

# Handbook of Moral and Character Education

Larry P. Nucci • Darcia Narvaez

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There is widespread agreement that schools should contribute to students' moral development and character formation. Currently 80% of states have mandates regarding character education. This apparent support for moral education, however, masks a high degree of controversy surrounding the meaning and the methods of moral and/or character education. The purpose of this handbook is to replace the ideological rhetoric that infects this field with a comprehensive, research-oriented volume that includes the extensive changes that have occurred over the last 15 years. Coverage includes the latest applications of developmental and cognitive psychology to moral and character education from preschool to college settings.

**Larry Nucci** (PhD University of California, Santa Cruz) is Professor of Educational Psychology at the University of Illinois at Chicago, where he is Director of the Office of Studies in Moral Development and Education. He is past-President of the Jean Piaget Society, and is currently a member of the Education Advisory Commission for the Character Education Partnership. In 1990 he was honored by the American Association of Higher Education as a pioneer in school-college collaboration. He is the author of *Education in the Moral Domain* (2001), the editor of four books on moral and character education and currently serves as the senior editor of the journal, *Human Development*.

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# Handbook of Moral and Character Education

Edited by

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# Preface

There is widespread agreement that schools should contribute to students' moral development and character formation. Currently, 80% of states have mandates regarding character education. This apparent support for moral education, however, masks the considerable controversy that swirls around the meaning of moral or character education, and the appropriate forms of practice that would constitute this area of education. Some of what is being promoted as moral or character education has little research support, and amounts to no more than slick marketing of the personal intuitions of program founders. At present, there is no single source that brings together research and scholarship on the diverse perspectives and approaches to moral and character education. Thus, it is difficult for researchers as well as school districts and administrators to get a handle on what is known about moral development and effective school practices for moral and character education. There has not been a high quality edited volume or handbook on moral education since Kurtines and Gewirtz published volume 3 of their *Handbook of Moral Behavior and Development* in 1991. Thus, there has not been a handbook in this field for over 20 years. This Handbook fills that gap by bringing together the top scholars and researchers in the field in a 30 chapter volume that covers the full range of perspectives on this critical area of education.

We were approached by Lane Akers, then senior education editor at Lawrence Erlbaum and Associates to produce this volume as a companion to Erlbaum's highly successful *Handbook on Moral Development* (Killen & Smetana, 2006). Since that time, Erlbaum has become part of the Taylor and Francis publishing group, and Lane Akers has remained our editor. Lane's encouragement and enthusiasm for the project was matched by the commitment of the 51 authors who contributed to make this volume such a valuable resource. The handbook includes a rich array of chapters covering topics as diverse as the historical and philosophical underpinnings of approaches to morality and character, the structure of classroom environments conducive to the generation of just and caring students, social and emotional learning, contemporary approaches to moral education from preschool to the college years, moral and character education beyond the classroom, and issues of professional development of teachers and administrators capable of engaging in effective practice.

The handbook is intended for researchers and scholars in the fields of social development and moral and character education. Because the issues dealt with in addressing moral education cut across disciplines, the handbook is relevant to educational philosophers and curriculum specialists as well as developmental and educational psychologists. Many chapters in the handbook deal with the actual practice of moral and character education. Thus, the handbook is also a resource for teacher educators, graduate students in education and educational psychology, as well as practicing teachers and school leaders. The book has been endorsed by the Executive Board of Directors of the Association for Moral Education.

*Larry Nucci and Darcia Narvaez, Editors*



# Editors

**Larry P. Nucci** is Professor of Educational Psychology at the University of Illinois at Chicago, where he is Director of the Office for Studies in Moral Development and Education. He is Past-President of the Jean Piaget Society, and is currently a member of the Educational Advisory Commission for the Character Education Partnership. He is Senior Editor of the journal *Human Development* and a member of the editorial board of *Cognitive Development*. Nucci has published extensively on children's moral and social development, and is the author of *Education and the Moral Domain* (Cambridge University Press, 2001; with editions in Chinese, Dutch, Italian and Spanish), and is editor of four additional books: *Conflict Contradiction and Contrarian Elements In Moral Development and Education* (Lawrence Erlbaum, 2005); *Moral Development and Character Education: A Dialogue* (McCutchan, 1989); *International Perspectives on Youth Conflict* (with Colette Daiute, Zeynep Beykont, and Craig Higson-Smith; Oxford University Press 2005), and *Culture, Thought, and Development* (with Geoffrey Saxe and Elliot Turiel; Lawrence Erlbaum, 2000).

**Darcia Narvaez** is an Associate Professor of Psychology at the University of Notre Dame. She is Director of the Center for Ethical Education at the University of Notre Dame. After college, she was a church musician, K–12 music teacher, middle school Spanish teacher, and owned her own business. She also earned a Master's in Divinity. She earned her PhD in Educational Psychology from the University of Minnesota, where she also taught (1993–2000) and was executive director of the Center for the Study of Ethical Development. She received a Carey Senior Fellowship at the Erasmus Institute at the University of Notre Dame. She has published numerous articles and chapters as well as *Moral Development in the Professions: Psychology and Applied Ethics* (1994), *Postconventional Moral Thinking* (1999), *Moral development, Self and Identity* (2004).



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# 1

## Introduction and Overview

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There is widespread agreement that schools should contribute to students' moral development and character formation. Currently, 80% of states have mandates regarding character education. These state trends reflect the public expectation that schools be places where children receive support for the formation of values such as honesty (97%), respect for others (94%), democracy (93%), and respect for people of different races and backgrounds (93%) (Public Agenda, 1994). Students tend to share these beliefs: 78% support the proposition that schools should promote values such as honesty and tolerance of others (Public Agenda, 1997).

This apparent support for moral education, however, masks the considerable controversy that swirls around the meaning of moral or character education, and the appropriate forms of practice that would constitute this area of education. To some extent the controversies that accompany calls for moral and character education reflect the broader debate about the current state of American culture and American youth in particular. Conservative social commentators tend to view the current era as a period of social decay (Bennett, 1998; Putnam, 2003) and youth crisis (Bennett, 1992; Himmelfarb, 1994; Wynne, 1987), requiring a return to traditional moral values and the indoctrination of children through traditional forms of character education (Bennett, 1992; Wynne & Ryan, 1993). Those on the political left tend to view current American society as in the midst of a period of rapid social change in which many longstanding social injustices, such as racism and gender discrimination, have been challenged by social movements that if anything seem to reflect moral improvement in at least those aspects of American culture (Turiel, 2002). Accordingly, these commentators view the movement toward traditional forms of socialization as an unjustified reaction to a period of social transition.

These debates rooted in political ideology generally produce more heat than light. The purpose of this handbook is to move beyond such discourse to bring together a collection of chapters by the top researchers and scholars in the field that reflect the state of the art in moral and character education. Indeed the author list comprises a virtual who's who in the field of moral and character education. Our goal has been to be as inclusive as possible with the one caveat being that anyone included in the volume operates from a solid grounding in scholarship or research rather than simply promoting a set of personal intuitions or political views. The book is structured

in sections with chapters intended to flesh out the underlying philosophical and theoretical issues underlying differing perspectives, followed by chapters in which these fundamental ideas are put to the test through various forms of research and educational practice.

## PART I: DEFINING THE FIELD: HISTORY, PHILOSOPHY, THEORY, AND METHODOLOGY

In broad terms the debates over moral and character education divide along three dimensions. One broad distinction is between those who view character formation and morality as centered on the cultivation of virtues and those who argue that morality is ultimately a function of judgments made in context. The former, who often trace their ideas within Western culture back to Aristotle, emphasize the importance of early habit formation and the influence of the social group. Often these virtue-based approaches to character education incorporate an emphasis on the attachment to groups and the role of society in forming the young as described by Emile Durkheim (1925/1961). Traditional character educators generally fall within this perspective. On the other hand, those who emphasize the role of reason and judgment draw their philosophical arguments from rationalist ethics with its emphasis on autonomous justification for moral actions based on principles of justice or fairness (Rawls, 2001). The focus is upon the development of moral reasoning drawing from the seminal work of Piaget (1932), and the Socratic approach to education. A third broad dimension is the degree to which educators place an emphasis upon the role of emotion. Traditional and developmental approaches address in different ways the role of emotion in moral and character development. However, the foregrounding of emotion is best seen in approaches that fall within the category of “care ethics”, attachment theory, and “spiritual” education. These latter approaches are discussed in detail in Parts II and III of the book.

In Part I authors address the basic philosophical, historical, and methodological issues undergirding contemporary moral and character education. The first chapter of this section (Chapter 2) by Thomas Wren “Philosophical Moorings” takes us through the philosophical schools of thought that buttress traditionalist and developmental approaches to moral education. His is not a “Cliffs Notes” reading of these philosophical positions, but rather a critical analysis of their relative adequacy as bases for moral education. In Chapter 3, Daniel Lapsley continues the discourse on virtue and reason opened by Wren extending it to contemporary philosophical and psychological considerations of the connections between morality and the self. This is an issue hotly debated in contemporary moral theory as evidenced in the writing of both editors of the current volume. In “Moral Self-Identity as the Aim of Education,” Lapsley explores whether the developmentalist emphasis on reason can suffice as a basis for moral education in the absence of an effort to also impact the development of the “self.” He reviews some of the struggles associated with Kohlberg’s initial approach to moral education with its studied absence of a connection to the student as a moral person (issues that Snarey and Samuelson touch on in Chapter 4). However, Lapsley does not dwell on that historical debate, but endeavors to place the issue squarely within the philosophical and theoretical nexus that is at the heart of the dialogue represented in this handbook.

The next three chapters present contemporary overviews of the traditional and developmental traditions that have historically dominated discourse on moral education. In Chapter 4 “Moral Education in the Cognitive Developmental Tradition: Lawrence Kohlberg’s *Bold and Daring Ideas*,” John Snarey and Peter Samuelson provide an historical overview of the work of Lawrence Kohlberg that spawned the reawakening of interest in moral education in the 1970s and formed the starting point for all subsequent developmentally based approaches to moral educa-

tion. They offer insights into the history and personal motivations for Kohlberg's efforts and his later struggle to reconcile the fundamental insights from his own work with Durkheim's sociological perspective on moral education.

In Chapters 5 and 6 authors James Arthur and David Carr offer strong defenses for the promotion of virtue and traditional approaches to moral education. They offer contemporary rebuttals to Kohlberg's analysis of the limits of virtue-based moral theories, and attempt to recover the role of traditional educational practices that have had a long history in the Anglo-Saxon approach to moral education.

The next chapter (7) in this section, "School, Community and Moral Education" by the educational philosopher Kenneth Strike takes a studied look at the role of community in forming the moral lives of students. Strike does not fall into the trap of placing developmentalists outside of those who care about the quality of the social environments experienced by students. Nor does he accept the reduction of Rawls' (2001) philosophical views as decontextualized and individualist. Instead Strike takes up a serious inquiry into what it means to build a moral community that sustains genuine moral education. In so doing he both defends the traditionalist emphasis on community, but rejects the type of determinist educational ideology that tends to be associated with that school of thought.

Part I ends with an analysis of the kinds of research needed to measure the impact of moral education. James Leming, who has written extensively on evaluations of moral and character education programs, offers a cautionary tale in Chapter 8 regarding the documented lack of impact of classroom teacher practice found in formal research. His sobering analysis concludes that educational research must become much more closely aligned with actual practice. He advocates movement toward an engineering model in which inquiry about moral and character education is directed at problem solving rather than traditional theory driven hypothesis testing.

## PART II: RELATIONSHIPS IN SCHOOLS AND CLASSROOMS

Irrespective of theoretical or philosophical orientation, all approaches to moral and character education recognize the importance of social interactions for students' moral growth. Part II addresses the affective and social environments of classrooms, and the influence that school-based social relations can have on morality and character formation. In Chapter 9, "Caring and Moral Education," Nel Noddings provides a concise overview of care theory as an account of moral growth and ethical action. Care theory emerged from the work of Carol Gilligan and the feminist movement, but in Noddings' hands takes on a more comprehensive and grounded and comprehensive philosophical framework. She addresses the nature of caring classrooms and schools, and explores the needs and attributes of teachers and others who are engaged in caring professions.

Marilyn Watson (Chapter 10) extends the notion of care into what she refers to as classroom relationships based on trust. Watson's emphasis is on the developmental needs of elementary school children to establish attachment relationships with nurturant caregivers. In the chapter Watson describes an approach to classroom structure and behavioral management called "Developmental Discipline" that engages the child's intrinsic motivations for autonomy, belongingness and competence. Developmental discipline comprised a central element in the approach to moral and character education formulated by the Developmental Studies Center. The chapter includes follow-up information about high school students who experienced developmental discipline while in elementary school.

One of the few educational practices jointly advocated by traditionalist and developmental educators is the use of cooperative groups. In Chapter 11 "Social Interdependence, Moral

Character and Moral Education” David and Roger Johnson provide a detailed overview of the appropriate uses of cooperative goal structures in classrooms, and research on the impact of the uses of cooperative groups on student social and moral development. The most radical effort at transforming school culture to promote moral development has been the “Just Community Schools” initiated by Lawrence Kohlberg and his colleagues. In Chapter 12 Clark Power and Ann Higgins-D’Alessandro, two of the pioneers in this area, review the implementation of a just community school and the current status of research on the effectiveness of this approach to moral education.

The final two chapters in Part II address areas of social relations that are not always viewed as directly related to moral or character education. In Chapter 13, Maurice Elias, Sarah Parker, Megan Kash, Roger Weissberg, and Mary Utne O’ Brien address the connections between programs addressing what has been called Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) and moral and character education. SEL emerged from the work of psychologists and educators with students who had behavioral disorders. What was learned from that work has proved to be valuable for social skill development in all students. SEL has thus moved from the realm of special education to an aspect of mainstream teaching. In their chapter Elias and his colleagues review the basic elements of SEL and the research demonstrating its utility and relevance for moral and character education as well as academic learning. Finally, in Chapter 14 Stacey Horn, Christopher Daddis, and Melanie Killen discuss how peer relations in school settings have implications for social and moral growth. Among the issues addressed in their chapter are ways in which schools can engage in practices to reduce instances of peer exclusion, harassment, and bullying.

### PART III: CONTEMPORARY APPROACHES

The chapters in Part III focus on contemporary approaches to moral and character education. The first two chapters represent efforts to incorporate recent advances in developmental and cognitive psychology into the design and implementation of moral and character education. Larry Nucci leads off this section with Chapter 15, “Social Cognitive Domain Theory and Moral Education.” In this chapter he outlines a thirty-year program of research which has demonstrated that concepts of morality (fairness, human welfare) are universal and form a conceptual system distinct from convention, religious prescription, and personal issues. Nucci recounts the origins of domain theory in the contradictions emerging from work with Kohlberg’s stages, and presents recent work on developmental patterns within the moral and conventional domains. The chapter presents research on the applications of domain theory to issues of classroom management and the construction of moral and social values lessons employing the regular academic curriculum, and concludes with recent work on the preparation of preservice teachers to engage in moral education.

In Chapter 16 “Human Flourishing and Moral Development: Cognitive and Neurobiological Perspectives of Virtue Development,” Darcia Narvaez brings together several cognitive and neurobiological lines of research to make recommendations for moral character development. She suggests that the traditionalist and cognitive developmental approaches to moral character development can be unified in instruction for moral expertise development. The Integrative Ethical Education model spells out a five-step, empirically derived approach for intentional character education that moves from caring relationships to self-authorship.

The next four chapters present approaches to moral and character education aimed at students in particular grade levels. Arguably the most successful attempt at comprehensive character education at the elementary school level has been the Child Development Project (CDP) of the

Developmental Studies Center. In Chapter 10, Marilyn Watson described “Developmental Discipline,” one element of the CDP program. In Chapter 17, Victor Battistich provides a comprehensive review of the CDP program and the results of extensive program evaluations demonstrating that constructing a caring school community is crucial to any effort to effect positive student outcomes for social and emotional development.

While considerable attention has been given to moral and character education at the elementary school level, far less attention has been paid to other age groups. Chapter 18 by Carolyn Hildebrandt and Betty Zan presents the theoretical assumptions and classroom practices of a developmentally based approach to moral development in early childhood settings. Their work builds from extensive research and experience in the application of Piagetian theory to classrooms in collaboration with their colleague Rheta DeVries. Chapter 19 by Matthew Davidson, Thomas Lickona, and Vladimir Khmelkov, “Smart and Good Schools: A New Paradigm for High School Character Education,” is based on a report commissioned by the John Templeton Foundation to uncover the factors that contribute to character formation among adolescents. Davidson and his colleagues make the case that moral virtues such as honesty and fairness must be supported by performance virtues such as perseverance and hard work if moral values are to be realized within a person’s actions. Their approach attempts to integrate attention to academic success with fostering moral character. In Chapter 20, Anne Colby reviews the research examining the impact of college experience on the moral development and civic engagement of young adults. Her chapter is based on a report she prepared for the Carnegie Foundation that was published in her book, *Educating Citizens*, and appears in the present volume with the permission of John Wiley and Sons.

One of the major concerns of educational policy makers and school administrators is whether any of the efforts at moral and character education actually affect student moral development and conduct. Chapter 21, Marvin Berkowitz, Victor Battistich, and Melinda Bier present the results of two recent comprehensive analyses of “what works” in moral and character education. Their findings summarize effective practices and policies. The chapter also includes a caveat based on the outcomes of an ongoing third comprehensive study, which raises the prospect that current practices may have less influence than other studies have claimed.

Part III concludes in Chapter 22 with an approach to teaching for morality and character developed by Rachel Kessler and her colleagues at the PassageWays Institute that focuses on the connection to spirituality, and is often confused with religiosity. For that reason, spirituality is thus typically absent from approaches to social and moral development advocated in the majority of educational programs. In their chapter Kessler and Fink attribute many of the difficulties being confronted by today’s youth as emerging from a sense of spiritual void. They offer an approach to help youth respond to challenges by engaging in educational practices that attend to their emotional and spiritual needs. Kessler and Fink write as practitioner-scholars in a style that will likely appeal to many readers of this handbook who are confronting similar challenges in their work with students.

## PART IV: MORAL AND CHARACTER EDUCATION BEYOND THE CLASSROOM

Education is often defined in terms of practices that schools and teachers use to influence student learning and development. Children’s and adolescents’ moral development and character formation, however, are not simply the result of schooling. The chapters in Part IV address how formal programs for community service, informal learning experiences through the media, and other modes of learning beyond the classroom can influence moral and character development.

Richard Catalano, David Hawkins, and John Toumbourou lead off this section in Chapter 23 with a look at what has become known as “positive youth development.” This approach inverts the usual attention to youth disorders by focusing upon areas of youth competence or strength with the goal of anticipating problems before they emerge. Their chapter is followed in Chapter 24 by a comprehensive examination of the impact of efforts to engage youth through service learning. Daniel Hart, Kyle Matsuba, and Robert Atkins define what is meant by service learning and civic engagement, describe the elements of effective programs, and offer powerful evidence that such beyond-the-classroom experiences shape the moral development and character formation of young people, including urban youth who face daily challenges of gang involvement, drug use, and street violence.

It is often said that sports build character. That cliché is critically examined by David Shields and Brenda Bredemeier in Chapter 25. They take us beyond the bromides to look at the psychology of morality within the context of sports, and to explore the kinds of sports experiences that genuinely tap into and build students’ moral character. Engagement in sports and sports teams is a form of involvement in community. Jim Lies, Kendall Cotton Bronk, and Jennifer Menon Mariano take a close look in Chapter 26 into what constitutes a positive community for youth development in its broadest sense. How do parents and community leaders build the institutions that will support the social and moral development of children and adolescents? What are the roles that young people can take in the process of community building? These and other issues are addressed in this chapter.

Finally, Marjorie Hogan and Victor Strasburger in Chapter 26 take on what may be today’s most daunting challenge to raising and educating youth of moral character: the media. Young people in most developed nations spend more time with television, computers, cell phones, or other electronics than they do in the classroom. They communicate through electronic media and gather information from the Internet or other media outlets. All of this presents an influence on children’s socialization that is unprecedented in human experience. Hogan and Strasburger describe these challenges, research findings, and offer guidance for how to employ media in the service of social and moral growth.

## PART V: PROFESSIONAL ISSUES

Up to this point the handbook has focused upon educational practices and experiences designed to impact the moral development and character of children and youth. In this final section the focus shifts to the moral development and character education of professionals, with particular attention to the ethical requirements of teachers and what is now being done to prepare teachers to engage in effective moral and character education. The section begins with Chapter 28 by Muriel Bebeau and Verna Monson. They review decades of research on the impact of professional education on the moral development of health professionals. On the basis of this research they offer a grounded theory for the integration of moral education within professional preparation generally and across disciplines. Merle Schwartz follows this contribution in Chapter 29 with an analysis on the current state of affairs with regard to formal efforts to prepare preservice teachers to engage in effective practices for moral and character education. She reports that most teacher education programs have no formal component of teacher training dedicated to providing prospective teachers with the knowledge base and tools to integrate moral and character education into their everyday lesson plans and teaching practices. She concludes the chapter with her formal evaluation of three university-based efforts sponsored by the Character Education Partnership designed to integrate moral and character education within their teacher education pro-



grams. Part V concludes with Elizabeth Campbell's thoughtful analysis of the ethical dimensions of teaching and the ethical dimensions of what it is to be a teacher. Her plea for moral autonomy and responsibility within the teaching profession is one that must be heeded if any of the ideas presented in this handbook are to reach fruition.

This handbook is a compilation that reflects the state of the art and science of moral and character education. This is a field that has grown since the 1960s as the general public and political leaders have come to realize that education is about more than academic learning. As Theodore Roosevelt once said, "To educate a man in mind and not in morals is to educate a menace to society." Still, perspectives vary in how best to go about the process of education for moral development, and whether the emphasis should be placed on the cultivation of virtue or the development of moral judgment. Nevertheless, there is a convergence of opinion around the need to continue research and inquiry in this area, and to encourage schools and teachers to include attention to moral development in their educational practices. It is our belief that this handbook will serve as a valuable resource for efforts to engage in both research and practice in the area of moral development and character education.

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# I

## **DEFINING THE FIELD: HISTORICAL, PHILOSOPHICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS**



## 2

# Philosophical Moorings

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As with the rest of human life, morality and moral education have an outside and an inside. Seen from the outside morality provides a way of getting along with others, and from the inside it is a way of getting along with oneself. More crudely: moral education is at once a necessary condition for social control and an indispensable means of self-realization. Most of us, including philosophers as well as parents and educators, assume that these two functions of morality sustain each other: what is good for society is good for our kids, and vice versa. Nietzsche and a few other so-called rugged individualists have rejected this assumption but I will not spend time defending it here. Instead I will focus on the second of these two perspectives, the “inside view.”<sup>1</sup> My motives for doing this are twofold. First of all, I want to unpack the general understanding, shared by contemporary educators of all persuasions, that morality is a form of self-realization. Also, I want to situate this understanding within the philosophical tradition of what, using the term in its broadest possible sense, I will simply call “human development.”

Specialists in the fields of education and psychology may object that not all conceptions of moral education are developmental, and this is certainly true if we understand development in the biological sense of an organic unfolding of innate powers, taking place within a reasonably stable environment that sustains but does not itself shape the developmental process. It is also true if we understand development in a nonbiological but equally narrow sense as an ordered progress through cognitive stages, each of which has its own logical structure.<sup>2</sup> But our everyday concept of human development is not so narrow. What is distinctive about developmental change is not inevitability or logical structure, but its normativity. Plainly put, most of us think of development as a movement from a less desirable state to a better one, even though in the case of human development the “betterness” at issue is subject to philosophical debate.

In what follows I will trace the way philosophers have formulated the fundamental developmental idea of human betterness because I believe the history of their struggles to understand what it means to be human has shaped the ways in which contemporary moral educators understand their own enterprise. I am tempted to say that here as elsewhere in the history of ideas ontogeny recapitulates phylogeny. However, to say this would oversimplify the way theories emerge within an intellectual tradition. It would be more realistic, I believe, to think of traditions, including our philosophical tradition, as providing necessary albeit usually unnoticed moorings for a specific theory or practice such as character education or moral judgment development. Thanks to these moorings a theory or practice is secured, stabilized, and thereby rendered intellectually plausible

and practically useful. This applies across the board, but as we will see in the following pages it is especially true for the theory, research, and practice of moral and character education.

## BUDDHA AND THE GREEKS

When I spoke just now of “our philosophical tradition” I had in mind the usual pantheon of Western philosophers, beginning of course with the Greeks. But I will begin even further back, not only because I want to acknowledge the existence and power of ancient non-Western thought but also because even a very short look at a single non-Western conception of human development—I have chosen Buddhism—will reveal what is distinctive and, indeed, quite novel about the Greek conception that emerged about the same time on the other side of the Asian land mass. And so let us begin there.

As Buddha sat under the Bodhi tree a few years before Socrates was born in Greece, he suddenly experienced the famous awakening that was to become the Buddhist hallmark of human development. With his awakening came enlightenment regarding the human condition and the nature of suffering, an enlightenment that Buddha spent the rest of his life trying to spread throughout what was then a predominantly Hindu culture. After his death two major sects developed: the more austere Hinayana emphasized the original doctrine of enlightenment as the developmental agenda for individuals; the Mahayana emphasized group enlightenment or, more exactly, the need for individuals to work as a group in order to achieve their respective enlightenments.<sup>3</sup>

This is of course just the tip of a long and complex history. But allowing for these and other differences within the Buddhist tradition, even larger differences emerge when we contrast the Buddhist and Greek traditions with each other. The dissimilarities between the terrain of the path toward enlightenment that Buddhists follow and that of the various paths followed by the ancient Greeks are relatively well known. For instance, the Buddhist roads are generally rockier (i.e., more ascetic), and the Greek roads more sharply signposted (i.e., more systematized). However, it remains to be seen just how different are the endpoints of these paths. The Greeks understood enlightenment as wisdom, *sophia*, whereas the Buddhists understood it as the emptying of the self, *nirvana*. At Delphi the famous Greek motto “Know thyself,” *gnothi seauton*, adorned the entrance of the temple of Apollo, the god of wisdom, and was reiterated by the pre-Socratic philosophers Thales and Pythagoras as well as by Socrates himself. In contrast, “Lose thyself” is the message of the Noble Eightfold Path (Table 2.1) which, within all the varieties of the Buddhist tradition, constitutes the system of practices leading to human development.

The Eightfold Path has been interpreted in several ways: as a progressive series of stages through which one moves, as a set of eight dimensions that require simultaneous development,

**TABLE 2.1**  
**The Noble Eightfold Path**

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|----|--|
| 1. | Right Viewpoint—Realizing the Four Noble Truths (viz., that all experience involves suffering, that suffering is caused by desire or craving, that desires must be overcome, not satisfied, and that this is done by following the Eightfold Path) |
| 2. | Right Values—Commitment to growth in moderation  |
| 3. | Right Speech—Speaking in a nonhurtful, truthful way  |
| 4. | Right Actions—Wholesome behavior, harming no one   |
| 5. | Right Livelihood—Having a job that does no harm to oneself or others, directly or indirectly   |
| 6. | Right Effort—Always trying to improve  |
| 7. | Right Mindfulness— Seeing things correctly and with clear consciousness  |
| 8. | Right Meditation—Reaching enlightenment, where the ego has disappeared   |
-

and sometimes as the exfoliation of three even more basic categories, namely wisdom, virtuous action, and concentration. However, in virtually all interpretations, enlightenment is seen as a progressive achievement, a gradual albeit not smooth curve, in which the degree of enlightenment is proportional to the loss of self and the preoccupations associated with the self.

We must be careful to remember that the Buddha's message was that we must get rid of the *idea* of self, not the actual self, since in fact there never really is such an entity. Although the Greeks did not have a specific word for "self" they clearly thought of the human person as a self-contained *thing*. The Buddhist notion of selfhood is quite different: there is no underlying unity to the streams of consciousness that converge and diverge during a person's life.<sup>4</sup> Our sense of self-identity comes from what Buddhists consider the unfortunate tendency to desire what we do not have, a proposition that has a very important implication: The ascetic elimination of desire also eliminates the sense of self. Of course eliminating the sense of self does not eliminate our streams of consciousness. But it does enable us to detach ourselves from worldly distractions and work toward enlightenment.

Admittedly, some forms of Buddhism such as Zen allow for sudden, short-lived "Aha!" experiences of enlightenment in which one achieves a state comparable to nirvana, realizes that all living existence is identical with the Buddha, and even becomes one with the Buddha himself. But the general Buddhist conception of human development is that getting rid of the idea of a self is a gradual process, sometimes referred to as an "unraveling." Living a solitary life of meditation and asceticism, plus doing certain selfless acts, produces good karma, generating a better future life and eventually total liberation from desire (i.e., nirvana itself).

## SOCRATES AND PLATO

The enlightenment that the young Buddha enjoyed under the Bodhi tree was apparently a rich and positive experience for him, but as just noted, the descriptions and prescriptions passed down in the Buddhist tradition for the ascent to enlightenment are aimed at the very thing that must be denied, the idea of the self. To this extent, the cognitive component of human development as conceived in Buddhism is an essentially negative type of knowledge. For Socrates (469–399 BCE) and Plato (428–347 BCE) however,<sup>5</sup> the ascent to enlightenment did not involve any special knowledge of the self, either positive or negative, but rather knowledge of the ideal Forms and, at the highest stage of human development, knowledge of the Good.

The doctrine of the ideal forms was developed by Plato in different ways throughout his various dialogues, but one of the most famous is his analogy of the Divided Line (*Republic*, 510-11), as shown in Table 2.2.<sup>6</sup> Imagine, he said to his disciples, a line that is divided into two unequal parts, one corresponding to the visible world of sense perception and the other corresponding to the invisible world of intellectual knowledge. Then imagine each of these segments being divided into two similarly unequal parts, corresponding in the first case to material things and pictures or other sorts of images of those things, and in the second case to the highest forms such as goodness and justice and the somewhat lower forms that are, in effect, concepts corresponding to the material objects we perceive.

As the diagram shows, the two middle segments are equal.<sup>7</sup> Plato, himself no mean mathematician, apparently regarded this numerical equality as symbolic in its own right, pointing to the close if not isomorphic semiotic relationship between physical things and the concepts we have of those things. To put the point in stage developmental terms, in the course of intellectual development our ascent through the stages of knowledge becomes increasingly difficult. We pass with relative ease through the lower portions of Plato's line, from our perceptions of images and

**TABLE 2.2**  
**The Divided Line**

<i>Ways of knowing</i>		<i>Objects of knowledge</i>	
<i>Intellectual thought</i>	Direct knowledge <i>(episteme)</i>	The Good, the higher forms	<i>The forms</i>
	Rational thought <i>(dianoia)</i>	Mathematical concepts, the lower forms	
<i>Perception</i>	Direct perception <i>(pistis)</i>	Physical objects	<i>Sensible objects</i>
	Seeing images <i>(eikasias)</i>	Images of physical objects	

physical things to the knowledge of their formal concepts, but we pass with relative difficulty through the higher portions; that is, to the understanding of the higher forms corresponding to those concepts. For Plato there is no great mystery here. It seemed self-evident that we readily recognize a physical object by looking at a picture of it (the first movement, from perceptual image to the physical thing it represents) and need only a little stimulation—modeled in the exchanges between Socrates and his interlocutors—to move on from there to the general idea of the object. However, what was not at all self-evident for Plato is the *reason why* these early passages are easy and the later passages, while not easy, are nonetheless pursued with passionate intensity. The dynamics of the ascent had yet to be explained.

**Knowledge and Love of the Good**

His eventual explanation, which was to be replaced later by Aristotle’s notion of final causality as a property of individual entities, was that the world as a whole has a goal or *telos*, and that this cosmic teleology is derived from an external source. In Plato’s late dialogue, the *Timaeus*, he identified this source as a transcendent but benevolent “divine craftsman” or *dêmiourgos*, who lovingly imposes an intellectually rich mathematical order on a preexisting flux and thereby transforms chaos into cosmos. This account, which was foreshadowed in the early and middle dialogues such as the *Republic*, *Phaedo*, and *Philebus*, fused the concepts of divine benevolence, cosmic order, intellectual comeliness, and striving of all sorts—especially the striving of human beings toward cognitive, moral, and religious excellence. Although there are always conflicting interpretations of the relationships between Platonic dialogues, many of today’s most prominent scholars associate the idea of a cosmic teleology developed in the *Timaeus* with the idea of the Form of the Good that he introduced in the *Republic* but never developed.

In a nutshell, Plato’s thesis had two parts: (1) because it is the highest form, the form of the Good is supremely intelligible, and (2) other forms participate in its goodness because they too are thoroughly intelligible albeit more limited in their referential range. Since even sensible things and images participate in the intelligibility of their respective forms (the tire on my car can be understood as representing, imperfectly, the idea of a perfect circle), they too have a derivative sort of goodness. Furthermore, something of the same sort also holds for the cognitions directed toward these forms and things: perceptual knowledge is good but intellectual knowledge is better. The movement from less to more adequate modes of thinking is, then, powered by the value-laden character of the hierarchy represented in the Divided Line. The ascent is based on a metaphysical dynamic.

Although the Good was the highest in a hierarchy of ideal Forms, it could be known indirectly in the course of knowing the lower Forms that reflect its goodness—indeed, one could even get a glimmer of the highest Form from the most banal perceptual experience. This idea is not as arcane or counterintuitive as it might first seem. We use lofty ceremonial language to commend saints and heroes for their goodness, but we also smack our lips after eating a hot dog and say, quite unceremoniously, “Mmm, that was good!” Banalities such as the hot dog commendation have been the subject of language-analytic theorizing by metaethical philosophers since G. E. Moore, but they also illustrate something important about Plato’s original theory of the forms. In our lived experience the theoretical distinction between knowing and willing regularly disappears. In ordinary, nonproblematic circumstances—say on a perfect day at the stadium when the home team is winning and lunch was a very long time ago—to see or smell a hot dog cooking on the grill is by that very fact to want it. In other words, the hot dog is *perceived as desirable* or, as Plato would say, it is apprehended “under the form of the Good.”

If this way of thinking applies to our perceptual experience of hot dogs it should be no surprise that it also applies to less humble forms of cognition. Christian philosophers and theologians such as Thomas Aquinas have hypothesized that the beatific vision enjoyed by the saints in heaven is at once a face-to-face knowledge of God and a perfect loving union with him. And theorists of human development have said the same thing about knowledge of the Good qua *moral*, which is to say the ideal Form of Justice: to know it is to choose it. Jean Piaget and Lawrence Kohlberg are examples of this sort of moral cognitivism.<sup>8</sup> The philosopher William Frankena is another. In his classical article on metaethical internalism, he argued that the very locution “X is the good [or right] thing to do” entails a motivational claim on the part of the speaker that he or she is at least somewhat inclined to do X” (Frankena, 1958; see also Wren, 1991).

But neither contemporary cognitivists nor ancient Platonists ever thought that it is easy to attain a direct, internally motivating vision of the moral Good qua *moral*. Piaget and Kohlberg postulated a series of logically structured stages through which one must pass on the way to the complete fusion of moral knowledge and moral virtue. Plato, on the other hand, simply told a story, his famous Allegory of the Cave. The allegory makes the same points that he laid out in his Divided Line analogy, but this time as a narrative. A group of prisoners have been chained together since birth and only see shadows on the wall in front of them, cast by a fire behind them against crude two-dimensional replicas of things in the outside world, which of course the prisoners have never seen nor even imagined to exist. One of the prisoners is dragged outside the cave where, after becoming accustomed to the bright light of the real world, he attains true knowledge or what we might call the higher stages of Platonic cognitive development. He sees for the first time and with increasing acuity the really real things (here read: eternal truths) that were so poorly imaged in the cave. Eventually he also sees the Sun itself, which like the Good, is the source of all things. The story does not have a happy ending, though. He later returns to the cave, where he is reviled by the prisoners for his inability to predict the goings and comings of the shadows on the wall. As often happens with those who try to enlighten others, he is eventually killed.

The point of Plato’s story is, of course, that it is a terrible mistake to think that the physical world is the real world, even though the only true knowledge and hence the only knowledge really worth having—the knowledge of the ideal Forms—is acquired slowly and with great difficulty. But for all its drama the narrative of the prisoners in the cave leaves out an important part of Plato’s concept of human development: his view of knowledge as remembrance or anamnesis. Commentators divide on whether Plato was speaking figuratively or literally when he declared in the *Meno* (81d) that the soul “has been born many times and has seen all things both here and in the other world.” However, he definitely believed that, as he said a bit later in the same dialogue, “the truth about reality is always in our soul” (*Meno*, 86b; see also *Phaedo*, 72e–73a). For some



reason, supposedly the shock of being born into the sensible world, we have forgotten most if not all of this “truth about reality” but, since the truth is still in our soul, the good news is that recollection or anamnesis is possible. It was this happy fact that William Wordsworth celebrated in his poem “Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood,” exclaiming

O joy! that in our embers  
Is something that doth live,  
That nature yet remembers  
What was so fugitive.

This “something that doth live” is, of course, the innate nostalgia that motivates the search for wisdom. It is not exactly part of the human essence, as Aristotle would later insist, but it is nonetheless part of the cosmic telos described above. (Another part of the cosmic telos is the supplemental motivation provided by external agents such as teachers, parents, and society as a whole: recall that the prisoner in the cave was *forced* to begin his journey toward the light [*Republic*, 515d].) This nostalgia is passion, not idle curiosity. It takes the form of what might be called the love of learning, but also the love of what is to be learned. It is the ultimate answer to the question of why Plato thought that to know the Good, Justice, or any other Form was to love it.

### The Beauty of Virtue

Plato’s most famous account of virtue is his discussion of justice in the *Republic*, where he compares the tripartite structure of the soul (mind, spirit, and appetite) to the three classes of an ideal society (rulers, guardians, and workers). Each of these three classes has a distinctive function—ruling, protecting, and producing/consuming goods—which when done well exhibits the virtues of wisdom, courage, and temperance respectively. A just society is one in which all three classes work well and harmoniously together. Similarly, an individual who is wise, courageous, and temperate is said to be just in a global sense that corresponds to what we mean today by calling someone a very righteous or moral person.

So far so good. But here as in Plato’s other dialogical writings, it is important to recognize what precipitated his famous parallel of personal and societal justice. Much earlier in the dialogue Socrates had been shocked by the cynical claim, represented by the sophist Thrasymachus, that justice is nothing more than an instrument of self-interest. In opposition, Socrates argued that justice (and by extension, virtue in general) is not a means but rather a good in itself, a “thing of beauty” (*to kalon*). But what does this mean? Is Plato grounding his moral theory in purely aesthetic value? Not exactly.

Although he expounded his comparison of a just person and a just society without going into detail about any of the constitutive virtues, it is clear from this and other parts of the *Republic* that Plato believed each virtue has its own status as an ideal Form or eternal truth, and hence can be known directly in roughly the same way as the other Forms or eternal truths, such as the one embodied in the tire of my car. In the latter case the eternal truth is the mathematical formula for a circle ( $c = \pi d$ ); in the former (the moral judgment) it is a moral principle. Supposedly those who are truly wise understand the hurly-burly of daily life in these terms, which in moral life means that our judgments of what to do are based on principle in the double sense that the principle provides a motivational component as described above and also a justificatory rationale. Understood in this way, Plato’s teaching on the virtues fits better with the rule-oriented moral theory of Immanuel Kant and his contemporary heirs—who include not only philosophers like John Rawls

but also cognitive developments such as Piaget and Kohlberg—than with the disposition-oriented theory of Aristotle and his heirs—who include not only philosophers like Alasdair MacIntyre but also most of the character educationists featured elsewhere in this volume.

### Moral Complexity

However, before we move to Aristotle's theory it is important to soften this overly sharp contrast between Plato's supposed ethic of principles and Aristotle's ethic of virtue. Plato certainly believed that for every virtue that we see in the lives of real people there is a corresponding ideal Form, but he never explicitly claimed that actual moral judgments proceed top down, from abstract principles to concrete actions. This point is made clear in the opening pages of the very first Platonic dialogue that we have, the *Euthyphro*. Socrates encounters the young Euthyphro who is on his way to prosecute his own father for murder because Euthyphro thinks his moral obligation to do so is perfectly clear. However, Socrates is not so sure, and one of Plato's most lifelike conversations begins. The script could have been written by Aristotle, though at no time does Socrates invoke any eternal principles of morality. Instead he asks questions about the concrete details of the case, such as the relationship between the father and the man whom he allegedly murdered, who was a slave of dubious morality. Euthyphro's attempt to bring the entire case under a single principle, namely piety to the commands of the gods, is shown to be hopelessly naive, and the dialogue ends, quite significantly, with no resolution as to what Euthyphro should do.

The conclusion which we should draw from this short exegesis is, I think, that although it would be wrong to ignore the difference between Plato's idealist approach to morality and Aristotle's contextualist approach, it would be equally wrong to ignore the fact that Aristotle inherited the categories of his old teacher even though he used them quite differently.

## ARISTOTLE

After Socrates' death in 399 BCE, Plato taught in the academy until he died, during which time Aristotle (384–322 BCE) was a student and then, after Plato's death, the founder of a rival school, the Lyceum. The institutional rivalry between these two schools is of little historical interest but the intellectual rivalry between Aristotle and those of Plato's disciples who remained true to their teacher's intellectual idealism is important. The contrast is supposedly illustrated in Raphael's famous painting *The School of Athens*, in which Plato and Aristotle are pictured together, the one pointing heavenward for the realm of the ideal Forms and the other gesturing downward to the earth which, for Aristotelians, was the truly real world.

Plato's notion of human development was fundamentally backward looking—the prisoner in the cave was really trying to return to a pristine state that he had lost, but for Aristotle human development was as forward looking as any other sort of organic development. It was a goal-seeking, not a form-recalling sort of process. It was, in a word, teleological. Just as the internal dynamism or telos of an acorn is to grow into an oak tree, so the telos of human beings is to develop into fully functional, happy, flourishing rational animals. And that is what organisms do when nothing goes wrong. Of course things can go wrong and often do, for people as well as acorns. Even so, the acorns have an easier time of it, since they cannot err. Unless certain external conditions are absent (the acorn falls onto a sidewalk rather than fertile soil) growth is guaranteed, for the simple reason that acorns are not conscious of the end-state they are moving toward.

With this we come to what may be the two most important and least understood parts of Aristotle's theory of human development and, in consequence, his conception of character and

character education. The first part is his conception of the human telos as living in conformity with reason. Such a life may appear from the outside to be hopelessly conventional, but if the “reason” to which a person conforms is his or her *own* reason and not just an external social norm, then it is clearly wrong to equate good character with mindless conformity. Even so, Aristotle is often read this way, owing to the second part of his theory of human development; namely, the account of character acquisition as “habituation.” These two themes, “conformity with reason” and “habituation,” need to be disentangled if we are to understand the relationship between classical Aristotelian virtue theory and contemporary theories of moral education.

There is an important ambiguity in Aristotle’s use of the term “reason” in the context of moral character and virtue. Sometimes he seems to mean the individual’s own historically situated cognitive faculty and at other times he echoes Plato’s notion of Reason as a transcendent reality that by its very nature always seizes upon the truth. The latter impression is strengthened by W. D Ross’s famous translation of the *Nicomachean Ethics*, where the original Greek *orthos logos* is rendered as “right rule” (1138b25).<sup>9</sup> However, more recent scholarship regards this choice as far too Kantian, so that now the preferred translations are “right reason” and “practical wisdom.” Indeed, the more colloquial (and more literal) phrase “straight thinking” may be even closer to what Aristotle has in mind, but this is not the place to quibble over terminology. What is important is that for Aristotle moral reasoning was an interpretation of here-and-now situations, not the imposition of antecedently known eternal principles onto the empirical phenomena of the present moment.

This point has been made repeatedly by Aristotle scholars since the 1970s and 1980s, but it is only slowly percolating into the respective literatures of moral development and character education. In his early work Kohlberg (1970) dismissed virtue theory as an essentially noncognitive bundle of habits that were not only conceptually and psychologically disconnected from each other (character being considered as “a bag of virtues”) but also too situation specific to be the subject of any realistic education program. He eventually qualified this view (see Power, Higgins, & Kohlberg, 1989) but the line had been drawn, and character educationists such as W. Bennett (1980, 1991) who resisted the Kohlbergian characterization of virtue as knowledge of the good also unknowingly resisted the idea at the heart of Aristotle’s own view, namely that virtue is cognitive through and through. It is, as he put it, “a character state concerned with choice, lying in the mean relative to us, being determined by reason and the way the person of practical wisdom would determine it” (1107a1).

This idea of practical wisdom or *phronesis*—sometimes rather misleadingly translated as “prudence”—is the core of what we might equally well call Aristotle’s cognitive developmental moral psychology or Aristotelian social learning theory. Moral goodness and wisdom are necessary conditions for each other, in that one cannot be fully good without practical wisdom nor practically wise without also being virtuous. So put—and this was the way Aristotle himself put it (NE1144b31-2)—this famous dictum may sound like a chicken-and-egg sort of circular argument. But if we temporarily suspend the chronological question of which precedes which, and instead analyze separately what Nancy Sherman (1989) has called the four areas of practical wisdom, we can see what Aristotle had in mind. We can also see the general outlines of what he would have said about the current disconnection between the cognitive developmental and character formation models of moral education.

The four areas of practical wisdom that Sherman identifies (while adding that there may be more) are perception, deliberation (choice-making), collaborative thinking, and habituation. Each of these areas has its own logical geography and developmental course, and of course all four overlap in important ways. Each has been the subject of arcane debates among philosophers, classicists, and philologists, but their basic features are reassuringly familiar to anyone who has

raised children or engaged in any sort of moral education. The first area, perception, is essentially interpretative; it is the ability to pick out the salient features of a situation. The person with good moral perception can “read the scene” in much the same way as a person with good social skills knows what to say at a funeral, an art critic sees when things come together in a painting or concert, a military commander realizes when the battle is turning, or a coach identifies the other team’s weakness.

This description of perception begins with the concrete situation and is therefore quite different from the top-down account of moral reasoning that is also identified with Aristotle, namely the practical syllogism. In the latter account moral cognition is modeled on deductive inference, where a major and minor premise logically entail a conclusion. Analogously, the so-called practical syllogism (Aristotle himself never used this term) combines a general value statement such as “My goal is X” with a factual statement about the here-and-now situation such as “Doing Y on this occasion will lead to X,” from which the conclusion follows, “I should do Y.”<sup>10</sup> True, the practical syllogism model incorporates perception—after all, the situation-specific minor premise would be impossible without it—but only as accessory to the transsituational and personally neutral value or moral principle that constitutes the major premise. For this reason it would be a mistake to reduce Aristotle’s notion of perception to the task of applying abstract principles to specific situations. Moral cognition and its developmental story run in the opposite direction: our general knowledge of what counts as courageous, just, etc., is the resultant of many specific interpretations of real world situations. Perception is part of the moral response, not its prelude. Sherman aptly puts it: “Pursuing the ends of virtue does not begin with making choices, but with recognizing the circumstances relevant to specific ends” (p. 4).

One might object that some people are just born with greater social sensitivity than others, and that it would be unfair to regard them as more moral than someone who, perhaps because of a harsh upbringing or a central processing deficit, often fails to pick up important social cues. However, Aristotle sees the distribution of moral sensibility as an educational problem, not a fairness issue. He would applaud the “sensitivity training” that is now part of our corporate culture as well of the school and the family. He would, I think, see such efforts as constituting an essential component of moral education.

But of course seeing and doing are not identical. They are different moments of virtuous action, and this difference takes us to the second area of practical wisdom, which is deliberation or choice-making. Like sensitivity, deliberative thinking is a skill that can be learned, in moral as well as nonmoral contexts. Here again we can think of the corporate sector, where management trainees are expected to participate in workshops and other sorts of programs in which they learn how to improve their ability to determine which actions are most appropriate means toward selected ends. This ability includes such subskills as being able to prioritize multiple goals and to integrate them in ways that minimize conflict. The analogy with moral deliberation should be obvious, regardless of whether training in this area is done formally or informally. Instruction, modeling, trial and error, vicarious experience through historical or literary narratives, debates about hypothetical cases—moral educators have used such practices long before Aristotle.

The third area of practical wisdom is collaborative thinking, which is both the source and fruit of hands-on collaboration. This collaboration can be on any scale and at any level of sophistication: within the family, among friends, civic activity, and even across national boundaries. In every case the cognitive requirement is the ability to take the perspective of another, and the affective requirement is the tendency to care about whatever is revealed when one takes such a perspective. Its most primitive version is collaboration for mutual benefit, but Aristotle believed that it is in our nature as “political animals” (*zoon politikon*) to care about common goods such as the quality of our family life itself, the preservation of our friendship, the prestige of our city,

and so on. This expansion of our horizons includes an increased sensitivity to social complexity: children develop better understandings of why their parents worry about the things they do, lovers learn new things about their own motivations, citizens discover in public debate issues they never dreamed of, and so on. Social bonds are not blind attachments but rather richly cognitive relationships, shaped not only by day-to-day interactions with family members, friends, and associates but also by what is now called civic education. The pedagogies for civic education are controversial—what is the correct ratio of discipline to creativity, how to combine respect for authority with critical thinking, etc.—but there is little doubt that Aristotle thought collaborative thinking, like perception and deliberation, is something that can be learned, and that this learning process is an integral component of moral education.

As we turn to the fourth area of practical wisdom, habituation, it might seem that here Aristotle's emphasis will be on noncognitive processes. Many commentators as well as moral educators who invoke Aristotle have interpreted him in that way, though within the scholarly community the tide shifted years ago (see Burnets, 1980; Rorty, 1980; Nussbaum, 1986; Sherman, 1989; Sorabji, 1973–74). Those who continue to favor the noncognitive interpretation take quite literally Aristotle's distinction between the intellectual and moral virtues, according to which the latter consist in habits that regulate the “irrational” parts of the soul (i.e., the passions). These habits, Aristotle tells us, are acquired in childhood by means of external pressures such as discipline, good example, and above all by the repetition of good acts. In this way, we are told, the child develops moral virtue as a “second nature,” a phrase that many character theorists have taken to mean mindless conformity. Moral habituation, it would seem, is comparable to the way other “irrational animals” are trained.

The problem with this interpretation of Aristotle is, as Sherman explains, “it leaves unexplained how the child with merely ‘habituated’ virtue can ever develop the capacities requisite for practical reason and inseparable for full virtue” (p. 158). As we have seen, Aristotle insisted that full virtue is possible only with practical wisdom (NE1144b30-33), which includes the heavily cognitive areas or dimensions of perception of salience, choice-making abilities, and collaborative thinking. It is far more plausible, as an interpretation of Aristotle but also as a description of our own children's development over their early years, to suppose that habituation includes not only rewards and punishments but also reasoned explanations as to why certain actions are rewarded or punished, certain persons are held up as models, and so on. That a child lacks adult-level practical wisdom does not imply that he or she has no cognitive capacities for reading situations, making choices, or taking the perspective of others. Furthermore, a closer look at what Aristotle said about the so-called nonrational parts of the soul (i.e., the passions or emotions), shows that even the crudest responses of fear or anger or desire have cognitive dimensions and hence can be directed by one's own intelligence as well as by external pressures.

We saw that each of the first three areas of practical wisdom had its own educational agenda or pedagogy. Perception is developed through sensitivity training, which includes teaching children how to pick out the morally salient features of a situation. Deliberative thinking is developed through what might be called managerial pedagogy, which shapes the ability to set goals and figure out how to meet them. And collaborative thinking is developed through perspective-taking training and, on a larger scale, civic education. But what about the fourth area, habituation? Does it have its own pedagogy?

Yes and no. Aristotle went to great lengths to explain how moral teachers—typically parents—should use discipline, modeling, and consistent repetition to enable learners to acquire the right habits. This is the pedagogy of habit formation, but it should not be understood as radically distinct from the other three areas of practical wisdom. Virtue is itself a habit and so are all its component skills. For instance, children develop the habit of reading common household social

situations (perception) by observing their mother's sensitive responses to a sibling's unspoken needs; they develop an established habit of carefully weighing the pros and cons of any course of action (deliberation) by doing so on repeated occasions, and they expand their interpersonal horizons to civic readiness (collaborative thinking) by emulating leaders whom they see praised and honored for their service to the community. For Aristotle moral education was organic, not modular: each component pedagogy made its own contribution to the goal of living a life in conformity to reason, but as it did so it provided the necessary condition and platforms for the other pedagogies. This integration of functions was only to be expected in a fundamentally teleological philosophical system such as Aristotle's.

Aristotle's teleology has as its contemporary counterpart recent developmental theories in which reality, especially moral reality, is understood in teleological terms. It should therefore come as no surprise to learn that cognitive developmentalists such as Piaget and Kohlberg sometimes compare Aristotle's account of habituation to their own accounts of the early stages of moral competence (see Power, Higgins, & Kohlberg, 1989, p. 134). Their similarities do seem genuine, but we should not identify Aristotle too closely with any contemporary psychological theory. His recognition of the importance of external pressures such as discipline, good example, trial and error, and above all the repetition of good acts is compatible with the more cognitive approaches of social learning theory, such as Martin Hoffman's (2000) "induction,"<sup>11</sup> which emphasizes the role of reason-giving in parent-child relationships, or Walter Mischel's (1968, p. 150) "observational learning," which is mediated by perceptual-cognitive processes. It is safest to say that Aristotle's theory of habituation and, for that reason plus others, his entire ethical theory is underdetermined as far as contemporary moral psychology is concerned. Even though much of what he says in the *Nicomachean Ethics* and elsewhere is clearly incompatible with hard core behaviorist or associationist approaches to moral socialization, and even though his account of moral education has important developmental features, it leaves open important questions such as whether the acquisition of moral habits is best understood in stage-structural terms, according to which the cognitive capabilities discussed above (perception, etc.) advance in tandem or are clustered in distinct and increasingly adequate ways during the child's developmental career. Perhaps the best way to praise Aristotle's thought in this important area is to say that it seems to be more a matter of common sense than deep psychological theory. That moral virtue is indeed part of the human telos is old news.

## BRITISH EMPIRICISM

We now skip over the transformations of Aristotelian teleology wrought by the Roman Stoics who turned philosophy into a "therapy of desire" (Nussbaum, 1994) and later by the medieval Scholastics who baptized the very idea of goal-seeking and treated it as part of the larger story of divine providence and salvation history. We even rush past the opening century of modernity, when in the 1630s René Descartes rejected the teleological model itself, dismissing it as the keystone of the existing ramshackle edifice of unwarranted assumptions, beliefs, superstitions, and appeals to tradition. These were all important phases in the history of philosophy and the formation of our contemporary views of human nature, but they are not of special relevance to the theory and practice of moral education or character formation. But the phase that came next was not only relevant but a radical break with what was then the established view of human development.

And so we come to rest in the following century, and take up the so-called Father of British Empiricism, John Locke (1632–1704). Locke had not been inspired by the worn-out Scholasti-



cism current when he was a student at Oxford, but cheerfully embraced Descartes' repudiation of tradition as the font of wisdom. However, he rejected its accompanying theory of innate ideas and other cognitive structures. In this respect he and the empiricists who followed him had the same ambivalence toward Descartes that Aristotle had toward Plato.

What psychologists now call human development was a relatively unanalyzed notion in British empiricism. Locke never directly challenged the general Aristotelian model of human flourishing, which he inherited from Scholastic philosophy and the conventional Christianity of the 16th and 17th centuries. Here as elsewhere, he took a commonsense approach to human nature, as did the philosophers who followed him. However, he replaced Aristotle's dynamic notion of human development as the unfolding of an inner teleology with his own relatively static notion of experience as receptivity to external perceptions or "inputs." For instance, we will see below that Locke believed our moral understanding is shaped by a combination of natural prosocial "sentiments" and experiences (observations) of prosocial behavior in others.

Locke's famous image of the mind was a "blank slate" (*tabula rasa*). It lies at the heart of the conception that he and other empiricists such as David Hume and Adam Smith had regarding what counted for them as human development. The blank slate metaphor has two parts: (1) there are no innate ideas (certain ideas such as the moral principle of the Golden rule and principles of identity and contradiction are self-evident, but that does not make them innate), and (2) experience is the only stylus that can write on the slate. There were, said Locke, two sources of experience: *sensation* (which was the primary source, derived from sensible objects external to the mind), and *reflection* (the secondary source, entirely internal to the mind). Among the latter are moral ideas, but Locke left it to his successors to spell out exactly how these ideas emerge.

The most important of these successors, especially in matters of moral psychology, is undoubtedly David Hume (1711–1776). Like Locke he located moral ideas and their corresponding passions under the category of "ideas of reflection" since they were not immediate perceptions of an external reality, though his analysis was much more extensive. He shared Locke's belief that their mutual predecessor Thomas Hobbes had gone too far in his psychological egoism, according to which all action, even moral action, is motivated solely by self-interest. Their more moderate position, which Locke himself did not develop, was that motives of benevolence as well as self-interest are operative in human affairs. In his *Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals* (1751) Hume argued that the way we actually make moral judgments is to approve or disapprove certain actions rather than to describe any unique moral quality they might have. Since as far as he could tell most of the actions we approve of happen to increase public utility, he concluded that we have a natural tendency (motivation) to consider and promote the well-being of others. The "calm passion" of benevolence combines with "pleasurable impressions" such as knowing one is esteemed by others, and thereby creates what learning theorists would later call schedules of internal reinforcement.

In sum, Hume believed that morality is based on affectivity, not rationality, that our nature includes not only the power to reason but also two types of passion, namely self-regarding and other-regarding sentiments, and that successful social systems cultivate both sorts of affectivity. Moral development consists in the cultivation and balance of the sentiments, but there is no special cognitive framework within which this development must take place.

There are several reasons for this absence, but the main one is Hume's associationist theory of knowledge in general. Wielding Ockham's razor, he did away with the assumption that ideas necessarily have a one-for-one correspondence to the components of external reality. Whatever coherence the world (or the self) seems to have is, he claimed, a matter of the simple application to our mental life of three natural laws of association, namely the laws of resemblance, contigu-

ity, and causality (which is basically contiguity in time). Note that what is associated in these laws are not things or events in the world but introspectible entities, namely ideas, taken in the broad sense as including the internal contents of all experience.

The educational implications of this skeptical disconnect between the way our ideas are configured and the way the external world is configured is profound, and they are especially profound in the case of moral education. What is learned are regular relationships between certain kinds of experiences and certain kinds of perception, typically the sentiment-laden perception that one is the object of other persons' approval or the experience of benevolent feelings. How these relationships are learned varies. Sometimes the learning in question is the simple repetition of a pair of ideas or mental events such as the smell of cigarette smoke and the pain of a sublethal electric shock, and sometimes it is a very complicated set of resemblances and correlations such as what the social learning theorist Albert Bandura has called "observational learning," which is to say watching models. As he explains, "By observing others, one forms rules of behavior, and on future occasions this coded information serves as a guide for action.... Throughout the years, modeling has always been acknowledged to be one of the most powerful means of transmitting values, attitudes, and patterns of thought and behavior" (1986, p. 47).

Absent from this quotation is any hint of *why* or *how* the simple experience or set of experiences of seeing a model perform a certain action leads one to form a rule for that action. Like Hume, Bandura has applied Ockham's razor to lop off any epistemological account of the correlation between observation and rule-formation. Although he prefers to be called a "social cognitive theorist" Bandura's approach to observational learning is at bottom as epistemologically empty as Pavlov's classical conditioning paradigm or B.F. Skinner's radical behaviorism (see Wren, 1991, ch. 3). The same could be said of any program of character education that was as faithful to Hume's three laws of association as Bandura was in the passage just quoted.

## KANT

It was perhaps inevitable that Hume's skepticism about our moral and scientific knowledge of the external world would generate a counterskepticism about the validity of the entire empiricist program. However, when the reaction came it was not a return to the straightforward realism of classical philosophy but rather an entirely new conception of philosophical inquiry, known from its very beginnings as "transcendental critique." Its founder was Immanuel Kant (1724–1804), who began his philosophical career in much the same way that Locke did a century earlier, working within the scholastic dogmatism that had lingered on during the modern era in spite of Descartes' *cogito* and Locke's *tabula rasa*. This came to an end for Kant when, in what must have been the philosophical equivalent of a midlife crisis, he read Hume's work and, as he put it, awoke from his dogmatic slumbers.

The rationalists inspired by Descartes and the empiricists inspired by Locke shared the same goal of explaining how our concepts can match the nature of objects, but Kant changed the program. Taking what is now called a constructionist approach, he argued that philosophers must show how the structure of our concepts shapes our experience of the world. He broke this huge task into three parts. The first was to establish the conditions under which (Newtonian) scientific knowledge—and by extension any experience whatsoever—is possible, which he did in the *Critique of Pure Reason* (1781, 1787). Then, using similar categories and methods of argument, he went on to establish the conditions of the possibility of any *moral* experience, first in his famous *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals* (1785) and then in the more formidable *Critique of Practical Reason* (1788). His third major work, the *Critique of Judgment* (1790), analyzed



the compulsion, common to the experiences studied in the first two *Critiques*, to understand our experiences in teleological terms.

Unlike the empiricists, Kant had a clear and radically new conception of human development: personal autonomy. Paradoxically, the way one becomes autonomous is by obeying the law, especially the moral law. But one must obey the law for the right reasons, which is to say from motives of duty rather than the “inclinations” of self-interest. (Note that Kant saw nothing intrinsically wrong with acting from inclination, as long as one does not do so *instead of* acting from duty. He was, in fact, something of a *bon vivant* according to certain reports.)

Kant unfolded his idea of moral autonomy as follows. Since a truly good person is one who has internalized and follows the moral law, the core conception of moral agency is not the teleological notion of human flourishing or virtue but rather the deontological notion (from the Greek word for duty, *deon*) of following a self-imposed rule. Simply put, when I act from inclinations—which range from crude sensual desire to the composite desire for happiness—I am letting my actions be ruled by something other than my own will. I am properly described as acting under the rule of something “other,” which Kant called heteronomy of the will. But when I act in accord with a law that I generate and impose on myself as a rational member of the human community, I am self-ruled, which is of course the literal meaning of the word “autonomy.” Like all legislation, the moral law is formulated as a set of prescriptions, commands, or *imperatives*. Kant distinguished between two sorts of imperatives: hypothetical and categorical.

“*Hypothetical*”: As the term suggests, hypothetical imperatives, like hypothetical statements, have an “if-then” structure, linking an antecedent condition and a consequent action or action-mandate. The action that is the object of the command is only considered good because it is a means to achieve an ulterior end or proposition (the antecedent): “If you want *y*, do *x*,” or negatively, “Avoid *x* if you want *y*.” Thus seemingly moral injunctions such as “Keep your promises if you want people to trust you,” and “Don’t steal if you want to avoid problems with the police,” are hypothetical in form and for that reason not part of the moral law.

“*Categorical*”: In contrast, a truly moral action has neither antecedent nor consequent components. Its rightness is simply unconditioned, that is, independent of considerations of external goals or circumstance. There are no “ifs, ands, or buts”: the action is commanded simply because it is considered to be of value in itself. Thus the general form of a moral imperative is “Do *x*” or “Do not do *y*”—as in “Keep your promises” and “Do not steal.”

Of course it is possible to issue obviously nonmoral commands that are categorical in the trivial sense that no antecedent is uttered, as when a parent says “Wash your hands before coming to the table.” What makes a truly moral imperative different from “Wash your hands” is, then, something over and above the simple absence of an antecedent term. This “special something” is, Kant believed, a formal quality of the *maxim* underlying the action in question, a point that Kohlberg (1981, p. 135 *et passim*) later seized upon in order to differentiate his judgment-oriented approach from the content-oriented approach typical of character education.

To examine this quality we first need to understand Kant’s notion of a maxim or, to use a phrase common in contemporary analytic philosophy, the “relevant act-description.” Kant’s own example is a person who normally tells the truth but is prepared to lie when doing so is to his or her advantage. Such a person has adopted the maxim “I will lie whenever doing so is to my advantage,” and is acting on that maxim whenever he or she engages in lying behavior. Of course many maxims have nothing to do with morality, since they are purely pragmatic policies such as straightening one’s desk at the start of each workday or not picking up hitchhikers.

Now we can return to the “special something” that makes a maxim a moral maxim. For Kant it was the maxim’s *universalizability*. (Note that *universalizability* is a fundamentally different

concept than *universality*, which refers to the fact that some thing or concept not only should be found everywhere but actually is. However, the two concepts sometimes flow into each other: human rights are said to be universal not in the sense that they are actually conceptualized and respected in all cultures but rather in the sense that reason requires that they *should* be. And this is a moral “should.”) However, in the course of developing this idea, Kant actually developed several formulations of the Categorical Imperative, all of which turn on the idea of universalizability. Commentators usually list the following five versions:

1. “Act only according to a maximum that at the same time you could will that it should become a universal law.” In other words, a moral maxim is one that any rationally consistent human being would want to adopt and have others adopt it. The above-mentioned maxim of lying when doing so is to one’s advantage fails this test, since if there were a rule that everyone should lie under such circumstances no one would believe them—which of course is utterly incoherent. Such a maximum destroys the very point of lying.
2. “Act as if the maxim directing your action should be converted, by your will, into a universal law of nature.” The first version showed that immoral maxims are logically incoherent. The phrase “as if” in this second formulation shows that they are also untenable on empirical grounds. Quite simply, no one would ever want to live in a world that was by its very nature populated only by people living according to immoral maxims.
3. “Act in a way that treats all humanity, yourself and all others, always as an end, and never simply as a means.” The point here is that to be moral a maxim must be oriented toward the preservation, protection and safeguarding of all human beings, simply because they are beings which are intrinsically valuable, that is to say ends in themselves. Of course much cooperative activity involves “using” others in the weak sense of getting help from them, but moral cooperation always includes the recognition that those who help us are also persons like ourselves and not mere tools to be used to further our own ends.
4. “Act in a way that your will can regard itself at the same time as making universal law through its maxim.” This version is much like the first one, but it adds the important link between morality and personal autonomy: when we act morally we are actually making the moral law that we follow.
5. “Act as if by means of your maxims, you were always acting as universal legislator, in a possible kingdom of ends.” Finally, the maxim must be acceptable as a norm or law in a possible kingdom of ends. This formulation brings together the ideas of legislative rationality, universalizability, and autonomy. What Kant had in mind can be illustrated by imagining a parliament of partisan but nonetheless civil senators or deputies who have, over and above their personal feelings, a deep-seated respect for each other as legislators, typically accompanied by courtly rhetoric such as “I would respectfully remind my esteemed colleague from the great state of \_\_\_ that....”

Like most philosophers who discuss the way we think about moral issues, Kant took as his normal case a fully functional adult living in a basically decent environment. But cognitive developmental psychologists who focus on children’s moral reasoning processes have also worked in the long shadow of Kant ever since Jean Piaget wrote his *The Moral Judgment of the Child*. First published in 1932, this work is now a classic scholarly resource for moral educational theory. The same can be said of much of the work by Lawrence Kohlberg, whose first publication in 1958 was a doctoral study based on Piaget and whose last publications appeared posthumously as late as 1990. In both cases they charted the development of the child’s ability to make moral judgments about the rightness or wrongness of specific (though hypothetical) actions, and in both

cases claimed to discover an ordered set of stages that began with what Kant called heteronomous principles of action and ended with autonomous principles.

The logical structures of Piaget's and Kohlberg's stages are, of course, well known, but what is not always clear is the dynamic by which the child moves through the sequence. Here we find no help from Kant, who apparently assumed that a clear-thinking person of any age would have an intrinsic motivation to think and act autonomously, even though moral struggle always remained a logical as well as empirical possibility. Ironically, the best account of our tendency to reason autonomously may be found in Aristotle's idea of collaborative thinking. As we saw above, he posited an innate prosociality (the human person as *zoon politikon*) that was realized in the quest for shared goods at various levels of inclusiveness. Aristotle was apparently unaware of how ethnocentric his Athenian conception of human flourishing and moral standards really was, but there does seem to be an important affinity between his idea that people are political animals and Kant's idea of the moral agent as "universal legislator, in a possible kingdom of ends." If so, then the developmental dynamic in question may be connected in important ways with the constructionist epistemology that Piaget and Kohlberg inherited from Kant. As they explain in various contexts, children (and adults, at least in Kohlberg's scheme) move from one stage to the next because of interactions that take place between them and other persons: conflicting social demands, questions proposed by others who think differently, responsibilities for distributing resources, and so on. Toward the end of his career Kohlberg decided that classroom discussions of moral dilemmas were far less effective as occasions of moral growth than were real-life experiences of decision making. With this realization came the "just community" approach to moral education, which in spite of its Kantian conception of moral reasoning seems to incorporate much of Aristotle's own understanding of practical wisdom.

However, the gap between Aristotle and Kant remains. As we saw above, Aristotle believed that practical wisdom, which for him was the supreme moral virtue, is something quite different from principled reasoning. Whereas Kant thought that we first formulate and adjudicate moral maxims and then apply them to concrete situations, Aristotle thought that we first pick out the goods at stake in a given situation, then work out the best way to balance these goods in a coherent and publicly responsible way, and then—but only if one is inclined to be a moral philosopher as well as a moral agent—distill all these considerations into a set of moral principles such as those found in his discussion of distributive justice in Chapter 3 of the *Nicomachean Ethics*.

## THE AFTERMATH

The history of moral philosophy did not end with Kant, but the parts that have most influenced moral educators did, with of course a few exceptions. One of the most important exceptions is Arthur Schopenhauer (1788–1860), whose conception of the world, including the human world, as the representation of a cosmic force or "Will" influenced Freud and those educators who understand morality primarily in Freudian categories. However, Freud himself insisted that Schopenhauer's influence was incidental to his own discovery of the unconscious and related primary processes, and it is safe to say that whatever Schopenhauer's influence on Freud really was, it has had no direct impact on moral educators in the English-speaking world. Something of the same sort holds for the moral theories of G.W.F. Hegel (1770–1831) and Nietzsche (1844–1900), whose influence on 19th- and 20th-century ethical philosophy is not matched by any direct impact their works had on moral education.

Another important exception is John Dewey, who anticipated the cognitive developmental view that human beings advance in their understandings of moral issues in a progressive way. His

application of this general psychological principle to the classroom—the controversial “progressive education” pedagogy—foreshadowed the just community approach mentioned a few lines earlier. As Power, Higgins, and Kohlberg (1989) once explained, “our basic expectation, derived from the theories of Dewey and Piaget, was that participation in the governance of a small school community would stimulate growth of moral reasoning more than would participation in the more traditionally governed high schools” (p. 266).

Philosophers continue to add their voices to the dialogue of moral and character education, but for the most part they do so by retrieving, or better, refurbishing the parts of the philosophical tradition that we have surveyed in this chapter. Among more recent moral philosophers the figure of the late John Rawls (1921–2002) towers over all, but without denying his importance it is clear that much of the power of his social contract theory of justice and its consequent importance for moral educators is an extension of the Kantian approach that he himself readily acknowledged. Similar retrievals are made by virtue theorists such as Alasdair MacIntyre (1929–) who advocate a return to the teleological conception of character found in Aristotle, and utilitarian philosophers such as Richard Brandt (1910–97), whose contributions to the moral education debate were drawn from the deep well of Humean empiricism.

So where does this leave us? Answers to this question are proposed in the remaining chapters of this book. To return to the “mooring” metaphor that opened this chapter, we should keep in mind that the various assertions, denials, interpretations, and methodologies comprised in the following chapters are not free-floating intellectual constructions but rather are moored to a long-standing philosophical tradition. But we should also keep in mind that they are moored in different ways and to different mooring posts, by which I mean that their underlying assumptions are drawn from distinctly different philosophical conceptions of what it means to be and to develop into a truly human person. Understanding how their respective philosophical infrastructures differ will not resolve the difficult theoretical and practical differences among moral educators, but it will enable them to take each other’s perspective more thoroughly and, let us hope for the sake of our children and ourselves, more productively.

## NOTES

1. For an example of the “outside view,” consider Robert Dreeben’s (1968) structural functionalist conception of the school as “an agency of socialization whose task is to effect psychological changes that enable persons to make transitions among other institutions; that is, to develop capacities necessary for appropriate conduct in social settings that make different kinds of demands on [students] and pose different kinds of opportunities” (p. 3).
2. This point has been discussed at length by Ger Snik and other contributors to a volume entitled *Philosophy of Development: Reconstructing the Foundations of Human Development and Education* (van Haften, Korthals, & Wren, 1997). As Snik explains, “The question is not whether we should use the notion of development but only what specific conception of development is most appropriate in educational contexts” (ibid, p. 202).
3. Readers familiar with the history of Christianity will be reminded here of the contrast between the Protestant and Catholic salvation programs: in the first case salvation is a personal pilgrimage à la John Bunyan, whereas in the second case the church is the vehicle that carries one to join the communion of saints.
4. Contemporary and not-so-contemporary personality theorists are divided on the status of the “self.” Some think it is a real thing with objectively determined layers (Wundt, Freud) and others think it is a mere term of convenience (Skinner, Bandura). However, many contemporary psychologists take a process approach to the self (James, Lacan), reminiscent of the Buddhist view and, some say, that of David Hume.

5. Here as elsewhere it is hard to separate their respective views since most of what we know of Socrates comes from his role in Plato's dialogues.
6. The most accessible translation of this and the other Platonic dialogues cited here is probably John M. Cooper's scholarly edition *The Collected Works of Plato* (Plato, 1997). Since many translations of Plato's writings are available I have followed the convention of Platonic scholarship by using the Stephanus line number system instead of page numbers.
7. Suppose the total length of the line is 100 units and its overall ratio is 3:2. The larger of the two main segments will then be 60 units and the smaller one 40. Using the same ratio, the first of these two segments is then subdivided into two smaller ones whose respective lengths are 36 and 24. The second segment is subdivided into segments of 24 and 12 units. And voila! 24=24.
8. In the introduction to the first volume of his collected writings Kohlberg (1981, p. xxix) presents an eight-point summary of the elements of Plato's conception of justice that he incorporated in his own work. The third point is especially relevant here: "...Virtue is knowledge of the good. He who knows the good chooses the good."
9. Ross's translation of the *Nicomachean Ethics* is contained in Aristotle (1984). A much better overall translation of the *Nicomachean Ethics* is the one by C. Rowe, contained in Aristotle (2002). Note that in my discussion of Aristotle I have again followed the practice of using line numbers (the Bekker numbers) rather than page numbers since there are so many different translations of Aristotle's work.
10. Some philosophers prefer to say the conclusion is not "I should" or any other sort of statement but rather the decision itself to do Y—or even the act of doing Y.
11. Hoffman defines this oddly named parenting technique as follows: "the type of discipline...in which parents highlight the other's perspective, point up the other's distress, and make it clear that the child's action caused it" (2000, p. 143).

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# 3

## Moral Self-Identity as the Aim of Education

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### INTRODUCTION

The ambitions that most parents have for their children naturally include the development of important moral dispositions. Most parents want to raise children to become persons of a certain kind, persons who possess traits that are desirable and praiseworthy, whose personalities are imbued with a strong ethical compass. In situations of radical choice we hope that our children do the right thing for the right reason, even when faced with strong inclinations to do otherwise. Moreover, other socialization agents and institutions share this goal. For example, the moral formation of children is one of the foundational goals of formal education (Dewey, 1909; Bryk, 1988; Goodlad, 1992; Goodman & Lesnick, 2001; McClellan, 1999; Strike, chapter 7 this volume) and there is increasing recognition that neighborhoods and communities play critical roles for inducting children into the moral and civic norms that govern human social life (Eccles & Gootman, 2002; Flanagan, Cumsille, Gill, & Gallay, 2007; Lies et al., this volume).

Yet how are we to understand the moral dimensions of personality? When our aspiration is to raise children of “a certain kind,” what does this mean? Historically, the work of developmental and educational scientists have coalesced around two options. One option draws upon Aristotelian resources to assert that moral formation is a matter of character development; it is a matter of developing those dispositions that allow one to live well the life that is good for one to live. We flourish as persons, in other words, when we are in trait possession of the virtues. A second option draws upon Kantian resources to assert that moral formation is a matter of cognitive development; it is a matter of developing sophisticated deliberative competence to resolve the dilemmatic features of our lives but in a way compatible with the “moral point of view.” Our behavior is distinctly moral, under this view, when it conforms to the duties required by the moral law, or, alternatively, when behavior is undertaken for explicit moral reasons.

The character and cognitive developmental options are associated with various educational strategies that are discussed in a number of chapters in this volume and elsewhere (e.g., Lapsley & Narvaez, 2006; Turiel, 2006). In this chapter I describe a third option that attempts to frame the moral qualities of persons in terms of the psychological literatures on selfhood and identity. These constructs have a long history in psychology, and are variously understood by different

research paradigms (e.g., Harter, 2006; Leary & Tangney, 2003). Hence their application to the moral domain is by no means straightforward (Blasi, 2004; see Pease, 1970). Yet, for all the peril, these constructs also hold out considerable promise for understanding the dispositional and motivational bases of moral behavior (Bergman, 2004; Blasi, 2005; Hardy & Carlo, 2005). Moreover, an appeal to self and identity opens up the study of moral development and education to the theoretical and methodological resources of other domains of psychological science, thereby increasing the prospect of our improving the aim of moral education with powerful integrative frameworks.

In the next section I attempt to frame the contemporary appeal of moral self-identity by situating it within the problematic of the character and cognitive developmental alternatives noted earlier. As we will see, neither alternative has much use for the language of selfhood or identity, at least in their traditional, unvarnished formulation, but that a number of theoretical and empirical advances have converged to raise its profile. Five theoretical approaches to moral self-identity will then be described, followed by an account of their educational implications. I will conclude with a survey of “doubts and futures”—conceptual doubts about the coherence of moral self-identity as a useful construct in moral psychology, and possible futures for a moral self-identity research program.

### SITUATING MORAL SELF-IDENTITY

The increasing prominence of moral self-identity in developmental psychology (e.g., Blasi, 1993; Lapsley & Narvaez, 2004) is reflected also by recent trends in contemporary ethics that draw a close connection between personal and moral considerations (Flanagan & Rorty, 1990; Taylor, 1989). As Taylor (1989) put it, “being a self is inseparable from existing in a space of moral issues” (p. 112). Of course, the recent prominence of the moral self should not imply that it was ever completely absent from ethical theory (Bergman, 2005). The Aristotelian ethical tradition, for example, with its emphasis on virtues, is thought particularly friendly to the moral dimensions of selfhood (Punzo, 1996). Moreover, Carr (2001) associates Kant’s moral theory with the view that moral agency is crucial to what it means to be a person. As Carr (2001) put it, “although there are other senses in which human agents may be regarded as persons, the most *significant* sense in which they are persons is that in which they are moral agents” (p. 82). For example, while many strictly contingent facts about one can be open to normative assessment (e.g., competent teacher, good writer, loves Bob Dylan), it is moral integrity, it is one’s moral character, that is a necessary feature of the “real me.”

Yet ethical traditions differ on how tightly to bind the connection between personal and moral. For example, although Kant’s ethical philosophy links moral agency and personhood (Carr, 2001) and carves out a role for virtue (Louden, 1986), it is famously thin in its account of the role of the self or of personality in moral rationality. For Kant, the moral self is a rationally autonomous moral agent, but one not conditioned by empirical realities such as sense experience, bodily desires and passions. The moral self is a “noumenal” agent not bound by causal necessity. It is the noumenal agent that is capable of rational willing. The noumenal moral agent can will *purely*, in complete freedom of the contaminating influence of passion and the determinisms of sensible experience. Indeed, bodily desires—the passions, inclinations, dispositions of our impure wills—exert a force contrary to reason. I will revisit this notion a bit later.

Hence, for the Kantian, embodiment is a pressing moral problem (Johnson, 1993). To get from the embodied, phenomenal agent bound by empirical characteristics, to the noumenal agent who is not, one must abstract from our phenomenal character everything that differentiates us



from one another in the world of experience (Wolff, 1977). The noumenal self abstracts everything that is particular to us and therefore inessential to our shared essences as rational creatures (Stout, 1981). As MacIntyre (1984) put it, “To be a [Kantian] moral agent is...precisely to stand back from any and every situation in which one is involved, from any and every characteristic that one may possess, and to pass judgment on it from a purely universal and abstract point of view that is totally detached from all social particularity” (p. 31). The Kantian moral agent, in other words, would not much care whether the self is a competent teacher, a good writer, or a Bob Dylan fan! Much thicker conceptions of moral personhood are proposed in more recent ethical theory (Sandel, 1982; Taylor, 1989; Williams, 1973). These conceptions weave personal identity into the very fabric of moral agency, and serve as orienting frameworks for recent psychological accounts of moral self-identity. But something like the Kantian option was embraced by the cognitive developmental tradition that dominated the study of moral rationality for almost two generations of researchers. The most prominent example was, of course, Kohlberg’s moral stage theory (Kohlberg, 1969; Lapsley, 2006).

### Kohlberg’s Paradigm

Kohlberg’s research program attempted to show that moral reasoning undergoes qualitatively distinct transformations that coalesce into six developmental stages. The trajectory of moral development aims for the final stage that describes a perfected mode of sociomoral operations. These operations make possible a deep appreciation of the moral point of view, one that seeks consensus, decries ethical relativism, and accedes to the duties and obligations required by universal moral imperatives. Yet Kohlberg’s research program did not leave much room for reflection on how moral cognition intersects with personological processes, for an important paradigmatic reason (there were strategic reasons, too, see Lapsley, 2006).

The paradigmatic reason can be traced to the way that stages are understood in the Piagetian cognitive developmental tradition. For Piaget, stages are descriptive taxonomic categories that classify formal “morphological” properties of children’s thinking on an epistemic level. Much the way a biologist might classify various species of mollusks on the basis of their structural characteristics, so too are forms of thought differentiated on the basis of structural properties. The resulting taxonomy is a stage sequence that describes species of knowledge, varieties and kinds of mental operations, and not different kinds of persons (Chapman, 1988).

When Kohlberg appropriated the Piagetian paradigm to frame moral development he well understood the taxonomic implications of the stage concept. Stages describe variations in the formal structural properties of sociomoral reflection, and not individual differences among persons. Moral stages are not, after all, “boxes for classifying and evaluating persons” (Colby, Kohlberg, Gibbs, & Lieberman, 1983, p. 11). Moral stages permit no aretaic judgment about moral competence, make no evaluative claim about character, say nothing about virtue, and are silent about the moral features of personality and selfhood. Instead, the moral developmental stages, like Piaget’s stages, describe forms of thought organization of an ideal rational moral agent, an epistemic subject, and therefore cannot be “reflections upon the self” (Kohlberg, Levine, & Hewer, 1983, p. 36). There can be no reason to wonder, then, given these paradigm commitments, just how personological issues, or notions of selfhood and identity, could matter to an epistemic subject or to a rational moral agent (Lapsley & Narvaez, 2004b).

Yet Kohlberg’s moral stage theory could not do without a self-construct for long. Kohlberg appealed to the self to provide a motivational linkage between moral judgment and moral action. Kohlberg argued that one is motivated to perform a moral action when one perceives that the self is responsible for enacting the moral law. Hence judgments of self-responsibility play a motiva-

tional role in Kohlberg's moral stage theory, but such judgments are a developmental achievement as well. Judgments of self-responsibility are more likely, for example, at higher stages of moral development. At the highest stages one has a better appreciation that moral principles make prescriptive claims upon the self; that moral principles oblige the self to enact what duty requires. For Kohlberg, then, it is the clear grasp of prescriptivity that launches the responsible self into action.

Kohlberg's notion of the responsible self was largely informed by Blasi's (1983) "self model" of moral action, although there is a subtle but important difference between the two positions. For Blasi, moral action does not follow directly from understanding the prescriptive quality of a deontic judgment, as it does for Kohlberg. Instead, after one makes a moral judgment one filters this judgment through a second set of calculations that speaks to the issue of self-responsibility. These calculations might include whether taking a certain action is so required by one's self-understanding, is so foundational to one's self-identity and to the sort of person one claims oneself to be, that failure to act is to betray something fundamental about one's very identity as a person. Blasi (2004) suggests that the motivation for moral action does not spring directly from a cognition, but rather from a deeply felt sense of fidelity to oneself in action. It springs from a moral identity that is deeply rooted in moral commitments—commitments so deeply rooted, in fact, that to betray them is to betray the self.

This is not quite the same as Kohlberg's view of the responsible self (Lapsley, 1996). For Kohlberg, the moral motivation to act is derived from one's understanding of the prescriptive consequences of the moral law. Moral principles are automotivating for the responsible self who understands them. Under this condition, not to act is to betray a *principle*. For Blasi, moral motivation is a consequence of one's moral identity, and not to act is to betray the *self*. Perhaps Kohlberg was unwilling to implicate the self more directly in moral deliberation lest it open the door to aretaic evaluation of persons, a prospect that he assiduously kept out of his moral stage theory.

Moral stage theory had recourse to the "responsible self," then, as a way of bridging the gap between moral thought and action; between knowing the right thing to do and doing it. Blasi's "self model" has been particularly influential (Lapsley & Narvaez, 2004). Indeed, his account of the self-as-agent, whose identity is constructed by reference to moral reasons, is at the core of many contemporary accounts of moral identity, as we will see.

## THEORIES OF SELF-IDENTITY

There is strong thematic affinity between prominent theories of moral self-identity in psychology and certain influential strands of contemporary ethics. The bridging concept appears to be Harry Frankfurt's (1971) account of how the will is structured by means of second-order desires.

### Orienting Frameworks

Certainly we have motives and desires that structure our wants and impel action. A first-order desire is the desire for anything other than wanting certain desires. But we are capable also of second-order desires, that is, we have the self-reflective capacity to reflect upon our desires and motives, to form judgments and desires with respect to them. A second-order desire is the case of wanting to have certain desires, or alternatively, of wanting certain desires to be one's will, or what Frankfurt (1971) calls *second-order volitions*. For example, we might want to have certain desires (e.g., to exhibit more charity, resist smoking, reduce carbon emissions), but not

necessarily that such desires *be effective*, that is, be part of our will. After all, one's desire to live charitably, to give up addictions, or be environmentally responsible could well clash with prudential judgments about the cost of such exertions; or simply be trumped by the lure of competing desires.

However, when we wish our desires to effectively move us "*all the way to action*" (Frankfurt, 1971, p. 8), that is, to be *willed*, to that extent do we have second-order volitions. Moreover, in Frankfurt's (1971) view, individuals who have second-order volitions are *persons*; those who do not are *wantons*. A person cares about the sort of desires, characteristics, and motives one has, and wants effectively to instantiate these in one's life. A wanton is beset by first-order desires that are ungoverned by second-order volitions. A wanton does not care about the desirability of his desires; does not care about his will. As Frankfurt (1971) put it, "Not only does he pursue whatever course of action he is most strongly inclined to pursue, but he does not care which of his inclinations is the strongest" (p. 11).

Frankfurt's (1971) distinction between first- and second-order desires influenced important theories of moral self-identity in both philosophy (Taylor, 1989) and psychology (e.g., Blasi, 2004, 2005). For example, according to Taylor (1989), an individual is a person to the extent that one engages in *strong evaluation*. Strong evaluators are those who make ethical assessments of their first-order desires. Strong evaluators make discriminations about what is worthy or unworthy, about what is higher or lower, better or worse; and these discriminations are made against a "horizon of significance" that frames and constitutes who we are as persons. Indeed, our identity is defined by strong evaluation; it is defined by reference to things that have significance for us. "To know who I am," Taylor (1989) writes, "is a species of knowing where I stand (p. 27). He continues:

My identity is defined by the commitments and identifications which provide the frame or horizon within which I can try to determine from case to case what is good or valuable, or what ought to be done or what I endorse or oppose. (p. 27)

Taylor (1989) assumes that it is a basic aspiration of human beings to be connected to something of crucial importance; to something considered good, worthy and of fundamental value; and that this orientation to the good "is essential to being a functional moral agent" (p. 42).

### Blasi's Moral Personality

The notion of second-order desires and of the identity-defining commitments of strong evaluation are evident in Blasi's (1984, 1985) early writings on moral self-identity. His work bridges two somewhat disjunctive positions in moral psychology, positions that seem to reflect the dual options of a deeply entrenched "folk theory" of Western morality (see, e.g., Johnson, 1993). The Western folk theory of morality assumes that the will is beset by opposing forces, one of reason, and one of passion; and that the two forces are slugging it out for the control of the will. Kant (1785/1988) assumed, for example, that of the two natures, rationality is what is essential, higher, and worthy of us, while passion and our bodily nature was lower and unworthy, the source of compromise, backsliding, and perdition. Indeed, for Kant (1785/1988), our lowly bodily nature tended "...to argue against these strict laws of duty and to question their validity, or at least their purity and strictness; and, if possible, to make them more accordant with our wishes and inclinations, that is to say, to corrupt them at their very source, and entirely to destroy their worth" (p. 30). Not for nothing, then, did Kant locate the moral self in a transcendental metaphysical realm safely removed from the corrupting contingencies of bodily passions, desires, and motives.

### *Moral Identity*

The difficulty for the moral theorist is to retain the traditional emphasis on moral rationality while constructing a moral psychology that is applicable to creatures like us; that is, to creatures who are thickly-constituted *persons* and not ghostly noumenal ciphers. The danger is twofold, at least from the perspective of our moral folk theory: If one links moral functioning to our deeper human nature—to personality, to the self and its desires, passions and inclinations, then one risks divorcing morality from its most prized possession, which is rationality. But if one emphasizes reason and judgment as the sole moral motives, and casts into darkness those features close to our bodily nature, then one risks divorcing morality from the person. The trick is to ground moral psychology on a realistic conception of the person but in such a way that the rational character of morality is not lost.

Blasi's (1984) solution is instructive. The construction of self-identity is done on the basis of moral commitments. In this case one can speak of a "moral personality." For these individuals moral notions are central, essential, and important to self-understanding. Moral commitments cut deeply to the core of what and who they are as persons. But not everyone constructs the self by reference to moral categories. For some individuals moral considerations do not penetrate their understanding of who they are as persons; nor influence their outlook on important issues; nor "come to mind" when faced with the innumerable transactions of daily life. Some have only a glancing acquaintance with morality but choose to define the self by reference to other priorities; or else incorporate morality into their personality in different degrees; or emphasize some moral considerations ("justice") but not others ("caring").

Hence moral identity is a dimension of individual differences, which is to say, it is a way of talking about personality. One has a moral identity to the extent that moral notions, such as being good, being just, compassionate, or fair, is judged to be central, essential, and important to one's self-understanding. One has a moral identity when one strives to keep faith with identity-defining moral commitments; and when moral claims stake out the very terms of reference for the sort of person one claims to be.

Blasi's (1984) account of moral identity is not far from his self-model of moral action. For example, if moral considerations are crucial to the essential self, then self-integrity will hinge on whether one is self-consistent in action. And failing to act in a way that is self-consistent with what is central, essential, and important to one's moral identity is to risk self-betrayal. In more recent writings Blasi has reflected on how and why people come to care about the self and its projects and desires (Blasi, 2004). He has also proposed a psychological account of moral character, and outlined some important developmental considerations (Blasi, 2005).

### *The Intentional Self*

Blasi (2004) takes issue with cognitivist approaches that view the self exclusively in terms of cognitive constructs—as schemas, representations, concepts, knowledge. This orientation misses something fundamental about human experience, which is the fact that we are not neutral with respect to the self; we care about the sort of person we are, and we take steps to manage and control our behavior, motives, characteristics, and desires accordingly. Moreover, we make distinctions about what is core and fundamental to our identity and what is peripheral and optional. We are motivated to protect this essential self from corruption, and to promote its flourishing by the concrete choices of our lived experience (Blasi & Glodis, 1995). These are activities of an intentional agent who presses on for self-change and self-control, yet such intentional agency is not captured by cognitive literatures that understand the self simply as a species of representational

knowledge. “The problem is especially serious,” Blasi (2004) writes, “when one conceptualizes the construction of self-representation, as is frequently done, as a result of non-intentional, more or less automatic, frequently non-conscious information processing operations” (p. 7, cf. Hassin, Uleman, & Bargh, 2005; Narvaez & Lapsley, 2005).

What is missing from cognitivist accounts is the sort of self-experience that is conscious but nonrepresentational, such as the experience of *intentional action*. Within intentional action the self is experienced immediately in terms of its *agency* (the self is the source of action and controls it) and its sense of *mineness* (the actions belong to the self). In Blasi’s (2004) view, the sense of agency and ownership are real facts about the subjective self, but they are not cognitive representations. They emerge as a consequence of *self-mastery* and *self-appropriation*. Self-mastery is the conscious, intentional process of gradually taking ownership (“colonizing”) of various aspects of the self, including one’s emotions, impulses, and dispositions. An emergent, growing sense of self-mastery has both objective and subjective consequences. On the objective side it yields greater capacity for emotional and behavioral self-regulation. On the subjective side, self-mastery extends one’s agentic reach which, in turn, increases the sense of being in charge, of being capable and responsible, a master of one’s domain.

Similar to self-mastery is the process of *self-appropriation*, which is the “taking over” of different aspects of the self as one’s own property, but integrating them within the self. Self-appropriation is a conscious selection among different aspects of the self, but it is also a stance of welcoming (or rejecting) these contents as a basis for identification. It is as if the person said, “I know that I am all the things that I realize are true of me, but I want only some of them to be *really me*” (Blasi, 2004, p. 14).

Of course, it is easy to see, in Blasi’s (2004) account of self-appropriation, the affinity with Frankfurt’s (1971) notion of second-order volitions; and of Taylor’s (1989) strong evaluation. Blasi (2005) has formulated a psychological account of moral character that appropriates the language of “will” and other resources of Frankfurt’s (1971) seminal paper, but which also proposes developmental steps in the child’s acquisition of will.

