for their placement by engaging with character focused, ethical dilemma-based activities such as the example in Activity 1.

In addition to being taught, character can be caught through the immersion of the student teacher within a positive school community and ethos and the formation of positive relationships (Jubilee Centre, 2022), with experienced teachers and mentors acting as character role models throughout their time in placement. Securing professional placements for student teachers is not an easy task. However, despite these challenges the impact of a school ethos and culture on a student teacher’s character cannot be underestimated, and where possible the school should be able to offer these three elements:

- A setting conducive to the development of a student teacher’s character.
- Practices and initiatives to support a character-informed approach to ITE.
- School leadership and mentor(s) who facilitate positive relationships between the ITE provider and the student teacher.

Whilst undertaking professional placement, character can also be sought through the experiences presented to the student teacher, including wider opportunities offered over and above the minimum expectation, for example the opportunity to accompany a school trip. Placement documentation can be adapted to encourage character centred reflection and feedback with questions and feedback being framed in relation to key character virtues. For example, relating to the virtue of community a question could include: What have you learnt from the school community that has informed or developed your practice?

Activity 1: Ethical Dilemma Activity

With teaching being a challenging profession fraught with ethical dilemmas that may lack a clear resolution and often require an in the moment response, ITE providers have a key role to play in supporting student teachers to develop the practical wisdom to know how best to respond when faced with challenging ethical situations. As opposed to delivering a traditional lecture on professionalism, workshop-style seminars with a focus on authentic ethical dilemmas can be a more effective way of helping student teachers to understand their moral responsibilities. The following example adapted from The Systematic/Reflective Case Debriefing Method (Freeman, 1999) is an example of how to provide a safe space for student teachers to consider how they could/would respond to ethical dilemmas that may arise in their professional practice:

On their placement Anna (a student teacher) has regularly overheard one of her colleagues making derogatory remarks about their class and commenting that they don’t bother preparing properly for their lessons because the children are not worth it.

Activity:

1. Student teachers individually record their initial reflections on the scenario, considering if it is an ethical dilemma and, if so, which virtues might be in conflict in this situation (e.g. in this instance compassion for the children and their welfare versus loyalty towards Anna’s colleague).

2. Student teachers then work as a group to identify all the stakeholders involved to raise awareness of all affected by this situation.

3. Student teachers will then consider the issues that make the stakeholders have an interest in the situation as a means of considering multiple perspectives and developing empathy.

4. At this point, to demonstrate the complexity of such dilemmas, viewpoints of stakeholders involved or who have a vested interest can be shared to enable the student teachers to consider whether this additional information affects the group’s response to the dilemma (in this example additional viewpoints might be: the perspectives of Anna, the teacher in question, another teacher who may have taught the class, the headteacher).

5. Student teachers then consider a range of possible resolutions to the dilemma irrespective of how likely, acceptable or conventional they are.

6. Finally, based on the ethical deliberations that have ensued and with reference to the relevant code of ethics (Core Content Framework, Teachers’ Standards), student teachers draw conclusions about what would be the most appropriate course of action for a virtuous practitioner in response to the question ‘What would a ‘good’ teacher do?’
Leading Character in Initial Teacher Education

Catherine Carden and Virginia Bower

As with all successful and enduring initiatives, character education in ITE needs to be led in an effective and strategic way. ITE programme leads need to have a strong understanding of what character education is comprised of; its importance to those working in educational settings; and how it might be embedded across and within the curriculum. In addition to developing an understanding of character education, ITE programme leads need to explicitly model good character and moral agency.

What is Character Education?

The Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues Framework describes character as being caught, taught, and sought and these are useful terms to consider when leading students and staff on an ITE programme. Through a virtues-led vision, ethos and culture, accompanied by strong, positive relationships within the educational setting, character will be caught. Other aspects will need to be taught through explicit development sessions, embedded into the annual staff CPD calendar, and through strategic use of resources. These two approaches to character education – caught and taught – will hopefully lead to a more intrinsic approach to character education, where all staff seek to cultivate the virtues in a more independent and deliberate way – they will be sought.

The aim is to encourage staff to use their own experience, practice, and reflection to work towards acting as moral exemplars of ‘practical wisdom’ (Jubilee Centre, 2022). Practical wisdom is the overarching meta-virtue and includes the cultivation of considered deliberation, well-founded, open-minded judgements, vigorous enactment of decisions, foresight, clear sight and far sight, and the ability to learn from experience (Jubilee Centre, 2022). The moves towards practical wisdom and ethical insight are highlighted in Figure 3.

Figure 3: Moving Towards Practical Wisdom and Ethical Insight
Developing a Vision for and Knowledge of Character Education

A recommended starting point for the inclusion and development of character education within ITE would be the formation of a character-based vision, including all staff within the process. This would begin with staff training to ensure a strong knowledge and understanding of character education, and might follow a ‘flipped learning’ approach, where staff are asked to read material related to character education, before attending an event where time is built in for discussion and the sharing of ideas. Explicit staff training on character education could lead to a discussion focusing on how staff might embed the virtues into their subject areas and how staff might support student teachers on teaching practices. As with all leadership roles, having aims and strategies will maintain a steady focus. Table 4 suggests some possibilities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aims</th>
<th>Strategies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Define and prioritise virtues</td>
<td>Mission statement. Strategic plan for staff CPD, wherein the virtues are embedded and the integral role of moral virtues emphasised.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Live and lead the virtues</td>
<td>Embody the virtues, showing strong moral character, care for others, an ability to uphold principles and showcase good work. Recognise that there is a connection between ‘high-stakes’ situations and rule-based reasoning and where this might occur for staff and students in ITE e.g. Ofsted.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensure a shared language of character, encouraging consistent communication and reflection</td>
<td>Through prospectuses, curricula, displays, policies, email communications, recruitment of staff and students, and induction of staff and students. Staff could be encouraged to start a ‘My Character Journal’ (<a href="https://www.jubileecentre.ac.uk/1842/teacher-education-resources">https://www.jubileecentre.ac.uk/1842/teacher-education-resources</a>). This is designed for students on teaching practice, but could be reframed for staff, to promote the shared language of character.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clearly defined ethical and moral expectations</td>
<td>Staff and student charters. Moral exemplars – taken from staff members’ experiences where there has been an ethical challenge. Mentoring of staff, with a focus on virtue-based decision making.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equality and inclusion</td>
<td>Character education resources and CPD opportunities available in different formats/at different times. Encourage staff to take on the mantle of being a role model or mentor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Embed character education in all aspects of ITE life</td>
<td>Integrate aspects of the virtues into staff recruitment and induction. Regularly revisit the virtues in CPD sessions. Recognise and celebrate examples of good character.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4: Leadership Aims and Strategies
With a vision established, character education can then become a core part of the departmental culture and practice so that character is caught, taught, and sought. This can be achieved through the following three phases: introducing, supporting, and sustaining.