### *Moral Character*

One’s moral character presumably is comprised of *virtues*. But it is useful, on Blasi’s (2005) view, to distinguish higher- and lower-order virtues. Lower-order virtues are the many specific predispositions that show up in lists of valued traits favored by character educators including, for example, empathy, compassion, fairness, honesty, generosity, kindness, diligence, and so on. Typically these lists describe predispositions to respond in certain ways in highly specific situations. It is easy to generate these “bags of virtue” (as Kohlberg derisively called them). Indeed, as Blasi (2005) put it, “...one immediately observes that the lists frequently differ from each other, are invariably long, and can be easily extended, and are largely unsystematic” (p. 70). In contrast, higher-order traits have greater generality and quite possibly apply across many situations.

Two clusters of higher-order traits are distinguished. Blasi (2005) calls one cluster “willpower” (or, alternatively, self-control). Willpower as self-control is a toolbox of skills that permit self-regulation in problem solving. Breaking down problems, goal-setting, focusing attention, avoiding distractions, resisting temptation, staying on task, persevering with determination and self-discipline—these are the skills of willpower. The second cluster of higher-order traits are organized around the notion of “integrity,” which refers to internal self-consistency. Being a person of one’s word, being transparent to oneself, being responsible, self-accountable, sincere, and resistant to self-deception—these are the dispositions of integrity. Integrity is felt as *responsibility* when we constrain the self with intentional acts of self-control in the pursuit of our moral aims.

Integrity is felt as *identity* when we imbue the construction of self-meaning with moral desires. When constructed in this way living out one's moral commitments does not feel like a choice but is felt instead as a matter of self-necessity. It is rather like Martin Luther at the Diet of Worms: "*Here I stand; I can do no other.*"

This suggests that self-control and integrity are morally neutral but take on significance for moral character only when they are attached to moral desires. Our self-control and integrity are *moralized* by our desire to keep faith with morality. Here Blasi (2005) appeals to Frankfurt's (1971) notion of effective will and second-order volitions noted earlier. To want to have certain moral desires ("second-order desires"), and to have these desires effectively willed for the self ("second-order volitions"), is the hallmark of moral character, which describes *persons* but not *wantons*. But not all persons possess moral character either, unless they will *moral* desires as second-order volitions.

### *Development of the Moral Will*

Blasi (2005) proposes seven steps in the development of the moral will. At step 1, the child experiences desires, some of which conflict, but the child is unable to distance the self from them or to choose among them. There is intentional action with respect to desires but there is neither volition nor self-mastery. As step 2, second-order desires are now possible to the extent that the child desires to repeat a certain experience of desire satisfaction. A volitional stance is taken towards desires in the sense that they are appropriated and brought under agentic control. The appropriation of a larger number of desires across a wider range of contexts is the hallmark of step 3. At step 4, actions and desires are grouped into categories and these are the object of volitional appropriation. Some undifferentiated and local moral desires might be present, but moral volitions are rare. At step 5 the various categories are subjected to valuation—some are good, beautiful, moral, and so on. But the category of morality is just one of many things to value. No priority is accorded moral values over other values. Moral volitions are in competition with other volitions.

The distinctly moral will comes into sharper focus at steps 6 and 7. Step 6 points to two kinds of individuals: One kind desires certain moral desires to prevail when in conflict with other, rejected desires; and attempts to organize aspects of his or her life in accordance with them. Such moral desires are designated "virtues." A second kind of individual links several of these virtues for the purpose of regulating wider areas of one's life. Such a person is said to have "moral character." The general concern, however, is with ridding rejected desires from one's life. Absent is a notion of "wholeheartedness"—a notion also derived from Frankfurt (1988)—by which Blasi (2005) means that "a general moral desire becomes the basic concerns around which the will is structured" (p. 82). Wholehearted commitment to a moral desire, to the moral good, becomes an aspect of identity to the extent that not to act in accordance with the moral will is unthinkable. This is the stance of some individuals at step 7.

### *Summary*

Blasi's writings on moral identity, personality, and character established the terms of reference for a renewed examination of self and identity in the moral domain. His eloquent, meditative defense of the subjective self-as-agent in psychological science, his insistence on the rational, intentional nature of distinctly moral functioning, and his integration of self and identity with moral rationality and responsibility is a singular, influential achievement. Moreover, Blasi has returned long-forgotten concepts to the vocabulary of modern psychology, including desire, will, and



volition; and added new concepts, such as self-appropriation and wholeheartedness. Although the most searching of his theoretical claims have yet to be translated into sustained empirical research, there are lines of research that do encourage the general thrust of his work.

For example, moral identity is used to explain the motivation of individuals who sheltered Jews during the Holocaust (Monroe, 2003, 2001, 1994). The study of “moral exemplars”—adults whose lives are marked by extraordinary moral commitment—reveal a sense of self that is aligned with moral goals, and moral action undertaken as a matter of felt necessity rather than as a product of effortful deliberation (Colby & Damon, 1992). Similar findings are reported in studies of youth. In one study adolescents who were nominated by community organizations for their uncommon prosocial commitment (“care exemplars”) were more likely to include moral goals and moral traits in their self-descriptions than were matched comparison adolescents (Hart & Fegley, 1995; Reimer, 2003). Moral exemplars show more progress in adult identity development (Matsuba & Walker, 2004), and report self-conceptions that are replete with agentic themes, ideological depth, and complexity (Matsuba & Walker, 2005). Moreover, identity integration and moral reasoning appear to be strongly correlated constructs (Maclean, Walker, & Matsuba, 2004).

There are, of course, other approaches to moral self-identity. Indeed, the moral exemplar studies trade mostly on Blasi’s insight that a self constructed on moral ideals will show a distinctive behavioral profile. Although there is often broad compatibility with Blasi’s framework, alternative approaches to moral identity have starting points other than the subjective self-as-agent, and invoke processes that are more social-cognitive (Aquino & Reed, 2002; Lapsley & Narvaez, 2004b), personological (Walker, 1999; Walker, & Hennig, 2004, 1998), communitarian (Power, 2004; this volume) and contextual (Hart, 2005; Hart, Atkins, & Ford, 1998). A brief summary of these approaches is in order.

### Alternative Approaches to Moral Identity

Power (2004) extends Blasi’s perspective on the self to include a social dimension that takes the form of a moral or just community. The community dimension is critical in Power’s (2004) view, insofar as “The self does not experience a sense of obligation or responsibility to act in isolation but with others within a cultural setting” (p. 52). One’s sense of identification with the group and its communal norms will generate a “moral atmosphere” that either conduces to moral formation or undermines it. Hence moral self-identity is a matter of group identification and shared commitment to its value-laden norms. The moral self identifies with the community by speaking on behalf of its shared norms and by taking on its obligations as binding on the self.

#### *Moral Self in Community*

The transformation of classrooms and schools into just communities is an important educational strategy derived from the Kohlberg tradition (Power & D’Alessandro-Higgins, chapter 12 this volume; Power, Higgins, & Kohlberg, 1989). In a just community there is a commitment to participatory democracy but in the service of becoming a moral community. Members of a community—a classroom or school—commit to a common life that is regulated by norms that reflect moral ideals. These shared norms emerge as a product of democratic deliberation in community meetings. Here the benefits and burdens of shared lived experience are sorted out in a way that encourages group solidarity and identification. But group identification is not simply awareness that one is a member of a group, but rather that one is responsible for the group. The responsible self is a communal self that takes on obligations and duties as result of shared commitment to group norms.

Power (2004) uses Blasi's (1988) account of identity types (*identity observed*, *identity managed*, *identity constructed*) as a template for understanding how a person might identify with a community by speaking on behalf of its norms. In an early phase, one simply acknowledges that one is a member of a group and is bound thereby to group norms (*identity observed*). Then, one speaks up more actively in defense of a group norm, and in urging the community to abide by its commitments (*identity managed*). Finally, one takes "legislative responsibility for constructing group norms" (p. 55; *identity constructed*). Power (2004) argues that the democratic process challenges members to "appropriate" community group membership into one's personal identity. He writes:

This appropriation is rational and critical and is not a passive internalization of group norms and values. Moreover, the appropriation of membership in the community is to be based on the ideals of the community. In this sense the identification with the community not only allows for but encourages a critical stance toward its practices and commitment to change it. (p. 55)

The power of community involvement was demonstrated in a longitudinal study by Pratt and his colleagues (Pratt, Hunsberger, Pancer, & Alisat, 2003). They constructed a moral self-ideal index that was based on participants' endorsement of a set of six personal qualities (trustworthy, honest, fair, just, care, shows integrity, good citizen). At age 19, participants who endorsed a high moral self-ideal were also more likely to endorse the "self-transcendent" values of "universalism" and "benevolence." Moreover, endorsement of each of the six moral qualities predicted an index of involvement in community activities.

Yet longitudinal analysis revealed that it was the temporal precedence of community involvement that led to subsequent endorsement of a moral self-ideal rather than the other way round. Moral self-ideal did not lead to community engagement but was its result. Moral self-ideal is a precipitate of good works and not its cause. It is a dependent variable. If true this suggests that the best way to influence attitudes and values is to *first change behavior*—in this case in the direction of greater community involvement (Pancer & Pratt, 1999). As Pratt et al. (2003) put it, "community involvement by adolescents leads to the development of some sort of sense of identity that is characterized by a greater prominence of moral, prosocial values" (p. 579).

### A "Systems" Model

According to Hart (2005) identity is a crucial construct for at least two reasons. First, it helps us understand not only moral exemplars, but also instances of moral calamity, such as the Rwandan genocide that saw identity used as a lever for the destruction of Tutsis by Hutus (see also, Moshman, 2004). Second, it is a bridge construct between philosophical conceptions of the moral life and certain empirical findings of psychological research. For example, it is a commonplace in ethical theory to assert that moral freedom is grounded by our rational capacity to discern options, make decision, and justify actions. On this account a behavior has no particular moral status unless it is motivated by an explicit moral judgment, one that is reached by means of an effortful, deliberative decision-making calculus.

Yet this image of moral agency collides with empirical research that shows that much of human decision making is not like this at all; and that, indeed, much social behavior is under "nonconscious control" (Bargh, 2005). Hart (2005) asserts that moral psychology cannot evade findings like these, yet the deliberative quality of moral life also cannot be dispensed with. In his view the identity construct is one "...in which occasional conscious moral deliberations can be integrated with action plans, emotions and the structures of life" (Hart, 2005, p. 172.), which I take to mean are largely outside of consciousness.



According to Hart (2005), identity includes the ability to take oneself as an object of reflection, and to make an emotional investment in some aspects of the self. Identity is also the felt experience of continuity and sameness over time and place; and a sense of integration of self-attributes. Identity requires the participation of others. It is forged in the heat of relational commitments, within *webs of interlocution* (Taylor, 1989), where social expectations influence which aspects of the self become important, essential, and central to one's identity. Finally, identity is a moment of *strong evaluation* (Taylor, 1989) that helps us discern answers to the traditional questions of ethics ("What should I do?" "What sort of person should I become?").

But Hart's model is distinctive for its account of the factors that influence moral identity formation. Five factors are noted, arrayed into two columns of influence. The first column is composed of (1) enduring dispositional and (2) social (including family, culture, social class) characteristics that change slowly and are probably beyond the volitional control of the developing child. As Hart (2005, p. 179) put it, "Enduring personality characteristics, one's family, one's culture and location in a social structure, all shape moral life." But these things are beyond the control of the child. Children do not select their personality traits; they do not select their home environments or neighborhood, though these settings will influence the contour of their moral formation. As a result, there is a certain *moral luck* (Nagel, 1979; Williams, 1981) involved in the way one's moral life goes, and a certain *fragility of goodness* (Nussbaum, 1986), too, depending on the favorability of the one's ecological circumstances—including the *goodness of fit* between one's enduring personality dispositions and the contextual settings of development.

The second column of influence includes (3) moral judgment and attitudes, (4) the sense of self (including commitment to ideals), and (5) opportunities for moral action. These factors are closer to the volitional control of the agent, and introduce more malleability and plasticity in moral identity formation. Moreover, they are thought to mediate the link between the first column (personality and social) and moral identity formation and other adaptive outcomes.

Hart and his colleagues have reported a number of studies that document key features of the model. One study (Hart, Atkins, & Fegley, 2003) showed that moral identity (as reflected in voluntary community activity) has deep roots in childhood personality. In this study adolescents whose personality profile was judged "resilient" as children were more likely to be engaged in voluntary community work than were teens who had undercontrolled or overcontrolled personality types as children. Social structure also influences children and adolescents' voluntary community service. For example, neighborhoods characterized by poverty and child-saturated environments (a large proportion of the population composed of children and adolescents) are associated with depressed levels of volunteering (Hart, Atkins, Markey, & Youniss, 2004).

Yet social opportunities are associated with increased youth participation in community service (Hart, this volume). In a recent study social opportunities to interact frequently with others in the community, perhaps through social institutional structures (church, community meetings), along with a "helping identity," predicted voluntary community service in a nationally representative sample of adults (Matsuba, Hart, & Atkins, 2007). Indeed, attachment to institutional groups seems to be a powerful way of facilitating youth involvement in community service (Hart, Atkins, & Ford, 1998), particularly attachment to school (Atkins, Hart, & Donnelly, 2004).

Hart's (2005) model is the closest thing we have to a developmental systems perspective on moral identity formation; and one implication of an ecological systems perspective is the expectation of relative plasticity in development (Lerner, 2006). Not surprisingly, then, Hart's model suggests that there is plasticity in moral identity development. Moral identity is open to revision across the life course, particularly when one is given opportunities for moral action. This underscores the importance of providing youth with opportunities for service learning and community service (Hart, Matsuba, & Atkins, chapter 24 this volume).

### *Self-Importance of Moral Identity*

Aquino and Reed's (2002) account of moral identity shares some features in common with Blasi's model. They assume, for example, that moral identity is a dimension of individual differences. Moral identity may be just one of several social identities that one might value, and there are individual differences in the centrality of morality in people's self-definition. Moreover, they assume that moral identity is a key mechanism by which moral judgments and ideals are translated into action.

But Aquino and Reed (2002; Aquino, Reed, Thau, & Freeman, 2007) also diverge from Blasi's model in significant ways. For one thing, they avail themselves of the theoretical resources (and experimental methodologies) of social cognitive approaches to personality, an option that Blasi disfavors. Social cognitive theory assumes, for example, that the activation of mental representations of the self is critical for social information-processing. Hence, they define moral identity in terms of the availability and accessibility of moral schemes (following Lapsley & Lasky, 1999). On this view a person with a moral identity is one for whom moral schemas are chronically accessible, readily primed, and easily activated for appraising the social landscape (Aquino et al., 2007).

Aquino and Reed (2002) also adopt a trait-specific approach to moral identity. They define moral identity as a self-conception that is organized around specific moral traits (e.g., caring, compassionate, fair, friendly, generous, helpful, hardworking, honest, kind). These traits then serve as "salience induction stimuli" (in the manner of spreading activation effects) to activate a person's moral identity when rating the self-importance of these traits on a moral identity instrument. Factor analysis of this instrument revealed two factors: a Symbolization factor (the degree to which the traits are reflected in one's public actions); and an Internalization factor (the degree to which these moral traits are central to one's self-concept). In some studies these nine traits are used in an experimental manipulation to prime the accessibility of moral identity.

Research in this paradigm has yielded highly interesting results. For example, Aquino and Reed (2002) showed that both dimensions were significant predictors of spontaneous moral self-concept and self-reported volunteering, but that internalization showed the stronger relation to actual donating behavior and moral reasoning. In subsequent research individuals with a strong internalized moral identity reported a stronger moral obligation to help and share resources with outgroups; to perceive the worthiness of coming to their aid; and to prefer outgroups in actual donating behavior (Reed & Aquino, 2003). Similarly, Reed, Aquino, and Levy (2007) showed that individuals for whom moral identity is very important prefer to donate their personal time for charitable causes rather than donate money. They also showed that while individuals with high status in the organization may prefer to donate money to charity rather than their time, this tendency was considerably weaker among those with a strongly important moral identity.

Finally, research shows that moral identity appears to neutralize the effectiveness of moral disengagement strategies (mechanisms that allow us to support or perpetrate doing harm to others while protecting our self-image and self-esteem). When the moral self is highly important to one's identity, it undermines the effectiveness of cognitive rationalizations that otherwise allow one to inflict harm on others (Aquino et al., 2007).

### *Moral Identity and Personality*

There are now insistent calls to study moral rationality within the broader context of personality (Walker & Hennig, 1998; Walker & Pitts, 1998; Lapsley & Narvaez, 2004b). Indeed, Walker (1999) suggests that the study of moral functioning has been influenced inordinately

by Kantian formalism in ethics and by the cognitive structural tradition in moral development, a condition he calls *rational planexia*. We are pulled off center, as if by gravity, to study moral rationality at the expense of studying the moral agent as a whole person. Yet moral reasoning cannot be abstracted cleanly from the complex dynamic system of personality of which is both part and product. If moral self-identity, or “character,” is the moral dimension of personality, then our accounts of these constructs must be compatible with well-attested models of personality. But *which* model?

Cervone (1991) argued that personality psychology divides into two disciplines on the question of how best to conceptualize the basic units of personality (see McAdams & Pals, 2006, for an alternative conceptualization). One discipline favors trait/dispositional constructs; the second discipline favors cognitive-affective mechanisms or social cognitive units. The traits/disposition approach accounts for personality structure in terms of between-person classification of inter-individual variability; individual differences are described in terms of “top-down” dispositional constructs as might be found in latent variable taxonomies, such as the Big 5 (extraversion, neuroticism, conscientiousness, agreeableness, open-to-experience). In contrast, the social-cognitive approach understands personality structure in terms of intraindividual, cognitive-affective mechanisms; and attempts to account for individual differences from the “bottom-up,” that is, in terms of specific, within-person psychological systems that are in dynamic interaction with changing situational contexts (Cervone, 2005). Scripts, schemas, episodes, plans, prototypes, and similar constructs are the units of analysis for social-cognitive approaches to personality.

Both disciplines of personality psychology are represented in recent accounts of moral personality. For example, Walker and his colleagues have attempted to understand the personality of moral exemplars in terms of the Big 5 taxonomy. One study showed, for example, that the personality of moral exemplars was oriented towards conscientiousness and agreeableness (Walker, 1999). Agreeableness also characterized young adult moral exemplars (Matsuba & Walker, 2005). In a study of brave, caring, and just Canadians, Walker and Pitts (1998) found that brave exemplars aligned with a complex of traits associated with extraversion; caring exemplars aligned with agreeableness; and just exemplars with a mixture of conscientiousness, emotional stability and openness to experience. This pattern was largely replicated by Walker and Hennig (2004).

In contrast Lapsley and Narvaez (2004) have attempted a social-cognitive approach to the moral personality. Although social-cognitive theory draws attention to cognitive-affective mechanisms that influence social perception, these mechanisms also serve to create and sustain patterns of individual differences. If schemas are easily primed and readily activated (“chronically accessible”) then they direct our attention selectively to certain features of our experience. This selective framing disposes one to select schema-compatible tasks, goals, and settings that canalize and maintain our dispositional tendencies (Cantor, 1990). We choose environments, in other words, that support or reinforce our schema-relevant interests, which illustrates the reciprocal nature of person–context interactions. Moreover, we tend to develop highly practiced behavioral routines in those areas of our experience that are regulated by chronically accessible schemas. In these areas of our social experience we become “virtual experts,” and in these life contexts social cognitive schemas function as “a ready, sometimes automatically available plan of action” (Cantor, 1990, p. 738). In this way chronically accessible schemas function as the cognitive carriers of dispositions.

Social-cognitive theory asserts, then, that schema accessibility and conditions of activation are critical for understanding how patterns of individual differences are channeled and maintained. From this perspective Lapsley and Narvaez (2004) claim that a moral person, or a person who has a moral identity or character, is one for whom moral categories are chronically acces-

sible. If having a moral identity is just when moral notions are central, important, and essential to one's self-understanding, then notions that are central, important, and essential are also those that are chronically accessible for appraising the social landscape. Chronically accessible moral schemas provide a dispositional readiness to discern the moral dimensions of experience, as well as to underwrite the discriminative facility in selecting situationally appropriate behavior.

Recent research has attempted to document the social-cognitive dimensions of moral cognition. For example, research shows that conceptions of good character (Lapsley & Lasky, 1999) and of moral, spiritual, and religious persons (Walker & Pitts, 1998) are organized as cognitive prototypes. Moreover, moral chronicity appears to be a dimension of individual differences that influences spontaneous trait inference and text comprehension (Narvaez, Lapsley, Hagele, & Lasky, 2006). In two studies Narvaez et al. (2006) showed that moral chronics and nonchronics respond differently to the dispositional and moral implications of social cues.

### Educational Implications

The recent enthusiasm for theoretical and empirical analysis of moral self-identity has not yet produced well-articulated plans for making it the aim of education. One impediment is that moral self-identity is often conceptualized from the perspective of adult functioning, and it has proven difficult to work out possible developmental trajectories with enough specificity to yield testable empirical outcomes. This is particularly true for social-cognitive accounts of moral self-identity. In the absence of strong developmental models it is often difficult to work out appropriate educational strategies. Without more precise knowledge of developmental mechanisms it is difficult to know just where, when, and how to intervene.

Yet we are not completely helpless, either. Indeed, each of the perspectives on moral self-identity reviewed here yield clues on how to educate the moral self. For example, one implication of Blasi's approach is that children should develop the proper moral desires as second-order volitions; and to master the virtues of self-control and integrity. But how do children develop wholehearted commitment to moral integrity? Blasi (2005) helpfully describes some possible steps towards the development of the moral will. Yet there are additional clues about possible pathways from research on the development of "conscience" in early childhood.

Kochanska and her colleagues (Kochanska, 2002; Kochanska et al., 2004; Kochanska, Aksan, & Koenig, 1995) proposed a two-step model of emerging morality that begins with the quality of parent-child attachment. A strong, mutually responsive relationship with caregivers orients the child to be receptive to parental influence. Within the bonds of a secure attachment the child is eager to comply with parental expectations and standards. There is "committed compliance" on the part of the child to the norms and values of caregivers which, in turn, motivates moral internalization and the work of "conscience." Kochanska's model moves, then, from security of attachment to committed compliance to moral internalization. This movement is also expected to influence the child's emerging internal representation of the self. As Kochanska et al. (2002) put it:

Children with a strong history of committed compliance with the parent are likely gradually to come to view themselves as embracing the parent's values and rules. Such a moral self, in turn, comes to serve as the regulator of future moral conduct and, more generally, of early morality. (p. 340)

This model would suggest that the source of wholehearted commitment to morality that is characteristic of Blasian moral personality might lie in the mutual, positive affective relationship

with caregivers—assuming that Kochanska’s “committed compliance” is a developmental precursor to Blasi’s “wholehearted commitment.”

Take a recent study by Clark and Ladd (2000) as another example of the general point. They report evidence that a strong sense of connectedness in the parent–child relationship fostered a “prosocial-empathic” orientation in children that resulted in their enjoying numerous adaptation-al advantages among peers. As the authors put it, “Through connected interaction with parents, children develop an empathic socioemotional orientation that serves as a foundation for interpreting social situations and responding prosocially to agemates” (Clark & Ladd, 2000, p. 494; see also O’Reilly & Chatman, 1986, for a somewhat different example). These data, along with Kochanska’s, suggest that the foundation of self-control, integrity, and moral desires is deeply relational. Moral self-identity emerges within a history of secure attachment.

Two points should be underscored. First, this model would be scarce comfort to Blasi to the extent that it yields only a morality of internalization or of compliance. Yet, if there is something to it in broad stroke, that is, if the moral self is congealed within a context of positive, secure attachment relations (Reimer, 2005)—and a relational context is unspecified in Blasi’s model but could use one—then this underscores the importance of school bonding, caring school communities, and attachment to teachers as a basis for prosocial and moral development (Lapsley & Narvaez, 2006).

For example, the Seattle Longitudinal Project shows that there is a press toward behavior consistent with standards when standards are clear and when students have feelings of commitment and attachment to school (Hawkins, Guo, Hill, Battin-Pearson, & Abbott, 2001). The Child Development Project showed the elementary school children’s sense of community leads them to adhere to the values that are most salient in the classroom (Solomon, Watson, Battistich, Schaps, & Delucchi, 1992). These findings are quite close to Kochanska’s model of early conscience development: secure attachment promotes committed compliance which leads to internalization of norms, values, and standards, suggesting some continuity in the mechanisms by which children appropriate the moral values of their family or classroom community (Lapsley & Narvaez, 2006).

Power’s (2004; Power et al., 1989) model of the moral self also underscores the importance of school community for inducing commitment to moral ideals and norms. Power’s model is helpful in at least four ways. First, it is informed by a robust developmental model. Second, there are specific guidelines on how this should work: classrooms and schools should be just communities that use participatory democratic practices and frequent class meetings. Third, the model avoids the language of compliance and internalization in favor of the language of appropriation and of moral constructivism. Fourth, it is attested by a significant literature that documents the efficacy of moral atmosphere for promoting responsibility (Higgins-D’Alessandro & Power, 2005; Power et al., 1989) and for reducing transgressive behavior in schools (e.g., Brugman, Podolskij, Heymans, Boom, Karabanova, & Idobaeva, 2003).

The moral exemplar (e.g., Colby & Damon, 1992) and systems (Hart, 2005) approaches to moral self-identity lead to similar educational recommendations. For example, moral exemplar research holds out as a goal the sort of prosocial commitment exhibited by care exemplars. But how do individuals come to align personal goals with moral ones; or come to identify the self with ideal goals? Colby and Damon (1992) nominate social influence as a decisive mechanism. The key, in their view, is for young people to become absorbed by social networks that have moral goals. A study has documented one mechanism by which friends influence prosocial behavior. Barry and Wentzel (2006) showed, for example, that a friend’s prosocial behavior can influence one’s own pursuit of moral goals (e.g., to be helpful or cooperative) when the affective relationship is strong and interactions are frequent (Barry & Wentzel, 2006).



Similarly, Hart's (2005) research illustrates the importance of cultivating attachment to organizations that provide social opportunities for young people to engage their communities in prosocial service. Indeed, we have seen how community involvement predicts moral self-ideal in late adolescence (Pratt et al., 2003). There is a significant literature that documents the salutary effect of participation in voluntary organizations and service learning opportunities more generally on prosocial behavior and moral civic identity (C. Flanagan, 2004; Youniss & Yates, 1997, 1999).

One challenge for a social cognitive theory of moral self-identity is to specify the developmental sources of moral chronicity. Lapsley & Narvaez (2004b) suggest that moral chronicity is built on the foundation of generalized event representations that characterize early sociopersonality development (Thompson, 1998). These representations have been called the "basic building blocks of cognitive development" (Nelson & Gruendel, 1981, p. 131). They are working models of how social routines unfold and of what one can expect of social experience. These prototypic knowledge structures are progressively elaborated in the early dialogues with caregivers who help children review, structure, and consolidate memories in script-like fashion (Fivish, Kuebli, & Chubb, 1992).

But the key characterological turn of significance for moral psychology is how these early social-cognitive units are transformed from episodic into autobiographical memory. In other words, at some point specific autobiographical memories must be integrated into a narrative form that references a self whose story it is. Autobiographical memory is also a social construction elaborated by means of dialogue within a web of interlocution. Parental interrogatives help children organize events into personally relevant autobiographical memories which provide, as part of the self-narrative, action-guiding scripts that become frequently practiced, overlearned, routine, habitual, and automatic. Some of these events are surely of moral or prosocial significance. Hence parental interrogatives might also include reference to norms, standards, and values so that the moral ideal-self becomes part of the child's autobiographical narrative. In this way parents help children identify morally relevant features of their experience and encourage the formation of social-cognitive schemas that are chronically accessible (Lapsley & Narvaez, 2004b). This suggests, though, that the education of moral self-ideal is not always a matter of pedagogy or curriculum and does not take place primarily in schools.

## Doubts and Futures

As we have seen, moral self-identity is an attractive concept and a promising one. It seems to capture something important about the link between personal agency and the construction of moral ideals. It opens up possibilities for engaging other psychological literatures, particularly those regarding personality and cognition, with the goal of deriving robust integrative models of moral functioning. Moreover, implications for educating the moral self seem broadly compatible with developmental insights about qualities of attachment and affective interpersonal experiences at home, school, and neighborhood; and compatible, too, with instructional best practice with respect to the importance of caring classrooms, just communities, service learning, and participation in voluntary organizations at school and in the wider community.

But there are reasons for pause. Nucci (2004a, b) has provided the most extensive commentary on the moral self-construct. One problem concerns the claim that moral notions are somehow more central to the identity of moral exemplars than nonexemplars; that with a moral self-identity one holds morality in higher regard; that as a dimension of individual differences, some people just don't have a moral self while others do.

Nucci's (2004a) objections are several. First, he generally doubts that anyone would deny

the importance of morality for the self. Virtually everyone thinks that morality is important. Although it is possible for people to disagree about how morality might be displayed for given situations and contexts, he notes that “people generally attend to moral social interactions and have common views of prima facie moral obligations” (p. 119). Second, there is ambiguity about just when and where a moral self-identity is evinced. Indeed, current theory on the moral self does not, in his view, come to grips sufficiently with the heterogeneity of the self-system. Our self-concepts are highly differentiated and domain specific; and our self-evaluations are similarly specific, flexible, and subject to discounting. Mindful of such complexity, when are we confident in ascribing moral self-identity to an agent?

Much current research seems confident is ascribing a moral self to individuals who volunteer in the community—they are “care exemplars”—even though we know nothing of their motivation for service (perhaps it was to burnish a resume). But what about the leaders of the Weathermen underground who took up action against an immoral war by engaging in violent protest? Are violent protest and community service alternative manifestations of a moral self? Was John Brown exercising the prerogatives of moral self-identity at Harpers Ferry? What is the true measure of a man’s moral character when he leads the nation in a heroic struggle for civil rights or when he has serial extramarital affairs along the way? Most biographical studies of individuals whose lives are marked by extraordinary moral accomplishment also reveal instances of appalling moral failure. This observation is made banal by the uneven manifestation of moral qualities in our own lives let alone the lives of heroic exemplars. Yet the language of moral self-identity seems inadequate to capture this complexity. The construct seems insensate to the demand of situations, underestimates contextual influence, and otherwise neglects the social contexts that interact dynamically with dispositional tendencies (Doris, 2002). Nucci (2004a) asks: “Does our moral identity shift with each context? Is it the case that as the self-same person it is the salience of morality that shifts with the context?” (p. 127). As a corrective Nucci (2004a) calls for a “contextualist structural theory” of moral cognition to account for when individuals prioritize morality and when they do not.

Four additional problems are noted by Nucci (2004a). First, it is reductionist to argue that the motivation for moral action is the desire to maintain consistency between action and moral identity: to do so reduces the contextual complexity of moral situations to the simple judgment of whether a certain action is consistent with one’s sense of self. Second, self-consistency is not only reductionism but a species of ethical egoism. It reduces questions about fairness, justice, and human welfare to questions about whether actions accord with desires or make one feel good about the self. Following Frankena (1963), Nucci (2004a) argues that self-consistency is not a motive for moral action, but rather judgment that it was “the right thing to do” (see also, Nucci, 2005). Third, there is very little specification of the developmental features of moral self-identity. Fourth, in some instances, a moral identity is utterly dysfunctional if our identification with a moral framework is so total that we are frozen into moral rigidity or else burn with the crazed indignation of the moral zealot. Moral saints make life unbearable for the rest of us, and you couldn’t be friends with one (Wolf, 1982; also, Sorensen, 2004).

There are also compelling criticisms of the orienting philosophical framework(s) that stand behind current work on moral self-identity (e.g., Keba, 2004). One is never sure how much of this should count against the psychological theory, yet such criticism does seem useful in providing a perspective on possible lines of theory revision. For example, the language of “centrality” is used to describe when moral traits are core to self-identity. Yet, as Rorty and Wong (1990) point out, there are at least seven ways for a trait to be central to identity, and there is no necessary connection among them. Moreover, personal identity has plural aspects—somatic/temperamental dispositions, social role identity, socially defined group identity, ideal identity—and the relative

centrality of traits may be allocated differently across these aspects (and sometimes depending on the context). Differentiating the notion of centrality in this way, and what it means for the configuration of moral self-identity, might address some of the concerns raised by Nucci (2004a).

There is also criticism of the notion of weak and strong evaluation (Taylor, 1989) and, by extension, first- and second-order desires (Frankfurt, 1971). O. Flanagan (1990, p. 37) argues, for example, that strong evaluation “overstates the degree to which rich and effective identity, as well as moral decency, [is] tied to articulate self-comprehension and evaluation.” He continues: “Identity and goodness do not require reflectiveness to any significant degree” (p. 37). Flanagan (1990) objects to the claim that identity is vouchsafed by strong evaluation, that strong evaluation requires linguistic competence and transparent articulacy, and that strong evaluators are persons who make ethical assessments of their desires (where ethical is defined broadly). He argues instead that self-comprehension and self-interpretation does not require rich linguistic environments or even reflective judgments. O. Flanagan (1990) writes:

Such self-comprehension might involve an evolving sense of who one is, of what is important to oneself, and how one wants to live one’s life. But the evolution of this sense might proceed relatively unreflectively, possibly for the most part unconsciously. It might be conceived of along the lines of the acquisition of athletic know-how and savvy by way of continuous practice. (p. 52)

One can recognize and acknowledge standards and conform behavior to them, “without ever having linguistically formulated the standard and without even possessing the ability to do so when pressed” (O. Flanagan, 1990, p. 53).

O. Flanagan (1990) rejects, then, a notion of strong evaluation that is too intellectualistic. A better way to go, in his view, is to endorse Frankfurt’s (1982) notion that identity is constituted by that which we care most about. Adopting the Frankfurt notion has two advantages. First, it allows for identity “in people whose lives are guided by cares, concern, imports and commitments, but who are for whatever reason and to whatever degree, inarticulate about them” (p. 54). Second, this way of framing identity is nonmoralistic in the way that strong evaluation is not. As Flanagan (1990) put it, “For better or worse, what a particular human individual cares about can involve all manner of nonethical concerns (not all of which are thereby loony and low-minded, although they might be) and involve almost nothing in the way of ethical evaluation” (p. 54).

This analysis reveals certain fault lines in how moral self-identity might be understood. In some ways, Flanagan’s (1990) critique of strong evaluation is not necessarily a challenge to the dominant way(s) that moral self-identity is understood. For example, the Frankfurt formulation that links identity to those things that we care about most has resonance with key themes in Blasi’s (2004, 2005) writings on the self. Moreover, contemporary theories of moral self-identity reviewed here would not dispute Flanagan’s (1990) point that what someone cares about most could involve all manner of nonethical concerns. No one is committed to an overly faithful reading of strong evaluation.

That said, Flanagan’s (1990) critique does push extant psychological theory in interesting ways. It holds open the possibility that self-comprehension of the second-order type might proceed unreflectively, perhaps automatically and outside of consciousness. It holds out the possibility that psychological theories that require conscious, intentional, and volitional self-appropriation and self-mastery might overestimate the intellectual resources necessary for the development of the moral will; and overestimate the need for articulate reflective judgment of the sort that is envisioned for moral self-identity.

Future research on moral self-identity could surely take up these and other matters with profit. It might ask, for example: What is the nature of second-order desires, and how transparent



must they be to articulate self-comprehension? How and where do automaticity and “nonconscious” control intersect with the development of the moral will? What does self-appropriation look like in early development? In addition, future research must specify more precise developmental models. Although it is useful to explore adult forms of the moral self, particularly as these are regarded as endpoints of a developmental process, we must now work back to discern the proper trajectories that yield these adult forms as outcomes.

By far the most glaring deficiency in moral self-identity research is the relative absence of well-attested assessments of the construct. There is no consensus on how best to measure moral self-identity in adulthood; and I am not aware of any systematic attempt to measure it in children, a fact that explains the paucity of developmental research. Nothing will stop the momentum of scholarly interest in moral self-identity more surely than the failure to develop suitable assessments. Indeed, most of the advances in moral psychology research since the mid-20th century were made possible by the availability of well-regarded (interview and questionnaire) assessments of moral development and principled reasoning. Clearly the development of such assessments for moral self-identity should be a high priority.

Finally, how best to characterize the units of moral self-identity is in dispute. As we have seen, there is some suspicion of the language of cognitive “representation” to describe adequately the subjective self-as-agent. Recall that the intentional action of the moral agent was said to be “cognitive but nonrepresentational.” Certainly alternative conceptualizations of cognition are welcome. Indeed, interest in nonrepresentational models of enactive or embodied cognition (Varela, Thompson, & Rosch, 1993) might be the way to go to conceptualize the intentional action and volitional agency of the moral self. Working out the implications of nonrepresentational models of cognition for the moral domain is a fascinating and promising line of research for the future.

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# 4

## Moral Education in the Cognitive Developmental Tradition: Lawrence Kohlberg's Revolutionary Ideas

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### INTRODUCTION

To appreciate Lawrence Kohlberg's ideas about moral cognition, development, and education, we need to begin with Kohlberg's own life history. In every generation there is an event or series of events that seems to spark intense interest in the question: How do we best prepare the next generation to become adults of good moral character? In our time, tragic events, such as the Bosnian genocide in the former Yugoslavia, the terrorist acts of September 11, 2001, and the attempted eradication of 80 black African groups from the Darfur region of western Sudan all bring questions of human rights and moral education into sharp relief (cf. Brabeck & Rogers, 2000). For Lawrence Kohlberg (1981) and many others of his generation, the Holocaust brought about by Nazi Germany "is the event in human history that most bespeaks the need for moral education and for a philosophy that can guide it" (p. 407). Kohlberg also noticed that the Holocaust was incongruously organized by a country noted for its citizens' high level of education, flourishing arts, and complex social institutions. This led Kohlberg to seek a new understanding of moral cognition and development and to look for educational factors that supported the development of people's moral judgment maturity.

The youngest of four children born to a Christian mother and a nominally Jewish father, young "Laurie," as he was known then, was socialized into the moral sensibilities of the upper class with its emphasis on individual freedom, privileged rights, and capitalist economics. He attended an elite preparatory school in Massachusetts, where he often found himself on probation as he rebelled against what he considered arbitrary social conventions. As a high school student during World War II, he became acquainted with the plight of European Jewry and, in contrast to his father, began to identify closely with his Jewish heritage. At age 18, instead of following his prep school peers to an Ivy League college, the adventurous Kohlberg joined the U.S. Merchant



Marine and traveled to Europe, where he witnessed the end of the war and met Holocaust survivors. Kohlberg's war experiences intensified his Zionist sympathies and provided him with a moral cause by which to order his identity (Snarey & Hooker, 2006).

After his tour of duty was completed, Kohlberg returned to Europe as a crew member on the *Paducah*. The ship was renamed the *S.S. Redemption* by the Haganah (a Jewish military force) and outfitted to smuggle European Jewish refugees through a British blockade and land them in Palestine, then a British-controlled territory. Was establishing a Jewish state more moral or serving a higher purpose than obeying the law? Kohlberg decided that it was and participated in civil disobedience—willingly breaking British law for what he considered a higher moral purpose. The ship was intercepted about 10 miles off of the coast of Palestine. The crew, not willing to face the consequences of public civil disobedience, hid themselves by mingling with the approximately 1,500 refugees. All were interned on Cyprus. Three months later, with the help of the Haganah, Kohlberg escaped, made his way to Palestine, and was there during the 1948 war, which established the state of Israel (cf. Brabeck, 2000; Kohlberg, 1948; Snarey, 1982; Power, 1991a).

The youthful Kohlberg had contributed in some small way to the care of Holocaust survivors and the founding of a nation. Yet a related moral dilemma was soon unveiled: Was responding to the tragedy of the anti-Semitic Holocaust in Europe by expelling Palestinian Arabs from their ancestral homeland a fully just resolution? Did this end justify the Haganah's methods? Kohlberg had encountered the limits of his then, apparently, Stage 4 moral reasoning.

Kohlberg took the questions raised by his wartime experiences to the University of Chicago where he completed his undergraduate degree in only one year and turned 21. While in college he considered becoming a lawyer or a clinical psychologist as a way of working toward social justice. Eventually he settled into a doctoral program in psychology where, reminiscent of William James, he pursued his joint interest in psychology and philosophy. Kohlberg completed a groundbreaking doctoral dissertation at the age of 31, which was based on interviews he conducted with 84 adolescent boys in Chicago about several moral dilemmas. The boys were asked, "Should Heinz steal a drug to save the life of his wife or should he obey the law and let his wife die for lack of the drug? Why or why not?" As Kohlberg examined the boys' reasons, he identified distinct age-related differences in the complexity of the moral reasoning they used to arrive at and justify their answers. Although psychology at that time was dominated by behaviorists who were reluctant to utter the "m" word, Kohlberg's "bold and daring" dissertation laid out six cognitive-developmental stages of "moral judgment," in which persons construct increasingly complex and progressively more useful understandings of morality (cf. Arnold, 2000, p. 366).

In the Heinz dilemma we may see a reflection of the personal dilemma Kohlberg faced when he purposely violated British law to help the survivors of the Holocaust establish a new life. One might call this the dilemma of "indoctrination" or enculturation, a dilemma that is part of the natural process of individuation. The accepted norms, values, and moral lessons acquired through the process of enculturation are only useful when they work—when they usefully make sense of experience. When moral understandings no longer fit experience, or when they collide with another framework of ideals that may fit experience better, a cognitive dilemma ensues: do we leave cherished values that no longer work to embrace new values? From our perspective, this dilemma reflected Kohlberg's own experience. His upper-class American sensibilities collided with and were modified by his wartime experiences and youthful ideology, which, in turn, were moderated by his adult commitment to the equality of human rights and the dignity of all human beings. He probably made an autobiographical connection when he read Jean Piaget, the Swiss psychologist who theorized that it is just such collisions, when new experiences collide with old structures of thought, that drive the development of the mind. As he studied the works of Jean Piaget, Emile Durkheim, and others, Kohlberg took this insight into the study of morality and

refined it, defining both the structures and the collisions that comprise human moral development (cf. Rest, 1989).

## JEAN PIAGET'S PSYCHOLOGY "VERSUS" EMILE DURKHEIM'S SOCIOLOGY

Contemporary approaches to moral character education have their roots in the theories and methods of Jean Piaget (1896–1980) and Emile Durkheim (1858–1917). One approach, often called Moral Education, emphasizes the participation of the student in moral thought and action through moral dilemma discussions, role play, collaborative peer interaction, and a democratic classroom and school culture. This approach focuses on “cognitive developmental” processes and, like Piaget, places the locus of moral formation in the hands of an individual and his or her peers. Thus, they speak of “the child as a moral philosopher” in the sense that children actively construct ways of thinking about right and wrong. Another approach, often called Character Education, emphasizes the direct teaching of virtues and exemplary character traits, role modeling, and reinforcement of good behavior. This approach focuses on content more than process and, like Durkheim, places the locus of moral formation in the hands of the parent, teacher, or other moral authorities.

### Piaget's Cognitive Developmental Approach

The historical beginnings of the “cognitive developmental tradition,” also termed “structural-developmental,” are found in Jean Piaget's (1947, 1970) work on cognitive development. The approach is “cognitive” or “structural” in that it emphasizes the active nature of children's brains as they cognitively construct or organize structures of thought and action. The “basic premise is that all knowledge is constructed” (Noddings, 1995, p. 115). The approach is “developmental” in that it identifies a series of organized structures that are transformed in an ordered sequence as a person constructs increasingly useful and more complex cognitive operations through interaction with her or his environment.

In *The Moral Judgment of the Child*, Piaget (1932) distinguished two types of moral reasoning, each of which has a different understanding of respect, fairness, and punishment:

1. *Heteronomous morality*. Initially morality is based on unilateral respect for authorities and the rules they prescribe. From a heteronomous perspective, fairness is understood as obedience to authorities and conformity to their sacred rules; consequences are understood as concrete objective damage, which is more relevant than intentions; expiatory punishment is the favored way of making things right.
2. *Autonomous morality*. From an autonomous perspective, morality is based on mutual respect, reciprocity, and equality among peers. Fairness is understood as mutually agreed upon cooperation and reciprocal exchange. Intentionality is understood as relevant; both intentions and consequences can be kept in mind concurrently; punishment by reciprocity is favored.

For Piaget, moral development was concerned with the movement from heteronomous morality to autonomous morality. Piaget was cautious about calling the two forms of morality “stages,” however, because it was not clear that the movement from heteronomous to autonomous morality satisfied the cognitive-developmental criteria for a stage theory (i.e., an invariant sequence of hierarchically integrated, structured wholes).



Piaget also was cautious about moral education programs designed to “push” or promote moral development and more trusting that social interactions, especially with peers, would fuel cognitive development. “Each time one prematurely teaches a child something he could have discovered himself,” Piaget declared, “that child is kept from inventing it and consequently from understanding it completely” (1970, p. 715). Nevertheless, Piaget was an especially strong advocate of democratic educational methods and did not hesitate to criticize what he took to be Durkheim’s position on this point:

The problem is to know what will best prepare the child for its future task of citizenship. Is it the habit of external discipline gained under the influence of unilateral respect and of adult constraint, or is the habit of internal discipline, of mutual respect and of “self-government?”... For ourselves we regard as of the utmost importance the experiments that have been made to introduce democratic methods into schools. We therefore do not at all agree with Durkheim in thinking that it is the master’s business to impose or even to “reveal” rules to the child. (1932, pp. 363–364)

Piaget argues that educators can promote the development of mature moral reasoning by talking with children as equal collaborators in the search for knowledge. Educators who speak with indoctrinative authority, however, will promote the consolidation of childish reasoning. Thus, it is not surprising that Piaget, writing less than eight years after Durkheim’s publication on moral education (1925), considers the moral development approach to be the “opposite pole from the Durkheimian pedagogy” (1932, p. 362).

### Durkheim’s Cultural Socialization Approach

While reading Piaget (1932), Kohlberg also read Piaget’s disparaging comments on Durkheim, and so he initially considered Durkheim’s views through Piagetian lenses. Durkheim had laid out the principles of his approach in his 1902 and 1903 lecture series, published posthumously as *Moral Education: A Study in the Theory and Application of the Sociology of Education* (1925). At the center of Durkheim’s approach is collective socialization or cultural transmission, which is the process whereby a person learns their society’s norms and expectations about what to think and feel, and what one should do, through instruction and explanation, role models, and group reinforcement. From a moral socialization perspective, education for moral character is primarily about social solidarity, group conformity, and mutual support. Durkheim maintained that social norms were the most effective means of control, not because they are socially imposed from the outside, but because they are voluntarily internalized and come to function as the “society living in us” (Coser & Rosenberg, 1964). Durkheim suggests that what is true of the larger society is equally applicable to the school classroom.

Durkheim (1925) identified three elements of morality, which are also goals for moral education:

1. *Spirit of Discipline.* Discipline includes consistent conduct and reliable behavior, respect for social norms, and some sense of authority. Durkheimian discipline is different from simple constraint. Discipline frees us from the need to contrive each solution to each situation from scratch. Only by imposing limits can the child be liberated from the inevitable frustrations of never-ending striving.
2. *Attachment to Social Groups and the Spirit of Altruism.* The unit of moral behavior and moral education is the group or society. Morality, for Durkheim, is a social or interpersonal activity. Self-serving or egotistical action is never regarded as moral, by Durkheim. We are moral beings only to the extent that we are social beings. Thus, morality requires that we are attached to or identified with the group. Only as a child is systematically exposed

to his or her society's cultural heritage, can the child realize a sense of social identity and altruism.

3. *Autonomy or Self-Determination.* The third essential of morality is autonomy. The society is the final authority for the child, but whether to follow society's rules must be freely chosen. Controlled behavior is not good behavior, although the first two elements emphasize the coercive qualities of social relations.

Durkheim distinguished autonomy from submission. Autonomy entails a personal decision, in full knowledge of the consequence of different courses of action, to be loyal to one's society and to do one's duty. Individuals become moral beings as they become conscious of their involvement in a society to which they desire to be duty bound.

Durkheim held that collective responsibility, applied with restraint and judgment, is central to moral education. Thus, in the practice of moral education, the school has a crucial and clearly specified function: to create a new being shaped according to the needs of society. Durkheim's pedagogical approach, to some degree, is reflected in contemporary character education. Moral character formation is accomplished by (1) the modeling of desired personal character and behavior by parents and teachers and other persons in authority, who are open and assertive about their opinions regarding what is right and wrong; (2) enlisting children in practicing prosocial conduct; and (3) exposing students to examples of moral aspirations, moral authorities, and mature behavior in literature, history, and culture (cf. Damon, 1996).

Kohlberg originally saw striking limitations to this method. Derisively labeling contemporary attempts at moral socialization as a "bag of virtues" approach, he explained the limitation of relative subjectivity in his early writings:

Although it may be true that the notion of teaching virtues, such as honesty or integrity, arouses little controversy, it is also true that vague consensus on the goodness of these virtues conceals a great deal of actual disagreement over their definitions. What is one person's "integrity" is another person's "stubbornness," what is one person's honesty in "expressing your true feelings" is another person's insensitivity to the feelings of others. (Kohlberg, 1971, pp. 228–229)

Kohlberg believed that an enculturation approach leaves one open to ethical relativity, and he wanted to avoid basing his approach on socially relative virtues. As he had learned from his wartime experiences, "One person's freedom fighter is another person's terrorist." Kohlberg championed the universalizable principle of justice that would transcend such ethical relativity.

Kohlberg eventually realized, nevertheless, that Piaget had attacked something of a caricature of Durkheim. Both Piaget and Durkheim agreed, for instance, that moral behavior entails cognitive understanding and the exercise of free will, not just imitating role models or ideals of virtue. As Durkheim was careful to indicate, "to teach morality is neither to preach nor to indoctrinate; it is to explain" (1925, p. 20). Both also shared belief in the egoism of the child, the importance of groups' social relations for the child's development, and that morality is formed in the context of relationships. Finally, both viewed a school's classroom dynamics and authority structure as inevitably involved in moral education (cf. Keljo, 1990; Power, 2004).

### Kohlberg's Refined Developmental-Socialization Approach

Kohlberg's work is primarily identified with the "cognitive developmental paradigm" and, in fact, he carried over many of the structural assumptions and criteria that characterized Piaget's stage theory of cognitive development. Kohlberg's stage theory of moral development also postulates that moral reasoning proceeds through an invariant sequence of stages toward an increasingly adequate understanding of what is just or fair. Both Piaget and Kohlberg subscribed to the central

tenet of cognitive developmental theory: the child is a philosopher who actively constructs and makes sense of his or her world. In this light, Kohlberg believed that the educator's aim is to provide the conditions that promote the natural progression of moral judgment by providing ethically enriched and stimulating educational experiences. Kohlberg, with Mayer (1972) found the concept of "natural progression" especially important in countering the implicit moral relativism of adherents of moral socialization. This view held that because stages of moral development have a culturally universal sequence, apparently embedded in cognitive-neural development but requiring social activation, stimulation of the child's development to the next stage is promoting a natural course of development that leads toward universal ethical principles. Like any natural developmental process, environmental conditions can inhibit or enhance growth. Conditions under which the child is able to exercise moral choice are ideal conditions for moral development.

Motivated by insights gained during real-life educational efforts, Kohlberg reread and reconsidered Durkheim. He came to see that the unit of education was the group, not simply the individual, and that moral education should change a school's moral culture, not only develop a person's moral reasoning. In one of his first public statements of his revised perspective, Kohlberg said:

It is not a sufficient guide to the moral educator, who deals with concrete morality in a school world in which value content as well as structure, behavior as well as reasoning, must be dealt with. In this context, an educator must be a socializer, teaching value content and behavior, not merely a Socratic or Rogerian process-facilitator of development. In becoming a socializer and advocate, the teacher moves into "indoctrination," a step that I originally believed to be invalid.... I no longer hold these negative views of indoctrinative moral education, and now I believe that the concepts of guiding moral education must be partly "indoctrinative." This is true, by necessity, in a world [in] which children engage in stealing, cheating, and aggression and in a context wherein one cannot wait until children reach the fifth stage to deal directly with moral behavior.... Now I believe that moral education can be in the form of advocacy or "indoctrination" without violating the child's rights if there is an explicit recognition of shared rights of teachers and students and as long as teacher advocacy is democratic, or subject to the constraints of recognizing student participation in the rule-making and value-upholding process. (1978, pp. 14–15)

Moral development and education, thus revised, involve both the collective socialization of moral content and the developmental promotion of moral reasoning (cf. Narvaez, Getz, Rest, & Thoma, 1999). Kohlberg's bold, creative mindedness is shown by the way he built on the paradoxical tension between, and ultimately aimed to integrate, a Piagetian cognitive development paradigm and a Durkheimian cultural socialization paradigm (cf. Reed, 1997). By democratizing Durkheim, Kohlberg hoped to give priority to the power of the collective in a way that also protected the rights of the individual. These two concepts—the cognitive-developmental promotion of moral reasoning and the collective socialization of moral content—form the foundation on which Kohlberg constructed his three models of moral cognition and his three approaches to moral education. We will continue to address Kohlberg's ability to appreciate both cognitive processes and community content as we, in turn, present Kohlberg's three models of moral cognition (i.e., moral stages, types, atmospheres) and three methods of moral education (i.e., moral exemplars, dilemma discussions, and Just Community schools).

## KOHLBERG'S THREE MODELS OF MORAL COGNITION AND DEVELOPMENT

Kohlberg's stage model of moral development remains his greatest contribution to moral psychology. Though his basic stage theory had changed little since its inception in his dissertation

study (1958), Kohlberg eventually augmented it with two additional models to more adequately explain the process and content of moral cognition and development. Thus, within the paradigm of structuralism, Kohlberg created three models: (1) moral “stages,” (2) moral “types,” and (3) social-moral “atmosphere” levels. Together, they provide a fairly comprehensive view of human moral cognition and development.

### Moral Stages

Kohlberg saw moral judgment development progressing through six stages, cognitively structured moral reasoning steps that follow an invariant sequence. What drives moral development is the adequacy or inadequacy of moral thought structures to make sense of experience. The human mind assimilates the environment to existing thought structures and, when this fails, accommodates by modifying them to more adequately make sense of environmental moral issues. Kohlberg used moral dilemma interviews as his research tool; he presented the equivalent of nine dilemmas, including the now classic Heinz dilemma noted previously, to a cohort of 84 adolescent boys and then studied how they reasoned about the dilemmas.

Where Piaget primarily saw two thought structures in moral reasoning (outlined above), Kohlberg saw six age-related thought structures that he felt best described his subjects’ reasoning about the dilemmas. Through the course of 20 years of longitudinal testing of his original cohort, he observed that when those thought structures were inadequate to solve socio-moral dilemmas, the thought structures would change in a predictable pattern (see Colby, Kohlberg, Gibbs, & Lieberman, 1983; Hart, 1992). In the moral realm, that is, a person progresses from focusing on the self, in which he or she tries to avoid punishment or maximize gains (pre-conventional stages), to include the perspective of those in close relation to him- or herself, which will eventually include whole systems of relationships expressed in groups, institutions, and society as a whole (conventional stages). According to Kohlberg, a person cannot move from pre-conventional to conventional moral reasoning unless and until he or she can think beyond an egocentric perspective and hold multiple perspectives in mind (one’s own, the other’s, and the needs and rights of the group) while performing mental operations on a moral issue. The final level (post-conventional stages) involves holding a complex array of perspectives and thoughts about right moral action against a universalizable set of moral values and principles. Kohlberg’s (1981, 1984, 1987) pre-conventional stages 1 and 2, conventional stages 3 and 4, and post-conventional stages 5 and 6 are defined in Table 4.1.

Overall, Kohlberg’s model of moral stage development illustrates the potential evolution of moral reasoning toward greater complexity and adequacy. Moral stages, for Kohlberg, were not simply moral ideals, ideal types, or virtual models of reasoning, but actual cognitive-developmental stages in the evolving structure of the social-moral brain.

The sweeping nature of his approach received both academic acclaim and public media attention. Scholars, however, also subjected his work to intense scrutiny, which resulted in several critiques because of philosophical questions and an inadequate empirical base. Partially in response to these criticisms, high-quality empirical studies were conducted, and several decisive reviews of the accumulated research studies were published. These reviews provided support for the following conclusions:

1. *Stage validity.* Developmentally, moral stages have been shown to be qualitatively different from each other, and internally integrated structured wholes, which change in an invariant sequence, one stage at a time (Colby & Kohlberg, 1987; Kohlberg, 1984; Snarey, Reimer, & Kohlberg, 1985; cf. Dawson, 2002).

**TABLE 4.1**  
**Kohlberg's Six Developmental Stages of Justice Reasoning**

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**Stage 1: Obedience and punishment orientation**

At Stage 1, what is moral is to avoid breaking rules or to comply for obedience's sake, and to avoid doing physical damage to people or property. Moral judgments are self-evident, requiring little or no justification beyond labeling. A person at Stage 1 does not realize that the interests of others may differ from his or her own. Justice is understood as strict, literal equality, with special needs or mitigating circumstances not understood or taken into consideration. In situations in which an authority is involved, justice is defined as respectful obedience to the authority. The justification for moral action or doing what is right includes avoidance of penalties and the superior power of authorities.

**Stage 2: Instrumental purpose and exchange**

What is moral for the person at Stage 2 is to follow the rules when it is in the person's immediate interest to do so, especially in terms of an equal exchange, a good deal. The person now recognizes that other persons may have other interests. Justice involves relating conflicting individual interests through an instrumental exchange of services or marketplace economy: You scratch my back and I'll scratch yours. The justification for being moral is to serve one's own needs in a world where one must recognize that other people also have their own interests, which may conflict with one's own.

**Stage 3: Mutual interpersonal expectations, good relations**

A person at Stage 3 is able to coordinate the separate perspectives of individuals into a third-person perspective, which enables interpersonal trust, mutual relationships, loyalty, and shared moral values. What is moral is conforming to what is expected by people close to you or what people generally expect of people in one's role as son, sister, parent, friend, and so on. Justice now can take into consideration a person's worthiness, goodness, and circumstances. The justifications for acting morally focus on the desire to be seen as a good person in one's own eyes and those of others. One should be caring of others because, if you put yourself in the other person's shoes, you would want good behavior from others.

**Stage 4: Social System and Conscience Maintenance**

The right thing to do is to be a good citizen, uphold the social order, and maintain the society. What is moral involves fulfilling one's duties. Laws are to be upheld, except in extreme cases in which they conflict with other fixed social duties. Justice centers on the notions of impartiality in application of the law; procedural justice first emerges as a central concern at Stage 4. A just decision also should take into consideration a person's contribution to society. This is a social-maintenance, rather than an interpersonal-maintenance, perspective; being moral involves contributing to one's own society, group, or institution. The justifications for being moral are to keep the institution functioning, to maintain self-respect for having met one's defined obligations, and to avoid setting a socially disruptive precedent.

**Stage 5: Prior rights and social contract**

What is moral is being aware that many values and rules are relative to one's group and subsuming these culturally relative values under fundamental human rights, such as the rights of life and liberty, which are logically prior to society. The person logically organizes rights and values into hierarchies from most to least fundamental. Such non-relative rights are inviolable and should be built into and upheld by any society. Justice now focuses on human rights or social welfare; due process is also a concern. This is a society-creating rather than a society-maintaining point of view. A social system is understood, ideally, as a social contract freely entered into. A person reasoning at Stage 5 justifies upholding the social contract because it preserves one's own rights and the rights of others, ensures impartiality, and promotes the greatest good for the greatest number.

**Stage 6: Universal ethical principles**

Deciding what is moral is guided by universal ethical principles that generate decisions by which human dignity is ensured and persons are treated as ends in themselves rather than simply as means. Particular laws or social agreements are usually valid because they rest on such ethical principles. When laws violate these principles, however, one acts in accordance with the principle. Going beyond the importance of a social contract, Stage 6 also focuses on the process by which a social agreement is reached. This is a moral-justice point of view, involving the deliberate use of justice principles, which centers on the equality of human rights and respect for the dignity of all human beings as free and equal autonomous persons. The justification for being moral is the belief, as that of a rational person, in the validity of universal moral principles that all humanity should follow, and because one has made a self-conscious commitment to them.

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2. *Cross-cultural universality.* The first four stages are found in virtually all cultural groups, and principled reasoning is found to some degree in all complex societies with elaborated systems of education such as India, Japan, and Taiwan. Although the stage sequence is not altered by diverse cultural context, post-conventional or principled reasoning becomes more pluralistic. Where Kohlberg saw *the* post-conventional summit of social evolution, research among non-Western cultural groups and non-European-American racial-ethnic groups reveals a pluralistic array of genuine ethical principles in addition to those addressed by Kohlberg's theory and scoring manual (cf. Sidle Walker & Snarey, 2004; Snarey, 1985, 1987, 1995; Snarey & Keljo, 1991).
3. *Moral action applicability.* Moral behavior and moral reasoning are positively and significantly associated. In both laboratory and real-life settings, moral reasoning is a significant predictor of moral action, including altruistic behavior, resistance of temptation, and nondelinquency (Blasi, 1980). Persons at higher moral stages, for instance, are significantly more likely to help a stranger who needs medical attention (Kohlberg, 1984). The literature also shows a well-established relationship between moral immaturity and delinquency. A 9-year longitudinal and cross-sectional study, for instance, confirms the reciprocal relationship between moral immaturity and delinquency—the higher the moral reasoning score, the lower the rate of delinquency (Raaijmakers, Engles & VanHoof, 2005; cf. Stams et al., 2006). Of course, although the association between moral reasoning and moral action is positive, there are many mediating factors or components between moral reflection and ethical behavior (cf. Bebeau, 2002; Palmer, 2003; Thoma, 1994; Thoma, Rest, & Davison, 1991).
4. *Gender inclusiveness.* Possible gender differences in moral judgment have been a source of continued criticism and controversy. In her book, *In a Different Voice*, Carol Gilligan (1982) was one of the first to suggest that Kohlberg's model of moral development was biased to a more male-oriented morality of justice at the expense of a morality of care and responsibility that better suits female moral perspectives. Some research has shown that females tend to use more care-related concerns in their moral justifications (Garmon, Basinger, Gregg, & Gibbs, 1996; Jaffe & Hyde, 2000). Nevertheless, a substantial body of empirical evidence indicates that the Kohlberg's Moral Judgment Interview scoring system contains no significant bias against women (Walker, 1984) and that Rest's Defining Issues Test scoring system shows a very small but stable gender effect that consistently favors women (Thoma, 1986). Many studies show that women, as well as men, use Kohlberg's ethic of justice. Furthermore, any developmental differences found are more situational than a reflection of stable gender differences across the lifespan (Clopton & Sorell, 1993). For instance, Ryan, Reynolds, and Reynolds (2004) found that the nature of the relationship between the self and the other is more salient than gender in predicting justice versus care reasoning and Thoma's (1986) meta-analysis of studies that had used Rest's Defining Issues Test showed that age and education effects, during the college years, were about "250 times more powerful than gender differences in accounting for the variance" in the maturity of justice reasoning (p. 173).
5. *Care not subordinate to justice.* Carol Gilligan (1982) also identified a moral orientation of care as qualitatively different from the orientation of justice and rights that dominates Kohlberg's theory. While Kohlberg contended that his model of justice included care, others concluded that Gilligan's view had enlarged the psychological understanding of morality (cf. Brabeck, 1984). A number of studies offer evidence that an ethic of care, while present among both men and women, is inadequately represented in Kohlberg's theory (Gilligan, 1982), hypothetical-dilemma interview method (Jaffee & Hyde, 2000),



and scoring manual (Walker, 1984). Philosophically, justice and care are equally vital and equally irreducible principles in normative moral values (cf. Blum, 1988; Noddings, 1984, 1989; Sidle Walker & Snarey, 2004). Different occupational ecologies also seem to require or promote somewhat different moral orientations in terms of the practical usefulness of care or justice ethics (e.g., Branch, 1998, 2000; Rest & Narvaez, 1994). In sum, an ethic of care is a unique ethical voice that is increasingly seen as an expansion of, not subordinate and reducible to, an ethic of justice (cf. Brabeck & Ting, 2000; Jorgensen, 2006; Puka, 1991; Sherblom, 2007).

Kohlberg's stage model, despite a number of necessary qualifications and caveats, remains theoretically forceful and pedagogically useful. It continues to generate innovative, and sometimes ground-breaking, research into the nature of moral thought and action, the causes of delinquency and criminal behavior, our nature as human beings, and the understanding of ourselves as moral agents (cf. Gibbs et al., 2007).

## Moral Types

Kohlberg (1976) and his colleagues (Schrader, Tappan, Kohlberg, & Armon, 1987; Tappan et al., 1987) recognized that moral stages did not account for important within-stage variations seen in moral judgment interviews. To address this variation, they returned to a Piagetian-like conception of morality as two forms of moral judgment: heteronomous and autonomous. They initially conceived of heteronomy and autonomy as two substages within each of Kohlberg's six stages (Lapsley, 1996). Eventually, however, they dropped the "substage" language because research showed that this approach did not satisfy Piagetian stage criteria (e.g., not an invariant sequence from A to B, nor structured wholes).

Kohlberg then turned to the tradition of sociologist Max Weber (1949) and identified the two forms of "ideal types"; that is, an abstraction that defines the extreme forms of the possible properties of each stage. More specifically, Kohlberg and colleagues defined heteronomy and autonomy as two subtypes that may occur within any stage (e.g., Stage 2A and Stage 2B). These subtypes are defined by variations in the content of moral judgments, including notions of freedom from external constraints, ideas about the human construction of rules and law, and issues of who is to be included in the moral domain (Kohlberg, 1984). Moral types are, in essence, a way of accounting for the information about the content of a person's reasoning that is ignored when a strict structural lens for assessing moral stage is applied. Thus, what Kohlberg originally saw as a pioneering but developmentally restricted conception of morality in Piaget's work, was retrieved to describe apparent cycles of variation between heteronomy and autonomy within each stage.

Type analysis or scoring focuses primarily on the content of moral reasoning, whereas stage analysis focuses primarily on the cognitive structure of moral reasoning. When interviews are scored for moral type, the content of a person's reasoning is considered. Kohlberg and his colleagues looked for criteria to discern these ideal types in the psychological and philosophical works of Piaget and Immanuel Kant. They derived nine "content themes" and used them to discern the moral type of the subject under examination. In the scoring manual for moral type, these theoretical criteria are translated into coding criteria for each of the three standard interview dilemmas. The unit of analysis for coding the moral types is the individual dilemma as a whole. Moral type scores are calculated based on the data that meet the criteria of the Piagetian and Kantian categories that reflect autonomous reasoning in two out of three moral dilemmas (Schrader et al., 1987). For example, the content of a subject's reasoning about the "Joe dilemma," which involves a conflict between a parent's promise to a child vs. a child's obligation to obey the parent

even if the parent rescinds the promise, would be analyzed in terms of what the person emphasized or reasoned about. If a subject emphasized pragmatic concerns, held an instrumental view of persons, considered only the self-interests of the persons' involved, made judgments that are justified on an external basis with unilateral obedience to rules and laws in a rigid fashion without regard to justice or fairness, he or she would be scored as an example of type A or heteronomous morality. If a subject reasoned in such a way that reflects a clear hierarchy of moral values, treating persons as ends in themselves, in which judgments would apply to everyone who was in the same situation without reliance on external authority to make judgments, and the person shows an understanding of other's perspective in the dilemma and has a flexible view of rules which can be adapted to achieve the most fair and just solution, he or she would be scored as an example of type B or autonomous morality. The nine criteria that determine moral type are summarized in Table 4.2.

A 6-year longitudinal cross-cultural study (Logan, Snarey, & Schrader, 1990) confirmed Kohlberg's previous longitudinal findings from studies in the United States and Turkey that type B reasoning increased with age (Tappan et al., 1987). Moreover, Logan and colleagues (1990) found that the achievement of type B reasoning was positively and significantly associated with moral stage development; that is, subjects who scored at higher stages were more likely to also use type B reasoning. The longitudinal cross-cultural data, however, also showed a trend of one-time shifts (from type A to type B), after which the type tended to remain stable. Nevertheless, consistent with Kohlberg's conceptualization of moral types, reversals from type B to type A occurred, and both types of reasoning were used by some subjects at every moral stage represented in their study (Stage 2 to Stage 4/5).

Kohlberg's moral types prove to be a robust category in accounting for how moral reasoning translates into moral action. In a number of studies analyzed in Kohlberg's (1984) chapter on moral judgment and moral action, those subjects with a type B moral orientation were more likely to act in concordance with their moral judgments and values even when those values conflicted with a prevailing rule or authority. This discovery is exemplified by data from 26 students involved in the Milgram (1974) experiment who were given the Moral Judgment Interview. The

**TABLE 4.2**  
**Kohlberg's Distinctions between Type A and Type B Moral Orientations**

<i>Criteria</i>	<i>Type A (Heteronomous)</i>	<i>Type B (Autonomous)</i>
Hierarchy	No clear moral hierarchy, reliance on pragmatic and other concerns	Clear hierarchy of moral values; prescriptive duties are primary
Intrinsicity	Instrumental view of persons	Persons as ends in themselves; respect for autonomy, dignity
Prescriptivity	Moral duty as instrumental or hypothetical	Moral duty as moral obligation
Universality	Judgments uncritically assumed to be held by everyone or based on self-interest	Generalized view; applies to everyone in same situation
Freedom	External bases validate judgments	No reliance on external authority or tradition
Mutual respect	Unilateral obedience	Cooperation among equals
Reversibility	Views the dilemma from only one point of view	Understanding of the other's perspective; reciprocity
Constructivism	Rigid view of rules and laws as fixed	Flexible view of rules and laws as adaptable
Choice	Does not choose or justify choice in terms of fairness or justice	Chooses solution generally seen as just or fair

Source: Logan, Snarey & Schrader (1990), p. 75.



Milgram experiment, supposedly testing the effects of punishment on memory, required the subjects to administer an increasingly powerful electric shock to a victim in the event of a wrong answer, even to the point of rendering the victim unconscious. The victim was an actor who was not actually shocked, but the reality of the situation was such that the experimental subjects were forced to choose between obeying the authority of the experimenter (dressed in a white lab coat and encouraging the subject to continue administering the “shock”) and discontinuing the suffering of the victim by ceasing to participate in the experiment. A full 86% of the participants of moral type B quit the experiment regardless of stage. None of the moral type A participants quit and only 18% of those scored as “ambiguous” ceased participation in the experiment (Kohlberg, 1984). Kohlberg accounted for these results by noting that the type B is characterized by a clear conception of the “right” thing to do in a situation (deontic choice) as well as a sense of responsibility to act born of a fully developed notion of autonomy (freedom to act according to one’s own values regardless of what others expect), reversibility (a desire to be treated as one would want to be treated), and universality (that you would expect your action to be “right” in all similar situations). Deontic choice and responsibility are two judgments that mediate moral action, according to Kohlberg (1984).

In sum, Kohlberg’s typology represented an expansion of his stage theory in three respects: (1) moral types address primarily the content of moral reasoning, in contrast to moral stages, which focus primarily on the structure of moral reasoning; (2) either type may occur at any stage and at any age in the lifespan, thus accounting for observed within-stage variability (cf. Gibbs et al., 1986; Schrader et al., 1987); and (3) moral type helps clarify the connection between moral reasoning and moral action.

### Moral Atmosphere

Kohlberg (1980, 1985) and colleagues (Power, Higgins, & Kohlberg, 1989) coined the concept of “moral atmosphere” to refer to a community’s “moral climate” or “moral culture,” by which they primarily meant a community’s shared expectations and normative values. Kohlberg understood that the primary context for the development of a moral person is the group. At the same time, Kohlberg’s stage theory was being criticized for his emphasis on the individual reasoner and upon individual rights, at the expense of the community. Some criticisms were a result of failing to distinguish autonomy from individualism. Nevertheless, communitarian ethical values are rare in Kohlberg’s scoring manual, especially at the post-conventional level, while cross-gender, cross-class, and cross-cultural studies have shown that higher stage reasoning can be articulated in terms of communitarian values (cf. Snarey & Keljo, 1991; Snarey, 1995). Those who are socialized in groups, in which communitarian values prevail, tend to express moral reasoning in terms of those values (e.g., altruism rather than individualism), even at higher stages of moral reasoning. Kohlberg’s stage scoring scheme, by itself, generally misses or misunderstands the phenomenon of communitarian reasoning, especially at the higher stages.

Kohlberg’s theory of moral atmosphere analysis is a robust answer to his communitarian and Durkheimian critics. It is based in part on Durkheim’s (1924) well-known idea that groups themselves have qualities that are not simply the aggregation of the qualities of its individuals, but that the group is greater than the sum of its individual members. Kohlberg and his colleagues sought to characterize the added value of groups that would be the most relevant to moral cognition, development, and behavior. Also, drawing on Durkheim’s concept that the unit of education was the group, Kohlberg concluded that change in the school’s moral culture should have the most profound impact on an individual’s moral formation. Kohlberg specified that the most beneficial group for moral development is a democratically governed group, one that recognizes the rights and responsibilities of each to each other and to the group as a whole. Thus, a simple focus on the

developmental promotion of moral reasoning was not enough; democratic governance would be the kind of collective socialization that would foster moral ideals, goals, and actions as well as promote moral reasoning. The promotion of moral development had to include the collective socialization of moral content. Kohlberg also recognized that moral development is not only about doing justice but is also about the social dimension of a person acting in caring relations among those attached to each other and to the group (McDonough, 2005).

Clark Power and Ann Higgins worked with Kohlberg (1989) to make operational the sociological concept of moral atmospheres by constructing an array of complex variables that, taken together, provide a detailed map of a school's moral atmosphere or climate (cf. Fuqua & Newman, 2006). Three of these variables (levels of institutional valuing, stages of community valuing, and phases of the collective norm) are summarized in Table 4.3. The first two focus on

**TABLE 4.3**  
**Moral Atmosphere: Levels, Stages, and Phases**

<i>Levels of institutional valuing</i>	<i>Stages of community valuing</i>	<i>Phases of the collective norm</i>
Level 0: Rejection The school is not valued.		Phase 0: No collective norm exists or is proposed
Level 1: Instrumental extrinsic valuing The school is valued as an institution that helps individuals to meet their own needs.		<i>Collective Norm Proposal</i>  Phase 1: Individuals propose collective norms for group acceptance.
Level 2: Enthusiastic identification The school is valued at special moments when members feel an intense sense of identification with the school.	Stage 2: There is no clear sense of community apart from exchanges among group members. Community denotes a collection of individuals who do favors for each other and rely on each other for protection. Community is valued insofar as it meets the concrete needs of its members	<i>Collective Norm Acceptance</i>  Phase 2: Collective norm is accepted as a group ideal but not agreed to. It is not an expectation for behavior.  Phase 3: Collective norm is accepted and agreed to, but it is not (yet) an expectation for behavior
Level 3: Spontaneous community The school is valued as the kind of place in which members feel a sense of closeness to others and an inner motivation to help them and to serve the community as a whole.	Stage 3: The sense of community refers to a set of relationships and sharing among group members. The group is valued for the friendliness of its members. The value of the group is equated with the value of its collective normative expectations.	<i>Collective Norm Expectation</i>  Phase 4: Collective norm is accepted and expected (naive expectation).  Phase 5: Collective norm is expected but not followed (disappointed expectation).
Level 4: Normative community The school as a community is valued for its own sake. Community can obligate its members in special ways, and members can expect others to uphold group norms and responsibilities	Stage 4: The community is explicitly valued as an entity distinct from the relationships among its members. Membership in the community is understood in terms of entering into a social contract to respect the norms and ideals of the group. The community is perceived as an organic whole composed of interrelated systems that carry on the functioning of the group.	<i>Collective Norm Enforcement</i>  Phase 6: Collective norm is expected and upheld through persuasion.  Phase 7: Collective norm is expected and upheld through reporting.

*Note:* The parallel listing of the three variables is not intended to imply a clear theoretical parallelism between moral atmosphere levels, stages, and phases.

*Source:* Power, Higgins, & Kohlberg (1989), pp. 117, 119, 130.

the valuing of the school as a social entity and the last one focuses on the phases of commitment to the collective norm.

More generally, Kohlberg and his colleagues noted that “the two major units in this analysis, the collective norm and the element of institutional value, correspond to two of Durkheim’s goals of moral education: discipline and attachment to the group.” They continued: “Durkheim’s third goal of moral education, autonomy, corresponds most closely to our analysis of the stage of norms and elements” (p. 116). As Kohlberg (1985) states elsewhere, they made use of Durkheim’s concept of the “spirit of discipline” as “respect for group norms and rules” and “respect for the group; which makes them” (p. 42), and they made use of his concept of the “spirit of altruism,” which arises from attachment to the group, as “the willingness to freely give up the ego’s interests, privileges and possessions to the group or other members of it” (p. 42). Beyond Durkheim, however, Kohlberg and colleagues also placed more emphasis on rational “autonomy” in order to avoid abuses that could result from “immoral use” of the power of the “collectivist model” (1987, p. 116). Furthermore, Kohlberg (1985) supplemented Durkheim’s concept of “loyalty” to one’s society with “loyalty to universal principles of justice and responsibility as the solution to problems” (p. 41).

Kohlberg’s analysis of social-moral atmosphere demonstrated that he had come to appreciate, and sought to understand better, the profound impact that socialization has on the content of moral reasoning and an individual’s moral concepts (cf. Turiel, 1983). Thus, Kohlberg advanced the idea that school social-moral atmosphere should emphasize a sense of community, democratic values, personal autonomy, individual rights and responsibilities, a sense of fair play, and collective responsibility. Kohlberg’s approach confirmed his sociological turn. He had launched a revolutionary understanding within moral psychology—it is the group that will provide the dilemma of enculturation, the content of which will be rethought, following an invariant sequence of increasingly complex stages of moral reasoning. Variations among social environments, such as opportunities for civic participation, have a significant impact upon the structure of moral development as well as upon the content of moral socialization (cf. Hart & Atkins, 2002).

Attention to moral atmosphere analysis, like moral type analysis discussed above, is another instance of Kohlberg’s recognition of the role of content in moral education. It is also an example of his genuine commitment to understanding education as a two-way street between theory and practice (cf. Selman, 2003). Kohlberg hoped to integrate socialization with development in such a way that gave priority to the power of the community yet also protected the rights of individual community members (Power, Higgins, & Kohlberg, 1989). His approach to moral formation is not merely developmental, but can be characterized as a “developmental-socialization” approach (Snarey & Pavkov, 1991). In sum, the net effect was to broaden Kohlberg’s theory to include the concurrent processes of moral judgment development and cultural values socialization, without reducing one to the other. Subsequent empirical research has provided support for the wisdom of this approach (cf. Narvaez, Getz, Rest, & Thoma, 1999). Within this developmental-socialization approach to morality, Kohlberg’s employed three distinct pedagogical methods.

### KOHLBERG’S THREE METHODS OF MORAL EDUCATION

Kohlberg (1987) understood that what promoted a person’s structural changes in moral reasoning was having rich experiences in the social-moral realm. In fact, the center of his moral identity was that of a moral educator. Kohlberg’s pedagogical methods cover all of the critical learning experiences according to cultural learning theory (Tomasello, Kruger, & Ratner, 1993). Moral exemplars facilitate learning by imitation. Dilemma discussions are a prime example of collab-

orative learning, and the Just Community approach employs direct instruction along with collaborative learning and imitation. Kohlberg's multiple approaches to moral education promote learning from interaction with adult role models (moral exemplars), peers and friends (dilemma discussions), and the larger school community (Just Community schools).

### Moral Exemplars

The least acknowledged of Kohlberg's methods of moral education is his use of "moral exemplars." Kohlberg recognized moral exemplars as pedagogically useful in terms of both supporting socialization and promoting development. Looking back at his writings, one can see that he intuitively understood that observing those who practiced moral principles was a more direct method of teaching than any theory could hope to attain (cf. Bigelow, 2001). Kohlberg often demonstrated stage-level reasoning with concrete examples from moral judgment interviews, thus using moral case examples to teach his moral developmental categories (Kohlberg & Turiel, 1971). This was especially true of the uncommon Stage 5, being seldom heard, and the mercurial Stage 6, being not easily pinned down. In addition to research participants, Kohlberg saw public moral exemplars as a critical factor in moral education; through their insights and actions, they "draw" our development toward higher stages of moral reasoning. Kohlberg held up such mature examples as moral exemplars.

In a one of the concluding chapters to *Essays on Moral Development: The Psychology of Moral Development* (1984, pp. 486–490), Kohlberg and chapter co-author Ann Higgins highlight the example of a 32-year-old woman named "Joan." Her ability to frame the Heinz dilemma as a dialogue of competing claims, and her ability to take the role of each person in the dilemma in turn, appeared to be an example of post-conventional moral reasoning. This was confirmed for Kohlberg by Joan's life story. In a job working with juvenile wards of the court for a local judge, Joan allowed one of the wards in her care to escape to a better situation in a halfway house in another state, even to the point of providing her with bus money. This action was a clear violation of her responsibilities as outlined by the law, and Joan lost her job. Joan's words and actions suggest a form of reasoning that posits a universal respect for the rights and dignity of persons, regardless of the dictates of the law.

Why did Kohlberg make use of moral exemplars and whom did he view as worthy of such elevation? When people see universal moral principles embodied in the action of moral exemplars, Kohlberg believed, principled moral reasoning and behavior becomes familiar to those who otherwise struggle with the inadequacy of lower stage reasoning. Genuine moral exemplars, therefore, are also moral educators because they make real the ideal of universal principles of justice through their words and deeds and, thereby, make it available to rational comprehension to those who reason at lower stages. Kohlberg (1981) saw in the writings and actions of Martin Luther King, Jr., for example, the formation of universal principles of justice that are "the culmination of moral development" (p. 392). Dr. King was a prime example of the highest stage of moral reasoning because of his willingness to take the perspective of all the actors in the struggle for human rights, from the lowest, most oppressed, and economically disadvantaged black person to the most racist and privileged white person. King argued from a universal and principled stance that granting civil rights to African Americans would lift all people to a higher, more just, and freer existence. Such a universal application of a moral principle benefiting all was an example of the highest stage of moral reasoning and an example of a communitarian voice elevating the moral atmosphere of a society.

Kohlberg typically used a "roll call of the saints" rhetorical device to list the names of those whom he saw as moral exemplars. Limiting our survey to his two-volume collected works on

moral philosophy (1981) and moral psychology (1984), there are six separate such lists with a total of nine moral exemplars. Two persons are included in five of his six lists and were otherwise also cited the most frequently in his writings—Martin Luther King, Jr. and Socrates. One person was included in two of the lists—Abraham Lincoln. The remaining six were included in one of the six lists—Marcus Aurelius, Janusz Korczak, Thomas More, Andrea Simpson, Baruch Spinoza, and Henry David Thoreau. Occasionally, Kohlberg spoke of at least three other individuals in such a way as to suggest membership in his pantheon of moral exemplars—“Joan,” Justice Brennan, and Archibald Cox.

What made these dozen people worthy of being paraded in Kohlberg’s roll calls of moral exemplars? What makes them valuable models for moral educators today? Perhaps most important, in addition to their exemplary moral reasoning and empathic moral emotions, they had taken tangible moral action (e.g., non-violent public dissent, critical speeches, protest marches). These were acts of public moral education. Morality, without works, is dead, Kohlberg seemed to believe. In brief, Kohlberg regarded all of his exemplars to be, broadly speaking, “moral educators.” Thus, while Kohlberg had many philosophical conversation partners (e.g., Aristotle, Plato, Kant, John Dewey, John Rawls), the one he elevated to moral sainthood was Socrates. While he cites with respectful admiration several theologians (Paul Tillich, Martin Luther King, Jr., Teilhard de Chardin) and four Saints of the Catholic Church (Saint Thomas Aquinas, Saint Augustine, Saint Thomas More, Saint Paul), Kohlberg only spoke of two of these seven as moral exemplars—Thomas More and Martin Luther King, Jr. While discussing the relationship between morality, religion, and a hypothetical Stage 7, Kohlberg acknowledged the work of several well-known and charismatic religious leaders, but he only elevated Spinoza, Marcus Aurelius, Andrea Simpson, and Martin Luther King, Jr., as faith-motivated moral exemplars, suggesting that his positive regard for them had little to do with religious charisma and everything to do with how they lived out their moral principles.

Kohlberg (1984) explicitly noted that a high percentage of his exemplars were persons with an active commitment of faith and that their ethics often rested on a religious or metaphysical perspective on the human condition. Their universal and inclusive ethical perspective, that is, was often articulated through the language of faith, although from a pluralistic array of religious backgrounds (Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish) and religious orientations (monotheism, polytheism, pantheism, transcendentalism). Perhaps the inclusion of Marcus Aurelius is the clearest indicator that, for Kohlberg, moral-faith maturity had little or nothing to do with organized religion or religious affiliation. Marcus Aurelius, like other pantheists, articulated a moral philosophy that sees a unity between God and the natural order and rests on a “sense of connectedness between the individual mind and heart and the larger cosmic whole or order” (p. 355).

Finally, Kohlberg always understood that moral exemplars were still flawed human beings and products of their time. Consider the fact that one of the central undertakings for many of his exemplars was *moral education against racism* (e.g., Abraham Lincoln, Martin Luther King, Jr., Janusz Korczak). Nevertheless, while discussing the phenomena of historical “decalage” on the subject of enlightenment regarding slavery, Kohlberg comments that “Socrates was more accepting of slavery than was Lincoln, who was more accepting of it than King” (1981, p. 129). Inevitably, of course, the same historical partiality was true of Kohlberg. In terms of race and gender, his roll call of exemplars included one black man, two white women, and nine white men. Nevertheless, although partial, his primary criteria of being considered an exemplar for moral education rings true in that they lived out their mature moral reasoning and empathy through moral behavior and courageous action that threatened the status quo. Consequently, most faced penalties and some died for their moral stance (see Table 4.4).

The fact that moral exemplars are not necessarily saints is an important lesson for classroom



teachers to pass onto their students. Students need to understand that one does not need to be perfect before one can do good; that because one is not perfect does not mean one's good works are not significant; and that social injustices do not need to be completely solvable for people to work to resolve them. We will always have the poor with us, for instance, but poverty can be reduced and, so, it must be reduced (e.g., Marcus Aurelius). We will always have racism with us, but it can be reduced, and so it must be reduced (e.g., Henry David Thoreau, Abraham Lincoln, Janusz Korczak, Martin Luther King, Jr.). There will always be some degree of political corruption in every society, but it can be reduced, and so it must be reduced (e.g., Archibald Cox). We will always have wars and rumors of wars, but violence can be reduced, and so we need people who will remind us that war is not a good answer (e.g., Andrea Simpson). Given that many moral exemplars are also historical figures, their real-life moral dilemmas and acts of moral courage (e.g., Thomas More) can readily be highlighted through curriculum materials, role-taking exercises, and classroom discussions. In the process, students may learn that moral courage is seldom abundant, so it is all the more important for each flawed and finite person and community to speak up.

Experienced moral educators know that lecture descriptions of moral stages take on new relevance when illustrated with examples "ripped from the headlines," so to speak, or when moral maturity exemplar makes a guest visit to a class session to talk about why they care (cf. Vozzola, 1998). Neo-Kohlbergian publications on the topic of moral exemplars, while not abundant, also can be useful in moral education. Colby and Damon (1992) provide portraits of 23 contemporary lives of moral commitment and courageous leadership. Siddle Walker and Snarey (2004) make use of six moral exemplars, three children and three adults, who embody African-American care-and-justice ethics. Perhaps Walker and colleagues (e.g., Walker & Henning, 2004) have conducted the most important empirical studies of exemplarity.

### Dilemma Discussions

About a decade after the debut of Kohlberg's (1958) moral stage model, the first genuine Kohlbergian venture into moral education began with an experiment by Moshe Blatt, one of Kohlberg's doctoral students at the time, who attempted to facilitate moral stage development among sixth-grade students through weekly classroom discussions of hypothetical moral dilemmas (cf. Blatt & Kohlberg, 1975). Blatt found that over one-third of the students in the experimental group advanced in stage of moral development during the year, whereas few of the students in a control group exhibited any stage change.

Subsequently, Kohlberg and his colleagues implemented this method by integrating dilemma discussions into the curriculum of school classes on the humanities (e.g., literature) and social studies (e.g., history). In preparation for these dilemma-discussion interventions, Kohlberg and colleagues taught teachers and wrote about how to lead moral dilemma discussions (e.g., Fenton & Kohlberg, 1976; Kohlberg & Lickona, 1987). Some of the questions were quite similar to those used in a standard moral judgment interview; that is, they focused on asking students to clarify their reasoning about "why" they held a certain position. Other questions were aimed at asking students to make their meaning clear (e.g., "Elizabeth, what did you mean when you used the word 'justice'?"), ensuring a shared understanding (e.g., "Ashley, will you tell the group in your own words what Benjamin said?"), or promoting peer interaction, especially perspective-taking (e.g., "Ashley, what do you think of what Benjamin said?"). Additionally, attention was given to questions designed to promote Socratic discussion (e.g., "Is it ever right to break a law?" "What would happen if everyone broke laws when it pleased them?") Others, like Georg Lind (2007), also have given attention to the importance of the overall structure and organization of a moral dilemma discussion.

“On the whole,” research has shown “largely positive contributions of peer relationships to children’s and adolescents’ behavior, adjustment, and development” (Berndt & Ladd, 1989, p. 12) and the major assumption of promoting moral dilemma discussions in classrooms and peer groups is that “interactive exchanges with peers” will “speed up the natural development of moral judgment” (Rest & Thoma, 1986, p. 59). More recently, Samuelson (2007) demonstrated that a discussion-based curriculum utilizing film clips containing moral dilemmas from popular Hollywood films produced a statistically significant improvement in the degree to which students endorsed higher stage moral reasoning compared to those who did not participate. Beyond statistical significance, however, Kohlberg asked, how psychologically significant are the gains promoted by participation in dilemma discussions? Subsequent comparison studies of approaches to moral education, and several reviews of moral education research and programs using moral dilemmas, have provided decisive evaluations.

Schlaefli, Rest, and Thoma’s (1985) landmark meta-analysis of 55 studies showed that the dilemma discussion approach produces moderate and significant educational effects on moral development, whereas other types of intervention programs produce smaller effects, and individual academic courses in the humanities produce even weaker effects. Higgins’ review (1980) drew similar but more qualitative conclusions. “The most powerful interventions for stimulating moral stage change are those that involve discussions of real [rather than hypothetical] problems and situations occurring in natural groups, whether the family or classroom in which all participants are empowered to have a say in the discussion” (p. 96). This finding should serve as a heads-up to teachers and professors—many unexpected critical incidents in teaching involve a real moral dilemma. Thus, when an educator is “taken with surprise,” the silver lining is that such incidents often provide an opportunity to engage in a real life moral dilemma discussion (cf. Pui-lan et al., 2005).

Formal courses on ethics are another common approach to moral education. DeHaan and colleagues (1997) compared the effectiveness of three approaches to ethics education among high school students by enrolling students in one of four high school classes: an introductory ethics class, a blended economics-ethics class, a role-model ethics class taught by graduate students, and a non-ethics comparison class. The first two classes made use of dilemma discussions, and all groups were assessed with pre- and post-test measures of moral reasoning, moral emotions, and moral behavior. The clearest positive pattern evident in the data was that the integrated economics-ethics class and the introductory ethics class showed statistically significant gains in socio-moral reflection maturity, principled moral reasoning, and moral behavior. Similar students in the comparison group and the role-model ethics class showed no such gains. These findings again suggest that high school students have the most to gain when teachers explicitly draw their students’ attention to the ethical issues inherent in their respective courses and integrate the discussion of relevant moral dilemmas into their current courses.

It is not just the method or experience of moral dilemma discussion that has an impact on its efficacy in moral development, but also the peer context. Kohlberg hypothesized that the ideal situation for advancement in moral reasoning was to be involved in a discussion with another person who reasoned at a level one higher (+1) than one’s own. Blatt and Kohlberg (1975) engaged a group whose participants expressed reasoning at various levels in a dilemma discussion. The experimenter then chose the argument that was one stage above the level of most of the participants and supported it, emphasizing its strengths and encouraging participants to engage in thinking along these lines. This method led to significant increases in moral maturity scores. In a review of the effectiveness of moral development interventions using the plus one strategy using moral dilemma discussions, Enright, Lapsley, Harris, and Schawver (2001) established that the vast majority (10 of 13 interventions) produced significant gains in moral reasoning. Those

interventions in which a significant difference did not occur tended to be of shorter duration (e.g., one to six sessions). While the plus-one strategy has good support in the literature, other strategies have also proven effective. Walker's (1982) study of middle school students found that moral reasoning was significantly affected by exposure to persons who reasoned two stages above the subjects, while Berkowitz, Gibbs, and Broughton's (1980) study of college students found the ideal stage differential was at a third (+1/3) of a stage for dialogues between two peers. Overall, these studies support the general concept of the zone of proximal development (ZPD), which posits that children learn best from a person who performs at a level just above the child's level (Walker & Taylor, 1991).

While most studies of moral development interventions take place in the school setting, much of a child's moral development takes place at home. Walker and Taylor (1991) investigated the role of dilemma discussions between parent and child. They showed that children with significant gains in moral reasoning over time had parents that adjusted their level of moral reasoning to fit the child's. In other words, it is not high moral reasoning in parents that predicts change in the child; rather it is parents who can accommodate their reasoning to the child's level who will have the most effect. They also found that hypothetical dilemmas were not predictive of children's subsequent moral development, but that "real-life" moral dilemmas from the experience of the child had the greatest impact, supporting Higgins' (1980) prior conclusion. Moreover, Walker and Taylor found that the most effective type of communication in moral dilemma discussion was of the representational type, which included such behaviors as restating the child's reasoning, asking for the child's opinion, asking questions of clarification, and checking for understanding. This, combined with presentation of moral reasoning at approximately one stage above the child, predicted the greatest gains in the child's moral reasoning. Ann Kruger's (1992) investigation of moral dilemma included young girls' discussions both with their peers and with their mothers. She showed that peer discussions of moral dilemmas result in greater improvement in moral reasoning than do discussions between children and adults. Kruger (1993) reasoned, like Piaget, that the greater symmetry of knowledge and power in the peer dyads compared to the adult/child dyads produced the freedom to entertain multiple perspectives, which resulted in measurable development in moral reasoning (cf. Selman et al., 1986; Hauser et al., 1991).

From these studies we can draw several conclusions: (1) Dilemma discussion is a useful method for moral development education. (2) Real-life dilemmas, perhaps especially those drawn from personal experience, are more efficacious for moral development than are hypothetical dilemmas. (3) There is a zone of proximal development in which dilemma discussions advance moral development maximally. (4) Peers are the best teachers or conversation partners. Dilemma or problem-situation based discussions continue to be the most widely used method of moral education today.

### Just Community Schools

Kohlberg's thinking about moral education within schools broke new ground when he recognized a limitation of the moral dilemma discussion method. It changes students, but slowly, and does not take into account the moral atmosphere of the social context. As Kohlberg put it, the school is a context "in which one cannot wait until children reach" Stage 5 of moral development "to deal directly with moral behavior" (1978, p. 15). Yet, now Kohlberg faced a pedagogical dilemma: how to teach moral values without imposing them on children or compromising their moral autonomy. Moreover, Kohlberg had theorized (and his research findings had supported the idea) that children are perhaps best equipped to help each other advance in moral reasoning since they



often reason within a stage of one another, and their interaction provides optimal dilemmas for discussion and resolution. The dilemma then is even more refined: how to help children teach each other universal moral values.

Kohlberg had theorized that this dilemma was solvable because he understood that the end principles present in higher stages (4, 5 and 6) of reasoning, such as reciprocity, respect, and justice, were present in some form from Stage 1 onwards (Kohlberg, 1980). His idea for schooling moral maturity was for the teacher to promote the development of the children's native sense of fairness and in so doing, prepare them to better understand and then appropriate the principle of justice toward which moral development reaches. The goal was to achieve a "balance [of] 'justice' and 'community'; to introduce the powerful appeal of the collective while both protecting the rights of individual students and promoting their moral growth" (Power, Higgins, & Kohlberg, 1989, p. 53). His bold and daring approach was deceptively simple—a return to the progressive ideal of educational democracy but within a communitarian mode (Dewey, 1916).

Kohlberg founded the first "just community school" in the spring of 1974. He had received funding to train high school teachers in developmental moral education. At the same time in the city of Cambridge, MA, plans for a new alternative high school were under way and Kohlberg was invited to consult in its planning. Students, parents, teachers, and Kohlberg met together to design the new school. The end result was the Cluster School, which was governed by the following principles (Power, Higgins, & Kohlberg, 1989, p. 64):

1. The school would be governed by direct democracy. All major issues would be discussed and decided at a weekly community meeting at which all members (students and teachers) would have one vote.
2. There would be, in addition, a number of standing committees to be filled by students, teachers, and parents.
3. A social contract would be drawn between members which would define everyone's rights and responsibilities.
4. Students and teachers would have the same basic rights, including freedom of expression, respect of others, and freedom from physical or verbal harm.

The keystone of the just community approach was the weekly community meeting (aka, Town Meeting)—a gathering of students and staff to decide school policies and practices that dealt with issues of fairness and community. The advisor and standing committee groups met on the day before the community meeting. Each advisory group consisted of one of the five teachers and a fifth of the students. These small group meetings set the stage for the larger community meetings as well as providing an opportunity for students and their advisors to get to know each other and share more personal concerns than could be dealt with in the larger meeting (cf. Ames, 1992). The agenda for the community meeting would be discussed, and the small group would often debate the issues and try to achieve consensus or agreement on majority and minority proposals to bring to the next day's meeting.

All of these meetings functioned as a context for moral discussion and a place to build community. The general aim was for students to achieve a sense of community solidarity—to create a "moral atmosphere"—through the practice of democratic governance (i.e., coming to fair decisions, carrying out these decisions and, as necessary, to democratically changing their decisions). One aspect of the Just Community educator's role was similar to that of a youth leader, that is, to both function as Durkheimian socializers and Piagetian facilitators (Power, 1991b). The sense of group solidarity allowed the peer group to function as a moral authority for its members' behavior. Direct participatory democracy, furthermore, functions to protect the rights of the student, to

limit the power of group solidarity to coerce conformity in order to maintain the possibility for alternative conceptions of the good to be voiced.

Just as important was the role of the teacher. In moral dilemma discussions in a regular classroom, they could function as facilitators but in just community schools, they had to function as advocates as well, specifically, advocates for moral content, justice, and community. Thus, the teachers served as moral leaders by advocating their own positions within the constraints of one person, one vote, and by being invested in “what” students decided to do and “why” they decided to do it.

Later Kohlberg and his colleagues would have an opportunity to apply the Just Community approach at the upper-class and upper-middle class suburban Scarsdale Alternative High School in Westchester County, NY and at the semi-urban middle-class School-Within-a-School in Brookline High School, MA (cf. Mosher, Kenny, & Garrod, 1994). Finally, in his last Just Community endeavors near the end of his life, Kohlberg and his colleagues implemented three Just Community programs in New York City; two in one of the five worst city schools and one in an examination school with high performing students (Higgins, 1989). Several other schools have adopted the principles of Just Community schools, at least in part, in order to promote moral development (see Howard-Hamilton, 1995).

Reactions to the idea of “the adolescent as citizen” often create the same initial response as the idea of “the child as philosopher.” What “kind of quixotic oxymoron” is this? (Mosher, 1992, p. 179). Educational researchers also have asked, does Kohlberg’s Just Community approach actually promote the moral reasoning of students and the moral atmosphere of schools? The answer is a qualified “yes,” based on a comparative analysis of the first three Just Community schools (cf. Power, Higgins, & Kohlberg, 1989; Mosher, Kenny, & Garrod, 1994). The students in each of the three Just Community schools (i.e., Cambridge, Brookline, and Scarsdale) scored significantly higher than their contemporaries attending the parent high schools on all measures of moral atmosphere, including the level of institutional valuing, stage of community valuing, and phase of collective norm. The results on individual moral judgment were also in the expected direction; the average moral stage scores for the students in the Just Community programs were significantly higher than for the students in their companion traditional high schools. The stage gains were smaller than expected, but still respectable (i.e., at two- and three-year longitudinal follow-up interviews, students at the Cluster School showed that they gained on average about a half-stage in moral development). It is also noteworthy that the evaluation studies found no statistically significant gender differences in any of the analyses of moral culture or moral stage variables. Nevertheless, it also is clear that future Just Community interventions need to provide for a greater degree of culturally sensitive adaptation and cultural responsiveness when approaching cross-class, cross-race, or cross-cultural school settings, each with its own distinctive socio-cultural history, strengths, and needs (cf. Higgins, 1987; Noddings, 1995; Snarey, 1987; Vozzola & Higgins-D’Alessandro, 2000). At the minimum, as Noddings (1992) has noted, “we respond most effectively as carers when we understand the other’s needs and the history of this need” (p. 23).

In sum, the net effect of the Just Community model of moral education was to extend Kohlberg’s theory from the moral reasoning of individuals to the moral culture of communities. Kohlberg’s Just Community approach to moral education incorporates both socialization and developmental perspectives and provides a way for teachers and administrators to embody justice and care in their treatment of students and each other and a way for students to develop these moral values. In the end, the Just Community approach also expanded our understanding conventional moral reasoning Stage 3 and Stage 4. Students who are reasoning at so-called conformist levels, that is, were shown to be able to “understand moral concepts” in ways that allow

them to “scrutinize, critique, resist, or attempt to change the practices, laws, or arrangements of their” high school society (Turiel, 2002, p. 105).

### WHAT KOHLBERG TAUGHT US

Kohlberg opened the eyes of psychologists and educators to the fact that people’s moral thinking changes as they grow up, and that these changes continue to follow predictable stages of development as they grow older. While his stage model is one of his greatest contributions to moral psychology, Kohlberg also contributed models of moral “types,” as well as moral cultural “atmosphere” levels, which have made the picture of human moral development more complete. Kohlberg’s models of moral development, alone, would have been a remarkable achievement. But he was, at heart, a dedicated educator, committed to seeing theory bear fruit, and so he developed methods of moral education that would promote moral development and mature character. Kohlberg’s three-pronged approach to moral education—moral exemplars, moral dilemma discussions, and Just Community schools—collectively transcend the dichotomy of socialization versus development. His groundbreaking approach to moral education, similarly, taught that we must pay equal and concurrent attention to the moral reasoning development of the individual and the moral cultural development of the community. Both play equally important roles in the development of morality. Kohlberg’s ideas were bold and daring, but they began with his attention to the moral dilemmas in his own life. He created a lasting framework by which to approach moral cognition, development, and education, but he made these breakthroughs because he took seriously his own experiences.

Additionally, Kohlberg modeled an openness to bold and daring ideas. He demonstrated a genuine interest in the views of his critics and a willingness to engage in new approaches to moral cognition, development, and education. His example remains especially relevant today because the cognitive-developmental tradition is currently characterized by a “revisionist spirit” (Arnold, 2000, p. 366). This pluralism is to be valued because we now understand that “moral functioning is inherently multifaceted” (Walker, 2004, p. 547). Taking our cue from Kohlberg’s openness, it is likely that we have much to gain from positive engagement with ongoing constructive critiques of the cognitive-developmental tradition. Many of the critics began their theoretical work during Kohlberg’s lifetime but, during the first two post-Kohlberg decades (1987–2007), theoretical innovations have continued, alternative measures of their theoretical constructs have been perfected, and corresponding methods of moral education have been constructed. A number of these alternatives and innovations are reflected in the chapters in this handbook (e.g., Noddings, chapter 9; Nucci, chapter 15; Narvaez, chapter 16; Hildebrandt and Zan, chapter 18; Colby, chapter 20; Bebeau and Monson, chapter 28). These innovations demonstrate the field’s current spirit of expansion and pluralistic revisionism. Kohlberg would be the first to remind us, of course, that there is room at the table for everyone.

### NOTE

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# 5

## Traditional Approaches to Character Education in Britain and America

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The formation of character could be said to be the aim that all general education has historically set out to achieve. It is an aim that has often not been explicitly stated, instead it has simply been assumed. Most traditional approaches to character education emphasise the role of habit, imitation, modelling, instruction, rewards and punishments, and authority in the formation of character and regularly invoke Aristotelian ethics in justification. Some of these educational approaches have been interpreted as both coercive and teacher-centred and are seen in sharp contrast to the advocates of child-centred approaches based on moral developmental research which is characterised by a belief in the child's ability to gradually bring their 'behaviour under the explicit guidance of rational deliberation' (Narvaez & Lapsley, 2005: 141).<sup>1</sup> Therefore, to enter on a discussion about character and, even more, about character education is to enter a minefield of conflicting definition and ideology. It is an educational theme about which there is much fundamental disagreement and division. The disagreement is about whether traditional character education is a legitimate aim of schooling. Can there be said to exist such a thing as a regular and fixed set of habitual actions in a person that constitutes his or her character? In order to begin an answer to this question we must start with the early Greek idea of character.

### GREEK ORIGINS

Character education is ultimately about what kind of person a child will grow up to be and the early Greek idea of character suggests that moral goodness is essentially a prediction of persons and not acts. It also implies that this goodness of persons is not automatic, but must be acquired and cultivated. Character education is inherently a multi-disciplinary endeavour, which requires its adherents and critics to ask divergent questions and employ disparate methods in approaching the subject. Socrates, the tutor of Plato, taught that virtue is knowledge of the good and he made a sharp distinction between those who are good and those who are not. Socrates' educational goal was to encourage people to think philosophically, and his method in teaching was to question his students about the very language and definitions they were using. He asked them such questions as: 'What is the meaning of virtue?' 'What is the meaning of justice?' 'What is temperance?'—in order to force them to confront their own ignorance and lack of understanding. Plato's *Republic*

was the first major work on the philosophy of education which argued that to have or to form a good character is also to become fully human. Both the *Republic* and Aristotle's *Ethics* concern themselves with the question of how a good person should live.<sup>2</sup> They are also about how society should structure itself to make this type of life attainable. These books were addressed to an audience which today would be considered undergraduate: they were mainly wealthy young men who had already developed a degree of maturity, self-control, and order in their lives. They had already developed habits of action based on experience that had been formed early in their childhood. What they received from Plato and Aristotle were the final stages of the process of moral education. For the socially elite in Greek society the attainment of the good life was the goal of human existence and the virtues were the qualities that made a life excellent, particularly the virtues of courage, generosity, honesty, and loyalty.

In modern discussions about moral character most writers tend to cast the respective views of Plato and Aristotle as polar opposites. They argue that, in Plato's case, a truly good character will be one that understands the good and therefore does what is good. Plato held that a person who *knows* what is good will therefore *do* it. He did not think that anyone *willingly* acted immorally, and explained that if they did so act then it could only be through ignorance of the good. In contrast, Plato's pupil, Aristotle, took a different view. Where Plato had taught that a prior intellectual understanding of the good alone makes moral excellence attainable, Aristotle argued rather that a person *becomes* good by learning first what it is to *do* good. He also recognized, in contrast to Plato, that a person may have the ability to think about the good without having the disposition to implement it.

Aristotle says we become good by practising good actions. From Plato there is the idea that moral education is about improving thinking skills, whilst in Aristotle it is primarily about practising right behaviour. In one there is an emphasis on moral reasoning without moral action, in the other, conformity without inner conviction. This is to overstate their differences. Both believed that character must be actively cultivated in the young. Both were concerned about whether ethical behaviour could be taught. They debated mainly in terms of virtue and the virtuous, and morality for them was not about rules or principles, but the cultivation of character. Conformity to a set of moral rules was not their aim in the development of this character, but rather character development involved *being* a certain kind of person and not merely *doing* certain kinds of things.

In Aristotle's writings, right moral conduct was not a matter for explicit teaching in terms of a subject on the school curriculum, although he did recommend mentors who guide the individual until he or she is able to cultivate his or her own virtues. Aristotle believed that there is rationality in every moral choice and this cannot be omitted from the process through which virtue is formed. The focus is not on the formation of prescribed habits, but rather on the intentions of the child. Habits are not simply passively learnt through repetition of behaviour, but contain a cognitive element—they presuppose a capacity for decision making and are done for the right reason in the right place. Whilst children must eventually decide voluntarily how to act in a certain way, this behaviour is achieved gradually as they become more autonomous and make their own decisions. According to Aristotle, virtues are developed by an individual over time and signify a specific excellence in them of some kind. He recognised that a person may have the ability to think about the good without having the disposition to implement it. This Aristotelian notion of education is also about setting someone free, whilst demonstrating a consistent pattern of behaviour. In contrast, Plato believed that reasoning was the preserve of the few and that they alone had the duty to either persuade or even coerce the majority to act in particular ways.

Aristotle gave more specific attention to the process of education than did Plato. He suggested that there are clear developmental stages in education. The first stage is the training of the body; the second is the training of character, and lastly comes the training of the intellect. He observed

that intellect appears later in the child. Only after they have built certain good habits within the second stage can children reasonably move to the stage of comprehension. There is a paradox here: students who already have virtuous characters through their actions are to be taught how to think about moral decisions. And yet Aristotle says that unless you already have skills to think correctly about moral decisions then you cannot be virtuous. Aristotle taught that children are not born moral, but have the capacity to be moral through appropriate education and training in moral habits first, followed by skills in reasoning (see Hughes, 2001). This virtue-ethics approach to character education is detailed by Carr (chapter 6, this volume). These Greek approaches to moral education spread to Rome and later were fused with early Christian thought and practice.

## CHRISTIAN DEVELOPMENTS

Greek Patristic thought aimed at the formation of the *anima Christiana*, the Christian, and the child was to be formed after the likeness of Christ—Christ-loving or Christ-minded. This language articulated a unique kind of pedagogy and it is clear that these early Christians would have thought in terms of *paideia* which is a much broader meaning than the word *moral*. *Paideia* is a word that has been lost to modern educational discourse. *Paideia* is the total development of the human person: body, mind, heart, will, senses, passions, judgements, instincts, aimed at what the Greeks called *arête*, excellence in living. Early Greek Christians believed that morality cannot simply be taught as part of schooling: moral character was seen as a firm disposition for the good, for moral excellence, for all that is best in human existence and required the educative force of a Christian community for these things to flourish. This was understood from within the Christian faith which taught that moral character is rooted in intellectual insight and rational judgement and is the outcome of deliberate choice. The early Christians clearly built upon the classical understandings of character.

Much later Aquinas laid great emphasis upon the importance of using reason to make moral choices. Aristotle had taught that becoming virtuous involved using one's powers of reasoning to shape virtues that are innate in each individual and that it was this inherent condition or potential that produced a natural impulse to desire the good (Porter, 1990). Aquinas combined this natural impulse with the power of rational thought and claimed that together they allow human beings to reach an understanding of what is morally right. In other words, Aquinas develops a more sophisticated sense of the natural law which he says allows us to grasp God's moral laws through our own reasoning powers. In regard to moral character Aquinas insisted upon the relationship between reason and faith as the one sustained the other (*Summa Theologiae* 1a 2ae.94.2). Aquinas does not advocate the pursuance of mechanical actions without reflection as he emphasises again and again that virtuous actions must be the product of liberty.

For the Christian, character formation is not independent of religious faith. Both reason and revelation are required for ethical decisions and actions. The task of Christian ethics is to discover what God is enabling and requiring Christians to be and do. Christianity places a high value on altruism and self-sacrifice, but does not see character education as being an end in itself. Christianity is embedded in all kinds of inclinations, feelings, attitudes, interests, habits, life styles, decision patterns, and actions. It is based on a teleological concept of the good life that is contained in the Christian revelation and tradition. Two approaches to character education can be discerned from Christian tradition. First, some Christians want to move deductively from scripture or doctrine to contemporary moral issues. Second, others wish to work inductively from contemporary empirical data back to scriptural or doctrinal affirmations. In practice, many Christians, especially evangelical Protestants, adopted wholly negative views of the child which

assumed that a child was born corrupt and evil and that it was the task of education to rectify this through punishment and training in obedience. An obvious weakness of contemporary Christian approaches to character is that they are often abstract and say little to teachers about the pedagogical practices of character formation. Nevertheless, Christianity was once the dominating influence on most Western character education programmes and this inheritance is still influential among many character educators.

## SECULAR INSIGHTS AND NINETEENTH-CENTURY EXPERIMENTS

The period of the Enlightenment brought some secular insights into what character was understood to be. Whilst it is accepted that Enlightenment philosophy was not directly connected to traditional forms of character education, a number of philosophers addressed the issue. James Barclay, for instance urged that teachers should only be selected for the role if they had strong characters because he considered that the example set by them was crucial. As he said: ‘Example is allowed to be stronger than precept, and children especially are much readier to copy what they see than what they hear’ (Hutchison, 1976). Another Scot, David Fordyce spoke of developing the child’s imagination in moral matters and wrote that ‘dull, formal lectures on several virtues and vices’ were of no use in the formation of good character. Francis Hutcheson, professor of moral philosophy at the University of Glasgow in 1747, advocated greater study of character. He sought to ‘search accurately into the constitution of our nature to see what sort of creatures we are’ (ibid.). What was needed, he argued, was an objective study of human nature, particularly motives and behaviour. John Locke also believed that character formation was more important than intellectual attainment. There was also a sustained attack on the relationship between religion and character during the Enlightenment. In the writings of David Hume and Jeremy Bentham we see how, in their view, the concept of the divine was superfluous to any thesis of morality. Education was about knowledge and was considered value-free whilst religion was about dogma and was value-laden. Enlightenment philosophy was much more aligned with the developmental approaches to character development.

Robert Owen, who was influenced by Enlightenment philosophy, especially the educational writings of Jean Rousseau, established the Institution for the Formation of Character in 1816, in Scotland, as a school which explicitly sought to train the character of the poor. As he said in his *Essays on the Formation of Character* in 1813, three years before the Institution was opened: ‘the essence of national training and education is to impress on the young ideas and habits which shall contribute to the future happiness of the individual and the State; and this can be accomplished only by instructing them to become rational beings’. He wished to ‘train children from their earliest infancy in good habits of every description...[and only afterwards must they be] rationally educated’. The aim of the Institute was to ‘improve the habits, dispositions and general character’ of the children. He saw education as the instrument for formation of social character and he sought, through this attempt at improving character, to reduce class differences in society. Robert Owen’s experiment in the social reconstruction of character through integrating character with society was an example of a utopian theory of character formation. His approach contained strong elements of traditional character education approaches whilst employing a rhetoric of Enlightenment ideas. His approach was therefore contradictory and often confusing. He attempted to repeat the experiment in New Harmony, Indiana, in 1825 but it failed after two years.

His educational followers were many, but they sometimes produced crude social experiments in schools. Edward Craig, for example, a teacher who invented what he called the ‘Charactrograph’ which was a machine with numbers representing each student in a class together with four

coloured counters by each number. These counters represented: white—freedom from reproach; red—excellent conduct; blue—a minor fault; and of course black—a serious offence. The machine was displayed each morning on the teacher's desk and began with white for each student. By the end of the day the members of the class would know what state they and others were in. Some teachers went as far as placing a counter around the student's neck indicating the immediate state of their character (Stewart & McCann, 1967: 162–163).

Victorian education had conscious moral purposes, particularly in the economic and religious domain. Indeed, there are clear similarities between the views contained in Plato's Republic and Victorian character education. The production of characters suited to the needs of work was one of the principal goals of nineteenth century elementary schools for the poor. Children in these schools were taught the 'habits of industry' (Barnard, 1966: 6) for they were destined for either the factories or domestic service. Character training formed the core of their schooling and included a form of moral development firmly based on the Ten Commandments and stories from the Bible. The teacher's role in these schools was to inculcate specific social roles typified by a pattern of behaviour in children. Children accepted without question the moral training provided and expected to be punished for bad habits. The emphasis was on obedience and duty to all forms of authority in society and absolute conformity to predetermined social roles for the child. The teachers themselves were often not well educated and were selected for their ability to exhibit virtues in and outside of school. They held a restricted outlook on educational matters, which resulted in crude and mechanistic methods of teaching (Arthur, 2003).

Society in nineteenth century Britain was acutely class conscious and children were viewed as miniature adults to be inducted into the ways of social convention. Character was viewed as a class-based concept which contained within it a judgement regarding an individual's status as much as their good conduct. The growing middle classes realised that money alone would not secure them the coveted status of the 'character of a gentleman'. Increasingly they sent their sons to the rapidly expanding number of independent schools. There was a marked revival of interest in character formation for middle-class children in the 1820s which began first in some reformed public schools (Rotblatt, 1976: 133–134). Teachers overtook wider societal experience to become the main facilitators for this shaping of character. It was considered important that students developed strong characters from which they could take a principled stand, usually in favour of the established virtues of society. Stefan Collini (1985) identifies these Victorian virtues as including: bravery, loyalty, diligence, application, and manners. Thomas Arnold, the Headmaster of Rugby, gave voice to middle-class aspirations by emphasising that the educational ideal should be the production of the 'noble character', the 'man of character' or more precisely the Christian manly spirit, better known as 'muscular Christianity'. His aim was no less than the formation of the Christian character in the young through 'godliness and good learning'. However, it was a more limited idea of Christian character than either the early Christian idea of *paideia* or the later natural law based on understanding of character.

Supporters of Arnold were strong adherents of character formation. As well as instituting stern disciplinary regimes in their schools, they encouraged reading of selected great authors to discern the essential core of 'common' values. There was a strong belief that games developed manliness and inspired, *inter alia*, the virtues of fairness, loyalty, moral and physical courage, and co-operation. Games in the private schools were thus constituted as a course in ethics. The public schools also socialised young men into the habit of good manners. In this view character was a form of social and moral capital and the function of the school was to provide the right environment in which the 'right' people could, at an early stage, get to know one another. For many, character was not an ideal, but a display of the required manners solely to those they considered their elders and betters. This was an education designed for the social elite and generally for men,



it was not the character of a gentleman, but the reputation of gentlemen, and the social advantage that it would bring, that was the goal in educating their children.

The Victorian period was certainly a high point in character education, or perhaps more accurately the use of the language of character. The Victorians meant many things by the use of the word “character.” The notion of character formation they operated led to much ambiguity and contradiction in behaviour. Much more general was the view that character equalled a socialisation in good manners and in a particular form of social conduct. Whilst there was a recognition that human nature could be directly shaped by education, the notion of character was largely embodied in laws, institutions, and social expectations. The kinds of character that teachers and educational thinkers espoused and the training methods they used also varied enormously. Schools as a place to train character, was not a totally new concept, but it came to distinguish the English private school, and influenced character education in America.

It is important to remember that British society was relatively homogeneous in religious outlook at this time. There was a common set of values derived from scripture and Protestantism. Morality was not a controversial issue for most school teachers since the generalised Protestantism which pervaded the culture was implicitly accepted by teachers and by those who wrote the school text books of the period (Arthur et al., 2001: 61f). Even when a Victorian abandoned religious belief this did not necessarily mean a lowering of ethical standards. Instead, agnostics pursued the moral life as a good in itself. Their enthusiasm for instilling moral character in the masses was often greater than that displayed by some Evangelicals. There is a long history of ill-conceived, ineffective, and failed efforts at character education in Britain.

As the religious basis for morality began to decline by the late nineteenth century, for some the latter became the surrogate of the former and there developed a heightened awareness of ensuring that moral standards in society and in individuals were upheld. This was the secular ethic, which profoundly influenced the progress of character education in schools. Secular character training became an alternative to the moral lessons derived from Bible teaching and those who used the term ‘character training’ were often the progressives in education. They used this language to avoid conflict with religious based moral education, but it remained an ethic firmly based on puritan foundations. In 1886 the Ethical Union was established in Britain by a group of agnostics with the primary objective of seeking a secular basis for morality. They became interested in the education of character and formed the Moral Instruction League in 1897. The Moral Instruction League was opposed to Bible reading in schools and encouraged parents to withdraw their children from religious lessons. The government’s view of character training was expressed in the *Introduction to the Education Code* of 1904 and 1905, in which it was stated that ‘The purpose of the public elementary school is to form and strengthen the character and to develop intelligence, of the children entrusted to it’. The language and the notion of character here is more Greek than Christian in origin, a certain lip-service was paid to Christianity in order to legitimate or strengthen a secular ethic.

The Moral Instruction League comprised many of the leading educational thinkers and philosophers of the time. It aimed: ‘to substitute systematic non-theological moral instruction for the present religious teaching in all State schools, and to make character the chief aim of school life’ (Hilliard, 1961). It further stated:

The aim of moral instruction is to form the character of the child. With this object in view, the scholar’s intellect should be regarded mainly as the channel through which to influence his feelings, purposes, and acts. The teacher must constantly bear this in mind, since knowledge about morality has missed its aim when no moral response is awakened in the child. A moral instruction lesson ought to appeal to the scholar’s feelings, and also to affect his habits and his will.



This was a good definition of character education in its day and whilst the League did not recommend any specific teaching methods it did produce a syllabus for use in schools in 1901. Developments in the US, particularly the Character Education League, produced many curriculum materials with the explicit aim of teaching about and developing in children thirty-one virtues that would result in an integral virtue called ‘character’ (see McClellan, 1992). These virtues were almost identical to the Moral Education League’s syllabus so there must have been some cross-fertilisation of ideas.

## CHARACTER EDUCATION IN AMERICA

Character education has deep roots in the American public school system. Virtually every school in the US in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries was responding in some implicit way to the educational goal of developing character. During the colonial period character education was based on theology, a reflexive Protestantism predominated in society, and the Founding Fathers saw moral education as a way of shaping the young into good citizens. However, in common with the experience in Britain, character education began to drift away from its Christian moorings by the late nineteenth century. Traditional character education approaches continued in the early twentieth century often without explicit reference to Christian ideals. Craig Cunningham provides a critical survey of the history of character education in the US which is an excellent start for those interested in a more detailed historical account (Lapsley & Power, 2005).

One of the first major empirical research investigations into character development was entitled *The Character Education Enquiry* conducted in America by Hugh Hartshorne and Mark May (1928–1939). This enquiry seemed to deny that there was anything that could be called character, which it defined as the persistent dispositions to act according to moral principle in a variety of situations. The results of their tests of attitude did not consistently predict behaviour and their most significant finding was that moral behaviour appeared to be situation specific. This enquiry significantly influenced the work of Lawrence Kohlberg and many other moral developmental researchers. However, the research methodology employed was limited. Hartshorne and May took the profile of a morally mature person as their model and asked a series of questions of young people on stealing, cheating, and lying. The conclusions were, first, that there is no correlation between character training and actual behaviour. Second, that moral behaviour is not consistent in one person from one situation to another. Third, that there is no relationship between what people say about morality and the way that they act, and finally that cheating is distributed, in other words they claim that we all cheat a little. These results presented a challenge to those who sought to directly teach character to children. The findings could have dealt a severe blow to traditional character educators, but James Leming (1997: 35) indicates that books continued to appear on traditional character education, at least in America.

By the 1950s cognitive psychology was becoming a discipline and gave great emphasis to Kohlberg’s theories, helping to make them popular in education. The success of Jean Piaget, Lawrence Kohlberg, and Erik Erikson was due to their themes of development which indicated progress. These themes satisfied the demands of culture at the time. Culture and society had become more pluralistic and therefore schooling became more sensitive to the increasing heterogeneity of children in many schools. These cognitive approaches to moral education—character education—were also more compatible with the liberal traditions of critical thinking rather than a virtues-based approach. Kohlberg (1984) was perhaps the most influential of the developmental theorists and he believed that knowledge of the good was constructed by the individual in a logical-cognitive progress through six stages of development. Each stage represented a qualitatively

different mode of moral thinking and that development could stall at any stage. Kohlberg seemed to be dismissive of virtues as important in morality and to focus exclusively on the cognitive structural dimension of the human person's character development. His early research specified no content and after some criticism (Peters, 1979) he sought to address the substantive content of his approach and to differentiate his position from the values clarification methods which gained widespread currency in schools. Kohlberg also differentiated his approach from value relativists, but many of his followers in schools interpreted and applied his ideas in a way that lacked substantive content for moral education. A number of writers have outlined the limits to the application of Kohlberg's moral psychology by raising a number of empirical and conceptual problems (see Lapsley & Power, 2005).

The important work in the US of Peck and Havighurst (1960) on character education helped to revive explicit thinking in the area, even though they concluded that each generation tended to perpetuate its strengths and weaknesses of character and that character formation in the early years was relatively unmodifiable. The 1960s and 1970s were concerned with values clarification and procedural neutrality in the classroom and there was a widespread presumption in favour of moral relativism. It was the reaction against this relativistic thought that has seen the re-emergence of more traditional character education approaches. Today, assumptions about right and wrong are undergoing a profound change. General culture in the West, particularly in Europe, is moving away from its Judeo-Christian foundations. In modern European societies few have regard for absolute values and there are no authoritative moral criteria to evaluate human action in the public domain. The idea that we can derive determinate appraisals of conduct and character from an objective description of what is characteristic of human nature through theology or philosophy has been largely rejected in academe. The result, some claim, is the disintegration of traditional morality (McIntyre, 1981).

Cognitive psychologists, until recently, placed much emphasis on the development of the structure of moral reasoning which, they claimed, underlies decision making. Some even claimed universal application for this method, but David Carr (2002) casts doubts on the scientific basis of many of these developmental theories and questions their logical status. He observes that these theories were generally employed in support of progressive approaches to education with their emphasis on choice of lifestyle. This, he claims, ignores the more traditionalist perspectives that are generally concerned with initiating students into the knowledge, values, and virtues of civil society. Progressives, according to Carr, reject traditional perspectives because they do not wish to predetermine the ends and the goals of human development and because they question the worth of received knowledge and values. However, neo-Kohlbergian research finds cross-cultural validity for most of Kohlberg's stages (Rest et al., 1999) and newer approaches to moral cognition indicate that there is some evidence for universal elements of moral judgement outside of a universal stage sequence. Larry Nucci (2001: 122) for example, found in his research that basic moral concerns are shared across the range of human societies and religious groups and that there exists common ground in making moral judgements.

Given the multifarious positions taken in respect of character, it follows that the discussion about character education, and whether it is possible, is equally discordant. The variety of approaches results in a bewildering variety of educational schemes and curricula. This may be seen as a positive phenomenon potentially resulting in concrete classroom solutions, or perhaps as a wasteful overlapping of character education resources. James Leming (1993) believes that this diversity of academic opinion hampers effective development of character education as a school subject. He says that: 'the current research in the field consists of disparate bits and pieces of sociology, philosophy, child development research, socio-political analysis, and a variety of different programmes of evaluation'. It has proved a difficult task for teachers and academics to

arrive at a clear and workable definition of character, and more particularly, character education. It is necessary to say something first of why traditional approaches to character education are increasingly being advocated.

### THE LITANY OF ALARM

Those who have advocated character education in America and Britain often present it as a response to a list of ills facing society which originate in the behaviour of juveniles (see *British Social Trends*). This list would normally include the following, which have all shown a stubborn increase despite many attempts by government, schools, and welfare agencies to address their causes: suicides, especially of young males; teenage pregnancy and abortion; the crime rate, particularly theft by minors; alcohol and drug abuse; sexual activity and sexual abuse; teenage truancy and mental health problems. This teenage dysfunction has to be contextualised and set against a backdrop of family breakdown, domestic violence, poverty, and the provision of an endless diet of violence and sex in the media. Perhaps as a result of this, increasing numbers of children are arriving in early schooling showing symptoms of anxiety, emotional insecurity, and aggressive behaviour. They seem devoid of many social skills and suffer low self-esteem. There are many reasons for the existence of these symptoms but they have a common effect in significantly reducing the ability of the school to develop positive character traits.

Thomas Lickona (1996) lists a further set of indicators of youth problems: dishonesty; peer cruelty; disrespect for adults and parents; self-centredness; self-destructive behaviour, and ethical illiteracy. Altruism often appears as the exception whilst self-interest has become the rule. The general moral relativism of society is also routinely blamed by character educators for this litany of social and moral breakdown, which is often referred to as a 'crisis in moral education' (Kilpatrick, 1992: 13f). This moral relativism, it is claimed, has replaced the belief in personal responsibility with the notion of social causation.

A criticism levelled at promoters of character education by certain commentators is that they do not examine sufficiently the complex issues which underlie many of the social statistics they detail. David Purpel (1997: 147) makes the point that 'Even if there has been a significant increase in teen-age pregnancies there is still a question of why it is considered a moral transgression'. He asks which framework character educators use to criticise the degeneration they see around them. For Purpel, teen-age pregnancy and divorce are not problems at all. Timothy Rusnak (1998: 1) believes that fear is the justification for many character education programmes in the US. Others would strongly argue that there has never been a 'golden age', that every generation for the past two hundred years have simply produced their own 'litany of alarm'. Harry McKown (1935: 18–34), writing in America in the 1930s provides his own litany. He bemoans the social break-up of the family (caused by economic pressures as opposed to marital difficulties); he decries the excessive individualism of the age; notes the decline in citizen participation in elections; abhors the 'tremendous increase in crime'; is saddened by fewer young people attending Church; is concerned by the negative effect of advertising on the young; and sees the implications for morality in everything from public dancing and smoking to the wearing by young people of 'types of close-to-nature clothing and bathing suits'.

### CRITICISMS OF CHARACTER EDUCATION

Terry McLaughlin and Mark Halstead (1999: 136) take issue with contemporary approaches to character education in the US, as do two major critics of the movement in America—David

Purpel (1997) and Robert Nash (1997). They all claim, rightly, that American character educators generally begin with detailing the social ills of society and then offer character education as a remedy; that these character educators also believe that core values can be identified, justified, and taught. In addition, they claim that character educators seek explicit teaching in the public schools of moral virtues, dispositions, traits, and habits, to be inculcated through content and the example of teachers, together with the ethos of the school and direct teaching and that the success of character education programmes should be measured by the changes in the behaviour of students. Character educators also, they claim, leave explaining difficult moral concepts until later in the student's development. They then criticise these views by outlining that character education is narrowly concerned with certain virtues, that it is restricted, limited, and focuses on traditional methods of teaching. Also, that there is a limited rationale given for the aims and purposes of character education by those who propose it in schools and that there is also a restricted emphasis on the use of critical faculties in students. McLaughlin and Halstead (1999: 139) observe that the character education movement: 'lacks a common theoretical perspective and core of practice'.

Whilst McLaughlin and Halstead are reasonably sympathetic to character education, they paint a bleak picture of current narrow practices in the US. However, they fail to deal with Nash whose language can often be extreme. Nash (1997) believes that most models of character education are deeply and seriously flawed, authoritarian in approach, too nostalgic, pre-modern in understanding of the virtues, aligned to reactionary politics, anti-intellectual, anti-democratic, and above all dangerous. He seeks to replace this tradition of character education with one that is not based on any moral authority and one which has an absence of a common moral standard by which to evaluate competing moral vocabularies. If this is what he seeks, then McLaughlin and Halstead should have pointed out that he cannot condemn other competing moral vocabularies as he so obviously does from his own post-modern position. It appears that Nash refuses to acknowledge that all education rests on assumptions and beliefs and that a plurality of positions, including character education, can co-exist. In the case of Purpel (1997: 140) they do not answer his claim that character educators are 'disingenuous' in their debates about character education and that they are effectively a conservative political movement with a hidden agenda. In any event, there is no necessary connection between a conservative political outlook and character education (see Howard, Berkowitz, and Shaeffer 2004). Robert Nash (1997: 30) concludes by saying: 'I believe that character educators go too far in separating moral reasoning from moral conduct. The result is to foster an ethos of compliance in the schools wherein indoctrination and rote learning replace critical reflection and autonomous decision making'. Many assumptions are made in this statement. First, the assumption is made that these students are already operating as autonomous decision makers and are critically reflecting on what is taught to them. Second, that character educators actually separate moral reasoning from moral conduct. Third, that indoctrination and rote learning are the result of character education programmes. All these assumptions are questionable since it depends on what character education programme is under consideration. A more reasonable outline of the limits of the various approaches to traditional character education is provided by Larry Nucci (2001: 129f).

David Brooks and Frank Goble (1997) in *The Case for Character Education* follow a standard structure of argument used by many who advocate school-based character education. As previously mentioned, Harry McKown (1935) was one of the first to develop a model of writing about character within the context of schooling, a framework which has since been adopted by many others. McKown's book defines character education, presents a 1930s litany of alarm, explains why we should have character education in schools, describes the objectives of such a programme, suggests how it should be in the curriculum, through the curriculum, as an extra-curricular activity, how it should be in the home and community and how it might be assessed.

Brooks and Goble follow the same pattern. They first ask ‘what is wrong with Kids?’ and answer: ‘they just don’t seem to know the difference between right and wrong’ (1997: 1). They then focus on student crime rates, etc., detailing a litany of alarm. This leads to the conclusion that something needs to be done. They cite a lack of standards as the reason for the problem and they offer character education as the solution. They then attack all the other methods of moral education, ranging from values clarification to cognitive theories of development, and this is then followed by the outlining of a number of teaching methods for character education. A virtue ethics approach to character education is suggested, but what this would entail for teaching in schools is never explained. These books, whether consciously or not, follow a model which has its origins in McKown’s 1935 seminal work and which was revived by Thomas Lickona’s publication of *Education for Character* in 1992.

### CONTEMPORARY DEFINITIONS OF CHARACTER EDUCATION

It is important to stress that few in America or Britain would consider the school the most important location for character education, even if it remains the main public institution for the formal moral education of children. The mass media, religious communities, youth culture, peer groups, voluntary organisations, and above all parents and siblings, account for significant influences on character formation. It cannot be easily assumed that the school makes more of a difference than any of these. It would be reasonable to assume that certain positive features of the school contribute to character development. Yet it is common in society to hold students responsible, not only for their behaviour, but also for their own character, at a time when the burden of character education has inevitably been falling principally on the school. Obviously, some schools have the potential to be more effective than others at influencing character development. Some would argue that the ordinary public or State school has a more limited role in this for it would need to open longer and for many more days in the year to have a greater effect on character formation. However, in defining character education Ryan and Bohlin (1999: 190) say that it ‘is about developing virtues—good habits and dispositions which lead students to responsible and mature adulthood’. The difficulty in attempting to define character education is that the concept is more ethically reflected upon than empirically studied which means that it is often defined in terms of its educational practices. Narvaez (2006: 703f) provides a review of the various definitions employed in current practice.

In reviewing the diverse views of character educators in America Anne Lockwood (1997: 179) develops a ‘tentative’ definition of character education. She defines character education as a school-based activity that seeks to systematically shape the behaviour of students—as she says: ‘Character education is defined as any school-instituted program, designed in cooperation with other community institutions, to shape directly and systematically the behaviour of young people by influencing explicitly the non-relativistic values believed directly to bring about that behaviour’. She details three central propositions: first, that the goals of moral education can be pursued, not simply left to an uncontrolled hidden curriculum and that these goals should have a fair degree of public support and consensus; second, that behavioural goals are part of character education; third, that antisocial behaviour on the part of children is a result of an absence of values. There is of course a presumed relationship here with values and behaviour.

I would add a fourth proposition; that many character educators not only seek to change behaviour, but actually seek to produce certain kinds of character; to help form them in some way. The use of the terms ‘form’ and ‘formation’ here is not to be understood passively, but rather as the individual’s active and conscious participation in their own formation. Character education

holds out the hope of what a person can be as opposed to what they are. Character education is not the same as behaviour control, discipline, training, or indoctrination; it is much broader in scope and has much more ambitious goals. Whilst good character and good behaviour are similar, the former covers more ground. ‘Character’ is an inclusive term for the individual as a whole. Consequently, for many character educators ‘character education’ has much more to do with the formation and transformation of a person and includes education in schools, families, and through the individual’s participation in society’s social networks.

Much that passes for character education in schools is essentially a pluralistic vision of character education that evades explicit directives for practice and lacks for many the forcefulness to be compelling. It is also executed without explanation or analysis of its theoretical basis within an education system where there is no consensus as to what constitutes virtue or how it should be taught. How is it possible in a heterogeneous society, composed of people who sharply disagree about basic values, to achieve a consensus about what constitutes character education for citizens in a democracy? Can we agree on what constitutes character education, on what its content should be, and how it should be taught?

We live in a pluralistic society in which our values appear to be constantly changing and in which children are presented with all kinds of models and exposed to all kinds of opinions about right and wrong. For some, this appears to necessitate a content-based moral education curriculum that many others have rejected as too problematic and even suspicious. Progressive educationalists have long advocated that individual development should not be hindered by ‘controversial’ moral content and they have cast suspicion on the motives of others who propose such explicit content. It is not therefore surprising that most academic discussions of character education have been rife with controversy, with constant disputes about definitions and methods. Consequently, many teachers and academics have sought to construct an implicit character education rationale without subscribing to any particular set of values or content-based moral education. They have found subscribing to any set of values deeply problematic in a pluralistic society and so they often commit themselves to nothing in particular—or to a sort of undefined humanism where the only question is ‘how do you feel about it?’ The kind of character education that is often accepted is one that has an instrumental value.

## CONTEMPORARY APPROACHES TO CHARACTER EDUCATION

The contemporary approach to character education in schools has been to accord the student a say in their own moral education, a degree of self-direction, which has been largely influenced by the cognitive development theorists. At the same time adult direction and authority has suffered from a great deal of criticism. Since the 1960s progressive teaching methods have emphasised child-centred learning, learning through experience, neutrality, and co-operative learning. These ideas in education tend to view the teacher as a professional educator who should not attempt to deliberately stamp character on students. Berkowitz and Bier (2005) have examined a range of empirical research, principally in refereed academic journals, in character education to examine whether character education works. They concluded that it does if ‘implemented effectively’. They also identify twelve recommended and eighteen promising practices in character education that include: problem solving, empathy, social skills, conflict resolution, peace making, and life skills. This is clearly a very broad view of what counts as character education and most teachers would not readily associate the term ‘character education’ with these practices as a way to describe their intentions or objectives. Therefore, Berkowitz and Bier (2005) do not say exactly what is distinctive about the content or teaching methods of character education.



Teachers commonly argue that there is little room in the school curriculum to educate for moral character. Many will say that moral character is the responsibility of parents together with faith communities and that in any case in a multi-cultural society there is no agreed way to determine what is good and bad character. There also appears to be a growing 'moral correctness' mind-set in education, as teachers do not say things are 'immoral' for fear of being branded discriminatory. In fact, teachers are generally non-judgemental in official language about children. However, it may be that talk of indoctrination and brainwashing often excuses the teacher from the really difficult task of thinking what values they might consciously inculcate. Instead of deciding what should be taught suspicion is raised and concern is voiced about values and controversial issues. Carr and Steutel (1999) have argued that character education ought to be grounded in an explicit commitment to virtue ethics. Whilst the virtue ethics approaches have made inroads in mainstream education, few teachers have been prepared to deal with their complexity. Teachers are, with few exceptions, ill equipped to discuss, far less consciously adopt a virtue ethics approach to character education as they lack the language in virtue-ethics discourse. Suzanne Rice (1996) has noted: Increasingly, schools are being held responsible for the development of good character among students, but if John Dewey is correct, this responsibility ought to be seen as belonging to all our institutions. Virtue, on his account, develops and is sustained in interaction with the whole of one's physical and social environment. The school constitutes only a part of children's environment, and the other environments in which they participate will also bear on the development of character.

Narvaez (2005:154–155) has argued strongly that character education should be based on psychologically valid research. Her approach offers a promising line of research which has been to integrate the insights from developmental theory and psychological science into character education. To this end she has described a model of character development and education which she calls Integrative Ethical Education (IEE) that sees character as a set of component skills that can be cultivated to a high level of expertise. She has identified the characteristic skills of persons with good character and believes that children move along a continuum from novice to expert in each ethical content domain that is studied. As she says 'True ethical expertise requires concurrent competent interaction with the challenge of the environment using a plethora of processes, knowledge and skills' (Narvaez & Lapsley, 2005: 155). This expertise approach to moral character requires a well structured school environment in which the child is able to understand and develop skills together with opportunities for focused practice. The child learns from a variety of experiences and builds a knowledge base that can be used in authentic practical learning experiences. Narvaez makes clear that this understanding in the child ought to be evident in their practice and action. She makes clear that her approach is not simply about intellectual ability or mere technical competence. It is an attempt to integrate character education with cognitive science and there are signs that it holds out an approach that traditional character educators might find useful.

Traditionalist advocates for character education include the writings of Bennett (1991), Kilpatrick (1992), Ryan (1996), and Wynne and Ryan (1993). These writers are agreed that moral maturity requires character education that exhibits direct teaching and close guidance of the young. Much of what has followed has built upon their work and a range of authors draw inspiration from their writings. For example, Philip Vincent (1999: 3) provides some helpful suggestions which he calls 'rules and procedures for character education'. He suggests that schools should identify the virtues that need to be developed to help form character traits in students. These, he indicates, should be transformed into rules which are the expectations for appropriate behaviour and that these should in turn become procedures which are practices needed to develop the habits of following rules and developing good character. So, the virtue of 'respect' becomes a rule to



treat all human beings with respect which becomes a set of procedures such as not interrupting others whilst they are speaking. Vincent and many others have looked at ways of translating the virtues into practical suggestions for teachers.

Thomas Rusnak (1998: 3–4) advocates an integrated approach to character education on the basis that: *‘thinking*—what is to be done or learned, *feeling*—appreciating what is learned, and *action*—experiencing through deed and not only discussion what is being learned’. From this theory he proposes six principles for a school-wide approach. First, character education should not be seen as a subject or course of study. Instead, it should be integrated into every subject area within the school and form part of the planned experiences for each student. Second, character education should be seen as ‘action education’ involving commitment and action on the part of teachers and students. Third, character education is shaped and built by the school environment—the positive atmosphere, climate or ethos of the particular school. Fourth, character education must be part of the mission and policy statements produced by the school. Fifth, character education must be taught by teachers who are empowered and free to teach without the constraints of a centralised curriculum. Character education needs to involve the whole school and the local community. All these approaches to character education have been employed in American schools with varying degrees of success, but they are not based on empirically based research or explicit theories of human development.

Bill Puka (2000: 131), in reviewing character education programmes identifies six teaching methods. These are: (1) instruction in basic values and virtues; (2) behavioural codes established and enforced; (3) telling stories with moral lessons; (4) modelling desirable traits and values; (5) holding up moral exemplars in history, literature, religion, and extolling their traits; (6) providing in school and community outreach opportunities (service projects) through which students can exercise ‘good’ traits and pursue ‘good’ values. There are a wide variety of character development strategies which include those listed by Puka, but few have been evaluated. There are also certain assumptions of character educators implicitly or explicitly contained in these strategies. Whilst some subscribe to the psychological idea of moral development as developmental progression through stages, some prefer to substitute the word ‘development’ for ‘formation’. Many character educators do not accept that moral values are relative—they generally insist that moral values can be objectively grounded in human nature and experience. Some would also claim that moral action is not simply rational, but involves the affective qualities of a human being, including feelings and emotions (Nucci, 2001: 122). Ryan (1996) and Wynne and Ryan (1993) would reject many models of moral education as inadequate on the basis that they are not comprehensive enough to capture the full complexity of human character. They also advocate a holistic approach to character education which provides, they claim, an integrative view of human nature.

Kevin Ryan and Thomas Lickona (1987: 20ff) provide an interesting model of character development that involves three basic elements—knowledge, feeling, and action. Lickona (1991) further developed this model. First, students learn moral content from our heritage. This heritage is not static, but subject to change for it can be altered and added to. The student learns to know the good through informed rational decision making. Moral reasoning, decision making, and the ability to gain self-knowledge through reviewing and evaluating behaviour are all essential in this dimension of character development; second, the affective domain, which includes feelings of sympathy, care, and love for others and is considered by Lickona as an essential bridge to moral action. Lickona (1992: 58ff) refers to this second element as feelings and adds conscience, love, empathy, and humility as important aspects of it. The conscience, for example, is also partly cognitive in that one needs to know what is right, but it has an important function of feeling—particularly the feeling of guilt. Lickona is eager to make a distinction between destructive and constructive feelings of guilt. In destructive guilt feelings the student thinks they may be a ‘bad

person' and Lickona wishes to avoid this. He feels that constructive guilt feelings result when an individual knows what should be done, but doesn't do it. Guilt in this sense helps the student resist temptation to do wrong. The presence or absence of this feeling element in character development determines whether a student practises doing what is right or not. Third, action depends on the will, competence, and habit of a person. Will is meant in the sense that a student must will their way to overcoming their self-interest and any pride or anxiety they have in order to do what they know to be the right action. Students must also develop the competence to do the 'good' which involves certain skills and they must freely choose to repeat these good actions as a form of habit. Ryan and Lickona tell us that these three elements of action do not always work together. Their model also states that character development takes place in and through human community. This requires students to be participative in the affairs of the community.

Thomas Lickona (1996) also outlines eleven principles that have been largely adopted by the Character Education Partnership in the US as criteria for planning a character education programme and for recognising the achievements of schools through the conferment of a national award. Whilst he does not consider these principles to be exhaustive, they are:

1. schools should be committed to core ethical values;
2. character should be comprehensively defined to include thinking, feeling, and behaviour;
3. schools should be proactive and systematic in teaching character education and not simply wait for opportunities;
4. schools must develop caring atmospheres and become a microcosm of the caring community;
5. opportunities to practise moral actions should be varied and available to all;
6. academic study should be central;
7. schools need to develop ways of increasing the intrinsic motivation of students who should be committed to the core values;
8. schools need to work together and share norms for character education;
9. teachers and students should share in the moral leadership of the school;
10. parents and community should be partners in character education in the school;
11. evaluate the effectiveness of character education in both school, staff, and students.

Lapsley and Narvaez (2006: 269) offer a useful critique of these principles which they claim appear, at first sight, to be a kind of manifesto for progressive education. The list certainly endorses a wide range of teaching methods that are considered educational best practice. However, Lapsley and Narvaez (2006) raise important questions in their critique concerning whether the core values referred to in principle 1 can be based on objective truth.

Almost all character educators emphasise the importance of the school ethos in advancing arguments about character education (De Vries, 1998, Wynne & Walberg, 1985; Grant, 1982). These authors have all claimed that there is a relationship between school ethos and educational outcomes concerning moral character. John Dewey also believed that moral education and character development could not be separated from the school curriculum—that it was delivered through every aspect of school life (1909). Today it is widely accepted that the non-academic aspects of schooling are just as significant for the development of students. There is no such thing as a 'value-free' school ethos. The research and writings of Edward Wynne (1982, 1985/1986, 1988, especially Wynne and Ryan, 1997) also suggest that the school ethos is crucial to an effective character programme. Ryan (1996: 75) contends that 'classroom life is saturated with moral meaning that shapes students' character and moral development'. Wynne focuses on the school

rather than on the individual student. He believes that the school could teach morality without saying a single word about it. We can see this in the fact that character or moral education is rarely formally recorded in any lesson plans or schemes of work—rather it forms part of the hidden curriculum. No elementary teacher would doubt how the school often acts as a family for many students replicating some of the formative influences of the family environment—warmth, acceptance, caring relationships, love, and positive role models. When a school has a positive atmosphere it is bound to affect the motivation of teachers by providing them with higher satisfaction levels which in turn are transformed into higher student expectations.

The emphasis on school ethos is a relatively new feature within character education. The term ‘ethos’ is an elusive concept and is closely associated with notions of ‘atmosphere’, ‘climate’, ‘culture’, and ‘ethical environment’. Consequently, it is difficult to focus on the specific meaning of ‘ethos’ for the purpose of analysis and discussion. However, there is a strong and widely-held assumption that the ethos of a school influences the formation of quality relationships and even promotes good moral character. There is some emerging evidence to support these assumptions (see Arthur et al., 2006). Nevertheless, greater critical attention is needed to the kinds of educative influence ‘ethos’ might have in its relationship to moral character. There is also a greater awareness of the role of the ‘hidden curriculum’ on character development and some believe that the indirect methods of teaching character are perhaps more beneficial than traditional curricula based approaches. Ann Lockwood (1997: 24) in interviewing James Leming found that he believed that character educators are far more informed by basic research in education and by the principles of human learning than at any previous time. In other words they appreciate the positive influence of school ethos on the formation of character.

The development of character naturally takes place within communities, such as schools, which encourage respectful relationships so that students and staff work together to meet common purposes. These relationships in a school should be caring relationships which help all to feel that they belong as full members of a community. Therefore schools need to design opportunities for students to collaborate together on a frequent basis. This collaboration can be achieved and planned for in any subject area of the school curriculum. However, it is the implicit curriculum of the school which is the important agency for teaching character. But first an important qualification needs to be made. Schools in a democracy are not total institutions—the home is the primary shaper of character whilst the school is only a secondary shaper. Schools are limited institutions in democratic societies which are only able to support certain values and virtues of homes and society when asked to do so. There is therefore the possibility of a clash between home and school values. It would be wrong to have utopian hopes for what a school can achieve in the way of character development—it makes a contribution, but can never in a democracy be the primary shaper of character. Nevertheless, this is an important contribution and consists of certain norms such as school discipline and rules, the example of adults in the school, the general school ethos, and the educational policies pursued. All of these convey messages to children about the kinds of values and virtues that should be cultivated.

Teachers are clearly already involved in the formation of character of their students simply by being part of the school community. In practice most teachers view certain kinds of action by students as wrong and it is not unusual to find teachers insisting, for example, that students ought always to tell the truth. In a study of 2,000 student teachers in England (Arthur and Revell, 2005) it was found that the overwhelming majority believed that the teacher influenced the character of their students and that this process of influencing moral values was integral to the role of the teacher. However, it was clear that the students experienced no common practice of moral or character education in schools and their training courses were inadequate at preparing them for this role. In another study of 551 students over a two-year period between the ages of 16 and 19 it

was found that the quality of relationships between teachers and students is of central importance for character formation in schools, especially teachers modelling values (Arthur *et al.*, 2006). John Wilson (1993: 113) concludes:

Moral qualities are directly relevant to any kind of classroom practice: care for the students, enthusiasm for the subject, conscientiousness, determination, willingness to cooperate with colleagues and a host of others. Nobody, at least on reflection, really believes that effective teaching—let alone effective education—can be reduced to a set of skills; it requires certain dispositions of character. The attempt to avoid the question of what these dispositions are by employing pseudo-practical terms like ‘competence’ or ‘professional’ must fail.

## CONCLUSION

The development of moral character has been a traditional goal of moral education in schools. Traditional character education focuses on the inculcation of virtuous traits of character as the aim of education. Character education is a label or generic term for a wide range of approaches to moral education, but specific programmes often lack an explicit definition of what counts as character, they lack solid supporting empirical evidence, and they often lack a specific underlying theory. There are also few evaluations of any traditional approaches to character education in schools and James Leming (1993, ch. 10) explains that the few studies in existence contain varied and mixed findings for those who promote character education. Nevertheless, since character refers to that combination of rational and acquired factors which distinguish one individual from another it is clear that certain aspects of character building are beyond the realm of measurement. Another problem concerns the nature of the teaching role—an exemplary teacher will naturally establish a good ethos in their class and will promote good behaviour with or without an explicit character education programme. Character is not considered to be formed automatically, but is developed through teaching, example, and practice. There are also new approaches that have emerged to character education from cognitive psychology that are promising for a more empirically based understanding of character and its development.

We can conclude that different approaches to character education will be viewed more or less favourably by people of different worldviews. However, because of the wide variety of approaches to character education it is difficult to evaluate them *en masse*—it is necessary to look at individual projects. The research to date tells us that the danger of traditional character education lies in adopting inappropriate teaching techniques for the classroom which include an overtly coercive, teacher dominated approach. That said, character education programmes are popular in many schools and the development of character can be effective moral education, especially when integrated into the whole curriculum and school life.

## NOTES

1. Lapsley and Narvaez (2006) and Narvaez (2006: 703) provide an excellent review of this developmental research tradition since the late 1950s.
2. Plato’s *The Republic* is presented in the form of a dialogue between Socrates and three different interlocutors; it is an enquiry into the notion of a perfect community and the ideal individual within it. Aristotle’s *Ethics* converted ethics from a theoretical to a practical science and also introduced psychology into his study of behaviour. Aristotle both widens the field of moral philosophy and simultaneously makes it more accessible to anyone who seeks an understanding of human nature. There are many editions of both books and the editions cited in the references are published by Penguin Books in the UK.

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## 6

# Character Education as the Cultivation of Virtue

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### MORAL EDUCATION: PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICE

Writing as a political philosopher, Karl Marx famously wrote that the point of philosophy is not to interpret the world, but to change it (Marx, 1968, p. 30). From a political perspective, any approach to moral education or training that promises to change human conduct for the better is likely to win favour precisely insofar as it offers to deliver direct practical results. In a world of widespread social and political problems (war, crime, anti-social attitudes, individual dysfunction, alienation and despair) finding quick fixes for the defective behaviour of people will seem more to the point than engaging in complex theorising—or still less getting others to engage in such theorising—about the ethical grounds upon which such evident evils stand condemned. From this viewpoint, it is hardly surprising that the recent growth of interest in character education—an approach directly focused on changing human moral conduct—seems to have gained considerable political approval and support, or that the theoretical sources upon which it has drawn have often to date been of a more pragmatic social scientific than moral philosophical nature.

On the one hand, one may sympathise with such more pragmatic or practical approaches: there is after all much plain horse sense in the idea that any so-called moral education that does not conduce to the production of responsible conduct—as opposed to the cultivation of moral casuistry—is little more than hot air. From this perspective, one may sympathise with contemporary impatience with those more ‘theoretical’ approaches to moral education of the post-war period (such as ‘values clarification’) which seem to have been more concerned to turn young people into embryo moral philosophers than to keep them firmly right about what is and is not morally acceptable—and which may not seem to have had much discernible effect in turning them into effective moral agents. Indeed, it has not been unknown for distinguished professors of ethics to lead quite morally disordered lives. On the other hand, there are clear dangers in impatience with philosophical or ethical reflection or theorising in a field such as moral education in which the very ends and goals of moral life are clearly controversial and about which it is incumbent upon all responsible agents—at least in democratic polities—to have a considered view. Training people to behave thus and so is well and good only if such behaviour is responsible and not merely a matter of blind obedience to the will of others. The problem with classical learning theory is that although it taught us that people’s behaviour can indeed be shaped or manipulated



to this or that end, it did not address the question of to what or whose ends these might be shaped (Hitler's? Stalin's? Pol Pot's?). Moral behaviour is hardly deserving of the name, if it is not in some sense autonomous rather than heteronomous; principled rather than unprincipled.

Concerns of this nature undoubtedly underlay the well-known objection of Lawrence Kohlberg—arguably the most influential post-war theorist of moral development and education—to what he called the ‘bag of virtues’ view of moral education (Kohlberg, 1970, p. 63). Kohlberg’s basic reservation was undoubtedly about forms of moral training—perhaps drawing on experimental learning theory—that favoured training in character traits or dispositions over the cultivation of capacities for principled reflection on moral issues and questions. In the present context, however, it is worth asking why Kohlberg should have referred to such induction as a ‘bag of virtues’ approach. On the face of it, the short answer to this question is that the term ‘virtue’ has often been regarded as synonymous with that of ‘moral character’, and our common talk of moral virtue—of honesty, courage, temperance, justice, prudence—is essentially that of positive character traits. In short, insofar as our ordinary virtue talk suggests that there is more to virtue than merely knowing the right thing to do—since a person who knew but did not do what was virtuous would hardly be virtuous—it is at least *necessary* for possessing a virtue that one exhibits the appropriate and relevant state of moral character. But Kohlberg’s criticism of the bag of virtues view of moral education seems also to suggest that—as well as doubting the moral stability of such traits—he also supposed that proponents of virtue approaches would regard possession of one or more positive character dispositions as *sufficient* for virtue.

It will be one important issue for this chapter whether in fact this is so. But the wider question to which this chapter is addressed is that of whether the general approach to the theory of virtue that has come to be known as ‘virtue ethics’, might provide a coherent theoretical basis for character education that avoids such Kohlbergian or related objections.

## CHARACTER AND VIRTUE

It may be well to begin with some broad theoretical distinctions. First, it is important to distinguish virtue theory and virtue ethics from other sorts of moral theories and from each other. To begin with, virtue theory and virtue ethics are both concerned to explore the role and relevance of character traits to moral life and association: to examine precisely the relationship of principled moral understanding to such character traits and dispositions as honesty, integrity, fairness, courage, benevolence and so on. However, one should also appreciate that not all moral theories have had much if any interest in such questions—at least as matters of ethical concern. Some (especially analytical) theories of ethics have assumed that it is their job only to explicate the grammar of moral discourse, and that the business of explaining how human agents internalise moral principles or acquire moral traits is rather a matter for empirical (psychological) enquiry. That said, some classical ethical theories that have been primarily concerned with explicating the grammar of moral discourse—most notably Kantian deontology and utilitarianism—have also had much to say about the cultivation of character traits, which they have also taken to be matters of central ethical concern. From this viewpoint, there have been more or less developed Kantian and utilitarian theories of virtue or moral character (see, for example, Kant, 1964; Munzel, 1999).

All the same, Kantian and utilitarian theories of virtue are not—except in one or two special and controversial cases—forms of virtue ethics. For, in the simplest terms, a virtue ethics is a particular type of virtue theory that takes the study of moral character traits—rather than of (say) the grammar of principled moral deliberation—to be the logical point of departure for ethical enquiry. Generally, both deontological and utilitarian theories begin by asking in what kinds of

reasoning a person would need to engage in order to warrant recognition as a moral agent, and then proceed to define appropriate qualities of moral character as conduct that broadly accords with such deliberations: an honest person, for example, is one who habitually reasons to truthful conclusions in situations requiring honesty. Virtue ethical theories, on the other hand, incline to the view that one cannot understand what it is to engage in appropriate moral reasoning and deliberation apart from some grasp of what it is to be a moral agent—conceived in terms of the possession of broader qualities of moral character, perception and sensibility: in short, a moral agent is not just any sort of agent who has mastered the logic of this or than pattern of practical moral inference. In the limiting case, virtue ethicists have adopted the extreme position that it is not in principle possible to identify and/or articulate any general or decontextualized moral principles or deliberative procedures to which any or all morally virtuous agents would have to conform in all circumstances: on this view, moral or virtuous judgements and decisions are just the decisions that virtuous agents may be expected to make in that or that situation—and what counts as a virtuous agent is therefore determined precisely by reference to wider character and sensibility.

In that case which ethical theories would count as forms of virtue ethics? In the event, since the focus of most modern (post-Cartesian) ethical theory has been on issues of the rational justifiability (or otherwise) of moral claims and principles—and despite the fact that some latter day virtue ethicists (see, for example, Foot, 1978; Swanton, 2003) have drawn upon the insights of such less conspicuously ‘rationalist’ philosophers as Hume and Nietzsche—the key sources upon which modern virtue ethics has drawn have been mainly pre-modern: precisely, they have been those of Greek antiquity—in particular the ethics of Aristotle (1925)—and of such later medieval or scholastic followers of Aristotle as Thomas Aquinas (1984). While such attention to the Greeks has also been largely confined (aside from some interest in the Stoics) to the three prime movers of ancient ethics, it is also probably safe to claim that Socrates, Plato and Aristotle (insofar as it is at all possible to distinguish between the views of the first two of these) regarded the pursuit of moral virtue—taken to be something developmentally wider than the cultivation of moral rationality—as the main aim of moral life, if not the main goal of the soul more generally. That said, if we may follow traditional Platonic scholarship in supposing that the early dialogues of Plato (such as *Protagoras*) are most closely representative of the views of the historical Socrates, then Socrates may have held—not unlike some modern moral philosophers—that moral knowledge is indeed both necessary and sufficient for the practice of virtue: in short, that if agents know what they ought to do, then they could not do otherwise than what is rationally required, and that therefore the only cause of wrongdoing would be ignorance.

Be that as it may, the view presented by Plato in the later *Republic* (Plato, 1961) is rather more complicated. Whereas the Socrates of the early dialogues is depicted as holding that moral virtue is primarily a matter of the proper control of (largely negative) passions and impulses and that the route to such control lies in right moral thinking, Plato’s own later view seems to have been not only that right moral thinking could not suffice for right moral action, but that right moral action needed to be reinforced by if not actually rooted in right moral attitudes, sentiments and dispositions. Thus, while Plato agrees with the Socratic view that such feelings and emotions as anger, fear and lust require firm rational control if they are not to obstruct or impede our reasonable moral goals, he also seems to have thought that there are also morally positive attitudes and feelings—identifiable with what he called the spirited part of the soul—that require deliberate educational cultivation. Plato appears to have regarded such feelings—which seem to have included such motives as drive, valour, resolution, initiative, integrity, healthy self-respect and so on—as primarily executive virtues (perhaps corresponding to what we might today regard as qualities of will—although this idea is a largely post-Augustinian invention). He also required such qualities or virtues of that ‘auxiliary’ class of citizens—identified as the executive arm of his

ideal government—whose task it was to enforce the moral and social legislation of the guardians or philosopher-kings.

Interestingly, Plato also held that such qualities of character or executive virtues were best cultivated through physical education—though he further thought that any satisfactory moral education would need to be a balance of academic and physical education: in the *Republic* he states explicitly that whereas an exclusive diet of academic education could leave agents with insufficient backbone, an exclusive diet of physical education was liable to make them rough and uncivilised. All the same, according to Plato's tri-partite theory of the soul, the attitudes or character dispositions of spirit are key constituents of any morally well-attuned soul—on the one hand, required to help control the baser appetites, on the other answerable to the higher dictates of reason. Plato, in short, seems to have held that distinctive qualities of character are necessary to, albeit not sufficient for, a life of moral virtue, and he also took such character traits to have substantial affective—as well as cognitive—roots and sources. Indeed, it might here be observed that despite any Socratic opposition of reason and appetite, the Greeks did not generally incline to the sharp division between reason and passion—in particular the assimilation of this distinction to that between (non-affective) cognition and (non-cognitive) affect—that seems to be characteristic of later (post-Cartesian) philosophy. It would therefore seem that on the Platonic view, passions and sentiments might well be cognitive or concept-mediated (although they might not also thereby be rational) and thoughts and judgements—not least judgements of value—could certainly be affective.

#### ARISTOTELIAN RESERVATIONS ABOUT PLATO'S MORAL PSYCHOLOGY

Moreover, although it is common in crude overviews of the history of philosophy to sharply contrast their views (especially on philosophical psychology), there is evidently here some continuity between Plato and Aristotle on the nature of virtue. To be sure, Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* (1925) does open with some fairly direct criticism of Plato. Aristotle's main complaint—on which perhaps his major ethical contribution (what the British philosopher Elizabeth Anscombe (1959) called 'his best discovery') rests—is directed at the Platonic form of the good which he takes to be of little or no practical moral use. Thus, while Aristotle agrees with Plato that the achievement of virtue requires wisdom and rational reflection, he argues that the essentially abstract and theoretical form of reason or dialectic pioneered by Socrates and further developed by Plato for the purposes of more consistent theoretical understanding of the concept of good, is not well suited to this purpose. In this light, Aristotle distinguishes moral reflection or wisdom from theoretical or scientific (and other forms of) deliberation, arguing that it is the main concern of practical moral reason, not to define the term 'good' in formal or abstract terms, but to help us to become virtuous moral agents. But (it might be objected) would we not have to know in some more formal or abstract sense what 'good means, before we could know how to become good'? Aristotle's key point, however, seems to be that matters are not quite so straightforward in the practical rough and tumble of human affairs.

Aristotle's doubts about the practical utility of formal philosophical or theoretical analyses of such key moral concepts as 'good' seem to be based precisely on the thought that they are of unhelpful generality. In this respect, one might imagine a Platonic dialogue in which Socrates asks his interlocutors to define the 'good'. As a first shot, someone might suggest that any good treatment of others would be just or fair treatment, and then—asked by Socrates to define 'justice'—someone else might suggest that justice is treating everyone the same or equally. The advantage of this answer, from the viewpoint of political administration or the kind of abstraction

to which Platonic moral theory seems to aspire, is that it precisely seems to point to a generally applicable rule or principle: if you want to treat people justly then treat them all the same. But even in terms of Socratic or Platonic dialectic this answer is clearly open to question (of the sort that it does basically attract in the *Republic* when a respondent defines justice in terms of keeping one's promises and paying one's debts). For clearly being just or fair is not always or obviously treating all others the same. So someone might then suggest that justice is treating others according to their deserts or needs. But the trouble now is that—insofar as this enjoins us to match our moral responses to particular and contextually defined requirements—any such rule, unlike treating people equally, is clearly of little or no immediate practical utility. For, precisely, whereas treating people equally means ignoring (impartially) their personal differences, meeting their needs (or giving them their deserts) would appear to mean emphasising particular differences.

Indeed, it is not just that any general injunction to be fair by respecting individual differences is impossible to apply as a general rule, but that no such general injunction could possibly tell us—as any kind of general rule—what differences to regard as morally salient. But what could or might help us to understand this? We might rephrase this question by asking what someone who did not possess the capacity to register differences of interest, merit or need in other people would actually be lacking. Here, it seems that this would not necessarily be someone who lacked the cognitive or rational capacity to register and apply general rules or principles, since it also seems that there are many people who possess this capacity to a high degree—for example, some able bureaucrats and administrators—who are nevertheless rather bad at registering and responding to individual or personal needs and concerns. Arguably, what such people would lack is a kind of capacity for judgement that is not just cognitively but affectively or emotionally grounded. What seems to drive and sharpen attention to the needs, interests and merits of others are positive human emotions or sensibilities of care and concern. This is of some interest in the light of the latter day theory of moral education in which care approaches to moral development (Gilligan, 1982; Noddings, 1983, 2000) are often opposed to justice approaches (Kohlberg, 1970): on an Aristotelian or virtue ethical approach, on the other hand, it would seem that caring is actually presupposed to justice, and justice is not to be had in the absence of the kind of concern and care that is needed for sensitive discernment of the needs of others.

At all events, it is clear that for Aristotle it is not only—as with Plato—that there can be no virtue without affectively grounded sensibilities, but there cannot be any moral reason or wisdom either. Insofar as practical wisdom is in and of itself a form of judgement concerned with the rational or reasonable ordering of passions and emotions—rather than any system of abstract moral principles—it cannot be identified separately from or independently of affective life and experience. Indeed, he is fairly explicit that one could no more have practical wisdom in the absence of the affectively grounded moral virtues than one can have the virtues without practical wisdom. In short, the virtuous need to have deliberated and judged the Aristotelian mean between unacceptable moral extremes of affective excess and defect: thus, for example, the courageous need to steer a sensible course between terror-stricken concern for their own skins and fearless but reckless disregard for personal safety; the temperate have to avoid gluttonous indulgence of appetites on the one hand and debilitating asceticism on the other; the generous need to find some appropriate middle way between stinginess and profligacy; and so on. But it is abundantly clear on Aristotle's virtue ethical view that some measure of affectively grounded sensibility is a key component of any and all virtuous reflection and deliberation: judging as a courageous agent would judge requires some experience of fear; in order to be temperate one would need to have appetites and lusts; and one could not be rationally compassionate and caring without experiencing some degree of other-regarding concern.

Hence, it turns out that insofar as Plato seems to have thought that one would need—irrespective of the moral value of some affective sensibilities—to arrive at a definition of goodness or justice that was completely abstracted or disconnected from the non-rational affective basis of much if not most natural human motivation, he seems much closer to such later moral rationalists as Kant (1967) and Mill (1970) than to Aristotle. While one difference between Kant and Plato is certainly significant—that whereas the former believes that the essentially subjective affective state of one’s soul is irrelevant to one’s status as a moral agent, the latter does not—Plato nonetheless subscribes to much the same ‘top-down’ rationalist conception of moral character as Kant and other moral cognitivists. On Plato’s view, as well as Kant’s, it is the exercise of reason alone that serves to determine what shall count as a valid moral principle or a sound moral judgement, and moral character is no more than affective conformity to such disconnected principles: in short, like Kant’s ethics, Plato’s account may be considered a theory of virtue but not a virtue ethical view in anything like the Aristotelian sense. In this respect, Aristotle’s fundamental disagreement with Plato—clearly expressed in the early sections of the *Nicomachean Ethics* (1925, book 1, part 6)—turns on his rejection (as practically useless) of the Platonic ‘form’ of the good, his repudiation of theoretical reason (and precise definition) as an appropriate route to the discernment of virtuous conduct and his embrace of a naturalistic teleological conception of human goodness.

### ARISTOTLE’S THEORY OF MORAL CHARACTER

Although Aristotelian exegesis is a major modern industry and there are (as we shall see) competing interpretations of Aristotle’s virtue ethics, we may start with what might be regarded as the orthodox or mainstream modern reading—which seems to have got started with the British so-called neo-naturalist moral philosophers of the post-war years (Anscombe, 1958; Geach, 1977; Foot, 1978) and to have received furthest development to date in the work of Rosalind Hursthouse (1999). Basically, Aristotle’s ethical theory is—along with such later forms of consequentialist ethics as utilitarianism—a variety of naturalistic ethics. In short, whereas Plato takes moral experience and agency to be expressive of a metaphysically transcendent intellectual realm that is somehow independent of and inaccessible to empirical perception, Aristotle regards moral dispositions as no less features of human nature than breathing and eating—and as therefore, in principle, no less apt for the same sort of naturalistic enquiry: in fact, Aristotle’s basic approach to the study of human virtue seems to be quasi-biological. That said, Aristotle’s general approach to biology is—unlike that of modern biology—primarily teleological. In short, in attempting to understand the functions of animate (though also inanimate) entities or properties, Aristotle’s basic questions are: ‘What are their fundamental purposes?’ and ‘What do they need to serve these purposes?’ From a teleological viewpoint, these questions are also explanatorily interdependent. For example, in trying to understand the nature of a fish and why it has the natural features it has, one may first observe that a fish is something that requires to live and move—for its particular flourishing (*eudaemonia*)—in an aquatic environment. One might then observe that in order to do this effectively a fish needs fins and gills, and that a fish that lacks fins or gills will not flourish in its watery abode. One may then proceed to the reasonable explanation that the function of fins and gills is to assist a fish to achieve its particular flourishing in its natural watery environment: and so on and so forth for other creatures and their natural characteristics.

For Aristotle, the properties that serve to promote the purposes or flourishing, of an animal, such as the gills or fins of a fish, are regarded as comprising the ‘*arête*’ of the species in question. The *arête* of a thing is just what makes it a good or successful thing of its kind—and while the Greek term is usually translated by the English term ‘virtue’, the Greek generally has the wider



(than moral) connotation of ‘excellence’: thus, the *arête* of a fish include its gills and fins and whatever else makes it a successful specimen of its kind. Thus, as a first step to understanding human moral virtues, Aristotle regards it as meaningful to ask, as he would in the case of a fish, what the general end, purpose or flourishing of human beings might be. In so doing he also seems to have arrived at two distinctive, albeit highly general, features of human success or fulfilment: first, that man is a rational animal, so that—as he argues in the *Nicomachean Ethics*—the final fulfilment of a flourishing human life is to be discovered in contemplation; second, that man is a social animal (*zoon politikon*) so that his true happiness or flourishing is not to be found in separation from positive association with others of his kind. But consequently, since man’s fulfilment as a rational animal is only possible through cultivation and exercise of the intellectual virtues—of both theoretical speculation and practical wisdom—and since his flourishing as a social being is only possible via the exercise of such moral virtues as honesty, justice, temperance and courage, the various intellectual and moral virtues may be jointly regarded as comprising the characteristic *arête* of human nature.

In short, Aristotle’s analysis of human nature in general and moral goodness in particular depends on the idea of natural human purpose: on this view, just as there are certain features that plants and non-human animals need to do well or survive as species, there are certain qualities that the human species needs in order to flourish. Clearly, however, this notion is far from unproblematic. In the course of mounting a powerful neo-Aristotelian case for the idea of natural goodness, the British philosopher Philippa Foot (1978; see also 2001) has argued that while it is natural enough to invoke the idea of function to account for the goodness of human conduct with respect to such occupational roles as farming or soldiery—for in such cases, our judgements about the goodness of farmers and soldiers are very much tied to our evaluations of the effectiveness of such individuals in achieving the proper goals or purposes of farming and soldiery—it is rather less plausible to claim with Aristotle that human goodness consists in the possession of dispositions conducive to human purpose or flourishing *as such*. Whatever particular purposes farmers or soldiers might have, how might human agents be said to have purposes simply *qua* humans? All the same, in another pioneering modern defence of virtue ethics, Peter Geach (1977) has insisted that we can indeed make sense of Aristotelian virtues as conducive to human flourishing by recognising that they are presupposed to the success of any and all human projects and enterprises requiring self-control, persistence or co-operation. As Geach puts it—in strikingly Aristotelian terms: ‘men need the virtues, like bees need stings’ (Geach, 1977, p.17). On this view, despite any and all other differences of human interest or concern, there are nevertheless common human needs for health, justice, education and so on that require Aristotelian virtuous conduct in any and all contexts. That, said, we shall shortly need to take notice of a virtue ethical perspective that is sceptical about any such idea of natural goodness.

At all events, it is fairly clear that although Aristotle does take the moral virtues to be natural to human beings in the sense of needful to their well-being or flourishing, it is no less clear that he does not regard them as natural in the sense of ‘innately endowed’: if men need the virtues like fishes need fins or bees need stings, they are certainly not naturally equipped with such excellences in the same way that fishes and bees are with theirs. Aristotle himself puts this by saying that: ‘neither by nature, nor contrary to nature, do the virtues arise in us: rather we are fitted by nature to receive them’ (Aristotle, 1925, p. 28). Thus, he maintains, the virtues are not passions like anger or fear or faculties like sight or hearing that we possess as a matter of natural endowment, but precisely states that we need to acquire by means of training or habituation. It is very much on the basis of this consideration that Aristotle identifies the virtues as states of character—that he then also proceeds to define as dispositions lying in a mean between undesirable extremes of affective excess and deficit (of the sort we have previously considered). Now,



however, faced with the task of explaining how the moral virtues come to be acquired, Aristotle offers his well-known comparison of character formation with skill acquisition. As the virtues of moral character are primarily practical dispositions, we acquire them, Aristotle says, in much the same way as productive artists and artisans acquire the skills and techniques of their crafts. We become temperate, courageous and just in much the same way as a builder learns to build and a lyre player learns to play the lyre—namely through practical application (Aristotle, 1925, book 2, part 1).

It is easy to see, simply on the basis of this analogy, why Aristotle's moral philosophy has so appealed to modern advocates of character education. For whereas so many modern theories of moral development and education have seemed to go to excessive lengths to pay liberal respect to personal moral autonomy and choice in the face of value diversity and moral ambiguity, Aristotle's emphasis on training in certain precisely specified moral dispositions seems to offer the way to a more practical no-nonsense conception of moral education. Indeed, the view that moral education is grounded in dispositions that require practical training also seems to resonate well with a common view that the basis of moral authority in moral education is social and public rather than personal and private: that moral education is first and foremost a matter of initiation—under the instruction and guidance of parents, teachers and the general community—in socially approved standards of conduct. We discourage children from guzzling the last piece of cake by advising them of the adverse consequences of gluttony, or that it is unfair to ignore the needs of others; we caution against violent expressions of anger by pointing out that we should not like others to visit the same loss of control on us; we discourage excess displays of distress at minor injury by encouraging a degree of stoical or at least dignified self-composure; and so on.

On the Aristotelian view, then, moral training is a necessary condition of moral education—and, in turn, such training can hardly be other than social. This is also at least partly because, although it is a basic Aristotelian assumption that virtues generally benefit their possessors no less than other people—and though it may well be that some self-regarding virtues (eg control of appetite) may not benefit others much at all—it is still difficult to explain the point of many if not most virtues in other than interpersonal, social or other-regarding terms. Indeed, as we have seen, it is essential to understanding Aristotle's philosophical anthropology in general, and his moral, social and political philosophy in particular, to recognize that he regards humans as social as well as rational animals. Thus, at least one of the reasons why humanity needs the moral virtues is to oil the wheels of human association in the interests of optimal social harmony and cooperation: if individual agents are to benefit from the characteristically human projects, enterprises, institutions and practices—of food-production, child-rearing, civil defense and so on—that presuppose common or joint endeavor, they will need the virtues of sociability, fair dealing, tolerance and self-control which fit them for such congress. From this viewpoint, the basis of moral education has to be the systematic initiation via moral training into socially desired and approved rules and patterns of conduct: moral education must therefore be in part and at least initially a matter of securing conformity to social convention.

However, the trouble with any comparison between the cultivation of virtue and training in practical skills, coupled with an emphasis on conformity to socially approved or endorsed practices—much as it might appeal to the more authoritarian or paternalistic tendencies of contemporary character education—is that it risks missing the Aristotelian point that training in basic character traits or dispositions is (pace Kohlberg) at best necessary and not sufficient for virtue. First, indeed, despite his widely noticed analogy between the mode of acquisition of virtues and skills, Aristotle is at no less pains in the *Nicomachean Ethics* to distinguish between these otherwise diverse forms of practical capacity. Here, of course, the main point upon which such distinction turns is his explicit association of skills and virtues with the rather different styles of reason

or deliberation of (respectively) *techne* and *phronesis* (practical wisdom). Thus, Aristotle defines *techne*—the sort of reflection and deliberation he takes to be principally involved in art—as the reasoning involved in skilled making (Aristotle, 1925, book 6, part 4): productive reasoning and effective production is a matter of more or less strict conformity to specific rules and procedures. But, insofar as this is so, the know-how of *techne* is significantly independent of the agent: what is right or wrong is something to be determined by reference to the craft more than the craftsman—who is quite free to choose, once the relevant knowledge has been acquired, whether to exercise it or not. However, in an important passage of the *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle (1925, p. 143) explicitly maintains that since virtuous agents cannot—unlike craftsmen—err voluntarily, the *techne* of skill is quite different from the wisdom of virtue. Put simply, though someone who has acquired the skills and techniques of a classical pianist is perfectly free to choose whether or not to exercise them in this or that context, it is less credible to suppose of any agent who has truly cultivated the virtues of courage or justice that he or she might so choose whether or not to be courageous or just in circumstances that call for such virtues. Hence, the wisdom of moral virtue is not a kind of technical mastery and is to that extent a logically different quality of mind or soul from skilled expertise.

So although cultivating the qualities of character presupposed to the effective exercise of virtue requires some initial rule-following which may be a bit like the practical mastery of skills, this is by no means the be all and end all of virtue. As Aristotle says himself: ‘the actions that produce moral virtues are not good in the same sense as those that flow from it: the latter must fulfil certain conditions not necessary in the case of the arts’ (Aristotle, 1925, p. 34). More strongly, he goes on to claim—a point to which we shall need to return—that actions may only be considered truly just and courageous when they are such as the just or courageous man would do, and that therefore such actions are not just or courageous as such, but only when performed as a virtuous agent would perform them (Aristotle, 1925, p. 35). But if we now ask what enables us to decide whether any apparently just or courageous actions are virtuous or not, the answer should be fairly clear: actions are virtuous if they are performed in the light of *phronesis* or moral wisdom. Of course, since moral wisdom requires to be nourished by the practical experience of performing virtuous acts that is provided by early moral training, it cannot be (as for Socrates) quite sufficient for virtue: indeed, we might want to regard as virtuous some who are just naturally good without much call for (at any rate conscious or explicit) moral deliberation. But, for Aristotle, practical wisdom is clearly more than just empirically necessary for virtue (as lightning might be empirically necessary to produce thunder) but something more definitive or constitutive of virtue—insofar as any true understanding of what makes a particular action virtuous would seem to depend upon grasping the moral reasons, judgements and sentiments in the light of which that action seemed right or good. But since, as we have also already seen, such conditions are highly specific, it follows that observers rather than agents of virtue will usually require complex and detailed psychological and contextual knowledge in order to evaluate the status as virtuous or otherwise of any action. Moreover, a point to which we need to return, it would also seem that it is only the virtuous agents themselves who could have ready access to such knowledge.

It would also seem to follow that the moral action of virtue—since it involves particular contextualised judgement on the basis of right reasons and feelings—could not be a matter of mere slavish devotion to social or other convention. For, although agents may certainly be praised or blamed for observing socially approved moral conventions rather than succumbing to self-interested temptation (for handing in the lost purse to the police, say, rather than keeping it for themselves) there will also be morally complex situations that require more thoughtful choices between competing or conflicting conceptions of what is the right thing to do that are not obviously settled by simple observance of social convention—since, indeed, the choice may well be

that of which of two such competing social conventions to observe (see Carr, 2003). In such circumstances, moral wisdom may well call for individual judgement on the basis of situated reflection and deliberation—rather than the straightforward technical application of general rules or prescriptions. Indeed, it is here worth noting that the exercise of moral wisdom is normally called for in the case of practical difficulties that precisely resist such technical resolution: in short, if it is possible to resolve a problem in technical terms—without, indeed, some moral loss following from whatever course of action is chosen—it scarcely counts as a moral problem. Moreover, it should also be clear that at least some of these are cases in which an agent may be called upon to resist prevailing social convention or approval in the name of some higher conception of what is right: some of the greatest of past moral heroes and saints have been those who have precisely defied the socially accepted moral wisdom of their time. But if, as Aristotle himself insists, practical wisdom is informed by values and principles—some of which are clearly not just socially approved but of considerable social utility—the question may arise now of what the source of moral principles could be if they are not in some sense matters of social invention or construction.

### MACINTYRE'S SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIVIST VIRTUE ETHICS

One educationally influential contemporary virtue ethicist who lays great emphasis on the social or cultural sources of moral values and principles is the British moral philosopher Alasdair MacIntyre. Taking his cue from Elizabeth Anscombe's neo-Aristotelian demolition of prevailing ethical trends in her classic essay 'Modern Moral Philosophy' (Anscombe, 1958), MacIntyre claims that modern enlightenment attempts to base civil association upon some objectively universal (Kantian or utilitarian) conception of justice have failed, and that modern moral theory and practice are in a state of complete disarray. From this viewpoint, modern moral discourse is an incoherent patchwork of fragments of diverse traditions of moral reflection in which the dominant voice is emotivism—a conception of value judgement as basically grounded in subjective preference. For MacIntyre, the most conspicuous feature of modern moral discourse is *disagreement*—not only over the resolution of particular moral issues, but also about what the key moral issues are and about how one might appropriately go about resolving them. To this extent, moral disagreement is about the logical form of moral judgements no less than their content.

It is in the light of his rejection of moral modernity that MacIntyre turns—like Anscombe—to virtue ethics in the tradition of Aristotle and Aquinas. That said, MacIntyre appears to depart from Anscombe's ethical naturalism—and, it would also thereby seem, from its Aristotelian source—by rejecting what he calls Aristotle's 'metaphysical biology' and any and all conception of a pre-social human nature. For MacIntyre, at least in 'After Virtue' (MacIntyre, 1981) and the two immediate sequels to that work (MacIntyre, 1988, 1992), there can be no socially or culturally unmediated human nature by reference to which significant differences of moral outlook between human cultures might be rationally resolved. In this light, despite his professed debt to Aristotle and Aquinas, MacIntyre's work also seems to have deep roots in a nineteenth century post-Kantian tradition of conceptual idealism. On this view, there is no objective reality of Kantian 'things-in-themselves' behind appearances and the (Kantian or other) principles according to which human experience is ordered are not innate features of psychology but socially grounded rules. In short, all human knowledge is locally (socially-culturally and historically) constructed or perspectival, and there is no world 'out there'—no view from nowhere—on which one might ground any epistemic preference for this perspective rather than that. In a bid to avoid epistemic relativism, however, idealists have usually sought some non-realist basis for preferring this socially constructed perspective to that one. While idealists and non-realists have addressed this

problem in a variety of ways, the German philosopher G.W. F. Hegel appears to have held that local views might be regarded as limited or fallible versions of a less distorted and more complete (absolute) perspective that gradually emerges through a process of historical dialectic. In Hegelian dialectic, conflict between the thesis of one cultural tradition and the antithesis of another is resolvable via an epistemically 'higher' synthesis in which what is true in both rival perspectives is preserved and what is false eliminated.

Basically, both these aspects of Hegelian idealism—idealist historicism and the idea of rational progress through dialectic—appear in MacIntyre's virtue ethics. To be sure, MacIntyre's primary interest is in the normative dimensions of humankind's understanding of itself and its world, where problems of objectivity and relativism are particularly acute. However, given that such normativity is inherently implicated in the realms of practice and practical (rather than theoretical) reasoning, he holds that the key to understanding moral reason and conduct is to be found in the idea of *narrative*. In this respect, MacIntyre argues that it is not possible to understand human identity and action in the essentially causal or statistical terms of natural or social science. He argues that the accounts of human behaviour of psychological behaviourists (in terms of stimulus and response) and social scientists (in terms of social roles) can provide no meaningful account of human self-understanding and agency—precisely insofar as they ignore or deny the teleological dimensions of such agency. On this view, human behaviour is characteristically rational and purposive, and human moral and other conduct cannot be understood as other than involving the adoption of reasonable means to desired goals or ends. Consequently, for MacIntyre, understanding self and identity is not a matter of establishing physical or psychological criteria of continuity, but of understanding the roles occupied by individuals in narratives that others tell about them or which they tell about themselves. The unity of the human person is the unity of a character in a story, and any agency associated with personhood so conceived requires to be understood as a constituent of such narrative. Apart from such narratives, human conduct and personal identities cannot be individuated or understood at all.

For MacIntyre, to endorse any such teleological account of human identity and agency, focused primarily on the pursuit (through practical reason) of goals and purposes, is to place human normativity squarely in the realms of practice—or more especially in that of *practices*. The ends, goals and purposes to which all coherent human endeavour, ambition and fulfilment tend are embedded in social practices in relation to which individuals or groups may excel or fall short. All such significant practices are implicated in the pursuit or achievement of some aspect of human flourishing, and MacIntyre lists arts, sciences, sports and games, political and productive activities among such practices. On the other hand, MacIntyre does not count laying bricks, planting potatoes and playing noughts and crosses as practices—presumably because they do not offer the same scope for the achievement of excellence according to established standards. MacIntyre proceeds to define virtues by reference to a distinction between the *internal* and *external goods* of such practices. Distinguishing between the internal goods of a game like chess—the intellectual and other excellences that need to be cultivated in order to excel at the game—and the external goods of reputation or financial gain that may accrue to professional distinction in the game, MacIntyre argues that the cardinal and other moral virtues are precisely those qualities that are needed to sustain the internal goods of such practices. (Although MacIntyre also insists that practices are not completely discrete or isolated: nothing would count as a virtue that sustained the goods of chess-playing, but only at the price of other goods in which a flourishing life might be implicated—such as family relationships, civic responsibility or financial solvency.)

But, for MacIntyre, the idea of such practices and the goods that they sustain is not self-standing and in turn requires to be understood in terms of the further notion of *tradition*. One of MacIntyre's key objections to the enlightenment project is that it seems to suppose that

individual agents are (morally or otherwise) self-creating and that the projects and practices in which they engage are individual endeavours or creations. The emphasis on tradition reminds us that our projects and practices are continuous with the past and that our scientific, artistic or other achievements ‘stand on the shoulders of others’. That said, MacIntyre rejects more modern ‘conservative’ conceptions of tradition as fixed and final accounts of how things should be done. On the contrary, he argues, any and all genuine traditions are living and evolving, and when a tradition is no longer open to change and development it is usually a sure sign that it is moribund. Hence, MacIntyre defines a tradition as ‘an argument extended through time’. This definition, however, also gives MacIntyre scope to develop his defence against relativism, and provides a basis for supposing that although there may be no culturally neutral or ‘external’ conception of moral development and progress, there might yet be a more rationally ‘internal’ one. In short, MacIntyre argues (in a strikingly Hegelian way) that rational moral progress can indeed occur through the ‘dialectical’ resolution of conflicts either within or across rival traditions in the form of a higher synthesis of the best in both. MacIntyre argues that this is what precisely happened in thirteenth century Paris when tensions within and between Aristotelianism and Augustinianism were resolved by the Thomist moral tradition.