**Introducing Character Education**

When introducing ITE staff to character education, it is important to recognise that not all members of staff will have been party to the creation and discussion around the departmental vision of character education and that staff prior knowledge and understanding of character education could be varied. It is important therefore, to ensure that through staff induction and continued professional development activities that staff are introduced to character education. Figure 4 highlights some activities that could take place during staff induction.

**Supporting Character Education**

Character education should become a thread through all development activities within the department, with the overall vision for character being both explicit, and revisited at regular intervals.

This can be achieved in the following ways:

- Revisiting the vision for character education as part of termly departmental meetings and/or communications.
- Establishing a programme of mentoring and/or coaching for staff.
- Developing pedagogy to include character education, through including a focus on character education as part of a peer observation programme and associated professional conversations.
- Having a focus on character virtues as part of 1:1 discussions and annual appraisals.

**Sustaining Character Education**

The aim when leading character in ITE is to embed and sustain this culture so that character virtues are not only known and shared but lived in every aspect of the department’s work. It is essential that ITE leaders demonstrate and model good character through their behaviours, attitudes, and working practices to promote character caught.

Establishing ‘character champions’ who are both knowledgeable and enthusiastic about character education and can be seen as authentically living the character virtues of the department is an effective way to embed and sustain a character education approach.

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**Moving Forward**

Consider these questions:

Is the leadership of character education:

- Random?
- Assumed?
- Unconscious?
- Reactive?

OR

Is the leadership of character education:

- Intentional?
- Planned?
- Organised?
- Reflective?

An intentional, planned, organised, and reflective approach to the leadership of character education, has the potential to allow all involved to develop ‘the ability to do the right thing in the right way for the right reasons, guided by practical wisdom’ (Arthur et al., 2015, p.8). This enables a strong foundation upon which strong, character-centred leadership can develop.
Developing Character Education in Primary Initial Teacher Education

Julie Taylor

When applied to a primary ITE context, a useful way of reflecting on the extent to which a primary taught programme addresses character development is to apply the previously referenced typology of character caught, taught, and sought.

Character Caught

Character caught relates to the ethos of the communities of which the primary student teachers are a part, and the extent to which ITE colleagues and school-based mentors embody and role model their institutional values in such a way that supports the cultivation of character. Particularly given that primary school teachers generally have responsibility for the same class of children for a whole academic year, primary student teachers need to fully understand the significance of creating a classroom and wider school environment that promotes flourishing and nurtures the personal development as well as the academic growth of the children in their care. It is also imperative that student teachers recognise their role as a moral exemplar, learning to consciously and intentionally reinforce virtuous practice not just in their own classroom but in the wider school, in corridors, in their interactions with teachers, pupils and parents, in assemblies, in staff training etc. Opportunities for student teachers to share reflections on character and virtues focused approaches experienced on their school placements in conjunction with case studies of primary ‘schools of character’ (e.g. Thompson, Fullard and Edwards, 2020; Arthur and Harrison, 2013) can help to deepen understanding. These opportunities are particularly important in cases where student teachers may have experienced a lack of emphasis on character and virtues within their placement school(s).
As in the example below, prompts on presentation slides can be a useful way of introducing character and virtues to student teachers, as well as acting as a timely reminder to ITE providers delivering the sessions where there are opportunities for an explicit link to character and virtues.

Primary school teachers can benefit in developing character with their assigned class as the extended teacher/pupil contact leads to compassionate and supportive relationships being built so teachers inevitably feel invested in their class's personal development as well as academic growth. This prolonged contact, and the affordances offered for building positive relationships, provides an excellent opportunity for discrete character activities to be planned in response to particular character development needs e.g. a focus on collaboration, respect, listening and turn taking for a class who may struggle with group work. Case Study 2 presents a more in-depth example of how a simplified version of how the Components of Virtue can be used to provide a model to share with student teachers, to support the teaching of explicit lessons related to character and virtue. It also serves as a useful model for student teachers to reflect on their own character in guided reflection sessions led by their ITE providers. Relating the dialogue to specific incidents from student teachers' school practice, where virtues may have been in conflict, can help student teachers to navigate through and reflect on their responses to ethical dilemmas they may have faced.

Further ideas on planning and teaching character in primary schools both discretely and through subjects are available at: www.jubileecentre.ac.uk/2955/character-education/teacher-resources

Character Taught

Student teachers may not observe bespoke lessons specifically classified as 'character education' in their placement schools, but student teachers are inevitably going to witness aspects of learning with moral content. This learning may be intentionally planned and explicitly taught as part of the PSHE curriculum (PSED in Early Years), which naturally lends itself to lessons focusing on the development of particular character virtues, or more implicit references to character introduced through subjects in Primary/EYFS areas of learning. Given the time constraints, particularly on a postgraduate ITE programme, there would be insufficient time available to plan and deliver additional character education content for all National Curriculum subjects/EYFS areas of learning, yet it is straightforward for ITE tutors to make connections to character and virtues in existing content to highlight to student teachers different ways of facilitating pupils' knowledge and reflection (Harrison, Bawden and Rogerson, 2016), encouraging them to be more astute and explicit in their planning and teaching of character.