Finally, MacIntyre argues that his social tradition-based virtue ethics supplies the perfect *via media* between two unacceptable ethical extremes to which he refers as the ‘encyclopaedist’ and ‘genealogical’. The first of these positions rests on an untenable enlightenment objectivism that locates human progress in the gradual development of objective scientific knowledge upon which a universal and largely tradition-transcendent notion of justice as fairness might be grounded: this is the failed enlightenment project that has in MacIntyre’s view led to utter scepticism regarding the prospect of grounding judgements of value in anything other than personal desire and preference. The second position, which MacIntyre takes to be of Nietzschean lineage, rests on an equally untenable relativism or subjectivism which largely embraces scepticism about moral values and in its own way fuels moral emotivism. In sum, MacIntyre’s claim is that his tradition-focused account steers the only possible safe course between the rock of enlightenment absolutism and the hard place of post-modern scepticism.

## NATURE AND NURTURE IN VIRTUE ETHICS

There can be no doubt that MacIntyre’s sociologised virtue ethics has exercised enormous influence on contemporary educational philosophy (see, for example, Dunne & Hogan, 2004), and it clearly has many attractive features. First, from a more general theoretical viewpoint, his view sits fairly well with what has been called ‘the thesis of the social character on meaning’ (Dummett, 1978, p. 420 ff) and with (almost universal) modern rejection of empiricist or other passive spectator epistemologies: on this view, coming to knowledge of the world is not a matter of the theoretically detached description of some sensorily ‘given’ objective reality, but a matter of cooperative construction of principled practices for essentially social and cultural purposes. Secondly, from a more particular theoretical viewpoint, MacIntyre’s appeal to the essentially teleological notion of narrative to explain the nature and purpose of such practices clearly promises to make better sense of (moral and other) human identity, character and action—and of the contribution of culturally valued literature and arts in understanding of such things—than much natural and social science. Thirdly, however—closest to present concerns—his account may also appear to explain how virtuous character is actually acquired or promoted: on this view, the best way to assist young people to the cultivation of positive qualities of character is to get them to appreciate the internal goods of practice and to encourage persistence in the development of those



qualities—of, presumably, perseverance, self-control, integrity, honesty, fairness and so on—that are conducive to the successful pursuit of such practices. One more, this is a proposal that might well have clear appeal for would-be character educators.

On the other hand, however, MacIntyre's account has less attractive and compelling features. First, again generally, the frequently noted relativist tendencies of MacIntyre's account have been a continuing source of worry to many philosophers. If virtues are relative to socially constructed cultural traditions and practices, and such traditions and practices may vary to the point of incompatibility or incommensurability, then incompatible or even contradictory qualities of character may count as moral virtues in different times and places—which is just what MacIntyre actually claims. Moreover, while the moral objectivist in MacIntyre recognises this as a problem, it is not clear that his attempt to solve this in terms of some Hegelian dialectical synthesis of rival cultural perspectives cuts very much ice. First, most basically, it is simply not clear how two otherwise incompatible theses or prescriptions (p and not p) could—in defiance of the laws of contradiction and excluded middle—be resolved in favour of a third alternative that is neither of these. Secondly, indeed, it is no less clear—on MacIntyrean premises—why any such alternative would have to be regarded as a higher resolution of conflict rather than as simply another rival option. In this regard, at the level of ordinary practical dispute, it is certainly not obvious why some proposed compromise between (moral or other) preferences would have to be regarded as a better option than the positions between which it attempts to mediate: indeed, a compromise may well be the worst of all possible practical worlds. But failing any such neo-idealist dialectical solution to conflicts between rival moral traditions, it seems hard to see how MacIntyre's historicized virtue ethics might avoid the collapse into moral and social relativism.

Another difficulty with MacIntyre's constructivist virtue ethics concerns his account of moral virtues as dispositions needed to promote the goods of social practices. One trouble here is that if this does not, as already noted, relativize such dispositions, then it is hopelessly circular. For if MacIntyre does not want to count as virtues the dispositions that sustain any and all social practices—including organized crime or political or religious oppression—then we would have to ask which social practices he has in mind: but if his answer to this is that it is only those practices that are consistent with such virtues as honesty, justice, temperance and courage then we are no clearer about the moral grounds of such virtues than we were before MacIntyre offered his social practices account. Indeed, it is worth noting that we are ordinarily inclined to evaluate human social practices by reference to their consistency or otherwise with the virtues rather than otherwise: we do tend to deny the legitimacy of some social practices (such as slavery) precisely on the grounds that they are cruel and unjust. But it seems that MacIntyre's account inclines not only to relativise but to instrumentalize the virtues: on this view, it looks rather as though the purpose of acquiring this or that virtue disposition is so that one might successfully pursue the end of a given social practice. To be sure, since MacIntyre's goods are internal rather than external, the practices are not to be properly pursued for fame and fortune but for the sake of painting, rocket design, fishing or farming in and of themselves. But, more intuitively, we might still be inclined to teach our children to be honest, just, temperate or courageous, not because by possessing such qualities they will become better painters, farmers or fisherman, but because they will become better human persons as such by virtue of possessing such dispositions.

Taking these points in turn, there may of course be less drastic ways than MacIntyre's to reconcile the objectivity of moral virtues with the observation that these are also in some sense constructed by this or that local social constituency. Thus, while conceding in her paper 'Non-Relative Virtues' that moral virtues are liable to variable local construction and expression, Martha Nussbaum (1988) argues that certain common core dispositions nevertheless underlie such apparent differences. But how would this work if different constituencies have different moral



beliefs that precisely ground diverse moral practices? While Nussbaum does not say much in detail about this, the present author has argued (Carr, 1995, 1996) that what is required is precisely to move away from a common conception of moral practices as grounded in beliefs or rules and more towards a dispositional Aristotelian conception of moral practice. In order to understand this, it may help to employ an analogy from the familiar human practice of automobile driving. Hence, we know that the rules that define good driving are prone to local diversity: whereas, for example, it is the rule in the US that one should drive on the right hand side of the road and appropriate for drivers to believe that they should so drive, it is not appropriate to drive thus in the UK and some other countries. But though good drivers in different countries should observe different rules and entertain different beliefs about good driving, good driving does not consist only in the observance of such rules and beliefs—and, indeed, people who observe such rules and beliefs may yet fail to be good drivers. Moreover, the qualities of good drivers—appropriate knowledge, relevant practical skills, capacities for attention and good judgement and so on—are not just of clear objective value but quite universal: there are no contexts of driving in which such knowledge (despite its contextual diversity), skills and capacities will not be needed for effective driving. Likewise, due Aristotelian appreciation of the fundamentally dispositional character of virtue helps us to see that what is needed for honesty, justice, temperance and courage is apt for exercise in many different contexts of cultural belief: that, indeed, virtue is fairly recognisable by the same fundamental features in a wide diversity of cultural contexts—so that there can be, as one would expect, brave and just Moslems as well as Christians or Marxists.

But while this analogy certainly upholds the view that diversity of cultural expression does not preclude the objective or universal value of virtue, it would seem to offer less support for any claim that the virtues should be sought not because they are instrumental to ends of social or cultural practices but for their own sake. For the objective human value of driving skills is surely just that they enable agents to achieve the purposes of driving safely and effectively: they are a means to a further practical end rather than ends in themselves—whatever this means. Indeed, the trouble with regarding virtuous states of character as worthwhile for their own sake is that the problem it seems to raise for any MacIntyrean justification of virtues as internal to social practices may appear to loom just as large in relation to any more naturalist Aristotelian story about virtues as means to human flourishing. To be sure, this tension is clearly apparent in Aristotle himself who clearly does want to say on the one hand that moral virtues are justified by reference to the more or less functional role they play in promoting human flourishing, and on the other that a virtuous agent is precisely one who pursues virtue for no other end beyond itself: Aristotle's distinction between continent and virtuous persons, for example, rests in part on a recognition of the difference between agents who see some utility in pursuing what is right—although their own inclinations may not lie that way—and the virtuous who wholeheartedly pursue goodness for its sake alone.

There are also contemporary theories of virtue ethics which—while differing significantly from each other as well as from MacIntyrean and neo-naturalist accounts—are also highly sensitive to this key tension between the intrinsic and extrinsic value of virtue. First, on the influential virtue ethics of John McDowell (1998), insofar as virtuous agents are those who have come to possess a special kind of moral perception or vision, such vision is thereby (by definition) denied to the non-virtuous. But, in turn, this means that the virtuous agent could recognise no reasons for the pursuit of virtue that are, as it were, external to the moral vision of the virtuous. In short, on McDowell's account, since the virtuous vision is effectively definitive of any conception of human flourishing to which the virtuous might aspire, the pursuit of virtue for its own sake would have to be the sole aim and reward of virtuous agents, who could never conceive of virtuous action as merely instrumental to the production of any other independently conceived (other than

virtue-focused) benefits. On this view, then, genuine pursuit of virtue must always be intrinsically motivated. But secondly, on the somewhat different but also influential ‘agent-based’ virtue ethics of Michael Slote (1992, 2001), there just are certain qualities of character—such as integrity or inner strength, universal benevolence and caring—that we are inclined to regard as worthwhile or admirable in and of themselves: indeed, despite any and all connections with or consequences for right action, happiness or flourishing of such virtues, we often admire such qualities of character even when they do not lead to right action or happiness. Influenced by contemporary care ethics, Slote attempts to develop the idea of caring as the key virtue of his virtue ethics.

While the virtue ethical insights of McDowell and Slote may seem merely to exacerbate the tension between the naturalistic basis of Aristotle’s ethics and his own idea that virtue is intrinsically rather than extrinsically worthwhile—and while it is far from clear that either McDowell’s or Slote’s views are entirely reconcilable with the naturalist mainstream of much contemporary virtue ethics—it is nevertheless arguable that some basic distinctions may significantly reduce such tensions. To begin with, it seems helpful to distinguish between the rather different explanatory contexts in which notions of virtue for its own sake and virtue as a means to flourishing play in Aristotle’s account. For while Aristotle’s quasi-biological functional account of virtue as a means to the promotion of human flourishing is clearly intended to operate at a more theoretical (perhaps social scientific) level of explanation, his claim that the virtuous agent is one who seeks virtue for its own sake appears to be more about personal moral motivation. But it is not all clear that these accounts are incompatible: it could still be the case that while (from a social scientific viewpoint) the moral virtues serve a particular (perhaps survival-related) function in the life of the species, virtuous (as opposed to continent agents) are nevertheless those who (from a psychological viewpoint) pursue honesty (say) in a particular way—namely, for its own sake rather than for its extrinsic benefits. By analogy, the fact that some social or other scientist explains (even rightly) human aesthetic experience in terms of its benefits for mental health and wellbeing would not necessarily preclude the common (Kantian) claim that aesthetic experiences are typically pursued not for mental health but for their own sake.

Secondly, however, this distinction between the natural or social explanatory and motivational aspects of virtue is shadowed by a not unrelated distinction between the ethical and moral psychological dimensions of a naturalised virtue ethics. For one evident consequence of Aristotle’s quasi-biological or functional account of virtue is that his ethics is of a very particular sort: in short, like utilitarianism, it is a teleological and naturalist ethics which—unlike modern forms of non-cognitivism—recognises the continuity of natural and normative enquiry, denies the fact-value distinction and regards observations about human nature and circumstances as relevant to moral reflection and deliberation (see, on such questions, McInnon, 2005). On the face of it, McDowell’s claim (for which he again draws on Aristotle) that the virtuous agent has developed a special kind of intrinsically focused moral vision that is inaccessible to the non-virtuous (the wanton, the incontinent or the continent) may seem to conflict with any such naturalist ethics. For since, so it might be said, virtuous and non-virtuous moral perceptions of the same situation may differ to the point of mutual contradiction, any idea of objectively neutral facts to which virtuous or non-virtuous agents might indifferently appeal is surely just fictional. All the same, it does not obviously follow from Aristotle’s apparent claim that the virtuous are those who are capable, by courtesy of phronesis, of non-codifiable perceptions and judgements that are also inaccessible to the non-virtuous, that such judgements could not draw on familiar factual or natural scientific observations about human nature and circumstances. By analogy, it hardly follows from the fact that a trained scientist is able to perceive certain aspects of nature in a much more discerning way than the untrained layperson that scientific enquiry is not concerned with the investigation of observable facts that are no less (albeit less expertly) apt for perception by either scientist or layperson. So again,

irrespective of whether McDowell's views are ultimately compatible with Aristotelian naturalism (which they may not be), any tensions between the extrinsic aspects of naturalist ethics and the intrinsically focused nature of virtuous judgement may be more apparent than real.

## VIRTUE, CHARACTER AND EDUCATION

This paper has been so far concerned to explore the basic conceptual contours of virtue ethics and its relevance to understanding moral character: we have not so far said much—other than by implication—about the consequences of a virtue ethics of character for moral pedagogy. However, it is arguable that although a virtue ethical view of character undoubtedly gives pause for complex and detailed reflection in a wide variety of social and educational fields and contexts, such reflection would be more a matter for educational and pedagogical specialists in the fields concerned, and there is probably not much more of a very general philosophical or psychological nature to be said about the practical cultivation of virtuous character than has been said so far. Still, by way of conclusion, it may be worth highlighting what would seem to be three key respects in which a virtue ethical view of character requires the attention of educational professionals.

The first of these, which seems most often to attract the attention of educationalists drawn to virtue ethics, is the high profile that Aristotle gives to basic training in practical dispositions. Thus, in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle insists that the cultivation of moral virtue is at least initially a matter of practical training and habituation: one becomes courageous and just, much as one comes to be a good builder or musician—in a large part through practice. In a nutshell, it is likely that Aristotle's main concern at this point is with the cultivation of basic temperance or self-control. From a commonsense viewpoint, indeed, it is hard to see how children or young people might acquire more complex virtues of practical wisdom, justice and even courage, in the absence of some appropriate control over their desires, passions and appetites. Moreover, rising contemporary levels of obesity, teenage pregnancy, sexually transmitted disease, alcohol and drug abuse and drunken street violence, in many contemporary societies (including the United States and Britain), would suggest widespread failure to promote such self-discipline in homes, schools and other contexts of upbringing. To be sure, while there is much agreement about effects that such trends are having on the lives of successive generations of young people, there is also much disagreement about what should be done, and calls for greater discipline from more politically or religiously conservative quarters are sometimes resisted in more liberal quarters as unacceptably repressive.

All the same, insofar as it is possible to disconnect the virtue ethical point that personal self-discipline is the bedrock of virtue from any conservative (or other) religious or political agendas, any such anti-authoritarian resistance misses the key moral point, and fails to appreciate—as Aristotle and his more recent virtue-ethical heirs have appreciated—that any and all moral sense and reflection need to be grounded in basic self-control. In short, one does not have to be a fundamentalist religious fanatic to see that raising one's offspring to be persons capable of some orderly restraint of their basic instincts and appetites cannot but conduce to their moral welfare. Moreover, it should also be appreciated that such self-control need not or should not be a matter of repression or coercion. Indeed, it should be remembered that Aristotelian virtue—even such clear virtues of self-control as temperance—is not the same as continence, and should not anyway be conceived as a matter of external coercion or repression. On the contrary, such virtues are better cultivated in positive parental and educational climates of encouragement, love and support in which it also would seem that the key psychological and pedagogical mechanism is modelling or *exemplification*. In short—and this is the second key pedagogical implication of

virtue ethics—Aristotle’s ethics seems generally consistent with a time-honoured view of moral education as a matter of the setting by parents or teachers of appropriate examples of good or virtuous deliberation and conduct for the young: thus, if we are to make virtuous characters of the young, and a precondition of such character is good example, then the guardians and teachers of youth need themselves to be models of such good character.

However, moral habituation in the light of exemplification could not be sufficient for virtue and the question now arises of what could be held to inform a virtuous agent’s—and hence a virtuous citizen’s—conception of character or moral flourishing. For Aristotle—our third point—the key to development of the full virtue for which moral habituation could only provide the foundation lay in the cultivation of the particular form of reason or deliberation he identified as *phronesis* or practical wisdom. In the *Nicomachean Ethics*, as we have seen, this is fairly sharply distinguished from theoretical and technical knowledge as concerned with deliberation, choice and decision of a primarily normative or moral kind. But this still raises the question of the rational or evidential grounds of such reason. For modern or post-enlightenment moral philosophers—at least by those who do not deny that moral claims have any rational basis whatsoever—practical moral reason has often been regarded as largely or primarily concerned with the formulation of general rules of moral or political association and with the development of procedures for the fair and equitable negotiation or settlement of conflicting social interests. In this light, character education might appear to be a matter of some initiation into modes of public discourse concerned with the formulation of impartial rules and procedures that are also (as Kant, one of the prime architects of this conception of practical reason, seems to have thought) *sui generis* or largely independent of other modes of reflection and enquiry.

However, although Aristotle did argue that the moral wisdom of virtue is to be formally distinguished from other (theoretical and technical) forms of enquiry, it is equally clear that he did not regard it as at all independent of other forms: on the contrary, he appears to have regarded it as very much apt for nourishment by the wider reflection and contemplation he regarded as the crowning glory of a flourishing life. It is clear from Aristotle’s *Poetics*, for example, that he regarded imaginative literature and the arts, no less than such academic forms of study as history, as key sources of normative enquiry. Moreover, Aristotle’s appreciation of the normative significance of literature and the arts, has been greatly reinforced by more recent virtue ethicists (e.g., MacIntyre, 1981, 1987, 1992) who have argued that the fundamental form of human self-understanding is narrational: that, in short, the only way in which human agents can come to an appropriate understanding of themselves as individual or social selves acting in the world is through narrative forms of history, religious myth, imaginative literature and so on. On this view, also defended by key champions of liberal education from at least the nineteenth century to the present, literature and the arts are not just educationally marginal or frivolous pursuits, but may be regarded as genuine forms of knowledge and enquiry with large potential for any understanding by human agents of themselves, and their relations with others. Moreover, insofar as the arts and humanities have also been traditionally regarded (see Carr, 2005) as conducive to the refinement of the feelings and emotions that—as we have also seen—lie at the heart of any and all genuine virtues, it seems arguable that they should occupy a quite central place in any coherent conception of character education.

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# 7

## School, Community and Moral Education

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To be attached to the subdivision, to love the little platoon we belong to in society, is the first principle (the germ, as it were) of public affections. It is the first link in the series by which we proceed towards a love of country and to mankind. Edmund Burke. (2001, p. 241)

To enjoy the things we ought and to hate the things we ought has the greatest bearing on excellence of character. (Aristotle, 1941)

In this chapter I discuss the role of community in moral education, and I emphasize the school's academic curriculum. These are connected by viewing academic subjects as practices in Alasdair MacIntyre's (1981) sense of that term. Education is an initiation into practices and into the communities that sustain them. Initiation into these communities involves learning norms and valuing goods that contribute to the development of a sense of justice. I will refer to this process of initiation as normation (Green, 1999). Effective normation requires the endorsement of norms by communities that are strong enough to have their endorsement carry authority. However, schools are rarely strong communities, and may sometimes endorse the wrong norms.

### A COMMUNITARIAN CRITIQUE OF SCHOOLING: WHY SCHOOLS HAVE TROUBLE ENDORSING NORMS

Communitarians claim that the goods that constitute human flourishing, the excellences and virtues that enable the realization of these goods, and the norms of justice that establish conditions of fair cooperation, reside in the purposes, traditions and attachments of communities. There is no "view from nowhere" (Nagel, 1986), no universal principles that hold for all times and places. Views of moral education that emphasize autonomy and the critique of traditions reduce members of communities to abstract persons characterized solely by freedom and equality (Sandel, 1982). They dissolve the traditions and bonds that hold communities together leaving anomie and alienation in their place. Persons who are robbed of their roots and their traditions become victims of the market, rational egoists and possessive individualists.



In a paper entitled “The Communitarian Critique of Liberalism” Michael Walzer (1995) notes that this communitarian critique of liberalism has two versions. The first is aimed at liberal practice and assumes that liberal practice accurately represents liberal theory. Western societies, communitarians imagine, are “the home of isolated individuals, rational egoists, and existential agents, protected and divided by their inalienable rights” (p. 54).

The second version claims that liberal theory misrepresents real life and that the persons envisioned by liberalism are impossible. “Men and women are cut loose from all social ties, literally unencumbered, each one the one and only inventor of his or her own life, with no criteria, no common standards, to guide the invention: these are mythical figures” (p. 56). Walzer notes that these two versions of the communitarian critique are inconsistent, but claims that each is partly right.

The representation of liberalism in the communitarian critique is suspect. There are few recent defenders of liberalism who believe that unencumbered and isolated selves are either possible or desirable. Rawls’s account of the person in *Political Liberalism* (Rawls, 1993), Charles Taylor’s in “The Politics of Recognition,” (Taylor, 1994) and Anthony Appiah’s in *The Ethics of Identity* (Appiah, 2005) all assume that identities are products of culture, tradition, and community. Rawls claims that autonomy is not a commitment of political liberalism. Appiah’s account of autonomy views autonomy as something that is built on a substratum of culture and is not so much the capacity to invent oneself *de novo* as it is a license to explore diverse cultural resources and migrate from one’s cultural home. Few modern liberals believe that people create themselves *de novo* or that rational egoism and isolation are good things.

Indeed, I doubt that the communitarian characterization of liberalism adequately describes the views of the founders of modern liberalism such as Locke or Mill. Locke’s (1960) picture of a social contract is not an empirical account of the origins of society. It is part of the justification of the authority of democratic government. The point of the state of nature is to deny that there is any natural authority, to deny that we are natural slaves. It is not to deny that we are social beings. One cannot read Locke’s writings on education (Locke, 1964) or religious tolerance (Locke, 1946) and fail to find it clear that Locke saw people as shaped by culture, tradition, and community.

Perhaps the tension between communitarianism and modern liberalism has more to do with moral universalism. Liberalism, arguably, is committed to the “view from nowhere,” to norms that are the norms of everyone everywhere, hence of no one in particular. Ultimately, then, liberalism still uproots people from the soil of community and traditions and asks them to gain sustenance from the air of universalistic abstraction.

This characterization is doubtful as well. Rawls (1971), for example, claims that the procedures involved in the original position are meant to formulate the moral intuitions of those socialized in liberal democratic societies. His Kantian constructivism is not intended to discover preexistent universal principles, but to propose principles that all can accept. Most liberals do want to hold that in a society characterized by durable pluralism, norms of justice must be norms *for* everyone. They can only reflect the distinct outlook of a particular sub-community at the price of domination and oppression. Yet people are undeniably shaped by their communities and motivated by their attachments. No liberalism that finds these facts merely problematic and seeks their remediation with a healthy dose of universalism is likely to be adequate. The trick, therefore, is not to defend the view from nowhere against communitarian particularism. It is to develop a form of liberalism in which community, tradition, and attachments count, but in which justice is the justice of all.

This project is one that communitarians should share. A communitarian view that sees cultures or communities as internally coherent and sharply demarcated from one another and that claims that critique of a culture or community’s norms can only come from within, will lapse

into cultural relativism and will tend to oppress its own members. It will do the first because it has rejected external sources of criticism. It disallows both universal principles and the wisdom of other cultures. This leaves only a process of internal critique. It will do the second, because it will lack the resources to critique cultural norms that sustain oppression and domination.

A coherent communitarian view must explain how critique of cultural norms is possible. Moreover, if it wishes to avoid a cultural war of all against all, it must explain how diverse cultures that occupy a common space can live together peacefully. To grant these points is not to affirm a view from nowhere, but it is to begin a search for norms of justice people from different communities can share. Conversely, liberals who disavow the view from nowhere, must provide an account of how norms of justice are validated that does not invoke it. Such liberals and communitarians are, in fact, engaged in a similar project. Both agree that norms are culturally rooted and that identities are social products. Both seek norms of justice that are norms for all and seek for ways to engage in argument, critique, and dialogue that avoid the Scylla of relativism and Charybdis of the view from nowhere.

Once it is granted that liberals believe that people are shaped by culture, tradition, and community and that the norms they acquire from their social environment may be just or unjust, noble or base, it follows that liberals have an interest in the quality of the cultures, traditions, and communities available to people. These norms are, as Appiah (2005) suggests, the resources from which lives are created.

Liberals may view culture as the first word to individuals concerning justice, but will not grant an assumption that the validity of this first word is assured. Thus, liberals will advocate for cultural forms and practices that create good liberal citizens, and they will worry about cultures, communities, and traditions that are illiberal. They will resist views that isolate unjust norms from critique. There is a large and growing literature on this (see, for example, Callan (1997) and Macedo (2000), much of it focused on schools.

Liberals have other interests in cultural forms and practices. Rawls (1971), for example, claims that persons have two capacities that define them as persons: a capacity for a conception of the good, and a capacity for a sense of justice. Both capacities must be developed. The adequacy of their development may depend on the nature and quality of the cultures, traditions, and communities available to people and on how they are made available to people. Good citizens are less likely to be created by illiberal cultures and flourishing lives are unlikely to be developed by impoverished cultures. Moreover, the development of good citizens and flourishing lives may be intertwined. People who have acquired a conception of their good that is base may be less likely to become good citizens as well.

If there is a communitarian critique of liberalism worth pursuing it is this: Developing a sense of justice and a worthy conception of the good depend on the internalization or appropriation of cultural and intellectual resources that live in our various cultures, traditions, and communities. These cultures, traditions, and communities may be more or less worthy, more or less accessible, and more or less authoritative. Liberalism may create institutions and practices that make the richness of various cultures, traditions, and communities more accessible, but less authoritative. If so, the moral authority and, ultimately, the coherence and cohesiveness of robust communities may be eroded by liberal practices and institutions.

The cultural resources available to members of liberal societies often present themselves without any “quality controls.” People must choose among these cultural riches and this involves making judgments about what is worthy and what is not. God, Bach, heavy metal, Shakespeare, Marlboros, SUVs, hip hop, Playboy, football, Ipods, and Budweiser are thrown at us and at our children constantly and in a bewildering array. These various products of modern culture do not wear their value on their sleeves. Often those of least worth are promoted with the most

effective techniques. Choosing wisely and well among these options is something that must be learned.

Learning to choose wisely and well involves mastery of norms and criteria of appraisal. Children are not born rational. Moreover, the means of rationality, norms, and criteria of appraisal, are themselves cultural artifacts invented by human beings and acquired from other human beings.

At the inception, norms and criteria of appraisal are most likely to be learned if they are presented with a kind of authoritative endorsement by those who care for children. Children do not (and I think cannot) reason their way to the norms and standards that provide their initial epistemic stance to the world and enable judgments of what is worth while. They gain much of their "epistemic perspectives" first from their families and then from the various communities and cultures they encounter in their lives. It is membership in these groups that provides an initial authoritative endorsement of standards of judgment. This is the core truth of communitarianism.

If this is correct, then liberal societies need to take care that children are exposed to communities that offer something of genuine value and to insure that these communities have the capacity to provide an authoritative endorsement of worthy norms. Of course, in liberal societies characterized by durable pluralism, there will be much disagreement about what is of genuine worth and a liberal view of justice will rightly restrain the capacity of the state to do much authoritative endorsing. Hence, this suggestion is rightly viewed with some suspicion. But stay tuned.

Modern societies may weaken the capacity of their constitutive communities to provide authoritative endorsement. People have weak connections to many communities. The church must compete with the ski club and the television. Families are often spread across the continent. Children spend a large part of their lives in schools, but schools typically present a fragmented culture. Teachers collectively rarely project a coherent or unified view of what is worthwhile even about their own subjects. Mathematics competes for attention with literature, band, and sports. All of these influences compete with the various forms that youth culture can take. As Jackson, Boostrom, and Hansen (1993) have reminded us, schools have a complex moral life, but the voice with which the school speaks is likely to be that of Babel.

To be sure, the forces that create this Babel of products and influences are not entirely or even largely a product of liberalism. Yet liberalism may contribute to the erosion of the potential for authoritative endorsement. Its stance toward various conceptions of the good life and hence toward the communities that sustain them is supposed to be one of neutrality. This neutrality may indirectly affirm the Babel of voices, endorse none, and weaken the effectiveness of all. It takes justifiable pride in the marketplace of ideas that it creates, but often does not notice that, for children who approach the world with little ability to discern what is of worth, the marketplace of ideas may be experienced as a shopping mall where image, packaging, and peer pressure count for more than substance and serious argument.

Apart from effective communities promoting worthy conceptions of the good and of the moral life, the culture of our society may be captured by the ethos of the market. The person whose behavior is largely formed by the market may well be rather like the egoistic individual that communitarians lay at the feet of liberalism. That is, the individual shaped by the ethos of the market is likely to be a rational calculator of his or her own interests (and these may be understood in untutored and unworthy ways) and to see life as a competition for goods, opportunities, and resources. Justice may find it difficult to get a purchase on the soul of such a person.

The market may debase the culture. There are many voices to be heard in the Babel of the market, but sex and violence sell well; Monk and Mozart do not. The market will provide all the

sex and violence we want or need. Advertising will provide an endorsement of a sort. Mozart and Monk require a project.

One might hope that schools would adopt cultural projects that endorse worthy conceptions of the good, and yet the main message promoted by the culture of many schools may well constitute an endorsement of the ethos of the market. This endorsement may come in the form of the regular suggestion that students are in school primarily to acquire marketable skills to be cashed in for employment or at the university admissions office. Hence the value of these skills is competitively priced. Students are taught to see themselves as being in competition with others for scarce opportunities and goods.

Bryk, Lee, and Holland (1993) make the following points about the culture of many public schools. First, they claim, public schools convey a vision of society where “individuals strive for success while pursuing their self-interests. Institutional norms are competitive, individualistic, and materialistic.” (pp. 318, 319) Second, through such practices as a differentiated curriculum, tracking, and teacher assignments, schools “produce an inequitable social distribution of achievement...[while] they also socialize students to internalize the causes” (p. 319). Third, schools regulate conduct through a variety of rules that are generally not viewed as expressing any conception of justice or a moral order, where the moral authority of adults is replaced by bureaucratic authority, where doing the prescribed thing replaces a concern for doing the right thing, and where students learn the skills of manipulating the system for their own benefit (also see Grant (1988).

Bryk et al. summarize:

Public Education is not value neutral; its values mirror those of our larger society. The vision conveyed in the public schools is one of *homo economicus*; rational men and women pursuing their self-interest, seeking material pleasures, guided toward individual success. (p. 319)

Ironically the substance of the curriculum of these same schools is increasingly dominated by an academic curriculum consisting of subjects that were once viewed as part of a liberal arts education: science, mathematics, literature, and history. These subjects, however, are increasingly disassociated from the purposes of a liberal education such as the examined life, civility, taste, and citizenship and are viewed as the core of human capital and the basis of security and prosperity (National Commission, 1983).

Let me recapitulate: If children are to become good citizens and if they are to acquire a praiseworthy conception of the good, they must be initiated into communities that function as custodians and transmitters of norms that promote justice and praiseworthy conceptions of the good. If communities are to succeed in the task of communicating such norms, they must be strong enough to provide an authoritative endorsement of them. Yet it may be that liberalism (among other forces) contributes to weakening the capacity of communities to provide authoritative endorsement. If so, children may be unduly dominated by the ethos of the market which is more likely to predispose them to become egoistic and possessive individualists than good citizens with a praiseworthy conception of the good. Since schools are likely to reflect the society in which they exist, they are likely to mirror these values.

The argument here is not the communitarian claim that sees egoism and possessive individualism as central values of liberalism or core to the liberal conception of the person. This is not true. Rather, the claim is that in a society which is both liberal and capitalist and where it is increasingly less likely that children are raised in communities that provide strong endorsement of praiseworthy conceptions of human flourishing, the values of the market easily become the default values. Liberalism does not advocate this. It may abet it.

## NORMATION, PRACTICES, AND SUBJECT MATTER

Moral education involves authoritative endorsement of norms. What is a norm? In what follows I will view the term “norm” as roughly synonymous with “rule,” or “standard of judgment.” Norms regulate the practice of and judgments with respect to some area of human conduct or practice. The notion that we should stop at red octagonal signs is a norm. So is the idea that forks go to the left of plates. The syntax and semantics of language consists of norms. So does much of morality. So does logic.

What makes a norm a norm is its prescriptiveness. Norms prescribe—they specify how something *ought* to be done. The tell-tale sign that a norm is involved is that we are able to recognize mistakes. Norms are what enable us to recognize excellence or ineptitude, distinguish right from wrong, and tell beauty from ugliness. They also enable moral argument. Much of what we debate in moral argumentation is the adequacy or the application of norms.

Some norms are merely conventional. That is, there is nothing rational or irrational about them. There are no reasons why forks must go on the left or why stops signs must be octagonal. Other norms reflect histories of discussion and debate. They may have other kinds of evolutionary histories. They may reflect power and class interests. They may be the product of some cultural analogue of natural selection. They may be accidents.

Hence, that a norm exists does not validate it. Norms may be good or bad, base or noble, just or unjust. Hence a thorough moral education must involve both normation and the critique of norms.

Norms may vary in a number of ways. They can be vague or precise. Their application may or may not be highly context dependent. They may be flexible or not.

Norms need not be consciously held. Nor need we attend to them to follow them. We can recognize that something is amiss in the sentence “My dog are a collie” even if we are unable to state the rule that requires singular verbs for singular subjects.

Norms are often internalized uncritically and unconsciously. They shape our moral sensitivities and feelings, but we do not choose them. We discover that we hold them. We must work to articulate and critique them.

Norms can be formulated and reformulated as the result of experience and reflection. Plato’s (1928) account is instructive if not quite right. The dialectic cannot begin until we can articulate a norm. We then test norms against others’ “intuitions” and try to reconcile them with other moral norms. But these norms and the intuitions against which we test them are not innate. They are not the expression of forgotten forms; they are our culture whispering in our ear. And a successful moral inquiry does not end with a discovery of a universal truth. It ends with a provisional reflective equilibrium.

I do not claim that ethics can be reduced to rule following as though there was nothing to ethics other than the application of rules to cases. Any full account of ethics must include a discussion of virtues and emotions, for example. But norms are central to ethics. Any virtue is a disposition to do certain things and feel certain ways under given circumstances. Norms will be core to our understanding of what we should do and how we should feel. We cannot understand virtues or emotions apart from norms.

Normation structures perception, generates feelings, and alters character. The first point may be illustrated by games. Internalizing the rules and concepts of a game is a prerequisite for seeing it. Imagine what an alien would see at a baseball game. Without the rules and concepts of baseball the alien might observe people throwing white spheres and hitting them with sticks, but ET could not observe hits, outs, and home runs. The rules of the game are constitutive of these events. They do not exist and cannot be seen without them. Nor could ET understand the strategy of the game

or appreciate its aesthetics. People used to say that Ted Williams looked good striking out. To see this one must have aesthetic norms for hitting. Without them there may be effective swings, but not sweet swings. When we learn a game, we learn a vocabulary for describing it and norms for appraising it.

The violation of norms generally elicits certain feelings. If we see someone behaving boorishly, we may feel indignant at the rudeness involved. If we have misinterpreted what was being done and the behavior is not actually boorish, then the feelings of indignity are mistaken. Feelings can be wrong.

When we have violated a moral norm, we may experience guilt or shame and feel the need of forgiveness. When we see someone else violate moral norms we may experience anger or indignation. If the person repents and makes amends, we may feel the need to forgive. When a performance is clumsy, or an object misshapen, we experience ineptitude or ugliness. If we are praised for an achievement, we may feel pride. If we believe our performance was unworthy, we may feel embarrassment. Normation is a prerequisite of such feelings.

Finally, normation is transformative. When we have internalized a set of norms, we see the world differently, we have different feelings, we are disposed to behave in different ways, and we become different people. Normation as well as habituation is essential to character. An honest person is not only someone for whom honesty has become a habit, an honest person is someone who experiences the world in a certain way and who has a range of feelings about dishonest behavior. Virtues are cognitive habits. They involve the inclination to see and feel in certain ways as well as to act in certain ways. Indeed, it is hard to imagine what it would be like to be honest out of habit, but not to experience dishonesty in others as wrong and in one's self as a source of guilt or shame.

Subject matter is one potential source of norms. Hence to master a subject matter involves coming to see the world in new ways, feel about it in different ways, and, indeed, be transformed in certain ways. To understand this, we need to develop the notion of a practice. Alasdair MacIntyre (1981) characterizes a practice as

any coherent and complex form of socially established cooperative human activity through which goods internal to that form of activity are realized in the course of trying to achieve those standards of excellence which are appropriate to, and partially definitive of, that form of activity, with the result that human powers to achieve excellence, and human conceptions of the ends and goods involved, are systematically extended. (p. 175)

According to MacIntyre academic disciplines as well as the arts are practices, as are most sports, many games, crafts, and occupations.

Consider several features of practices. First, practices involve norms, and the mastery of a practice, in addition to requiring the development of skills and the acquisition of knowledge, involves normation. In mastering a practice we must internalize the standards of excellence appropriate to the practice. We must know what counts as a good performance.

MacIntyre calls the norms involved in practices "standards of excellence." This phrase suggests that the process of normation in most areas emphasizes what counts as doing something well. But this notion needs to be understood broadly. In many academic areas the norms of a practice involve aesthetic standards and ethical standards as well as standards for a sound argument. Mathematicians may characterize a proof as elegant as well as rigorous. And the norms of any intellectual activity must include a concern for truth and evidence. A scientist who had mastered the techniques of good experiments, but who was willing to distort evidence or misrepresent data so as to secure professional advancement has failed to internalize the norms of his or her field.



Second, practices are constituted by goods that are internal to them as well as the excellences required to achieve these goods. The distinction between those goods that are internal to practices and those that are instrumentally connected to a practice is important to MacIntyre's exposition of the concept. Some goods are constitutive of a practice. Such goods cannot be achieved except through mastery of the excellences of the practice. Other goods may also result from the activities of a practice, but may be achieved apart from its excellences. Physics aims at knowledge and understanding of the physical world. Failure to master the excellences required to do good experiments or draw warranted conclusions from their results defeats the aims of knowledge and understanding. But poor physicists may still find ways to gain university professorships and earn good salaries. Status and income are externalities of the practice.

The goods internal to practices contribute to human flourishing in that they are intrinsic goods. The arts aim at beauty and certain forms of understanding. The sciences aim at understanding, not just as an instrument of control, but as a good in its own right. There are also what might be termed epistemological goods. Those who engage in practices must care about truth, wisdom, and excellence. When the practices are academic in character, rigor, coherence, and elegance of argument are internal to them. These goods as well are likely to be experienced as intrinsic goods by those who have begun to master a practice.

Third, engaging in practices extends both human capacities to accomplish the goods internal to the practices and the understanding of the nature of the goods and excellences involved. Mastery of a practice involves the expansion of both capacity and comprehension. People are changed for the better by engaging in practices. Mastery involves capacity to see the world in new and better ways and the alteration of the self in ways that those who are so altered will view as good. Hence the goods internal to practices include ideals of character.

Finally, to engage in practices is to be involved with others in certain forms of community. Practices are social and cooperative activities. Their functioning depends on communities who "own them" and whose conversations, arguments, and expositions are essential to their maintenance, development, communication, and the initiation of new members. Practices are forms of cooperative activity in pursuit of shared aims. They provide a basis for shared understandings of others, and they elicit collegiality, community, and friendship. The experience of cooperation toward shared ends and the experience of sharing practices with others is itself a good.

Practices require authentic instruction. I understand the idea of authentic instruction as instruction that aims at normation as well as at the transference of belief and skill. This conception of authentic instruction is intended to build on the intuitive idea that instruction should seek to represent any subject matter of practice in a way that captures its character accurately and fully. Hence students who study biology must know more than what biologists currently believe about the living world. They must come to see, understand, and internalize the excellences that are constitutive of biology. They must be able to do what biologists do and think as biologists think. They must not only know facts and theories and possess laboratory techniques, they must internalize a concern for the aims of the biological sciences and make the standards of good argument that pertain their standards. They must come to value truth and inquiry and must experience the attainment of truth and the process of inquiry as intrinsic goods.

Authentic instruction views the current state of a practice as authoritative but not as authoritarian. A practice involves norms of reasoning, value, and excellence. Students cannot engage in the discussions and arguments of those who have mastered a practice until they have achieved some measure of mastery themselves. The discussions and arguments of the well initiated may change the norms of a practice. Hence their authority is provisional. But they cannot be changed by those who have not mastered them.

Authentic instruction generally has elements of an apprenticeship. Norms are best learned

when they are shown as well as stated. Feedback on the quality of a performance is a fundamental aspect of learning. Modeling and feedback require a relationship between a competent practitioner and a novice.

Authentic instruction is also a rite of initiation into the norms of a community. The goods and standards of a practice are the goods and practices of a community that develops, sustains, and transmits them. To master a practice is to internalize the norms of a community by engaging with others in a practice. Learning involves coming to belong. One's character is shaped so that one is recognizably "one of us."

Given this, authentic instruction must be viewed as including moral education. It involves the internalization of worthy aims as well as excellences. It involves internalizing a commitment to truth, honesty, and integrity. It shapes character. Authentic instruction engages and develops both of Rawls's two moral powers. It abets the development of a taste for certain kinds of goods and a conception of the good that prefers the more sophisticated and complex to the mundane and simple. And insofar as it aims at honesty and integrity, it may aid in the internalization of a range of moral norms. Perhaps most importantly, it creates people who can be persuaded by argument.

That authentic instruction is a form of communal activity is also important to its potential for moral education. When instruction is focused on realizing the goods internal to practices and on internalizing and exhibiting standards of excellence, engaging in a practice becomes more of a cooperative than a competitive activity.

Unlike jobs or income, understanding, skill, and excellence are not scarce although they may be rare. Something is rare when there is little of it. It is scarce when the fact that one person has it lessens the opportunity for others to have it. We must compete for jobs, power, status, and income because they are scarce. But we need not compete for truth and excellence. They are rare because they are hard to achieve.

Inquiry is a cooperative activity. When others are excellent, their excellence can contribute to a shared project of inquiry much in the way that members of an orchestra can contribute to a shared project of playing well. Members of orchestras succeed or fail as a group, and the excellence of each is an asset for the development of all. The other person's success is not a competitive liability. It is a resource that can enhance learning and advance collective aims.

It is the external goods to which practices may lead that generate competition. Striving for excellence in playing the violin does not generate competition. Seeking a position in a first rate orchestra or a lucrative concert tour do. So does the need for preeminence. Positions and income are scarce. Status is a positional good. Not all can have it. It follows that an academic culture that emphasizes the goods and norms internal to practices is more likely to generate a sense of cooperation in a shared pursuit than a school culture that sees its practices largely as the production of economic capacity. Moreover, insofar as the goods internal to practices are genuinely internal—part of the meaning and character of practices—authentic instruction will emphasize these goods over the external goods to which practices lead.

A school that emphasizes the goods internal to practices over a range of practices is also likely to provide a kind of endorsement for what, following Rawls (1993), I will call a partially comprehensive doctrine. A comprehensive doctrine, according to Rawls, is a general view concerning the nature of a good life. A view is a partial comprehensive doctrine when it contains elements of such a conception of what is valuable in human life, but it does not claim completeness and may coexist with other doctrines.

The partial comprehensive doctrine affirmed by a school curriculum that emphasizes goods internal to practices gives weight to the values of a liberal education which (I have argued elsewhere (Strike, 2005)) include an ideal of personal development, an ideal of psychological

independence (autonomy), and an ideal of citizenship emphasizing collective deliberation. Here I am concerned with the ideal of personal development.

The ideal of personal development emphasizes the importance of capacity and complexity as significant features of human flourishing. Rawls (1971) in characterizing what he calls the Aristotelian Principle claims: "Other things equal, human beings enjoy the exercise of their realized capacities (their innate or trained abilities), and this enjoyment increases the more the capacity is realized, or the greater its complexity" (p. 426). Above I have used MacIntyre's account of practices to expand this view beyond the account Rawls presents. It is the initiation into practices that develops capacities. And, on MacIntyre's account, it is not just that we enjoy doing what we are good at, it is the transformation of experience, the enhanced perceptions and understandings, and, indeed, the changes in ourselves that are sources of enjoyment and satisfaction. Note three significant facts about this account.

First, it is only a partial account of human flourishing. It does not include a wide range of goods that many find valuable. Family, health, and faith, for example, are missing.

Second, the view is not elitist in that the range of worthy practices and, therefore, the range of activities pointed to by the Aristotelian Principle, goes well beyond academic disciplines. It includes not only the arts, but also sports, crafts, and most occupations (MacIntyre mentions farming).

This second point is important because children come into schools with a variety of both innate and socialized differences. No practice can be expected to resonate to every student. What is important to the ideal of personal development is not that every student should love physics and Shakespeare, but that every student should encounter practices that develop a range of excellences and the capacity to experience a range of complex goods that develop capacity and transform experience. So far as the personal ideal is concerned, auto mechanics may have as much to contribute as poetry in that a well tuned engine may be as much a source of pleasure as a well turned phrase. It follows that a school that is interested in the personal development of all of its students must attend both to the provision of a range of practices and provide enough flexibility to allow students to pursue those that, after adequate acquaintance, they find fulfilling.

The third point is that this partial account of human flourishing, while it may not be fully neutral in the way in which some liberals insist, is nevertheless big tented. Every culture has achieved practices that enable the achievement of a range of goods. No major religion of which I am aware rejects the idea of mastery of practices, and, indeed, many religious activities are themselves practices. Thus, while an educational emphasis on the mastery of practices through authentic instruction may constitute an endorsement of a partially comprehensive conception of the good, this view is decently consistent with reasonable pluralism. It is the kind of endorsement that public schools can make, and it is the kind of endorsement they should make if the ethos of the market is not to be the default source of norms in liberal societies.

Where does this take us? When we view academic subject matters as practices, the process of mastering an academic subject (or an art form, most vocations, complex games, or sports) becomes the initiation into a community. This initiation involves internalizing the norms of the community and coming to understand and value its goods and norms. When instruction provides an adequate picture of the nature of a practice and aims to have students internalize its norms and value its goods, it is authentic instruction. Authentic instruction involves authoritative endorsement of such norms and goods.

Thus, insofar as the norms of such communities include moral norms (as they must) then initiation into a practice is a form of moral education. Indeed, both of Rawls's two moral powers, a conception of justice and a conception of the good, are developed in some measure by such an education.

## COMMUNITY, POLITY, AND MORAL DEVELOPMENT

The preceding is not meant to suggest that an initiation into a range of practices provides an adequate or sufficient moral education. This is the case for several reasons.

First, the range of moral norms developed through the initiation into various practices is not complete. Initiation into academic practices, for example, may develop a commitment to honesty, truth, and intellectual integrity. But it also constructs these ideals as norms of inquiry rather than broader norms of fair treatment of others. Its endorsement of these norms is teleological and contextual in character. While there may be some transfer from ideals of intellectual honesty and integrity to broader norms of truth telling and honesty, it is unclear how far initiation into the norms of various practices will take us toward developing an adequately broad sense of justice.

Second, the Aristotelian Principle and the idea of goods internal to practices provide an account of the nature of enjoyable activities or experiences. As a conception of the human flourishing, these ideals are incomplete. They lack, for example, a full account of relationships, but friendship, love, kindness, and family are generally important aspects of a good life as is health. Nor is there a conception of the role of religion, faith, or spirituality.

Third, the authority structure implicit in practices is hierarchical more than democratic. The pedagogical structure of the initiation into practices is largely a master–apprentice relationship. The communities into which the novice is initiated are generally governed by those who have achieved expertise or mastery. In the realm of practices, “Those who know should rule” is the common norm.

Finally, a life that is unduly focused on the mastery of a practice and that is not balanced by a broader conception of morality and a more complete view of the good may well involve certain vices. Not every “good” that satisfies the Aristotelian Principle is morally acceptable. Not every “good” internal to a practice is commendable in the larger scheme of things. One may make even torture into an art form. Excellence in sports may involve membership in athletic cultures from which civility is absent or where brutality or dominance is glorified. A preoccupation with excellence in some endeavor to the exclusion of all else may produce people who are dilettantes, narcissistic, or self-centered, willing to sacrifice the welfare of others for their art or preoccupation.

I think, however, that there is more to be said about the capacity of community to promote desirable norms and values than what has thus far been said. Good communities not only serve to initiate people into practices, they provide broader forms of social experience that also socialize with moral effect. Communities can be school masters to democracy in that they lead us to many of the values and virtues required by democratic communities. Thus I want to expand my account of the role of community in moral education by considering Rawls’s account of his three psychological laws of moral development. Rawls (1971) provides the following account of these three psychological laws.

First law: given that family institutions are just, and that the parents love the child and manifestly express their love by caring for his good, the child, recognizing their evident love of him, comes to love them.

Second law: given that a person’s capacity for fellow feeling has been realized by acquiring attachments in accordance with the first law, and given that a social arrangement is just and publicly known to be just, then this person develops ties of friendly feeling and trust toward others in the association as they with evident intention comply with their duties and obligations, and live up to the ideals of their actions.

Third law: given that a person’s capacity for fellow feeling has been realized by his forming attachments in accordance with the first two laws, and given that a society’s institutions are just and

are publicly known by all to be just, then this person acquires the corresponding sense of justice as he recognizes that he and those for whom he cares are the beneficiaries of these arrangements. (pp. 490, 491)

I agree with the overall direction of this account, but first a few concerns about the details. The shifts from love in the first law, to feelings of friendship and trust in the second, to justice in the third, seem too abrupt and the range and role of attachments involved is too modest. Good communities and good societies, I suspect, accomplish their moral purposes, not only in virtue of being just, but also because they care for and about their members in ways that go beyond justice in the accomplishment of shared ends. Virtues such as compassion, kindness, and civility play a role throughout. This is particularly the case in the classroom where the fact that teachers care for their students may be a significant factor in the development of a sense of community.

Rawls's picture of associations in the second law seems closest to a guild to which members belong largely to further their own interests, and they bond with other members because others live up to their duties and obligations. But good communities, especially those that are good for the growth of children, may retain elements of the relations to be found in loving families, and may in this respect be more like congregations than guilds. That is, the basis of the association may go beyond the cooperative advancement of the members' interests to the pursuit of a common project that is pursued out of commitment to some larger good and where love and compassion for one another are a part of this common project.

Even in the transition to a societal level in the third law, it is desirable that people not only treat one another justly, but also that they view society as somewhat like a family or a congregation in which there is a felt obligation to care for others, especially for those weakest members who are unable to care for themselves. Here kindness and civility may play a role as well as justice (see Strike, 2000).

A second concern is that these three laws do not attend to the role of the moral content of the association. The operative feature of a good association in the second law is that people live up to their duties and obligations. This engenders feelings of friendship and trust. This account is a "generic" account of how associations work, and in this respect it is similar to that of Putnam (1993). But this omits the moral importance of the purposes of the association and the specific norms that may be socialized in a given association. Churches may be presumed to teach different lessons than banks and the Ku Klux Klan. These differences in content are not trivial in the processes of moral education.

To put this complaint differently, Rawls's account emphasizes processes that may help us to understand how important virtues are acquired, but it ignores the phenomenon of normation and the authoritative endorsement of norms that strong communities can provide.

Nevertheless, given these caveats, Rawls's account suggests some of the basic features of communities that are able to accomplish moral purposes. Such communities are built on a foundation of love, care, trust, justice, and shared purpose. As children move out of loving families and through various associations that exhibit these characteristics into the larger society, there is a kind of dialectal and reciprocal expansion of the child's capacity for various attachments to others. The range of attachments (love of parents, friendship toward and trust of associates, kindness to strangers, identification with and concern for fellow citizens, etc.) that develops in response to being the object and beneficiary of these feelings and attachments expands. The moral conceptions that mediate and regulate the expression of these attachments similarly develop.

Moreover, communities with these characteristics may accomplish the work of normation better on that account. In schools, when children and young adults experience communities of this sort, the conditions of authoritative endorsement of the norms and goods of the school's

academic communities are created, and the tendency of these norms to find expression in narrow forms of self-indulgence is checked.

Authoritative endorsement requires trust. Teachers cannot argue students into internalizing the norms and valuing the goods of various practices. Students may not possess the concepts to be persuaded, and they lack a developed capacity to experience the goods internal to most practices in other than a preliminary way. Teachers must, in effect, say to their students, “I have something to teach you that other human beings have experienced as being of value. Understanding the concepts and coming to value the goods of this practice are things you are not in a good position to do right now. Mastery of this sort requires effort, patience, discipline, and commitment. You will have to stick with me a while.” This is essentially an appeal for trust. When given to students who are largely uninitiated into a given practice, trust is essential because students are not yet capable of experiencing many of the goods that are internal to the practice. If the teacher and the school are to be trusted, they must be viewed as trustworthy. This is best accomplished by establishing classrooms where student have the experience of care. The success of authoritative endorsement requires good communities in which students are first and foremost cared for and about.

More may be involved. The school community is not merely an assemblage of guilds. It is also an extension of the family and a mini-polity. The student’s experience of school communities should be more like the experience of being a member of an orchestra and a congregation than like being a soloist. In orchestras there should be a sense that “we are all in this together” because the orchestra, like a sports team, succeeds or fails as a group. Each member has an interest in the success of other members. In a good congregation part of the shared project of the group is the care they provide for one another. Members are valued for themselves, not just for the contribution that might be made to common goals.

In good communities there is a sense of learning as a shared effort and a willingness to contribute to the success of others. Seeing learning as a shared effort can create a sense of community, but also depends on some preexistent bonds among members that allow individuals to value assisting their weaker collaborators. In an environment that is characterized largely by a spirit of competition, cooperative learning is easily seen by more able students as an exploitation of their ability for the welfare of others. Thus, while cooperative learning may abet a sense of community, it is not likely to succeed if there is not some measure of a sense of community already existent.

Three points should be noted here. First, this expanded account of the role of community in moral development no longer makes the idea of the mastery of practices the sole role of community. Nor is the guild the basic model for community. When we view the school’s community as originating in a broad based care for students, we are trying to create a community that aims at more than just the mastery of practices. We are trying to create a community in which students are cared for and about generally and with respect to multiple domains of their lives. What has become central is the connection between the attachments that are shown, first, (one hopes) by teachers but then also by students toward the teacher and toward one another.

Second, given this, a broader range of norms may be involved and endorsed. Teachers may not only endorse those norms that are important to the mastery of a practice and succeed because they are trusted. They may also endorse norms that are important to the establishment of a democratic community. Norms of inclusion and justice may be endorsed when there is an emphasis on the idea that we are all in it together. Students may learn to value working together for the common good.

Third, subject matter may contribute to this kind of normation. History may be engaged not just to create historical understanding and the academic norms of good historiography, but also to engender democratic norms by an engagement with both liberal democratic ideals and the common failure to live up to them in American history—Eamonn Callan (1997) provides an excellent



account of this. Moreover, the art of democratic deliberation across cultural differences may be taught in history and social studies and the appreciation of cultural differences in art, literature, and music.

This view of moral learning that sees moral learning as a matter of normation through participation in healthy communities is largely a communitarian account. That it is built on the views of Rawls, the quintessential deontological liberal philosopher of the 20th century, may seem anomalous. I think, however, that this is not the case.

Views of moral education might be thought to depend on the answers we give to three different questions—questions that sometimes are not adequately distinguished. These are:

1. How are moral norms justified?
2. How are moral norms learned and understood?
3. How are people motivated to act on moral norms?

The account that I have given, emphasizing the role of normation and the role of community in normation, is largely an account of moral learning and motivation. Deontological liberalism is, however, essentially an account of the justification of moral norms. In his extensive writing on this topic Rawls provides an account of the justification of principles of justice that relies on principles of rational choice exercised in the original position and behind a veil of ignorance. Much of the point of this account is to show that norms of justice can be justified in a way that is independent of any comprehensive doctrines or view of the good. As Rawls (1993) argues in *Political Liberalism*, a view of justice that is adequate for a society characterized by a durable pluralism of reasonable comprehensive doctrines cannot find its justification in one particular comprehensive doctrine.

But in his account of the acquisition of a sense of justice, Rawls does not rely on the justification of his principles of justice either as a significant part of how they are learned or motivated. Rawls's account of the acquisition of a sense of justice relies instead on the assumption that people who are raised by those who love them, care for them and treat them justly will respond with a range of appropriate moral conceptions and sentiments. It is an account that is rooted in what might be called affective reciprocity. Family and community are central to it.

Another feature of Rawls's argument should be mentioned. Rawls claims that his principles of justice constitute an overlapping conception of justice. The core idea here is that while there is a justification of the principles of justice that is independent of any comprehensive doctrine, nevertheless many people will hold comprehensive doctrines that will also provide justification for liberal principles. And it is a condition of any reasonable view of justice that it not be inconsistent with justice. Thus, Rawls's argument does not seem to preclude that people may, in fact, find their justification for liberal principles within a teleological or even theological framework. Moreover, insofar as approaching issues of justice from some such perspective lends motivational force to them Rawls seems to welcome them. It would appear then that Rawls does not view his deontological account of justice as inconsistent with a more communitarian account of the sources of moral leaning and commitment. In fact, he provides such an account.

## CONCLUSIONS

I have argued that moral learning can be usefully characterized as normation and that effective normation requires authoritative endorsement of the kind that is most effectively provided by strong communities characterized by a praiseworthy account of human flourishing and regulated

by justifiable norms including norms of justice. I have also considered a communitarian complaint that argued that in our society the role of such communities is eroded by a range of factors among which I included the liberal demand for neutrality and competition with the market which puts forth a bewildering array of goods to those unprepared to judge wisely among them. I also claimed that the culture of the public school is more likely to reflect these vices than it is to counter them.

I then argued that some counterweight to these influences might be found in two conceptions of community. The first is communities of practice, which provide some elements of a moral education insofar as they endorse justifiable norms and praiseworthy goods. In addition, an education that provides authentic instruction in such practices provides an endorsement of a partially comprehensive doctrine that is usefully built on Rawls's notion of the Aristotelian Principle. However, these communities have three deficiencies. First, the range of norms they are likely to convey is narrow and does not add up to a fully adequate conception of morality. Second, apart from other moral conceptions and goods, a focus on the mastery of practices can lead to a conception of life that is overly self-centered: focused on the quality of experience and the excellence of the performance, and inadequately concerned for the just treatment of others except insofar as they contribute to one's project. Third, schools cannot be expected to successfully initiate all students into every practice in which they provide instruction. This is not merely a failure of good instruction or of excessive content. It is a result of individual differences innate or socialized. Not every student will love poetry or mathematics. Here the cure is to provide an adequate range of worthy practices, and at an appropriate point to permit students to follow their inclinations. Communities of this sort are exemplified by guilds, sports teams, and performing groups such as orchestras in which success must often be achieved as a group and where the excellence of each contributes to the welfare of all.

The second type of community is one characterized by moral commitments that emphasize caring, love, inclusion, and justice. Such communities promote both normation and desirable attachments and moral sentiments via a kind of process in which children come to form attachments to and develop a sense of justice with respect to others because they come to reciprocate the love, care, and justice which they experience from others. This kind of community has a project which includes care for others. It is typified by congregations and democratic polities.

The trick to both good schools and morally educative schools is largely finding ways to embed the first kind of community into the second. I have mentioned some instructional practices that are important for the creation of such communities, authentic instruction and cooperative learning. The first leads us to emphasize initiation into practices in a way that gives adequate weight to their internal norms and goods and avoids framing their role largely in terms of the acquisition of human capital. Cooperative learning helps create and reinforce the idea that learning is both an inquiry and an activity where "we are all in this together." Because authentic instruction is, itself, an inherently cooperative activity, these two pedagogical emphases hang together and are easier to achieve if the emphasis on finding a place in the job market is diminished.

As with any reasonable view of education, there is no substitute for teachers who both have a deep grasp of their subjects and who care for their students. The first is a requirement of initiation into practices, the second of the creation of democratic community.

There are other practices and policies that might make a difference. The argument of this paper gives considerable weight to the emerging view of school reform that emphasizes small schools with a distinct curricular focus. A distinct curricular focus provides a context where authentic instruction and cooperative learning become easier. School communities with a focus are more likely to be valuationally coherent. Moreover they are more likely to be able to reach out into the larger society and connect students with accomplished adult practitioners of practices

and help initiate students into the broader communities they represent. Finally, smallness provides a more personalized context where teachers can more adequately express their care for students. Creating communities capable of authoritative endorsement of a range of morally important norms requires institution building, not just better classroom practices.

One final comment: This view of moral education falls somewhere between a view that sees moral education as a distinct activity with specifically identified moral content and a view that sees moral learning largely as an unintended consequence of institutional culture. It does not see moral learning as a consequence of a particular program that emphasizes moral learning, but it does see moral learning as the product of cultures that can be created and nurtured. Unhappily, I fear that the cultures we are currently creating in our schools, dominated as they are by a concern for test based accountability and argued for largely by an appeal to the importance of human capital, are likely to be counter-productive so far as moral education is concerned. The emphasis on testing is likely to erode authentic instruction. The emphasis on the requirements of the job market is likely to lead students to see one another largely as competitors in the race for scarce goods and opportunities. The emphasis on efficiency is likely to continue to generate schools that are large, bureaucratic, and alienating.

If I am right, the key to good moral education, indeed, of good education, is largely the work of building healthy communities.

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## 8

# Research and Practice in Moral and Character Education: Loosely Coupled Phenomena

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The scientific content of education consists of whatever subject-matter selected from other fields, enables the educator, whether administrator or teacher, to see and think more clearly and deeply about whatever he is doing. Its value is not to supply objectives to him, anymore than it is to supply him with ready-made rules. Education is a mode of life, of action. As an act it is wider than science. (Dewey, 1929, p. 75)

Ever since Edward Thorndike popularized the application of the methods of behavioral research to educational settings at the beginning of the twentieth century, American education has been committed to the belief that findings from educational research can lead to improvements in educational practice by telling us “what works” and “what doesn’t work.” Over the past 100 years character education and educational research have been fellow travelers. At the turn of the twentieth century an emerging character education movement relied largely on philosophical and phenomenological perspectives to define its goals and pedagogy. The initial methods advocated by the leaders of this movement relied largely on exhortation, habit formation, and the use in textbooks of inspiring figures from literature and history. These largely teacher-centered methods were referred to as direct instruction. Even though the research of this era was widely interpreted as discrediting teacher-centered and directive methods in character education, these methods never lost their appeal to educators of the era.

In the early days of the recent character education movement of the 1980s and 1990s, methods for the education of character were little changed from the era of the 1920s. Among influential proponents such as William Bennett, Secretary of Education under Ronald Reagan, and the late Ed Wynne, professor of education at the University of Illinois-Chicago, preferred methods were stated largely in Aristotelian terms with the focus on the development of virtuous behavior through literature containing moral themes (Bennett, 1993) and habit formation through an in-school focus on moral advocacy, praise and reward, drill, and rules (Wynne, 1982; Wynne & Ryan, 1997).

Today, however, once again, it is widely accepted that virtue-based approaches of the early, and current, proponents of character education lack a solid research base. Researchers, draw-

ing heavily upon the field of psychology and experimental research, are defining the field. At the beginning of the twenty-first century, character education looks dramatically different from that proposed by the early founders of the field and the more recent advocates for a virtue-based approach. Approaches to character education that utilize advocacy, praise and reward, drill, and rules have been dismissed as not research-based and even passé by many of the leading character educators today (Berkowitz, 1995; Schaps, Schaeffer, & McDonnell, 2001).

In this chapter I will trace the development of research into moral and character education in the United States through the twentieth century up to the present. In doing so, I will describe the methods and findings of three distinct waves of research interest in the last century, assess the impact that the research of these eras had on practice, and draw conclusions regarding the nature of the relationship between research and practice in the field of moral and character education. I will thereby identify a number of characteristics of research findings and other factors that have previously weakened, if not eliminated, the link between research and practice. I will argue that the current experimental paradigm for improving character and moral education is based on a naive view of the role of research in the process of curriculum decision making. Drawing upon the writings of John Dewey, I will propose a broader understanding for the interaction of research and practice in character and moral education.

First, it will be argued that unless research addresses practice in a way that is perceived by teachers as clear, salient, and utilitarian, it will likely remain irrelevant to classroom practice. It will be demonstrated that the character/moral education research of the past century has largely failed to meet these criteria. Second, it will be argued that the process by which teachers make pedagogical decisions about teaching for character should be a prior and in some ways is a more important consideration for researchers than the attempt to identify “what works.” The chapter will conclude with a perspective on “research as used” that results in a more comprehensive view of the goals and methods best suited for advancing practice in the field of character education. It will be shown in this chapter that the promise of research to impact and advance practice in the field has not been realized and that an awareness of the reasons for this failure provides a perspective for forging a closer link between research and practice.

### THREE WAVES OF RESEARCH INTO MORAL/CHARACTER EDUCATION

#### Thorndike’s Chickens and the Character Education Inquiry

It is impossible to separate the first wave of character educational research—the mid-1920s until the end of the 1930s—from Edward Thorndike. It was in 1898 that the twenty-three-year-old graduate student published his dissertation on chickens in puzzle boxes at Harvard under the tutelage of William James. In Thorndike’s dissertation research he placed hungry chickens in enclosures (puzzle boxes) from which they could escape and obtain food by some simple act such as pressing a lever. Thorndike then observed and recorded changes in the animal’s behavior and how long it took the animal to solve the puzzle and escape (Joncich, 1968). The salience of Thorndike’s research was the generation of a behaviorist view of human learning that would shape the future of American education. Thorndike today is widely recognized as one of the most influential individuals in American educational history. Not only did his approach to research define the field, but also his behavioral views on human learning also had an indelible effect on the course of schooling throughout the twenty-first century.

In 1910, Thorndike gave a clue that character was to be an important focus of the new science of psychology when, he noted in the first volume of the *Journal of Educational Psychology*:



A complete science of psychology would tell every fact about one's intellect and character and behavior, would tell the cause of every change in human nature, would tell the results which every educational force would have. (Thorndike, 1910, p. 6)

The key to effective research for Thorndike was measurement. His credo, "What ever exists at all exists to some amount" (Thorndike, 1918, p. 16) was widely accepted and placed measurement of human characteristics at the heart of behavioral and educational research. This emphasis on measurement was the basis of a great deal of the importance and significance of the Character Education Inquiry. Thorndike, however, was not as strong on methodology. As his biographer (Joncich, 1968) noted: "his investigative techniques and research designs in human psychology are, by general agreement and his own admission, both opportunistic and unpretentious" (p. 262).

### *The Character Education Inquiry*

At its 1922 meeting, the Religious Education Association passed a resolution that endorsed a research study to find out "How is religion being taught to young people and with what effect?" (Hartshorne & May, 1928–1930, p. v). Two years later, the Institute of Social and Religious Research, at the request of the Religious Education Association, agreed to fund a research inquiry based on this question. The agreement with Teachers College called for a three-year "...inquiry into character education with particular reference to religious education" (Hartshorne & May, 1928–1930, p. vi). The inquiry was set to begin September 1, 1924 with all funds supplied by the Institute of Social and Religious Research, established and funded by John D. Rockefeller. In 1926, the grant was extended for two additional years, thereby enabling the grant to fund a five-year study from 1924 to 1929. The final bill for the Character Education Inquiry was \$140,000 (In 2007 dollars, adjusted for inflation, this study would have a cost of \$1,627,078).

By the time of the Character Education Inquiry the shift toward the use of scientific methods in education and away from metaphysics and philosophy was nearly complete. When the President of Teachers College, Ernest D. Burton, initiated the Inquiry in 1923, it was placed under the immediate supervision of Professor Edward L. Thorndike, the director of the Division of Psychology of the Institute of Educational Research (Hartshorne & May, 1928–1930). Dr. Hugh Hartshorne, Professor of Religious Education at the University of Southern California and Dr. Mark A. May, Professor of Psychology at Syracuse were hired to serve as co-directors of the inquiry. Both had impeccable credentials in the new field of education science—both were former students of Thorndike and held doctorates from Columbia Teachers College and had graduated within a year of each other. Both had a nearly identical liberal progressive lineage (Setran, 2000, pp. 208–209) and Thorndike obviously decided to go with individuals whom he knew to lead this effort. The Character Education Inquiry (CEI) ultimately became one of the most frequently cited and significant research studies of the twentieth century (Borstellman, 1974). Undoubtedly, the CEI constituted a giant step in the assessment of character. Even today, this study continues to provide useful instruments for researchers in the field. Hartshorne and May saw their study as being potentially of great importance, "Implications of these facts for character education are enormous" (Hartshorne & May, 1930, p. 609), but much less clear is the extent of the impact of this research on educational practice.

Whereas the motivation for and original thrust of the inquiry was to examine the question of the influence of religious education on youth character, by the time that Hartshorne and May designed the study, this goal had become a matter of only minor concern. Hartshorne and May's primary study, following Thorndike's lead, focused on the development of a large body of standardized test material for use in the field of moral and religious education. Tests were to be

developed in the areas of knowledge and skills, attitude, opinion and motive, conduct, and self-control. Student character was assessed through innovative classroom tests of honesty (deceit) and altruism or prosocial behavior (service).

The study sample, drawn primarily from private and public schools situated in Eastern metropolitan areas of the United States, consisted of 10,850 fifth through eighth grade students. Although the sample was not a random sample, Hartshorne and May attempted to use representative samples combining various SES levels, ethnic groups, types of communities, and intelligence levels.

As the study evolved, its focus clearly shifted from a case of applied to basic research. That is, instead of a study designed to focus on the practice of character and religious education with a view toward the development of knowledge that would be useful to practitioners, the research focused instead on the fundamental nature of character. Of the final 1,782 pages of text in the three-volume report, only 50 pages, or 3% of the manuscript reported data on the influence of character and religious education programs on youth. The funders noted this shift upon reading the final report. Galen Fisher, the Executive Secretary of the Institute of Social and Religious Research, presents the following interpretation:

To lay minds this volume, at first glance, may seem overloaded with matter that has little to do with moral and religious education.... Such readers may profitably reflect that these preliminary processes are inevitable if character education is to evolve from guesswork to science.... It must be left to time and the experts to pass judgment on the daring work done by Professors Hartshorne and May. (Hartshorne & May, 1928–1930, vol. 2, pp. v–vi)

The attractiveness of the CEI to educational progressives of the era was based on the findings derived from the basic psychological research contained in the report. The particular finding that received the most attention was referred to as the doctrine of specificity: “a child’s conduct in any situation is determined more by the circumstances that attend the situation than by any mysterious entity residing in the child” (Hartshorne & May, 1930, p. 610).

While, the Hartshorne and May study was not, as sometimes assumed, primarily a study of “Best Practices” or “What Works” in the practice of character education its findings were largely interpreted as having significance in this area. With regard to the efficacy of character and religious education in the promotion of character, the authors concluded that “...the mere urging of honest behavior by teachers or the discussion of standards and ideals...has no necessary relation to conduct...the prevailing ways of inculcating ideals probably do little good and may do some harm” (Hartshorne & May, 1930, vol. 1, p. 413). This frequently cited quotation was in fact an inference drawn largely from non-experimental comparisons of intact groups and was not consistent with a wealth of other contemporary educational research. A greater quantity of relevant, and in many respects better, research was available to teachers and educational leaders in this era that could be utilized to reach a very different set of conclusions about the practice of character education.

The conventional interpretation of the impact of the Hartshorne and May inquiry on the character education movement is easily stated:

From a research perspective the death blow to character education was delivered by Hartshorne and May’s famous research on character...its effect was to debunk the very notion of character itself, thereby pulling the rug out from under the educators. The authors of this assessment supplied evidence to support this claim in the form of an analysis of the number of entries under “character” in the *Education Index*. They found that between 1930 and 1940 the number of times “character” was cited dropped 85 percent. (Power, Higgins, & Kohlberg, 1989, p. 127)

In a similar analysis of published research articles devoted to character education, Stanhope (1992) found 480 character education articles published between 1929 and 1938, but only 115 published between 1939 and 1948—a decline of 76%. Based on Stanhope's content analysis of the published articles, interest in character education had declined by the decade of the 1940s.

Another recent history of the character education movement (Setran, 2000) concluded, "The results sent immediate shockwaves through the character education community" (p. 315) and "The impact of the Character Education Inquiry can hardly be overstated...this report became the scientific backbone of the liberal progressive character education movement and the chief empirical critique of conservative pedagogy" (p. 317). Finally, in review of the influence of teaching and schooling on moral development (Solomon, Watson, & Battistich, 2001), concludes that the decline in direct character education, nearly complete by the 1950s, "...may have been caused, at least in part, by the publicized conclusions of a major research project conducted by Hugh Hartshorne and Mark May..." (p. 573). These recent assessments of the impact of the Character Education Inquiry on practice ignore a large and competing body of research published in this era.

### *Other Research of the Era*

Any interpretation of the impact of the Character Education Inquiry on educational practice, however, must take place within the broader set of research findings of the era on the efficacy of differing methods of character education. In the 1932 Yearbook of the Department of Superintendence of the National Education Association (Threlkeld, 1931) a chapter entitled "Research Related to Character Education," contains 98 pages of detailed annotations of research studies on character education. In this yearbook the Character Education Inquiry received attention, but it is only one of more than 100 studies discussed in the report. In the chapter of the report on research in character education it was noted that, "Experimental studies of moral character are few and relatively unsatisfactory" (Threlkeld, 1931, p. 80). This chapter of the Report further noted that even though a controlled experiment had been included in the CEI it was only a minor part of the study, and the results were far from conclusive—the character education program, on a measure of deception, "showed a superiority of the experimental group in three comparisons, of the control group in two, and equivalence in one" (Threlkeld, 1931, p. 81). Thus, one of the leading professional organizations of the time took a critical stance toward the findings of the CEI.

Also, in the 1920s and 1930s the growing field of educational research contained many findings inconsistent with one of the CEI's conclusions, namely that direct methods were ineffective. Many studies of this era (Armstrong, 1929; Bowyer, 1931; Feder & Miller, 1933; Jones, 1936; Mawson, 1931; Peters, 1933b; Tatum, 1928; Thompson, 1932; Tuttle, 1928, 1929; Voelker, 1921; Zyve, 1931) compared the impact of direct methods to indirect methods on student character. Unlike the CEI, these studies utilized experimental research designs. In the studies that utilized experimental designs it was found that direct methods were, on balance, more effective than indirect methods.

In the Penn State studies, in twenty-six of the thirty matched classrooms the results supported the effectiveness of systematic direct moral instruction. Under incidental instruction, on fifty-six of the variables differences favored the control groups and on 50 of the variables the differences favored the experimental groups (Peters, 1933b). Peters noted "...the previous controlled experiments dealing with this topic (character education) have been so few and so small in scope that we may say the question has hitherto been nearly untouched" (Peters, 1933a, p. 213). Based on the Penn State experiments, he concluded "...systematic moral instruction can aid in the development of character" (Peters, 1933a, p. 213).

The contemporary interpretation of the CEI varied widely. In a 1931 review of character education research, Breed cited Mark May to the effect that “The major implication of these contributions of science is that character can be taught” (Breed, 1931, p. 292). Of course, May was referring not to the use of direct methods but to the use of indirect or incidental methods. Vernon Jones (1935), however, presented a different perspective on the CEI: “Hartshorne and May, however, as a result of their extensive study emphasized the great difficulty of making changes in the character of children” (p. 32). Jones also expressed skepticism about the CEI’s advocacy of incidental methods in character education:

Much is heard from some sources about the merits of incidental training in character, the assumption apparently that it is relatively easy to make improvement in the character of children.... In view of the fact that it requires such careful planning and persistence to achieve even small improvement, it seems that any instruction that is hit-or-miss will accomplish very little. (Jones, 1936, p. 382)

The perspective of Troth in 1930 was typical of the general support for the direct approach that many of the era drew from educational research:

The results of scientific experimentation in learning give irrefutable evidence that the best way to acquire the greatest proficiency in any line of endeavor is to train on the specific thing to be mastered, and not to depend upon acquiring it as a by-product of some other activity. (Troth, 1930, pp. 187–188)

A review published by the National Education Association noted:

Probably the most extensive studies of school influence are those of Hartshorne and May and others. In interpreting their data, however, it must be borne in mind that most of their work involved pupils in only four school grades, five to eight inclusive, and in only a few school systems. Final conclusions could not be drawn from such a restricted sampling, even if the tests and other techniques used had been entirely adequate. (National Education Association, 1934, p. 75)

The authors highlighted the finding of the relationship of group morale to student conduct. Many contemporary historical accounts have assumed that the CEI finding that character was highly situationally determined was the death knell for character education. It is apparent that researchers and educators in the 1930s tended to view the findings as less compelling. In a chapter on character education in the December 1937 issue of the *Review of Educational Research*, the status of the “specificity versus generality” controversy was presented in this way: “...during the period under review the heat of this controversy seems to have diminished a great deal. Perhaps it is too early to predict the outcome, but the trend seems to be a middle of the road position” (Jones, May, Olson, & Trow, 1937, p. 38). One of the co-authors of this appraisal was none other than Mark May.

### *So What Happened to Character Education?*

The decline in citations under character in the *Education Index* in the 1930s was only a loose proxy for what was happening in schools. Some of the character building innovations of the movement such as homerooms or advisory periods, student clubs, and character marks on report cards have persisted in schools up until the present. Other evidence that character education had not vanished from schools by the end of the 1930s comes from Henry Lester Smith, Dean

Emeritus of the School of Education of Indiana University. In 1950 Smith conducted a national survey of character education practices for the Palmer Foundation (Smith, 1950). Smith received 300 responses from colleges and universities involved in teacher training, public schools, and from state superintendents of education. Smith concluded, “There is a decided variance in opinion as to the methods that should be used in character education” (Smith, 1950, p. 48). While many from the three groups above did not express an opinion regarding the direct versus indirect debate, of those that did, the state superintendents and colleges of education favored the indirect approach by better than two to one. Respondents from the public schools were evenly split between the two methods (35 to 35). Smith noted that:

While many schoolmen in institutions of higher learning and in administrative positions in the public schools are so ardently pointing out that the direct method is ineffective and outmoded, there are schools all over the country—in large cities, in towns, in rural areas—actually making use of the method and enthusiastic over the good results obtained. In short while some are crying ‘It can’t be done,’ others are going ahead and doing it. (Smith, 1950, p. 10)

Smith also observed a phenomenon that is familiar today in such venues as the Association for Moral Education and the American Educational Research Association:

The writers who believe in using the direct approach have no objection to the use of the indirect. None expressed the opinion that the indirect method is undesirable, ineffective or futile, or that the direct should be used exclusively. On the other hand, a large number of writers believe thoroly (sic) in the use of the indirect method exclusively. They are definitely opposed to the direct method and claim it is futile, ineffective and outmoded. (Smith, 1950, p. 9)

Apparently, a strong attachment to one’s preferred ideology and an intolerance of diverse perspectives is not a new phenomenon in educational circles.

It would appear that the Character Education Inquiry did not, as has been presumed, send an earthquake through America’s public schools following its publication. A number of characteristics of this research contributed to its limited impact on practice.

First, the CEI, due to its length and complexity was largely inaccessible to practitioners. Second, when the results were presented they were generally presented as more negative than positive when it came to implications for practice. One common interpretation of the CEI was that there is no such thing as character and teachers should not attempt to shape students’ conduct in a preordained manner. This common perspective on the implications of the CEI ran counter to the conventional wisdom that schools have a responsibility to shape character. Even if one were disposed to the use of indirect methods in character education there was little in the way of methodology for practitioners contained in the report. The report essentially told teachers that what they were doing was ineffective, but offered no alternatives. On many levels the CEI was not a teacher friendly report.

Third, many did not see the results of the study as compelling. There was sufficient skepticism regarding both the quality of the findings and the limited focus of the study. There was a clear call at the time: “Better research is needed.” In addition, there was a competing body of research that reached very different conclusions regarding best practices. It was easy for character educators, if they even paid attention to the research, to pick and choose from a wide variety of studies and findings.

Finally, the persisting issue of the link between pedagogical practice and theory and research was as salient then as today. Issues of classroom management and teaching in “real world” classrooms for many teachers made the application of the proposed indirect methods seem impractical.

In the era under study, the calls for progressive pedagogy emanated largely from the cloistered halls of academe or the secluded offices of large city superintendents of schools. While the character education movement had strong grass roots, attempts to shape its development were largely top down in nature with the advocates for change being far removed from the perturbations of classroom life. The shape and evolution of the practice of character education arose more from the requirements of life in schools than from the exhortations of theorists and researchers. As one perceptive observer of the era stated:

...long before philosophy had defined the educator's problem, the kindergarten child would have been an octogenarian...nor can department of research bring immediate aid because time must always be the essence of their investigations...the educator who desires to make a desirable social product from the seemingly riotous and sometimes lawless material sent today from home to school to be "educated, if you please" must assume an immediate and independent position. (Anderson, 1930, p. 308)

Two possible explanations exist for what happened to character education in the 1930s, each in its own way having merit. With regard to the decline in "character" citations in *Education Index*, one must recognize that the authors of these articles were largely the same individuals that initially popularized the movement: university professors and administrators in large urban school districts. These individuals, many of whom were not big supporters of direct methods in the beginning, now interpreted the CEI as "case closed" for direct character education. With indirect methods, schools teach character simply by virtue of the fact that schools are social institutions. At this point it was seen that there was little reason to continue writing about character education.

The other leading explanation for what happened to character education was that it actually persisted but underwent a subtle transformation. McClellan (1999) suggests that character education did not decline, but simply was transformed by the times: "Both the Second World War and the early stages of the cold war seemed to emphasize the importance of character and schools offered a rich variety of activities to promote moral and civic growth" (p. 70). Field (1992, 1996) likewise argues that character education became subsumed into social studies education as Americans became more concerned about group citizenship in the unsettled times of the 1940s. What appears to have happened during the 1930s is that writing about character education gradually declined while character education school practices were slowly subsumed under the rubric of citizenship education within the social studies curriculum in response to shifts in societal priorities. In a 1968 interview, Mark May was asked about what happened to character education (Chapman, 1977). May noted that "...what happened was, they kept changing the labels on it. The word 'character education' somehow went out of fashion and it became 'citizenship education'" (p. 63). It is fair to say that the reports of the death of character education in the 1930s were greatly exaggerated.

### The Second Wave—the Kohlbergian and Values Clarification Research Programs

When moral/values education resurfaced as a curricular area of interest in the late 1960s and early 1970s, the influence of E. L. Thorndike had not waned. Campbell and Stanley's (1963) highly influential book on experimental designs provided a sacred text for educational researchers of the era. In this book, they succinctly presented their commitment to the experiment as:

...the only means for settling disputes regarding educational practice, as the only way of verifying educational improvements, and as the only way of establishing a cumulative tradition in which the



improvements can be introduced without the danger of a faddish discard of old wisdom in favor of new novelties. (p. 2)

This perspective was a part of the training of the researchers of the era and as a result research into moral/values education curricula was to be dominated once again by the experimental method.

The year 1966 signaled the beginning of a new period of interest in the morals and values development of youth. Character had fallen from the lexicon in favor of the more psychologically and empirically friendly terms of values and morals. Merrill Harmin, collaborating with Louis Rath and Sidney Simon, co-authored *Values and Teaching*, the highly influential first statement of the theory and technique of values clarification (Raths, Harmin, & Simon, 1966). In the same year the developmental psychologist Lawrence Kohlberg began to turn his attention to educational settings (Kohlberg, 1966). Values clarification, along with the cognitive-developmental approach to moral education of Lawrence Kohlberg, dominated the field of moral or values education for the next twenty years.

As is typically the case with educational movements, it is difficult to judge exactly how much impact values clarification had on educational practice. It is clear that the values clarification approach was by far the more popular approach with teachers. For example, one handbook of practical strategies for values clarification sold over 600,000 copies (Kirschenbaum, 1992, p. 772). This is an almost unheard of figure for an education methods textbook of this era.

### *Values Clarification*

From the perspective of values clarification the goal of moral education is for each student to achieve greater clarity regarding his/her values by following the prescribed seven-step valuing process. The theory of values education held that "...if we occasionally focus students' attention on issues in their lives, and if we stimulate students to consider their choices, their prizings, and their actions, then the students will change behavior, demonstrating more purposeful, proud, positive, and enthusiastic behavior patterns" (Raths, Harmin, & Simon, 1966, p. 5). The teacher was urged to be only a facilitator of the valuing process and, for fear of influencing students, was to withhold his/her own opinions. Whatever values the student arrived at, they were to be respected by the teacher.

A vigorous research program evolved based on the values clarification approach. Between 1969 and 1985 seventy-four studies using school-aged youth were conducted where values clarification strategies served as the independent variable (Leming, 1987). An equal number of studies utilizing adult samples were conducted. Of the studies utilizing school-aged subjects, sixty-eight were doctoral dissertations, five were published articles, and one was an ERIC document. In general, the studies were of five weeks duration or longer, consisted of a lesson per week, utilized a true or quasi-experimental design, were equally spread between elementary, middle or junior high school, and high school, and carried out in a wide range of subject matter areas. A consistent pattern of findings emerged from these studies; namely, there was only limited success at detecting significant changes in the dependent variables (Leming, 1981, 1985, 1987; Lockwood, 1978).

The values clarification research program contains a wide range of dependent variables such as values thinking, self-concept, attitudes toward the subject matter and the school, dogmatism, value related behavior, etc. While the percentage of the studies finding the predicted results varies from dependent variable to dependent variable, the predicted change in a given variable is seldom found in more than 20% of the studies (Leming, 1987). For example, in the fourteen studies that

assessed the effect of values clarification activities in classrooms on self-concept only four found a statistically significant effect. Similarly, in the twenty-one studies that assessed changes in values as the dependent variable, only three detected statistically significant changes.

One would anticipate that such a pattern of findings would be unsettling to proponents of values clarification and would result in the rethinking either of theory, research, or method. This however, did not occur. Instead, research findings apparently had little impact on the development of the theory. In the second edition of *Values and Teaching*, published in 1978, twelve years after the first edition, the theory was unchanged. Research studies continued to examine the same hypotheses and use the same dependent variables, and the method only changed when subjected to devastating socio-moral critiques.

One reason why research findings had little impact either on the practice or theory of values clarification in schools is that the proponents of values clarification selectively interpreted the existing research as supporting their claims. For example, in a 1977 article entitled “In Defense of Values Clarification” the authors stated that “80% of the studies lend credibility to the assertion that the use of the valuing process leads to greater personal value (e.g. less apathy, higher self esteem, etc.), and greater social constructiveness (lower drug abuse, less disruptive classroom behavior, etc.)” (Kirschenbaum, Harmin, Howe, & Simon, 1977, p. 745). This claim was made in spite of the fact that between 1973 and 1977, in twenty-nine values clarification doctoral dissertations a positive effect for values clarification was found in only 20% of the studies (Leming, 1987). Rather than rely upon dissertation research and published articles, the proponents of values clarification tended to rely on “reports”—unpublished studies that did not attempt to control potential sources of bias. Additionally, the proponents of values clarification tended to interpret trends in the data that were not statistically significant as supportive of the methodology.

It would appear that the will to believe in the values clarification method, coupled with the willingness to suspend critical judgment in the interpretation of research, led to a situation where many, in spite of the evidence, felt that the methodology was research-based and efficacious. In the end, however, it was not empirical research that resulted in the decline of values clarification, but rather it was careful philosophical analysis that exposed the major flaws at the heart of the values clarification moral perspective. Analyses that pointed out the ethical relativism, therapeutic bases of values clarification, and potential threats to privacy rights (Lockwood, 1975, 1977; Stewart, 1976), coupled with a shifting political climate in the country, contributed to a state where values clarification became anathema in most schools. As Howard Kirshenbaum noted in 1992, values clarification had fallen so out of favor with educators that “Some administrators today would rather be accused of having asbestos in their ceilings than of using values clarification in their classrooms” (Kirschenbaum, 1992, p. 773).

### *The Cognitive Developmental Approach of Lawrence Kohlberg*

Moshe Blatt, a doctoral student at the University of Chicago, demonstrated how Kohlberg’s cognitive-developmental theory of moral development could be applied to the practice of moral education. Blatt hypothesized that if children were engaged in the discussion of morally complex issues (dilemmas) and systematically exposed to moral reasoning one stage above their own, they would be attracted to that reasoning and attempt to adopt it for their own. Blatt found that after a twelve-week program of systematically exposing students to moral dilemmas and “plus one” reasoning, 64% of his students had developed one full stage in their moral reasoning (Blatt, 1969; Blatt & Kohlberg, 1975). In the moral dilemma discussion approach that developed out of Blatt’s research, the teacher’s role was to serve as a facilitator of student reasoning—to assist the student in resolving issues of moral conflict and to insure that the environment in which the

discussion took place was one that contained the conditions essential for stage growth in moral reasoning.

Reviews of the moral discussion research program (Enright, Lapsley, & Levy, 1983; Lawrence, 1980; Leming, 1981, 1985; Lockwood, 1978) have reached similar conclusions; namely, that in approximately 80% of the semester length studies a mean upward shift in student reasoning of one quarter to half a stage will result when students are engaged in the process of discussing moral dilemmas where cognitive disequilibrium and exposure to examples of the next highest state of moral reasoning are present. A 1985 review that utilized meta-analytic techniques with moral reasoning measured by James Rest's Defining Issues Test, found an average effect size of .22 for fourteen junior high school studies and an effect size of .23 for twenty high school studies (Schaeffli, Rest, & Thoma, 1985). In general effect sizes were somewhat larger for studies of longer duration, and of better quality. An effect size of .22 represents a positive change of 22% of a standard deviation compared to the comparison group. Most statisticians interpret effect sizes in the range as "small." The authors noted, in assessing the significance of the data reviewed that, "To date, no studies have demonstrated directly that changes wrought by these moral education programs have brought about changes in behavior" (p. 348).

The achievement of the predicted results of the moral discussion approach must be interpreted cautiously. First, the stage growth found as a result of the moral discussion approach is in the stage 2, 3, and 4 range and small—usually less than one third of a stage for interventions one semester in length and on average two thirds of a stage for year-long interventions. Second, none of the moral dilemma discussion studies reviewed have used any form of social or moral behavior as a dependent variable. Moral reasoning was the only dependent variable. Kohlberg and his associates did argue that moral reasoning and moral behavior were related at the principled level (Kohlberg & Candee, 1984); however, analysis of the evidence has detected only weak associations (Blasi, 1980). One research finding has found that among fourth and eighth grade students, stage 1 and stage 3 levels of moral reasoning are associated with fewer conduct problems than stage 2 reasoning (Richards, Bear, Stewart, & Norman, 1992). This finding raises the interesting possibility that raising students' reasoning from stage 1 to stage 2 may be associated with deterioration in student conduct. Thus, even though the moral dilemma discussion approach "works," it appears to be of little practical utility with regard to achieving the character education objective of influencing students' personal and social behavior.

The research on the moral dilemma discussion methodology, however, could not make the approach appealing to practitioners. The conceptual complexity of the developmental stage theory, the difficulty of managing productive dilemma discussions with school-age youth, and the lack of salience of stage growth in students for teachers and to the realities of classroom life, comprised a triple whammy for the approach. The methodology never did receive wide attention in our nation's classrooms.

In the late 1970s Kohlberg's perspective on moral education underwent a major change. This change did not specifically grow out of the research program, however, but rather out of a realization that the approach did not address the more practical concerns of parents and school personnel—student behavior and discipline. As Kohlberg noted in 1978, "I realize now that the psychologists' abstraction of moral cognition...is not a sufficient guide to the moral educator who deals with the moral concrete in the school world...the educator must be a socializer" (Kohlberg, 1978, p. 14). It is clear that the major impetus to change in the cognitive-developmental theory of moral education came from outside the "plus one" research program. Kohlberg's personal experiences with educational programs in prisons and experimental high schools in the Cambridge area, criticisms regarding the value neutrality of the approach, and Kohlberg's own increasing appreciation of the views of the French sociologist Emile Durkheim (Durkheim, 1961), all were

powerful influences that led Kohlberg to shift his focus as a moral educator to school moral atmosphere—the just community (Power, Higgins, & Kohlberg, 1989). Like the moral dilemma discussion, the approach seemed impractical to many school personnel and the just community school remains a rarity.

### *Research and Practice*

In this era a substantial body of research was generated on the two approaches. This research, however, contributed little to the popularity, or lack of popularity of the approaches in schools. Although the pedagogy of the moral dilemma discussion “plus one” approach was clear, it did not gain traction in schools because of the requisite developmental understandings required of teachers and the complexity of implementation. In addition, its objectives did not seem relevant to the needs of teachers facing everyday character issues in schools. In this respect, it had much in common with the indirect methods proposed in the early character education movement.

With regard to values clarification research, two characteristics are worth noting. First, interpretation of the values clarification research findings varied widely. The proponents viewed the results, many with weak designs and insignificant findings, as supporting the program’s efficacy. Second, it was clear that regardless of how the findings were interpreted, the research quickly became irrelevant for political reasons. Researchers tend to be fond of the idea of “speaking truth to power,” but power, in this case, carried the day.

### The Third Wave—The Conservative Restoration and the Psychological Regime

In the 1980s a change was occurring in both the political climate of the nation and in the nation’s schools. Gradually, the word “character” once again became the preferred term to describe the schools’ efforts in moral education. In 1987 the Secretary of Education, William J. Bennett, organized a conference in Washington, DC entitled *Moral and Character Education* (Pritchard, 1988). In effect, this conference signaled that for the Reagan administration education for the character of youth would be a national priority. Also in the early 1990s, a number of publications signaled that “character” was now the preferred term for what the schools should be doing (Bennett, 1993; Kilpatrick, 1993; Lickona, 1991; Wynne & Ryan, 1993). Through the last three presidencies character education has continued to be a focus of the U.S. Department of Education.

Lagemann (1989) notes “...that one cannot understand the history of education in the United States unless one realizes that Edward L. Thorndike won and John Dewey lost” (p. 185). The experimental science paradigm has been, and remains, the most influential perspective with regard to how to improve educational practice. In 2002, the What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) was established at the U.S. Department of Education’s Institute for educational sciences, reaffirming the salience of this perspective. The stated goal of the WWC is “...to provide educators, policy makers and the public with a central and trusted source of scientific evidence of what works in education.” The WWC’s model for the advancement of educational practice is similar to that of the Food and Drug Administration’s (FDA) approval process for drugs. First, high quality scientific research will be conducted in the field. These studies, when possible, utilize randomized clinical trials and undergo rigorous peer review and replication, finally achieving the approval of the Food and Drug Administration. Only then will such drugs be permitted access to the prescription process by doctors. The model proposed by the WWC for education is similar. Educational researchers will produce high-quality experimental studies. The WWC will vet the studies with a view to evaluating their quality and claims regarding effectiveness. The WWC reviews will then be made available to the educational community. While the WWC lacks the statutory

authority to regulate or require specific curricular products for schools, it is assumed that good products/programs will be adopted and poor products/programs rejected. This implicit adoption model assumes that by linking government funding to approved curricula, incentives will be created for schools to implement WWC certified curricula. The hope is that through the adoption of “proven” and “effective” methods and programs that education will be transformed in a way that scientific research resulted in revolutions in medicine, agriculture, and transportation in the twentieth century. This “research-certification-adoption” model, however, appears not to work as simply as imagined.

Reviews of the research, undertaken to ascertain what works in the field are demonstrating that the development of a science of moral/character education will not be an easy task. As of May 2007, character education research from the What Works Clearinghouse cites thirteen programs judged to meet evidence standards in three outcome domains: (1) behavior; (2) knowledge, attitudes, and values; and (3) academic achievement. Of these, one program was found to have strong positive effects on behavior and on academic achievement, and one program was found to have strong positive effects on knowledge, attitudes, and values. Five programs were found to have *potentially* positive effects (a less rigorous standard) on behavior, two were found to have potentially positive effects on knowledge and attitudes, and one program to have potentially positive effects on academic achievement. Overall, in the eleven studies, in the three domains, of twenty-two possible effects, ten were found to be positive or potentially positive. Within the scientific community, replication is a key to establishing confidence in a research finding or theory. Replication entails multiple studies using different subjects and different researchers. In only three of the eleven WWC character education curricula above did two research studies for a curriculum met WWC evidence standards for inclusion in the review. In eight studies the WWC report is based on a single study.

Marvin Berkowitz, a noted developmental psychologist and character educator, when looking for guidance for the improvement of practice in character education, approached the task from the perspective of “The science of character education” (Berkowitz, 2002). In a recent comprehensive review of the research in character education sponsored by the Character Education Partnership (CEP) with a lead grant from the Templeton Foundation, Berkowitz and Bier (2005a, 2005b) note that “...unfortunately there is very little information on ‘grass roots’ character education. This is true despite the fact that most education practice is of this ‘home grown’ variety” (p.17). They also observe: “In fact, most educators do not utilize existing programs, but rather create their own programs (p. 8),” and note that it is often difficult to know what is being evaluated in a given character education program because program descriptions in the research often lack specificity. As a final caveat they observe that character education programs employ many different strategies (components) and as a result it is hard to isolate the impact of a given component on any particular outcome.

In their review, Berkowitz and Bier take a broad view of what comprises character education. They define character as a “composite of psychological characteristics that impact the child’s capacity and tendency to be an effective moral agent, i.e. to be socially and personally responsible, ethical and self managed” (p. 2). In their review they include many studies that do not self-identify as character education.

The Berkowitz and Bier review is guided by a focus on experimental research studies that meet agreed upon standards for this type of research, such as comparison groups, pre- and post-tests, and tests of statistical significance. The identified sixty-nine studies represent thirty-three programs deemed effective. The success rate for all variables in these studies was 51%. The highest rate of success for program impact was with regard to cognitive variables (62%). The success rate for affective variables was 45%, and for behavioral variables 45%. In their conclusions and



recommendations they do not propose a theory of character education, rather they list a set of what they argue are research-supported programs and practices. What of practical use emerges is not clear.

Each of the thirty-three programs deemed effective are different in significant ways and each utilizes a multiple methods approach; that is, each program uses multiple pedagogical strategies; for example, discussion, literature, classroom climate, disciplinary techniques. As a result, it is an almost impossible task to draw generalizations that apply across the diversity of approaches. For example, one effective method identified by Berkowitz and Bier is peer discussion, but one learns little from the review about the roles played in achieving successful outcomes by factors such as the type of discussion, the role of the teacher, the subject matter of the discussions, the goals of the discussion, and classroom climate. Because research on moral education curricula based on a single instructional strategy is almost nonexistent, the threat of multiple treatment interference makes drawing conclusions about best practices about any program problematic.

Comparing Berkowitz and Bier's "List of Scientifically Supported Programs" with the list of the What Works Clearinghouse reveals some of the lack of agreement about effectiveness. One program identified by Berkowitz and Bier as scientifically supported (Facing History) was found by WWC as having no discernable effects. Four studies found by WWC to have potentially positive effects did not make the CEP scientifically supported list. Finally, twenty-seven programs, listed in the CEP review as scientifically supported, do make the WWC evidence standards for review. While some of these differences may be due to the ongoing and incomplete nature of the work of the WWC and definitional issues regarding what is character education, the resulting state of knowledge at this time is far from persuasive regarding what works.

Is research having an impact on the practice of character education in our nation's schools in this "what works" era? Hardly. Three of the most widely used character education programs—DARE (<http://www.dare.com>), Character Counts (<http://www.charactercounts.org>), and Learning for Life (<http://www.learning-for-life.org>)—report on their websites 26 million, 5 million, and 1.7 million students respectively enrolled in their program annually. None of these three programs appear in either the WWC or CEP research reviews. The DARE program research has repeatedly been found to be ineffective (Clayton, Cattarello, & Johnstone, 1996; Lynam et al., 1999) and neither the Character Counts program and the Learning for Life program has a single research study that meets minimum standards for a controlled experimental design. The latter two websites report surveys and single group pre-posttest designs, but lack studies that utilize quasi or randomized control designs.

On the other hand, two well-researched character education programs—Positive Action (<http://www.positiveaction.net>) and the Child Development Project (<http://www.devstu.org/cdp>)—cannot come close to these numbers of students nationwide of the three programs above. The Positive action program currently is in classrooms with approximately 500,000 students (B. Flay, personal communication, October 30, 2007). The Child Development Project, which has spent millions on high quality research, can count 20,000 classrooms today or approximately 480,000 students (E. Schaps, personal communication, October 23, 2007). Clearly, more than a solid research base and a carefully developed program are necessary for wide adoption today.

Another perspective from which to make an assessment of the role of research in shaping character education today comes from an analysis of the Character Education Partnership's *2007 National Schools of Character: Award Winning Practices* (Character Education Partnership, 2007). In this report a Blue Ribbon panel of character education experts judged ten schools nationwide to be exemplary with regard to the practice of character education. Each school and its practices are described in detail and references provided. It is apparent that each school has developed a program unique to the school. The general pattern is that no program rests explicitly



on research-based “what works” criteria. The Character Counts program, notable for the weak research base, was the most frequently referenced program by these award-winning schools ( $n = 3$ ). It would be unfair to make too strong a statement regarding the role of research in developing these programs given the nature of the narrative, but the distinct impression is that local considerations more than research, drove the curriculum development process.

## CONTEMPORARY PERSPECTIVES ON THE LINK BETWEEN EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH AND EDUCATIONAL PRACTICE

In a recent *USA Today* article (Toppo, 2007) the following was concluded about the state of educational research today:

More than five years after President Bush’s No Child Left Behind law told educators to rely on “scientifically based” methods, the science produced is often inconclusive, politically charged or less than useful for classroom teachers. And when it is useful, it often is misused or ignored altogether. (p. 6D)

Given the failure of character education research to significantly impact practice, one must question if scientific research in character education doesn’t rest on a mistaken view of the relationship between research and practice. Perhaps it is time for character education researchers to study some of the reasons for why research and practice seem so loosely coupled in the field of character education. In an ingenious study by Kennedy (1999), she asked, “do teachers find some research genres more persuasive and more relevant than others, or are some genres more likely to influence their teaching than others?” (p. 516). Kennedy developed two packages of articles: one for language arts and one for science/math. The packages consisted of the following genres of research: experimental, a non-experimental comparison of two approaches, autobiography, survey, history, and disciplinary study. Teachers were then asked to indicate which studies they found the most persuasive, the most relevant, and which influenced their thinking the most. The nomination frequencies for the three criteria were consistent across genres. In rank order the three highest rated studies were: Non-experimental comparison, experiment, and teaching narrative. Kennedy offers that the hypothesis that best fits her data is “that teachers find value in articles that address the relationship between what they do and what students learn” (p. 527). Kennedy concludes from her study that arguments for the superiority or quality of one genre of research over another are less important than the teachers’ perspective on the relationship between the study and their classroom situations.

The problematic nature of the assumption that research findings will significantly impact educational practice can also be illustrated by the case of Robert Slavin, who has long been a strong advocate for the use of educational research to improve practice. Slavin argues that the application of the randomized clinical trial methodology, if applied to education, will achieve a similar effect to that as in the field of medicine: Increased funding for research, a strong influence on the practice of medicine, and improved health for citizens. Slavin (2002) predicts that

Once we have dozens or hundreds of randomized or carefully matched experiments going on each year on all aspects of educational practice, we will begin to make steady irreversible progress... evidence based policies could finally set education on the path toward the kind of progressive improvement that most successful parts of our economy and society embarked on a century ago. (p. 20)

Slavin not only advocates evidence-based practice, but he also has produced a body of research focused on his school reform program Success for All (SFA). But as Slavin is finding out, research findings do not go unchallenged. In the case of the SFA program, Pogrow (2000), in reading the SFA Texas study, labels SFA a failure. Slavin responded defending the quality of his study. The net result is, however, that in the case of this study research findings were obfuscated for many who lack the time or expertise to sift through the competing claims.

Slavin's dream for the future of education as an evidence-based practice suffered another setback as reported in 2004 that "research proven" Comprehensive School Reform programs were getting a smaller and smaller share of federal funding, compared to home grown or commercial programs—dropping from 20.2% in 1988 to 8.1% in 2002. Gosling, the head of the clearing-house argues that many of the research proven programs are not adopted (or funded) because they are seen as not relevant to local concerns and seek to change the processes in schools—a move that is resisted. Additionally, it is argued that a program may be research based in that all of the program's parts are based on research without the entire program having been subjected to a randomized controlled experiment. Gosling argues, "Lots of schools might develop something with a local university that's unique to their situation. It's impossible to do large-scale study of those because they're idiosyncratic. That doesn't mean that they're not effective, but it does mean it's not [a] transportable model" (p. 18).

A number of significant factors should make one less than enthusiastic regarding the potential for research to dramatically reform the practice of character education: First, school personnel often are skeptical about research findings and find research studies far from clear or conclusive regarding the implications for practice. For example, in a recent single issue of *Education Week* (April 25, 2007), research studies were cited on four areas of educational practice: Head Start programs, abstinence sex education, zero tolerance programs, and the use of manipulatives. In each article it was pointed out that the research was far from clear-cut and implications for practice were more negative than positive. Second, research findings often exist independent of and are not seen as related to more powerful motivations for practice. Third, research findings often ignore the contexts in which teacher understandings develop and exist. As a result, research often lacks salience to teachers and schools. Finally, social, economic, and political contexts of schools, as well as marketing strategies of curriculum developers, often trump research in achieving access to classrooms. In conversations with the author of this chapter over the past semester with fifty practicing teachers in central Michigan, the depth of the disconnect between research and practice was apparent when teachers were asked what factors influence what they teach. Representative observations included:

"All is driven by benchmarks and standards. We are driven to achieve these goals and the existing curriculum might not get us there."

"With packaged curriculum we take out and add so that it aligns with the state goals."

"I don't have time to teach the curriculum as it is designed."

"Different personalities often end up teaching very differently."

"Research doesn't even show up on the radar screen when it comes to curriculum."

"We've got to do something and something quick with our students. We are not going to wait for research."

"If you have an idea, there is research out there somewhere to support that idea. For example research on middle schools has changed 180 degrees in two years."

“Kids change from year to year. Last year’s curriculum often doesn’t work with this year’s students.”

“There are really multiple curricula in many classrooms. Differentiated instruction (hot topic today) actually means multiple curricular approaches. High ability/low ability and high income/low income students are examples of the need to differentiate the curriculum.”

Q: “What accounts for the curriculum that exists on your desk?” A: “Marketing—politics—affordability—administrative whim.”

### THORNDIKE WON, BUT DEWEY WAS RIGHT

For twenty-six years (1904–1930) John Dewey and Edward A. Thorndike taught nearby each other in New York City—Dewey in the Department of Philosophy at Columbia University, and Thorndike at Teachers College. There was little of what could be called professional contact between the two. Thorndike claimed not to understand Dewey and as their professional careers developed Dewey became a strong critic of the positivism advocated by Thorndike. Dewey (1929) came to see education as both an art and a science and saw engineering as the example that demonstrates the compatibility of the two: “Education is in actual practice an art. But it is an art that progressively incorporates more and more of science into itself.... It is the kind of art it is precisely because of the content of scientific subject matter which guides it as a practical operation” (p. 12). Dewey later noted that “Educational practice is a kind of social engineering,” and was clear to note that no scientific finding could be translated into a rule of practice. John Dewey (1929) expressed this concern about a dependence on experimental research in education when he noted:

The sources of an educational science are any portions of ascertained knowledge that enter into the heart, head, and hands of educators, and which by entering in, render the performance of the educational function, more truly educational than it was before. But there is no way to discover what is more “truly educational” except the continuation of the educational act itself. It may conduce to immediate ease or momentary efficiency...to seek and answer in some material that already has scientific prestige. But such a seeking is an abdication, a surrender.... It arrests growth; it prevents the thinking that is the final source of all progress. (pp. 76–77)

In other words, from Dewey’s perspective, if the adoption of “research-based” practices closes the teacher off from the careful and continuing examination of his/her practice and the reactions of students, it may well serve as an obstacle to the development of better practice. In Biesta’s (2007) interpretation of Dewey’s perspective she argues that for Dewey educational judgment is not just about what is possible (a factual judgment) but also is about what is educationally desirable. From Dewey’s perspective we do not need settled knowledge about the world before we can act on it. According to Dewey, the idea of experience is that we undergo the consequences of our “doings” and we change as a result of this. Research can tell us what worked, but not what works or will work—only experience can provide this knowledge.

It is clear that in the field of character education a chasm exists between the “research into practice” model and the “research in educational practice” reality. This chasm is apparent in the many indicators from history and contemporary practice. What accounts for this current state of affairs? A large part of the difficulty is based on the differing cultures of the researcher and the practitioner. From the researcher’s perspective the goal is to develop context free and general-

izable knowledge. It follows, from this model, that research-based practices will be faithfully implemented (treatment fidelity) in classrooms to achieve the desired educational outcomes. From the educational practitioner's perspective the goal is to achieve the desired outcomes in a local setting that is in many respects unique, and hence largely not generalizable. It is apparent that many teachers make adaptations to "curriculum as designed" that dramatically affect what researchers call treatment fidelity. The practitioner will turn to research only under a limited set of conditions. Specifically, the research must be seen as salient, clear, and comprehensible, and utilitarian in meeting his/her real world character development needs with students in the local classroom, school, and community.

### THE ENGINEERING OF CHARACTER EDUCATION PRACTICE

In the remainder of this chapter I will present a conception of the process of the development of effective programs for character education that breaks from the sole reliance on experimental science that has seemed to impact practice so little. This different perspective starts with the observation that the development of evidence-based character education programs will advance only if the process is viewed more as an engineering process than as a science-based process.

In the research-based model of educational change, researchers develop the body of rigorous research and translate the findings for practitioners. Implementation then occurs by one of three means: (1) motivated teachers self-adopt recognizing value in the findings and practices; (2) implementation is forced by district, state, or federal incentives; (3) incentives are arranged in such a way to encourage adoption; for example, by making program funding contingent upon implementation. The primary reason why this approach has been ineffective is that researchers are seldom in touch with the needs of the individual classroom teacher. The teacher is always "presented" with someone else's view of good research-based practice—usually a university professor.

A more fruitful way of addressing the gap between research and practice is not to focus simply on more and better research, but to take the process of knowledge and evidence generation to a practical level. To this end the knowledge generated through the engineering process is a better model for improving educational practice than the scientific research model.

In an effort to develop a perspective that will link research to the practical needs of practitioners, Burkhart and Schoenfield (2003) propose an engineering approach to research. Such an approach would be less focused on developing generalizable views of how schools and pedagogy work and would instead be more directly concerned with the development of high quality solutions to practical problems. From their perspective, "general theories are weak, providing only general guidance for design; nonetheless they receive the lion's share of attention in the research literature. Local or phenomenal theories based on experiment are seen as less important or prestigious than general theory, but are currently more valuable in design" (p. 10).

James Shaver (2001) describes the differences between developing a science of education and educational engineering in the following manner:

Engineering is technology, not science, not even applied science. It is a different type of research enterprise with a different epistemology. The purpose of engineering is (not to create more knowledge) practical and set in a social context. The purpose is to create artifacts that serve humans in a direct and immediate way. Knowledge is generated to be used in the design, production and operation of artifacts that meet recognized social needs. (p. 233)

Shaver goes on to argue that a science of education is simply not possible because “human behavior is historically and culturally conditioned and takes place in a context that is too interactionally complex to allow the development of scientific theory” (p. 247).

For practitioners the value of science is not to provide answers about how the world works, but to provide a source of information that can contribute to the design of effective local programs and a methodology that can be of value in assessing the effectiveness of those programs.. The focus for practitioners is on “Growth in program development” and research into character education finds its primary value as it contributes to this process.

Lee Schulman (1987) offers an insightful perspective on teacher decision making and the development of “Best practice” that only tangentially includes research based knowledge. He has proposed that the appropriate way to understand expert or effective education practice is through the study of the cognition of expert teachers’ understanding of their practice. He describes ‘pedagogical content knowledge’ (PCK) as “...that special amalgam of content and pedagogy that is uniquely the province of teachers, their own special form of professional understanding.” In the author’s interviews and focus groups with character educators (Leming & Yendol-Hoppy, 2004), it was noted that many of the most effective teachers had a well-developed understanding of what works with their students and were unhesitant and unrepentant in changing time, methods, and content to suit their understanding of effective character education. Often, the classroom practice was significantly different from that intended by the curriculum developer.

Developing character in youth may be compared to an engineer’s task of building a bridge. While there are certain empirical givens such as the tensile strength of steel, and the physical properties of concrete, different civil engineers are likely to come up with very different designs for a given bridge depending on local conditions. Prior bridge designs (that didn’t collapse), the characteristics of the site and soil and substrata conditions, budget, and the personal creativity and aesthetic sensibility will impact the actual product.

Similarly, teachers in differing educational contexts, even if they share a knowledge of the relevant research base, are likely to design very different educational practices. In some schools, some practices consistent with research findings may be already in place or partially in place. Some teachers will embrace some research findings immediately and reject other findings out of hand. Some schools will identify best practices that they are doing well, so-so, or not at all. These decisions will not take place in a vacuum, but rather be based on their local and in- depth knowledge of students, school culture, school curriculum, and political and moral values of the local community. The crafting of character education programs will always be influenced by local characteristics and no two programs will look exactly alike.

According to Vincenti (1990), engineering is technology and technology is not a derivative from science, but is an autonomous body of knowledge different from science. The generation of engineering knowledge follows from a different type of research enterprise with a different epistemology. Campbell (1960) has described this different epistemology as “blind variation and selective retention.” Blind variation refers to the process by which alternative solutions to the practical problem at hand are selected and tried out. These variations do not take place randomly, but are selected without complete or adequate guidance. Selective retention refers to the process by which observed successes and failures become part of the knowledge base that leads to the design of useful artifacts.

From an educational engineering perspective, the primary reason why research has had limited impact on the practice of character education is that research strives to produce context-free understandings of effective practice while teachers operate in context-bound environments. A second reason results from the distinction between the teacher as the designer of an educational artifact in his/her classroom and the teacher as the implementer of research-based curricula.

In character education, educational engineering may occur on multiple levels. On a national level, curriculum development specialists may utilize a variety of sources of information to design curricula. One of these sources may well be results from well-designed research studies. Two examples of this sort of effort are the evolution of the Caring School Community program of the Developmental Studies Center and of the DARE program. In the case of the Caring School Community program, research and curriculum development efforts over a twenty-year period, at the Developmental Studies Center (<http://www.devstu.org>) have resulted in a continuous process of curriculum design. In the case of the DARE program (<http://www.dare.com>), the existence of negative findings on program effectiveness has resulted in significant modifications of the original program. Whether the new program will turn out to be more effective than the original program awaits future research. Engineering of character education may also take place at the local level. Working groups of teachers or district curriculum specialists may design curriculum for the district's classrooms. This process too will likely utilize appropriate research findings as a component in the engineering process.

Finally, and most importantly, the classroom teacher, working from multiple sources, including published curricula and relevant research, will engineer an approach to character education that is best suited for the students and their environment in his/her classroom.

So, how are we to know once an effective program is engineered that it comprises an effective program? The first step in this process will be to assess if the stakeholders are satisfied. If staff, administration, students, and parents are enthusiastic about the program, this by itself will be given great importance. In the process of assessing satisfaction, the selection of appropriate indicators will play a role. This will result in the second general step in the process; namely, if the program is meeting its goals—if it is a socially valuable artifact. Local data should be collected and evaluated in this process. If differences of opinion are detected, that information should go into the process of further consideration of growth of the program.

Careful observation and measurement, and even experimental designs, have an important role to play in the above processes. However, if that knowledge is to be used in the further design and improvement of programs it will be just one of many sources drawn for the local context to be used by school personnel.

The ideal role for educational researchers will remain little changed if the point of view presented in this chapter were to be adopted. That goal should be to produce high quality, comprehensible research studies on questions that will have salience to teachers and other researchers. In addition, it remains important for teachers to have the knowledge and skills to be able to read educational research and conduct inquiries in their classrooms and schools to assess if their efforts are achieving the desired results. One issue facing researcher utilization today is the idea among many school personnel that research leads to some sort of settled truth. The very phrase "What Works" implies that we can achieve a degree of certainty, when in fact research knowledge is always provisionally held knowledge. Too often the quest for certainty, encouraged by effectiveness reviews results in confusions and frustration and flight from research when simple answers aren't forthcoming. If researchers and practitioners were to "aim low" with regard to their expectations of research it is likely that the impact of research on practice would lead to greater growth and the pursuit of deeper understandings in educational practice.

The guiding question of this inquiry has been to search for a deeper understanding and conception of research-based best practice for the field of character education. While my analysis accords a place for research in the development and public warrant for best practices, I believe we must look beyond experimental research for the fullest picture. I am drawn to Dewey's notion of growth and experience as a broader and more fruitful perspective. Just as Dewey called for teachers to be aware of and utilize the educational conditions, physical and social, to design



student experiences that lead to growth, so too should educators be driven by the ideal of continuing growth in their practice. Any view of a link between research and practice that presents research as “settled” knowledge and determinate of educational practice closes off the possibility of openness to further professional experience and growth and therefore may be less educative than miseducative.

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## **II**

# **RELATIONSHIPS IN SCHOOLS AND CLASSROOMS**





# 9

## Caring and Moral Education

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The caring approach to moral education has been developed from the ethics of care. To understand it and use it effectively in classrooms, therefore, one needs to know something about care ethics and its relation to other forms of ethics. This chapter starts with some background material on caring and ethics; it then proceeds to a discussion of caring in the caring professions and the importance of providing a moral climate for education in general and for moral education in particular. The last section lays out a model of moral education and discusses classroom practice.

### CARING AND CARE ETHICS

Care theory has developed over the past three decades mainly in psychology (Gilligan, 1982) and philosophy (Noddings, 1984/2003). In psychology, the idea of moral development based on relation and response (Gilligan, 1982) challenged the form of cognitive developmentalism laid out by Lawrence Kohlberg (1981). In contrast to Kohlberg's emphasis on moral reasoning culminating in a commitment to universal justice, Gilligan's version of care theory described an alternative path of moral development based on the moral agent's increasing capacity to respond with care to the needs of others. Her highly influential work has generated a voluminous literature on caring not only in psychology (Brabeck, 2000), but also in social policy (Noddings, 2002b), religion (Groenhout, 2004; Keller, 1986), politics (Tronto, 1993), nursing (Kuhse, 1997), and even law (Clement, 1996; Menkel-Meadow, 1988).

Much of the work inspired by Gilligan's view has concentrated on gender, because the relational path of moral development was discovered in interviews with women. It has been a matter of some debate whether Gilligan originally intended to present the ethic of care as a "woman's ethic," but it is clear in her later work that she believes the care voice can be male as well as female (Gilligan, 1986).

Gilligan's work has fueled other debates on morality and moral development—primary among them, the debate on justice and caring (Katz, Noddings, & Strike, 1999). Although there are still vigorous arguments over which orientation is primary, the tendency seems to be toward reconciliation of the two views. Noddings (2002b), for example, describes justice as essential but locates its roots in caring. Susan Okin (1989), too, has argued that caring is implicit even in John Rawls' theory of justice (Rawls, 1971).

Similarly, a debate continues over the roles of reason and feeling in moral life. Which is dominant? How do they work together? Elliot Turiel (2002) argues that moral judgment develops universally and makes it possible for human beings to criticize the practices of their own communities. Other writers, following David Hume, put greater emphasis on emotion and feeling (Hoffman, 2000). Still others suggest that both emotion and reason are involved in the evolutionary development of a moral capacity resembling the linguistic deep structure presented by Noam Chomsky (Hauser, 2006). This last is highly contentious. It may be right to trace the development of morality to evolution, but it is highly questionable to posit a moral organ or deep structure comparable to that in linguistics. Normal adults may use ungrammatical expressions, but they do not use ill-formed expressions such as “sleeping mat on the is cat the.” In moral life, however, they do differ on both moral judgments and the criteria by which moral judgments are made. In any case, this interesting scientific work has little to contribute to moral education, since the influence of deep structures is unconscious.

In addition to debates over justice and caring, over reason and emotion, and over the role of gender in moral development, interesting issues have arisen on racial differences in caring and moral education (Eaker-Rich & Van Galen, 1996; Siddle Walker, 1993; Siddle Walker & Snarey, 2004). Black feminist thinkers have described a tension between the caring expected of Black mothers and the justice they should demand for their own lives (Collins, 1990). But they also put more emphasis on communities of caring than on individual justice (Collins, 1995). African-American educators sometimes adopt “virtue caring” rather than “relational caring” because the actual survival of Black children has often depended on virtues such as obedience. Virtue caring is discussed a bit later in this chapter.

The philosophical roots of care theory can be found in several places. In my first work on caring (Noddings, 1984/2003), I drew heavily on the relational philosophy of Martin Buber (1958/1970, 1965). Later (Noddings, 1992/2005, 2002b), better informed on feminist theory, I referred to the work of Simone Weil (1977) and Iris Murdoch (1970) on attention. Both Weil and Murdoch emphasize the importance of listening to others and responding in ways that help to establish caring relations. These two characteristics of a caring consciousness—attention and response—figure prominently in the development of care theory and moral education.

Before launching into that discussion, however, I should remind readers that there are several useful definitions of care and caring other than the ones in care theory. We often identify *care* with concern, for example. In that sense, one may care—that is, be somewhat concerned—about another’s plight, yet fail to act on the concern. “Of course, I care,” someone may say, “but I can’t get involved right now.” *Care* is also used as a synonym for worry or anxiety. One may be loaded down with woes and burdens, laden with cares. Again, *care* sometimes conveys caution or heed: move ahead with care, cross the street with care, approach the boss with care. And *care* may describe what a person is charged with as in, She has the care of her mother’s estate. *Care* may also be used to acknowledge attention to detail as in completing a job with care. All of these uses are legitimate, but they are not the ones we build upon in care theory.

In care theory, we are interested in the formation of caring relations, and a relation requires two parties—not just a single agent who “cares” or “has cares.” As we study the nature of caring relations, we ask what characterizes the consciousness and behavior of the carer (or one caring) and that of the cared-for (person receiving care).

Inspecting many cases of caring relations, we find certain features in all of them. The carer is, first, attentive; that is, she adopts an open, receptive attitude toward the cared-for. She listens. In the words of Simone Weil, she asks the cared-for, “What are you going through?” (Weil, 1977, p. 51). This question serves as a foundation for moral life. In *Caring* (1984/2003), I used the word *engrossment* to refer to this attitude of nonselective receptivity. But *attention* will do, if we

understand that the initial attention is not directed by self-interest or preconceived values. These interests and values may indeed enter the picture eventually, but initially the carer's attention is nonjudgmental, open, genuinely focused on what-is-there in the other's message.

Second, the carer experiences motivational displacement; that is, her motive energy—at least temporarily—flows toward the expressed needs of the cared-for. We have all felt this diversion of energy under the demands of caring. Sometimes, the displacement is resisted, and then the caring relation is at risk. At other times, however, such displacement is properly resisted, because the expressed need is unethical or is thought to be against the best interests of the cared-for. In such cases, the relation is still at risk, and the carer has the task of persuading the cared-for that his expressed needs are, in some sense, wrong. The carer in these cases must still try to maintain the caring relation, although she cannot respond positively to the expressed need.

Finally, the carer must act. Using the information supplied by the cared-for and whatever resources she has available, she acts to satisfy or modify the expressed need. It is at this point (or even before) that many normative ethics try to give explicit instructions on what the moral agent should do. The ethic of care cannot tell us exactly what to do. Whatever the carer does must support the caring relation without doing harm to anyone in the web of care. If I must say that I cannot help with a project proposed by the cared-for because it is likely to hurt others for whom I should care, I must remain in dialogue with the cared-for in an effort to maintain our caring relation. This can be hard work, and throughout such an episode, the relation is a risk.

The second member of the relation, the cared-for, also contributes to the relation. The cared-for responds to the carer's efforts in some way, signaling that the caring has been received. An infant stops crying and smiles, a patient whose pain has been relieved relaxes and rests, a student pursues a project with greater energy and assurance. The response need not be one of explicit gratitude. Often, given the age or situation of the cared-for, no such expression of gratitude can be expected, and gratitude is not necessary. Still, a response of recognition is essential to a caring relation. It also serves as further information for the listening, watching carer. It helps her decide what to do next.

Some critics of care ethics have complained that care theorists give moral credit to infants for smiling and to students for pursuing their own interests. These critics misunderstand the basic point of care ethics. It is not mainly about moral agents and their virtue, certainly not about moral credit. It is about moral life and its foundation in human relations. The cared-for, in every domain of human activity, contributes significantly to the caring relation. Parents, physicians, teachers, social workers, and speakers are all, in this fundamental way, dependent on their children, patients, students, clients, and audiences for the all-important response that completes the relation.

Another point to keep in mind is that the labels *carer* and *cared-for* are not permanent designations. They refer to positions in encounters. I may be the carer in one encounter and the cared-for in another. Indeed, in most everyday adult relationships, we expect mutuality, a sharing of positions. It is only in unavoidably unequal relations such as parent-infant, physician-patient, and teacher-student that one party serves almost exclusively as carer.

But suppose now that, despite the carer's conscientious efforts, the cared-for fails to respond or responds negatively—"You just don't care!" Then there is no caring relation. Here again critics complain that the hard-working carer should get moral credit for her efforts. Care theorists have no objection to granting credit for effort, but again such credit is not the point. The point is to discover why a caring relation has not been established or maintained. The fault may lie with the carer, the cared-for, or the situation in which carer and cared-for are caught. In schools, for example, the fault often lies in the structure of classes, rules, and evaluations (Noddings, 1996, 2002a). Often teachers and students do not spend enough time together to develop relations

of care and trust. The situation is frequently at fault when caring fails in the so-called caring professions. This calls for changes in the environment.

Before looking at the connections between caring and the caring professions, however, we should mention one more distinction—one that will be mentioned again in a later section. One reason that critics seek moral credit for the carer is that they confuse care ethics with virtue ethics (Noddings, 2006d). A virtue-carer (as contrasted with the relational carer) may decide what is best for the cared-for without listening to him. Such carers have the best interest of the cared-for at heart, but they are likely to act on needs they infer for the cared-for and not those needs expressed by the cared-for. Most of us have encountered parents or teachers who act in this way. They are the people who told us, “Some day you’ll thank me for this!” when they forced us to do things we preferred to avoid. And sometimes they were right. For now, it is perhaps enough to be aware of the distinction. Virtue carers may or may not be constrained by the expressed needs or wants of the cared-for. Relational carers *must* take these needs and wants into account as they decide what to do. Debate between virtue-caring and relational caring has generated an important set of issues (Ivanhoe & Walker, 2006).

## CARING AND THE CARING PROFESSIONS

The ethics of care has had considerable influence on the so-called caring professions, and these professions are significant for moral education in two ways. First, their practitioners are expected to show what it means to care and, thus, to teach others to care. Second, because “moral education” points not only at teaching people to be moral but also at an education that is morally justified, we must ask whether we are justified in continuing to educate young women, and very few men, for the caring professions.

These professions—nursing, social work, and teaching—are sometimes referred to as *semi-professions* (Etzioni, 1969) because they share some features of the professions but fall seriously short on others such as, for example, autonomy and control over admission to the profession. It is not surprising that these occupations, together with childcare, have not so far achieved full professional status. They have been staffed mainly by women, and it was long thought that anything done by women demands neither serious study nor great respect. Indeed, in the nineteenth century, to call for a nurse meant simply to call for a woman willing to do the work (Reverby, 1987). There has been obvious denigration of women in the history of the caring professions.

However, it may also be that the view of care theorists is somewhat at odds with the accepted criteria for professions. Caregiving and caring are not synonymous. One may be formally, by occupation, a caregiver and yet not act in the caring manner described by care theorists. We have all known nurses, social workers, and teachers who were cold, unsympathetic, and even cruel. The classic case in literature is Nurse Ratchett in Ken Kesey’s *One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest*. In teaching, we might name Dickens’ Thomas Gradgrind who forbade all use of imagination and Muriel Sparks’ Jean Brodie who thought mainly of herself and tried to make her students into true followers.

Theoretical difficulties go deeper, however. We encounter again the issue of virtue-caring versus relational caring. Sociologists have identified one characteristic of the professions—of medicine, law, and the ministry—as dedication to service; the professions are thought to be inherently altruistic (Larson, 1977). But the caring associated with this altruistic commitment is generally of the virtue sort. The professional knows what the patient, client, or parishioner needs, and he may or may not listen to the expressed needs of the cared-for. Sometimes the cared-for becomes a mere case—a set of problems to be solved. Until recently, for example, physicians

were warned to remain detached—not to become affectively involved with what their patients are going through. That attitude is beginning to change, but it is by no means entirely gone (Arras, 1995; Gordon, Benner, & Noddings, 1996; Pellegrino, 1985).

In both teaching and nursing, professional advancement has long required putting some distance between teacher and students or nurse and patients. Advancement comes by moving farther from everyday work with students and patients. The more closely one works with students or patients, the lower one stands in the professional hierarchy. For many years, it was thought that the near absence of women in educational administration could be traced in large part to women's lack of professional ambition. Today most people blame the absence on gender discrimination. But it may be, too, that many women want to remain in direct contact with students. Many women enter teaching to make a difference in the lives of individuals, and they cherish the opportunity to establish and maintain caring relations. Should this attitude be equated with lack of professional ambition? The question arises: How can we recognize competent, caring teachers? Should we create a professional hierarchy that will allow teachers to advance and yet remain in direct contact with students? This suggestion was made some years ago by the Holmes Group (1986), but the problem has not been solved. Those closest to children are still paid least.

As we move toward a discussion of caring and moral education, we will see that much of what we do as moral educators depends on the moral climate in which we work. As the school climate becomes more professional—in the sociological sense of that word—establishing a climate of care may actually become more difficult.

We have already noted how the enforced distance between teacher and students may work against building relations of care. Consider now another feature of professionalization—possession and use of highly specialized language. Educators have been criticized for using pedagogical jargon, and rightly so. Much of it is just silly, and it reflects an inept attempt to mimic genuine professional language.

But there is a rich technical language in which teachers should be well versed: cognitive structure, metacognition, intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, scaffolding, massed and distributed practice, wait time, authoritative parenting, qualitative evaluation, action research, time on task, incubation and illumination, developmental learning, mnemonic devices, and a host of concepts, names, and historical accounts that furnish a rich vocabulary for professional education. The difficulty is that teachers cannot use this vocabulary with children, and they are rarely well equipped to translate it for parents. When physicians use technical language with their patients, they follow its use with a prescription of treatment which is given in ordinary language. (When it isn't, patients may seek a second opinion.) In education, the rich professional language used in teacher preparation tends to decay or, in practice, to deteriorate into jargon. Professional language becomes more acceptable, more likely to be admired, as we move up in the grades. Parents expect some technical language from high school teachers in their specialized disciplines, but they object to it from primary teachers. This, too, poses a problem for caring.

It is perhaps primary school teachers who do the best job of caring for students. Of necessity, they speak the language of childhood, and they spend a greater part of the day in direct contact with their students. Teachers of older students do not often have the time required to establish caring relations, and the desire for recognition as professionals may lead them to adopt a more distanced stance. We tend to think of primary school teachers as warm, maternal types and of high school teachers as more distant, professional figures. And, of course, there are more men in secondary education than in primary education. Their presence in secondary education also adds to an aura of professionalism and, perhaps, reduces the emphasis on caring—thought to be “women's work.”

In writing about *carework*, sociologists often fail to mention caring or care ethics, but they



attend to matters of gender, particularly the exploitation of women in carework (Bianchi, Casper, & King, 2005; Zimmerman, Litt, & Bose, 2006). It is women who do most of the carework both at home and in paid jobs—work that by its very nature should call forth caring. Concentration on working hours, physical burdens, lack of appreciation, and low compensation characterizes much of current sociological work. But there is also an implicit challenge to care ethics in this treatment, and an explanation for this appears in some philosophical work. There is a fear that an emphasis on caring—especially on caring as a woman’s ethic—will undermine women’s professional mobility and actually give support to a system of carework that continues to exploit women (Rhode, 1990).

This illustrates the confusion surrounding the meaning of the term *caring*. Caring does not imply caregiving. It points, rather, to a way of being in the world. We can be attentive and disposed to help in any human encounter. If we are charged with caregiving, we should be caring but, as we have seen, that is not always the case. If we are caring, however, we are not necessarily in a caregiving role. To care is a moral expectation in any encounter, and caring relations form the foundation of moral life in every domain. In some ways, caring as described in an ethic of care becomes more challenging with older students and competent adults. The behaviors associated with caregiving for young children and helpless or suffering adults are not usually appropriate. With competent adults, we have to listen, be moved to act in accord with what we hear, and monitor the effects of our attempts to care through observation of the cared-for’s responses. We have to recognize the growing independence of those with whom we interact as carers.

There should be little conflict between caring and professionalism. It is the definition of *professional* that must change. When teachers—usually male—say, “I’m a professional, not a baby sitter”—they display ignorance about what it means to care. Caring does not mean (but it does not exclude) cuddling, patting, hugging, and drying tears. Neither does it mean, as we saw earlier, deciding solely on the basis of the carer’s own values and virtues what is in the best interest of the cared-for. With these confusions cleared up, we can explore what it means to build and maintain a moral climate for moral education.

## A MORAL CLIMATE FOR MORAL EDUCATION

Moral education directed by care theory focuses more on the moral environment than on the virtues and vices of students. It gives some attention to the development of virtues, of course, but its main interest is in establishing a climate in which caring relations can flourish. It calls upon parents and educators to create a world in which it is both desirable and possible to be good. Following John Dewey (1897/1972), we agree that there are two meanings of *moral education*, and the first meaning refers to an education that is morally justified. It requires a moral climate for education. The second, more familiar, meaning refers to the production of moral students and citizens through education.

In describing the misery of his early school days, George Orwell wrote: “I was in a world where it was *not possible* for me to be good.... Life was more terrible, and I was more wicked, than I had imagined” (1946/1981, p. 5). His teachers, supposedly having the best interests of their students at heart, demanded the impossible and inflicted all sorts of cruelty on him and his peers. Had they been asked about moral education, they would surely have named many of the virtues we now try to inculcate in our students, but they created an atmosphere in which it was impossible for children to exercise those virtues or to understand what they really meant.

A moral climate in schools is one that assures students that their self-worth does not depend on academic prowess or any other special talent; it depends only on their moral decency—the

exercise of their capacity to enter into and maintain caring relations. With that understanding, all sorts of legitimate talents are to be developed and respected (Noddings, 2003). An important task for teachers in this moral environment is to ensure respect for the wide range of human talents by acknowledging them as they appear and reminding students to do the same. We live in an interdependent world. Not only do we depend on one another for all sorts of material goods and services but, ontologically, we are defined relationally. The attribute we call *individuality* is constructed in relation.

When we recognize the enormous range of human talents and interests, we must also see that there are great demands on caring teachers. *Caring demands competence* (Noddings, 1999). To respond to the expressed needs of students—and not just to those inferred from the formal curriculum—teachers must acquire a broad expanse of knowledge, one that goes well beyond the limits of narrow subject-matter expertise. Caring, as it is described in care theory, is not just a fuzzy, kindly attitude. To respond effectively after listening to a wide range of student needs, teachers must be life-long learners, and they must continually strive for competence. One huge task for competent, caring teachers is to work on the moral climate of schooling as well as on that of their own classrooms.

A moral school climate reduces unhealthy competition (Kohn, 1992). It does not eliminate all competition; that would be unrealistic. There are criteria for healthy competition (Noddings, 1989, 2000a): the activity should still be fun, it should help us to turn in better and better performances, and it should allow us to take pleasure in the success of our competitors. When competition sacrifices the joy of learning for higher GPAs and test scores, it is unhealthy. When one person's success is defined in terms of another's failure, the competition is unhealthy. When it encourages cheating or depriving others of a chance at success, it is unhealthy. In too many schools today, students strive only for high scores, and they withhold information even from friends in order to secure an advantage (Pope, 2001). Care theorists want to change the climate that supports this unhealthy behavior. We do not try to make students into moral heroes who can withstand the pressures of such an unhealthy climate.

Moral heroism should be discussed, of course, but—by its very nature—heroism cannot be expected of everyone. We work toward a world in which ordinary people find it possible to be good. That means that the human propensity for evil must also be discussed. Children need help in understanding that the struggle for a moral life is universal.

Some time ago, I spoke with a large group of fourth graders in an elite private school at the request of their teachers who were troubled by an outbreak of bullying. I asked the kids, “Could *you* ever be a bully?” The ensuing conversation was touching and enlightening (Noddings, 2006b). The kids described the situations that led them into complicity as bullies: fear that they would alienate friends who were engaged in bullying, fear that they might themselves become victims, anger over unrelated events in their lives that made them want “to pick on someone,” fear of looking weak or stupid. By the end of the conversation, it was clear that these children feared becoming perpetrators as much as they feared becoming victims. They wanted to be good, but they were living in a world where that was difficult.

Conversations of this sort should occur at every level of schooling. Understanding how the demands of various situations can bring out the worst in us might go a long way to reduce cheating and violence in schools and atrocities by our armed forces in combat (Noddings, 2006a). And every such conversation should induce a new round of reflection on the part of educators: In what ways are we supporting the worst in our students instead of encouraging the best?

To establish a moral climate in which caring relations can flourish, we need to know what our students are going through. This means listening to them—not assuming even before contact that we know what is best for them. It takes time to develop relations of care and trust (Watson,

2003), and schools must make it legitimate for teachers to spend time doing this. Everything else should go better as a result.

Learning what it means to be cared for is the first step in moral education, and this is done in an environment in which teachers and parents reliably demonstrate caring (Bullough, 2000). In the early years of schooling, teachers are faced with the enormous task of teaching some children what it means to be cared for (Noddings, 1996). It should *not* mean being coerced, shouted at, punished, and tightly controlled, but some children come to school with this faulty notion of caring, and the misconception sometimes lingers into middle and high school years; it may even last a lifetime, and then the faulty idea is passed on to another generation (Noddings, 2001). Asked to describe a caring teacher, some middle school youngsters say it is one who “makes us do things.” With such students, teachers may at first have to be more directive and controlling than they wish to be, but they must respond to the obvious needs of these youngsters. Gradually, teachers can help these students to understand that caring means to be responsive and supportive and then teachers can move to a more facilitative role. Notice that care theory requires us, paradoxically, to give up the behaviors we often associate with caring when the needs of the cared-for suggest other forms of response. The cared-for is more important than specific behaviors derived from the theory.

A caring climate has little need for rigid rules and harsh penalties (Kohn, 1999). In such a climate, we might well adopt a zero-tolerance attitude toward behaviors that hurt others, but we would not establish zero-tolerance *rules*. These rules force us to suspend the use of judgment, and that is just foolish. Educators should be able to decide when an outlawed behavior is simply a mistake and when it is a dangerous, deliberate infraction. A zero-tolerance attitude leads us to say, “We don’t talk to one another like that in here,” “We don’t throw things in here. Please pick it up,” and like admonitions when students misbehave. If a climate of care and trust has been established, most youngsters will feel appropriately chastised by their teacher’s warning and obvious disappointment. It is not tougher penalties that will produce socially acceptable behavior but, rather, the deeply held desire to remain in a cherished caring relation.

## A MODEL FOR MORAL EDUCATION

Having discussed the central importance of creating a moral climate—an educational world in which it is both desirable and possible to be good—we are now ready to consider a model for moral education in the sense of developing moral understanding in our students. There are today several influential approaches to moral education (Stengel & Tom, 2006). Except at the extremes, they are not in irresolvable conflict. The model based on care ethics consists of four components.

### Modeling

Almost all approaches to moral education recognize the importance of modeling. If we would teach the young to be moral persons, we must demonstrate moral behavior for them. From the care perspective, we must show them what it means to care.

Teachers show their caring by listening to students and giving respectful attention to their expressed needs. When their efforts at caring fail to connect—that is, fail to elicit a response of recognition that the caring has been received—they initiate encounters designed to learn more about the students’ needs and the backgrounds from which they have emerged. They talk, listen, explain, negotiate, and sometimes back away watchfully, recognizing that their efforts may have been too insistent, even intrusive.

It is important to note that, although they necessarily model caring, caring teachers do not “care” primarily for the sake of modeling caring. The modeling is an inevitable by-product of genuine caring. It is for this reason that care ethicists are a bit skeptical about “caring behaviors.” When researchers list caring behaviors and set out to study them, care ethicists want to know what triggered a particular behavior. Does it represent a caring response to a need or want expressed by the cared-for, or is it simply a behavior chosen from an approved list of “caring behaviors?” If it is best described as the latter, then its status as a caring response is in question. A smile, a positive remark to a student’s faulty presentation, a pat on the shoulder may or may not be a caring act. Even “listening,” if it is not attuned to what-is-there in the student may not be a caring act. Every caring act must be assessed in context.

There are, of course, times when our attention is focused on the effect of our modeling. When we show a child how to handle a kitten, for example, we are giving a lesson through modeling. Our attention is more on the child than the kitten. When we treat a classroom infraction with firm consideration, our attention may be as much on the lesson we are providing for the whole class as on its effects for the wrong-doer. This is entirely proper, but we must be careful not to sacrifice the cared-for to the lesson. Otherwise, we may be dismayed to hear from the cared-for, “You really don’t care about me. You just want to look good.”

## Dialogue

Dialogue is the most fundamental component of moral education from the care perspective. All forms of moral education use talk of some kind—usually statements of knowledge, commands, rebukes, praise, warnings, advice. But dialogue involves a mutual search for understanding. The conclusion is not known to one party at the outset and then gradually revealed to the other. Parents and teachers sometimes engage children in such a fake form of dialogue. They talk and talk. In the end, the adult lays down the law, perhaps saying, “I tried to reason with you.” In contrast, a caring adult who feels it is necessary to insist on a predecided outcome will say so immediately. There will be no pretense at dialogue. She may, however, invite dialogue to explain her decision.

True dialogue, then, follows a path described by Paulo Freire (1970). It involves a topic of considerable interest to at least one of the parties, and it is open-ended. Together, the parties in dialogue search for meaning and understanding. Such dialogue differs from most everyday conversation in its purpose—that search for meaning and understanding. It is not trivial chit-chat.

A dialogue may be broken up by occasional interludes of conversation. A caring participant may, for example, change the subject briefly if she sees that the cared-for is suffering or uncomfortable with the direction dialogue has taken. Parents and teachers often interrupt the flow of logical reasoning in dialogue to assure a young person that he is thinking well, to remind him that he has successfully handled a similar situation, or that all people suffer agonies of indecision. The conversation may even diverge to reminiscences, humorous anecdotes, or playful activity with words. To do this well, partners in dialogue must have a grasp of interpersonal reasoning (Noddings, 1991). The purpose of using interpersonal reasoning is to maintain the caring relation. That relation is more important than the chain of reasoning that should culminate in a logical conclusion.

Caring participants in dialogue do not forget that the carer’s basic question to the cared-for is, “What are you going through?” In equal relations, those between peers, parties in dialogue exchange places as the situation warrants and both are ready to act as carers. This attitude—readiness to care and commitment to do so—can make a difference in professional as well as personal relationships. It reduces the tendency to engage in warlike debate and encourages a more

constructive form of professional dialogue. Constructive criticism may emerge in dialogue, but it is not allowed to damage caring relations.

Genuine dialogue also has the potential to restore the “immortal conversation” to education. Traditionalists of the Hutchins/Adler school are quite right in insisting that great existential questions be treated seriously in educational programs, and these themes can be addressed well before the college years. It is sad, even frightening, to observe that high school students rarely ask existential questions. Surely, they still wonder whether God exists, whether life has meaning, in what the good life consists, where the universe came from, how to conceive of infinity, how other people have thought of immortality. And yet, by the time children reach high school, they have given up asking such questions. They know that the questions will not be admitted to classroom discussion (Simon, 2001).

We are afraid of such questions, in part because teaching is too often thought of as didactic work—a matter of imparting authoritative knowledge to the young. Understandably, we do not want public school teachers to respond to existential questions with answers derived from their own religious or ideological perspectives. But, if we believe that one important task of teaching is to share in the search for understanding—to engage in dialogue that explores, analyzes, and wonders—the whole picture of teaching changes. In responding to a student’s question, the teacher may talk about what a variety of thinkers have said on the topic, how views have changed over time, where the main controversies currently lie, and where the themes occur in literature. It is not an accident that some of the greatest literature on education takes the form of dialogue.

It is in dialogue that we show our care for another. But much more occurs. Language is expanded and polished. Logic is learned, exercised, corrected, and applied. Thinking is encouraged within the safety of caring relations. Real problems are shared and addressed respectfully. Connections are made among the disciplines. Knowledge is transmitted informally, and opportunities for incidental learning abound.

The address and response of dialogue are central to moral education not only because it is through dialogue that caring is activated but also because dialogue provides an opportunity to discuss specific moral problems. Here, too, the quest is more for moral motivation and understanding than for justification. We discuss moral problems openly to decide what to do, to better understand the needs of others, and to figure out what might be done to meet the needs expressed. Through dialogue we also learn more about our own motives and what matters to us.

Dialogue should be preferred to didactic teaching on the virtues. We cannot teach virtues as we do the times-tables and quadratic equation, but we can invite critical dialogue on the virtues. Are the virtues always virtuous (Noddings, 2002a)? When is courage not virtuous? When is honesty not virtuous? Are there other “virtues” that are sometimes questionable?

Willingness to enter dialogue is important to the maintenance of personal relationships. It can also contribute to positive relations in national and international affairs. Instead of setting rigid preconditions for conversation (and claiming too often that “you just can’t talk to these people”), we should enter into dialogue hopefully and address those conditions after establishing a climate of care and trust—even if the stability of that climate is shaky. History is loaded with lessons on the perils that follow a failure to engage in dialogue. Years later we try to explain what happened. People we once hated and fought with murderous self-righteousness, we now count as friends. Often we even deny that hatred ever played a role. Instead, we charge wartime violence to a few bad characters and tragic events. Through continuous, caring dialogue (not necessarily negotiation) we might prevent the creation of enemies and the arousal of hatred (Saunders, 1991).

Similarly, dialogue at home and in school can reduce the need for rigid rules, penalties, and many acts of coercion. A question is asked. The caring response in true dialogue is, “I am here. Let’s talk about it.” Then we learn from one another and move toward deeper understanding.

## Practice

We learn to care, first, by being cared for. We observe as caring is modeled, and we explore moral life through dialogue. Then we need opportunities to practice caring (Charney, 1992; Cohen, 2001). Every human encounter presents an opportunity to care, and moral education should emphasize this. We need not be in a caregiving occupation to respond as carers.

Classroom procedures should create situations in which caring can be encouraged and monitored. Working in groups can provide opportunities to care and to strengthen the whole web of care. But, if group work is to be effective, teachers must continually remind students that they are engaged in this work to help one another—not simply to produce a better product or to surpass another group. Kids, like all human beings, can be very unpleasant to one another. If, for example, they will receive a group grade for their work, they may pick on the weakest members of the group and divert their own attention from caring to competing. It is hard to maintain care and trust in a climate of competitive grading, and teachers must use some ingenuity if they are to get the best from group work.

We noted earlier that caregiving is not always accompanied by caring, but opportunities to help others may encourage caring. Service learning is, therefore a promising arena in which to practice caring but, again, participation must be carefully monitored, and supervisors should be sure that student-carers listen to those they are serving and that expressed needs are heard. It cannot be considered practice in caring if students are directed simply to perform prespecified tasks that may or may not meet the needs of those designated as recipients of care.

The connection between caregiving and caring should be discussed in dialogue. There is some evidence that women take more naturally than men to caring as a moral orientation, in part because they have been expected for centuries to take responsibility for caregiving. Exposure to this responsibility seems to increase the likelihood that males, too, will embrace the care orientation (Noddings, 1989). It seems reasonable to suggest, then, that boys as well as girls be given opportunities to care for the physical comfort of family members and for guests, younger children, and pets. Most educators today agree that girls as well as boys should have experience with building materials, mathematical games, and science experiments, but we often neglect our boys when it comes to apprenticeships in caring.

Practice in working together provides an opportunity to develop social skills, and well-developed social skills in turn contribute to a life of caring and being cared for. It is far easier to work with, care for, or accept care from a pleasant, well-mannered person than an inconsiderate, grouchy one. Schools today are beginning to recognize that social/emotional education is as important as academic education (Cohen, 2006; Noddings, 2005, 2006c). Working together under the supervision of caring teachers also makes it more likely that students will develop healthy peer relationships (Johnston, 2006), and the hope is that success in such relationships will help to build a caring society.

## Confirmation

Confirmation, as I have discussed it in care ethics, does not appear in most other models of moral education. In religious institutions, for example, *confirmation* usually refers to a formal ceremony inducting a young person into a religious tradition as a mature, rational person.

In contrast, in the relational philosophy of Martin Buber (1958/1970, 1965) and in care ethics, confirmation refers to a carer's conscious act of affirming or confirming the morally best in another. In acts of confirmation, we attribute to the cared-for the best possible motive consonant with reality. Such acts are not mere strategies designed to manipulate the cared-for. They are,



rather, genuine attempts to locate the good that may have been intended in an otherwise unacceptable act. For example, students sometimes cheat in order to help friends or to please parents. They neglect onerous duties to pursue other worthwhile projects. They say something cruel to relieve their own fear or uncertainty. Teachers who know their students well can detect such better motives and show their understanding by naming and discussing them. The end result is often relief and appreciation on the part of the erring student: Here is an authoritative figure, my teacher, who sees something better in me. Acts of confirmation point students upward by recognizing a better self already partly formed and struggling to develop. Confirmation is perhaps the loveliest of moral acts.

There are dangers, however. One danger is that the teacher may not know the student well enough to perform a genuine act of confirmation. Students and teachers today rarely spend enough time together to make this component of moral education a reality. Recognizing this, we might advocate greater continuity in teacher–student relationships. Students and teachers might both profit from working together (by mutual consent) for, say, three years rather than the typical one year.

A second danger is that, in confirming another, we necessarily work from an ethical ideal we ourselves have internalized. We have at least a sketchy idea of what constitutes a good person, and we look for characteristics of that good person in the developing student. Here we must be careful to avoid a danger identified by Isaiah Berlin (1969), one associated with the positive concept of liberty. Berlin analyzed two concepts of liberty. In the *negative* view, liberty or freedom is equated with noninterference; adult human beings are free to the degree that they are not constrained by others. In the *positive* view, people are free if they become what they *should be*; that is, an ideal is established, and people are free to the degree that they approach the ideal. The positive view, as Berlin notes, can be very dangerous. When we hold too rigid a view of what a good or free person should be like, we are tempted to force people into a certain mold “for their own sake.” This is a mistake, identified earlier, often made in what we have called virtue-caring. The remedy cannot be to discard our own vision and beliefs. It lies, rather, in recognizing that a certain vision and set of beliefs *are* our own and remaining open to the possibility that, through dialogue and practice, our views might be modified or, at least, that another vision may be entirely acceptable for other people.

## CONCLUSION

Moral education from the perspective of care theory concentrates on the construction of a moral climate for education. A *moral education* is one that is morally justified in social structure, curriculum content, pedagogy, and approved human interactions. It provides an educational climate in which it is both desirable and possible to be good. Within such a structure, we provide an education designed to produce moral people through modeling, dialogue, practice, and confirmation.

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# 10

## Developmental Discipline and Moral Education

Marilyn Watson

Moral and character educators working from different philosophical perspectives have generally acknowledged a major role in students' moral development of the "hidden curriculum" manifested in the interpersonal environment of schools and classrooms (Giroux & Purpel, 1983; Jackson, Boonstrom, & Hansen, 1993; Ryan, 1986; Fallona & Richardson, 2006). Dewey (1909/1975), for example, argued that the mode of social life and the nature of the school community were far more important factors in students' moral growth than direct moral instruction. Ryan (1986), from a quite different theoretical perspective, argues that "very little of the moral education that inevitably occurs in the schools is formally recorded in lesson plans, curriculum guides, or behavioral objectives" Rather, students develop their "conceptions of what being a good person entails" from such aspects of schooling as the rules that are or are not enforced, the rituals and procedures of daily classroom life, the expectations for and consequences of their behavior, and their teachers' warnings, advice, and manner (p. 228).

Classroom management is the educational field that focuses on the overall classroom environment separate from any particular academic content (Brophy, 2006). During the first half of the twentieth century, classroom instruction focused on civic and moral virtues as well as academic skills and competencies (Brophy, 2006; Ryan, 1986). However, probably because of the disappointing findings of Hartshorne and May and their colleagues (Hartshorne & May, 1928; Hartshorne, May, & Maller, 1929; Hartshorne, May, & Shuttlesworth, 1930) the general educational community lost interest in instruction in virtues and morals. Consequently, most empirical research on classroom management strategies evaluated effectiveness based on improvements in academic learning (Brophy, 2006).

Also, until quite recently, most classroom management research was conducted assuming teaching to be the transmission of knowledge. Correlatively, the view of human nature was derived from behavioral psychology. Students were seen as blank slates motivated by self-interest to be shaped or socialized through reinforcement into learners and productive citizens. For example, early in the twentieth century, a leading figure in classroom management, William Chandler Bagley (1907), viewed the educational task as "slowly transforming the child from a little savage into a creature of law and order, fit for the life of civilized society" (p. 35, as cited in Brophy, 2006). A similar view is expressed more elegantly at the end of that century by Ryan and

Bohlin (1999), moral educators working within a cultural transmission paradigm. They argue that “we are born both self-centered and ignorant, with our primitive impulses reigning over reason. The point of...education is to bring our inclinations, feelings, and passions into harmony with reason” (pp. 5–6).

In the 1970s and 1980s, good classroom management was about efficient control of students in order to optimize academic learning. The earlier view that classroom management and discipline might also serve to support students’ social and moral development had retreated so far into the background that Walter Doyle’s chapter on classroom organization and management for the 1986 *Handbook of Research on Teaching* didn’t even mention potential social or moral outcomes. Most classroom teachers as well as their university instructors viewed classroom management as a set of procedures for organizing and motivating students to attend to academic instruction along with a set of disciplinary interventions (desists) to stop student misbehavior and refocus student attention on learning (Evertson & Weinstein, 2006). Although research on classroom management in the 1970s and 1980s did initiate a focus on management strategies to prevent problems, such as teaching the behaviors required in particular educational settings, and providing cues to situational expectations, most teachers, feeling poorly prepared in these strategies, were concerned with maintaining order and controlling misbehavior (Brophy, 2006; Evertson & Emmer, 1982; Jones, 2006).

With twenty to forty students to a classroom, there were countless behaviors teachers felt compelled to stop, ranging from bullying, hitting, and teasing to hat wearing, gum chewing, and talking out of turn. Teachers felt the need for easy and efficient control techniques and an industry sprung up to fill that need. Efficient and sometimes elaborate control systems involving checks on the board, tokens, stickers, notes of praise, time outs, and so on were developed and rapidly spread to schools across the country. These approaches were generally guided by behavioral psychology and behaviorism’s view of children as self-interested and needing to be shaped by extrinsic reinforcers. Lee Canter’s *Assertive Discipline* (1976) is probably the best known and most influential of these approaches. By 1980 the predominant approach to classroom management and discipline in American public schools was focused on control of students’ behavior by rewards and punishments and the traditional citizenship goals had been largely abandoned.

## ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES TO CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

On a parallel track, influential, alternative approaches to managing children’s behavior were being generated not out of behavioral psychology or classroom research, but out of Adlerian psychology (Dreikurs, 1968; Dreikurs, Grunwald, & Pepper, 1982), Rogerian therapy (Gordon, 1974), and reality therapy (Glasser, 1965, 1969). These approaches are more consistent with developmental-constructivist education. Children are viewed as having legitimate needs and positive social motivations but sometimes choose misguided means for satisfying their needs. Consistent with developmental/constructivist principles, these approaches stress the importance of understanding the reasons behind student misbehavior.

While Nucci (2001) classified these approaches to discipline as examples of Developmental Discipline, they are not truly developmental. Students are viewed like adults as rational, capable, and socially oriented. Teachers are advised to remain impersonal, as an analyst might, and to help students recognize and solve their own problems. For example, Gordon stresses the importance of demonstrating attention to and concern for a student’s problem by reflecting the student’s statements back, thereby helping the student clarify the problem and find his or her own solution. This approach is respectful of a child’s good will and autonomy, but it risks overestimating the

child's abilities. Gordon does not appear to make adjustments for children's developmental levels, but rather argues that the skills and methods he advocates "are equally useful and applicable for effective teaching of students of all ages" (1974, p. 13).

Glasser's approach stresses the importance of positive teacher-child relationships and of involving students in class meetings to create class rules and to discuss problems. His ten-step approach to student misbehavior begins by improving the teacher-student relationship, involves several steps in which the student describes and strives to create a plan to stop the misbehavior, and ends with three successive steps, in-school suspension, home suspension, and finally removal to another institution. Again, there is much in this approach that is consistent with developmental theory—involving students in setting and discussing rules and problems, and allowing students time to think about their behaviors and solve their own problems. However, the lack of a focus on adult guidance is strikingly nondevelopmental.

The third therapeutic approach developed by Rudolph Dreikurs has a darker view of children and a more controlling role for teachers (Kohn, 1996). Dreikurs argues that students who misbehave are trying to satisfy their legitimate needs through misguided means. He stresses four basic goals for student misbehavior; to gain attention, to exert power, to exact revenge, or to gain sympathy by feigning incompetence. Teachers are instructed to build positive relationships in the classroom and to respond to student misbehavior based on one of these four potential causes. Dreikurs believed that students would willingly abandon their inappropriate goals when confronted with them. If they did not, he advised against expiatory punishments, recommending instead what he called natural or logical consequences. However, in Dreikur's own writing and in the application his principles received in schools, natural and logical consequences are often thinly disguised punishments (Kohn, 1996). For example, a child who tips his chair is made to stand throughout a lesson, and a child who forgets lunch money is made to go without lunch (Dreikurs & Gray, 1968; Dreikurs, Grunwald, & Pepper, 1982).

There is much about these approaches to appeal to developmentalists—the focus on understanding student needs, the respect for student rationality, the idea that students have within them the power to solve their own problems, and for some the idea of controlling behavior using natural or logical consequences. But these approaches lack a developmental perspective—a sense of what the developmental tasks are for children of different ages and the appropriate role of adults in assisting the child's development. Some ideas from these programs have been influential in shaping current developmental approaches to classroom management; for example, problem-solving class meetings are integral to discipline approaches derived from developmental theory and research (DeVries & Zan, 1994; Kohn, 1996; Power, Higgins, & Kohlberg, 1989; Watson & Ecken, 2003). Mainstream American classrooms remained, until quite recently, focused on teaching academic content and controlling student behavior through rewards and punishments.

## EDUCATION FOR MORAL AND CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT

In the 1980s there was a resurgence of interest in the school's role in student's moral or character education. In response to a Gallup poll, 84% of respondents who had children in public schools favored moral instruction, and the U.S. Secretary of Education called for teachers to help students become good people as well as good students (Ryan, 1986).

The traditional approach to teaching values involving, for example, modeling, direct instruction, opportunities to practice values, and the judicious use of rewards and punishments to encourage behavior consistent with core values, easily fit with the then current direct instruction approaches to teaching, and the controlling approaches to classroom management (Ryan, 1989;



Wynne, 1989). It did not require a rethinking of the whole educational endeavor. Whether transmitting values or math skills, the educational processes of telling, modeling, explaining, practice, and correction would be the same. Likewise, whether motivating learning or good behavior the principles of reward and punishment would apply. Traditional moral or character education programs fit well with the then predominant conceptions of teaching and classroom management.

Moral educators working in cognitive-developmental or social constructivist paradigms faced many more barriers to implementing their programs in public schools. From the perspective of these educators the mainstream views (1) of education as the transmission of knowledge; (2) of learning as passive acceptance; and (3) of classroom management and discipline as behavioral control, were wholly unacceptable. Drawing from the theory and research of Piaget, particularly *The Moral Judgment of the Child* (1932/1965), cognitive developmentalists argued that autonomy not obedience and understanding not remembering are the proper aims of education (Cople, Sigel, & Saunders, 1979; DeVries & Zan, 1994; Kamii, 1984; Kohlberg & Meyer, 1972). Constructivist educators also hold a more positive view of children. Children are seen as being in the process of development and naturally predisposed toward cooperation and learning insofar as their level of development allows. The negative view of children as self-interested and work avoidant and the strong emphasis on adult control of children's behavior characteristic of public school education led educators applying developmental, constructivist principles to seek alternative approaches to teaching, classroom management, and discipline.

Kohlberg and his colleagues focused on small, experimental high schools which they organized into "just communities" (Power, Higgins, & Kohlberg, 1989). Others, for example, Rheta DeVries (DeVries & Zan, 1994), Constance Kamii (1984), and Irving Siegel (Cople, Siegel, & Saunders, 1979), focused on early childhood education, where the existing frameworks were more in line with developmental theory and views of children's motivations more positive. The Child Development Project (Brown & Solomon, 1983; Solomon, Battistich, Watson, Schaps, & Lewis, 2000; Watson, Solomon, Battistich, Schaps, & Solomon, 1989) focused at the elementary level where contemporary classroom management and discipline practices aimed at control through direct instruction and rewards and punishments.

## THE DEVELOPMENT OF DEVELOPMENTAL DISCIPLINE

During the 1960s and 1970s, developmental, social, and motivational psychologists working from a variety of theoretical perspectives created a substantial body of research related to children's moral or prosocial development (e.g., Aronson, Bridgeman, & Geffner, 1978; Baumrind, 1967; Feshbach, 1979; Hoffman, 1975; Hoffman & Saltzstein, 1967; Kohlberg 1978; Kohlberg & Mayer, 1972; Peck & Havighurst, 1960; Pitkanen-Pulkkinen, 1980; Sroufe, 1983; Staub, 1971, 1975; Stayton, Hogan & Ainsworth, 1971; Yarrow & Scott, 1972; Yarrow, Scott, & Waxler, 1973; Zahn-Waxler & Radke-Yarrow, 1979; see Solomon, Watson, & Battistich (2001) for a review of this research). During the 1980s and 1990s, developmentally oriented educators focused on moral or prosocial development realized that they needed to create new approaches to classroom management and discipline. While drawing from somewhat different but overlapping bodies of theory and research, all of these approaches have similar assumptions and goals and all stress the necessity of creating a caring or just community as a first principle; see Watson & Battistich (2006) for a detailed description of these community approaches to classroom management.

For example, once the staff of the Child Development Project realized that a classroom environment supportive of children's moral development would need to be quite different from the controlling environments found in most American elementary schools, they began designing

an approach to classroom management and discipline consistent with developmental theory and research. They argued that this alternative management approach would need to fulfill four conditions (Watson, Solomon, Battistich, Schaps, & Solomon, 1989).

1. The teacher–child relationships would need to be warm, supportive, and mutually trusting.
2. The classroom would need to be a caring, democratic community in which each child’s needs for competence, autonomy, and belonging are met.
3. Children would need opportunities to discuss and refine their understanding of moral values and how they apply to everyday life in the classroom.
4. Teachers would need to use both proactive and reactive control techniques to help children act in accordance with prosocial values and that enhance (or at least do not undermine) the above goals.

### What Does It Mean to Be Prosocial or Morally Competent?

From the perspective of developmental theory, to act morally one must act for moral reasons; for example, because one cares about or wants to help the other or one wants to live up to internalized moral values. Moral action must be taken for moral reasons and not to avoid punishment, gain pleasure, emulate a powerful model, or please authority. A morally supportive management and discipline system must foster the development of students’ empathic caring, moral awareness, and moral understanding, while minimizing or avoiding the enticement of desirable behavior through praise, rewards, and punishments.

Moral competency also requires that one know how to carry out the actions that are called for by one’s internal moral values, and have the stamina or determination to act in caring or moral ways in the face of obstacles. Thus, a management and discipline system focused on supporting moral behavior also will need to focus on teaching the social and emotional skills and competencies required for moral action and help students build moral stamina and determination (Lapsley & Narvaez, 2005; Narvaez, 2003; see Narvaez [2006] for a description and discussion of a wide range of skills involved in competent moral action). Let us turn now to the four necessary components of a developmental approach to classroom management and discipline supportive of moral development.

### Warm, Nurturing, and Trusting Teacher–Child Relationships.

At first it may seem that arguing for warm, nurturing, trusting teacher–child relationships is like arguing for tasty, nutritious, affordable school lunches. Who could argue otherwise? However, if one views children as essentially self-interested, a view that undergirds most control oriented management and discipline systems, it would be difficult to feel warm and nurturing or trusting when children do not behave as we wish. One would feel the obligation to treat children humanely, just as one feels the obligation to treat prisoners humanely. One might feel warm, nurturing, and trusting toward some children, those who have earned our trust through their good behavior, but not toward children in general and especially not toward children who regularly misbehave. As the following two comments from high school students indicate, many classrooms lack warm, nurturing, trusting teacher–child relationships (Watson, 2006).

*Tara:* It’s like nobody’s really pushing us to do our best. If you don’t understand...they’ll think that you’re not understanding on purpose.

*Cindy:* ...most teachers now days they just...they don't make relationships with their students. Its, "One year to be here and you're off. As long as you pass my class."

Teaching teachers humane techniques for controlling students is considerably easier than teaching them how to build warm, nurturing, trusting relationships. For many it requires convincing them to change their understanding of children, an understanding that they have acquired over years of hearing about rewards, reinforcements, and self-interest. However, a substantial body of research supports the view that children's moral development is positively related to warm, nurturing, and autonomy supportive parenting styles (Solomon et al., 2001). For example, studies of moral development in families found that morally mature children were more likely to have been raised in families where their parents were

- sensitive to their needs (Baumrind, 1989; Peck & Havinghurst, 1960; Pitkanen-Pulkkinen, Stayton, Hogan, & Ainsworth, 1971),
- emotionally involved as opposed to distant from (Main & Weston, 1981; Sroufe, 1988; the Fels longitudinal study, as described in Baldwin, 1955),
- trusting of the child (Peck & Havinghurst, 1960; Pitkanen-Pulkkinen, 1980),
- involving of the child in decision making (Baldwin, 1955; Baumrind, 1989; Hoffman & Saltzstein, 1967; Kochanska, 1991; Peck & Havinghurst, 1960; Pitkanen-Pulkkinen, 1980), and that
- allowed the child reasonable freedom and responsibility (Baldwin, 1955; Peck & Havinghurst, 1960; Pitkanen-Pulkkinen, 1980).

If one assumes that the teacher's role as an agent for moral growth should be similar to the parent's role (Pianta, 1999), the research clearly points to the importance of teachers building warm, nurturing, and trusting relationships with students, relationships that focus on meeting students' needs. Therefore, Developmental Discipline's first principle asks teachers to go beyond being humane and to establish warm, nurturing, trusting relationships with students.

The centrality of such relationships to moral development is not only supported by empirical studies of children's development in families, it is consistent with several powerful theoretical perspectives on children's development. For example, care theorists, Noddings (1988, 1992, 2002) Gilligan (1982), and Kerr (1996) argue that a commitment to care is central to morality and that children learn to become caring by being in caring relationships. Attachment theorists argue that when children are reared in an environment in which their caretakers are available and respond sensitively to their needs, "a disposition for obedience—and indeed a disposition to become socialized—tends to develop in children" (Stayton, Hogan, & Ainsworth, 1971, p.1059). This view of children as developing a cooperative stance to the world based on their cooperative interactions with their caregivers is also consistent with Vygotsky's view of the child as an apprentice to the adult and Piaget's views of the role of parent-child cooperation in socialization. For example, in *The Moral Judgment of the Child* (1932/1965) Piaget says:

*There is a spontaneous mutual affection (between parents and children), which from the first prompts the child to acts of generosity, and even of self-sacrifice, to very touching demonstrations which are in no way prescribed. And here no doubt is the starting point for that morality of good.... (p. 195)*

From the perspective of Developmental Discipline it is the experience of warm, nurturing, trusting caregiver-child relationships that gives rise to a core aspect of morality, the desire to be

caring, cooperative, or moral. For many children this desire will already have been kindled in their family. But still, if the classroom is not a caring place, if, for example, students need to compete with each other to obtain privileges or teacher attention and favor, then, at the very least, they will find it difficult to behave in caring and moral ways in the classroom. Worse, they may come to think that treating others fairly and kindly applies only at home. They may come to believe that it is justified to shun or tease the students who are less able or who are frequently “disciplined” by the teacher. Even for initially caring or cooperative students an uncaring classroom is unlikely to further and may even hinder their moral development, regardless of how many moral sayings they are taught.

However, some students arrive at school never having experienced the kind of sensitive, nurturing relationships that allowed them to develop a view of others as caring, themselves as worthy of care, and relationships as cooperative (Sroufe, 1988, 1996). These are also the students most likely to cause difficulties in the classroom. Depending on the nature of their earlier experiences of care, they are likely to have poor social skills, lower impulse control, and greater dependency needs, or to be particularly aggressive and defiant (Cohn, 1990; Erickson, Sroufe, & Egeland, 1985; Howes & Hamilton, 1992; Pianta & Nimetz, 1991; Pianta, Nimetz, & Bennett, 1997; Sroufe, 1983, 1988, 1996; Sroufe & Fleeson, 1986). If one views these children as capable but self-interested, it will be difficult to like them, let alone form a warm, nurturing, trusting relationship with them. But without such a relationship these students will not have a basis for building a moral worldview—a view of relationships as cooperative and reciprocal.

### *What’s Involved in Forming Caring Teacher–Child Relationships?*

A caring relationship requires not only that the caregiver be reasonably successful in meeting the legitimate needs of the one cared for, but also that the one cared for perceive the caring intent of the caregiver (Noddings, 1984, 2002). Developmental Discipline places more emphasis on building relationships than on controlling students. For example, it stresses the importance of developing a view of children as wanting to learn and wanting to have mutually caring relationships, but often needing help in doing so. It also stresses the importance of teachers getting to know each student personally, of really listening to them, and helping students see that they like them. Doing nice things for students, seriously engaging their issues and concerns, sharing one’s own experiences and stories, and bringing fun and humor into the classroom are some of the ways that teachers help students see that they really care about them. Teachers also need to be able to meet children’s basic needs for friendship, autonomy, and competence. They need to create a moral community that fosters children’s positive peer relationships, provides reasonable opportunities for autonomy and voice, and honors their need for competence.

### **Building a Caring, Just, Democratic Learning Community**

Studies of human motivation support the premise that to flourish humans, children included, need to experience not only a sense of belonging—that they are loved and respected—but also a sense of competence—that they are capable and seen as capable by others—and a sense of autonomy—that their actions are consistent with what they want to do or believe they should do (deCharms, 1968; Deci & Ryan, 1991; Erikson, 1950/1963; Nicholls, 1989; White, 1959; see Watson & Ecken, 2003 for a more detailed discussion of students’ needs). Consistent with this research, studies of family environments found that morally mature children were more likely to experience democratic home environments, characterized by children having opportunities to influence decisions, the freedom to assume some responsibility for their own behavior, and

opportunities to take responsibility for maintaining the environment (Baldwin, 1955; Baumrind, 1989; Pitkanen-Pulkkinen, 1980; Peck & Havighurst, 1960).

From the cognitive-developmental perspective, the ideal adult-child relationship for supporting moral growth “is characterized by mutual respect and cooperation” in an environment where children have the possibility to interact with one another and to regulate their behavior voluntarily (DeVries, Zan, Hildebrandt, Edmiaston, & Sales, 2002, p. 17). Dewey (1916/1966) and Kohlberg and his colleagues (Power et al., 1989) stressed the power of participation in a democratic or just community for fostering moral development and a commitment to democratic ideals. From a social-constructivist perspective, children are viewed as biologically predisposed to seek cooperative relationships with more accomplished others (adults) around meaningful tasks within their community (Vygotsky, 1968). Through these collaborative interactions “the child acquires the ‘plane of consciousness’ of the natal society and is socialized, acculturated, made human” (Tharp & Gallimore, 1988, p. 30). From this perspective “learning and development occur as people participate in the sociocultural activities of their community” (Rogoff, 1994, p. 209).

Thus, a developmental approach to classroom management and discipline needs to involve students in creating and maintaining caring, democratic learning communities. Students will need ways to influence decisions that affect the community and opportunities to take responsibility for the community. Also, at least with preschool and elementary students, teachers will need to help students develop the skills of friendship and self-regulation. Thus, Developmental Discipline involves some form of collaborative learning—opportunities for students to learn and work together in fair and caring ways under the guidance of the teacher. It also involves guidance in conflict resolution—explicit teaching of strategies to resolve conflicts fairly; class meetings for planning, decision-making, and influencing community decisions and life; and class jobs or responsibilities. Teachers are also advised to limit competition, encourage students to help one another, and, look for ways to provide choice in, for example, learning topic, how the learning is accomplished, when and how long learning activities are engaged in, and how the learning is demonstrated or shared.

### Providing Opportunities to Discuss and Think about Moral Values

Developmental theory and research (Berkowitz, Gibbs, & Broughton, 1980; Blatt & Kohlberg, 1975; Nucci, 2001; Oser, 1986; Turiel, 1989) and studies of the family practices of morally mature children (Baumrind, 1989; Peck & Havighurst, 1960; Pitkanen-Pulkkinen, 1980; Walker & Taylor, 1991) indicate a positive influence on children’s moral development of moral discourse. Care theory also stresses the importance of morally relevant conversations to students’ positive development (Noddings, 1994, 2006). Such conversations can happen as part of the study of literature and history, in response to individual student actions or questions, and in class meetings to make decisions or reflect on class experiences. For example, in the CDP program such conversations often occur at the beginning and end of collaborative learning activities as students are asked to reflect on and discuss ways to treat one another fairly and kindly and their level of success at achieving these goals (Developmental Studies Center, 1997; Watson, Solomon, Dasho, Schwartz, & Kendzior, 1994).

#### *Ways We Want Our Class to Be*

Instead of specific lists of do’s and don’t’s such as “Keep your hands and feet to yourself” or “Listen when the teacher is talking,” most developmental approaches to discipline and classroom

management engage students in deciding rules based in moral principles. *Learning to Trust* (Watson & Ecken, 2003) at the elementary level and *Moral Classrooms/Moral Children* (DeVries & Zan, 1994) at the preschool level describe different but related processes for devising class rules through discussion, careful questioning, and guidance by the teacher. In the Just Community (Power et al., 1989) high school students have opportunities for moral discussion in small student advisories and discuss and make all the rules for the school in whole school meetings along with faculty on a one-person, one-vote basis. Teachers can influence the decisions through the power of moral persuasion, but not the power of authority.

Even very young children understand the moral principle of reciprocity and possess such basic moral knowledge that it is wrong to hurt another without reason or to treat people unfairly (Nucci & Turiel, 1978). Thus, they will describe a moral classroom when invited to seriously reflect on how they want their class to be. When children are helped to devise general rules and procedures in these ways, moral concepts such as kindness, fairness, and respect are partly defined by the specific examples and become general class guidelines replacing the more traditional lists of specific behaviors. It becomes clearer to students that when teachers find it necessary to enforce rules, they are exercising moral authority not just the authority of their position.

One potential danger in involving students in formulating classroom rules and norms is that rather than the classroom rules being seen as examples of universal moral imperatives to be kind, fair, and responsible, teachers might attempt to enforce such imperatives on the grounds that they were the group's decision. For example, a teacher might respond to a child who has called another child a name with the statement, "Remember Martin, we said we weren't going to call each other names in this class." Nucci (2001) labels such responses "domain inappropriate" because they give a conventional reason to cease an action that is in the moral domain. This danger will be essentially eliminated, however, if, in response to misbehaviors, teachers focus on the problem that the misbehavior caused. Let us turn now to control and teachers' responses to misbehavior—the most controversial aspect of Developmental Discipline.

### Control Techniques—Structure, Guidance, and Responses to Misbehavior

In any classroom, sheer numbers of children as well as their levels of immaturity make it necessary for teachers to exert control. While Developmental Discipline is not primarily about control, how teachers achieve control is important and can be a powerful force for moral development. How students respond to their teachers' efforts at control will depend in large part on the quality of the teacher–student relationship. Hence Developmental Discipline's initial focus is on building the teacher–student relationship. If students view the teacher as responsive to their needs, they are more likely to respond to his or her control efforts in a cooperative spirit. Teachers and students will be able to achieve what Piaget (1932/1965) and others have called a cooperative approach to discipline—an approach that will lead to an autonomous morality (DeVries & Zan, 1994, DeVries et al., 2002; Kamii, 1984). Conversely, how and how much teachers exercise control will affect the student–teacher relationship and the power of the control to foster moral growth. In the sections that follow, the principle control techniques consistent with Developmental Discipline are described and discussed.

Classroom control falls into three categories: indirect control—structures, rules, and procedures that limit the possibility of misbehavior or increase the probability of desired behavior; proactive control—suggestions, guidelines, or explanations offered to students prior to situations in which misbehaviors are likely to occur; and desists—responses to misbehaviors that do occur. Adequate classroom control, at least at the preschool through middle school levels, requires control techniques from all three categories.



### *Indirect Control*

Shaping the environment to interfere with potential misbehavior or to facilitate desirable behavior can make classroom life easier for everyone. How teachers design the environment will depend on the behaviors they want to facilitate or prevent and what their learning goals are. For example, seating students in rows makes it harder for them to talk and observe one another's work, while seating students in table groups encourages conversation and work sharing. Assigning partners for group work helps to assure that all students have opportunities to work with and build friendly relationships with one another, while allowing students to choose work partners honors autonomy and might provide opportunities for students to purposefully reach out to less popular students. Teachers may make these decisions themselves; for example, to help students easily sit in a circle for class meetings a kindergarten teacher might place a circle of tape on the floor; a third grade teacher might arrange seating such that more distractible students are in areas with fewer distractions. Alternatively, teachers might engage the students in drawing up a set of guidelines or creating structures that will help the classroom to run more smoothly. For example, a second grade teacher might use a series of class meetings to devise and assess the effectiveness of guidelines for leaving the classroom to use the restroom down the hall.

Involving students in determining the guidelines and structures that, once established, will exert control is ideal from a developmental perspective. When students are involved in creating structures that facilitate the smooth functioning of the classroom their autonomy is honored and they are helped to understand why the rules and structures are necessary. In *Moral Classroom/Moral Children*, Devries and Zan (1994) provide several examples of ways to involve students in decisions about nearly all the rules or procedures in preschool classrooms. For example, if a teacher wants to begin the year with a rule limiting the number of students in the block areas, the teacher can alert the students to the problem she is anticipating by asking the students if the whole class can fit in the block center at the same time. Then he or she can guide the students in answering the question, "What guidelines do we need so everyone can have a fair turn with blocks" (p. 129)?

However, for efficiency, teachers will often need to take full control in some areas in order to make room for autonomous learning in others. While acknowledging that taking full control, even indirect control, robs students of both autonomy and opportunities to learn, the judicious use of teacher determined structures, rules, and procedures designed to lessen problems and facilitate the teacher's goals and objectives is fully consistent with Developmental Discipline. Fortunately, elementary school children are quite willing to grant teachers the power to regulate a fair number of school and classroom procedures (Nucci, 2001). It is important, however, that teachers offer explanations for the structures if they are questioned, be willing to change them if students present good reasons for so doing, and organize their classrooms to assure that students have meaningful opportunities to act autonomously and solve nontrivial problems on their own.

The following examples of teachers' choices in situations in which indirect control might or might not be used illustrate the range of possibilities consistent with a developmental approach to discipline. In the first example, a teacher in an inner-city, second-third grade class carefully chooses the children who sit at each of the five tables, changing table groups every month. For academic tasks involving partners, this teacher assigns partners either randomly or based on her judgment of optimal pairings for the given activity. When students groan about not being able to work with their preferred friends or try to trade partners, the teacher acknowledges that they might be disappointed not to get to work with their best friends, but that her goal for the class is for them to learn to work with everybody and to see that everybody in the class is worth getting to know. She taught the students how to greet a partner in a friendly way even if they are disap-

pointed, and worked hard to facilitate successful interactions of partnerships when the initial interactions seemed tentative or unfriendly.

Because this is a situation where the students really did mind not having the autonomy to make their own choices, the teacher needed to work hard at establishing this ground rule and used a good deal of humor before the students accepted the teacher's control. The following vignette illustrates one of the humorous ways this teacher made her exercise of control more palatable.

With some students, "if they don't get exactly who they want to work with, they'll say, "I'm not working with them!" So what I've been doing when I introduce a partner activity is to say, "Now, we're going to work with partners in this activity, and I don't care if you get Captain Hook for a partner." If you get Captain Hook, I want you to say, "I'm glad to be hooked up with you, let's get to work.'" And then I'll go on and say some other goofy stuff. "If you get a boa constrictor for a partner, say, 'Give me a hug, and let's go to work.'"

Well, this week we were going to get new partners for working with the book *Chicken Sunday*. Just as I got ready to name the partners, Rebecca announced, "And remember, Mrs. Ecken, if you get a tiger, say you're glad to be with that tiger and just work with him." And then three or four others piped up with different animals. (Watson & Ecken, 2003, p. 65)

There is no guarantee that this choice was the right choice for this class. The teacher was guided by her goals—helping her students respect and get along with everyone in the class, creating a caring community, and encouraging respect for individual differences—and her ongoing observations of her students. As the vignette shows, the students did stop resisting and appeared to accept the validity of the teacher's goals. Further confirmation of the teacher's choice came several years later when these students were interviewed in high school. One student attributed his ability to work with others to his experiences in the class and several others spontaneously recalled their good feelings toward all their classmates.

- John:* ...Today I can work with almost anybody. I think it helped me in my life by working with other people in groups
- Paul:* There weren't really no [sic] bad kids in that class.
- Derek:* That class was, hands down, the best class of my years, I mean since I've been in school.... Everybody knew everybody and everybody was a friend to everybody.
- Tara:* ...everybody knew everybody.... Everybody was like in one big group because everybody knew each other.
- Louise:* ...as our class grew and everything we became like...one big happy family I guess you'd call us.

In the second class, a suburban fifth-sixth grade class, the teacher allowed the students to choose who they sat with and with whom they worked during collaborative activities. No problems seemed to emerge until January when the class had a meeting to assess how they were doing at creating the kind of classroom they said they wanted—a classroom defined by friendship, kindness, and respect. Midway through the meeting, students began to talk about having their feelings hurt, being teased, and of not being able to trust some of the other students in the class. One student offered the explanation that some of the students don't really know one another that well. Another suggested that the teacher should change seating more often, a suggestion the teacher accepted. And another threw out a suggestion to the group of students, saying, "Hey, you guys, I've got a suggestion. How about when Mrs. Lewis lets us change our seats, instead of choosing our special friends, we choose someone we don't know that well." The class agreed and the students had solved the problem autonomously on their own.

The heavier as well as the lighter use of control are consistent with Developmental Discipline. Teachers need to make judgments about how much control to exercise based on what they believe about their students' capabilities, the risks or time involved in not exercising control, and their own particular learning goals. Cognitive developmental and motivation theory and research both point to the importance of autonomy and would seem to imply that less adult control is better. However, as Erikson (1950/1963) argues, it is the adult's role to provide children with "gradual and well-guided experience of the autonomy of free choice" (p. 252). Higher levels of parental control are correlated with moral maturity if that control is seen by children as having been in their best interests (Pitkanen-Pulkkinen) and with higher cognitive ability in situations where high control appeared necessary for safety (Baldwin, Baldwin, & Cole (1990). The positive results of both of the above scenarios along with the family research indicate that decisions about when to exercise indirect control depend on the situation.

### *Proactive Control*

Proactive control is akin to scaffolding in academics (Wood, Bruner, & Ross (1976). As students are about to engage in an activity or enter a situation that will place high demands on their social, emotional, or moral skills, the teacher seeks to prime those skills by, for example, reminding students of the skills that will be called for or asking the students to think in advance how they will solve some of the problems likely to arise in the activity or situation. CDP's approach to cooperative learning provides a good example of the kind of proactive control consistent with Developmental Discipline (Developmental Studies Center, 1997; Watson, Hildebrandt & Solomon, 1988; Watson, Solomon, Dasho, Shwartz, & Kendzior, 1994). Before students set out to work on a collaborative project the teacher either reminds them of the kinds of interpersonal problems they are likely to encounter or asks the students to think of potential problems and then either suggests solutions, teaches a needed skill, or asks students for solutions.

Alerting students to potential social/moral issues likely to be involved in a given activity and reminding students of or teaching those skills is a powerful form of instruction in the social/moral domain. Students immediately need the skills highlighted or taught and have immediate opportunities to practice those skills in the context of authentic learning activities. Such scaffolding can provide students with social/moral success experiences that not only sharpen their skills but also help them see themselves as good people and their classroom as a caring community.

As with indirect control, how much is open to the students to figure out on their own will depend on the teacher's estimate of how much help the students will need to be reasonably successful. One can engage in too much proactive control as well as too little. Too much wastes time, deprives students of the challenge of figuring out for themselves how to solve problems, and can imply that the teacher doesn't think the students are capable of succeeding on their own. Too little can cause students to experience unnecessary pain and frustration, undermine classroom relationships, limit learning, and lead students to feel guilty or inept. The goal is not to eliminate all problems, should that even be possible, but to provide enough help to assure that students can achieve reasonable success or do not flounder unproductively. If no problems occur, either the environment is not providing sufficient challenge or the teacher is providing too much scaffolding.

### *Rewards and Praise*

Rewards and praise are frequently used by teachers as a form of proactive control. It's a basic principle of behavioral theory that organisms tend to repeat behaviors that are followed by positive outcomes. One way for teachers to prevent misbehavior is to reward or praise behaviors that

are inconsistent with the undesirable behaviors they want to eliminate. This sounds like a great form of control, good behaviors are reinforced, misbehaviors are reduced, and nice things happen to students in the form of praise or rewards. Numerous character education and management approaches have been developed around the “catch them being good” concept. At my grandchildren’s school authority figures carry with them little blue slips of paper with the word “Gotcha” on one side and room for the students to write their name and room number on the other. They are distributed whenever someone in authority catches a student doing something praiseworthy. The slips are collected for a weekly drawing and one student from each grade level wins a prize.

While developmental educators disagree on whether rewards and praise have any place in a developmental, constructivist approach to classroom management and discipline, there is general agreement that using praise and rewards proactively to encourage good behavior is likely to undermine a teacher’s effectiveness as a moral educator. For one thing, enticing students to behave in desired ways because of praise or the promise of rewards deprives students of the opportunity to act for their own reasons, because they want to. Because autonomy is a basic human need (Deci & Ryan, 1985) manipulative praise designed to control behavior risks undermining the teacher–student relationship and lessening the desire to perform the praised behavior spontaneously, for intrinsic reasons (Kohn, 1993; Lepper & Greene, 1978.).

Equally important from the perspective of moral education, such praise deprives students of the opportunity to behave in positive ways because they understand that those ways are more helpful, more considerate, or more fair. Moral actions must be done for moral reasons. Thus controlling rewards and praise, while offering students something positive, denies them something more important, autonomy, and prevents them from acting for moral or prosocial reasons.

Some developmental educators argue that rewards and praise, even praise that is meant to show appreciation or approval of a student’s behavior, have no place in moral education. For example, Kohn (1993, 2005) and DeVries and Zan (1994) both argue that praise is counterproductive because it substitutes an authority’s judgment for the student’s own. Kohn argues that “what’s most striking about a positive judgment is that it’s a judgment (2005, p. 155). Similarly, DeVries and Zan (1994) state that when a child does something positive “(t)he constructivist teacher does not praise the behavior” (p. 32). In the place of praise Kohn (2005) suggests various forms of encouragement such as describing the student’s action, pointing out the positive effects of the action on others, and asking the child or student to reflect on or tell about his or her action or accomplishment.