Some examples of natural links between character and the Primary/Early Years curriculum content include.

- **Maths**
  - Problem solving/reasoning to solve real life problems.

- **English**
  - Opportunities to reflect on a character's actions in a story through a moral lens.

- **History**
  - Exploring the vices and virtues of significant people in History from a range of civilisations and time periods.

- **Computing**
  - Using technology safely and respectfully, understanding the need for cyber-wisdom.

- **Design and Technology**
  - Using empathy when designing a product to meet the needs of another person.

- **Understanding the World**
  - Developing positive attitudes about the differences between people.

- **Expressive Arts and Design**
  - Working collaboratively to share resources, ideas and skills.

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- **Understanding the World**
  - Developing positive attitudes about the differences between people.

- **Expressive Arts and Design**
  - Working collaboratively to share resources, ideas and skills.

**Social Justice**

Adopts an ethical approach to young people's learning, inclusive of all young people in their work and active in developing and promoting socially-just teaching and learning practices.
Character Sought

Character sought is related to promoting opportunities for student teachers to apply and practice the virtues themselves and for them to consider ways to support pupils to become more morally autonomous. True virtue happens in the absence of the guidance and tutelage of teachers/mentors so character sought explicitly links to the CCF/Teachers Standard 8 (DfE, 2013; 2019) relating to the student teacher’s wider professional responsibilities. In addition to ITE providers giving consideration as to what opportunities student teachers have to apply their own virtues beyond the taught programme, it is helpful to guide student teachers to self-reflect on the character sought opportunities they may undertake through the ITE curriculum or character sought opportunities they may initiate themselves in their placement schools. Examples in a primary school may include after school clubs, Forest School, enrichment opportunities, citizenship activities, school councils, school-led/community-led social action and volunteering (Jubilee Centre, 2022).
Case Study 2
An Example of a Practical Model Based on Eric Carle’s *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* to Support the Development of Virtue Knowledge, Reasoning, and Practice

The 3 main areas of virtue (adapted from Jubilee Centre, 2022; Smith, 2015).

i) Virtue Knowledge and Understanding
- Being able to identify and name virtues
- Know which situations would be appropriate for using this particular virtue
- Knowing how you feel in situations requiring virtue
- Observing what those who have this virtue do particularly well

ii) Virtue Reasoning
- Understanding why a virtue is good – the benefits it brings to ourselves, others, and our communities
- Understanding the ‘middle-way’ – doing the right thing, at the right time, in the right way, and for the right reasons
- Giving (our own) and taking (from others) to provide sound reasons for our actions
- Developing awareness of how we typically act in certain situations and making decisions about what habits we might need to change

iii) Virtue Practice
- Putting virtues into action
- Observing and learning from others who put the virtues into action
- The ability to reflect on events that have happened, to learn from them, and grow in understanding of how to act well
- Consciously and deliberately forming habits of virtuous action, with awareness of the person we are becoming

The 5 stages of the Caterpillar Process used to explore the virtue of patience with a Lower Key Stage 2 class

1. **Stop** – involves the ability to pause before making a decision or pause afterwards to reflect on decisions made – requires emotional regulation to enable pausing before launching into a decision. Provide games/tasks that children will play in pairs or a very intricate art activity such as pointillism with very small implements and dot work to challenge their patience. When they encounter a challenge or frustration, encourage them to pause before reacting in what could be a potentially negative way.

2. **Notice** – involves gathering more information about the situation rather than just going with first thoughts to see the situation for what it really is. Encourage the children to reflect on what they noticed about the situation – what were our first thoughts? What other options might we have? What virtue does this situation require and why?

3. **Look** – involves observing our own emotions and the emotions of others to provide information about what we perceive compared to others and how these emotions are not always appropriate. This is an opportunity to encourage self-reflection on the ‘middle way’ – how we should aspire to feel the right things, at the right time, in the right way, and in the right amount. Encourage children to reflect on how they felt in comparison with their partner. What can we learn from each other? What do people who are patient do well?

4. **Listen** – involves the giving and taking of reasons for the things that we decide to do and the feelings we have and encourages us to draw on our knowledge of the virtues and apply it practically to different situations. With their partner, children should listen to each other’s interpretation of their feelings and evaluate the different emotions and how these relate to the ‘middle way’. Specifically encourage reflection on the focus virtue. In the case of patience, questions to prompt reflection could be: What does patience look like when we feel ourselves getting frustrated? How would my partner feel if I lacked patience and stopped trying? How would you practise patience if you are waiting for a turn? Why is patience an important virtue to have?

5. **Caterpillar** – in the story, the colours the caterpillar eats become the colour on his wings so this can be used as good analogy for the influence of our thoughts, feelings, words, and actions on the person we become. This is a chance for reflection on responses to the first four stages and a commitment to changing any responses that lacked virtue, in this case how the child may demonstrate more patience in the future. As a teacher, it is important to find ways to give further opportunities for growth and to encourage praise and recognition of any virtue development, particularly when the virtue is enacted without teacher intervention.
Developing Character Education in Secondary Initial Teacher Education

Hayley Hampson-Stemp
Making Learning Personally Relevant

It is the responsibility of teacher educators to develop robust, intellectually curious, and responsive pedagogical decision makers (Day, 2004). Current teacher guidance, alongside constraints of curriculum time within a knowledge focused secondary curriculum, risks robotic teachers that position pupils as simply second-hand learners and regurgitators of their knowledge (Noble-Rogers, 2021). Such guidance has its place in terms of impacting upon pupils’ learning, but from a character education perspective, exposing, dissecting, and discussing pedagogies that promote personal and social, as well as academic, flourishing is an important consideration for ITE providers. ITE providers should recognise that the challenges faced by secondary student teachers is not limited to overcoming issues relating to behaviour management (EEF, 2019). ITE providers should recognise that transformative and progressive character education pedagogies are not solely aligned to the moral purpose of teaching but offer the opportunity to encourage and develop a learning climate within classrooms that not only allows student teachers to meet the standards required for QTS, but which also enables both the student teacher and pupil to flourish.