Other developmentally oriented educators view praise that is genuine and not manipulative to be consistent with developmental theory (Nucci, 2003; Watson & Ecken, 2003). Praise that is meant to validate, inform, or celebrate a child’s accomplishment is consistent with a sociocultural view of development in that it can serve to provide children with knowledge of their culture and provide a bonding experience of shared joy.

The use of rewards and awards to shape or celebrate students’ behavior is generally considered counterproductive by developmental educators. While Nucci (2003) allows for the use of rewards such as a good citizenship award to “*validate* what the child is already motivated to do,” he warns that “the routine awarding of pins or other emblems, and the weekly public listing of the names of children who have displayed ‘virtue’ or ‘character’...can lead to competition and undermine genuine moral motivation (pp. 198–199, emphasis in the original). However, Watson and her colleagues (Dalton & Watson, 1995; Watson & Ecken, 2003) worry that singling out students for awards is likely to undermine classroom community and students’ relationships with one another: “When children must compete for limited prizes...their classmates are their rivals, not their colleagues” (Dalton & Watson, p. 79).

### *Desists—Responding To Misbehavior*

From a developmental perspective, children naturally want to build their understanding of their world and form mutually caring relationships, but they are still developing the competencies needed to succeed. From this perspective, student misbehaviors are mistakes. From the point of view of cognitive developmental theory, mistakes are opportunities for learning. From the Vygotskian social constructivist perspective, in an appropriate learning environment mistakes indicate the zone of proximal development (ZPD)—the area where adult guidance or instruction is most likely to help the child advance to a higher plane. It follows from developmental theory that teachers' responses to students' misbehaviors can powerfully affect moral learning.

Research in family socialization supports the role of desists, or disciplinary responses in moral learning and development (Solomon, Watson, & Battistich, 2001). Hoffman (2000) offers two reasons why parental disciplinary actions are important for children's moral development: such encounters are frequent, at least for children between two and ten, and they provide parents with highly salient opportunities to teach the misbehaving child how to respond morally in a moral encounter. Several studies have found significant correlations between parental discipline and children's moral development. For example, parental discipline style has been shown to significantly affect children's aggressiveness, concern for others, and prosocial orientation (Hoffman, 1960, 1963, 1975; Hoffman & Saltzstein, 1967; Zahn-Waxler, Radke-Yarrow, & King, 1979).

Likewise, in the classroom, where desists are also frequent, teachers play a similar socialization role. If teachers view discipline desists as primarily about teaching or scaffolding, their responses to student misbehavior can support moral development as well as create order and prevent harm. Good teaching from a developmental perspective involves believing that students want to learn, understanding the causes of students' failure, providing support based on the presumed causes, and focusing on building student understanding as well as skills. From a developmental perspective, good teaching is also an active collaborative process between student and teacher: it will be best accomplished if students and teachers trust one another. For students to trust their teachers, they have to believe that their teachers care about them and they need to be in an environment where their basic needs for autonomy, belonging, and competence are being met. These aspects of good developmental teaching along with the meaning of what it is to be moral have clear implications for how teachers should respond to student misbehavior. While there are many possible causes for the misbehaviors of individual students, the following guidelines for desists or disciplinary interventions follow from or are consistent with developmental theory:

- Because there are many possible causes for misbehavior, **choose desists that address the most likely cause of the misbehavior**; for example, a reminder for momentary relaxed effort or inattention; instruction or scaffolding for lack of social/emotional skills; discussion or empathy induction for lack of understanding.
- Because children generally want to learn and do what is right, **attribute to the student(s) the best possible motive consistent with the facts.**
- Because autonomy is a basic human need and moral action must be from internal motives, **minimize the use of power assertion and maximize the autonomy of the misbehaving student(s).**
- Because good teaching requires a caring, cooperative relationship, **minimize negative consequences to the misbehaving student(s) while focusing on solving the problems creating or created by the misbehavior.**
- Because good teaching aims at fostering understanding, **focus on the harmful effects of the misbehavior and engage students in defining the problem and finding a solution.**

- Because children are developing and depend on the help of “more accomplished others” to learn, **accept the moral authority and responsibility to insure that students are caring, respectful, and fair toward you and one another.**

### *Potential Causes of Misbehavior*

Sometimes students misbehave because of momentary lapses in self-control, attention to the needs of others, or established rules or procedures. For example, a student who usually fully engages in learning activities and treats others kindly or respectfully fails to do so. If no serious harm has resulted, simply calling the student’s attention to what he or she is doing in a tone that implies the student knows better is frequently all that is needed. There is no instruction: the teacher is simply reminding the student to be guided by his or her better self. Such “call outs” are part of just about all discipline systems. The important difference in Developmental Discipline is that these reminders carry no implied negative judgment or threat of impending consequence. In fact, the implied message is one of trust, “I know you wouldn’t be doing that if you were thinking about what you are doing.” These desists can be quite frequent with some students, particularly in the beginning of the year as relationships and procedures are being established. However, if they continue to be frequent, they may point to a different cause, the demands of the environment may be too high for the student or students.

Sometimes teachers themselves are the cause of student misbehavior (Kohn, 1996). Lessons or class meetings that run longer than the students’ ability to attend, academic assignments that are boring or too difficult, competitive classroom structures that pit students against one another, and insufficient support or scaffolding for new or challenging activities will inevitably result in student “misbehavior.” In these instances, the corrections need to be taken by the teacher. When teachers are faced with misbehavior by a large number of students, Developmental Discipline suggests teachers analyze their own behavior for the potential cause. When teachers surmise that they are the cause, they can acknowledge the problem, explain what they believe has been causing the problem, seek student input and advice, and make adjustments in order to create a better learning environment.

Sometimes student misbehavior is caused by their lack of acceptance of school or classroom rules or procedures. For example, some schools or teachers disallow hats, some forbid running in the halls or going up the slide, some have strict dress codes, many disallow gum chewing or eating in the classroom, and some have neatness requirements; e.g., shirts must be tucked in. Students do not view these as moral issues and, especially by early adolescence, may find such regulations unreasonable or personally intrusive (Nucci, 1981, 2001). Of course teachers can offer reasons for such rules, but students may simply not accept the reasons. If the teacher–student relationship is positive, and the number of such rules small, students will usually comply, especially if the teacher enforces the rules with a light touch, uses humor, or allows for some autonomy in compliance. For example, early in the school year, a student in a middle school wore a dark colored shirt under her white uniform blouse. The school rules explicitly forbid such shirts and students are supposed to remove them or be sent home. Attributing the best possible motive, the teacher told the girl that she must have forgotten the school rule about dark shirts. She did not make her remove the shirt or send her home, but said that she was sure the student would remember not to wear a dark shirt again. The student did remember and the problem was solved in a way that did not undermine the student–teacher relationship.

Of course, teachers need to enforce such rules, whether they agree with them or not. If students persist in violating a non-moral rule, the teacher may have to remove the student from the classroom, but not until he or she has tried to cajole the student into cooperating or talked with



the student to find a way for the student to live with the rule. The teacher–student relationship is central to enforcing these rules. A good relationship will usually lead students to comply even though they don't agree with the rule. A sympathetic, light touch in enforcing such rules will help build teacher–student relationships.

Even in a well-orchestrated classroom environment with engaging and appropriate learning activities and few rules that students find unreasonable, students will misbehave. Potential causes for misbehavior abound: failure to understand the teacher's directions or expectations; relative lack of self-control or interpersonal skills; relaxed effort; inability, relative to their classmates, to do the academic work; belief by some students that they have to fight for what they need; strong self-interest conflicting with that of others; an interpersonal style that is rude or aggressive. In any given incident, if a simple request, reminder, or support does not stop the behavior, the teacher's next response needs to be guided by the presumed cause of the misbehavior—explain directions or rules; teach self-control or interpersonal skills; encourage increased effort; provide extra academic help; deny the applicability of their competitive, aggressive worldview; help them see the need to balance their self-interest with the needs of others; help them see the problems caused by their rude or aggressive behavior; and teach more respectful forms of interaction. A complicated set of possibilities, especially given that few misbehaviors come with a sign identifying their cause.

Time is also an important issue in the classroom. Sometimes there is not time in the moment to follow a request to stop misbehavior with a more elaborate response involving explanation, instruction, or conversation. Even if the student stops the misbehavior, it might be important to check in with the student later, for example, to hear his view, provide an explanation, or offer additional instruction. Sometimes, however, the misbehavior does not stop. For example, the student continues talking to his tablemates during reading time, or continues talking and laughing during instruction. At such times, Developmental Discipline advocates that teachers stop the misbehavior in a way that conveys respect, minimizes pain or embarrassment, and allows the student as much autonomy as possible. The focus is on solving the problem—encouraging the student to read rather than talk with classmates, stopping a student from disrupting instruction—not on punishing the student. A student who is trying to interact with his tablemates during reading may be sent to a quiet part of the room to continue reading. A student who is disrupting a class meeting may be asked to sit away from the group, but still invited to listen and participate. Students can also be offered the opportunity to return to the group when they feel that they will be able to concentrate in the group setting. Students can also be asked to write short reflections on the effect of their behavior on others; see Watson & Ecken (2003, pp. 166–171) for a general discussion of written reflections.

Even disciplinary encounters around non-moral matters—paying attention, not disrupting the learning environment, walking in the halls—convey moral information. When teachers treat all students with respect, even when they are misbehaving and even those who usually misbehave, they are living and modeling important moral principals of mutuality, reciprocity, care, and respect. When teachers respect the needs and dignity of misbehaving students, they convey the message that moral obligation extends to all. Their behavior says that it is not all right to harm or treat someone badly even if they are behaving badly. They are providing to misbehaving students the consideration, care, and respect they are asking from them. This will not only increase student trust and respect for the teacher, it will increase respect for other students, even those who misbehave. In a climate of mutual respect it will be easier for students to treat one another kindly, fairly, and with respect. At the very least, students will get more practice in being kind and respectful and feel less justified in scapegoating those students who, for whatever reason, more frequently misbehave. The following comment from an elementary school teacher addresses this issue.

When a child wouldn't come to the rug, I would put their name up on the board and fuss at them. I was causing that child to be an outcast. The other children were taking their lead from me. To myself I was thinking—this sounds horrible—“nobody likes that child.” But I was setting it up. I just wanted to control the class. I just wanted to dismiss the child who wouldn't be part of the class. Basically I was saying, for everyone to hear, “You're not part of the class.”

As I look back on it, the kids that got made fun of in the cafeteria or in line, the kids everyone refused to play with on the playground, were the kids I wasn't letting participate because they didn't know how to act. (Dalton & Watson, 1997, p. 73)

When misbehaviors pose the possibility of or cause harm they offer powerful opportunities for moral learning. Student–student conflict along with behaviors like teasing, name calling, excluding, laughing at someone's efforts, stealing, and threatening harm, provide teachers with the opportunity to develop many skills involved in moral behavior (e.g., perspective-taking, self-control, and communication skills as well as empathy, moral sensitivity, and moral understanding). And because the other students are often watching, those who have not caused harm are absorbing some of that learning along with the misbehaving student or students. However, such learning is unlikely to happen if the misbehaving student is simply informed that his or her behavior was wrong, and then punished, even if the punishment is commensurate with and related to the misbehavior.

### *The Problem with Punishment*

Punishment is harm purposefully done to someone who has caused harm as a response to the harm. Its purpose may be retaliation, retribution, or to teach a lesson and thus reduce the probability of the person causing harm in the future. From a developmental perspective, punishment as an inducement to moral growth is at best ineffective and at worst counterproductive. A punished person may avoid the punished behavior in order to avoid future punishment, but avoiding personal harm is not a moral reason and thus the better behavior does not amount to moral behavior. Punishment can also cause the punished to focus on the harm done to him or her, lead to resentment of the punisher and take the focus off of the harm the child caused (Hoffman, 2000). For most children, who generally want to be good but may be lacking the skills or understanding to be so at the moment, punishment is unnecessary. For oppositional children, those who have little trust and a confrontational stance toward the world, it will do little good and is likely to reinforce their untrusting, defiant stance (Hall & Hall, 2003).

Recognizing that parents and teachers sometimes have to control children's behavior, many educators have adopted discipline approaches that use negative consequences that are logically or naturally related to the misbehavior (e.g., Charney, 2002; Curwin & Mendler, 1988; Dreikurs, Grunwald, & Pepper, 1982; ). Kohn (1996) calls such approaches “punishment lite.” Such consequences may be useful for controlling behaviors that do not cause harm to others, such as forgetting one's lunch money, or not finishing an academic assignment, but letting a child go without lunch or making a student work through recess are not caring or compassionate acts. Nor are they inevitable. They are allowed to happen because the authority figure believes that they will cause the misbehaving child to experience some kind of discomfort or harm logically related to their misbehavior and thus teach the child the lesson that repeating the behavior will cause unpleasant consequences to him or her. They may be expedient but they do not join with the student in an effort to solve the problem. Worse, they carry the message that the punisher does not really care for the child. If done as a matter of course, they can undermine the child–teacher relationship. This is of particular concern in the classroom because teachers have far less time than parents to build relationships. Further, when a teacher causes one student in the classroom to experience a

punitive albeit logical consequence, that student and all the others who are watching have one more reason not to trust in the teacher's caring. Students who already believe that the world is uncaring will have their mistaken view confirmed.

So what is a teacher to do when one student or a group of students misbehaves? There are clearly times when teachers need to use power assertion to control student misbehavior. Some developmentally oriented educators advocate the use of natural or logical consequences (DeVries & Zan, 1994; Hall & Hall, 2003; Nucci, 2003). On close examination, however, most of the examples of logical consequences they provide are actions taken to solve the problem created by the misbehavior. Such actions might be unpleasant for the child, but any unpleasantness is simply the unavoidable consequence of solving the problem. That is, the adult's intention is to solve the problem and sometimes the only way to solve the problem will also cause some unpleasantness for the child. For example, Hall and Hall (2003) describe logical consequences as consequences that "restrict privileges only to the extent necessary to protect people's health and safety, to safeguard property, and to ensure the basic rights of others" (2003, p. 131). In the Just Community "the purpose of the D.C. (Discipline Committee) is to bring students who break rules into a conversation so that they can understand more adequately why their behavior presents a problem for the community and can feel the support of members of the community who genuinely want them to remain a part of the group" (Power et al., 1989, p. 97). Nucci (personal communication) offers the following example of an ideal logical consequence. A middle school teacher assigned a student who had teased a Down's syndrome student to assist in the special education classroom. The special education teacher provided support for the student as he worked with the special education students. Eventually, the student became an advocate in his school for the handicapped.

From a developmental perspective, for all misbehaviors the teacher's goal is to preserve her relationship with the student and provide whatever support the student needs to stop misbehaving. With a conception of students as generally wanting to learn and wanting to be in mutually caring relationships, the teacher needs to guess at the possible causes of the misbehavior, take action designed to address the potential causes, and judge the effectiveness of her actions. For example, is the misbehavior caused by the student's lack of social or emotional competencies? Teach or support the student in the exercise of the underdeveloped competency. Is the misbehavior caused by an untrusting and aggressive stance toward the world? Build a caring relationship and teach the child that he or she can trust you and others. Is the misbehavior caused by frustration at not being able to do the work? Provide extra support or encouragement. Is the student feeling rejected or unappreciated? The teacher can display her own affection and respect for the student and look for ways to encourage good feelings and friendship from other students. And so on.

When misbehavior causes harm, more can and must be done to maintain a caring, moral community. The goal here is moral instruction. The teacher needs to focus students on the harm they have caused—a true consequence of their behavior, encourage their empathic response to the other's distress, and insist that they find a way to repair as much as possible the harm they caused. Oser (2005) argues that truly facing the negative consequences of one's actions can provide a powerful force for moral growth. Two examples illustrate this point.

It was spring and some 6th grade boys at a suburban elementary school were fooling around on the playground during recess. They had discovered a great new trick. One of them would kneel down behind someone and the other would push the person over. The trick worked perfectly with Anna. She fell over with ease. She was hurt and crying. In the process she had broken her wrist. The yard duty staff sent the shaken boys to the principal. He began by saying that he understood that they were playing and hadn't meant to cause serious harm, but that, in fact, they had. He explained that the girl would have to wear a cast for weeks and now lots of ordinary things would be more difficult for her. He pointed out that the girl played the flute and would now not be able to

play in the spring concert. By the time he had finished, all three boys were in tears and very sorry for what they had done. The principal also suspended the boys for a day, explaining to them that even though he knew they were sorry and hadn't meant to cause such harm, he believed suspension was necessary to signal to everyone in the community the seriousness of the situation. On their own, all three boys brought the girl flowers and apologized for hurting her.

In this example, the principal attributed the best possible motive to the boys—they were fooling and hadn't meant to cause serious harm—and he focused on the harm they had caused the girl, arousing their empathy and remorse. The principal might have suggested that the boys come up with ways to make up for the harm they caused; however, the boys' spontaneous act of reparation is evidence that they had learned a moral lesson and would not likely try such a trick again. Morally, the suspension was expiatory punishment and beside the point. It probably didn't hurt, because of the respect the principal showed the boys, and it fit the community's expectation that such actions should be punished, but it was unnecessary for the boys' moral growth or behavioral change.

The next example is from a second-third grade inner city classroom. The teacher, Laura Ecken, had been working hard to build a trusting and supportive relationship with Tralin, a student with many positive characteristics but who had a history of fighting with and teasing classmates. In this incident, the children are getting ready to leave the cafeteria. Tralin shoves another student, Tyrone, out of line so she would be able to stand near her friend, Ella. When Tyrone complained, Laura believed she could simply fix the problem by telling Tralin to give Tyrone back his place in line and proceeded to move the class out of the cafeteria. Here, in the teacher's words is what happened next.

Before we could get all the way outside, she (Tralin) was screaming at Tyrone, "Your mom uses crack cocaine! Your mom's a crackhead!"

I asked her to just step aside so we could talk. I asked her why she had called his mother that, and she said, "Because she is and he lied on me and said I pushed him out of the line and I didn't touch him."

I said, "You know, Tralin, you're lying to yourself. I saw you push him out of the line. You wanted to be with Ella and so you shoved him out of the way."

"You know I'm not going to allow that, and I'm not going to allow you to call his mother names. Can you imagine how painful it is for Tyrone to know that about his mother, to suffer all the pain from that, and then to have to be at school and have you make his pain even worse? That's just not right."

In the process of confronting Tralin, the teacher realizes that Tralin needed to repair the harm she has caused Tyrone, suggests this, and supports Tralin in following through.

I said, "You know, you said some ugly things to Tyrone and I think it'd probably be best to take care of that."

She just looked at me, so I said, "When you have a plan, just find me and let me know, but I think that you should take care of it before the day's over."

About an hour later Tralin came up to me and kind of stood there, so I asked her if she had a plan. She said, "I need to tell him that I'm sorry and that I didn't mean any of it. I was just mad and that's why I said it."

I asked her if she wanted him to come out in the hall so she could tell him that privately, and she said, "Yeah, but first I need a drink."

I told her, "Listen, you go get a drink and I'll tell Tyrone you want to talk to him in the hall."

When Tyrone came back in, he was happy and so was Tralin. (Watson & Ecken, 2003, pp 162–163)

In this example, the best possible motives consistent with the facts are none too good. Tralin pushed Tyrone out of line because she wanted to be by Ella and when the teacher did not allow this Tralin was angry and wanted to hurt Tyrone because she blamed him for her plight. When Tralin denies having pushed Tyrone out of line, the teacher tells her that she is lying to herself and confronts her with the consequences of her ugly words to Tyrone. She helps Tralin see Tyrone's perspective and think about how hard his life must be. She calls upon fairness, and then tells Tralin that she should try in some way to repair the harm she has caused. These are real consequences for Tralin, but they are not designed to inflict discomfort on Tralin. They are designed to induce empathy and moral feelings and provide Tralin with a way to right a moral wrong. The teacher also shows respect and confidence in Tralin by letting her figure out a way to make reparation. This is the kind of moral instruction that has both the power to arouse moral desire through the student's empathic response, increase moral sensitivity by helping Tralin really see what she has done, provide moral knowledge by telling her what a moral person who has caused harm does, and allows Tralin to repair her moral standing with Tyrone and the community.

Hoffman (2000) refers to this form of disciplinary response as induction. This response takes different forms depending on the situation, but essentially it involves empathy, moral reasoning, and moral instruction. Induction can also be accompanied by genuine moral outrage and power assertion. In this example, considerable outrage came through in the teacher's voice as she pointed out the unfairness of Tralin's treatment of Tyrone and the teacher essentially ordered Tralin to find a way to make reparation. However, it does not include punishment—causing harm to the misbehaving student in response to her misbehavior. The focus is on moral understanding—helping Tralin understand the harm she has caused and on fixing the problem—requiring Tralin to repair the harm.

When students understand that their teacher's goal is to help and protect them, they are open to learning and do not resent the teacher's power assertion or the discomfort they may experience in the process. I had the opportunity to interview Tralin at the end of her sophomore year in high school. When she said that Laura Ecken's class was different from her other classes, I asked her to tell me how it was different. Prominent in her description was the way Laura responded to student misbehavior.

(W)e had open discussions, like...our morning meetings and afternoon meetings and my other teachers didn't do that. (In my current classes), You did what you did, you got in trouble...next day come back, act like nothing happened.... Just start all over again. And Mrs. Ecken, if we got in trouble,... she'll give us a chance to think about it.... How could we change the situation differently? What could we have done to make it better?... Things like that. (Watson, 2006)

A developmental approach to discipline argues against punishment, even in the form of logical or natural consequences. Sometimes, to allow students autonomy or the opportunity to discover the problem with their behavior on their own, teachers will decide to allow a misbehavior to continue, knowing that the student will soon discover the problem with it and abandon it. But the primary goal in such situations is to allow autonomy or self-discovery, not the negative consequences the child will experience. Sometimes teachers will need to take actions in order to stop misbehaviors, and sometimes those actions will have unpleasant consequences for the student; for example, sending a student who is disrupting a reading group off to work by himself. But the action is taken to solve the problem, stop the disruption, and get all students productively reading.

It does not teach anything. If any teaching is involved it will occur later as the teacher checks in with the student to see how to prevent such disruptions in the future. When teachers need to take controlling actions in order to create a caring and productive learning environment, they try not to display anger and try to honor the child's good will by providing some autonomy and the message that the student is still part of the community. To help students see such disciplinary actions as efforts to solve problems rather than punishments, teachers can either explain these procedures or ideally generate with the students non-punitive ways teachers can solve problems of student misbehavior (Battistich, Watson, Solomon, Schaps, & Solomon, 1991; DeVries & Zan, 1994; Nucci, 2003). During calm moments, when their self-interest is not immediately pulling them toward misbehavior, students know that they should be kind, respectful, and fair and work hard at their learning tasks, and they understand the teacher's responsibility for maintaining order and balancing the needs of individual students with the needs of the whole class.

### The Good Enough Teacher<sup>1</sup>

A developmental approach to discipline and classroom management is not easy. First, it's not easy to like students who don't work hard, bully other children, defy authority, or continually clamor for attention. It's easier when we view such children as vulnerable and desperately seeking to belong and succeed in a world they perceive as uncaring, but it is still hard. With such children, teachers will need to call upon their capacity for "professional caring," to act as if they liked the students even when they don't (Noddings, 2002). While forming mutually caring relationships with all students is the goal of teachers using Developmental Discipline, it is good enough to treat all students as if we liked them when we cannot make ourselves actually like them.

A developmental approach to discipline requires that teachers balance many needs and goals. It is often difficult to know the best course of action when confronted with student misbehavior. For example, a teacher in the OC School (Rogoff, Turkanis, & Bartlett, 2001) describes allowing a student the freedom to put little effort into a unit on poetry writing knowing that the student would discover the problem in not working hard when he displayed his poor work to the rest of the class. However, the student's embarrassment at showing his poor work led the teacher to plan "to hold conferences more frequently...to support students in managing their time and responsibilities" (Polson, 2001, p. 126). While treating all students with care is the moral obligation of teachers they will frequently make decisions that are not optimally caring. It is good enough to care enough to reflect and learn from one's mistakes. Consider the following anecdote from early in the school year in an elementary classroom.

The other day, I blame myself for this, I was in my reactionary mode, I guess. Yolanda and Martin were hitting each other with the pillows. They do that often and I'm just constantly reminding them. I know it was a fun thing, but I said to her "Every single day I need to talk to you both about this. I think that reminding you isn't working, so tomorrow I want you to stay in and we're going to write about why it's important that you just put these cushions away and come right back out when lessons are over. Yolanda got upset about that: I think she saw it as a punishment.

When she got back to her table group I saw her say something to Tyrone. His mouth dropped open and he said "She's gonna get you fired! She's going to the office as soon as the bell rings and tell 'em you've been cussin' at her. We're gonna have a new teacher tomorrow."

I was upset. So, in front of the kids, I said to Yolanda, "No, now we're not going to have threats in the classroom. We're going to walk to the office right now and talk to them about this." I added, "Yolanda, have I ever used a cuss word with you or to you?"

She said "No."

I said, "Well, you know that and the class knows that, so your plan wouldn't work." I probably



could have left it at that, but I was concerned with letting these kids know that they can't pull this kind of stuff. Anyway, after I did all that, I thought later that I was wrong. I asked myself, "Did you wreck your relationship with this child in one incident?"

So, the next day, when she came in I said, "You know, I made a really big mistake with you yesterday. I dragged you off to the office before I really even sat down and talked with you. I'm really sorry about that, and it won't happen again."

And she said, in a second, "I'm really sorry for what I said."

I said "Yolanda, I know you were upset because I asked you not to go out the next day. I understand the sometimes when we're upset we say things that we shouldn't. And from now on, we're just going to work through things. And she just hugged me." (Laura Ecken, personal communication, 1997)

It is not always possible to do what is the right thing to best support a student's moral and academic development and maintain a caring productive learning community. The good enough teacher genuinely tries and when he or she fails, apologizes, reflects, and goes on trying.

## SUMMARY

Moral and character educators have long understood the influence on moral development of the "hidden curriculum" embodied in teachers' discipline and classroom management systems. However, during the second half of the twentieth century when classroom management became a focus of empirical research, the moral mission of schooling was completely overshadowed by the academic mission. Hence, the field of classroom management—its theories, practices, and research—was initially developed with little regard for social and moral outcomes. Additionally, the predominant views of human nature and learning guiding educational research at the time were drawn from behavioral psychology. Children were viewed as primarily pleasure seeking and pain avoiding and learning was regarded as a process of building associations.

In the 1980s, when the field of education returned to a focus on students' moral or character development, teaching was generally viewed as direct instruction and motivating students primarily involved the promise of extrinsic rewards or the threat of punishment. In classrooms across the United States students were told what to learn and what to do, successful learning and compliant behaviors were rewarded while non-compliant behaviors were met with warnings and punishments. However, a growing number of educators deriving their views of human nature and learning from developmental and social rather than behavioral psychology were emerging. From the perspective of these educators learning is an active process of constructing meaning and children are predisposed to learn and fit into their social group.

From the perspective of these educators the entire educational process, including classroom management and discipline, needed to be transformed. Drawing from the work of Piaget and Vygotsky, and research on human development, motivation, and family socialization, these educators viewed children as partners in their own learning and socialization. For these developmentally oriented educators all learning, including moral learning, involves the personal construction of meaning aided by social interaction. All learning, including moral learning, will happen best in a community, variously described as caring, democratic, or moral. To create such communities teachers would need to help all students meet their basic human needs for autonomy, belonging, and competence, and students would need to be helped to treat classmates fairly and kindly. Students would also need opportunities to discuss and explore moral issues, practice exercising moral behavior and judgment, and learn morally relevant skills such as perspective taking. These educators developed alternative approaches to classroom management and discipline that

stressed cooperation, and shared control rather than compliance and adult control.

Developmentally oriented moral educators were quick to realize that socialization based on extrinsic reinforcement was more likely to undermine than enhance moral development. They developed an alternative approach to school and classroom discipline, called Developmental Discipline. Whether drawing from research on parental socialization, cultural environments, or the development of children's moral understanding, these educators stress the importance of caring adult-child relationships. Further, they stress the importance of helping children build their understanding of moral issues and values, teaching the skills needed to enact those values in daily life, and scaffolding or providing support as students strive to live up to those values. Rather than using praise and rewards to encourage desirable and punishments to discourage undesirable behaviors, these educators advocate a focus on children's capacity for empathy and intrinsic motivation to learn and be cooperative, relying on guidance, explanation, teaching, and reparation when students misbehave.

Advocates of Developmental Discipline recognize that there are significant challenges to achieving a caring, moral, democratic classroom characterized by mutually respectful and cooperative relationships. For a variety of reasons some children enter classrooms with an untrusting attitude, viewing their teachers as unreliable and their classmates as competitors. Some have poorly developed social and emotional skills that leave them unable to cope with the normal demands of learning and participating in a group setting. With such children it is difficult to create the basic condition for effective Developmental Discipline, a mutually caring and trusting relationship. It is even difficult for teachers to hold up their end of a caring relationship. These children will be difficult to like because they cause so much trouble, demand so much attention, and interfere with the learning and sense of safety of the rest of the class. If we view these children through the lens of behavioral psychology or even Freudian psychology, we will see them as selfish, motivated by Id impulses. Punishment and control, responses likely to increase the mistrust of these children, will appear to be the only ways to manage these children.

Attachment theory provides an alternative way to understand the attitudes and behaviors of such children. From the view of attachment theory it is through a history of secure attachment relationships that children acquire appropriate social and emotional skills and a belief in the trustworthiness of others, their own self-worth, and the cooperative nature of social relationships. Many children have not had a history of secure attachment and these children are prone to serious misbehavior. Understanding children through the lens of attachment theory can help teachers emotionally engage constantly misbehaving children, sustain belief in the children's potential for good will, see past their troublesome behavior, and provide a basis for genuinely caring for them. With time, in the presence of genuine care and limited use of control, untrusting children can begin to trust and develop a collaborative approach to relationships. They will then be open to the support and moral guidance that is central to Developmental Discipline; see Watson & Ecken (2003) for a description of how one teacher struggled and eventually succeeded in building mutually trusting relationships in a classroom with several oppositional and untrusting students.

Developmental Discipline can help teachers build the trusting relationships necessary for all students to learn and develop academically and morally. It differs from traditional discipline in its goals, view of children, methods, and the source of its power. The primary goal of Developmental Discipline is students' social, emotional, and ethical development. This includes characteristics that Lickona and Davidson (2005) have labeled performance character as well as moral character—the commitment and ability to persevere and do one's best as well as to be responsible and treat others kindly and fairly. The primary goal of traditional discipline is the efficient control of student behavior to maximize academic learning time.

In Developmental Discipline children are viewed as intrinsically motivated to learn (achieve

**TABLE 10.1**  
**Comparison of Developmental and Traditional Approaches to Discipline**

	<i>Developmental discipline</i>	<i>Traditional discipline</i>
View of children	Intrinsically motivated to learn and establish mutually caring relationships in a caring environment	Primarily motivated by self-interest
Goals	Create a caring community and support social/moral development	Efficient control to maximize academic learning
Methods	Trusting relationships, explanation, discussion, reflection, reminders, teaching social and emotional skills, empathy induction, and reparation.	Praise, rewards, and punishments
Source of power	Trusting teacher–child relationship and child’s intrinsic motivation to learn and establish caring relationships	Teacher’s control of resources and ability to bring about unpleasant consequences

competence) and to establish mutually caring relationships in a supportive and caring environment. There is much they need to learn about, such as managing their emotions and balancing their own needs with the needs of others, but when they realize that they are in a caring relationship they will cooperate with authority figures to learn these things. Traditional discipline assumes quite a different view of children. They are presumed to be primarily motivated by self-interest. They will not work hard to learn or to behave well unless they are enticed by rewards or threatened by unpleasant consequences.

Related to these different views of children, Developmental Discipline and traditional discipline rely on very different methods for supporting and responding to student behavior. Developmental Discipline employs primarily explanation; reflection; reminders; teaching social, emotional, and moral competencies; empathy induction; and reparation. Traditional discipline relies primarily on praise, stickers and rewards or warnings, scoldings, time outs, and loss of privileges. These different methods relate directly to both the different views of children and the sources of the authority figure’s power.

In Developmental Discipline, the source of power comes from the trusting and mutually caring relationship between teacher and children and the children’s intrinsic desire to learn and form caring relationships. In traditional discipline, the source of power comes from the teacher’s control of resources and ability to cause one to experience unpleasant consequences.

The judicious and skilled use of traditional discipline can create orderly classrooms and reasonably good learning environments fairly quickly. But it is unlikely to advance the moral development of students and the over-reliance on extrinsic motivation may well limit student learning. With Developmental Discipline and its focus on building relationships, establishing shared norms and goals, discussion, and mutual problem solving, a well-functioning classroom will take longer to establish. In a climate of extreme pressure for rapid academic learning, teachers may find it difficult to devote the needed time. Effective moral or character education requires that they do so.

### NOTE

1. This term is a variation on a term “good enough parent” used by Bettelheim (1987) in support of less than perfect parenting.

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# 11

## Social Interdependence, Moral Character and Moral Education

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A primary purpose of education is to socialize children, adolescents, and young adults into the conventions, values, attitudes, roles, competencies, and ways of perceiving the world that are shared by one's family, community, society, and culture (Johnson, 1970, 1979; Johnson & F. Johnson, 2006). Socialization takes place through group memberships (i.e., family, church, and school) and interpersonal relationships (i.e., parents, friends, teachers, colleagues). A central aspect of socialization is the inculcation of moral character. Morals and character are inherently social. They do not occur in a social vacuum. Moral values are by definition rules of "right" conduct, reflecting the cherished ideals that guide our behavior in the groups to which we belong and in our interpersonal relationships. Moral values are, therefore, learned, internalized, and expressed within groups and relationships within a larger community and society context.

Successful and constructive moral socialization and education depends on the presence of overlapping and interdependent components. The first is membership in a moral community that shares common goals, values, and culture. The common goals (i.e., positive interdependence) indicate that members have a common fate—what happens to one member will happen to all members. It is within membership in the community that individuals fulfill their *need to belong* (i.e., need to form and maintain lasting, positive, and significant interpersonal relationships; Baumeister & Leary, 1995) and need for *reference groups* (i.e., groups people identify with, compare their values and attitudes to, and use as a means for evaluating those values and attitudes; Newcomb, 1943). Being part of a moral community and thereby working with others to achieve common goals provides the context for moral socialization and education.

The second component of positive moral socialization and education is involvement in two-way positive, personal, and caring relationships (Johnson, 1979). These relationships set the stage for identifying with members who exemplify the society's values, adopting and supporting the society's norms and values, and adopting the roles individuals will play in the society. The relationships also provide arenas for the discussion of moral values and moral issues. A third component is mutual openness to influencing and being influenced. In order for moral values to be transferred from the community to the individual, members of the community must be able to influence each other. A mutual open-minded responsiveness to each other's values and moral directives should ideally exist. A fourth component is exposure to models who engage in behavior reflecting the values being inculcated (Bandura, 1977). Like a ball player who needs to see

other players in action in order to learn and improve, members of a moral community must see other members engage in actions reflecting the community's values in order to understand how to do so themselves.

A fifth component is the opportunity to engage in prosocial and moral behavior over and over again dozens and even hundreds of times (not just once or twice a year). The moral community must provide continuous opportunities to engage in the recommended moral behavior so that the behaviors become automatic habit patterns. A sixth component is the engagement in moral discussions in which community members disagree and challenge each other's moral reasoning (Johnson & Johnson, 1979; Piaget, 1948). Moral growth and development may depend on discussions that challenge the level of community members' reasoning. A seventh component is the resolution of conflicts in which one's interests are in conflict with the interests of other community members (Johnson & Johnson, 2005b). Resolving such conflicts justly and fairly requires the use of integrative negotiations and provides tests of the morals and values of the community members, revealing whether they will follow the community's values under duress and adversity.

In order for these components of moral socialization and education to exist in schools, certain conditions must be established. Schools first may wish to implement cooperative learning at the classroom level and positive interdependence (the heart of cooperation and community) at the class, grade, department, and school levels to ensure that the school is both a learning and a moral community (Johnson & Johnson, 2002). Once a cooperative context is established, students should be taught the constructive controversy procedure to ensure they disagree and challenge each other's thinking about moral issues and come to a consensus based on their best reasoned judgment (Johnson & Johnson, 1995). In addition, students should be taught to resolve their conflicts of interests with classmates and faculty through integrative negotiations and peer mediation. Within any group or community there are conflicts of interests concerning how resources and benefits should be distributed among group members. These conflicts need to be resolved justly, so that all members believe that justice prevails and they have been treated fairly. Conflict resolution procedures, therefore, should reflect concern for each other and the common good (i.e., integrative negotiations and mediation) (Johnson & Johnson, 2005b).

In order to understand how cooperative learning, constructive controversy, and integrative negotiations ensure that the components of positive moral socialization and education exist in schools, social interdependence theory must be presented. In this chapter, therefore, social interdependence theory will be summarized. Social interdependence creates psychological processes and interaction patterns that directly influence moral socialization and education. It is within the promotive interaction generated by cooperation that participants (1) disagree with and challenge each other's thinking and (2) problem solve conflicts so that everyone sees the resolution as just and fair. The impact of cooperative learning on democratic values and social inclusion will then be discussed.

## SOCIAL INTERDEPENDENCE THEORY

Social interdependence theory has its origins in Gestalt Psychology and Lewin's Field Theory. Gestalt psychologists posited that humans are primarily concerned with developing organized and meaningful views of their world by perceiving events as integrated wholes rather than a summation of parts or properties. One of the founders of the Gestalt School of Psychology, Kurt Koffka (1935), proposed that similar to psychological fields, groups were dynamic wholes in which the interdependence among members could vary. Kurt Lewin (1935) subsequently proposed that

the essence of a group is the interdependence among members which results in the group being a “dynamic whole” so that a change in the state of any member or subgroup changes the state of any other member or subgroup. Group members are made interdependent through common goals. Finally, Morton Deutsch (1949) developed a theory of cooperation and competition that serves as the heart of social interdependence theory.

*Social interdependence* exists when the accomplishment of each individual’s goals is affected by the actions of others (Deutsch, 1949, 1962; Johnson, 1970; Johnson & Johnson, 1989, 2005a). There are two types of social interdependence, positive (cooperation) and negative (competition). *Positive interdependence* exists when individuals perceive that they can reach their goals if and only if the other individuals with whom they are cooperatively linked also reach their goals. Participants, therefore, promote each other’s efforts to achieve the goals. *Negative interdependence* exists when individuals perceive that they can obtain their goals if and only if the other individuals with whom they are competitively linked fail to obtain their goals. Participants, therefore, obstruct each other’s efforts to achieve the goals. *No interdependence* results in a situation in which individuals perceive that they can reach their goal regardless of whether other individuals in the situation attain or do not attain their goals. Each type of interdependence results in certain psychological processes and interaction patterns which, in turn, determine the outcomes of the situation, including the moral socialization and education of the individuals involved.

## Psychological Processes

The psychological processes created by positive interdependence include *substitutability* (i.e., the degree to which actions of one person substitute for the actions of another person), *inducibility* (i.e., openness to being influenced by and to influencing others), and *positive cathexis* (i.e., investment of positive psychological energy in objects outside of oneself) (Deutsch, 1949, 1962). Negative interdependence creates the psychological processes of *nonsubstitutability* (i.e., the actions of one person do not substitute for the actions of another person), *resistance* to being influenced by others, and *negative cathexis* (i.e., investment of negative psychological energy in objects outside of oneself). No interdependence detaches a person from others, thereby creating nonsubstitutability, no inducibility or resistance, and cathexis only to one’s own actions. Each of these psychological processes has influences on moral education and socialization.

### Substitutability

In cooperative groups, members tend to realize that their actions substitute for the actions of other members and vice versa. When one member engages in an action that moves all group members closer to their goal, then other members are freed to engage in complementary or supplementary actions. When seeing a groupmate in distress or in need of help or encouragement, for example, one’s supportive actions substitute for the supportive actions of other members (i.e., they do not have to duplicate one’s actions).

In competitive and individualistic situations, on the other hand, participants’ actions do not substitute for each other. Each person has to engage in every action required to move them towards goal achievement. Thus, they stay self-centered and self-focused.

### *Modeling and Vicarious Prosocial Actions*

In cooperative situations there are direct prosocial actions in which one helps another, and there are vicarious prosocial behaviors as the prosocial actions of groupmates consciously substitute for one’s own. In both cases, prosocial values such as providing help and support for those

who need it are emphasized and generalized to everyone in the group or community. To see other group members provide help and support, for example, not only provides visible and credible models of behavior that reflects desired values but also the vicarious experience of giving help and support (especially when group members supplement their modeling with direct discussion of the importance of the values). Seeing a groupmate help another fulfills one's intentions and may be experienced "as if" one personally provided the help.

### Inducibility

Within cooperative situations, group members tend to easily induce each other to (1) engage in actions that promote goal achievement and (2) not engage in actions that would interfere with goal achievement (Deutsch, 1949, 1962). Inducibility provides the basis for both direct influence and indirect influence through normative control. It also provides the psychological basis for channeling individual efforts into a coordinated system of action to move the group toward goal attainment and maintain the viability of the cooperative system. This includes being open to adopting and internalizing the values and group norms promoted by other group members. In competitive situations, on the other hand, competitors tend to resist influence attempts (Johnson & Johnson, 1989). In individualistic situations, other people's influence attempts tend to be ignored as irrelevant or as interference with one's efforts to achieve one's goal. Thus, individuals are more likely to accept and internalize values that are being promoted by collaborators than by competitors or other people working individualistically (Johnson & Johnson, 1989, 2005a). Since many cooperative situations involve participants who differ in authority, expertise, and knowledge, it should be stated that inducibility is present even in groups in which members of an authority hierarchy are working together cooperatively (i.e., teacher-student, parent-child, employer-employee). Authority hierarchies are organized to make cooperative efforts more effective and efficient and inducibility may be present in such situations as it is in groups of peers.

### Cathexis

Based on the assumption that if an organism is to survive, it has to respond positively to events that enhance its well-being and respond negatively to events that reduce its well-being, Deutsch posited that in cooperative situations, effective actions are cathected positively and bungling actions are cathected negatively, while within competitive situations the opposite is true. The cathexis attached to other individuals' actions tends to generalize to the person as a whole. Thus, when effective actions are cathected positively, liking for the person engaging in the effective actions tends to result. The positive cathexis tends also to extend to the group as a whole, resulting in group cohesion. Positive, caring relationships within the school community are essential for moral education and socialization (Battistich, Solomon, Watson, & Schaps, 1997; Berkowitz & Bier, 2005). In addition, values that are perceived as enhancing the quality and success of the cooperative efforts may also be cathected positively.

In competitive situations, on the other hand, actions of others that increase their chances of winning are cathected negatively. These feelings are then generalized to the competitors as persons, and disliking for competitors tends to result. Other negative emotions such as envy and jealousy are also prone to result. If competitors engage in actions that are ineffective and increase their chances of losing, however, positive cathexis results (the ineffective actions are viewed positively) but the results are not generalized to the person, as losers are often viewed with disdain and contempt. In addition, in competitive situations participants tend to take pleasure in the failure of others and often feel pride and satisfaction with depriving others of the fruits of success.



Nelson and Kagan (1972), for example, found when given a choice, American children took toys away from their peers in 78 percent of the experimental trials (even when they could not keep the toys for themselves) and observing the success of their actions, some of the children gloated, "Ha! Ha! Now you won't get a toy." Competitors, thus, may cathect positively to such competitive values and feeling pleasure in depriving others.

Cathexis tends to be contagious (Johnson & Johnson, 2005a). Emotions are transferred in a seemingly automatic way from one person to another and emotions tend to become amplified in groups so that their level is intensified. Thus, cathexis may create an emotional interdependence among the individuals in the situation and the positive feelings generated among members of cooperative groups may be contagious and become amplified. Group members are thus likely to identify with each other and internalize each other's values, attitudes, perspectives, and behavioral patterns.

### Validating Research

There is considerable research validating the proposition that cooperation tends to result in positive cathexis that is generalized to the other individuals involved and that competition tends to result in negative cathexis that is also generalized to the other participants. In 1989, there were over 175 studies that investigated the relative impact of cooperative, competitive, and individualistic efforts on quality of relationships and another 106 studies on social support (Johnson & Johnson, 1989). As Table 11.1 shows, cooperation generally promoted greater interpersonal attraction among individuals than did competitive or individualistic efforts (effect sizes = 0.67 and 0.60 respectively). Cooperative experiences tended to promote greater social support than did competitive (effect-size = 0.62) or individualistic (effect-size = 0.70) situations. Stronger effects were found for peer support than for superior (teacher) support.\

The research on group cohesion corroborates the above research. The greater the group cohesion, the greater tends to be the commitment to group goals, commitment to group norms and values, feelings of personal responsibility to the group, willingness to take on difficult tasks, motivation and persistence in working toward goal achievement, satisfaction and morale, willingness to endure pain and frustration on behalf of the group, willingness to defend the group against external criticism or attack, willingness to listen to and be influenced by group members, commitment to each other's success, and productivity (see Johnson & F. Johnson, 2006 for a review of these studies). The more cohesive the group, furthermore, the lower tends to be the absenteeism and dropout rates.

**TABLE 11.1**  
**Meta-Analysis of Social Interdependence Studies: Mean Effect Sizes**

<i>Dependent variable</i>	<i>Cooperative vs. competitive</i>	<i>Cooperative vs. individualistic</i>	<i>Competitive vs. individualistic</i>
Achievement	0.67	0.64	0.30
Interpersonal attraction	0.67	0.60	0.08
Social support	0.62	0.70	-0.13
Self-esteem	0.58	0.44	-0.23
Time on task	0.76	1.17	0.64
Attitudes toward task	0.57	0.42	0.15
Quality of reasoning	0.93	0.97	0.13
Perspective-taking	0.61	0.44	-0.13

Source: Johnson, D. W., & Johnson, R. (1989). *Cooperation and competition: Theory and research*. Edina, MN: Interaction Book Company. Reprinted with permission.

## Interaction Patterns

The basic premise of social interdependence theory is that the way in which interdependence is structured determines how individuals interact and the interaction pattern determines the outcomes of the situation (Deutsch, 1949, 1962; Johnson, 1970; Johnson & Johnson, 1989, 2005a). Positive interdependence results in promotive interaction, negative interdependence results in oppositional or contrary interaction, and no interdependence results in the absence of interaction. *Promotive interaction* may be defined as individuals encouraging and facilitating each other's efforts to achieve the group's goals. It consists of variables such as mutual help and assistance, exchange of needed resources, effective communication, mutual influence, trust, and constructive management of conflicts. *Oppositional interaction* may be defined as individuals discouraging and obstructing each other's efforts to achieve a goal; individuals focus both on increasing their own achievement and on preventing any other person from achieving more than they do. Oppositional interaction consists of such variables as obstruction of each other's goal achievement efforts, tactics of threat and coercion, ineffective and misleading communication, distrust, and striving to win in conflicts. *No interaction* may be defined as individuals acting independently without any interchange with each other while they work to achieve their goals; individuals focus only on increasing their own achievement and ignore as irrelevant the efforts of others.

## Equal vs. Unequal Power and Promotive Interaction

Cooperation inherently tends to result in participants seeing each other as being of equal value and worth and equally deserving of help and assistance. Many cooperative situations, however, involve members of authority hierarchies in which one person has more authority than others (e.g., teacher-student, supervisor-worker, parent-child). In effective cooperative situations, there is recognition that while participants can vary in expertise, intelligence, power, status, authority, competencies, and so forth, all are of equal worth. Thus, even when their task performances are markedly discrepant, members of cooperative groups tend to view themselves and their group-mates as being similar in overall value, ability, and deservingness of reward (Johnson & Johnson, 1989). Even members of business and other organizations with defined authority hierarchies tend to believe in the equal value and worth of all members (Johnson & F. Johnson, 2006; Tjosvold, 1986). Thus, the equalitarian orientation found in cooperative groups tends to apply to all types of cooperative situations.

## Outcomes

Promotive, oppositional, and no interaction have differential effects on the outcomes of the situation (Johnson & Johnson, 1989, 2005a). Over 800 relevant research studies have been published from which effect sizes can be determined. Beginning in the late 1800s, the research has been conducted in twelve different historical decades, with participants ranging in age from three to postcollege adults, conducted in numerous disciplines, conducted in numerous countries and cultures, and conducted on a wide variety of dependent measures. The research was primarily conducted in two major settings: education (where participants tended to be equal in authority) and business (where participants tended to be unequal in authority) (Johnson & Johnson, 1989, 2005; Tjosvold, 1986, 1989). The research has focused on numerous outcomes, which may be subsumed within the broad and interrelated categories of effort to achieve, quality of relationships, and psychological health (Johnson & Johnson, 1989, 2005a) (see Table 11.1). Overall, the evidence is

very strong that cooperation (compared with competitive and individualistic efforts) promoted (Johnson & Johnson, 1989, 2005a):

1. Greater effort exerted to achieve (e.g., higher achievement and greater productivity, more frequent use of higher-level reasoning, more frequent generation of new ideas and solutions, greater intrinsic and achievement motivation, greater long-term retention, more on-task behavior, and greater transfer of what is learned within one situation to another).
2. Higher quality of relationships among participants (e.g., greater interpersonal attraction, liking, cohesion, and esprit-de-corps, valuing of heterogeneity, and greater task-oriented and personal support).
3. Greater psychological adjustment (e.g., greater psychological health, social competencies, self-esteem, shared identity, and ability to cope with stress and adversity).

These outcomes have been discussed extensively elsewhere (Johnson & Johnson, 1989, 2005a). This chapter focuses on the outcomes dealing with moral socialization and education.

### Prosocial Behavior

*Prosocial behaviors* are actions that benefit other people by helping, supporting, and encouraging their goal accomplishment or well-being (Shaffer, 2000). Cooperative experiences tend to increase the frequency with which participants engage in prosocial behaviors (Blaney et al., 1977; Eisenberg & Fabes, 1998; Etxebarria et al., 1994; Johnson & Johnson, 1983; Solomon et al., 1990). Choi, Johnson, & Johnson (submitted for publication), in a study involving 217 fourth and fifth grade students, found that both cooperative learning experiences and cooperative predispositions predicted the frequency with which the students engaged in prosocial behavior. Competitiveness and individualism, on the other hand, did not predict prosocial behavior. The mutual responsiveness and shared positive affect typically found in cooperative situations, furthermore, seem to be key elements in the development of prosocial behavior (Kochanska, 2002). There are benefits to being prosocial. Prosocial children tend to build positive relationships with peers (Asher & Rose, 1997) and, compared with schoolmates, are intrinsically motivated to build relationships with classmates, believe they are involved in positive relationships, value relationships, and enjoy positive well-being (Hawley, Little, & Pasupathi, 2002).

The opposite of prosocial behavior is antisocial behavior. One form of antisocial behavior is harm-intended aggression (i.e., bullying). Choi, Johnson, and Johnson (submitted for publication) found that the more cooperative a student, the less likely he or she was to engage in harm-intended aggression. The negative relationship between cooperativeness and harm-intended aggression is consistent with previous evidence (Bay-Hintz, Peterson, & Quilitch, 1994; Berkowitz, 1989; Napier, 1981; Nelson, Gelfand, & Hartmann, 1969; Tjosvold & Chia, 1989). The more competitive the student, the more frequently the student engaged in harm-intended aggression. Bullies tend to alienate their peers and experience diminished well-being (Asher & Rose, 1997; Rigby & Slee, 1993; Slee, 1995) and tend to experience more loneliness, sadness, and anxiety than most students (Hawley, Little, & Pasupathi, 2002). Just as there are benefits for engaging in prosocial behavior, there are costs for engaging in antisocial behaviors such as harm-intended aggression.

### Perspective Taking

More frequent and accurate perspective taking was found in cooperative than in competitive (effect size = 0.61) or individualistic (effect size = 0.44) situations (Johnson & Johnson, 1989).

In competitive situations, a person's perceptions and comprehension of others' viewpoints and positions tends to be inaccurate and biased. The opposite of perspective taking is egocentrism and while perspective-taking ability tends to be indicative of psychological health, egocentrism tends to be a sign of psychological pathology (e.g., extreme forms of depression and anxiety result in a self-focus and self-centeredness). The accurate perspective taking in cooperative situations enhances members' ability to respond to others' needs with empathy, compassion, and support.

### Level of Cognitive and Moral Reasoning

There is more frequent use of higher level cognitive and moral reasoning strategies in cooperative than in competitive (effect size = 0.93) or individualistic (effect size = 0.97) situations (Johnson & Johnson, 1989) (see Table 11.1). There are a number of studies that demonstrate that when participants are placed in a cooperative group with peers who use a higher stage of moral reasoning, and the group is required to make a decision as to how a moral dilemma should be resolved, advances in the students' level of moral reasoning result.

### Task Engagement

More positive attitudes toward the task and the experience of working on the task tend to be found in cooperative than in competitive (effect-size = 0.57) or individualistic (effect-size = 0.42) situations (Johnson & Johnson, 1989) (see Table 11.1). Students working cooperatively (compared to those working competitively or individualistically) also tended to be more involved in activities and tasks, attach greater importance to success, and engage in less apathetic, off-task, disruptive behaviors. Cooperators tend to spend more time on task than competitors (effect size = 0.76) or participants working individualistically (effect size = 1.17) (Johnson & Johnson, 1989).

### Moral Identity

Promotive and oppositional patterns of interaction may have considerable impact on a person's moral identity. A person's *identity* is a consistent set of attitudes that defines "who I am" (Johnson & Johnson, 2002). One aspect of identity is the view of oneself as a moral person, with character, who acts with integrity. A moral orientation adds an "ought to," obligatory quality to identity. The social context in which individuals function largely determines their moral identity. Identity in a cooperative context defines the person as part of a community that shares a joint identity. Their promotive interaction tends to reflect egalitarianism (i.e., a belief in the equal worth of all members even though there may be differences in authority and status) and characterized by mutual respect. Identity in a competitive context, on the other hand, defines a person as a separate individual striving to win either by outperforming others or preventing them from outperforming him or her. Thus, a competitor may have a moral identity involving the virtues of inequality, being a winner, and disdaining losers.

Promotive interaction includes engaging in prosocial behavior by helping and assisting other group members. Doing so influences how a person thinks of him- or herself (i.e., moral-identity). Midlarsky and Nemeroff (1995), for example, found that the self-esteem and self-view of people who had rescued Jews during the Holocaust were still being elevated 50 years later by the help they provided. Elementary school students who privately agreed to give up their recess time to work for hospitalized children saw themselves as more altruistic immediately and a month later (Cialdini, Eisenberg, Shell, & McCreath, 1987). Prosocial behavior tends both to enhance and verify individuals' self-definitions (Grube & Piliavin, 2000; Swann, 1990).

## Moral Inclusion and Scope of Justice

Engaging in promotive or oppositional interaction inherently influences moral inclusion and the scope of justice. Each person has a psychological boundary for his or her moral community (or scope of justice) that defines who his or her moral rules apply to (Deutsch, 1985; Opatow, 1990; Staub, 1985). The *scope of justice* is the extent to which a person's concepts of justice apply to others (Deutsch, 1985). Moral considerations guide our behavior with those individuals and groups who are inside our scope of justice. *Moral inclusion*, therefore, involves applying considerations of fairness and justice to others, seeing them as entitled to a share of the community's resources, and seeing them as entitled to help, even at a cost to oneself (Opatow, 1990, 1993). *Moral exclusion* occurs when a person excludes groups or individuals from his or her scope of justice, a share of the community's resources, and the right to be helped. Moral exclusion moral values and rules that apply in relations with insiders are not applicable, permitting justification for derogating and mistreating outsiders and is perpetuated primarily through denying that it has harmful effects. The denial includes minimizing the duration of the effects; denying others' entitlement to better outcomes; and seeing one's contribution to violence as negligible (Opatow & Weiss, 2000). Those outside the scope of justice can be viewed as nonentities (e.g., less than human) who can be exploited (for example, illegal immigrants, slaves), or enemies who deserve brutal treatment and death. An example is the former country of Yugoslavia. Prior to its breakup, the Serbs, Muslims, and Croats in Bosnia more or less considered themselves to be part of one moral community and, therefore, treated one another with some degree of civility. After the country divided, and vilification of other ethnic groups became a political tool, Serbs, Muslims, and Croats committed atrocities against one another.

In competitive and individualistic situations, the boundaries between in-groups (in which moral inclusion exists) and out-groups (which are morally excluded) are quite strong and well marked. Cooperative situations, on the other hand, promote a much wider range of moral inclusion and scope of justice. Especially when the members of diverse backgrounds and cultures participate in the same cooperative group, moral inclusion is broadened (Johnson & Johnson, 1989, 2005a). With moral inclusion come related values of fairness, equality, and humanitarianism. Cooperators tend to see all of humanity as being entitled to fair treatment, justice, and help and may even extend moral inclusion and the scope of justice to other species and life forms. Albert Schweitzer, for example, included all living creatures in his moral community, and some Buddhists include all of nature.

## Justice and Fairness

An important aspect of moral socialization is to value justice; that is, to ensure that all benefits of membership in one's groups, organizations, and society are distributed justly (i.e., distributive justice), the same procedures are applied fairly to all members (i.e., procedural justice), and everyone is perceived to be part of the same moral community (i.e., moral inclusion) (Deutsch, 2006). Deutsch (1985) defined *distributive justice* as the method used to grant benefits (and sometimes costs and harms) to group or organizational members. There are three major ways in which benefits may be distributed. The *equity (or merit) view* is that a person's rewards should be in proportion to his or her contributions to the group's effort. This view is inherent in competitive situations. The *equality view* is that all group members should benefit equally. It is inherent in cooperative situations. The *need view* is that group members' benefits should be awarded in proportion to their need. Cooperators typically ensure that all participants receive the social minimum needed for their well-being. Whatever system is used, it has to be perceived as "*just*." When

rewards are distributed unjustly, the group may be characterized by low morale, high conflict, and low productivity (Johnson & Johnson, 1989, 2005a).

There is evidence that a child's view of distributive justice develops over time (Damon, 1977; 1980). Children age four or younger, for example, were found to believe that whoever wants something the most should get it. After four, this belief tends to be replaced by the view that benefits should be based on strict equality or reciprocity (i.e., everyone should get the same amount). This strict reciprocity tends to be given up for the view that justice is more complex and may be seen from multiple perspectives, including that the person with the greatest need (such as the handicapped or the poor) deserve special consideration (Damon, 1977, 1980; Enright, Franklin, & Manheim, 1980).

*Procedural justice* involves fairness of the procedures that determine the outcomes a person receives. Fair procedures involve both that the same procedure is applied equally to everyone and that the procedure is implemented with polite, dignified, and respectful behavior. Typically, fairness of procedures and treatment are a more pervasive concern to most people than fair outcomes (Deutsch, 2006).

Finally, justice involves being included in the moral community. As discussed above, individuals and groups who are outside the boundary in which considerations of fairness apply may be treated in ways that would be considered immoral if people within the moral community were so treated.

The research indicates that the more students participated in cooperative learning experiences and the more cooperatively they perceived their classes, the more they believed that everyone who tried had an equal chance to succeed in class, that students got the grades they deserved, and that the grading system was fair (Johnson & Johnson, 1989, 2005a). Even when their task performances were markedly discrepant, members of cooperative groups viewed themselves and their groupmates as being similar in overall ability and deservingness of reward.

## The Common Good

The more cooperative the situation and the greater the person's cooperativeness, the more the person will put the long-term well-being of the group over immediate self-interest (Johnson & Johnson, 1989, 2005a). Valuing the common good of the group is inherent in every cooperative lesson.

## Values

A distinction may be made between conventions and values (Nucci, 2002). While conventions are shared but arbitrary behavior is specified by the social system (such as driving on the right side of the road or shaking hands when meeting someone), values such as "one should not steal" are determined by factors inherent in social relationships and tend to be perceived as more universal and unchangeable. Both social conventions and values may be more effectively taught in cooperative than in competitive or individualistic situations (Johnson & Johnson, 1989), because individuals tend to adopt the conventions, values, attitudes, perspectives, and behavioral patterns of the groups to which they belong or aspire to belong (Johnson & F. Johnson, 2006). Conventions and values are not inculcated by focusing on each individual separately, but rather by emphasizing membership in a group (or community) that holds the desired values. Lewin (1948), for example, recommended that if the goal is to change the values of an individual, the focus should be on changing the values of the groups to which the individual belongs. In his studies to help solve food shortages during World War II, Lewin demonstrated that the key to changing



the eating habits of individuals was a combination of group discussion in which group norms and values were promoted and members making a public commitment to abide by the norms (Lewin, 1948). He subsequently found this procedure could change people's prejudices, alcoholism, criminality, and work production. It is in group discussions that individuals (1) clarify and obtain consensual validation of their values, and (2) increase personal commitment to adopt and internalize values.

There are value systems that are inherently taught just by being in a cooperative, competitive, or individualistic situation (Johnson & Johnson, 1994, 2000) (see Table 11.2). The moral orientation in competitive situations is based on inequality and the win-lose struggle to determine who will have superior and who will have inferior outcomes (Deutsch, 1985; Johnson & Johnson, 1989; Kohn, 1992). Competition teaches the necessity of prevailing over others to get more of something than anyone else. Success depends on outperforming the other participants and preventing anyone else from outperforming one. Other participants are viewed as rivals and threats to one's success. Engaging in competitive efforts inherently teaches that the natural way of life involves depriving others of the fruits of winning and opposing and obstructing the success of others. A person's value is contingent upon the relative success of his or her efforts; winners have value, losers do not. Thus, winners are envied and losers are disdained. One's own worth is also contingent, going up when one wins and going down when one loses. The task (such as learning) is just a means to winning, not of value in and of itself (e.g., highly competitive students when placed in a cooperative learning group have been quoted as saying, "If no one wins or loses, what is the point?"). Competitors either do not take the perspectives of others or do so in a strategic way to plan how to defeat them. Aggressing against others in order to win is viewed as appropriate, often necessary, and often admirable. An equity view of justice prevails—those who perform the highest should get the most rewards (i.e., losers are undeserving of rewards). Thus, competition is associated with less generosity, less willingness to take other people's perspectives, less inclination to trust others, greater aggression toward others, and less willingness to communicate accurately (Deutsch, 1962; Johnson & Johnson, 1989, 2005a).

The moral orientation in individualistic situations is based on strict self-interest. In individualistic situations everyone is a separate individual whose success results from one's own efforts only. Interacting with others, either in a caring or an aggressive way is inappropriate. The plight of others is to be ignored. One's own success is viewed as important; it is unimportant whether others are successful or unsuccessful. A person's worth depends on meeting criteria set by authority figures (such as teachers). The task is a means for achieving rewards. Thus, engaging in individualistic efforts inherently teaches individuals to focus on their own goals and view other peoples' success or failure as irrelevant and something to be ignored.

In his book, *One Hundred Ways to Enhance Values and Morality in Schools and Youth Set-*

**TABLE 11.2**  
**Values Promoted by Positive and Negative Interdependence**

	<i>Oppositional interaction</i>	<i>Promotive interaction</i>
Success	Outperforming others	Shared, joint efforts
Other people	Rivals, threats to own success	Allies, potential facilitators
Own efforts	Deprive others, cause their failure	Facilitate, contribute to other's success & well being
Worth	Contingent on winning	Basic acceptance of self & others
Task	Extrinsic, means to winning	Intrinsic
Perspective taking	None or strategic	Empathy, compassion
Aggression	Appropriate	Inappropriate
Justice	Equity	Equality, need

*tings*, Howard Kirschenbaum (1994) notes that cooperative learning may be the most important and most powerful influence on value and moral education and socialization. The moral orientation in a cooperative situation focuses on self-respect, mutual respect, and equality (Deutsch, 1985). All group members are viewed as having equal value and as being equally deserving of respect, justice, and equality (even though there may be differences in authority and status). This egalitarianism implies a definition of injustice as inequalities that are not to the benefit of all (Raws, 1971). Participants have a mutual responsibility to work for own success and the success of all groupmates. Success results from joint efforts. Not only are members pleased about their own success, but they take pride and pleasure in groupmates' success and well-being. Other people are viewed as potential allies and facilitators of one's success. Since collaborators "*sink or swim together*," an "*all for one and one for all*" mentality is promoted. One's efforts contribute not only to one's own well-being but also to the success and well-being of collaborators and the general welfare. One's personal identity includes a group identity that fosters loyalty. The worth of each member (including oneself) is based upon their membership in the human community; there is a basic and unconditional self-acceptance and acceptance of others. Members respect each other and themselves as unique individuals and appreciate the diverse resources members contribute to the group's efforts. Because completing the task contributes to others' well-being and the general welfare, the task is intrinsically motivating. Members feel a sense of responsibility to do their fair share of the work to complete the group's task and persevere in doing so, even when it is difficult to do so. Perspective-taking is ongoing and accurate, resulting in empathy and compassion for other members. Aggression toward other group members is seen as inappropriate. Members are viewed as being equally deserving of benefits (even though differences in authority and status may exist) and an obligation is felt to respond with help, support, and encouragement when a groupmate is in need. Members are committed to the long-term well-being of the group (i.e., the common good), and view promoting the success of others as a natural way of life.

### Valuing Self

Participants in cooperative situations tend to see themselves as being of more value and worth than do participants in competitive (effect size = 0.58) or individualistic (effect size=0.44) situations (Johnson & Johnson, 1989, 2005a). While contingent self-esteem dominates competitive situations, basic self-acceptance tends to dominate cooperative situations.

### Automaticity in Moral Responding

When students spend most of the school day in cooperative learning situations, they are provided with the repetition in moral responding needed for developing automaticity (Johnson, Johnson, & Holubec, 2002). Every time a learning group meets a member needs help and assistance. By responding over and over again to each other's needs, a pattern of moral responding may become an automatic habit pattern.

### Expanding Self-Interest to Mutual Interest

One of the most important aspects of moral socialization and education is the expansion of self-interest to mutual interest (i.e., goal transformation). It is within cooperative endeavors to achieve meaningful goals that a person's self-interests are expanded to include mutual interests (Johnson & Johnson, 2005a). Most individuals are intrinsically interested in the well-being of their self.

Subordinating one's own interests to the interests of the group, community, or other individuals, however, is just as intrinsic to humans and as powerful as acting on self-interests (Asch, 1952). Selfishness (i.e., the total focus on self-benefit while ignoring the well-being of others) has a low survival value because in a society each individual is dependent on others for even the most basic resources, such as food, water, shelter, clothes, transportation, and communication (not to mention belonging and caring). In order to meet such basic needs each individual must cooperate with others, working to achieve mutual goals that benefit others and the community as a whole as well as oneself. If the other group members are unable to do their share of the work, the person suffers. Working to enhance the well-being of other members thus is essential for one's own well-being. A person's success, happiness, and well-being thus becomes intertwined with the happiness and well being of others, and one's self-interests thereby include the interests of others and the community as a whole. The requirement for cooperation and community results in the emergence of new social needs and goals that include the well-being of others and the common good.

### NATURE OF COOPERATIVE LEARNING

In order to achieve these outcomes in educational organizations, cooperative learning must be used for the majority of the time. *Cooperative learning* is the instructional use of small groups so that students work together to maximize their own and each other's learning (Johnson, Johnson, & Holubec, 1998, 2002). Any assignment in any curriculum for any age student can be done cooperatively. There are three types of cooperative learning—formal, informal, and base groups.

*Formal cooperative learning* consists of students working together, for periods of one class period to several weeks, to achieve shared learning goals and complete jointly specific tasks and assignments (Johnson, Johnson, & Holubec, 2002). In formal cooperative learning groups, teachers:

1. *Make a number of preinstructional decisions.* Teachers specify the objectives for the lesson (both academic and social skills) and decide on the size of groups, the method of assigning students to groups, the roles students will be assigned, the materials needed to conduct the lesson, and the way the room will be arranged.
2. *Explain the task and the positive interdependence.* A teacher clearly defines the assignment, teaches the required concepts and strategies, specifies the positive interdependence and individual accountability, gives the criteria for success, and explains the expected social skills to be used.
3. *Monitor and intervene.* Teachers monitor students' learning and intervene within the groups to provide task assistance or to increase students' interpersonal and group skills.
4. *Assess and process.* Teachers assess students' learning and structure students' processing of how well their groups functioned.

*Informal cooperative learning* consists of having students work together to achieve a joint learning goal in temporary, ad hoc groups that last from a few minutes to one class period (Johnson, Johnson, & Holubec, 2002). During a lecture, demonstration, or film, informal cooperative learning can be used to focus student attention on the material to be learned, set a mood conducive to learning, help set expectations as to what will be covered in a class session, ensure that students cognitively process and rehearse the material being taught, summarize what was learned and preview the next session, and provide closure to an instructional session. The procedure for using informal cooperative learning during a lecture entails having three- to five- minute focused

discussions before and after the lecture (i.e., bookends) and two- to three-minute interspersing pair discussions throughout the lecture.

*Cooperative base groups* are long-term, heterogeneous cooperative learning groups with stable membership whose primary responsibilities are to provide support, encouragement, and assistance to make academic progress and develop cognitively and socially in healthy ways as well as holding each other accountable for striving to learn (Johnson, Johnson, & Holubec, 2002). Typically, cooperative base groups (1) are heterogeneous in membership; (2) meet regularly (for example, daily or biweekly); and (3) last for the duration of the semester, year, or until all members are graduated. Base groups typically consist of three to four members who meet at the beginning and end of each class session (or week), complete academic tasks such as checking each member's homework, carry out routine tasks such as taking attendance, and provide personal support by, for example, listening sympathetically to personal problems or providing guidance for writing a paper.

These three types of cooperative learning may be used together. A typical class session may begin with a base group meeting, followed by a short lecture in which informal cooperative learning is used. A formal cooperative learning lesson is then conducted and near the end of the class session another short lecture may be delivered with the use of informal cooperative learning. The class ends with a base group meeting.

## CONSTRUCTIVE CONTROVERSY

One of the central aspects of promotive interaction is disagreement and augmentation (i.e., constructive controversy) among members of cooperative groups when they have to make a decision or come to an agreement. A *controversy* exists when one person's ideas, opinions, information, theories, or conclusions are incompatible with those of another and the two seek to reach an agreement (Johnson & Johnson, 1995). Controversies are resolved by engaging in what Aristotle called *deliberate discourse* (i.e., the discussion of the advantages and disadvantages of proposed actions) aimed at synthesizing novel solutions (i.e., *creative problem solving*). Constructive controversy is an important source of moral socialization and education.

### Theory of Constructive Controversy

The process through which constructive controversy creates positive outcomes involves the following theoretical assumptions (Johnson & Johnson, 1979, 1989, 1995, 2000):

1. When individuals are presented with a problem or decision, they have an initial conclusion based on categorizing and organizing current information, experiences, and perspective. They have a high degree of confidence in their conclusions (they freeze the epistemic process).
2. When individuals present their conclusion and its rationale to others, they engage in cognitive rehearsal, deepen their understanding of their position, and use higher-level reasoning strategies. The more they attempt to persuade others to agree with them, the more committed they may become to their position.
3. When individuals are confronted with different conclusions based on other people's information, experiences, and perspectives, they become uncertain as to the correctness of their views and a state of conceptual conflict or disequilibrium is aroused. They unfreeze their epistemic process.

4. Uncertainty, conceptual conflict, or disequilibrium motivates *epistemic curiosity*, an active search for (a) more information and new experiences (increased specific content) and (b) a more adequate cognitive perspective and reasoning process (increased validity) in hopes of resolving the uncertainty.
5. By adapting their cognitive perspective and reasoning through understanding and accommodating the perspective and reasoning of others, individuals derive a new, reconceptualized, and reorganized conclusion. Novel solutions and decisions are detected that, on balance, are qualitatively better. The positive feelings and commitment individuals feel in creating a solution to the problem together is extended to each other and interpersonal attraction increases. Their competencies in managing conflicts constructively tend to improve. The process may begin again at this point or it may be terminated by freezing the current conclusion and resolving any dissonance by increasing the confidence in the validity of the conclusion.

Depending on the conditions under which controversy occurs and the way in which it is managed, controversy may result in positive or negative consequences. These conditions include the context within which the constructive controversy takes place, the level of group members' social skills, and group members' ability to engage in rational argument (Johnson & Johnson, 1979, 1989, 1995, 2000).

### Controversy: Instructional Procedure

Teaching students how to engage in the controversy process begins with randomly assigning students to heterogeneous cooperative learning groups of four members (Johnson & Johnson, 1979, 1989, 1995). The groups are given an issue on which to write a report and pass a test. Each cooperative group is divided into two pairs. One pair is given the con-position on the issue and the other pair is given the pro-position. Each pair is given the instructional materials needed to define their position and point them towards supporting information. The cooperative goal of reaching a consensus on the issue (by synthesizing the best reasoning from both sides) and writing a quality group report is highlighted. Students then:

1. *Research, learn, and prepare their position.* Students prepare the best case possible for their assigned position by researching the assigned position, organizing the information into a persuasive argument, and planning how to advocate the assigned position effectively to ensure it receives a fair and complete hearing.
2. *Present and advocate position.* Students present the best case for their assigned position to ensure it gets a fair and complete hearing.
3. *Engage in an open discussion in which there is spirited disagreement.* Students freely exchange information and ideas while (a) arguing forcefully and persuasively for their position; (b) critically analyzing and refuting the opposing position; (c) refuting the opposing position by pointing out the inadequacies in the information and reasoning; and (d) rebutting attacks on their position and presenting counter arguments.
4. *Reverse perspectives.* Students reverse perspectives and present the best case for the opposing position.
5. *Synthesize.* Students drop all advocacy and find a synthesis or integration on which all members can agree. Students summarize the best evidence and reasoning from both sides and integrate it into a joint position that is new and unique. Students write a group report on the group's synthesis with the supporting evidence and rationale and take a test on both

positions. Groups then process how well the group functioned and celebrate the group's success and hard work.

### Impact of Controversy on Moral Education

We have conducted over twenty-five research studies on the impact of academic controversy and numerous other researchers have added to the literature (Johnson & Johnson, 1979, 1989, 1995, 2006). Overall, the research indicates that constructive controversies create higher achievement, greater retention, more creative problem-solving, more frequent use of higher-level reasoning and metacognitive thought, more perspective taking, greater continuing motivation to learn, more positive attitudes toward learning, more positive interpersonal relationships, greater social support, and higher self-esteem. Engaging in a controversy can also be fun, enjoyable, and exciting (see Table 11.3). In this chapter the outcomes relevant to moral socialization and education will be discussed.

### Values

Participating in the controversy process teaches such values as (1) you have both the right and the responsibility to advocate your conclusions, theories, and beliefs; (2) "truth" is derived from the clash of opposing ideas and positions; (3) insight and understanding come from a "disputed passage" where one's ideas and conclusions are advocated and subjected to intellectual challenge; (4) issues must be viewed from all perspectives; and (5) you seek a synthesis that subsumes the seemingly opposed positions. In addition, it teaches hope and confidence in the value of deliberation, respect for the canons of civility, mutual respect, importance of arguing on the basis of factual information, importance of the common purpose of reaching a joint reasoned judgment, and affirmation of democratic political discourse even if it results in outcomes that are contrary to one's own preferences.

### Perspective Taking

Students in academic controversies (1) more accurately take the other's perspective than do students participating in concurrence seeking (effect size = 0.91), debate (effect size = 0.22), or individualistic efforts (effect size = 0.86). Tjosvold and Johnson (1977, 1978) conducted experiments where participants discussed a moral dilemma taken from the Defining Issues Test (Rest,

**TABLE 11.3**  
**Meta-Analysis of Academic Controversy Studies: Mean Effect Sizes**

<i>Dependent variable</i>	<i>Controversy/concurrence seeking</i>	<i>Controversy/debate</i>	<i>Controversy/individualistic efforts</i>
Achievement	0.68	0.40	0.87
Cognitive reasoning	0.62	1.35	0.90
Perspective taking	0.91	0.22	0.86
Motivation	0.75	0.45	0.71
Attitudes toward task	0.58	0.81	0.64
Interpersonal attraction	0.24	0.72	0.81
Social support	0.32	0.92	1.52
Self-esteem	0.39	0.51	0.85

Source: Johnson, D. W., & Johnson, R. (1995b). *Creative controversy: Intellectual conflict in the classroom*. Edina, MN: Interaction Book Company. Reprinted with permission.



1972; Rest, Narvaez, Bebeau, & Thoma, 1999) with a confederate who always used social order (Kohlberg Stage 4) reasoning. The confederate either agreed or disagreed with the participant's point of view. Participants in the controversy condition were more accurate in taking the cognitive perspective of the confederate on another (nondiscussed) moral issue from the Defining Issues Test) than were participants in the no controversy condition. Controversy resulted in more accurate understanding of the structure of the confederate's reasoning than did no-controversy.

### Level of Cognitive and Moral Reasoning

Cognitive development theorists such as Piaget, Flavell, and Kohlberg have posited that it is repeated interpersonal controversies in which individuals are forced again and again to take cognizance of the perspective of others that promote cognitive and moral development, the ability to think logically, and the reduction of egocentric reasoning. Such interpersonal conflicts are posited to create disequilibrium within individuals' cognitive structures, which motivate a search for a more adequate and mature process of reasoning. The impact of controversy on cognitive and moral reasoning has been found in varied size groups and among markedly diverse student populations.

Students who participate in academic controversies end up using more higher level reasoning and metacognitive thought more frequently than students participating in concurrence seeking (effect size = 0.62), debate (effect size = 1.35), or individualistic efforts (effect size = 0.90). There are several studies that demonstrated that pairing a conserver with a nonconserver, and giving the pair conservation problems to solve and instructing them to argue until there is agreement or stalemate, resulted in the conserver's answer prevailing on the great majority of conservation trials and in the nonconserver learning how to conserve. Change tended to be unidirectional and nonreversible. Children who understood conservation did not adopt erroneous strategies while nonconservers tended to advance toward a greater understanding of conservation. Even two immature children who argued erroneous positions about the answer tended to make modest but significant gains toward an understanding of conservation. The discussion of the task per se did not produce the effects. There had to be conflict among individuals' explanations for the effects to appear.

The same thing seems to happen with level of moral reasoning. There are a number of studies that demonstrate that when subjects are placed in a group with peers who use a higher stage of moral reasoning, and the group is required to make a decision as to how a moral dilemma should be resolved, advances in the students' level of moral reasoning result (Johnson & Johnson, 1989). In a study, Tichy-Reese (2006) examined the impact of controversy compared with individualistic learning on the four components of moral development (Narvaez & Rest, 1995). Although she did not find a consistent effect on moral sensitivity, controversy tended to result in significantly higher levels of moral motivation, moral judgment, and moral character.

### Open Mindedness

Individuals participating in controversies in a cooperative context tend to be more open-minded than do individuals participating in controversies in a competitive context (Tjosvold & Johnson, 1978). In deciding how to resolve a moral dilemma, when the context was cooperative there was more open-minded listening to the opposing position. When the context was competitive there was a closed-minded orientation in which participants comparatively felt unwilling to make concessions to the opponent's viewpoint and closed-mindedly refused to incorporate any of it into their own position. Within a competitive context the increased understanding resulting from controversy tended to be ignored for a defensive adherence to one's own position.

### Continuing Motivation to Learn

Individuals participating in constructive controversies tended to have greater continuing motivation to learn than did individuals participating in concurrence seeking (effect size = 0.75), debate (effect size = 0.45), or individualistic efforts (effect size = 0.71).

### Positive Relationships among Disputants

Participants in controversies developed more positive interpersonal relationships than did participants in concurrence seeking (effect size = 0.24), debate (effect size = 0.72), or individualistic efforts (effect size = 0.81). In addition, participants in controversies experienced greater social support than did participants in concurrence seeking (effect size = 0.32), debate (effect size = 0.92), or individualistic efforts (effect size = 1.52). The more individuals manage their disagreements through the controversy procedure, the more caring and supportive their relationships, which increases the likelihood of identification with each other (thus adopting each other's values) and group cohesion (thus increasing the commitment to group norms and values).

### Valuing Learning

Participants in controversies developed more positive attitudes toward learning than did participants in concurrence seeking (effect size = 0.58), debate (effect size = 0.81), or individualistic efforts (effect size = 0.64).

### Valuing Self

Participants in controversies developed higher self-esteem than did participants in concurrence seeking (effect size = 0.39), debate (effect size = 0.51), or individualistic efforts (effect size = 0.85).

## CONFLICT RESOLUTION TRAINING: TEACHING STUDENTS TO BE PEACEMAKERS

Another important aspect of promotive interaction is the way in which conflicts of interests are resolved. In working together cooperatively, conflicts of interests will frequently occur and how they are resolved has considerable influence on the quality of the cooperation and the long-term survival and health of the cooperative system. *Conflict of interest* exists when the actions of one person attempting to maximize his or her wants and benefits prevents, blocks, or interferes with another person maximizing his or her wants and benefits. The *Teaching Students to Be Peacemakers Program* began in the 1960s (Johnson, 1970; Johnson & Johnson, 2005b) to teach students how to resolve conflicts of interests constructively. All students are taught to:

1. Recognize what is and is not a conflict and the potential positive outcomes of conflicts.
2. Understand the basic strategies for managing conflicts (e.g., withdrawal, forcing (distributive, win-lose negotiations), smoothing, compromising, and engaging in problem-solving (integrative) negotiations).
3. Be competent in engaging in problem-solving (i.e., integrative) negotiations.

4. Be competent in mediating schoolmates' conflicts.
5. Understand the procedures for implementing the Peacemaker Program.

Once students are taught these five things, the Peacemaker Program is implemented and all students take turns in being a class or school mediator.

### Problem-Solving Negotiations

Conflicts of interests are resolved through negotiation (when negotiation does not work, then mediation is required). There are two ways to negotiate (Johnson & Johnson, 2005b): *distributive* or "win-lose" (where one person benefits only if the opponent agrees to make a concession) and *integrative* or problem solving (where disputants work together to create an agreement that benefits everyone involved). In ongoing relationships, distributive negotiation results in destructive outcomes and integrative negotiation leads to constructive outcomes. The steps in using problem solving negotiations are (Johnson & Johnson, 2005b): (1) *Describing what you want* (this includes using good communication skills and defining the conflict as a small and specific mutual problem); (2) *describing how you feel*; (3) *describing the reasons for your wants and feeling* (this includes expressing cooperative intentions, listening carefully, separating interests from positions, and differentiating before trying to integrate the two sets of interests); (4) *taking the other's perspective and summarizing your understanding of what the other person wants, how the other person feels, and the reasons underlying both*; (5) *inventing three optional plans to resolve the conflict that maximize joint benefits*; and (6) *choosing one and formalizing the agreement with a hand shake* (a wise agreement maximizes joint benefits and strengthens disputants' ability to work together cooperatively and resolve conflicts constructively in the future).

### Peer Mediation

When students are unable to negotiate a resolution to their conflict, they may request help from a mediator. A *mediator* is a neutral person who helps two or more people resolve their conflict, usually by negotiating an integrative agreement. In contrast, *arbitration* is the submission of a dispute to a disinterested third party (such as a teacher or principal) who makes a final and binding judgment as to how the conflict will be resolved. Mediation consists of four steps (Johnson & Johnson, 2005b): (1) Ending hostilities by breaking up hostile encounters and cooling off students; (2) ensuring disputants are committed to the mediation process; (3) helping disputants successfully negotiate with each other (the disputants are carefully taken through the problem-solving negotiation steps; and (4) formalizing the agreement into a contract.

### Implementing Peacemaker Program

Each day the teacher selects two class members to serve as official mediators. The mediators wear official T-shirts, patrol the playground and lunchroom, and are available to mediate any conflicts that occur in the classroom or school. The role of mediator is rotated so that all students in the class or school serve as mediators an equal amount of time. Initially, students mediate in pairs. This ensures that shy or nonverbal students get the same amount of experience as more extroverted and verbally fluent students.

If peer mediation fails, the teacher mediates the conflict. If teacher mediation fails, the teacher arbitrates by deciding who is right and who is wrong. If that fails, the principal mediates the conflict. If that fails, the principal arbitrates. Teaching all students to mediate properly results in a school-wide discipline program where students are empowered to regulate and control their own

and their classmates' actions. Teachers and administrators are then freed to spend more of their energies on instruction.

### Conflict Resolution Training and Moral Education

Between 1988 and 2000 sixteen studies were conducted on the effectiveness of the Peacemaker Program in eight different schools in two different countries (Johnson & Johnson, 2005b). Students involved were from kindergarten through ninth grades. The studies were conducted in rural, suburban, and urban settings. Some of the benefits of teaching students the problem-solving negotiation and the peer mediation procedures are summarized in Table 11.4.

### Values

Problem-solving negotiations and peer mediation are closely related to cooperation (Johnson & Johnson, 2003). They inherently teach all the values associated with cooperation. In addition, problem-solving negotiations and mediation teach such values as being open and honest about what one wants and how one feels, understanding the other person's wants and feelings, striving to see the situation from all perspectives, being concerned with the other person's outcomes as well as one's own, seeking to reach agreements that are satisfying to all disputants, and maintaining effective and caring long-term relationships. A teacher who emphasizes the value of "respect" states, *"The procedures are a very respectful way to resolve conflicts. There's a calmness in the classroom because the students know the negotiation and mediation procedures."*

### Valuing Conflict

Individuals' attitudes toward conflict tend to become more positive (effect size=1.07). Individuals learned to view conflicts as potentially positive and faculty and parents viewed the conflict training as constructive and helpful. In addition, individuals generally liked to engage in the procedures. A teacher states, *"They never refuse to negotiate or mediate. When there's a conflict and you say it's time for conflict resolution, you never have either one say I won't do it. There are no refusals."*

### Justice and Fairness

By using integrative negotiations to resolve conflicts of interests, the focus is on resolving conflicts so that everyone benefits equally. Reaching a mutually satisfying agreement requires using

**TABLE 11.4**  
**Meta-Analysis of Mean Peacemaker Studies: Mean Effect Sizes**

<i>Dependent Variable</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Standard deviation</i>	<i>Number of effects</i>
Academic achievement	0.88	0.09	5
Academic retention	0.70	0.31	4
Integrative negotiation	0.98	0.36	5
Positive attitude	1.07	0.25	5
Negative attitude	-0.61	0.37	2
Quality of solutions	0.73	0	1

*Source:* Johnson, D. W., & Johnson, R. (2000). *Teaching students to be peacemakers: Results of twelve years of research.* Paper presented at the Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues Convention, June. Reprinted with permission.

the integrative negotiation procedure and treating each other in polite, dignified, and respectful ways. By its very nature, integrative negotiation assumes moral inclusion, as negotiators are required to care about the well-being of the others involved in the conflict as well as the common good.

## MORAL EDUCATION AND BUILDING DEMOCRACIES

Inculcating moral values in individuals may be especially important in democratic societies. In 1748 Baron Charles de Montesquieu published, *The Spirit of Laws*, in which he explored the relationship that is necessary between people and different forms of government in order for the government to survive. He concluded that dictatorship survives on the fear of the people, monarchy survives on the loyalty of the people, and a free republic survives on the virtue (living by high ethical values) of the people. He added that the free republic is the most fragile of the three political systems. Motivation to be virtuous comes primarily from a sense of belonging, a concern for the society as a whole, and feeling a moral bond with the community (which is cultivated by deliberating with fellow citizens to help shape the destiny of the political community).

There are a number of important parallels between being an effective member of a cooperative learning group and being an effective citizen in a democracy (see Table 11.5). A cooperative learning group is a microcosm of a democracy. A democracy is, after all, first and foremost a cooperative system in which citizens work together to reach goals and determine their future. Similarly, in cooperative learning groups individuals work to achieve mutual goals, are responsible for contributing to the group's work, have the right and obligation to express their ideas, and are obligated to provide leadership and ensure that decisions are effective. All group members are considered equal. Decisions are made after careful consideration of all points of view. Group members adopt a set of values that include contributing to the well-being of their groupmates and the common good. All of these characteristics are also true of democracies. Cooperative learning, in fact, is being used in several parts of the world as a part of teaching children, adolescents, and young adults to be productive citizens in a democracy (e.g., Hovhannisyan, Varrella, Johnson, & Johnson, 2005).

Democracy requires engaging in political discourse to make decisions (about difficult issues) that reflect the best reasoned judgment of its citizens. In democracies, conflict among opposing points of view about what course of action should be followed is resolved through a process involving advocacy, challenge, and integration of the best information and reasoning from all sides. *Political discourse* is the formal exchange of reasoned views as to which of several alternative courses of action should be taken to solve a societal problem. It is intended to involve all citizens in the making of the decision. Citizens are expected to persuade one another (through valid information and logic) as to what course of action would be most effective. Political discourse is aimed at making a decision in a way that ensures all citizens are committed to (1) implement the decision (whether they agree with it or not) and (2) the democratic process. Children, adolescents, and young adults may be taught how to engage in political discourse through engaging in constructive controversy (Johnson & Johnson, 1995). Any time individuals participate in the controversy procedure, they are getting a lesson in democratic political discourse.

Finally, democracies can only survive as long as citizens know how to resolve conflicts (intergroup as well as interpersonal) so that all disputants benefit and believe that they have been treated in just and fair ways. All students can be taught those values and competencies.

**TABLE 11.5**  
**Partial Comparison of Cooperative Learning and Democracy**

<i>Cooperative learning</i>	<i>Democracy</i>
Work with others to achieve mutual goals; for example, members are expected to learn and to help groupmates learn	Work with others to achieve mutual goals; for example, citizens are expected to prosper and to help fellow citizens prosper
Each member is responsible for participating in the group, doing his or her fair share of the work, and maintaining good working relationships among members	Each citizen is responsible for participating in democratic process, doing his or her fair share in achieving the society's goals and maintaining good working relationships among citizens
All members are considered to be equal regardless of gender, ethnicity, religion; equality does not mean doing the same things or making equal contributions to the group; it means having the same value and being given equal consideration.	All citizens are considered to be equal regardless of gender, ethnicity, religion; equality does not mean doing the same things or making equal contributions to society; it means having the same value and being given equal consideration.
All members have the right and obligation to express their ideas, conclusions, and opinions (including opposition to others' ideas) and to be listened to with respect and consideration	All citizens have the right and obligation to express their ideas, conclusions, and opinions (including opposition to others' ideas) and to be listened to with respect and consideration
All members are expected to provide leadership, build trust among members, ensure effective decisions are made, ensure conflicts are resolved constructively, and agreed upon tasks and decisions are carried to completion.	All citizens are expected to provide leadership (including running for office), build trust among citizens, ensure effective decisions are made, ensure conflicts are resolved constructively, and agreed upon tasks and decisions are carried to completion.
Decisions are made by a combination of consensus and majority rule after a thorough discussion considering the merits of all points of view and focusing on reasoning and information	Decisions are made by majority rule with safe guards for minority opinions after a thorough discussion considering the merits of all points of view and focusing on reasoning and information
Members value contributing to the well-being of groupmates and the common good	Citizens value contributing to the well-being of fellow citizens and the common good

## ENDING ISOLATION AND ALIENATION

Isolated individuals, who are without friends or comrades, often tend to reject the values being promoted by the educational system. Isolated and alienated individuals tend to engage in antisocial behavior, be deficient in social-cognitive skills, and have psychological problems (Johnson & Johnson, 1989). There are so many negative consequences of isolation and alienation from peers on both physical and psychological health (as well as on moral development) that an essential aspect of schooling is for all individuals to be accepted and supported by their peers. Through the use of cooperative learning (as well as constructive controversy and the Peacemaker Program), teachers have the power to give every individual an opportunity to make friends and be socially integrated into the school.

## CONCLUSIONS AND GUIDELINES

Some historians claim that the decline and fall of Rome was set in motion by corruption from within rather than by conquest from without. Rome fell, it can be argued, because Romans lost their civic virtue. *Civic virtue* exists when individuals meet both the letter and spirit of their public obligations. For a community to exist and sustain itself, members must share common goals



and values aimed at defining appropriate behavior and increasing the quality of life within the community (Johnson & Johnson, 1996, 1999).

To socialize and educate children, adolescents, and young adults into the values of the school, community, society, and world, a number of components should be present. Some of the components are membership in a moral community, positive and caring two-way relationships with adults and peers, mutual openness to influencing and being influenced, exposure to models who engage in behavior reflecting the community's values, the opportunity to engage in prosocial and moral behavior over and over again dozens and even hundreds of times, the engagement in moral discussions in which members disagree and challenge each other's moral reasoning, and the existence of conflicts in which one's values are tested and challenged.

The first guideline is that constructive moral socialization and education requires that individuals spend most of their time in cooperative situations and thus internalize the values and competencies underlying cooperation. Cooperative learning should dominate classroom life. There are three types of cooperative learning: formal cooperative learning, informal cooperative learning, and cooperative base groups. The emphasis on working together to achieve common goals creates a moral as well as a learning community. The psychological processes (substitutability, inducibility, positive cathexis) and the promotive interaction inherent in working cooperatively with classmates creates the conditions most necessary for moral socialization and learning.

The second guideline is for teachers frequently to structure constructive controversies. Doing so will inculcate moral values such as seeking out disagreement and challenge to one's thinking and wanting to see issues from all perspectives, engaging in frequent and accurate perspective taking, higher-level cognitive and moral reasoning, greater open-mindedness, greater continuing motivation to learn, positive relationships among participants, valuing learning, and valuing self.

The third guideline is for teachers to teach students how to engage in problem-solving (i.e., integrative) negotiations and peer mediation. Doing so will significantly increase the constructive resolution of conflicts of interests and such values as seeking resolutions that benefit everyone, being concerned about others' well-being, and valuing justice and fairness.

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# 12

## The Just Community Approach to Moral Education and the Moral Atmosphere of the School

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The just community approach aims to promote moral development and moral responsibility through the organization, practices, and culture of the school itself. The just community approach to schools emerged in 1974 with the opening of the Cluster School, a small school-within-a-school located in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Out of this experiment and others that followed, Kohlberg, co-authors, Oser, Lind, and other colleagues, as well as the teachers and students within the different just community programs themselves developed the just community approach to moral education as we have it today.

We begin this chapter by presenting an overview of the goals of the just community approach to moral education and the outcomes that it achieved. We then take a closer look at the just community approach by describing its origins in the kibbutz model and later its application in a corrections setting. We proceed to discuss what distinguishes the just community approach from related “community-building” approaches to moral education. This leads us to consider the just community approach as a way of fostering civic competence, in particular, civic engagement. We conclude by outlining methods developed for assessing the moral atmosphere of schools.

The just community approach focuses on the institutions, practices, and culture that influence the school’s life and discipline. It is not a curriculum *per se* but addresses what has been called the school’s hidden curriculum of norms, values, and decision-making processes, and systems of reward and punishment (Jackson, 1968; Jackson et al., 1992). Left unexamined and unaddressed, the hidden curriculum may well undermine the best designed and delivered moral education curriculum.

The just community approach brings together a group of no more than a hundred students and teachers for one or more school periods a day and for two weekly meetings lasting minimally a class period each. Most of the decisions affecting the life and discipline of the community are made democratically in mandatory weekly community meetings where students and teachers

have an equal vote. Teachers and students meet weekly in advisory groups to prepare for the community meetings. Just community programs are animated with a strong commitment to developing a shared moral life characterized by seeking fairness and building group solidarity. The teachers in the just community programs are challenged to provide moral leadership by advocating for the community's ideals while facilitating student engagement.

### DESCRIPTION OF THE JUST COMMUNITY APPROACH

The just community approach has two major aims: (1) to promote students' moral development, and (2) to transform the moral atmosphere of the school into a moral community. Although the goal of promoting individual moral development is the ultimate aim of the just community approach, this goal is achieved through a more immediate focus on moral atmosphere, which from the perspective of just community theory (Power, Higgins, & Kohlberg, 1989) is a worthy aim in and of itself.

The just community approach is directed not only to promoting students' moral reasoning, but to fostering all of the components of students' moral functioning as they have been defined and explicated by Rest (1983) and Narvaez and Rest (1995). From its beginning, the just community approach was understood as a bridge between moral judgment and action because it addressed the concrete interactions among students and teachers in school. The just community approach nurtures moral sensitivity by bringing issues of common concern to attention of teachers and students in their weekly meetings. Many of these issues, such as stealing and cheating, clearly belong to the moral domain. Others, such as skipping class and using drugs and alcohol, belong to the conventional and personal domains and are "moralized" within a community context in which individuals are called upon to make personal sacrifices for common good (Nucci, 2001). The just community approach imposes a lofty standard for relationships and service to the community. For example, when students are excluded from or simply not included in student friendship groups, the just community approach calls for a discussion of the problem in the light of the communal ideal that friendship be extended to everyone.

The just community approach develops judgment and decision making through its practice of what is termed today deliberative democracy (Bessette, 1994; Fishkin, 1991). The process is aimed at achieving as much consensus as is practical through sustained dialogue in which all are encouraged to participate and in which the sharing and critical examination of reasons is considered crucial to arriving at a result that all consider fair. The just community fosters a sense of responsibility by the way it encourages students to identify with the community and its moral values as well as through its structures of deliberation and accountability (Power, & Higgins-D'Allessandro, 2005). In the community meeting, students and faculty determine rules and norms to guide their common life. Students and teachers are expected to help each other live up to their shared expectations. When violations occur, the offending party or parties are brought before a jury of their peers and, if the severity of the offense warrants it, they are brought before the entire community in a community meeting. Finally, the just community approach encourages the reflective implementation of its moral aims and purposes in all of its discussions of how the community can better realize its ideals.

#### The Model for the Just Community Approach: The Kibbutz Model

The just community approach was inspired by the educational experiment at the Anne Frank Haven in Kibbutz Sasa, Israel (Dror, 1995). The Haven is a residential junior and senior high



school, which was established in 1956 by kibbutz educators and the Youth Aliyah, an International Jewish and Israeli educational organization (Dror, 1995). This experiment achieved remarkable educational successes as well as fostering the moral development of its students to unsurpassed levels (Snarey, Reimer, & Kohlberg, 1985). Kohlberg, who had long been attracted to the communal life of the kibbutz, visited the Haven in 1969 out of a particular interest in studying its effectiveness in integrating poor urban children with those from local kibbutzim. Kohlberg reported the practice of collective education on the kibbutz he visited as “better than anything we can conceive from our theory,” and he envisaged his own contribution to moral education primarily as articulating the Haven’s approach within the framework of his own theory of moral development (Kohlberg, 1971, p. 370). In contrast to the moral discussion approach, which Blatt and Kohlberg (1975) had deduced directly from Kohlberg’s psychological theory, Kohlberg derived the just community approach from a successful practice and then attempted to build a theoretical and research framework to better understand and implement it. Thus the theory and the methods related to the just community approach are still developing and still expressed through a hybrid of different scientific and philosophical schools of thought. In its original formulation (Kohlberg, 1985; Power, Higgins, & Kohlberg, 1989), it combined concepts from cognitive developmental psychology and Kantian moral philosophy with Durkheimian (1925/1973) sociology and Roycean (1995/1908) philosophy. More recent work by Etzioni, McIntyre, Sandel, among others has helped us to deepen our appreciation for the moral power of community without losing sight of the principles of democracy (Reed, 1997).

Kohlberg’s appropriation of the kibbutz model focused almost exclusively on two of its aspects: regular democratic meetings and the influence of the *madrich*, the adult community leader. As the first among equals in a democratic group, the *madrich* was powerless to enforce norms by himself, but had to rely on the members of the group to act in ways consistent with group welfare. Although the Madrich was responsible for introducing young people into the way of life of the kibbutz, Kohlberg (1971) remarked that he did not think of himself as inculcating a particular ideology, but as emphasizing respect for universal principles of justice.

As a residential community within the kibbutz society, the Haven offered a far broader and richer experience of community life than Kohlberg could ever hope to realize in the just community experiments (Dror, 1995; Reimer, 1977). On the other hand, Kohlberg was confident that some of the features of kibbutz community could be re-created in a non-residential school setting. Fortunately for Kohlberg and the just community approach, schools in the 1970s were especially receptive to “free school” experiments (Miller, 2002). On the other hand, Kohlberg and his colleagues had no blueprint for what a just community school would look like and how its teachers might be prepared. Moreover, some of the values of the free school movement were contrary to those that Kohlberg had found attractive at the Haven. For example, Kohlberg did not think of the just communities as freeing students from the oppressive demands of the conventional school or as trusting in students’ competencies for self-governance. In fact, he was far less romantic about students’ innate goodness than most of the teachers with whom he worked in the early days of the Cluster School.

### The Just Community Approach to Corrections

Before he applied the just community approach to schools, Kohlberg had spent several years working with his two graduate students, Joseph Hickey and Peter Scharf to use a combination of moral discussion and just community methods in two corrections facilities in Connecticut (Hickey & Scharf, 1980; Kohlberg, Kaufman, Hickey, & Scharf, 1975). There Kohlberg began to appreciate how counter-cultural the just community approach really was. The greatest challenge

for the just community approach was to bring the staff and inmates together to form a common culture. Long-held suspicions and patterns of control and resistance had to give way for the approach to begin to touch the lives of the participants. Biggs and his colleagues have continued the application of the just community approach to correctional settings and report successes and difficulties similar to those encountered in just community programs whether they are in schools or correctional facilities (Biggs, Colesante, Smith, & Hook, 2000). Experiences of participatory democracy are powerful ones, particularly for adults and adolescents who have been robbed of stable relationships and opportunities for responsible leadership earlier in their lives.

The co-authors witnessed one of the most striking examples of the effectiveness of the just community approach while observing a locked ward in a mental hospital serving juvenile offenders with mental health disorders. The incarcerated adolescents participated with great enthusiasm and seriousness in the weekly community meetings and several functioned at higher levels than anyone on staff imagined possible. Staffing issues forced the closing of the program before the research project could be completed. Although this program did not yield sufficient data to draw conclusions about the program's effectiveness in promoting moral development, the fact that the approach succeeded in helping troubled adolescents to take responsibility for themselves and others in a small community was in itself no small triumph.

## THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS

### The Influence of Piaget and Durkheim

In understanding the success of the Haven and in attempting to articulate a theory to guide its practice, Kohlberg and his colleagues turned not only to what had been learned through the moral discussion approach but to Piaget and Durkheim's seminal research on moral development (Kohlberg & Higgins, 1989). Jean Piaget described two basic types of morality: a heteronomous morality of unquestioned obedience to hierarchically imposed rules and authority and an autonomous morality of reasonable cooperation among equals. Piaget stressed the relationship between children's moral judgment and their social context. The child's first stage of morality, heteronomy, emerges from an environment of constraint, characterized by conformity to the dictates of a hierarchical authority. The child's second stage of morality, autonomy, emerges from an environment of cooperation, characterized by mutuality and equality. Piaget's emphasis on the role of the environment led him to be skeptical about the influence of schools on moral development. Piaget suspected that teachers would simply confirm children in a unilateral, unexamined respect for the rules of the classroom and the commands of the teacher. He did, however, speculate that teachers might assume another, more egalitarian role, that of "elder collaborator." Following the footsteps of John Dewey, Piaget strongly advocated that schools become democratic. A democratic environment would give children the intellectual and moral freedom needed for cognitive moral development. In other words, schools could provide children with the fertile moral environment that Piaget found in children play among peers.

Especially in his early educational theorizing, Kohlberg expressed deep ambivalence about collectivist pedagogy, as he encountered it in Durkheim's theory and Soviet practice (Makarenko, 1935/1990). On the one hand, he deeply appreciated its effectiveness; and he chided American educators for neglecting it. On the other hand, he questioned the use of such pedagogy to promote "collective national discipline" as opposed to universal moral principles (Kohlberg, 1978). Durkheim (1925/1973) argued that moral education most effectively takes place by engaging students in the development of a cohesive classroom community characterized by strong

disciplinary norms and a spirit of self-sacrifice and altruism. For Durkheim, the primary task of moral education was to turn the student from a preoccupation with self to a devotion to the group as a whole. This devotion brought with it a deep sense of connectedness and well-being (Power & Power, 2006). As in the kibbutz, the success of the approach depended on the leader, in this case the teacher, who was charged with building peer group solidarity and instilling a sense of respect for the community as a whole and its rules. Kohlberg and later advocates of the just community approach (e.g., Power and Power, 2006) argued that the effectiveness of the teacher as a peer leader could be greatly enhanced in a democratic environment.

### Justice and Care

In the formative years of the just community approach, Carol Gilligan (1982) began her critique of Kohlberg's psychology for being based on a rights-centered conception of justice. She countered that Kohlberg had overlooked the feminine morality of care, which is based on relationships and responsibility. Gilligan never seriously engaged Kohlberg's involvement with the just community schools. Had she done so, she may have had to qualify some of the ways in which she characterized Kohlberg's moral positions (McDonough, 2005). Although in his moral philosophical writing and in his descriptions of Stage 6, Kohlberg emphasized the primacy of justice, in his descriptions of just communities, Kohlberg emphasized a primacy of care that went beyond the demands of justice. For example, in community meeting discussions that brought up problems of peer group exclusivity and the lack of informal racial integration, Kohlberg maintained that all members of the community were bound as members of the just community to care for each other. When a student had money stolen from her pocketbook during class, Kohlberg argued that being a member of the Cluster community obligated all members to take responsibility for the theft and restitution. His strong assertion that in a community everyone is their brother and sister's keeper went well beyond the duty in a liberal society to respect others by not violating their rights.

In linking justice to community in the just community approach, Kohlberg took a different view of justice than he had in much of his other writing. Justice in the context of a just community set limits to the demands that the community could demand of its members. The norms and rules of the community should not, for example, force the will of the majority on a minority or compromise the well-being of an individual student for the sake of the whole. On the other hand, by agreeing to become members of the community, members accepted the responsibility of working together to build community, which Kohlberg understood as a common life characterized by strong obligations for mutual care, trust, and collective responsibility. In a just as opposed to an instrumental association or in Sandal's (1982) terms an "instrumental community," members have obligations to promote each other's welfare and the welfare of the community as a whole. In a community the web of relationships, individual to individual, individual to group, and group to individual are of primary importance to all and efforts are continuously being made to strengthen and protect those relationships. In the kind of community Kohlberg sought to establish, concern for protecting individual rights is almost superfluous because the demands of caring based on the web of relationships preclude the violation of individual rights.

The kind of community envisioned within the just community approximates what Sandel (1982) describes as a constitutive community. By a constitutive community, Sandel means a community in which individuals "define their identity...as defined to some extent by the community to which they are a part" (p. 150). Within just communities, members are not only committed to common ends, but are intersubjectively connected. They hold their norms and values as a united "we" and not simply as a collection of separate egos. This sense of connection is a condition for

the possibility of students' responsibility for each other and the community as a whole. Thus the just community approach opposes the atomized subjectivity that characterizes much of American culture and much of school life (although this may be less true in extracurricular activities). In this, sense the just community approach may embody certain features of Gilligan's ethic of care and Gilligan's criticism of a rights-oriented approach to justice.

## THE SIGNIFICANCE OF BUILDING COMMUNITY

### Community-Building and Character Education

In spite of the growing popularity of community-building approaches as a tool of character education, little sustained interest has been given to the question of whether communities have moral value from their instrumental effectiveness in improving students' behavior and attitudes. What makes the just community approach unique among related community-building approaches is its explicit focus on the morality of the school culture as it is manifest in the moral quality of its shared norms and values.

Interest in building community and improving the social climate of the school is far greater today (cf. Schapss, Battistich, & Solomon, 2004) than it was when the original research on the just community approach began to appear (e.g., Power & Reimer, 1976). Since the 1990s, building community in classrooms and schools is a standard practice in character and moral education. The Character Education Partnership, Character Counts, the Institute of Educational Sciences within the U.S. Department of Education, the Developmental Studies Center, and Notre Dame's Center for Ethical Education are but a few of the organizations that offer programs designed to promote character through building community. Common to all of these efforts is the recognition that students thrive in environments that emphasize caring relationships, and give them a voice in classroom decision making.

### Self-Determination Theory and the Just Community Approach

Ryan and Deci's (2000) self-determination framework offers a very helpful framework for understanding why students thrive in community. Ryan and Deci note that all individuals have basic needs for competence, relationships, and autonomy. Environments that meet these basic needs are highly rewarding and motivating. In their exploration of children's transition to middle school, Eccles and Midgely (1989) called attention to the mismatch between classroom environmental structures and children's developing needs. A growing body of research now supports Eccles and Midgely's concern about the impact of the environment, specifically in areas relating to children's motivational orientation, sense of connectedness and belonging, and choice (Eccles, Roeser, & Vida, 2006; Meece, 2003). A consensus is emerging among educational researchers and practitioners that classrooms and schools should adapt themselves to meet children's needs. Not only should schools offer children a sense of community and belonging (Osterman, 2000), but they should also encourage student cooperation and a sense of personal control (Schaps, Battistich, & Solomon, 2004). Children need more than caring relationships; they need opportunities to collaborate with each other and to make decisions about policies and practices that affect their lives.

This combination of connectedness and decision making is an inherent feature of the just community approach. Community unchecked with a concern for autonomy could lead to a stifling atmosphere of compliance for the sake of peace and harmony. Such a community might be

considered caring but it would not be considered moral nor would it promote moral development. Such a community would inhibit self-expression and ultimately undermine students' motivation for engagement. The convergence between the just community approach and self-determination theory suggests potentially fruitful areas for further research. Both theories call attention to characteristics of the environment that may support or inhibit development.

In spite of the similarity of these approaches, the just community approach addresses specifically moral concerns not found in self-determination theory and even in character education programs advocating community. As its name indicates, the just community approach focuses on building classrooms and schools in which justice is a conscious goal and preoccupation. One cannot subordinate justice to another end such as student achievement, without violating the demands of justice. Of course, just community schools are also committed to fostering academic achievement. Yet academic achievement is embedded in the broader goal of nurturing the development of students as whole persons within society. As Dewey (1919/1977) noted long ago, the individual and society are inextricably connected. It is fruitless to focus on developing individual students without attending to the social context in which they interact. It is also fruitless to pretend that schools serve justice while being preoccupied only with individual academic achievement. Such a preoccupation is self-defeating. It also undermines the school's role in developing citizens committed to justice. If moral development is to be taken seriously as an educational aim, it must not be subordinated or made instrumental to academic achievement. The conditions that support moral development and academic achievement may well overlap but in order to protect the integrity of the former, they should each be conceived as worthwhile goals in their own right.

### The Moral Culture of Community

How do we go about thinking of schools as moral environments and what characteristics of the environments of schools are conducive to moral development? In one of his earliest and best known educational essays, Kohlberg (1970) cautiously concluded that a serious developmental approach to moral education would require a radical restructuring of schools: "The Platonic view I've been espousing suggests something still revolutionary and frightening to me if not to you, that the schools would be radically different places if they took seriously the teaching of real knowledge of the good" (p. 83). He described his ideal school as "a little Republic" governed democratically, with full student participation and with "justice... a living matter" (pp. 82, 83).

This idea of making schools "little Republics" led Kohlberg and his colleagues to employ organizational structures and procedures designed to help the school to realize its goal of becoming a moral community and in so doing help the members of the community to become more responsible and effective participants within the community. Education in this communal context involves "enculturation" insofar as members of the community are initiated into the norms and values of the community. The enculturation process is not, however, a one-way street from the culture of the community to the individuals who enter it. Members of the community not only buy into the existing culture of the school but dedicate themselves to transform that culture by making it more just. In this way the community undergoes constant transformation as it also transforms its members. The engine for moving the community forward toward greater justice is participatory democracy in which members of the community discuss the norms and rules they will adopt to promote the common good. This forging of community through shared deliberation marks off the just community approach from other approaches that foster community through processes designed to help students get to know each other and work together.

Although schools may generally satisfy the minimal demands of justice by few schools are devoted to the project of continuously striving to become more just and communal. The just community approach presupposes an ideal of justice within the context of community to which members endeavor to attain through their common life and collaborative efforts to improve that common life through common reflection and goal-setting in community meetings. Typical character education approaches to caring and community-building provide activities for students to get to know each other better, feel safe and comfortable in the classroom, discover common interests, and learn cooperative skills. These methods foster community by building bonds of mutual concern and affection. These approaches rarely, however, challenge the members of the group to set forth a vision for what kind of classroom or school community they believe they should become and what obligations might follow such a vision. Teachers, of course, often present an ideal of a classroom community to their students and lay down certain rules necessary for the maintenance of such a community. They generally do not, however, present community building to students as a project for all to share through shared deliberation and legislation. Even teachers who use class meetings to deal with common problems do not consciously structure the class meetings as a way of developing a more moral culture in the classroom. Classroom meetings may satisfy students' desire for a voice in classroom governance but not lead students to a commitment to achieving an ideal of justice and community.

Consider, for example, the following situation that occurred in the YES (Your Educational Success) Program, a just community alternative school-within-a-school for students labeled as "at-risk" in an urban Midwestern public school. The teachers noticed that most of the students were coming late to the weekly community meeting, held in a classroom at considerable distance from the previous period's classrooms, because they circumvented the school cafeteria rather than cutting through it. The teachers eventually raised the issue in a community meeting pointing out that community-meeting time was precious and the YES rules prohibited lateness. The students reluctantly confessed that they avoided the cafeteria because some students called them "mouts," which was a derogatory name used in the school to refer to the mentally handicapped students, who used to occupy the classrooms that now housed the YES Program. This revelation immediately won the teachers' sympathy and led to a problem-solving exploration of alternative routes to the community meeting classroom. One of the teachers, however, interrupted the meeting with a question: "What does it say about our community, if we simply decide to ignore what is going on in the cafeteria?" All of the students agreed that the name-calling was disrespectful and wrong. One student boldly asked whether it should matter whether or not the students in the YES Program were mentally handicapped. The more they discussed the issue, the more the students began to believe that the moral course of action was to show solidarity with mentally handicapped students by walking through the cafeteria. They also resolved to confront the issue of the name-calling head-on by saying something to those who taunted them and to the cafeteria monitors. The community voted that they should all take the shortcut through the cafeteria.

This example illustrates how the moral ideal of community imposes responsibilities on the members that may not otherwise be present. If such a discussion were held in most schools or classrooms, the teachers and students may well have commented on the inappropriateness of the name-calling and may have recommended that something be said to the cafeteria monitors. It is unlikely, however, that the group would have examined their responsibilities in light of who they were as a community. This sense of experiencing obligations to one's group because of the moral character of that group marks the just community approach off from other approaches that also recognize the importance of community-building and student participation in class meetings.



## ASSESSING THE JUST COMMUNITY APPROACH: INDIVIDUAL OUTCOMES

## Moral Functioning

Evaluations of the just community approach indicate that they influence all of the components of moral functioning, especially moral reasoning, moral responsibility, and moral behavior (e.g., Lind & Altoff, 1992; Oser, 1996; Power, Higgins, & Kohlberg, 1989; Power & Power, 1992). The earliest research on the just community schools focused on the extent to which they promoted moral stage development. The results indicated that they had a modest, but significant effect (Power, Higgins, & Kohlberg, 1987). The results also indicated that the approach was especially successful with students entering school at Stage 2, which was relatively low for their age-bracket.

More important than the approach's influence on moral reasoning stage was its influence on their other components of moral functioning. Through community meeting discussions, the just community schools helped to alert students to problems that they would otherwise ignore in their schools. For example, in the Cluster School, students initially dismissed incidents of theft and racially based antagonisms as inevitable in a large urban school. By the end of Cluster's first year, students expressed outrage over stealing and racial insensitivity and established policies to deal with them. Students had clearly become more aware of moral issues in their school and more willing to address them. This willingness to address issues may be understood in part as a growing sense of student responsibility and in part as a growing sense of student efficacy (Bandura, 1994), especially collective efficacy (Bandura, 2002). Giving students a vote helped them to feel responsible for the school. Making decisions and establishing policies fostered students' belief that they could join together to change their school environment.

## Civic Competence

In a study of the long-term influence of the just community approach, Grady (1994) found just community graduates to be far more involved in civic affairs than their peers from the same high school. It is hardly surprising that the just community schools would have an impact on civic engagement. In language reminiscent of Putnam's (2000) critique of the decline of participation in all forms of social organizations, Power, Higgins, and Kohlberg (1989) decried the pervasive "privatism" of American culture. This privatism is reflected in schools that focus on individual achievements and honors without a corresponding concern for inviting students' to take responsibility for the common or public good. The just community approach's emphasis on fostering student responsibility through an intense participation in a democratic community is an obvious remedy for the growing disengagement that threatens civil society today (Power & Power, 2006).

Concern about a growing lack of civic engagement has led to a renewal of interest in civic competence. Altoff and Berkowitz (2006) and Sherrod, Flannagan, and Youniss (2002) among others define civic competence as requiring the knowledge, skills, and motivation necessary to function in a complex democratic society. In our view, the just community approach appears to be a particularly effective way of teaching students certain skills (e.g., deliberation through public discussion) and of motivating students to participate in democratic processes. The just community approach is, however, not a complete approach to civic education because it does not provide students with a sufficient knowledge base or with sufficient skills to participate effectively in political organizations outside of the school. On the other hand, the just community

approach does give students a moral orientation to politics that may be lacking in most purely didactic approaches. Westheimer and Kahne (2004a, 2004b) describe three different kinds of citizenship: personally responsible, participatory, and justice-oriented. The just community approach encourages students to regard their duties as citizens as going beyond their personal responsibility to obey the laws or to vote. Weekly community meetings nurture a notion of citizenship as profoundly communal and participative. Citizenship demands interaction with others and the mutual construction of responsible rules and social policies. Yet the just community approach goes even further than that by asking students to reflect on and enact rules and policies in the light of substantive and procedural justice. Evidence from Power, Higgins, and Kohlberg (1989) indicates that the just community approach fosters the development of all three kinds of citizenship within the context of the school itself. Students range in the extent to which they become leaders within the community and advocate the moral ideals of the community. Grady's (1994) study of Cluster graduates suggests that their sense of citizenship continues to develop after they leave school, and a relatively high percentage of them appear to be justice-oriented. One way of enhancing the just community's influence on civic engagement may be through community sponsored service projects that would involve students in civic organizations outside of school and require students to discuss the moral and political dimensions of their projects in community meetings.

Research by Torney-Purta (2002) and Torney-Purta and Lopez (2006) indicates that civic engagement is related to students' belief and confidence that they could effectively join with their peers to improve their school. The just community programs challenged students on a weekly basis to work together to build community. Although students discovered that achieving ideals of community was a slow and laborious process, they did experience successes and certainly learned that they could make effective change by working together. Battistoni (1985) notes that schools with an authoritarian atmosphere discourage students from working together and foster passivity, dependence, and submission. In such an atmosphere, students who try to make changes are typically labeled as "troublemakers."

## PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

Although the just community approach was never widely adopted, a growing body of research confirms the importance of critical features of the approach such as moral discussion, student participation in decision-making, student connectedness, and community-building (e.g., Campbell, 2005; Schaps, Battistich, Daniel, & Solomon, 2004; Catalano, Haggerty, Oesterle, Fleming, & Hawkins, 2004). The just community approach has developed through its application in middle school and high school settings in the United States and Europe (Higgins, 1995a, 1995b; Lind & Altof, 1992; Oser, 1996; Power, Higgins, & Kohlberg, 1989; Power & Power, 1997). Each application presented its own set of challenges and each application contributed to how the approach was applied in subsequent projects. What have we learned over the last three decades that can inform our future work?

1. The just community approach requires radical school reform. High schools, however, which have been the main target for the just community approach, have been remarkably resistant to structural change. For example, in spite of research since Barker and Gump (1964), documenting the overwhelming advantages of smaller school size, big schools have become the norm (Cotton, 1996).

2. Involving students in democratic decision-making goes against the grain of conventional educational wisdom in spite of increasing concern about declining civic engagement (Sherrod, Flannagan, & Youniss, 2002). It is very difficult to convince decision-makers that students are capable of democratic participation with abstract arguments. On the other hand, those who visit community meetings are consistently edified by the way in which students discuss issues and take responsibility for the common good.
3. Successful just communities demand a substantial investment in teacher preparation. This is partly due to the fact that the just community approach is counter-cultural with its emphasis on democracy and a culture of moral community. As Oser (1996) notes, however, the problem is far deeper. Because of their focus on teaching curricular content, high school teachers lack expertise in and even receptivity to constructivist instructional methods applied to sociomoral interaction that have been successfully used in early elementary schools (e.g., DeVries, Zan, & Hildebrand, 2002). Comer (1989) in his work with under-resourced urban schools found that few teachers respond to needy children with sound developmental principles. Sound preparation in developmental psychology is essential for preparing teachers to implement the just community approach.
4. Participating in just communities fosters teachers' moral and leadership development. Longitudinal research by Higgins-D'Alessandro (2000) showed that over eight years all the teachers in one just community school developed from conventional moral reasoning (Stages 3 and 4) to (Stage 5). As they developed moral reasoning, they also became more adept at directing community meeting discussions. Regular staff meetings that give teachers an opportunity to reflect on past community meetings and to prepare for those in the future are particularly powerful opportunities for teacher development.
5. Funding is almost always an issue. Just community programs close for lack of funding. Often they are started with an influx of grant money, which eventually runs out. Even with "hard" funding, in a cycle of budget cutting experimental programs are viewed as expendable. The issue of funding is compounded by the fact that just community programs often serve children from low income families who lack the political clout needed to influence funding decisions.
6. Just community programs serving needy children require additional resources. The Cluster School (Cambridge, MA), Roosevelt Community School and Roosevelt Community RCS and RCR in the Bronx, NY), and the YES Program (South Bend, Indiana) are examples of just community programs in urban areas with high percentages of students in distressed circumstances. All four programs showed positive outcomes (Higgins, 1995, Higgins, 1989; Power & Power 1992); however, the YES Program probably achieved the greatest success of these four because it had the most favorable teacher to student ratio. Although all of the students in the YES Program were classified as "at risk" because of a history of truancy and because of unstable home situations, they succeeded as a school and as a just community because the teachers gave them the personal attention that they craved. Within a year after the just community approach had been implemented, the YES Program had a far better attendance rate than the parent high school, had practically no disciplinary problems, and had made solid gains in student achievement (Power & Power, 1992).
7. Finally, as Oser (1996) argues, just community programs should be integrated within a larger framework of school reform that includes a focus on curriculum. Schools are overburdened by the proliferation of special programs designed to address specific academic and social problems (e.g., bullying, vandalism).

## MORAL ATMOSPHERE

### Developing the Constructs

From the beginning, the development of the just community approach has been accompanied by attention to the moral atmosphere of the school. The earliest formulations of what constitutes a moral atmosphere were derived from conditions that were presumed to promote moral stage growth according to moral development theory and the moral discussion approach (Reimer, Paolitto, & Hirsh, 1983). The application of the just community approach to the prisons led to an interest in whether the environment itself could be categorized by stage. For example, a conventional prison environment in which the guards are perceived as exerting a strong and arbitrary authority might be classified as Stage 1 and a behavior modification prison environment by a behavior modification approach as Stage 2. Hickey and Scharf (1980) found that inmates described these lower stage prison environments than their own as "unfair." They also found that inmates in lower stage prison environments tended to resolve dilemmas based on real life issues in the prison below the stage of their competence as measured by the standard moral judgment interview using hypothetical moral dilemmas. These findings led Kohlberg and his colleagues to think more carefully about the role played by the moral atmosphere in not only fostering moral judgment development but in influencing real life moral behavior. These findings, moreover, prompted them to distinguish between moral atmosphere as an intrinsically valuable aim of the just community approach and moral atmosphere as a means to (or as providing the conditions conducive to) moral development and moral behavior.

The term *moral atmosphere* is a very general one, which may describe one or more aspects of a school's environment. Following the scheme developed by Tagiuri (1968), Anderson (1982) noted that school climates include four distinct dimensions: (1) ecology, (2) milieu, (3) social system and, (4) culture, which elucidate various ways in which the moral atmosphere may be understood. Ecology refers to physical attributes of a school. One might, for example, examine whether the aesthetics of a school contribute to the school's moral influence. School size is a highly significant ecological variable for enabling the face-to-face interactions necessary for moral discussion and community building. The milieu is defined by aggregate characteristics of the student and teacher populations, such as SES, moral judgment stage, and teacher preparation. The social system encompasses the structures and processes of deliberation and decision-making. The just community programs have a number of structures that are essential to its functioning: regular democratic community meetings, preparatory advisory group meetings, and disciplinary hearings. Finally and most importantly for the just community approach, is culture of the school, which emerges out of the interaction of the ecology, milieu, and social system over time. While the culture is the product of the other three dimensions, the culture can also influence the other three. For example, a school with a positive moral culture may show more care for its physical appearance, develop students' and teachers' moral reasoning to a higher stage, and adhere to its democratic procedures more faithfully than schools that lack much of a moral culture.

Given that the aim of the just community approach is to build a culture of community, Power, Higgins, and Kohlberg (1989) attempted to define and assess the characteristics of such a culture. Comparing community meeting transcripts from Cluster's first to second years, Power and Kohlberg (Power, Higgins, & Kohlberg, 1989) were struck by a dramatic shift in the way in which students discussed a variety of problems from stealing to attendance. In the first year, students spoke in the first person singular when expressing a personal judgment or in making a recommendation for the community. This took the form, "I think *a* is wrong for *x*, *y*, and *z* reasons, and I

propose a rule with a punishment suitable to deter that behavior in the future.” In the second year, students spoke in the first person plural in expressing a judgment presumed to represent that of the community as a whole. This took the form, “We are disappointed that *a* occurred because we value *x*, *y*, and *z* in this community, and we all need to take responsibility for what happened and make sure that it does not happen again.” The most obvious change from the first to the second year is the shift from “I” to “we,” a shift that suggests a development from an appeal to personal conscience in year one to a shared or collective conscience in year two. The appeal to this shared conscience is not intended to be a report of what most students believe so much as an effort to speak for the ideals of the community as a whole as if the community were a unified entity, a whole greater than the sum of its parts.

In addition to speaking in the collective “we,” the speaker in the second year voices disappointment that *a* occurred because *a* constituted a violation of shared values. Disappointment presupposes the violation of a genuine expectation. In Cluster’s first year, students spoke of stealing as a “fact of life.” They agreed that you cannot expect school to be any different from the subway. Stealing happens and the best that can be done is to try to deter stealing by making a rule with a harsh punishment and strictly enforcing it. In the second year, students expressed disappointment not only that stealing occurred but that it could occur given what they understood to be a shared commitment to live up to the values of the school. They really expected their fellow community members not to steal and were shocked when it happened.

In an effort to account for this dramatic shift in expectation, Power, Higgins, and Kohlberg (1989) noted that throughout the first year several community meetings were devoted to the problem of stealing. In the early discussions, most students were content to attempt simply to deter *x*, whether it was stealing or cutting class. Following the lead of Kohlberg and the Harvard consultants, the faculty urged students to consider whether they could have a real community if their rules did not touch the hearts of each member. As the year went on, an increasing number of students believed that community was more than a desired ideal, and they began to expect trust and care from their peers. As this change was taking place, students became less interested in controlling behavior through rules and punishments. Rather, rules and punishments became symbols of a shared commitment to upholding the common good. Violating the rules and less formal expectations of the group was seen as a sign of not caring about the community. Not surprisingly as students developed shared expectations, their behavior improved.

Power, Higgins, and Kohlberg (1989) concluded that the development of a moral community is revealed in the development of its collective norms and that the development of norms occurs on at least three dimensions. First, norms develop from reflecting the consciences of individual members to the conscience of the collective itself. Second, the expectation to live up to the shared consciousness of the community develops from being a desirable ideal to an expected reality. Later analyses would determine the extent to which members were willing to uphold their norms by confronting members who were violating the norms or even by reporting violators to the community. Third, these expectations went beyond behavior to shared values and reasons, which suggested that the collective norms could be loosely categorized by their moral stage.

Power, Higgins, and Kohlberg (1989) found that the assessment of the moral culture gleaned from community meeting transcripts paralleled that derived from semiclinical interviews. Having demonstrated a development with Cluster’s moral culture over four years, they compared cultures of the just community programs with those of the parent high schools. Their findings and those of subsequent studies (e.g., Power, Power, & Khmelkov, 1998) revealed not only a lack of shared community norms in the parent high schools but also several “counternorms” such as clique exclusivity that actually undermined the establishment of shared community norms.

## The School Culture Scale

The qualitative work of Power, Higgins, and Kohlberg (1989) led Power and Higgins to create a paper and pencil measure of school moral culture that resulted in the School Culture Scale (SCS; Higgins-D'Alessandro & Sath, 1997). The SCS assesses the moral values and norms of a school. Its four factors have high internal consistency: (1) students' relationships with their peers; (2) students' relationships with teachers; (3) school norms such as cheating, stealing, and vandalism; and (4) democratic and educational opportunities. Because it asks for respondents to report what is true for their school and the majority of people within it, the SCS captures perceptions of culture and not individual attitudes about their school, such as their feelings of attachment. Generally speaking, the SCS accounts for about 50 to 60% of the variance in students' views of their school. This is substantial and useful in differentially predicting student outcomes across different schools. In the Higgins-D'Alessandro et al. research (2006) large demographic differences among schools were not predictive of differences in students' prosocial attitudes and behavior nor of differences in their academic interest and attitudes; however, the school moral culture predicted both.

Research using the SCS suggests that the factors have distinct influences on student achievement and school engagement. For example, students' grade point averages are related to democratic and educational opportunities but not to the other three factors. The number of school-related activities in which students participated is related to the student relationships factor but not to the other factors (Higgins-D'Alessandro & Sath, 1997).

The SCS has been used and adapted to assess the impact of character education programs on school culture; for example in a national study of Community of Caring schools (Higgins-D'Alessandro, Reyes, Choe, & Clavel, 2006). The SCS has been translated into Dutch for a project that assessed parents' as well as students' views of school culture (Veugelers, 2003).

## The School Moral Atmosphere Questionnaire

Using a framework similar to that used to assess the culture of just community experiments, Brugman and his colleagues (Host, Brugman, Tevecchio, & Breem, 1998) developed a pencil and paper School Moral Atmosphere Questionnaire (SMAQ). Whereas the research coming out of the just community research failed to differentiate among the moral cultures of the comparison high schools, Brugman demonstrated that students in high schools that did not employ the just community approach, nevertheless, perceived the cultures of their schools as differing in significantly different ways. Mancini, Fruggeri, and Panari (2006) used the SMAQ and an additional measure of the norms with a sample of students from three high schools in Italy to show that what they call the "School Normative Context" influences aggressive behavior.

The SMAQ is improving to be a valuable instrument for measuring students' perceptions of the moral cultures of their schools. SMAQ research has demonstrated the importance of focusing on the moral atmosphere and not simply individual moral development. In a recent study of the antisocial behavior of juvenile delinquents and students who were not delinquent, Brugman and Aleva (2004) found that a low moral atmosphere was a better indicator of antisocial behavior than moral reasoning competence. On the other hand, more recent research suggests that students' perceptions of the moral atmosphere of their schools as measured by the SMAQ reflects more about individual students than shared or collective norms of the school (Beem, Brugman, & Høst, 2004). The variability of student perceptions is likely a reflection of the weak moral cultures of the sampled high schools. In an intervention study designed to help students to develop more common



perceptions of their school, Bruggman, Heymans, Bloom, Podolskij, Karabanova, and Idobaeva (2003) found that a more unanimous perception of the school's moral atmosphere was related to lower incidence of misbehavior and a higher incidence of prosocial behavior in school.

The SMAQ studies of moral atmosphere underscore the importance of the moral atmosphere for high school student behavior. They also reveal the difficulty in measuring moral culture in schools that do not take on the challenge of becoming moral communities. Without genuinely shared norms and values, students can only speak as individuals about other individuals in their school. The just community approach is one of the few approaches that provides the structures and processes for students and teachers to develop collective norms and values.

## CONCLUSION

Educational researchers and policy-makers are becoming increasingly aware of the importance of the classroom and school atmosphere for instructional success. They are also paying more attention to community-building approaches to character and civic competence. The time is ripe for a reconsideration of the just community approach with its radical focus on changing the moral atmosphere of the school. We now appreciate, as we did not in the 1970s, that the aims of student achievement and moral development are not mutually exclusive but complementary. Students are most likely to succeed academically when they are most fully engaged in a genuine community in which they feel a strong sense of connection and control. As radical as it may appear, the just community approach is not a "pie-in-the-sky" educational fad. It has been tried and found to work in the most challenging of circumstances. Whether it becomes part of a widespread educational reform or remains an intriguing possibility is in the hands of a new generation of educational leaders.

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# 13

## **Social and Emotional Learning, Moral Education, and Character Education: A Comparative Analysis and a View Toward Convergence**

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Anyone can become angry—that is easy. But to be angry with the right person, to the right degree, at the right time, for the right purpose, and in the right way—this is not easy. (Aristotle, *The Nicomachean Ethics*, Book IV, Section 5)

Aristotle's words suggest that humans have long been interested in how best to manage their emotional and social lives. Most recognize that their emotional reactions to events have significant impact on their social interactions and effectiveness. Many have considered the question of how individuals or groups of individuals might acquire more effective ways of regulating their emotional responses or social relations. Others prefer to frame the question in terms of how individuals or groups learn to guide their behavior in correct or virtuous ways. Many have looked to traditional educational environments as places to make progress towards these aims. Indeed, as one of the primary cultural institutions responsible for transmitting information and values from one generation to the next, schools have typically been involved in attending to the social-emotional well-being and moral direction of their students, in addition to their intellectual achievements.

Not surprisingly, moral education (along with its close cousin, character education) and social-emotional learning have emerged as two prominent formal approaches used in schools to provide guidance for students' behavior. Moral education focuses on values and social-emotional learning focuses on the skills and attitudes needed to function in relevant social environments. Pedagogically, the two approaches have come to differ more in practice than in their deeper conceptualizations. Moral education has focused more on the power of "right thinking" and "knowing the good," and social-emotional learning has focused more on the power of problem solving (Elias, Zins, Weissberg et al., 1997; Huit, 2004). Both, however, in their most discerning

theorists and practitioners, have recognized the role of affect (Emperies & Arsenio, 2000; Nucci, 2001). Now that research has caught up with this observational and intuitive understanding, both approaches are converging toward a central pedagogy involving the coordination of affect, behavior, and cognition and the role of the ecological-developmental context.

Paradoxically, moral education and social-emotional learning are values-neutral approaches to aspects of socialization. Acknowledging the role of context brings to visibility the elephant in the room in discussions of moral education, which is the source of moral authority or direction. This is an arena in which individuals and groups are going to disagree. However, from the perspective of America's public, secular education system in a nation committed to democratic principles, there are sets of values and moral principles that can be seen as consensual. Dewey has written about these with particular eloquence. And Nucci (2001) has found that even among religious children of different denominations, there is a consensus about moral values that transcend religion and degree of belief (e.g., most children would believe that stealing is wrong even if G-d commanded people to steal).

Yet, as it is said, the devil is in the details. What exactly constitutes "stealing"? Taking a friend's pencil and not returning it? Grabbing an apple from an open marketplace to bring home to your siblings when your family is hungry? Copying from a neighbor's test paper? More difficult in many cases is defining the positive value. What is "honesty"? Always saying the truth, all the time? Telling a hospitalized person how lousy they look? Pointing out to a classmate who has a problem with an activity in gym that he has not succeeded on 10 consecutive trials? Walking into class and telling the teacher you did not do the assigned reading?

Gather a group of educators or parents into groups and ask each member of each group to think about one child they know well. Ask the first group to think about a child who is highly responsible. Ask the next one to think about a child who is respectful. Have members of the third group think about one who is honest. Have the final group think about a young person that they would say is an exemplary citizen in their school or community (or if you are able to explain this without "giving away the answer," family). Ask them to picture the child they are thinking about and then write down or discuss what it is about that child that has earned the label of responsible, respectful, etc., in their eyes. Tell them that you are not interested in an abstract list, but things specific to the child they are envisioning. And then have each group come up with a consensus statement containing their observations.

When one leads a discussion and puts each group's responses on pieces of newsprint (yes, we will be honest, we really mean large sheets of Post-it pad paper) for all to see, a pattern invariably emerges and participants realize that to enact any of these cherished values and attributes, one needs a large number of skills. Responsibility involves time and task management and tracking and organization; respect involves empathy and social approach behaviors; honesty involves self-awareness and communication skills; good citizenship involves problem solving, decision making, and conflict resolution, as well as group and teamwork skills. And many of the skills cross-cut areas, such as the need for clear communication in citizenship and interpersonal sensitivity in responsibility. Indeed, there are instances in which children will "want to do the right thing" but either will not know how or do not believe they can do so successfully.

Efforts at moral and character education, however their objectives may be defined, are designed to inform behavior. Enacting their principles requires skills (Berkowitz & Bier, 2005; see Narvaez, chapter 16 this volume). Berman (1997) has framed this by defining skills that he believes are essential for the development of social consciousness necessary to live effectively as an engaged citizen in the modern world; Dalton, Wandersman, and Elias (2007) have identified a similar set of cross-cultural "participatory competencies." These are the specific cognitive, behavioral, and affective skills needed to effectively enact key roles in a given social context.



Lickona and Davidson (2005) have made explicit what has been implicit, or at least not featured, within character education, by articulating a distinction between moral and performance character. It is their way of codifying that “doing the good” does not follow automatically from “knowing the good.” Most current writings about moral education and social-emotional learning are aligned with these prevailing notions.

As moral and character education and social-emotional learning move toward what we believe is an inexorable and long-overdue convergence, having a sense of the trajectory of the SEL side should help practitioners, theorists, and researchers appreciate and put to better use the assets and limitations of the field. Because much has been written about the evolution of moral and character education (e.g., Lapsley & Narvaez, 2006; Lickona, 1976, 1991; Nucci, 1989; Wynne & Ryan, 1997; see also the present volume), the following will emphasize the development of SEL and elucidate its underlying bases. Again, it must be noted that in contexts with differing sources of moral authority, focal values and requisite social-emotional skills might vary from those that will be the implicit focus here. The considerations we present are relevant across particular sets of moral principles or interpersonal skills. In subsequent sections, we present thoughts about the implications of this background for linkages with moral and character education.

### THE EVOLUTION OF SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING (SEL)

Traditional views of the development and evaluation of SEL point to some of the first known writings about social and emotional skills (e.g., Aristotle’s *The Nicomachean Ethics*, cited in Goleman, 1995, as quoted above) and the increasing amount of interest and research on social or emotional intelligences over the past 150 years. They typically begin with Darwin’s exploration of the importance of emotion in evolution, in *The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals* (Goleman, 1995; Mayer, 2001). They also usually cite Thorndike’s proposal of a “social intelligence” component—an ability to comprehend others and relate to them effectively—to overall intelligence (Elias, 2001), although proponents did not find much subsequent support for Thorndike’s ideas. Sternberg’s work (1985) on what he then referred to as “practical intelligence” found more empirical support for such a concept, and Gardner’s research (1993) on multiple intelligences delineated and supported two distinct and related components—intrapersonal (emotional) and interpersonal (social) intelligences. The Consortium on the School-based Promotion of Social Competence (1994) emphasized the importance of integrating cognition, affect, and behavior to address developmental and contextual challenges and tasks. Prior to this point, the study of intelligence, emotion, and social relations tended to be separate; with Sternberg and Gardner’s work, it became clear that these phenomena were related to one another (Mayer, 2001), although others (e.g., Piaget and Dewey) had noted these interrelationships much earlier.

By the late 1980s, much evidence supported the idea of integrated social and emotional skills. Mayer and Salovey played a seminal role in rigorously defining and finding empirical support for “emotional intelligence,” as it is understood currently. In the first half of the 1990s, they produced a series of reviews and studies that presented support for emotional intelligence, provided a strict definition for the construct and a measure for assessing it, and demonstrated its validity and reliability as an intelligence (Mayer, 2001). Goleman popularized the concept and added some social components to the definition in his book, *Emotional Intelligence* (1995). Shortly thereafter, Reuven Bar-On’s (Bar-On, Maree, & Elias, 2007) extensive work in defining and assessing emotional intelligence came to prominence. Table 13.1 contains a summary of the way in which these founders of SEL defined the key skills and attitudes comprising the construct.

TABLE 13.1

**Primary Conceptualizations of Social-Emotional Learning/Emotional Intelligence Skills****The Salovey and Mayer (Brackett and Geher, 2006) approach to emotional intelligence**

1. Accurately perceive emotions in oneself and others and in one's ambient context,
2. Use emotions to facilitate thinking or that might inhibit clear thinking and task performance,
3. Understand emotional meanings and how emotional reactions change over time and in response to other emotions, and
4. Effectively manage emotions in themselves and in others ("social management")

**Bar-On's five key components (1997):**

1. Be aware of, to understand and to express our emotions and feelings non-destructively.
2. Understand how others feel and to use this information to relate with them.
3. Manage and control emotions so they work for us and not against us.
4. Manage change, and to adapt and solve problems of a personal and interpersonal nature.
5. Generate positive affect to be self-motivated.

**Goleman (1998) and CASEL's (2005) five clusters of SEL, each of which is linked to a collection of skills:**

1. Self-awareness.
2. Social awareness.
3. Self-management.
4. Responsible decision-making.
5. Relationship management.

**CASEL's Elaboration of Social and Emotional Learning/Emotional Intelligence Skills (Kress & Elias, 2006):**

1. Self-Awareness
  - Recognizing and naming one's emotions
  - Understanding the reasons and circumstances for feeling as one does
  - Recognizing and naming others' emotions
  - Recognizing strengths in, and mobilizing positive feelings about, self, school, family, and support networks
  - Knowing one's needs and values
  - Perceiving oneself accurately
  - Believing in personal efficacy
  - Having a sense of spirituality
2. Social Awareness
  - Appreciating diversity
  - Showing respect to others
  - Listening carefully and accurately
  - Increasing empathy and sensitivity to others' feelings
  - Understanding others' perspectives, points of view, and feelings
3. Self-Management and Organization
  - Verbalizing and coping with anxiety, anger, and depression
  - Controlling impulses, aggression, and self-destructive, antisocial behavior
  - Managing personal and interpersonal stress
  - Focusing on tasks at hand
  - Setting short- and long-term goals
  - Planning thoughtfully and thoroughly
  - Modifying performance in light of feedback
  - Mobilizing positive motivation
  - Activating hope and optimism
  - Working toward optimal performance states
4. Responsible Decision-Making
  - Analyzing situations perceptively and identifying problems clearly
  - Exercising social decision-making and problem-solving skills
  - Responding constructively and in a problem-solving manner to interpersonal obstacles
  - Engaging in self-evaluation and reflection
  - Conducting oneself with personal, moral, and ethical responsibility

*(continued)*

**TABLE 13.1**  
**Continued**

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5. Relationship Management

- Managing emotions in relationships, harmonizing diverse feelings and viewpoints
  - Showing sensitivity to social-emotional cues
  - Expressing emotions effectively
  - Communicating clearly
  - Engaging others in social situations
  - Building relationships
  - Working cooperatively
  - Exercising assertiveness, leadership, and persuasion
  - Managing conflict, negotiation, refusal
  - Providing, seeking help
- 

In a parallel track, educators were becoming increasingly interested in applying the ideas of social and emotional intelligence in educational environments. John Dewey (1933) was among the first to propose that empathy and effective interpersonal management are important skills to be conveyed and practiced in the educational environment. It was not until the early 1990s, however—contemporaneous with the work of Mayer and Salovey—that the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) was founded to apply the construct of emotional intelligence and its related theory, research, and practice to schools and education.

As Zins, Elias, and Greenberg (2007) explain, the term “social–emotional learning” was derived from a journey that has been driven by concepts, research, and practice. It began with a shift in thinking from prevention of mental illness, behavioral–emotional disorders, and problem behaviors as a goal and moved toward the broader goal of promoting social competence. Looking at the prior literature on social competence, the skills needed for sound functioning in schools, and at the emerging research on the importance of emotions, CASEL drew on Goleman’s (1995) formulation of key SEL skill clusters and expanded them (Table 13.1). Indeed, in selecting the name, “social and emotional learning,” CASEL recognized that it was essential to capture the aspect of education that links academic achievement with the skills necessary for succeeding in school, in the family, in the community, in the workplace, and in life in general. Equipped with such skills, attitudes, and beliefs, young people are more likely to make healthy, caring, ethical, and responsible decisions, and to avoid engaging in behaviors with negative consequences such as interpersonal violence, substance abuse and bullying (Elias, Zins, Weissberg et al., 1997; Lemerise & Arsenio, 2000).

Such learning is important to students because emotions affect how and what they learn, and caring relationships provide a foundation for deep, lasting learning (Elias, Zins, Weissberg et al., 1997). In a climate of ever-growing concern about academic achievement, attending to emotions was emerging as a matter of at least as great an emphasis as cognition and behavior. In a landmark book that brought together the research evidence about SEL and academic success from all fields, Zins, Weissberg, Wang, and Walberg (2004) concluded that successful academic performance by students depends on (1) students’ social-emotional skills for participatory competence; (2) their approaching education with a sense of positive purpose; and (3) the presence of safe, supportive classroom and school climates that foster respectful, challenging, and engaging learning communities. It is the totality of these conditions and the processes they imply that are now best referred to collectively as social-emotional learning, rather than continuing to view SEL as linked entirely, or even mainly, to a set of skills.

The logic model behind this view, in simplified form, is that (1) students become open to learning in environments that are respectful, orderly, safe, academically challenging, caring, involving/engaging, and well-managed; (2) effective SEL-related programs emphasize, impart, and develop key attitudes and skills that are essential for reducing emotional barriers to learning and successful interpersonal interactions; and (3) reducing emotional barriers to effective learning and interaction is essential for low performing students to learn academic content and skills deeply and for all students to reach their potential and apply what they learn in school to life inside and out of school.

CASEL's research (CASEL, 2005; Elias, Zins, Weissberg, et al., 1997; Elias & Arnold, 2006; Greenberg et al., 2003; Weissberg, Durlak, Taylor, Dymnicki, & O'Brien, 2007) has continued to show that schools of social, emotional, and academic excellence generally share five main characteristics:

1. A school climate that articulates specific themes, character elements, or values, such as respect, responsibility, fairness, and honesty, and conveys an overall sense of purpose for attending school;
2. Explicit instruction and practice in skills for participatory competence;
3. Developmentally appropriate instruction in ways to promote health and prevent problems;
4. Services and systems that enhance students' coping skills and provide social support for handling transitions, crises, and conflicts; and
5. Widespread, systematic opportunities for positive, contributory service.

These schools send messages about character, about how students should conduct themselves as learners and members of common school communities, about the respectful ways staff members should conduct themselves as educators, and about how staff and parents should conduct themselves as supporters of learning. In other words, SEL competencies are developed and reinforced not by programs but rather in the context of supportive environments, which lead to asset-building, risk reduction, enhanced health behaviors, and greater attachment to and engagement in school.

In CASEL's definition of SEL, one can see that the theoretical understanding of how children learn key social competencies has become more sophisticated than earlier views of social skills acquisition. First, there is recognition that social performance involves the coordination of affect, cognition, and behavior, and that these areas, as well as their coordination, develop over time. Second, skill acquisition is the ongoing outcome of processes that depend on nurturance, support, and appreciation in various environmental contexts. Third, much is now realized about the many accumulating influences on students, not all of which are consistent with the development of SEL skills. There is pressure and modeling in the mass culture for impulsive behavior, quick decision making, short-term goal setting, extreme emotions, and violent problem solving. Students' acquisition and internalization of life skills occurs in a maelstrom of many competing forces of socialization and development.

Research has gone beyond showing that SEL is fundamental to children's health, ethical development, citizenship, academic learning, and motivation to achieve (Zins, Weissberg, et al., 2004). It has also demonstrated the impact of systematic attempts to improve children's SEL. As they have evolved in the last decades of the 20th century and the early 21st century, these interventions have focused on fostering students' social and emotional development.

Generally, they are premised on the understanding that students experience the educational process as a social one; learning is facilitated (or hindered) by relationships and interactions

with teachers or peers. In general, a student who has more developed social “intelligence” will have improved abilities to navigate the challenges and processes of learning than one who does not. For example, a child who has poor understanding of how to effectively manage human relationships may be unable to communicate her needs to teachers or to others in the classroom environment; this will likely impede her learning. SEL curricula are also based on the growing body of evidence that students’ emotional experiences affect their learning and their demonstration of that learning (Damasio, 1994; Patti & Tobin, 2003). This is most effectively illustrated by contrasting the differences in information acquisition between a child who is enthusiastic about a topic and one who is not, or the differences in test results between a child who can channel her anxiety about an exam into better information recall and a child who is overwhelmed by his fear of assessment. Although SEL programs seek to develop social and emotional “intelligences,” these aspects are not viewed as fixed traits in that field. Instead, SEL programs aim to help students develop a set of skills that can help them better manage their own emotional state and their interactions with other people in the educational environment in order to maximize their learning experiences (Elias, Kress, & Hunter, 2006). Progress toward these goals is made most quickly and enduringly when programs adopt a two-pronged approach to SEL: intervention components aimed at individual students *and* at the school climate in general. Overall, it is critical that individual students learn about, practice, and regularly perform new thinking and behavior patterns in their everyday interactions at school. Yet it is equally important that SEL programs help teachers and administrators develop their own social and emotional skills and incorporate SEL paradigms and techniques on a broad level throughout the school (e.g., within the disciplinary and evaluative structure) (Elias et al., 2001; Elias, Zins, Weissberg, et al., 1997; Elias, O’Brien, & Weissberg, 2006). As these processes take hold, the classroom and school become places where social and emotional matters are openly discussed, valued, and practiced. When the educational culture changes this way, it is much more likely that any new skills being attempted by students will be noticed and reinforced.

Research suggests that SEL curricula designed in such a way have demonstrated positive effects not only on school-related attitudes and behavior, but also on students’ academic achievement and test scores (Zins, Bloodworth, Weissberg, & Walberg, 2004). Weissberg et al.’s (2007) meta-analysis of 270 studies of school-based SEL preventive interventions found that they had a significant impact on social-emotional skill performance, positive self-perceptions, school bonding, and adherence to social norms, with effect sizes ranging from .22 to .61. Findings related to reduced negative behavior, school violence, and substance use were sustained through a follow-up period of at least six months. Perhaps most salient in the current education climate is that SEL-related programs showed significant impact on academic achievement test scores (mean effect size = .37) and grades (mean effect size = .25).

Such a history hints at but obscures the contributions of three streams of influence on the definition of SEL, its implementation in school-based contexts, and its connection to moral and character education. Understanding this aspect of SEL’s background is important for seeing the converging and, we believe, intertwining pathways that will increasingly define these fields.

## SOCIAL LEARNING THEORY AND THE COGNITIVE REVOLUTION

Social Learning Theory (SLT; e.g., Bandura, 1973; Rotter, 1954) had enormous impact on the methods and techniques of SEL programs. It was derived from work in clinical and personality psychology and an appreciation of how cognitive factors led to the persistence of behaviors that appeared on the surface to be undesirable and even counterproductive. Rotter, a seminal theorist

in this field, studied under Alfred Adler and was highly influenced by his work with children. “Striving for superiority,” “style of life,” and “fictional finalism” are all essentially cognitive schemas that presage much of the later work in cognitive-behavioral theory. Bandura, in particular, observed how traditional, purely behavioral learning theories were unable to explain how humans acquired novel, unrehearsed, and unreinforced behavior from watching other individuals’ actions (Bandura, 1973). SLT therefore focused not only on the impact of modeling and observation but also the way in which individuals draw from their experiences to create expectancies about interactions with others. These expectancies, in turn, exercise strong influence on behavior.

Bandura (1973) referred to aspects of this process with his concept of the reciprocal interaction between behavior and environment; in contrast to existing, behavioral learning theories that focused primarily on how environmental cues elicited and reinforced behavioral patterns, he argued and found evidence to support how an individual’s aggressive behavior actually creates an environment that elicits further aggression. From an SLT point of view, solutions to aggressive behavior include not only helping an individual develop new behavioral patterns but also sharpening the individual’s observations about the contingencies in the environment and changing the environmental contingencies that support aggressive behavior in the first place (Bandura, 1973).

Bandura applied SLT to the understanding and treatment of aggressive behavior (Bandura, 1973); it is this application that is of most relevance to SEL programs. For example, he argued that, without providing a child with more effective skills, it would be very unlikely that her aggressive or antisocial behavior would change because her environment would inevitably, if infrequently, reinforce it. He also proposed that preventive or treatment programs be implemented in children’s natural settings, carried out by individuals with whom the aggressive person would have extensive contact (e.g., teachers or parents). This would increase the likelihood that new behavior patterns would be elicited and reinforced by the individual’s everyday context. Further, the importance of shared expectancies in SLT indicated that aggression was frequently a by-product of how groups of people interacted; because of this, Bandura suggested that entire groups receive violence-prevention interventions so that the social forces enabling aggressive behavior would be reduced even as individual behaviors were being addressed (Bandura, 1973). These insights informed SEL’s emphasis on providing students with new skills directly while simultaneously altering the educational context so that it supports more socially and emotionally “intelligent” behavior.

Bandura’s insights into the role of modeling in human learning and behavior also had a significant impact on intervention work. SEL curricula implicitly and explicitly rely on modeling by both adults in educational environments (e.g., teachers and other school staff across aspects of the school day and routine) and by peers (e.g., fellow students or mentors) to convey and reinforce newly acquired social and emotional skills. Bandura demonstrated how individuals could acquire new, more prosocial behavior patterns through observing others, a process that could be facilitated by the strength of the observer’s motivation to pay attention to the model’s actions, the ability of the observer to focus on salient aspects of the modeled behavior, and the observer’s familiarity with and use of all of the component responses comprising the modeled behavioral chain (Bandura, 1973). These and other facilitators and prompts are well integrated into effective SEL programming. Programs will, for example, put incentives in place for students to observe and practice new, more skilled behavior, provide structured observation opportunities to help students focus on a specific set of skills or responses, and help teachers structure students’ practice of new skills so that they can put together complex chains of socially or emotionally skilled behavior and responses (Elias & Clabby, 1992).

Generalization, in SLT, is a function of creating an expectancy about the likely desirable outcome of a behavior and its value. For this reason, the overall climate of the classroom and school (i.e., the normative structure) is important to sustaining prosocial behavior. Behaviors



must reach a certain threshold of repetition, reinforcement, and salience if they are to be internalized. As more influences in the environment provide messages contrary to the program, the “dosage” of whatever an SEL (or moral or character education program) wishes to convey in attitudes and skills will have to be higher before an intervention’s message is received and remembered. Hence, SLT recognized the powerful role presented by the ecological environment while also keeping in focus that it is the individual’s interpretations of the environmental contingencies (i.e., expectancies) that would ultimately be the most powerful influence on behavior.

### Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy

Many intervention approaches within SEL draw on cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) as the basis of their pedagogy. This approach, in turn has SLT as its underpinning. It was a short road from SLT’s focus on expectancies and the role of modeling to the observation of Meichenbaum (1977) and others that these expectancies were in consciousness and therefore likely to be “kept in mind” and influence behavior through the process of self-talk. Behavior founded on faulty premises—misunderstandings of the social environment, extreme thinking about how the world works or one’s place in the world, or strong but misplaced emotions, such as depression due to pessimism (all of which can be found in Adler’s theories)—is likely to be categorized as maladaptive or pathological.

A key premise for CBT is that problematic patterns of cognition, affect, and behavior are learned and therefore, can be replaced with more adaptive patterns learned in their stead. One area of CBT, social problem solving (Chang, D’Zurilla, & Sanna, 2004) captures best the two main strands of CBT that have contributed to SEL. First, problem solving has become a core part of CBT (Kazdin & Weisz, 2003) and is at the foundation of the vast majority of SEL approaches (CASEL, 2005). While there are differences in exact procedure and nomenclature (e.g., Crick & Dodge, 1994, use the term, “social information processing”), the common features involve a process of identifying a problematic situation, addressing the feelings related to it, putting a problem into words, defining a goal, generating multiple options, analyzing their potential consequences for short and long-term implications for self and others, making a choice, planning and rehearsing how to carry out that choice, taking the necessary action, and reflecting on what happened and what can be learned from it.

Spivack and Shure (1974) were pioneers in recognizing that what they called “interpersonal-cognitive problem solving” need not be taught only to individuals in clinical settings. Rather, a preventive effect could be achieved by building these skills on a universal basis, in the regular context of school and family life. Such skills would make it less likely that maladaptive patterns of thinking, feeling, and acting would arise? Others, such as Ojemann (1964), had arrived at similar conclusions and in the 1970s, programs to build these essential social-cognitive competencies began to be developed and expanded. These programs were built from the outset on a strong research base, and empirically demonstrated their effectiveness not only in preventing forms of psychopathology but more generally in enhancing wellness (Cicchetti, Rappaport, Sandler, & Weissberg, 2000; Elias & Clabby, 1992).

At this point, the SEL pedagogy and the CBT pedagogy have many points of convergence. Both emphasize the use of real-life problems but also recognize the benefits of thinking through how to handle hypothetical situations before dealing with affectively charged present situations. Both emphasize the processes of brainstorming, goal-setting, observation/modeling and practice/rehearsal of new behaviors, anticipation of potential obstacles and planning for them, reflection on experiences, and the use of prompts and cues as an aide to generalization. It is essential, from an SEL point of view, to recognize that generalization is viewed as occurring through skill appli-

cation and repeated mastery, in a large number of contexts, and over a long period of time. This derives directly from the SLT point of view that behavior is situational and that the strength of generalized expectancies derives from the number and salience of situations in which a particular behavior or set of behaviors has proven to be valuable.

There are powerful implications of this from an intervention point of view. Effective SEL requires congruence between any school-based program and the overall climate and environment and norms of the school. Interventions confined to one class period once or twice per week for even a whole year are not likely to be as effective as approaches that are coordinated across aspects of the school day, carried out and prompted continuously, and continued across multiple years to have a cumulative effect. It is noteworthy in this light that interventions emerging from the values education/clarification/affective education movements, begun around the same time, did not focus extensively on this set of implications. They were derived from a different set of pedagogical assumptions, which we will touch upon later.

### THE ROLE OF AFFECT

SEL as a movement grew out of the growing interest in emotional intelligence popularized by Daniel Goleman (1995), although, as noted, the term preceded his usage of it. Nevertheless, Goleman's work placed a strong focus on the role of emotion, or affect, in everyday behavior—reasoning, decision-making, and the like. Others had preceded him: Significantly, Piaget, in his relatively under-noticed work, *Intelligence and Affectivity* (1981), spoke clearly about the integration of affect and cognition and was pessimistic about attempts to disentangle them. He saw emotions as having directive and energizing functions, among others, and as vital for the implementation of intelligent action in the world. Therefore Goleman's emphasis was not new, but his renewal of it was accompanied by a resurgence of research in the area and a strong interest in emotion research on the part of significant funders.

The work of another individual, Carolyn Saarni (2007), has illuminated our understanding of the role of affect in everyday life. Saarni focused on the development of emotional competence well before “emotional intelligence” became defined, and her work is an essential part of that field's development. Her view of the eight skills of emotional competence takes a sophisticated developmental/transactional perspective (Saarni, 2007):

1. Awareness of emotional states, including the possibility of experiencing multiple emotions at levels we may not be aware of consciously at all times.
2. Skill in discerning and understanding the emotions of others, based on situational and expressive cues that have a degree of cultural consensus as to their emotional meaning.
3. Skill in using the vocabulary of emotion available in one's subculture and the link of emotional with social roles.
4. Capacity for empathic involvement in others' emotional experiences.
5. Skill in understanding that inner emotional states need not correspond to outer expression, both in ourselves and others, and how our emotional expression may impact on others.
6. Skill in adaptive coping with aversive emotions and distressing circumstances by using self-regulatory strategies and by employing effective problem-solving strategies for dealing with problematic situations.
7. Awareness that relationships are largely defined by how emotions are communicated within the relationships.

8. Capacity for emotional self-efficacy, including viewing our emotional experience as justified and in accord with our moral beliefs.

As one can see, Saarni's view of emotional competence contains bridges to social problem solving and other cognitive skills, much as problem solving can contain bridges to the affective domain. Her final skill contains a link to the moral domain, recognizing the directive and contextual influence that moral beliefs provide.

Indeed, researchers such as Adolphs and Damasio (2001) now view our emotional capacities as being among the earliest human capacities to develop and essential for sound decision making and relationship formation. They derive this in part from examinations of the consequences of isolated frontal lobe damage that prevents the integration of emotional information into everyday life. Forgas and Wyland (2006) conclude that rather than seeing emotion as deleterious to rational judgment, affect is better viewed as highly influential on what we think, what we do, and how we understand and use social information. In essence, affect is an integral part of our lives.

That said, its potency and perhaps its evolutionary primacy often lead individuals to experience difficulties in interpreting and managing emotional influences—what Forgas and Wyland (2006), refer to as “affective blindness” (p. 81)—and wanting certain things passionately for reasons difficult to discern or, in some cases, reasons that are faulty and harm-inducing. Of course, clinicians know well that affective experiences can sometimes become overgeneralized, exaggerated, or otherwise take on disproportionate influence on behavior; usually this is best interpreted as an attempt to preserve the individual from some anticipated harm. Regardless, in highly emotionally charged situations, people often suffer a decline in their ability to carefully and in detail examine all ramifications of the likelihoods and consequences of potential actions.

Forgas and Wyland (2006) suggest that congruence of affect, cognition, and behavior best takes place when affect is well integrated into the process. Their Affective Infusion Model implies that affective information is less salient when situations require less processing and are more likely to elicit a pre-existing or familiar response. In more novel situations, where inputs and considerations are more complex and scripts are less clearly applicable, we often have the most personal investment and so affect becomes an essential part of our understanding and response. Of course, how one creates schemas or scripts is not a matter of uniformity, and so one is left coming away most strongly with the view that affect is going to be a part of everything we do, to a greater or lesser extent, and there will be situations where affect may lead us astray, others where affect should be more prominently attended to, and many that fall in between. As Damasio (1994) puts it, feelings are not external to how we function and are best relied upon as both internal and external guides to empathy, to understanding the perspective and feelings of others, and to our decisions and their impact on self and others. This point of view has not been lost on those who are concerned about moral and character education and the process by which students make moral decisions and take corresponding action.

Nucci (2001), for example, advocates for a better understanding of how emotion is integrated into moral judgments. “Affect is part and parcel of adaptive intelligence” (p. 109); he argues that it is not useful to see it as somehow having any primacy. He notes that, from an evolutionary psychology point of view, basic emotional schemas and quick, automatic responses have a place in interpersonal relations, especially during infancy and early childhood, but become less adaptive in the typical social environments one encounters later in life. Gradually, the developmental challenge involves the integration of affect into cognitive systems.

Lerner and Arsenio (2000) point out that emotions appear to be stored as part of our complex representation of events. Consistent with Turiel's (1983) idea of moral understanding not necessarily being uniform across all life domains, they find that the nature of the affective charge associated with an event, situation, or decision, whether due to past or current circum-

stances, influences the way in which information available in a given context is used or valued. Nucci (2001) reviews data suggesting that some children who are aggressive believe, based on the history of their experiences and their interpretation of situations, that they have a right to act this way. In other words, their moral code is constructed in such a way to as to elicit none of the warning bells that might go off in other youth to inhibit their aggressive actions. So while cultures and contexts often provide strong socialization around social conventions and moral guideposts, individual and subgroup circumstances, particularly in valued microsystems (e.g., families, peer groups), can create competing frameworks. Thus, predicting emotional responses in groups may be easier than doing so for individuals.

Bechara, Damasio, and Bar-On (2007) provide an important explanatory mechanism for this phenomenon based on recent anatomical research into the emotions. They identify two key processes that mediate between an observed event and the emotional reaction and experience of the individuals involved. Secondary Inducers of emotion are activated by memories, thoughts, and feelings related to an experienced emotional state. As these Secondary Inducers are brought into awareness, they influence our emotional responses. The other process is Second-Order Mapping. The First-Order Map refers to the most immediate awareness of a feeling as a neurological representation of bodily changes resulting from an encounter with an emotional object, event, or situation, either experienced or recalled. Second-Order Mapping is a re-representation of this feeling filtered through a consideration of the relationship between the individual and the emotion-inducing circumstance and the integration of this information with the present bodily state and the surrounding world.

In essence, emotional reactions are the product of some degree of instantaneous and reflected representations of circumstances in their relational context, but many parameters of the specifics are highly nuanced and individualized. Bechara et al. (2007) report that lesion and injury studies are providing increasing neurological localization of these functions and show clearly how impaired judgment, failure to learn from experience, and compromised decision making in everyday life situations result from failures in the emotional integration system. Particularly instructive are their recommendations for what parents and educators can do to build emotional competence:

1. Foster awareness of bodily sensations and when they arise.
2. Track connections between feelings and emotional labels.
3. Develop mechanisms for controlling emotions.
4. Integrate emotions constructively into problem solving and decision making.

These recommendations are, and have been, standard parts of SEL approaches for many years (as well as increasingly reflected in moral and character education practices), anticipating the findings derived from neurobiology. However, for the introduction of efforts into mainstream socialization practices of schools, considerations beyond those at the individual level are clearly necessary (Dalton et al., 2007), and another theoretical perspective, that of community psychology and social ecology, provides this.

### A COMMUNITY PSYCHOLOGY-SOCIAL ECOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

SEL theorists and researchers have come to agree that SEL interventions seek to change not only direct, immediate reinforcement contingencies that maintain antisocial behavior, but also aim to alter entire systems through interventions that target classrooms—teachers and students alike—as well as schools, districts, and communities. This understanding began in part with Lewin's

field theory and his interest in examining the enormous variety of psychological processes that operate within a particular situation at a given time, and how an individual sits in the midst of an incredibly complex system of interactions between forces at multiple levels (Lewin, 1951). Lewin was among the first to assert that behavior was at least as strongly influenced by context as by individual predilections. This view was expanded by a community psychology/social-ecology perspective, which sought to define the multiple, interactive, and dynamic levels of systems within which individuals develop and adapt (Belsky, 1984; Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Dalton et al., 2007).

Children's social-emotional skills (and moral values) emerge out of an interaction with parents and other caregivers and family members, educators, medical personnel, and others whose responsibilities include navigating children through the socialization process. However, these interactions are framed by the nature of the formal and informal groups and organizations in which these interactions occur, the neighborhoods and communities within which they reside, and the overall zeitgeist that is communicated through the mass media. While social ecology theory is clear that small-group interactions are the most powerful developmental influence, the way in which digital media invade lives of families means that elements of the zeitgeist have greater potency than when events seemed more distant (Dalton et al., 2007). The implications of this are that the influence of SEL programs must be placed in a larger ecological frame. Interventions must be more encompassing and their impact will be related to their congruence with messages being imparted by other sources of influence.

Consider several simple examples. Programs teaching skills in delay of gratification must contend with social influences urging individuals to "just do it" and to take quick, and often violent, action. Pressures to be best or first will balance the skill of waiting one's turn. In an example that intersects both SEL and moral education, the discipline and skills needed for studying for a test are too often offset by an almost desperate need to succeed, and hence to cheat. In summary, the community psychology/social ecology perspective has led SEL researchers to embrace the understanding that lasting SEL skill acquisition and concomitant significant improvements in student behavior and academic achievement will be greatest to the extent that entire systems of psychological and social forces are addressed by particular interventions in sustained ways (Elias & Clabby, 1992; Zins, Weissberg, et al., 2004).

Our understanding of the background of SEL shows its progression toward an ecological, developmental, and systemic conceptualization of how skills are acquired and maintained and the nexus within which interventions work. We now proceed to examine ways to understand the current and potential pathways of convergence between SEL and moral and character education.

## AREAS OF CONVERGENCE BETWEEN MORAL AND CHARACTER EDUCATION AND SEL

In recent years, formal organizations have developed to help codify and promulgate theory, research, and practice in moral and character education and SEL. The Association for Moral Education, founded in 1976, was the first of these ([www.amenetwork.org/about/index.htm](http://www.amenetwork.org/about/index.htm), retrieved 3/25/07). The Character Education Partnership was founded in 1993 for the purpose of advancing the field in schools: ([www.character.org/site/c.gwKUJhNYJrF/b.1046953/k.C538/History.htm](http://www.character.org/site/c.gwKUJhNYJrF/b.1046953/k.C538/History.htm), retrieved 3/25/07). And as noted earlier CASEL was founded in 1993 to bring SEL into schools ([www.CASEL.org](http://www.CASEL.org)). That said, the time has clearly arrived when the advocacy aspect of these organizations must give way to convergence in the interest of children and advancing their common agendas, as well as the common aspects of their science and practice.

Huitt (2004) points out that fundamental to many approaches to moral and character education, and a criticism of some of Kohlberg's (1984) work, is a reliance on "right thinking" as leading to "right behavior." This has led to a pedagogical emphasis on values clarification/analysis/inculcation. These methods have not found strong empirical support. However, in more recent years, as the field has coalesced under the banner of character education in the context of schools, the connections between "right thinking" and proper behavior have been given greater attention. As noted earlier, this has culminated conceptually in Lickona and Davidson's (2005) distinction between moral character and performance character. They have urged that an emphasis on moral values is necessary but not sufficient to influence behavior and yield enactments that would allow one to be seen as having "good character." The latter, more often than not, is a result of one's actions. Clearly, this requires some theoretical and practical position regarding what behaviors are important for these enactments. As our exercise earlier about thinking of persons who embody different aspects of admirable character implied, such a perspective leads to greater convergence between SEL and moral/character education. SEL, as a set of basic interpersonal competencies, can be used for good or ill; but to be used for good, they must be mastered well—Responsibility, Respect, Honesty, and other desirable aspects of character all require sound SEL competencies; hence, the latter are participatory competencies in the fullest sense of that concept.

We wish to conclude by positing areas that we believe lie at the intersection of moral and character education and SEL. We do this by sharing observations based on a number of schools recognized as exemplary in SEL, character education, and related domains. In doing so, we attempt to align ourselves with others in the field whose past observations have been confirmed subsequently by replicated research.

### HOW TO CREATE STRONGER MORAL SENSIBILITIES AND MORALLY GUIDED ACTION IN YOUTH

At the end of *Democracy and Education*, Dewey (1916) provides a trenchant and prescient view of moral education:

The most important problem of moral education in the school concerns the relationship of knowledge and conduct.... The two theories chiefly associated with the separation of learning from activity, and hence from morals, are those which cut off inner disposition and motive—the conscious personal factor—and deeds as purely physical and outer; and which set action from interest in opposition to that from principle. Both of these separations are overcome in an educational scheme where learning is the accompaniment of continuous activities or occupations that have a social aim and utilize the materials of typical social situations. For under such conditions, the school becomes itself a form of social life, a miniature community and one in close interaction with other modes of associated experience beyond school walls. All education which develops power to share effectively in social life is moral. It forms a character which not only does the particular deed socially necessary but one which is interested in that continuous readjustment which is essential to growth. Interest in learning from all the contacts of life is the essential moral interest. (<http://www.worldwideschool.org/library/books/soc/education/DemocracyandEducation/chap26.html>)

Dewey's observations implicitly speak to the convergence of SEL and moral and character education and point toward, at a conceptual level, ways these approaches can be synergistic. Here, we wish to move toward some modest, pragmatic suggestions that may be thought of as first steps, rather than comprehensive, encompassing integrative approaches. A current individual



with Deweyan insights, James Comer (2003), has made the point that children cannot be taught character, but rather “catch” it from the adults around them and the nature of the interactions they directly and indirectly experience. That said, it is not obvious exactly what children need to be exposed to, or for how long and in what ways, if they are to become “infected” with sound character. Perhaps some readers can recall parents bringing their children to spend time with friends who had measles or chicken pox in the hope that they would get these diseases then, rather than just prior to a family vacation time. Sometimes it worked, but more often, it did not. How, then, can we maximize the likelihood that parents and teachers can expose children to the conditions that are more likely to lead to a strong moral compass and the fortitude to follow the directions being pointed to? SEL has a great deal to say about how well an individual will be able to pick up the cues and experiences being provided by the environmental context. However, even if the skills are functioning well, the question remains about what kinds of experiences are necessary, or desirable, to create a strong moral sense and a commitment to act on that sense?

Of course, as noted earlier, difficult questions must be faced, such as the perceived source of moral authority. Different religions will provide different moral codes, although with a strong degree of overlap. What seems true in studies of modern religious identity development is that moral education is best thought of as a comprehensive system of socialization as opposed to creating religious identity or adherence to a set of values by simply exposing students to a set of individual moral principles. Without a nomological net to connect the moral principles in some way, it is very likely that an individual will deal with morality in a highly pragmatic and contextual manner rather than having an enduring set of guiding principles as the basis for his or her decisions and actions. We believe it is for this reason that Dewey forged such a strong link between democracy (as an organizing principle for morality) and education (as one potent source of moral experiences) and why character education approaches have implicitly or explicitly used frameworks drawn from religious observance as an organizing principle for sets or pillars of values/morals (Peterson & Seligman, 2004).

The work of Brendtro, Brokenleg, and Van Bockern (2002) offers some guidance with regard to the kinds of experiences and circumstances adults can provide that are likely to build a strong sense of morality and moral action in young people. In their view, morality involves children having sympathy, empathy, and compassion for others. Sympathy refers to the capacity to understand what is happening to others and to take the perspective of being in their shoes. Empathy adds to this an emotional attunement so that one not only understands but also shares the emotions of the others in their situation. Compassion brings in a behavioral component, such that one understands, feels, and is moved to act in a situation. While the distinction between these three emotions is not precise, they serve to underscore that moral action requires something “extra” on the part of an individual and does not follow automatically from being empathic.

In contemporary society, the print and digital media bring many moral situations to individuals’ attention in the comfort of their homes. We see tragedies of hunger and disease, horrors of war and genocide, ravages of natural disasters. In the vast majority of instances, we are not moved to act, though we have a moral objection to what we are seeing and hearing. Brendtro et al. (2002), drawing on the Circle of Courage model, Kessler (2000), drawing on her work on spiritual development in youth, and Elias, Tobias, and Friedlander (2002), drawing on their work with parents, conclude that children need adults in their lives to provide them with a balance of Appreciation, Belonging, Opportunities and Support for Competencies, and Contributions. In essence, to educate or parent children in an emotionally intelligent way (i.e., so that they have a strong moral compass, an orientation toward moral action, and the SEL skills to carry out their action effectively), caregiving adults must treat children in ways that will foster what is needed.

### A CULMINATING DISCUSSION: THE CONVERGENCE OF SEL AND MORAL AND CHARACTER EDUCATION

Consider the case of an individual who is morally committed to an extreme cause, or at least one viewed as such by many. Such an individual receives a form of moral education that includes the key elements presented above. This person is shown much tangible appreciation for the impending action(s), often coming at least in small part from a very highly regarded, even divine, authority figure. There is a clear process of indoctrination into the special group, including rituals and procedure (often in the name of secrecy and security), so that a strong sense of belonging (and in-group/out-group boundaries) is felt. Certain competencies are emphasized, training provided, and opportunities for their use are delineated. Support is also given while competencies are being developed, as well as up to the point of use. Finally, the individual is imbued throughout with a sense of being a meaningful contributor to a larger cause. The actions being asked are far from selfish; perhaps the magnitude of the contribution is portrayed in proportion to the personal sacrifice the individual is being asked to make.

While there are many other influences that can be added to this analysis (such as local contextual or idiosyncratic elements), we believe the considerations we have mentioned are worth examining in future research and as guides to practice. SEL is a parallel movement to moral education in that it is about the process of learning more than the content of learning. That is, educating for morality and educating for social-emotional competence, as opposed to educating about morality and about social-emotional competence. SEL has evolved from skills via programs, to participatory competencies via settings. These competencies are not neutral, however; they are aligned with fundamental, common values and attributes of good character and sound moral development.

The education system has the responsibility of preparing children for citizenship in a democracy and for leading a morally-guided life. It is not schools' responsibility alone to do this, but since schools' ability to educate all children and move them forward depends on their climates being places where children can "catch" character, they cannot "wait" for other responsible agents to act.

Thus, converging elements of SEL and moral and character education are to (1) provide a deep and visceral understanding of moral character by organizing schools as moral, caring communities of character with clear values, and (2) ensure that children are given opportunities and competences to enact their moral character in deep and meaningful ways by becoming active participants in the moral community of the school. Thus imprinted, children will want to seek out such communities as places to live and work and worship, as well as create in their homes communities in which to raise children. This is the promise of SEL and its connection to moral education, contained in this abbreviated logic model: civil schools, engaged students, prepared and participatory citizens of character.

### CONCLUSION

From at least the time of the Bible and Aristotle, people have wondered about humankind's potential to learn more effective ways of managing emotional experiences and social relationships; SEL and moral and character education offer at least one possible route to achieve this goal. We have shown that two philosophical positions underlying moral education and SEL each has something to learn from the other. Proponents of SEL have acknowledged that skills require direction and that maladaptive direction, such as might come from extremist or criminal ideolo-

gies, can be pursued effectively through SEL competencies. Moral and character educators are recognizing that it takes more than volition and intention to act with sound character. Sometimes certain behaviors are needed to assert one's values when the mainstream is not in agreement. In other instances, lack of skills in affective awareness or problem solving may lead to an inability to see or take advantage of opportunities for moral action that may exist in one's environment. Proponents of both views now see the need to go beyond a focus on programs and content and look at the way in which individuals develop in the context of their ecological environment over time and how that environment can be modified to impart skills and values that can lead children toward productive futures.

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# 14

## Peer Relationships and Social Groups: Implications for Moral Education

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School is a social context. While teacher–child interactions during school are readily apparent, the majority of children’s time in school is spent engaged with and interacting with other children. Indeed, most of the interactions (both positive and negative) that students experience during a typical school day are with peers. Peer interaction has long been theorized to play an important role in moral education, and thus, investigating peer interactions during school settings is essential for promoting and facilitating moral education of children.

Over the past century, there have been two predominant views of the role of peers in moral development and, subsequently, moral education. The first viewpoint, and one that has received an enormous amount of attention and study, maintains that peers play a negative role because they influence youth by promoting delinquent and antisocial behaviors (Coleman, 1961; Hall, 1904; Wynne, 1986; Wynne & Ryan, 1993). In fact, there is a vast literature detailing the impact of peer influence on aggression, drinking, substance abuse, smoking, truancy, sexual activity, and other antisocial behaviors (Boyer, 2006; Brown, Clasen, & Eicher, 1986; Coleman, 1961; Prinstein, Boergers, & Spiro, 2001; Urberg, Shyu, & Liang, 1990). From this viewpoint, then, peers are seen to be antithetical to moral education. Accordingly, the work of teachers, parents, and other authorities is to decrease peer influence and to inculcate young people into the traditions and values of society by instilling in them a set of virtues or “good character” (Coleman, 1961; Wynne, 1986). Accordingly, within traditional approaches to character education, adults (parents, teachers, and other authorities) are responsible for moral education and peers are viewed as having a negative effect on these endeavors.

The second, more recent, viewpoint on the role of peers in moral education comes out of the cognitive developmental approach to the study of morality (Kohlberg, 1969; Nucci, 2001; Piaget, 1932/1965). From this perspective, moral conceptions such as fairness, social reciprocity, and



welfare emerge out of children's social interactions and social conflicts with others, particularly, others of equal status (Piaget, 1932/1965). The central tenet holds that it is through relationships and interactions with peers that children construct an understanding of morality (Piaget, 1932/1965). While Piaget's moral development theory has often been referred to as a "cognitive developmental" perspective, we refer to research using his general model as "social-cognitive developmental" to differentiate it from research on scientific reasoning (causality, space, time, and number). Even though Piaget wrote only a few books on social cognition—*The Moral Judgment of the Child* (1932/1965), being the primary source—these works provided the foundation for the current developmental view of moral education. Approaching moral education from this paradigm leads to the belief that peers are not antithetical to the endeavor of moral education; they are essential to the endeavor. It is through active involvement in peer relationships that children and adolescents develop moral conceptions (Nucci, 2006).

In our chapter, we examine the multifaceted role that peers play in moral education. We will draw on the theoretical framework established by the cognitive developmental approach that defines morality as prescriptive norms regarding the treatment of others with respect to the issues of reciprocity and fairness, welfare of others, as well as individual rights (Nucci, 2001; Smetana, 2006; Turiel, 1998, 2006). We will also examine research that has documented the positive and negative ways in which peers have an influence on moral development. On the one hand, we will explore how peer interactions have been demonstrated to facilitate the development of equality and fairness through negotiation and fair social exchanges. On the other hand, we will describe how peer interactions reflect hierarchies, exclusion, and bullying, which play a negative role in development. We draw on the current social-cognitive developmental theory espoused by Nucci (2001), Smetana (2006), and Turiel (1998) to review and report on the multifaceted nature of the role of peer interactions on children's social and moral development. We argue that social and moral development involves interactions that occur between and amongst individuals that, at their core, focus on the fair and equal treatment of persons as well as the maintenance of groups, and the assertion of individuality. From a social-cognitive domain view (to be described below), social interactions involve moral, social-conventional, and psychological considerations which must be coordinated when children make social decisions (Nucci, 2001; Smetana, 2006; Turiel, 1998). At the same time, we believe that children take an active, critical view towards peer interactions that involve conflict such as exclusion and bullying, and that these critical perspectives reflect the emerging moral awareness of the individual. Because exclusion and bullying occur in a social context, understanding children's perspectives on these types of behaviors and attitudes will shed light on the role that peers play in the development of moral understanding.

Specifically, our chapter will be framed within the cognitive-developmental framework of social-cognitive domain theory that posits that social knowledge is constructed within three distinct domains of social knowledge: moral, societal, and personal (Nucci 2001; Smetana, 2006; Turiel, 1983, 1998). As stated above, the moral domain involves issues of human welfare, justice, reciprocity, and individual rights (Nucci, 2001; Smetana, 2006; Turiel, 1983, 1998), while the societal domain is comprised of issues related to societal traditions, conventions, and other social norms that promote functioning within the social group (Nucci, 2001; Turiel, 1983, 1998). While issues that fall within the societal domain may be matters of right and wrong (e.g., traffic laws, calling a teacher by her first name), from our viewpoint they are not issues of morality in and of themselves. Finally, the personal domain is comprised of those issues that are not matters of right or wrong but rather, issues of individual discretion, preference, and personal choice (e.g., control over one's body, choice of friends) (Nucci, 2001, 2006). Domain theory posits that these are conceptually distinct domains of social knowledge that emerge out of qualitatively different kinds of social interactions and experiences. When making decisions in everyday life, individuals

must coordinate knowledge amongst these domains (Killen & Hart, 1995; Nucci, 2001, 2006; Smetana, 2006; Wainryb & Turiel, 1995). Further, these domains of knowledge are both independently and interdependently related to social development and social functioning (Smetana, 2006; Tisak, 1995).

Consistent with the legacies of Piaget (1932/1965) and Kohlberg (1969), domain theory asserts that development within the moral domain emerges out of children's interactions and experiences within social relationships and the intrinsic consequences of actions emanating from those relationships. That is, morality and moral development, rather than being inculcated in children through the teachings and dictates of parents, teachers, and other adult authorities, are constructed out of children's experiences within their social relationships and importantly, within mutual or cooperative social relationships (Nucci, 2001; Smetana, 2006; Turiel, 1983; 1998). In contrast, development within the societal domain does occur through inculcation; it is largely the result of the unilateral transmission of societal rules, conventions, and traditions that are passed from more experienced members of the social group (i.e., parents, teachers, and other adults) to less experienced members of the social group (i.e., children) (Nucci, 2001, 2006; Turiel, 1983; 1998).

In discussing moral development in this chapter, we will focus on developmental approaches to moral education that are related to the interactions and relationships that influence how children come to understand issues of fairness, reciprocity, and human welfare (Nucci, 1997, 2006). This is not to say that the development of societal and personal knowledge is not important to the positive and healthy social functioning of individuals within a social institution such as school. In fact, Nucci states that,

in addition to attention to development in the moral domain...moral education is also seen as including a focus on the development of conceptions within other domains of social knowledge (i.e., societal convention, the personal) that would bear on the capacity of students to coordinate the moral and nonmoral components of conceptualized social values and actions. (Nucci, 2006, p. 662)

Thus, given the limitations of space, in our chapter we will primarily focus on the role of peers and peer relationships on development within the moral domain (issues of fairness, reciprocity, welfare, and rights), the ways in which other domains of knowledge interact with development within the moral domain, and the implications on educational practice, policies, and programs within schools.

Before discussing specific processes by which peers are involved, we will first discuss four approaches to moral education that emphasize the role of peers and peer interaction. These are described to illustrate the qualitative differences between adult inculcation and active construction of moral constructs. Second, we will outline the different levels and types of peer relationships that have been delineated within the peer literature. Then, we will discuss the roles that these different types of peer relationships play in moral development in children and adolescents. Finally, we will discuss the implications the roles of peers have for programs, policies, and practices within schools and classrooms aimed at promoting positive moral growth among youth.

### PEERS AND MORAL EDUCATION IN SCHOOL: FOUR APPROACHES

Because of the assumptions regarding moral development inherent in the social-cognitive developmental paradigm, educational programs developed from this paradigm have focused more

heavily on the role of peers in moral education than programming from more traditional character education paradigms (Nucci, 2006). In this section we will illustrate ways in which peers have been utilized in four approaches to moral education: the just community school approach developed by Kohlberg and colleagues (Power, Higgins, & Kohlberg, 1989) as well as an extension of this approach called constructivist education (DeVries & Zahn, 1994); programs that have focused on social-perspective taking, conflict resolution, and social skills development (e.g., Selman; social emotional learning; cooperative learning); and the social-domain guided model of moral education that is based on the social-cognitive domain theory (Nucci, 2001) (for more extensive reviews of different paradigms of moral education see, Sections I and II, this volume).

Within all of these approaches, an underlying assumption is that moral education should focus on the development of students' conceptions of morality, including how these concepts are actively constructed out of interpersonal relationships, especially with peers (Damon, 1988; Nucci, 2006). From this perspective, then, pedagogical and curricular strategies that facilitate peer interactions, peer discourse, and social relationships are essential components of moral education.

### Just Community School Approach

According to Kohlberg, education in general is an "essentially moral enterprise" (Kohlberg & Hersh, 1977, p. 55), and as such, "the aim of moral education ought to be the personal development of students toward more complex ways of [moral] reasoning" (Kohlberg & Hersh, 1977, p. 55). Grounded in his understanding of moral development (Kohlberg, 1969), Kohlberg and colleagues posited two conditions within schools that would stimulate development within children: moral discussion and discourse within the official curriculum; and the total moral environment or atmosphere of the school (Kohlberg, 1975; Power, Higgins, & Kohlberg, 1989). These two conditions became centerpieces of his approach to moral education, called the Just Community School approach (Kohlberg & Mayer, 1972; Power, Higgins, & Kohlberg, 1989). This view of moral education involved transforming schools into just communities where students actively participated in the social and moral functioning of the school and where teachers and students were viewed as equal participants in a democracy. Kohlberg believed that "...rather than attempting to inculcate a predetermined and unquestioned set of values, teachers should challenge students with the moral issues faced by the school community as problems to be solved, not merely situations in which rules are mechanically applied" (Kohlberg & Hersh, 1977, p. 57).

Within this approach peer interactions, relationships, and conflict are essential components to developmental change in individuals' moral reasoning, as well as to the curricular strategies and school structures implemented to foster this developmental change (Power, Higgins, & Kohlberg, 1989). Central to this method was the idea that students should be engaged in discussion and discourse with their peers regarding issues of moral concern, both within the official curriculum of English and history, as well as in the overall functioning of the school.