When pedagogical decisions and associated learning experiences are deemed more personally relevant to the pupils, a more steadfast motivation and willingness to learn from a student teacher is cultivated, providing a greater sense of joy and well-rounded progress for both learner and teacher learner. When learning becomes personally relevant through safe, experiential, and sensitive pedagogical guidance, pupils are helped towards embodying moral character (Brunsdon and Walker, 2022). Student teachers, uniquely positioned as both learners and leaders of learning, benefit from widening their perspectives on the purpose of education within and across secondary education settings. Modelling how learning and associated meaning can grow from pupil-centred pedagogies without devaluing subject content – a particular concern for secondary teachers – is an important dissemination of what personally relevant learning could entail, with a character caught and taught approach being the first step for ITE providers. Case Study 3 is an example of how approaching this threshold concept (Flanagan, 2019) through an explicit learning encounter that seeks to provide genuine value and relevancy to the teacher learner can serve to transform the way in which the student teacher perceives the educative value of their subject.
Case Study 3
Exemplification of Student Teachers Participating as Learners, Exploring the Potential of Physical Education through a Person-Centred Approach, and Introduction to Virtue Literacy

Context
Day one of ITE Secondary PGC/DE Physical Education course.

Session intentions
What is the true power of PE? How could PE be taught differently to your prior experiences?

Session outline
Secondary tutor sought to teach badminton unconventionally, modelling practice that was framed for success within an inclusive and pupil-centred classroom, whilst maintaining subject content specificity and motor competence development.

Session description
A 'big question' was shared with student teachers as the session aim; 'What are marginal gains?'. A purposeful play on a sporting term to hook the learners. A think-pair-share discussion prompted by sub questions:
- What do we mean by marginal gains?
- What do we mean by personal best?
- How do these terms correlate?

All learning occurred through a simple rally task as the core activity, from which a baseline for a personal best score developed. Sequential teaching of knowledge was disseminated through whole class feedback for success and divided through pause points which acted as mini plenaries from which questions were posed aligned to the big question, such as:

- Leading question: What tweaks had a positive impact on your skill acquisition and associated personal best score? [Subject content focus].
- Follow up question: What did your marginal gains look like? What dispositions or virtues contributed to your marginal gains? Is your competitive edge overriding the virtue of integrity? [Character education focus].

The subject tutor scripted responses on a white board to exemplify virtue practise in the pursuit of marginal gains e.g., resilience, focus, leaning on peer and expert advice, listening, problem solving, curiosity, drive, integrity versus desire to win, being prepared to fail.

The lesson concluded in a discussion that interrogated the personal relevance of the marginal gains theme. Student teachers were asked to connect their learning within the badminton lesson to that of learning to teach. Accurate and realistic expectations were realised, in that progress will not be straightforward nor easy, but improvement will occur when you remain curious and resilient, show integrity and honesty, embrace error, seek support and be kind to yourself as a learner teacher. This sets the scene for both the ITE year and highlights the true power of PE within the curriculum.

Learning From Experts
Collaboratively planning a lesson with an experienced character educator, as outlined in Case Study 4, provides a platform from which student teachers can learn to foster ethical and social competencies beyond performance virtues, enabling pupils to truly flourish. Throughout this process it has been observed that student teachers begin to flourish themselves as character educators through this explicit taught approach (Arthur, Fullard and O’Leary, 2022).
Case Study 4
Student Teacher Taught Through ‘Expert’ Input

Case study
Student teachers taught through expert input within an ‘I do, we do, you do’ methodology.

For context
Student teachers were de-constructing effective peer assessment approaches (DfE, 2019).

Session intentions
Strategies for well supported peer assessment.

Session outline
Learning on moral virtues to increase effectiveness of ITE led peer assessment approaches for the teaching of a complex skill (bowling in cricket). Reflecting on how this approach enhances inclusivity and personal relevance to the learning.

I do
ITE tutor set the learning intention through a big question, which was firstly analysed to ensure all learners understood what the language meant (virtue literacy).

Outcomes of the discussion identified that feedback derived fairly from fact, balanced with positives and next steps, and sensitively shared to manage others’ feelings is of value because it is more motivating and actionable. The tutor used this discussion to ground the peer-feedback task. Learners used ‘perfect’ models on an iPad to compare peer performances in cricket bowling against a success criterion.

Multiple pause points and mini plenaries were exaggerated to demonstrate a focus on exemplifying and celebrating learners who successfully gave empathetic and honest PIP feedback. This model lesson concluded with a discussion of where, when, and why empathy and honesty might be integral in other aspects of school and wider life (virtue reasoning; personal relevance). Student teachers experientially connected theory to practice.

We do
Student teachers were given a lesson focus of a similarly complex skill (serving in tennis) and collaboratively designed a lesson with the expert.

Student teachers benefited from the expert narrating the whole group planning and gained knowledge of the process of scaffolding lessons that promote both success of subject content and moral virtues.

You do
Student teachers individually adapted an upcoming lesson plan to incorporate peer feedback, through the lens of character education and personally relevant learning.

Post-lesson reflections subsequently prompted the consideration of how character education can add personal relevance to the subject content learning and add a tier of support to increase effectiveness of peer assessment strategies. Student teachers noticed how moral virtue understanding and practice is gradual and thus explicit sought opportunities to practice virtues is essential for pupil flourishing, but regularity of such pedagogy is just as essential.

Why is it important to be empathetic and honest when giving PIP feedback?

For what reason?
Truthful, using facts, consulting success criteria, fair, trusted, sincere

Valued

Putting yourself in someone else’s shoes; understanding the feelings of others

Putting yourself in someone else’s shoes; understanding the feelings of others
Noticing Character

Transitions through a typical ITE year, student teachers develop the capacity to respond to unexpected incidences with their pupils through a character education lens, with opportunities for character caught practice becoming as common as explicitly taught concept-driven pedagogies.

However, it is important to acknowledge that the ability to recognize opportunities, to know what to focus on and how to encourage the practice of virtue, in particular virtues beyond performance-driven or exam orientated success, is not easy and may not come naturally to all student teachers. Providing student teachers with prompts that encourage thought on character and virtues within planning and professional reflection, as exemplified in Table 5 is an important inclusion for sustained practice and impact.

### Prompt: Have you guaranteed learning?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grounding</th>
<th>Explanatory input</th>
<th>Questioning, Check for understanding, Misconceptions?</th>
<th>Deliberate practice, Guided practice, Modified vs. authentic</th>
<th>Scaffolding, Independent practice</th>
<th>Review/Retrieval Practice</th>
<th>Reflection</th>
<th>Within subject, Beyond subject, Next steps, Changing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Changing</td>
<td>Modelling, Vocabulary</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Do now.</td>
<td>Safety.</td>
<td>Warm up.</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5: Student Teacher Prompts

Each individual subject on a secondary ITE curriculum offers a unique opportunity for virtue practice. Bringing student teachers together in small groups from a range of secondary disciplines to discuss transformative opportunities and practices that contribute to virtuous growth provides an avenue for teachers to develop a knowledge and understanding of virtues from across the curriculum.

Explicitly making small but frequent space in the ITE curriculum for the development and application of character education establishes a confidence and aspiration in student teachers to nurture dispositions, whilst carefully navigating other valid teaching and learning foci.
The Role of a Mentor

The profile of the school-based ITE mentor has been raised in recent years, particularly following the introduction of the Early Career Framework (ECF) and the expectations for mentor engagement and training stipulated in the revised ITT quality requirements (DfE, 2022). Given the considerable amount of time student teachers are required to spend in school during an ITE programme, it is likely that school-based mentors will be a significant, if not the most significant, influence on a student teacher’s understanding of what it means to be a ‘good’ teacher (Brondyk and Searby, 2013). Therefore, the quality of mentoring on professional placements has a significant impact on an individual student teacher’s development, wellbeing, and self-esteem (Hobson and Malderez, 2013), potentially affecting their retention in the profession (Menter et al., 2010).

What constitutes a ‘good’ teacher is open to debate despite the introduction of rigorous guidance documents such as the CCF (DfE, 2019); and with multiple possible interpretations, it is unsurprising that mentoring is largely considered to be a socially constructed practice (Butler and Cuenca, 2012). As such, mentors justifiably interpret and enact the role in different ways based on their own personal experiences of being mentored; the contextual influences of their school setting; and their own preferred individual dispositions for teaching (Jones and Straker, 2006).

Although some variation in mentoring practice between ITE providers is expected and not necessarily a negative, a lack of parity within a provider’s partnership poses a significant challenge when attempting to ensure quality and consistency in mentoring provision, particularly for ITE providers working with a large partnership of schools. This is further exacerbated by ITE mentoring often being allocated to school colleagues without due regard given to the necessary skills and attributes required to make the mentoring relationship successful (Smith and Ingersoll, 2004) and a lack of designated time and status attributed to the mentoring role (Jubilee Centre, 2020). As a result, even where mentors approach their work with good moral intentions, mentors may struggle to prioritise the needs of the student teacher when juggling their mentoring responsibilities alongside numerous other commitments.

It is widely accepted by mentors that they have a key role to play in developing student teacher’s pedagogic skills and mentors understand the importance of providing guidance on key aspects of the technical aspects of teaching. However, if mentors view their role merely as a means of supporting student teachers to develop a ‘repertoire of behaviourally conceived teaching skills or ‘competencies’ for the purposes of teacher training’ (Carr, 2016, p.628), and little or no attention is given to the student teacher’s personal and moral growth, questions are raised as to whether any ethical regard is attributed to ITE mentoring. This is seemingly at odds with the Teachers’ Standards that set the expectation that teachers maintain high standards of ethics, as a key principle underpinning the values, principles, and intellectual base of teacher education (UCET, 2020) and with teachers themselves widely acknowledging the moral nature of their role (Arthur et al., 2015; Jubilee Centre, 2015).

These challenges highlight the need for greater consideration of the content and quality of training and development provided for ITE mentors. Mentor training often focuses on the administrative aspect of the role (Hobson et al., 2009), further reinforcing the reductive view of the mentor’s role as the transmitter of technical knowledge to the less experienced and less knowledgeable student teacher (Blackwell, 1989). However, with a greater amount of time being expected for mentor training in the revised ITE quality requirements, providers have a timely opportunity to reconceptualise the vision, aims and purpose of their mentor development curriculum, finding more meaningful ways to develop the qualities associated with individual flourishing (Jubilee Centre, 2020) and promote commonly agreed standards of moral and practical excellence (Arthur et al., 2015).
The Mentor as a Role Model

A shared vision is a crucial aspect of mentor training: if ITE providers are expecting mentors across the partnership to embody, nurture, and role model the character and virtues that are advocated through the provider-led curriculum. Opportunities to reflect both independently and with other mentors on the ITE providers shared virtues, contemplating what the virtues mean and look like in practice, can help develop a common language and a greater awareness of the need to explicitly and intentionally model good character in a mentor’s day-to-day work.

“...As a mentor, you are the ultimate role model. Students look up to you as the person chosen to guide them. If you are supporting and training them to develop their ethos as a teacher, they need to see consistently good models from you as they are likely to copy all aspects of your practice."

University of Warwick, Centre for Teacher Education: Mentor A

Despite limited evidence of ethical aspirations being explicitly addressed within the mentoring of student teachers, research affirms that adults have much to learn from moral role models; and behaviours, cultivated during professional training correlate with future professional behaviours (Papadakis et al., 2008). With student teachers susceptible to emulating both the ethical and unethical practice witnessed when on placement, it becomes a responsibility for ITE providers to support mentors in recognising that role modelling is a core purpose of their mentoring work and is embedded in the professional identity of a teacher (Jones, 2007); a crucial factor in the transmission of professional ethics (Jubilee Centre, 2023).

“...We need to demonstrate character values at all points both consistently and genuinely. You need to be modelling what you believe yourself..."

University of Warwick, Centre for Teacher Education: Mentor C

With the Teachers’ Standards predominantly concerned with ‘doing rather than being’, student teachers need to look to their school-based mentors to help them understand what it means in the reality of a school context to act, for example with ‘honesty and integrity’, and what ‘high standards of ethics and behaviour’ look like in all aspects of a teacher’s work (DfE, 2012).

Role-modelling is most effective when adopted as an explicit teaching strategy, allowing the mentor to give a clear explanation as to why the demonstrated virtues are morally important and how students can develop these for themselves (Harrison, Bawden and Rogerson, 2016). When mentors give greater prominence to moral issues and provide a regular moral commentary, mentors can reinforce why different virtues are a part of the day-to-day practice of a teacher and mentors can support student teachers to understand the implications of their actions in the classroom (Lickona, 1991). This is particularly significant for student teachers’ developing an understanding of how to navigate the complexities of the profession, particularly in situations that involve multiple stakeholders and require ‘flexible and sensitive judgement’ (Cooke and Carr, 2014, p. 91) so student teachers are better equipped to make appropriate, ethically informed decisions in their future career.
Developing Character through Mentoring

Where mentors do recognise the importance of the moral nature of the role and aspire for student teachers to become increasingly empowered to make moral judgements (Clutterbuck, 2004), there needs to be a shift away from the traditional expert-novice mentoring relationship so prevalent in ITE. Different approaches are required to stimulate and inspire adult learning (Knowles, Holton and Swanson, 2005) that acknowledge the need for autonomy and self-motivation. Whilst there is an unavoidable element of judgement when mentoring student teachers, a coaching approach based on ethical principles, such as an instructional coaching model (Knight, 2007), aligns with a character-focused conception of mentor development. A coaching approach to mentoring supports the promotion of an authentic mentor-mentee relationship, where mentors and their student teachers work reciprocally towards mutually defined goals that will impact positively on student teachers’ professional practical wisdom.

“Ethical practice is the right thing to do and the right way to be. For me teaching is a vocation and passing on this love of the profession to others is a privilege. And so, trying to be the best I can be, by maintaining high ethical standards is part of what I do. Role-modelling and being the best I can be, no matter what…”

University of Warwick, Centre for Teacher Education: Mentor B

Recommendations to be Considered by ITE Providers in their Work with Mentors:

- To work in collaboration with partnership schools to raise the profile of mentors, giving them recognition for their work and recognising the significance of ITE mentoring to the greater good of the teaching profession.
- To support partnership schools to make informed decisions about who is best placed to be an ITE mentor and not assume that experience is synonymous with the ability to become a good mentor – the willingness to do the role and the commitment to demonstrate good ethical practice are more important factors to consider when deciding which members of staff are best suited to mentor student teachers.
- To continue to find ways to ensure all ITE mentors working with student teachers have received sufficient training. Training should move beyond basic placement expectations, advocating approaches that promote and encourage student teacher autonomy and raise awareness of the mentor’s role as a moral exemplar. Mentor development should aim to incorporate an explicit focus on ethical practice to complement the content of the university caught and taught programme. Mentor training which ensures a shared knowledge and understanding of the ITE provider’s virtues, prepares mentors to consciously and intentionally demonstrate and role model these virtues.
- Wherever possible, mentors should also be encouraged to reflect on their own practice through an ethical lens to encourage their own character development.

“It's very easy to use your own personal anecdotes and to slip into imparting wisdom but at the end of the day, I don’t want my students to be me, I want them to be them. Giving them their own autonomy to do things is key - there is not necessarily a right and wrong way to do things and if you can justify your decisions, you can find your own path…”

University of Warwick, Centre for Teacher Education: Mentor D
Reflecting Upon Character Virtues

To teach with dignity and compassion, teachers first need to see these virtues in themselves. This requires self-reflection, whereby student teachers notice their own hard work, offer self-praise, and are ‘kind’ to themselves when things do not go as planned. As a person-centred profession, focusing reflection on character development connects with a teacher’s moral purpose.

In the early stages of their career, student teachers can be overwhelmed with what to reflect on and have limited experiences to reflect against, meaning that reflections are typically directed towards technical features of practice, such as teaching strategy or organisational aspects (Johansson, 2023). In part, this is a consequence of measurement against targets typically set within professional frameworks and Teachers’ Standards (DfE, 2019). In response, virtues-driven frameworks might better support an approach to self-reflection that focuses on developing traits conducive to a sustained and flourishing career.

In support of a more conscious and versatile practitioner (Johansson, 2023), critical reflection (Higgins, 2001) depends on an honest appraisal of practice from multiple perspectives. To widen a student teacher’s perspective beyond their norms, and increasingly towards their moral and civic responsibilities, learner-structured guidance (Rosenshine, 2012) can be useful. There is often a disconnect observed in student teachers between knowledge and consistent application of competences; by offering a menu of reflective questions (Roberts, 2020) alongside virtue vocabulary (Jubilee Centre, 2022) student teachers and ECTs are more likely to successfully manage this disconnect. Examples can be seen in Figure 5 and Figure 6. Reflecting through a character education lens provides stimulus for student teachers and ECTs to better understand the emotions and challenges their pupils face as learners; better placing student teachers and ECTs to support and teach their pupils in aspects of character education (Roberts, 2020).

What are your top five character virtues as a teacher (what do you feel most comfortable using, use most often, or give you most energy?).

Would your pupils agree? Would your colleagues/mentors/peers agree?

How might you model these virtues more explicitly?

What impact could this have on your and your pupils’ flourishing?

Reflect on your school community and name person-centred engagement in a typical week (e.g. mentor conversation, parents evening, CPD in subjects or whole school or with ECTs).

What character virtues do you bring to your school?

Where have you felt vulnerable or been courageous? Where have you shown trust or needed to trust others?

Which virtues would you like to use more? How might you develop these? How might this support your development? How might this contribute to a flourishing community?

Figure 5: Reflection Prompts After a Lesson

Figure 6: Reflection Prompts Positioned at the End of a Week, Unit, Half Term or Placement
Supporting Student Teachers to Maintain and Develop Character Virtues as they become an ECT

Retention within the teaching profession continues to be a challenge with the National Education Union reporting in 2023 that 16% of teachers plan to leave the profession within the next year and 41% of teachers predicting they will leave the profession within the next five years (NEU, 2023). In terms of ECTs, the UK Government (GOV.UK, 2022) statistics claim that 68.8% of teachers are still teaching five years after qualifying, an attrition rate of almost one-third, increasing to just under 50% attrition 10 years from qualifying. The retention of teachers is paramount to supporting a high-quality, sustainable and compassionate education system, and student teachers transitioning into ECTs need to possess the character virtues and awareness that will enable them to face the challenges, flourish and achieve longevity within the profession. These virtues will necessarily include important performance virtues, such as teamwork and determination, but must extend beyond these to incorporate essential intellectual, moral, and civic virtues.

ITE providers can support the transition from student teacher to ECT through well-timed summative reflection which promotes a more virtue centred self-reflection concentrating on personal purpose and motives for teaching. Introducing such reflection affords student teachers the space to reconnect with their reasons and motivations for becoming a teacher alongside their aspirations for the future as they transition to becoming an ECT. Figure 7 suggests a framework for this virtue centred reflection.

Framing teacher success through the notion of professional and personal flourishing has the potential to ensure a positive approach to the workload often associated with professional development, connect more rigorously with an individual’s motivation to teach, and improve teacher retention by promoting longer term professional success whilst at the same time allowing pupils to flourish.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Why did you want to become a teacher?</th>
<th>What are your hopes and dreams for the pupils you teach?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What steps have you taken towards these - what are you most proud of?</td>
<td>What steps do you need to take to realise these?</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Figure 7: Reflection at Transition from Student Teacher to ECT
Whilst virtue centred reflection builds the professional practical wisdom of student teachers and ECTs, there are obvious tensions between the notion of the development of good character and virtue centred reflection and the more technical, mechanistic approach of the ECF with its *Learn that... and Learn how to...* statements (DfE, 2019).

There perhaps, on first sight, seems to be limited alignment between the five core areas of the ECF (DfE, 2019) and the *Building Blocks of Character* (Jubilee Centre, 2022). However, when mapping character virtues to the ECF there is in fact synergy. Table 6 takes examples of intellectual, moral, civic, and performance virtues and maps these with the ECF core areas. Engaging with the ECF through the lens of character virtues encourages the translation of the technicist ECF statements into a wider vision of education in line with character education. At the same time, this offers an opportunity for student teachers to reflect upon their character virtues and areas for personal development. Activity 2 offers an example of how the synergy between the ECF, and character virtues can be used as a core component of a transition tutorial or workshop.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ECF Area</th>
<th>Intellectual Virtues</th>
<th>Moral Virtues</th>
<th>Civic Virtues</th>
<th>Performance Virtues</th>
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<tr>
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<td>How Pupils Learn</td>
<td>Reasoning</td>
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<td>Community</td>
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Table 6: Mapping Character Virtues to the ECF
Activity 2: RAG Rating* Character Virtues Against ECF Core Areas

The mapping grid (Table 6) is shared with student teachers ahead of their final tutorial. Student teachers are invited to RAG rate each virtue under each of the core areas of the ECF, applying the virtues to the specific area of their practice e.g. assessment.

By applying character virtues to each specific ECF core areas it may be that a student teacher highlights resilience as green for classroom practice but red for managing behaviour.

The student teacher is asked to select three virtues from each of the RAG categories to explore further at their transition tutorial/workshop.

*RAG Rating = rating each virtue as either Strong (Green), Average (Amber) or Weaker (Red)

Developing Character Targets and Identifying Professional Development Priorities

The development and refinement of character virtues is ongoing, and a sustained focus on moral character is required throughout a teacher’s career (Arthur et al., 2015). Being aware of the character virtues an ECT wishes, and needs, to develop is a positive first step which demonstrates awareness, reflection, and honesty. Yet, to be able to truly flourish as an ECT, the virtues that an ECT has deemed ‘weaker’ must be acknowledged, addressed, and developed.

Through the identification of appropriate, accessible, and relevant professional development opportunities, where moral character is reflected, an ECT can reconnect with their initial motivation for entering the profession. ECT targets framed using virtue language, capturing not only the technical aspects an ECT must develop but also the character virtues underpinning these ‘technical’ skills brings a focus on the development of good character to the fore.
Supporting Student Teachers in Demonstrating Good Character through the Early Career Teacher Recruitment Process
Catherine Carden and Virginia Bower

The End Goal
The end goal of ITE is for student teachers to gain employment in a school of their choosing where they will continue to develop both personally and professionally. The idea of securing a job in a school, any school, just to get a job is a common scenario for many. Student teachers being offered a teaching post early in ITE, often through their placement schools, are often flattered by such an offer and feel obliged to accept the job offer with some feeling that if they do not, this could negatively impact the success of their placement. Student teachers still seeking posts later in the academic year may begin to panic and doubt that they will secure a job, so when offered a teaching job accept it without giving the post or school the due diligence required. Accepting a teaching post simply because it is offered can result in student teachers becoming discontented ECTs working in settings that do not align with their personal values. Finding a school with a good ‘person-organisation fit’ is a key to whether a teacher is committed to the school and stays within the school for a sustained period (Cowley, no date).

Alignment of Values
It must be remembered that the recruitment process is two-way; the school is assessing the candidate’s suitability as an employee and the candidate should be assessing the school as a place where they would professionally and personally flourish. The recruitment process is an opportunity for the student teacher to ensure that the school community they are seeking to join aligns with their values (Watts, Fullard and Peterson, 2021). This is an important message to instil in student teachers through their ITE programme, but especially as student teachers begin to consider their first teaching post.

Taking time within taught sessions and tutorials of an ITE programme to scaffold the student teacher’s exploration of their values can make for an interesting discussion and debate but can also form the foundations from which student teachers will research schools to whom to apply for a teaching post. If a student teacher has not had the opportunity to explore their own character and virtues, how can they assess if these are aligned with the virtues of the school to which they may apply, or even accept their first post? The importance of the alignment of school and individual virtues can be explored using Activity 3.
Activity 3:
**Alignment of School and Individual Virtues**

- **Exploration of Character Virtues:** Utilising a set of cards, each identifying a character virtue, student teachers are invited to take some time to decide upon the three character virtues that are most important to them.

- **Exploring Job Vacancies:** Student teachers are provided with a range of 'real life' job adverts and links to the relevant school websites. The student teachers take time to explore the advertised role and school.

- **Decision Time:** The student teacher selects the school that they most wish to apply to and that they feel most aligns with their own virtues based upon the virtue cards they chose. Student teachers provide a rationale as to why they perceive this alignment.

Reflections of Character Virtues and Values on Social Media

Having taken time to reflect upon their core character virtues, the student teachers can now test how these come across in their public profiles. School leaders increasingly explore candidate’s social media presence as part of the recruitment process (Schools Week, 2023) with the DfE Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2022 suggesting that schools should undertake an online search as part of their due diligence with any incidents that are publicly available being able to be explored at interview (DfE, 2022). Student teachers must be cognisant of this and fully aware of how they portray themselves on the varying online platforms whilst being aware that previous incidents relating to them may be accessible online. There are two activities that can be undertaken with student teachers. Activity 4: The Lock Down and Activity 5: The Moral Character Impression.

Activity 4:
**The Lock Down**

Ahead of engaging with any applications, student teachers should assess the privacy settings on all social media. Where these are personal accounts, student teachers should ensure they are private and that such privacy settings are at their highest.

This includes preventing others from tagging them in posts. Employees and future pupils should not be able to access or view any personal posts or photographs. To test the robustness of their personal accounts the student teacher should ask someone who does not follow/is not followed by them to see what can be accessed.

Activity 5:
**The Moral Character Impression**

For online accounts that are for professional use, e.g. LinkedIn, the student teacher is asked to take their three chosen character virtues (from Activity 2) and evaluate how these are reflected within their professional profiles. A question to ask initially is how a student teacher’s online handle reflects their character and professionalism. This offers an opportunity to create a golden thread of moral character throughout a student teacher’s profile and application. This is an opportunity to ensure the student teacher has no hybrid ‘personal/professional’ accounts, and where this is the case to close these and to create a new professional only account.
Demonstrating Good Character through the Application

The first opportunity for the student teacher to demonstrate moral character to the recruiting school is via a written application, be this an application form, a letter or personal statement. The student teacher needs to be guided by their ITE provider to not only address the job description, providing evidence of their knowledge, understanding, experience, and skills but to showcase their own character. It is important for the student teacher to embed and exemplify their key character virtues throughout the written application. Figure 8 highlights the typical character virtues school leaders look for (Watts, Fullard and Peterson, 2021), and which the student teacher may wish to evidence or exemplify within their application.

Showcasing Good Character at Interview

Schools are seeking to recruit individuals who share their value system and as such would be likely to promote this within their daily professional practice (Watts, Fullard and Peterson, 2021). School leaders know that character is a key ingredient of a ‘good’ teacher and as such attention is paid to a candidate’s character at interview (Arthur et al., 2015) and as such, interviews are not only the place for a student teacher to showcase, and the school to assess, professional knowledge and skills but also to showcase and assess ‘good character’. It is therefore vital that ITE providers explain, model and showcase interview procedures to student teachers so that student teachers are aware of how best to demonstrate their character and virtues within the interview process, focusing on the values of the school and the virtues often sought by leaders (see Figure 8). A primary school in the south-east of England recently devised its interview questions for a Deputy Headteacher post to assess the candidates’ values based upon their own. The questions used can be seen in Figure 9.

Moving Forwards

Embedding approaches that have the potential to enable student teachers to flourish is the remit of ITE. All ITE providers, in whatever form, are driven by such aspiration for student teachers. Including a focus on character education across the ITE curriculum provides an ideal foundation to achieve this aspiration, offering student teachers entering the profession the character virtues needed to be a ‘good’ teacher. By exploring character and virtues at the student teacher recruitment phase, via the modelling of good character in all aspects of training and by ultimately supporting student teachers to incorporate character education within their practice ITE providers can provide student teachers with the best possible start to a flourishing career.

Figure 8: Typical Character Virtues School Leaders Look For (Watts, Fullard and Peterson, 2021)

- Confidence
- Humility
- Teamwork
- Kindness
- Empathy
- Humour
- Good Communication

Figure 9: Deputy Headteacher Interview Questions

What values and principles underpin your approaches to Early Years and Primary Education and would these make you an effective DHT at this school? (Honesty)

What do you consider to be the three most important traits of a leader and why? Which of these do you most need to develop and how might you do this? (Leadership/Honesty)

Tell us about your approach to professional learning and the activities you typically engage with. (Curiosity)

Have you ever faced an ethical dilemma at work? If so, what was the issue, and what did you do? On reflection, would you do anything differently? (Trust/Honesty/Love)

If you encounter a difference of opinion and views between yourself and members of staff, how do you approach this? (Teamwork/Collaboration)

If you disagreed with a decision the Headteacher had made but had to present this decision to staff, how would you approach this? (Respect)

Tell me about a time when you used an unusual or different approach to respond to a challenge and what was the outcome? What did you learn from this? (Creativity/Innovation)

How have you dealt with failure and bounced back from it? (Perseverance)

What do you believe to be the role of primary education? (Ambition/Leadership)
References


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The Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues Resources and Training

Leading Character Education in Schools Online Teacher CPD
Available at: www.jubileecentre.ac.uk/2857/character-education/online-cpd-leading-character-education

Conversations on Character Podcast
Available at: www.jubileecentre.ac.uk/2928/about/conversations-on-character-podcast

Teacher Resources
Available at: www.jubileecentre.ac.uk/2955/character-education/teacher-resources

Teacher Training Workshop Materials
Available at: www.jubileecentre.ac.uk/1842/teacher-education-resources
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