Within the official curriculum, the just community school approach utilized moral dilemma discussions around issues that arise as part of the history or English curriculum. By engaging in adult-facilitated discussion with one's peers regarding issues of moral concern, students' become exposed to competing viewpoints and values. Such active interactions would cause them to reflect on the reasoning processes they are applying to the moral conflict and become aware of inconsistencies and inadequacies in their thinking, thus facilitating development to progressively higher levels of moral knowledge (Kohlberg, 1975).

The other central component of Kohlberg's just community school approach involves the ways in which decision-making processes were structured within the school and the role of stu-

dents in the overall governance of the school (Power, Higgins, & Kohlberg, 1989). Building on Piaget's distinction between unilateral adult created rules and rules that children construct out of interactions with one another, the just community approach sees students as equal partners in the decision making and governance of the school. That is, students play active roles in confronting and solving the moral conflicts and dilemmas that arise within the school through participation in community meetings and the student discipline or judiciary committee (Kohlberg, 1975). Again, central to these ideas was the concept that students will engage in dialogue and discourse with their peers regarding real-life moral issues that allow them to take the perspective of others and reflect on their moral knowledge and actions. These interactions lead to the construction of progressively higher levels of moral understanding and behavior (Kohlberg, 1975; Power, Higgins, & Kohlberg, 1989).

### Constructivist Education

The constructivist education paradigm is a direct extension of Piaget's theory of constructivism (1975/1985), as well as empirical research on children's social and cognitive development. One of the main tenets of the constructivist approach is that classrooms establish a "cooperative sociomoral atmosphere" (DeVries, 2004; DeVries & Zan, 1994) in which teachers strive to "...establish egalitarian, cooperative relationships with children and avoid being unnecessarily coercive" (p. 8). Additionally, constructivist classrooms should be democratic entities in which young children and teachers work together to solve problems and conflicts, children are given autonomy and decision-making responsibilities over classroom structure and rules, children are encouraged to engage in cooperative play with each other, and also encouraged to solve conflicts on their own through negotiation and cooperation (DeVries & Zan, 1994). Research comparing constructivist preschool classrooms with other types of preschool classrooms (most notably direct instruction that focuses on transmission of information and unilateral relationships between teachers and children) provides evidence that in constructivist classrooms, young children have greater developmental gains in interpersonal understanding, are more likely to use negotiation to solve conflicts, and generally engage in cooperative interactions more than children in nonconstructivist classrooms (DeVries, Reese-Learned, & Morgan, 1991).

### Social Perspective Taking, Peer Mediation, and Cooperative Learning

Building from the work of Kohlberg and other research within the social-cognitive developmental paradigm, a number of approaches to moral education have been developed that focus particularly around issues of social-perspective taking and social competence. Central to these approaches is the goal of facilitating the development of interpersonal understanding, social competence, and social skills (Greenberg, Weissberg, O'Brien, Zins, Fredericks, Resnik, Elias, 2003; Selman, 2003; Spivak & Shure, 1989), as a way to decrease peer conflict and classroom disruption. The ultimate aim of these programs is to increase students' ability to get along with one another by increasing their sense of empathy, social awareness, and social-perspective-taking skills (Greenberg et al., 2003; Selman, 2003). Methods used within these programs include providing students with strategies and mechanisms that can be used to resolve their own conflicts (e.g., peer mediation, resolving conflicts creatively, social problem solving), using literature and peer dialogues to increase perspective-taking and empathy (Selman, 2003), engaging students in dramatic role-playing to increase their social awareness and perspective-taking, as well as engaging students in cooperative learning groups (Aronson & Patnoe, 1996 ; Slavin & Cooper, 1999). While these approaches have been used with young people of all ages, they tend to be concentrated most

heavily in programs focused on middle childhood and early adolescence. Recent research aimed at assessing the effectiveness of social-emotional learning programs (an umbrella term for many of the strategies discussed above) provides evidence that these programs are successful and lead to developmental gains in promoting positive youth development outcomes (Catalano, Berglund, Ryan, Lonczak, & Hawkins, 2002), as well as interpersonal problem solving (Durlak & Wells, 1997; Greenberg et al., 2003; Selman, 2003).

### Social Domain Guided Education

Building from other cognitive-developmental paradigms, Nucci (2001, 2006) has developed an approach to moral education that is theoretically grounded in social-cognitive domain theory (Smetana, 2006; Turiel, 2006). Similar to other cognitive developmental approaches to moral education, inherent in Nucci's approach is the idea that children actively construct an understanding of social and moral concepts as they engage in different types of social interactions (Nucci, 2001, 2006). Extending beyond other cognitive developmental approaches, however, Nucci believes that the "goals of moral education are not limited to the stimulation of progressively higher levels of social and moral reasoning (Kohlberg & Mayer, 1972), but are extended to the complex task of increasing the ability and tendencies of students to evaluate and coordinate the moral and nonmoral elements of multifaceted social issues" (Nucci, 2001; Turiel, 1989 as cited in Nucci, 2006, p. 662). Similar to the just community school approach, Nucci's approach to moral education involves two main components that involve peer relationships: transactive discourse and school ethos or climate.

At the center of Nucci's approach to moral education is the idea that the formal curriculum is imbued with both social conventional and moral issues that teachers can utilize to promote students' moral development by engaging them in critical reflection and dialogue with their peers around these issues (Nucci, 2001). Similar to Kohlberg, then, Nucci proposes a place for moral education within the existing curriculum of the school that utilizes transactive discourse around salient social and moral issues within the formal curriculum to facilitate the development of young peoples' social-cognitive capacities. As with the moral dilemma discussion, transactive discourse refers to student-student peer exchanges in which teachers probe and counter probe students' statements, and demonstrate ways to acknowledge a common ground. This approach enables students to integrate divergent perspectives into their arguments and their thinking.

The primary difference between a social domain approach and that espoused by Kohlberg is the underlying theoretical assumption regarding moral development upon which the approaches are based. Kohlberg's model assumes that adolescents have not yet constructed abstract principles of justice, the highest stages in his system. Kohlberg proposed that only through the use of the Socratic method would adolescents be able to construct notions of fairness and equality. In contrast, social-cognitive domain research has demonstrated that children construct notions of fairness and justice as early as the preschool period (Killen & Smetana, 1999; Smetana, 1989); what changes with development is when and how these concepts are applied to a range of social and interactive contexts.

Moreover, domain theory research has shown that young children differentiate three domains of knowledge: the moral (fairness), conventions (rules and regulations), and psychological (autonomy, individuality). With age, children develop the ability to coordinate these various domains of knowledge in situations that are multifaceted. For example, young children understand that hitting someone without provocation, a prototypic moral transgression, is wrong because of the intrinsic negative consequences to others, evaluating acts of harm in the context of provocation, a multifaceted situation is more complicated, and, at times, justified. Accordingly, to

evaluate a social issue or conflict, it is necessary to fully understand the conceptual salience and breadth of the range of moral (fairness), social-conventional (group conventions), and psychological (autonomy) issues. Thus, Nucci proposes that students need the opportunity to recognize and coordinate the moral and nonmoral components of the multifaceted issues with which they are confronted.

In summary, the majority of approaches to moral education that emphasize the importance of peers and peer relationships stem from a constructivist paradigm (Piaget, 1975/1985). Central to this paradigm is the idea that moral development, and thus moral education, does not result from unilateral authority and top-down socialization, but rather is constructed out of children's experiences within mutual, cooperative relationships with social others within their environment. That is, individuals construct their understanding of morality and moral knowledge through engaging with their peers, as well as by engaging in more mutual or "peer-like" relationships with adults (e.g., helping to derive classroom rules and consequences). Hence, social-cognitive approaches to moral development view children as active, not passive recipients of information in the social environment.

While the extant research on the role of peers in moral education has been somewhat limited, research on the structure, functions, and development of peer relationships, more generally, is quite extensive. In the next section of this chapter we discuss the different forms of peer relationships and their associations with moral development. This information is important in order to more specifically break down the notion of the "moral climate of the school." We propose that a detailed understanding of the taxonomy and the role of peer relationships in social development provides a map for designing and structuring moral education programs that are developmentally appropriate and beneficial.

## PEER RELATIONSHIPS AND SOCIAL AND MORAL DEVELOPMENT

### Structure and Function of Peer Relationships

Research describing peer experiences is often structured within a framework of peer contexts that differ by order of complexity (Hinde, 1987, Rubin, Bukowski, & Parker, 1998, 2006). These levels include peer interactions, peer relationships, and peer group processes. *Peer interactions* involve the coordination of behaviors of two individuals in an interdependent interaction. Research from this vantage focuses primarily on types of social exchanges such as aggression, helpfulness, and withdrawal, as well as peer conflict.

At a higher level of complexity, peer relationships involve a succession of interactions over time between two individuals who are known to each other. Close dyadic relationships may include siblings, romantic partners, or enemies, but the association that receives the most attention in the peer literature is friendship. Operationally, researchers studying friendships utilize three main concepts in defining friendship: reciprocity, affection, and the fact that they are voluntary interactions (Rubin, Bukowski, & Parker, 1998). At the very least, friendships are reciprocal in that both parties recognize and affirm the relationship and that both individuals are similar in relative degree of social power. The second central concept in the definition of friendship is that individuals are coupled through a bond of affection. Researchers note that bonds between friends go beyond mere instrumental goals. It is the socioemotional ties that are held to form the interdependence between two friends. Simply, partners in friendships like each other and enjoy spending time together. Finally, friendships are not obligatory or prescribed relationships; they are voluntary. While involuntary relationships such as sibling relations may be reciprocal



and emotionally close, the experience of voluntary relationships is a little more tenuous and unstable. Because kinship or laws do not determine friendships, they are more susceptible to disruptions than are involuntary relationships. Without common ground and affirmation during formation and maintenance, friendships are sure to terminate (Bukowski, Newcomb, & Hartup, 1996; Laursen, 1996).

At the highest level of complexity, a peer group is a collection of interacting individuals who have some degree of commonality with one another or of reciprocal influence over one another. Two basic levels of peer groups have been identified within the peer literature: crowds and cliques. A crowd is a reputation-based group of similarly stereotyped individuals who may or may not spend much time together (Brown, 1990). Adolescents do not select their crowd affiliation; it is assigned by the consensus of the larger peer group based on their perceived reputation, activities, and identity. Crowd labels function to channel adolescents into relationships with those sharing the same reputation (Eckert, 1989). Cliques, on the other hand, are friendship-based groups numbering in size from three to nine children or adolescents. Clique membership is based on youths' voluntary choice and personal preference of friends.

In addition to clique and crowd membership, social category group memberships (e.g., gender, race/ethnicity) are also related to social interactions within the school. While these factors influence peer relationships at all three levels of complexity outlined above (Rubin et al. 1998), intergroup relations, in and of themselves, have been studied extensively by researchers interested in developmental changes in prejudice, stereotypes, and discrimination (Killen, Margie, & Sinno, 2006), as well as in the development of educational interventions aimed at promoting positive intergroup relations among youth (Cameron & Rutland, 2007; Cameron, Rutland, Brown, & Douch, 2007; Horn, 2006a, 2007). In our review of the literature on peer relationships, then, we will include literature related to intergroup relations in childhood and adolescence because we feel this literature has important implications for moral education.

### The Role of Interactions in Fostering Moral Development

The central tenet of most social-cognitive developmental theories is that social interactions are critical to the development of social and moral knowledge (Smetana, 2006; Turiel, 1998). It is through social interactions with both parents and peers that young people construct an understanding of moral principles such as reciprocity and cooperation, fairness, and human welfare. That is, rather than being "taught" matters of moral right and wrong from adults around them, children construct an understanding of how to treat others through their experiences of interacting with others and the conflicts and disputes that are part of all human social interaction. At the level of interactions, research has focused on two specific aspects of social interaction with peers that are related to moral development in children: sociodramatic or pretend play and conflict and conflict resolution. In both types of social interactions, young people are faced with the developmental task of having to learn how to negotiate their own needs, desires, and wants with those of the interaction partner or partners (Rubin, Bukowski, & Parker, 1998; Turiel, 1998).

#### *Sociodramatic Play*

Children's sociodramatic or pretend play (play in which children engage in pretend activities involving varying social roles and social activities such as "playing house") tends to be most common during the toddlerhood and early childhood years. It tends to decrease in frequency as children move into the upper elementary grades when they begin to participate in more organized and formally structured social activities (Goncu, 1993; Rubin, Bukowski, & Parker, 1998).

Research on children's sociodramatic play with peers, however, demonstrates that such social interactions provide a "safe" space in which children can explore morally relevant issues of trust, reciprocity, and fairness because they have opportunities to try out various ways of interacting with social others (Dunn, 2006; Goncu, 1993). For example, by playing a role within a sociodramatic play context, children can explore emotions and feelings that may be frightening to discuss outside of the play context, but also can gain feedback from their peers regarding their emergent understandings of socio-moral issues (Dunn, 2006).

Additionally, because it is completely child generated and directed sociodramatic or pretend play requires that participants within the social interaction discuss and negotiate the script or rules of the play episode and coordinate their own position with that of the others involved (Dunn, 2006; Goncu, 1993). That is, children must determine what roles will be enacted, who will play which roles, and the general context of the pretend episode, without adult guidance or input. In determining these aspects of the social interaction, conflict is certain to arise (e.g., both play partners want to be the mommy). Because the continuation of the play episode is contingent upon coming to an agreed upon resolution to the conflict, however, children must learn how to, and are likely motivated to, resolve these conflicts in ways that are fair and equitable to all parties involved (Dunn, 2006). In the above example, then, the children may resolve the conflict by determining that they can both be mommies or that they can take turns being the mommy, and that both of these options would be fair. Significantly, these interactions can occur in the absence of adult direction.

Research on sociodramatic play suggests that when children increase their engagement in these types of social interactions with peers, they are more interpersonally oriented regarding moral transgressions (Dunn, Brown, & McGuire, 1995; Dunn, Cutting, & Demetriou, 2000; Hughes & Dunn, 2000); are better able to take the perspective of others or understand others' mental states (Astington & Jenkins, 1995; Garvey, 1990; Youngblood & Dunn, 1995); have higher levels of intersubjectivity (Goncu, 1993); and are more socially competent (Garvey 1990). Dunn and Hughes (2001), however, provide a note of caution regarding sociodramatic play and the development of morality in suggesting that the content of pretend play has implications for developmental outcomes within children. In a study investigating the impact of play types, they found that violent forms of pretend play were related to lower levels of moral development and higher levels of conflictual and disruptive behavior. Thus, while sociodramatic play provides a rich context in which children can explore sociomoral issues with their peers, it is not likely that all pretend play will have the desired outcome of promoting positive development among the play partners.

### *Peer Conflict*

Given the central role of conflict in Piaget's theory of development, a vast and rich literature on the structure, function, contextual variation, and development of peer conflict exists within the developmental literature. Due to space constraints, a complete review of this literature is not practical (for reviews, see Hartup, Laursen, Stewart, & Eastenson, 1988; Laursen, Finklestein, & Betts, 2001; Shantz & Hartup, 1992). In this section we will focus on two components of peer conflict: developmental changes in conflict resolution strategies and contextual and relational differences in peer conflicts.

While conflict can exist within any type of relationship (e.g., parent-child; peer-peer) or any level of peer relationship (interaction, friendship, group), peer conflict represents a particular type of social interaction that is central to the development of concepts of morality. Laursen and colleagues (Laursen et al., 2001) suggest that conflict and subsequently conflict resolution among

peers are central to the study of development because they represent a challenge which requires children to grapple with issues of fairness and justice, to recognize and regulate their emotions, and to coordinate their own needs and desires with those of another (Fabes & Eisenberg, 1992; Killen & Nucci, 1995; Nucci, Killen, & Smetana, 1996). Further, Laursen and colleagues suggest that learning to solve conflicts with peers amicably is central to the development of social relationships, and to overall adaptive social functioning (Laursen et al., 2001).

Conflict is a common element of social interactions and social relationships at all ages. Conflict resolution strategies that individuals apply to their disputes with their peers, however, tend to change with age (Hartup, 1992; Laursen et al., 2001; Shantz, 1987). Within a conflict episode, individuals can engage in a number of strategies to resolve or end the conflict, including compromise or negotiation, appealing to a third party, disengagement (withdrawing from the conflict or moving onto a different activity), or coercion (where one member submits to another) (Jensen-Campbell, Graziano, & Hair, 1996; Laursen et al., 2001). Research provides evidence that while negotiation and compromise are preferred conflict resolution strategies, in general, the use of these strategies, in favor of disengagement and coercion, increases with age (Laursen et al., 2001). As young people gain in social-cognitive maturity and experience they become better able to resolve conflicts through compromise and negotiation, rather than through the imposition of their will onto others (Hartup, 1996; Laursen & Collins, 1994; Selman, 1980; Youniss & Smollar, 1985).

Research also provides evidence, however, that conflict resolution strategies are sensitive to relational differences. For example, coercion and disengagement are more commonly utilized in conflicts with acquaintances and siblings, while negotiation is the preferred strategy in conflicts with friends and romantic partners (Laursen et al., 2001), thus, underscoring the important role that peer relationships, particularly friendships, play in fostering moral development.

### The Role of Friendships in Fostering Moral Development

There are two main rationales that explain why friendship relations are ideal contexts for children and adolescents to discover and practice moral concerns (Damon, 1988). First, recall that friendships are defined by high levels of affection as well as the fact that they are voluntary relationships, susceptible to termination. Accordingly, members of a friendship are decidedly motivated to attend to the friendship's norms and standards and to ultimately act in ways that will preserve the relationship. Second, friendships are almost always equal in status, especially when compared to adult-child relationships. This qualitative difference between types of relationships is illustrated with a discussion of how friends influence the development of *reciprocity*, which is defined as a principle of give and take within social interactions.

#### *Reciprocity and Fairness*

From the earliest of life stages, interactions are marked by reciprocal exchanges that define a relationship as social. Parent and infant interactions involve matched actions such as smiles and laughter that are later followed by more complex, turn-taking exchanges (Bugental & Goodnow, 1998). During childhood, exchanges between parent and child continue, but are characterized by one party (parent) directing the actions of the other party (child). This *reciprocity by complement* is contrasted with what Youniss (1980) termed *direct reciprocity*, where each party maintains equal social power and is free to act and respond without constraint from the other. Many theorists argue that this qualitative difference in types of interactions provides the context for the development of reciprocity and mutual understanding that forms a basis for understanding and practicing more complex moral concerns such as fairness, honesty, and kindness.

In contrast with adult-child relationships, both individuals in a friendship share a more equivalent respect for another's views and needs. Thus, decisions and resolutions are not made unilaterally, but by consensual agreement or mutual respect. As described by Piaget (1932/1965), when children experience rules in relations based on constraint (parent-child relations), they see rules as unchangeable properties of the external world. In such a view, fairness is dictated by the rule. On the other hand, with increasing experience in relations of mutual respect and direct reciprocity, children begin to see that rules are not so sacred and unchangeable. Specifically, they come to learn that rules come to exist as agreed upon uniformities created by a consensus from people operating as equals. From this view, fairness dictates the rule, not the other way around. In practical terms, what makes a rule moral is the fact that it is fair to both individuals, not because it was prescribed by an external authority. Thus, when presented with differences of opinion or decisions about fairness, children and adolescents often find discussion and debate over multiple perspectives easier with friends than they do with parents (Schonert-Reichl, 1999). Many theorists conclude then, that while child-parent relations are linked to the construction of a respect for social order, obedience, and convention, friendship relations are linked to the development of elemental moral concerns such as reciprocity, fairness, and cooperation (Damon, 1988; Hartup, 1996).

Research has described links between the development of understandings about specific moral concerns and friendship from childhood to adolescence. For example, Youniss (1980) proposed that *reciprocity* underlies friendship conceptions at all ages. In his research, he asked children to generate descriptions of simple interactions where individuals behaved kindly or unkindly. Utilizing different dyadic relations (adult/child, child/child, and child/friend) he was able to identify a trend in children's reflections of friendships that he claimed stems from maturing understanding and experience with interpersonal reciprocity. Younger children viewed reciprocity literally in that one's actions should equally match another's. During this time, friends are seen as playmates with whom one can share. Nine- to eleven-year-old children were found to include cooperation in their notion of reciprocity. At this age, behaviors and attitudes were adjusted for the other in an attempt to achieve interpersonal equality. Friends are people who one knows well, and with whom one has common interests and similar abilities. Adolescent friendships were found to transcend the momentary interactions as the identity of the relationship shifts from the "you-me" dyad to a unitary "we" whose ongoing existence depends on mutual responsibility, support, and caring. In sum, with age, children's concept of reciprocity develops from a fair exchange to a communal orientation, where the friend's needs and desires are addressed because each is concerned with each other's and the relationship's welfare (Aboud & Mendelson, 1996). Consequently, many argue that in friendship relations, children and adolescents are provided opportunities to discover others' needs and, with age, become increasingly motivated to be sensitive to these needs.

### *Prosocial Behaviors*

Endorsed by the commonsense hypothesis that people are influenced by the attitudes and behaviors of their friends, a great deal of research has focused on the negative influence of friends, noting that friends are similar in their orientation toward antisocial behavior (Hamm, 2000) and aggression (Poulin, Cillessen, Hubbard, & Coie, 1997). At the same time, however, research has indicated that friends are influential in the development of prosocial behavior. At the most basic level, prosocial behavior is more likely to occur between friends than between nonfriends (Berndt, 1985) and friends are more similar than nonfriends in the degree to which they engage in prosocial behaviors such as volunteering, sharing, and helping (Wentzel & Caldwell, 1997).

In an oft-cited examination of friend influence, Berndt (1979) assessed age related responses to hypothetical scenarios where friends urged the child to perform antisocial, neutral, and prosocial behaviors. Pressure to conform to a friend's antisocial goals was found to increase from third to ninth grade and decrease from ninth to twelfth grade. What is often overlooked in references to the study, however, is the fact that conformity to friends regarding prosocial behaviors was higher than antisocial behaviors across all ages.

Moving beyond issues of conformity, researchers have found that friends' prosocial behavior during the sixth grade predicted changes in target participants' behavior two years later (Wentzell, Barry, & Caldwell, 2004) and more recently, research has attempted to identify theoretical models that can explain the processes by which friends are influential. Using a social-cognitive approach, Barry and Wentzel (2006) demonstrated that friends' behaviors predicted adolescents' motivation to engage in prosocial behavior (prosocial goal pursuit), which, in turn predicted adolescent prosocial behaviors. Moreover, they found that the quality and frequency of interactions moderated the association between friend's prosocial behavior and prosocial goal pursuit.

### The Role of Groups in Fostering Moral Development

Child and adolescent peer relationships at the group level present a unique context in relation to the development of morality. Peer groups provide members with a network of associated norms, conventions, and social organizational structures that channel behavior and beliefs. Children and adolescents are challenged to coordinate and weigh attention to group norms against individuals' needs, as well as issues of reciprocity, welfare, and justice. Thus, peer interactions and relationships at the group level are necessarily complex and multifaceted and often involve issues such as peer group exclusion and inclusion, peer harassment, and social aggression, as well as issues related to intergroup relationships more generally. Due to the negative and harmful consequences that social exclusion, peer harassment, or discrimination can have for youth, these issues hold particular salience for individuals interested in moral education, as well as researchers interested in understanding moral and social development.

### Inclusion and Exclusion in Children's and Adolescents' Groups

In social interactions, individuals are faced with issues related to inclusion and exclusion almost daily. In particular, as young people negotiate their peer interactions and networks they must coordinate their developing understanding of groups and group norms with their understanding of people as psychological systems in determining whether excluding someone from a group is legitimate and fair even when it may be harmful to the other person. For example, in choosing individuals to participate on a sports team, young people must weigh factors such as the individual's skill or ability in the sport, the team's overall functioning and effectiveness, the purpose or motivation for the game (to have fun or to win), as well as the feelings of the individuals being chosen. In competitive situations, exclusion of those who do not possess the requisite skill or ability is seen as legitimate, fair, and necessary in order for the team to function and be effective in competition. At the same time, however, excluding someone from the team because of group membership categories, such as gender, race, or ethnicity (e.g., "She can't join because she is a girl") may not be legitimate because the reason for the exclusion is based solely on membership in a particular group rather than on the individuals' skills or abilities.

For the past several years, Killen and colleagues have been investigating peer group inclusion and exclusion and how children and adolescents reason and make decisions regarding this complex social phenomenon (Killen, Margie, & Sinno, 2006; Killen, Sinno, & Margie, 2007;

Horn, 2003, 2006b). Overall, the results of numerous studies suggest that the majority of children and adolescents view straightforward peer group exclusion as wrong, and use moral reasons such as unfairness or discrimination when it is based solely on an individual's membership within a particular social group (e.g., gender, race, peer group). The results also indicate, however, that several factors are related to how young people reason about issues of inclusion and exclusion and whether or not they prioritize the conventional needs (group functioning and group maintenance) and personal needs (individuals' prerogative to hang out with who they wish) over the moral implications of excluding someone from a group. Further, in situations that are ambiguous or complex, stereotypes and biases often are invoked. When children give priority to morality varies as a function of the participant's age, gender, ethnicity as well as contextual factors, such as the target of exclusion and social identity.

While, overall, the majority of children and adolescents evaluate exclusion as wrong, early and middle adolescents are more likely than younger children or older adolescents to endorse the legitimacy of exclusion and make appeals to such issues as personal prerogative and group norms in justifying their decision (Horn, 2003; Horn, Killen, & Stangor, 1999; Killen & Stangor, 2001). In early and middle adolescence, individuals are coming to a more complex understanding of the nature and function of social groups, group conventions and norms, as well as their own emerging identities and their sense of personal prerogative and autonomy and as a result they begin to use the peer group context as a place to test out and make sense of these new understandings (Horn, 2004a). During this developmental period, then, as adolescents are dealing with the complex issues of trying to balance the needs to develop a personal identity that is unique with the need to "fit in" and belong to a peer group, they are often more likely to prioritize group functioning and group norms, as well as individual prerogative, over issues of fairness and harm, in making exclusion and inclusion decisions (Horn, 2003, 2004a).

As adolescents develop a sense of their personal identity as separate and unique from both their family and the peer group and as their understanding of social systems and groups develops, they become more likely to prioritize moral issues over nonmoral issues in making decisions about peer group exclusion than they were during early and middle adolescence. In addition to age, particular features of the exclusion context are also related to variation in judgments about exclusion. In particular, judgments vary by the type of relationships inherent in the group (intimate versus nonintimate) as well as the complexity of the exclusion decision (e.g., degree of information provided; excluding one person versus having to choose one individual over another).

Across multiple studies, Killen and colleagues have found that individuals are more likely to endorse exclusion as legitimate in contexts that are intimate (e.g., friendships, dating relationships) than in contexts that are less intimate (e.g., extracurricular club or school), and were more likely to justify these decisions by making appeals to personal choice and personal prerogative (Killen, Lee-Kim, McGlothlin, & Stangor, 2002; Killen, Stangor, Price, Horn, & Sechrist, 2004). This research suggests then, that children and adolescents view intimate social relationships as a matter of personal choice and thus are less likely to view exclusion in these circumstances in moral terms.

In addition to the type of the relationship influencing individuals' exclusion judgments, the degree of complexity of the exclusion situation also influences children's and adolescents' reasoning about exclusion. This is due, in part, to the different factors that individuals have to weigh and coordinate in making their judgments. For example, in situations involving having to make a choice between two individuals wanting to be included in a group, children and adolescents must coordinate and weigh the individual's needs and merit with the needs, structure, and function of the group. In these situations, particularly when relevant information regarding the individuals is absent, stereotypes, in-group bias, and group functioning are much more likely to factor into



children's and adolescents' judgments (Horn, 2003; Killen & Stangor, 2001) and to overlay issues of fairness, harm, or discrimination. For example, it is better to include the girl (than the boy) in the ballet club because she will know what to do and the group will function better.

In these cases then, individuals who are perceived to "fit" the normative assumptions or stereotypes of what a group member should be or do are more likely to be included, while those who don't fit are more likely to be excluded (Abrams, Rutland, & Cameron, 2003; Horn, 2003; Killen & Stangor, 2001). This notion of conforming to normative assumptions regarding groups and group membership is particularly salient in terms of children's and adolescents' conceptions of gender, as well as adolescents' conceptions of sexuality. Children and adolescents endorse exclusion as more legitimate in situations where the individual being excluded violates normative assumptions regarding gender or sexuality (Horn, 2003, 2007). In particular, adolescents judged exclusion as legitimate of a peer who deviated from normative assumptions regarding gender appearance, regardless of whether or not they were gay or straight (Horn, 2003). These results suggest that in adolescence in particular, individuals are using peer group exclusion as a way to both test out what are the approved or acceptable identity expressions within the peer system and to communicate these norms and conventions to each other (Horn, 2004a).

A final set of issues that influence children's and adolescents' judgments about peer group interactions has to do with issues of social identity, social hierarchies, and group status. Individuals' are more likely to evaluate exclusion of a member of their in-group as wrong because it is unfair or hurtful than for the exclusion of a member of an out-group (Horn, 2004b). Additionally, individuals' who are members of high status groups, such as the "cheerleaders" or "jocks" judge exclusion as more legitimate for conventional reasons (e.g., traditions, group functioning) than individuals who are members of low status groups, such as "gothics" or "druggies". Eder (1985) argues that this may be due to the number of bids for friendships that individuals in high status groups receive, making it necessary that a certain number of these bids be turned down. Additionally, Horn (2004a, 2006b) has argued that individuals at the top of the social hierarchy with regard to the peer system overestimate the legitimacy of a system that provides them with status and privilege, whereas, individuals at the lower end of the hierarchy, those who do not benefit from the system, are more likely to see the moral injustices inherent within a system to afford privilege and status to certain individuals over others.

### Implications for School and Classroom Practices, Policies, and Programs

As is evidenced from the previous review of literature, there has been an explosion of research on peer interactions and peer relationships following Piaget's seminal work on moral judgment in 1932, and Kohlberg's work on stages of moral judgment in the 1960 and early 1970s. This work has provided support for a social domain theory of differentiated interactions. The findings demonstrate that children's peer interactions involve the negotiation of fairness (morality), the maintenance of group functioning (conventions), and the construction of the individual (psychological domain). For example, exclusion involves fairness ("It's not fair to exclude her just because she's a girl"), group functioning ("The group won't work well with someone different in it; he doesn't fit"), and personal prerogative ("I can be friends with whoever I want; it's my choice"). As children's interactions reflect these various considerations, their knowledge about these issues develops and changes. Thus, while peer interactions provide a basis for reciprocity, fairness, and justice, other interactions require that students take into consideration issues of group identity, social hierarchy, and an in-group/out-group dynamic, as well as issues of fairness. How children coordinate these often opposing values and sources of influence must be understood if moral education programs are to be effective.

In designing moral education programs, then, it is not only important to understand the role of peers in promoting moral growth, but also the ways in which peer interactions and relationships change over the course of development. In this section we will highlight a few types of developmentally appropriate moral education strategies involving peers, as well as discuss more generally strategies that are relevant to all young people at all developmental levels.

In general, providing young people with opportunities to engage and interact with their peers in schools will enhance their moral growth, particularly, when young people are engaged in pro-social and positive interactions that will lead to dialogue and discussion regarding moral issues. As mentioned in a previous section of this chapter, schools can engage students in these types of interactions through the formal curriculum, as well as through involving students in student governance, peer mediation, and conflict resolution. Curricular examples would include things such as engaging students in debates or transactive discourse with each other regarding particular historical or political issues (Nucci, 2001); using literature to spark discussion among children and adolescents regarding issues of moral concern or import (Nucci, 2001; Selman 2003); or engaging students in service-learning activities that utilize reflection on the activities to engage students more deeply with each other, as well as with the academic content (Killen & Horn, 2000). Noncurricular activities include such things as peer judiciary committees and peer mediation or conflict resolution programs.

Schools should also be places in which young people are encouraged to interact with a diversity of people within their school and community environment. Rather than simply being exposed to diverse groups, however, these interactions should involve a diversity of individuals working together toward a mutually beneficial goal. Through these types of interactions, individuals will get to know one another on a more personal level, thus providing spaces in which stereotypes or assumptions are challenged and perhaps changed and in which individuals are valued for the unique contributions that they bring to the group.

In early childhood, one of the most important things teachers and schools can do to promote moral growth is to provide opportunities for young people to engage in a range of peer interactions, in which they negotiate fairness, create groups, and assert their autonomy (Horn, 2004a; Killen, Margie, & Sinno, 2006; Nucci, 2001). Giving young children ample time to engage with each other in unstructured and structured play environments will provide them with opportunities to develop their understandings of issues of fairness and reciprocity and to learn positive social interaction skills. Additionally, using developmental discipline (Watson, 2003) to help scaffold children's understanding of how to deal with and negotiate conflict within their peer groups will provide students with skills and resources that will help them to form positive peer relationships and friendships as their social worlds become increasingly complex.

In middle childhood, young people are beginning to form more autonomous and enduring friendships and the peer group is becoming more complex. At this point, it is important for schools and teachers to continue to help students gain skills, knowledge, and resources that promote positive social relationships and interactions. That is, schools must recognize that in addition to teaching students reading, mathematics and science, part of the business of schools is also to promote and foster healthy social development (Wigfield et al., 2006). Research has shown that children who lack social competencies are at risk for poor academic achievement, low motivation, depression, and anxiety (Rubin, et al., 1998; Wigfield et al., 2006). During this developmental period students are also beginning to construct a more complex understanding of groups and institutions, as well as the norms and conventions that go along with groups. Inter-group interactions become more complex, as does children's understanding of peer harassment and social exclusion. It is important then, during this developmental period to provide young people with opportunities to engage in groups around structured or common goals, such as in

cooperative learning groups (Aronson, Blaney, Stephin, Sikes, & Snapp, 1978). More than this, however, it is critical that part of the objective of engaging students in these types of groups is to increase their skills and knowledge regarding intergroup interactions. Schools can also start to focus on providing young people with opportunities to reflect on and discuss such issues as what it means to be a good friend or group member, what it means to cooperate, and how to begin to negotiate or coordinate their individual needs and desires with the goals of the group.

In adolescence, this issue of having to negotiate individual needs and desires with the demands, goals, or norms of the group becomes increasingly salient in young peoples' lives. Not only are adolescents developing a more complex understanding of social systems and groups, but also at the same time they are figuring out who they are in the world as separate from their parents and families. Converging with these developmental gains is that fact that for most adolescents the peer world is becoming increasingly complex (Horn, 2004b). Just as with earlier developmental periods, moral growth will occur by providing opportunities for adolescents to engage in structured and supported reflection and dialogue that will help them to coordinate moral principles of fairness, individual rights, and human welfare with their developing understandings of individual prerogative and choice, as well as their developing understanding of social systems (and the norms and values associated with them). This can be done through curricular avenues by having students analyze social systems and social practices that unfairly advantage one group or type of person over another. An excellent example of this is the Facing History and Ourselves structured curriculum around the Holocaust that engages young people in examining the personal, societal, and moral issues related to the Holocaust and the individual and contextual factors that led to and shaped this historical event (Selman, 2003).

Additionally, because of the increased complexity of the peer system, as well as adolescents' developing social cognition, issues of social comparisons, social status, social hierarchy, and intergroup relations emerge as more salient features of adolescents' social worlds. Thus, part of moral education with adolescents is also to ensure that schools are places in which multiple identity expressions and a diversity of views and opinions are supported. This means that schools must critically examine both their formal and explicit, as well as their informal and implicit (or hidden) curriculum regarding what types of views or identity expressions are privileged and which are marginalized or silenced (Horn, 2004b).

## CONCLUSIONS

Peer groups are critical developmental contexts for young people. Just like other developmental contexts, peer groups can have both positive and negative effects on the developmental trajectories of youth. Thus, it is essential that moral educators and moral education programs include peers as central to their goals. This is because peer interactions and relationships are central to children's social and moral development. Children learn how to share with peers, to be inclusive, to be fair, and to respect others' rights and liberties. Naturally occurring peer interactions on the playground, at recess, and in the cafeteria provide significant opportunities for children and adolescents to interact with peers. Without scaffolding, discussion, dialogue, and feedback from adults, however, these exchanges can have a negative influence on children's development. This is due, in part, to children who for various reasons disrupt social exchanges through negative behaviors, such as bullying and exclusion. With adult intervention and guidance, however, the majority of interactions are positive (e.g., bullying is carried out by 10% of children), and providing an environment in which children can learn from one another contributes in the most

productive way towards natural moral education. Thus, moral education programs that ignore the peer context or view it as a barrier to overcome are missing important opportunities to facilitate the direction of social and moral development in young people. Moral education occurs in many social contexts, including both peer and adult-child interactions. The ultimate goal of moral education is to foster a just, fair, and equitable society, one that enables all children to become successful members of their communities.

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# III

## CONTEMPORARY APPROACHES



# 15

## Social Cognitive Domain Theory and Moral Education

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What is morality in any given time or place? It is what the majority then and there happen to like and immorality is what they dislike. (Alfred North Whitehead, August 17, 1941)

The quotation by Alfred North Whitehead at the head of this chapter sardonically expresses the conventional view of morality. It is an interpretation of morality defined by the norms of society that has tacitly guided traditional approaches to character education (Ryan, 1989) dating back to the seminal work of Emil Durkheim (1925/1961). This view of morality carries with it an implicit theory of socialization that places morality outside of the child, and calls upon agents of socialization such as parents and teachers to imbue the child with “moral values” through role modeling, emotional attachment to groups, and appropriate uses of rewards and consequences. While this inculcation perspective has a long history, and continues to have advocates (Kilpatrick, 1992), it sits in direct contrast with current understandings of educational processes in virtually every academic subject area from reading (Shanahan, 2000) to mathematics (Carpenter, Fennema, & Franke, 1996; Schoenfeld, 1994). These contemporary research-based accounts of learning view the child as an active interpreter of information and general experience and advocate constructivist approaches to teaching. Ironically then, traditional character education would be advising those teachers who pay attention to educational research to engage in practices of socialization that would contradict the methods of teaching that they would employ with every other aspect of instruction.

In addition to being at odds with contemporary educational practices, the traditionalist reduction of morality to the acquisition of the norms and conventions of society mischaracterizes morality and the process of moral development. In this chapter I will present an alternative account of moral development and moral education in which a distinction is drawn between morality and societal convention. I will begin by providing a brief overview of social cognitive domain theory, and its historical connection to the descriptions of moral development provided by Piaget (1932) and Kohlberg (1984). Following that overview of basic theory and research, I will describe how domain theory can be applied to educational practice.



## DOMAIN THEORY: HISTORY AND BACKGROUND

Social cognitive domain theory emerged from efforts to account for evidence from longitudinal studies of Kohlberg's moral stage theory that indicated that older adolescents and young adults appeared to regress from Stage 4 conventional moral thinking to earlier pre-conventional levels (Kohlberg & Kramer, 1969; Holstein, 1976). Such a regression posed a serious threat to the validity of this account of moral development because it violated the basic structural assumptions of the stage progression set forth by Kohlberg (1968). Researchers working within the Kohlberg framework subsequently established that the reasoning provided by these young adults did not match that of Stage 2 children. Instead of being based on Stage 2 instrumentalism, the thinking of these subjects appeared to confound a definition of morality as being defined by cultural norms with a principled respect for cultural systems as having equivalent moral worth. From this perspective, all moral codes are seen as having equal validity; thus all morality is relative to the context. From this radical relativism, sustained by a moral principle of respect for members of cultures, these young adults reasoned that morality was highly variable, and moral decisions were ultimately a matter of personal commitment or preference (Turiel, 1974, 1977). The reasoning displayed by these young adults is inherently unstable because the argument in favor of treating all moral systems as relative is based on a non-relative (culturally transcendent) moral principle of respect for others. The apparent regression to Stage 2 was thus re-interpreted as a transition (Stage 4½) in the shift from conventional to post-conventional levels of moral reasoning (Kohlberg, 1973).

### Morality and Social Convention

Elliot Turiel, who was one of the researchers working on this problem, began to look more deeply into the connections between reasoning about social conventions and moral concepts about fairness and human welfare that appeared to be interacting in the thinking of these young adults. Turiel's (1974, 1977) methodology involved asking children and adolescents simple questions about social acts based on philosophical criteria for morality (Frankena, 1978), and sociological definitions of societal convention (Weber, 1962, 1986/1921). Turiel reasoned that the conventional and moral concepts displayed by young adults had to have their origins in early adolescence or childhood. He set out to identify the point at which morality and convention emerged as distinct conceptual frameworks and to retrace their course of development. The questions Turiel and his colleagues asked were the following: "Would it be wrong or all right to have no rule about (the act)?" "If there was no rule about (the act), would it be okay to do (the act)?" "How about in another society, would it be okay for them to not have a rule about (the act)?" What Turiel (1975) discovered was that children as well as adolescents answered these questions quite differently depending upon whether the act in question involved harm or unfair treatment of another person. As expected, children judged conventional acts such as forms of address and table manners on the basis of the presence or absence of a governing social norm. Children, however, did not base their judgments about moral acts on the presence of social norms, but rather upon the effects those actions had upon the welfare of others. The responses young children provide in these sorts of interviews is illustrated in the following often cited excerpt in which a four-year-old child from the U.S. Virgin Islands is evaluating transgressions that she witnessed taking place in her own pre-school (Nucci, Turiel, & Encarnacion-Gawrich, 1983).

MORAL ISSUE: Did you see what happened? *Yes. They were playing and John hit him too hard.*  
Is that something you are supposed to do or not supposed to do? *Not so hard to hurt.* Is there a rule

about that? *Yes*. What is the rule? *You're not to hit hard*. What if there were no rule about hitting hard, would it be all right to do then? *No*. Why not? *Because he could get hurt and start to cry*.

CONVENTIONAL ISSUE: Did you see what just happened? *Yes*. *They were noisy*. Is that something you are supposed to or not supposed to do? *Not do*. Is there a rule about that? *Yes*. *We have to be quiet*. What if there were no rule, would it be all right to do then? *Yes*. Why? *Because there is no rule*.

As this interview excerpt illustrates, very young children reason differently about moral actions that impact the welfare of others, and matters of convention in which the status of actions is a function of agreed upon social norms or the dictates of authority (Turiel, 1983). These findings sit in contrast with the assumptions of moral development maintained by Piaget (1932) and Kohlberg (1984). For both theorists, moral development entails a progressive differentiation of morality (fairness) out of earlier stages in which morality is defined by social norms and authority. Only at the more advanced stages of moral autonomy (Piaget, 1932), or post-conventional thinking (Kohlberg, 1984) does morality supersede and operate independently of convention according to these earlier theories.

Since the 1970s, however, numerous studies conducted in a wide range of cultural contexts have replicated the basic finding that children and adults maintain conceptual distinctions between issues of morality and societal convention (Turiel, 1998; Nucci, 2001). The youngest ages at which children have been reported to reliably distinguish between morality and convention is 2½ years (Smetana & Braeges, 1990). Some of this work has tested the limits of the assumption that norms and authority are not determinants of morality through interviews with devout religious children and adolescents (Nucci, 1985; Nucci & Turiel, 1993). In those studies, Christian and Jewish children were asked whether actions considered wrong within their religious traditions would be all right if scripture had not included information that God had an objection to the act. "Suppose there was nothing in the Bible (Torah) about (the act); HaShem/God/Jesus had not said anything about (the act) would it be all right for a Jew/Christian to do (the act)." Findings from this research revealed that nearly all of the children and adolescents interviewed felt that it would be all right for a member of their religion to engage in actions such as working on the Sabbath, for a woman to lead worship services, for priests (Catholic) to marry, for individuals to no longer wear head coverings during worship (e.g., head scarf, kippah) if there were no religious rule or biblical injunction regulating the act. On the other hand, 80% or more of the children and adolescents maintained that moral acts such as stealing from another person, unprovoked hitting, slander, damaging another's property would continue to be wrong even if God or scripture had been silent about the act. The findings of these studies with Catholics, Amish, Dutch reform Calvinists, and Conservative and Orthodox Jews indicate that concepts of morality are not dependent upon adherence to a religious faith. These findings sustain the basic premise that morality and convention are distinct conceptual frameworks. They also are important for moral education in liberal democracies because they demonstrate that an educational focus on morality can be achieved in public schools independent of students' religious affiliations.

### The Personal Domain

The domains of morality and convention are further differentiated from conceptions of personal matters of privacy and individual discretion (Nucci, 1977, 1996). While morality and convention deal with aspects of interpersonal regulation, concepts of personal issues refer to actions that comprise the private aspects of one's life, such as the contents of a diary, and issues that are matters

of preference and choice (e.g., friends, music, hairstyle) rather than right or wrong. It has been proposed that the establishment of control over the personal domain emerges from the need to establish boundaries between the self and others, and is critical to the establishment of personal autonomy and individual identity (Nucci, 1996). Interview studies conducted in northeastern Brazil (Lins, Dyer, & Nucci, 2007; Nucci, Camino, & Milnitsky-Sapiro, 1996; Milnitsky-Sapiro, Turiel & Nucci, 2006); Colombia (Ardilla-Rey & Killen, 2001); Hong Kong (Yau & Smetana, 1996); China (Yau & Smetana, 2003); and Japan (Hasebe, Nucci, & Nucci, 2004), as well as the United States (cf., Nucci, 2001) have shown that children and adolescents judge personal issues to be within their jurisdiction. Evidence has been presented that parents within the United States (Nucci & Smetana, 1996; Nucci & Weber, 1995); China (Yau & Smetana, 2003); and Brazil (Nucci & Milnitsky-Sapiro, 1995) provide for a zone of personal discretion and privacy with children as young as three to four years of age. Justifications that children and their parents provide for why behaviors and decisions should be treated as personal and within the child's jurisdiction focus on the role of such choices in developing the child's autonomy and personal identity, and the child or adolescent's moral right to have such discretion (for reviews see Nucci, 1996; Smetana, 2005).

### Domains and Social Experience Origins

The basic finding of a conceptual distinction between morality and convention has proven to be among the most robust phenomena uncovered by psychological research. Most recently, it has been discovered that this basic distinction is maintained even by children suffering from autism (James & Blair, 2005; Leslie, Mallon, & Diorcia, 2006). Turiel (1975) proposed that morality and convention emerge as distinct conceptual frameworks because they account for qualitatively differing and fundamental aspects of social experience. Evidence in support of this proposition was initially obtained in observational studies of children's interactions with one another and with adults in preschools (Nucci & Turiel, 1978) and subsequently verified in other preschool and elementary school settings (Killen & Smetana, 1999; Much & Shweder, 1978; Nucci, Turiel, & Encarnacion-Gawrich, 1983; Nucci & Nucci, 1982a), playgrounds (Nucci & Nucci, 1982b), and in the home (Nucci & Weber, 1995; Smetana, 1989). What these studies uncovered is that interactions having to do with morality tend to focus on the effects those actions have upon the welfare of others. In the case of moral events, children experience such interactions as victims, perpetrators, or third person observers. Interactions around societal conventions, in contrast, tend to focus upon the norms or rules that would apply, along with feedback regarding the social organizational function of the norm (e.g., to maintain classroom order).

Observational studies of mothers and young children conducted in middle class homes have extended this work to social interactions around personal domain issues (Nucci & Weber, 1995). Three basic interaction patterns were found to occur around personal issues. In the first and least common pattern, mothers explicitly label certain things as up to the child (e.g., "It's up to you if you don't want to play with Larry. No one can tell you who to be friends with"). A second more common pattern follows what Shweder, Mahapatra, and Miller (1987) refer to as tacit communication in which the mother indirectly communicates that an issue is a personal matter by simply offering the child a choice (e.g., "What shirt would you like to wear today?"). Finally, there are interactions that reflect child resistance and parental negotiation. In these interactions the child is staking a claim to a behavior or choice as being up to the child. These acts of resistance to parents by young children comprised 11% of the 1518 mother-child interactions that were observed. Mothers negotiated with their children over these events 51% of the time as opposed to the 1% of the time mothers were willing to negotiate with their young children regarding compliance with moral or conventional issues.

These domain-related patterns of social interaction are also associated with differing forms of emotional experience and emotional expression (Arsenio & Lover, 1995). Moral transgressions, especially among young children, are often accompanied by strong emotions of anger, or sadness, as well as empathy for the victims. Positive moral interactions such as sharing are associated with emotions of happiness. Social conventions on the other hand arouse little affect among children. This holds for situations in which children are in compliance as well as in violation of transgression (Arsenio & Lover, 1995). Negative emotional expressions of anger or frustration surrounding violations of convention tend to come from adults rather than children.

In recent years these discoveries of the early emergence of basic moral concepts, and their apparent universality has led some scientists to speculate that morality is largely based upon inherent biological tendencies that are the result of our evolutionary history as a species (Hauser, 2006; Wilson, 1993). There is strong evidence that infants are sensitive to the emotional distress of others (Martin & Clark, 1982) and capable of identifying facial expressions conveying particular emotional states (Ludemann, 1991), all of which is consistent with the view that humans are primed to respond with empathy towards others (Emde, Hewitt, & Kagan, 2001). These early intuitions, however, are not the same thing as moral knowledge, and they do not account for the developmental changes in moral reasoning that we see in children and adolescents. This evolutionary priming forms part of the early experience that children employ in constructing their moral concepts. The related emotions and feelings that get incorporated within early moral schemas also undoubtedly play a significant role in moral motivation (Arsenio & Lover, 1995). Over the course of a lifetime the cognitions constructed around moral experiences alter or enter into the regulation of affect, and the final appraisal of social situations (Pizarro & Bloom, 2003). Moral development and effective moral education incorporate emotion as part of the informational and affective experiences that generate reflection and the construction of moral knowledge and reasoning.

## DEVELOPMENT WITHIN DOMAINS

Conceptual development within each of the domains just described follows a distinctive pattern. Development of morality is structured by changes in underlying conceptualizations of justice and human welfare (Damon, 1977; Nucci & Turiel, 2007). Development of convention is structured by underlying conceptualizations of social systems and social organization (Turiel, 1983). Finally, development of concepts about the personal is structured by underlying conceptions of self, identity, and personhood (Nucci, 1977, 1996). It is beyond the scope of this chapter to present a detailed description of each developmental sequence. What follows are descriptions of general patterns for development of morality and convention with references to sources where detailed descriptions can be found.

### Moral Development.

Morality begins in early childhood with a focus upon issues of harm to the self and others. Davidson, Turiel, and Black (1983) found that up to about age seven moral judgment is primarily regulated by concerns for maintaining welfare and avoiding harm and is limited to directly accessible acts. Young children's morality is not yet structured by understandings of fairness as reciprocity. Thus, young children have a difficult time making moral judgments when the needs of more than one person are at stake (Damon, 1977). In addition, there is little subtlety in young children's

concepts of moral harm, and in their moral evaluations of situations that involve helping others (Eisenberg, 1986; Nucci & Turiel, 2007).

Research on children's distributive and retributive justice reasoning shows that as they develop, children form increased understandings of benevolence, equality, reciprocity, and equity (Damon, 1977, 1980; Irwin & Moore, 1971; Lapsley, 1982). With respect to sharing, for example, the four-year-olds' premise that they should be allowed to have more of a desired good (e.g., candies) as long as they don't keep all of it, is replaced by the idea that distributive decisions should be based on strict equality or reciprocity. This strict reciprocity is replaced in turn by an attention to equity as well as equality such that persons with special needs, such as the poor or handicapped deserve special attention (Damon, 1977, 1980). The pattern of development reflects an increased ability of children to coordinate elements of moral situations within their justice reasoning. In the case of distributive justice this increased capacity to handle complexity leads to a linear growth pattern of steady incremental changes in moral thinking. When it comes to reasoning about issues of human welfare, however, the developmental pattern is more complex.

Recent studies of children's reasoning about situations involving harm or helping behavior have indicated that concepts about moral culpability and obligation with regard to such issues follows a U-shaped pattern rather than a linear one. As we saw above, very young children understand that unprovoked hitting and hurting someone is morally wrong. As one would expect, reasoning about this straightforward moral transgression does not change with age (Nucci & Turiel, 2007). What does appear to change, however, are children's concepts about indirect forms of harm, such as not letting another person know that they have dropped some money and keeping it for oneself instead. When this situation is placed in a real-life context, eight-year-old children and sixteen-year-old adolescents are more likely to judge keeping the money as being wrong than are thirteen-year olds. Moreover, thirteen-year-olds are far more likely to claim that they would have a right to keep the money than are eight-year-olds or sixteen-year-olds (Nucci & Turiel, 2007). Interestingly, thirteen-year-old children are as likely to return the money as eight- and sixteen-year-olds, when the person who drops the money is described as handicapped. Across ages nearly all children agree that it would be wrong to keep the money in that case. Thus, the reasoning of the thirteen-year-olds does not fit a pattern of purely instrumentalist moral thinking. Instead, several factors related to their increased understanding of the social world are converging to make the moral evaluation of the situation more variable. Development is allowing young adolescents to recognize the moral ambiguity of non-prototypical situations. In this case, the loss of the money did not occur because of an action taken by the observer; the observer did not reach in and take it from the other person's pocket. What is more, in the absence of an observer the money would have been lost in any case. To quote one of the adolescents in the study "It's (the money) in never land." Added to this moral ambiguity is the confusion adolescents experience as they sort out the differences in meaning among free will, personal choice (as in the personal domain), and a moral right to do something. For the eight-year-olds, the situation holds no ambiguity. There is a simple line drawn between the money and its owner. Hence there is no problem. By age sixteen, most of the adolescents in the study had resolved the complexities identified by the thirteen-year-olds, and after acknowledging the ambiguities inherent in the situation, judged that the act of observing rendered the bystander obligated to return the money.

Similar U-shaped developmental patterns were found for helping behavior in early adolescents (Nucci & Turiel, 2007), and again in young adulthood (early 20s) (Eisenberg, Cumberland, Guthrie, Murphy, & Shephard, 2005). These fluctuating patterns of development signal periods of increased attention to new elements of moral situations and mark transitions to more complex integrations of moral thought.

## Social Convention

The development of concepts about convention also presents an oscillating pattern between periods affirming the importance of convention, and phases negating the basis of the affirmations of the prior phase. Seven levels of development have been described from early childhood to early adulthood (Turiel, 1983). Evidence for these levels comes from cross-sectional (Nucci, Becker, & Horn, 2004; Turiel, 1975), cross-cultural (Hollos, Lies, & Turiel, 1986), experimental (Nucci & Weber, 1991, and longitudinal studies (see Turiel, 1998, for a review). Concepts about convention reflect the person's underlying conceptions of social organization. Within the school years, for example, the typical ten-year-old affirms convention as serving to maintain social order. Along with this is a concrete sense of social hierarchy. People in charge of schools make up rules to keep everyone from running in the hallways. At the next level of development, typical of early adolescence, children enter into a negation phase in which the prior basis for affirming convention now becomes viewed through the lens of the arbitrariness of the norms, and their status as "simply" the dictates of authority. Later, in middle adolescence, the dismissal of convention is replaced by an understanding that conventions have meaning within a larger framework. Thus, conventions are seen as normative and binding within a social system of fixed roles and obligations. The oscillating pattern of development of convention indicates the difficulty children have in accounting for the function of arbitrary social norms and illustrates the slow process of reflection and construction that precedes the adolescents' view of convention as important to the structuring of social systems.

## General Issues of Development

The oscillating or U-shaped patterns of development being ascribed to morality and convention in this more recent work would appear to be at variance with more long-standing depictions of development as entailing a succession of improvements as children move from one developmental stage to the next (Colby & Kohlberg, 1987). However, U-shaped growth patterns appear to be normative across developmental domains including language, cognition, and physical abilities, and may be a general property of all dynamic systems (Gershkoff & Thelen, 2004). Such periods of transition in which children appear to "regress" are familiar to most educators. Most teachers also understand that these "regressions" are not steps backward, but are part of the process of moving toward newer levels of competence and complexity. From an educational point of view, periods of transition are critical junctures where proper guidance can assist the developmental process.

## CROSS-DOMAIN INTERACTIONS AND COORDINATIONS

In making decisions in everyday life people make use of the social knowledge systems that will help them to best understand the problem or situation. Some social behaviors, such as unprovoked hitting of another person are clear-cut moral situations that require only the application of moral knowledge for the individual to come to a decision. In a similar way we could describe examples of situations that would involve the application of knowledge about social convention. Many social situations, however, contain elements that may draw upon one or more conceptual framework. This can occur when elements of fairness or human welfare intersect with societal conventions, or when conventions impede or regulate what the individual considers to be a personal matter. An historical example of domain overlap between morality and convention would



be the Jim Crow laws that segregated Whites and Blacks in the United States in the last century. According to domain theory, how an individual will reason about such an issue of overlap will depend in part upon whether the person subordinates the situation to a single domain of either fairness or social organization, or if the person will attempt to coordinate both elements of the issue (Turiel & Smetana, 1984).

From the classical Kohlberg tradition, the person's reasoning about such an issue would be determined by moral stage. Presumably, someone at a conventional level of moral reasoning would focus upon the law and social system, while a post-conventional reasoner would evaluate a situation such as Jim Crow laws from a justice perspective. However, research by the Kohlberg group aimed at standardizing moral-stage scoring uncovered that individuals at all points in development may respond from a perspective of either rules or authority (Type A reasoning) or justice and human welfare (Type B reasoning). These reasoning types are also discussed in John Snarey and Peter Samuelson's chapter (4) in the present volume. From a domain theory perspective these findings are not surprising, and indicate that the Kohlberg stage sequence may be best thought of as a series of age-related approximations of cross-domain coordination. This should not be unexpected since the original Kohlberg dilemmas used to assess moral growth were designed to pit moral concerns for harm and welfare against social norms. This brings us full-circle back to the issue of apparent moral regression in late adolescence that initiated Turiel's (1975) investigation into the developmental origins of reasoning about social convention. From an educational point of view, what we now realize is that facilitating social and moral growth requires attention to a multi-faceted system of social and moral development rather than a single structure of moral judgment (Nucci, 2001).

## DOMAIN THEORY: APPLICATION TO MORAL EDUCATION

The application of domain theory to moral education has been continuous with the broader family of developmental and constructivist approaches to education (Nucci, 2001). This has included attention to the social and emotional needs of children through classroom structure and responses to student behavior as well as the integration of moral education through the regular academic curriculum. What domain theory has added to existing developmentally based educational approaches is a set of analytic tools for identifying moral and non-moral aspects of educational experiences along with domain appropriate teacher strategies for fostering moral and social development. What follows is an overview of domain theory-based practices for classroom social interactions followed by a discussion of the uses of domain theory to foster social and moral development through the academic curriculum.

### Classroom Climate, Classroom Rules, and Responses to Transgressions

As was outlined above, moral and social knowledge emerges out of the child's interactions in the social world. Applying this basic premise to the classroom means that a fundamental source for children's and adolescents' social development is the social climate of the classroom and school, and the approach that teachers and administrators take toward managing student behavior. Research on the emotional correlates of morality (Arsenio & Lover, 1995), and recent findings on the brain regions associated with moral functioning (Blair, 2003) sustain basic claims of the importance of attention to affective experiences for moral development. In particular this work points to the centrality of establishing caring classroom environments (Noddings, 2002) that foster the child's construction of a worldview based on "goodwill" (Arsenio & Lover, 1995) char-

acterized by the presumption that social life operates for the most part according to basic moral principles of fairness and mutual respect.

This is more than a matter of providing students with consistent moral messages in an environment of physical safety. As Noddings explains (2002), critical to the establishment of a caring orientation is the capacity to accept care from others. This requires a school and classroom climate in which students can afford to be emotionally vulnerable, and in which that vulnerability extends to the student's willingness to risk engagement in acts of kindness and concern for others (Noddings, 2002). This notion of an ethic of care is related to a more general conceptualization of the school and classroom environment around the establishment of relationships based upon trust (Watson, 2003). Trust carries with it the affective connections of care, regulated by moral reciprocity, and continuity. Trust is basic to the construction of an overall sense of school or classroom community that in turn is one of the primary predictors of prosocial conduct in schools (Battistich, Solomon, Watson, & Schaps, 1997; Battistich, chap.17, this volume).

Establishing classrooms and school communities that foster trust and mutual respect should extend beyond the elementary years that Watson (2003) accurately identifies as a critical period for meeting the attachment needs of young children. As will be discussed in greater detail below, adolescence is a period of transition with its own emotional vulnerabilities that make establishing an atmosphere of trust important for secondary educational as well (Eccles, Wigfield, & Schiefele, 1998). The broader process of establishing trust in school is beyond the scope of this chapter, and is a topic covered in several other places in the handbook (see esp. Watson, chap. 10, this volume). What we will turn to now are the ways in which attention to social cognitive domain can contribute to an understanding of age-related shifts in student behavior, and the approach that educators might take toward school rules and classroom management.

### *Domain Appropriate Responses to Student Transgressions*

The emergence of distinct domains of social knowledge corresponds to qualitatively differing social interactions associated with each domain (Turiel, 1983). As one might expect, research has demonstrated that children evaluate teacher responses to their transgressions in terms of their correspondence to the domain of the transgression (see Nucci, 2001 for a comprehensive review). Interview studies conducted with preschool (Killen, Breton, Ferguson, & Handler, 1994) and elementary school children grades two through seven (Nucci, 1984) indicate that students evaluate teacher responses to transgressions in terms of their concordance with the domain defining features of the actions. Domain concordant responses to violations of school or classroom conventions, such as being out of line or not raising one's hand before speaking would consist of teacher statements referring to the governing rules or by statements engaging students to consider the disruptions to classroom organization or social functioning that would result from the transgression. Directing students to consider the consequences of such actions upon the welfare of others would on the other hand be responses concordant with moral transgressions. Students across grade levels were found to rate domain concordant responses higher than they rated domain discordant ones (e.g., providing a moral response to a conventional transgression) (Killen et al., 1994; Nucci, 1984). Fifth graders and above extended their evaluations of responses to transgression to include their evaluation of the teachers such that teachers who consistently responded to transgressions in a domain concordant manner were rated more knowledgeable and effective than teachers who consistently provided domain discordant responses (Nucci, 1984).

Observational studies conducted on the relative frequency of rule violations in first through eighth grade classrooms have consistently indicated that the vast majority of misconduct is with respect to violations of conventions rather than in the form of moral transgressions (Blumenfeld,

Pintrich, & Hamilton, 1987; Nucci & Nucci, 1982a). This would indicate that the assimilation of all classroom management issues to morality would run the risk of diminishing the force of moral argumentation by directing it around issues that are primarily matters of convention, and limit the extent to which classroom interactions can be employed as a way to engage students' thinking about convention.

### *School Rules, Misbehavior, and Periods of Transition*

The importance of attending to students' concepts of social convention becomes more apparent when we consider data indicating that the rate at which students engage in violations of classroom convention is associated with students' modal level of development in the conventional domain. Violations of convention in elementary school are highest in grades three and four and seven and eight, which correspond to ages at which children are respectively at Levels 2 and 4 phases of negation in concepts about convention (Nucci & Nucci, 1982a). As one might expect from the developmental literature, early adolescence is an especially challenging period from the point of view of teachers and administrators. This is because there are significant changes taking place in all three domains of social understanding.

With respect to social convention, young adolescents enter a phase (Level 4) in which they question the basis upon which they upheld conventions during middle childhood (Nucci et al., 2004; Turiel, 1983). The support for conventions as reflecting the norms of authority established in support of the goal of maintaining basic order (e.g., to keep kids from running in the hallways) evaporates as young people reconsider the arbitrariness of conventional regulations, and conclude that they are "simply the arbitrary dictates of authority" (Turiel, 1983). In many cases, students at this level of development will continue to adhere to conventions in order to maintain smooth relations with teachers, or in order to avoid sanctions. However, students at this level are unable to produce a conceptual rationale for the conventions themselves (Nucci et al., 2004). Thus, there is greater tendency for students at this point in development to engage in the violation of school conventions (Geiger & Turiel, 1983; Nucci & Nucci, 1982a). By middle adolescence, about age fifteen or the sophomore year of high school, most American adolescents have moved to the next Level 5 of reasoning about social convention (Nucci et al., 2004). At Level 5 conventions are viewed as constituent elements of the social system structuring hierarchical relations, and coordinating interactions among members of a society or societal institution such as the school (Turiel, 1983). In their longitudinal study Geiger and Turiel (1983) found that students who had moved to Level 5 in their concepts of convention engaged in significantly fewer violations of school conventions.

Coincident with these developmental shifts in concepts of convention are basic changes in the ways in which adolescents draw the boundaries between convention and what they consider to be matters of personal prerogative and privacy (Smetana, 2002). Areas where the conventions and norms of the family and school touch upon personal expression (dress, hairstyle), personal associations (friendships), personal communication (phone, e-mail), access to information (Internet), and personal safety (substance use, sexuality) become zones of dispute wherein adolescents lay increasing claims to autonomy and control. Family disputes across cultures are largely around such issues as adolescents beginning to appropriate greater areas of personal jurisdiction from what had been areas of parental influence or control (Smetana, 2002). Within school settings, students also lay claim to zones of personal privacy and prerogative (Smetana & Bitz, 1996). They are also somewhat more willing, however, to accept conventions regulating conduct within the school setting such as public displays of affection (kissing in public) that would be considered personal in non-school contexts (Smetana & Bitz, 1996). Nevertheless, the combined

developmental phase of negation of convention with the extension of what is considered personal renders the period of early adolescence a difficult transition as students struggle with the norms of schools as institutions.

In discussing the educational implications of this period of early adolescent transition, Smetana (2005) refers to the work of Eccles and her colleagues as providing a window into the mismatch that currently exists between schools and young adolescents around these normative issues. These researchers (Eccles, Midgley, Wigfield, Buchanan, Reuman, Flanagan, & Mac Iver, 1993; Eccles, Wigfield, & Schiefele, 1998) have provided evidence that despite the increased maturity of adolescents, middle schools and junior high schools emphasize greater teacher control and discipline and offer fewer opportunities for student involvement in decision making, choice, and self-management than do elementary school classrooms. Accordingly, Eccles and her colleagues (1998) have reported that the mismatch between adolescents' efforts to attain greater autonomy and the schools' increased efforts at control resulted in declines in junior high students' intrinsic motivation and interest in school.

From a developmental perspective, the responses of schools to this period of transition amount to a defensive maneuver while waiting out a passing developmental storm. An alternative approach recommended by Eccles (Eccles, Midgley, et al., 1993; Eccles, Wigfield, et al., 1998) is that schools include more opportunities for students to have input into the norms governing classroom practices. More specifically, Smetana's (Smetana & Bitz, 1996) research, and the observational studies of student transgressions (Geiger & Turiel, 1983; Nucci & Nucci, 1982a) indicate that the focus of such student input and discourse should be around matters of social convention and personal prerogative. Other work exploring the impact of developmental discourse around issues of convention has demonstrated that such discussion can effectively contribute to students' levels of understanding about the social functions of such norms (Nucci & Weber, 1991).

While the majority of adolescent misconduct is around issues of convention, some of the efforts to establish autonomy and identity entail engagement in risk-taking and moral transgressions (Lightfoot, 1997). For example, shoplifting tends to peak between the ages of twelve to fourteen (Wolf, 1992). This corresponds to the transitional period in early adolescent moral reasoning uncovered in our recent work (Nucci & Turiel, 2007). The Swiss developmentalist, Fritz Oser (2005) has argued that educators should view such moral misconduct as an essential component for moral growth, and seize upon moral transgressions as an opportunity for what he refers to as "realistic discourse." Oser's (2005) position is that "negative morality" like mistakes in math class comprises the basis from which a genuine moral epistemology and moral orientation arise. His approach to moral misconduct in adolescence is to make it the subject of moral discourse in which students must confront one another's actual misdeeds and interpretations of their motives and the consequences of their actions (Oser & Veugelers, 2003). Oser's approach builds from prior work done in the Kohlberg tradition on what is referred to as the "just community" (Power & Higgins-D'Alessandro, chap. 12, this volume). The processes advocated by Oser have been employed with considerable success by others working within the Kohlberg tradition (Blakeney & Blakeney, 1991) to alter the misconduct and recidivism among behaviorally disordered children and adolescents.

Many of the moral conflicts of adolescence are not straightforward matters confined to the moral domain. Issues of peer exclusion and harassment call upon students' conceptions of peer conventions of dress and behavior, personal domain construals of the selection of personal associations and friendships, and moral concepts of harm and fairness (Horn, 2003; Killen, Lee-Kim, McGlothlin, & Stangor 2002). The uses of moral discourse around such issues in the absence of attention to the ways in which students are focusing upon the non-moral aspects of a given

situation of peer exclusion will be ineffective. For example, peer systems of social status and hierarchy employ conventions of dress and behavior as markers of group membership (Horn, 2003). Middle adolescents, having just constructed an understanding of conventions as constituent elements of social systems, tend also to be more likely than younger or older adolescents to justify exclusion of peers whose clothing or behavior does not conform to peer conventions (Horn, 2003). Focusing only on the fairness or harm involved will not address the motivations and justifications for exclusion maintained by a young person whose focus is on the importance of peer conventions in defining group membership and identity status. An effective discourse around such a multifaceted social issue would start with an examination of the presumptive importance of the conventions as modes for defining group membership, social status, and personal identity (Horn, 2005). Only after students have had an opportunity to fully explore the meaning and ramifications of their use of conventions to define group membership would a discussion of the moral implications of such peer exclusion be fruitful.

### Domain Appropriate Uses of the Academic Curriculum

Attending to the social experiences of students can contribute much to their social and moral development. Schools can extend their impact upon moral and social development through the academic curriculum. This can occur in several ways. First, the academic curriculum contains many instances in the context of literacy and social studies of stories or events that replicate or reinforce social and moral values that students may be addressing in their direct everyday experiences. Using literature to promote moral values has a long history. Within traditional character education literature has been used to promote moral or social virtues (Bennett, 1996). However, this direct approach to character formation has limited impact upon children's moral growth because the moral messages contained in the stories are often not apprehended by the children who read the stories (Narvaez, 2002). On the other hand, uses of literature employing constructivist teaching methods with attention to children's developmental levels has been shown to impact both social and emotional learning (Elias et al., chap. 13, this volume) as well as moral development (Nucci, 2001).

Second, the formal curriculum moves the students' knowledge base beyond their own historical or cultural framework, and has the potential to motivate students to project themselves as members of a global community with responsibilities for the social welfare of persons beyond their immediate experience. Developmentalists dating back to Kohlberg (Kohlberg & Mayer, 1972) have cast the aims of moral education in progressive terms of enabling individuals to evaluate society and their own behavior from a critical, principled moral perspective. For Kohlberg this aim was to be achieved by stimulating students to move toward principled stages of moral reasoning. From a domain theory perspective this same progressive aim is strived for by fostering student skills to critically apply their moral understandings to evaluate social norms and personal conduct at all points in development rather than at a developmental end point (Nucci, 2001). In both cases, the underlying progressive educational ideology has a shared concept of moral education as fostering the capacity of students to act from a critical moral perspective. This social justice potential of schools has received a lot of attention in recent years, some of it quite critical (Ravitch, 2005). Critics, such as Diane Ravitch (2005) express concerns that attention to moral issues such as social class or racial inequalities competes with the primary academic aims of education. Such criticisms might have merit if it were the case that attention to moral development came at the cost of academic success. In fact there is mounting evidence that attention to social and moral development may enhance academic performance (Berkowitz et al., chap. 21 this volume; Durlak & Weisberg, 2007). Finally, encouraging students to employ their moral knowledge



to improve society is a goal broadly shared by educators, including proponents of mainstream character education (Lickona, 2004).

Several years ago, we set out to address whether attention to domain of social values in teaching social and moral lessons makes a difference in the development of children's moral and social conventional concepts (Nucci & Weber, 1991). The setting for our study was an eighth grade American history course, and a companion course in English composition. Together with the history teacher, we identified a series of issues from American history that were primarily either moral or social-conventional in character as well as events and issues that involved domain overlap. Examples of the moral issues were slavery and the forced removal of Indians from their lands. Conventional issues included such things as the adjustments in modes of dress, work conventions (such as time schedules), and dating patterns that resulted from the influx of immigrants and the shift from an agrarian to an industrial society. Changes in laws permitting women to vote is an example of a mixed domain issue used in the study.

Students were randomly assigned to small-group discussions of these issues once each week for a period of seven weeks. In addition, students were given essay homework assignments based on the issues which they had discussed. These homework assignments were graded by the classroom teacher as a part of his assessment of their learning of history. Finally, students wrote essays on related moral, conventional, or mixed issues in their English composition class. Students were assigned to one of three forms of instruction. In one condition (Convention), students were directed in their small-group discussions and in their essays to treat all issues as if they were matters of convention. Discussions centered around the norms involved, the function of norms in structuring society, and the impact that altering or violating the norms would have on the social order. In the second condition (Moral), students were directed to treat these same issues as if they were matters of morality. Discussions and essay instructions directed students to consider the justice and welfare implications of the issues under consideration. The third instructional mode fit our definition of Domain Appropriate values education. The focus of discussions and essays was matched with the domain of the particular issue under consideration. In the case of mixed domain issues, students were asked first to consider normative, conventional aspects and then to consider the justice or welfare features of the issue. Finally, students were asked to integrate or coordinate the moral and conventional features of the event. This latter exercise was one that we hoped would increase the capacity of students to spontaneously respond in a critical way to contradictions between morality and conventions, and to seek moral resolutions of those contradictions in ways that also respected the need for social organization.

Results of our evaluation indicated that attention to domain had an impact on student learning. Students in the Moral condition and students in the Domain Appropriate condition had moral reasoning scores that were very similar, and significantly higher than students who had been in the Convention condition. With regard to the development of reasoning about convention, the outcome was the inverse. Students in the Convention and Domain Appropriate conditions had similar levels of conventional reasoning, and both were on average nearly half a stage higher than the conventional levels of students in the Moral condition. These results indicate that attention to domain does matter in terms of efforts to impact on students' social conceptual development. Students who received instruction focusing in one domain developed in that domain, and not the other. Only the students in the Domain Appropriate instructional condition developed in both domains.

A second noteworthy finding of the study had to do with how students dealt with overlapping issues. At the end of the seven-week instructional period all students were asked to write an essay discussing their views of the social values issues raised by an event in which morality and convention were in conflict. The matter concerned an actual event in which the King of the



Gypsies of the Chicago metropolitan area refused federal money for scholarships being offered through a local public university because it would require him to permit Gypsy women to attend the university as well as Gypsy men. This actual event pitted the gender based conventions of Gypsy society against the unfair provision of educational opportunities for one gender and not another. The student essays were scored in terms of whether or not they subordinated the issue to either morality or convention, vacillated between the two domains without coordination, or integrated the moral and conventional elements of the event through domain coordination. Findings were that students who had Domain Appropriate teaching were the only ones to spontaneously coordinate elements from both domains. In contrast, two thirds of the students in the Moral instructional condition subordinated the issue entirely to its moral elements. Conversely, and as we had expected, a majority of students (including females) in the Convention instructional condition subordinated the issue to its conventional elements.

This last set of findings has particular relevance for our aim to develop students' capacity for critical moral reflection. Students in the Convention instructional condition were hampered in their ability to attend to the moral implications of the gender based conventions of Chicago's Gypsy community. Their prioritization of concerns for social organization was fostered by their recent educational experiences which heightened the salience of those conventional elements. The social conservatism of their curriculum appeared to foster a similar conservatism in their reading of this real life social issue. Conversely, the students in the Moral instructional condition prioritized the moral elements of the situation, and guided the social arguments made in their essays. The prioritization of morality is recognized in philosophy as a requirement for ethical judgment and behavior (Baumrind, 2005). However, the "idealist" social critics in the Moral condition of our study did not spontaneously consider the social organizational ramifications of their single-minded attention to morality. In real life, however, there are always organizational costs to any change in the conventional social structure. For example, a single-minded attention to needs for gender equality in careers leaves unanswered any number of practical questions in terms of how one should restructure the conventions of the family. When all is said and done, somebody has to do the dishes, raise the children, and so forth. The students in the Domain Appropriate instructional condition did prioritize the moral elements of the situation, and argued in their essays against the Gypsy king's decision. However, their arguments also acknowledged the ramifications this decision might have for the conventional organization of Gypsy society, and offered constructive suggestions for how those changes might be resolved.

## CONCLUSIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

This chapter has provided an overview of research on children's moral and social development indicating that morality forms a developmental system that is distinct from our concepts of societal convention, and aspects of our conduct that we consider to be matters of personal choice and privacy. That research has provided the basis for refinements in the developmental approach to moral education that attends to the contextual and experiential origins of students' concepts in each domain rather than subsuming social and moral development within a single developmental system. Observational studies have demonstrated that classroom social interactions differ by social cognitive domain, while interview studies have shown that students' evaluate teacher responses to students' social transgressions in terms of their concordance with the domain of the transgression. Finally, intervention studies have demonstrated that attending to social cognitive domain has salutary effects both on students' development within domains, and in their tendencies to spontaneously integrate knowledge from multiple domains when dealing with complex

social issues. In recent work, we have integrated this developmental research into the design of a teacher education program for the preparation of elementary school teachers. That effort has demonstrated that pre-service teachers can acquire the skills to integrate domain appropriate moral and social values lessons within the regular academic curriculum, and their approach to classroom management (Nucci, Drill, Larson, & Brown, 2005; Schwartz, chap. 29, this volume). Some of our current work has been directed at developing new tools for assessing growth especially in the area of social convention that will allow educators and researchers to efficiently evaluate the impact of their efforts. We are currently working on a computer-based method for generating free-response interviews of reasoning about social convention from students who are at or above a fifth grade reading level (Nucci, Becker, & Horn, 2004) along with a computer generated assessment of developmental level (Becker, 2007). As this work moves forward it will become possible for larger numbers of researchers and teachers to explore educational practices that impact development within domains.

Our goal in conducting this research, and sharing it with the educational community has been to provide educators and educational researchers with insights to improve their approach to developmentally based moral and social education rather than to promote a specific set of practices or curriculum. There are undoubtedly many ways in which classroom teachers and school administrators can integrate attention to moral and social development within their educational practices that go beyond the suggestions that we have come up with (Nucci, 2001). What is critical from our point of view is that moral education acknowledges the complexity inherent in social and moral decision making and in the construction of a moral life. What we have learned since the early 1970s about children's moral and social development is that moral education requires a variegated approach to preparing students to handle moral controversy, complexity, and heterogeneity. Moral development does not move toward an end-point at which moral principle triumphs over non-moral considerations. Nor does moral education result in the establishment of decontextualized virtue. Instead, what we can hope to accomplish is to develop young people capable of handling moral complexity, ambiguity, and contradiction in ways that will help them to lead moral lives and to construct a better moral society.

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# 16

## Human Flourishing and Moral Development: Cognitive and Neurobiological Perspectives of Virtue Development

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The cognitive and neurosciences have made great strides in uncovering the nature of human psychobiology in recent years. Moral educators have yet to make much of their findings. The theories presented here capitalize on recent research that has implications for building moral personalities and cultivating morally adept citizens. The two theories presented in brief are the Integrative Ethical Education model, intended for educators of all levels, and Triune Ethics Theory, a more comprehensive theory of moral development that has implications for moral education.

Approaches to education for moral character are typically divided into two opposing views which are rooted in different philosophical paradigms (Lapsley & Narvaez, 2006; Narvaez, 2006). One philosophical paradigm represents particularist claims regarding virtue with a focus on the agent and the deliberate cultivation of virtues or excellences (MacIntyre, 1981). Of primary concern is the nature of a good life and the characteristics necessary to live a good life (e.g., Anscombe, 1958; Hursthouse, 1999; McDowell, 1997). The individual takes on the responsibility for discovering the virtues and values inherent in the self, and cultivates them with the support of the community (Urmson, 1988). Moreover, nearly everything in a life has moral meaning, from friend selection to leisure activities. Traditional character education emerges from this view (Wynne & Ryan, 1993), although it seems to have misappropriated the nature of virtue cultivation (Kohn, 1997a, 1997b; Narvaez, 2006), resulting in minimal outcome success (Leming, 1997).

The contrasting view emphasizes universalist claims regarding justice and reasoning (e.g., Frankena, 1973; Kant, 1949), addressing what is *the right thing to do* in a particular moral situation (e.g., Hare, 1963; Rawls, 1971). Moral conduct is that which accords with applicable principles, derived from reasoning, for a particular situation but only in select slices of life. Few demands are made on individuals, leaving many life choices out of the moral realm. Moral obligation is reduced to that which can be formulated with respect to universal moral principles and becomes what is universally applicable (e.g., Kant's Categorical Imperative). "If what is right for

anyone must be right for everyone in relevantly similar circumstances, then what is right must be such as can be recognized and acted upon by persons who possess very little in the way of developed moral character” (Norton, 1991, p. xi). Moral obligation is reduced to what a person with little moral character can accomplish. Approaches to moral education rooted in Kohlberg’s work are typically anchored here. Not surprisingly, moral reasoning is the focus.

There has been a longstanding assumption adopted from philosophy that moral reasoning drives moral behavior (e.g., Blasi, 1980; Kohlberg, 1981; Piaget, 1932). Most famously, Kohlberg emphasized the deliberative moral reasoning and its advancement through moral dilemma discussion (Blatt & Kohlberg, 1975), what I call rational moral education (see Narvaez, 2006). The robust findings in moral judgment research notwithstanding (e.g., Rest et al., 1999), the centrality of deliberative reasoning in moral behavior is a fading paradigm. To be sure, extensive reasoned argument has been instrumental in shutting down discriminatory practices, such as slavery, and instituting more equitable practices, such as woman’s suffrage. Despite the indisputable importance of moral reasoning, there is only a weak link between moral reasoning and moral action (Blasi, 1980; Thoma, 1994). In fact, the disparity between knowing and doing has become increasingly evident across psychological fields, instigating a paradigm shift in mainstream psychology (Lakoff & Johnson, 1999).

In the new paradigm based on research since the cognitive revolution in psychology, unconscious parallel processing becomes dominant whereas conscious, serial processing becomes secondary (Bargh, 1997). “Higher mental processes that have traditionally served as quintessential examples of choice and free will—such as goal pursuit, judgment, and interpersonal behavior—have been shown recently to occur in the absence of conscious choice or guidance” (Bargh & Ferguson, 2000, p. 926). The rational human agent in the classical sense, who makes choices based on deliberative reasoning, no longer exists. Most information processing is automatic (Bargh, 1999); most decisions are made without deliberation (Hammond 2000); and most activities are governed by preconscious, automatic processes (Bargh & Chartrand, 1999; Bargh & Ferguson, 2000). In other words, humans have two types of “minds” (e.g., Kahneman, 2003).

The deliberative mind, based on explicit memory systems, processes information serially and consciously. The intuitive mind is comprised of multiple nonconscious, parallel-processing systems that learn implicitly from environmental patterns and behave automatically, often without awareness (Hogarth, 2001). Whereas, the intuitive mind develops appropriate sensibilities and habitual responses which comprise the “habits” that are valued in traditional character education, the conscious mind cultivates the sophisticated moral reasoning valued by rational moral education.

Despite the perceived conflict between these two approaches to moral character education, they can be viewed as complementary (O’Neill, 1995). The Aristotelian emphasis on intuition development evident in traditional character education is more empirically aligned with everyday human behavior. Yet it is deliberative reasoning that has convinced us of injustice. Therefore, character education should not be approached as an either/or, as a choice between rational moral education and character education, or between deliberative reasoning and intuition development. Both systems are required for moral agency and moral personhood. The intuitive mind makes decisions and takes actions without conscious awareness most of the time. Yet the deliberative mind is vital for guiding intuition development and countering poor intuitions (Groopman, 2007; Hogarth, 2001). A person without one or the other is missing a critical tool for moral personhood.

In light of the dual nature of the human mind and the importance of both reasoning and intuition, how should we approach moral character education? An approach that melds the paradigms is moral expertise development.

## MORAL EXPERTISE AS A FRAMEWORK FOR DEVELOPING MORAL CHARACTER

The two seemingly opposed approaches to learning and becoming a moral person are brought together in expertise development, which emphasizes the development of appropriate intuitions and sophisticated reasoning. Experts-in-training are immersed in environments that “train up” their intuitions while receiving explicit guidance as to how to think about solving problems in the domain. For example, a working chef practices under the watchful eye of the master chef who models, guides, and advises.

What do we mean by expertise? Experts differ from novices in several key ways. They have more and better organized knowledge (e.g., Sternberg, 1998). They have declarative (explicit), procedural (implicit), and conditional knowledge. In short, they know what knowledge to access, which procedures to apply, how to apply them, and when. They perceive the world differently, noticing underlying patterns and discerning necessity where novices see nothing remarkable (Johnson & Mervis, 1997). Expert behavior is often automatic and effortless (Vicente & Wang, 1998). Experts function as more complex adaptive systems in their approaches to solving problems in the domain whereas novices miss the affordances for action available in the circumstance (Neisser, 1976; Hatano & Inagaki, 1996). Experts have highly developed intuitions as well as explicit knowledge. Moreover, experts’ sense of self is highly connected to their efficacy. They are motivated for excellence.

The proposal here is that we should treat moral virtue or excellence as a type of adaptive expertise (Narvaez, 2006; Narvaez & Lapsley, 2005), much like the ancients did (e.g., Aristotle, 1988; Mencius, 1970). A virtuous person is like an expert who has highly cultivated skills—sets of procedural, declarative, and conditional knowledge—that are applied appropriately in the circumstance. In other words, moral exemplars in the fullest sense demonstrate moral (knowing the good) and practical wisdom (knowing how to carry it out in the situation). Moral expertise is applying the right virtue in the right amount at the right time. “A wise (or virtuous) person is one who knows what is good and spontaneously does it.” (Varela, 1999, p. 4)

Expertise is a set of capacities that can be put into action. Moral experts demonstrate holistic orientations (sets of procedural, declarative, and conditional knowledge) in one or more of at least four processes critical to moral behavior: ethical sensitivity, ethical judgment, ethical focus, and ethical action (Narvaez & Rest, 1995; Rest, 1983). Experts in Ethical Sensitivity are better at quickly and accurately discerning the nature of a moral situation and determining the role they might play. They take on multiple perspectives in an effort to be morally responsive to others. Experts in Ethical Judgment reason about duty and consequences, and apply personal and religious codes to solve complex problems. Experts in Ethical Focus cultivate self-regulation that leads them to prioritize and deepen commitment to ethical goals. Experts in Ethical Action know how to keep their spirit focused on the moral goal and implement the task step by step. They are able to step forward and intervene courageously for the welfare of others. Experts in a particular excellence have more and better organized knowledge about it, have highly tuned perceptual skills for it, have a deep moral desire for it, and have highly automatized, effortless responses. In short, they have more *content* knowledge and more *process* knowledge, more moral wisdom and more practical wisdom.

As novices in virtually every domain including the moral, children are best taught using novice-to-expert instruction (Bransford et al., 1999). In domains of study, experts-in-training build implicit and explicit understandings about the domain, engaging both the deliberative and intuitive minds. Immersion in the domain occurs at the same time that theory is presented, cultivating both intuitions and deliberative understanding (Abernathy & Hamm, 1995). Their practice is focused, extensive, and coached through contextualized, situation-based experience. The learn-

ing environment is well-structured, providing appropriate and accurate feedback (e.g., the chef-in-training gets feedback both from the physical results of food prepared and from the coach who judges it). Through the course of expertise training, perceptions are fine tuned and developed into chronically accessed constructs; interpretive frameworks are learned, and with practice, applied automatically; action schemas are honed to high levels of automaticity (Hogarth, 2001). What is painfully rule-based for a novice becomes, with vast experience, automatic and quick for an expert (Dreyfus & Dreyfus, 1990).

Nevertheless, there appear to be vastly different mindsets that influence perception and orientation in moral behavior. Triune Ethics Theory seeks to name these disparate orientations and find their roots. That is the topic of the next section.

### Triune Ethics Theory

Triune Ethics theory (TET) is derived from psychological, evolutionary, and neurosciences, emphasizing the importance of the limbic system and related structures for moral information processing and behavior. Most research in moral psychology has focused on the work of the neocortex (e.g., deliberate reasoning), often neglecting the motivational structures that lie underneath. TET has four goals (for more detail, see Narvaez, in press). First, it emphasizes motivational orientations driven by unconscious emotional systems that predispose one to process information and react to events in particular ways. Second, TET seeks to explain individual differences in moral functioning. Individuals differ in early emotional experiences that influence personality formation and brain wiring and in turn affect information processing. Third, TET suggests the initial conditions for optimal human moral development. The characteristics of the “environment of evolutionary adaptedness” (Bowlby, 1988) that support optimal brain development, which differ from modern childrearing practices, influence the development of a fully functional “moral” brain. Fourth, TET offers an explanation for the power of situations in influencing moral responses. Although one’s personality might have gelled around one ethic or another, situations can also influence which ethic will be put into play.

The moral self, moral identity, or moral motivation is an area of increasing interest to researchers (e.g., Hardy & Carlo, 2005). Blasi has suggested that a person with a moral identity has moral constructs central to the self (Blasi, 1985). The perspective proffered here contrasts with Blasi’s view. Focusing on the subjective view, the central question is not whether a person has a moral identity but what moral identity he or she has. Instead of dismissing some identities as nonmoral, the perspective here is that there are different types of moral identities (we will avoid the discussion of what personality is and whether there is such a thing—see Lapsley, chapter 3 this volume). All organisms are goal-driven, including human organisms (Bogdan, 1994). Persons select goals they think are the best in the circumstances, never consciously choosing goals they think are evil or bad. Even those who behave violently are motivated to right a wrong (i.e., revenge is felt as “good” in the brain; de Quervain, Fischbacher, Treyer, Schellhammer, Schnyder, Buck, & Fehr, 2004). Those who are impulsive feel that their goals are “right” in part because they feel them so strongly. The view here is that everyone has a subjective moral identity—one oriented towards the perceived good. What varies, based on experience and situation, is the type of moral identity active at any given moment.

Triune Ethics Theory identifies three basic attractors for moral information processing within the brain (Narvaez, 2007a), inspired by theories of brain evolution (MacLean, 1990). There are likely many subtypes across these major attractors, but only the major attractors are described here as types of ethics. These three distinctive moral systems, rooted in the basic emotional systems, propel human moral action on an individual and group level. The first formation, is rooted

in the R-complex (MacLean, 1990), or the extrapyramidal action nervous system (Panksepp, 1998). Dominant in reptiles, the R-complex relates to stereotyped behavior in many animals and several forms of behavior in mammals, including territoriality, imitation, deception, struggles for power, maintenance of routine, and following precedent. The Ethic of Security is based primarily in these instincts, which revolve around physical survival and thriving in context, instincts shared with all animals and present from birth. Primitive systems related to fear, anger, and sexuality reside here. Because they are primarily hardwired into the brain, these systems are not easily damaged, unlike those of the other two systems, making these the default systems when other things go wrong.

The Ethic of Security is based primarily in instincts for survival and physical flourishing. For example, subcortically-driven instincts for seeking (autonomous exploration) and emotional circuitry for fear and rage when autonomy or safety is thwarted are systems shared with all animals (Panksepp, 1998). The security ethic is oriented to physical factors in two senses. First, it maintains physical survival through self-protection, exploration, and autonomy. This is apparent in organisms automatically exploring their environments and becoming enraged when prevented from doing so, and the quick learning from experience what is unsafe (e.g., the visual cliff, the Garcia effect). Second, the security ethic is attendant to physical flourishing through status enhancement (hierarchy or pecking order) and in-group loyalty (purity). The security ethic is in ascendance when individuals seek out uniqueness of self or group. For example, it was reported that 90% of members of an evangelical congregation left after the pastor began to preach an inclusive rather than an exclusive message, saying that the whole world would be saved not just those of their brand of faith (*National Catholic Reporter*, 2005). When a security ethic is a cultural norm, inclusivity is an unwelcome message.

Like Kohlberg's preconventional stages, the security ethic is very concerned with self-preservation and personal gain, although it operates primarily implicitly. It can easily dominate thought and behavior when the person or group is threatened (MacLean, 1990). When the security ethic is triggered, defenses go up, in-group/out-group differences are emphasized, rivalry and the pecking order are stressed, and/or superorganismic (mob) thinking and behavior is set in motion (Bloom, 1995). In order to minimize triggering the defense systems of the Security ethic, the environment must be emotionally and physically safe. Providing a safe, secure environment where basic needs are met allows individuals to minimize triggering the security ethic and allows an emphasis on the ethics systems that better represent human aspirations (engagement and imagination). Control systems such as those in the prefrontal cortex may not be fully developed until the middle 20s (Giedd, Blumenthal, & Jeffries, 1999) and can be overtaken by the hindbrain's self-protective impulsivity (Bechara, 2005) so that adults must still offer guidance until the brain is fully developed.

A Security moral self is oriented to physical flourishing through wealth, status, and power. In the mind of the security ethic, it is "right" to be dominant and maintain inequality. Moral systems are hierarchical and ordered. Self-control, particularly of soft emotion or perceived weakness, is fundamental. It is moral to hold in contempt outgroup members or those who violate the moral rules. The virtues of the security ethic are self-protective loyalty and obedience, depicted so well in Hester at the end of *The Scarlet Letter* when she returns voluntarily to the colony to live out her life wearing the scarlet letter.

The Ethic of Engagement involves the emotional systems that drive us towards intimacy. These systems were identified as the locus of human moral sense by Darwin (1871/1981; Loye, 2002) because they are the root of our social and sexual instincts and affectionate parental care. Although evolution has prepared the human brain for sociality and moral agency, proper care during development is required for normal formation of brain circuitries necessary for success-

ful social engagement and cultural membership (Greenspan & Shanker 2004; Panksepp 1998; Schore, 2003a). Human brains are reward-seeking structures, evolved to obtain rewards primarily from social relationships (Nelson & Panksepp, 1998). With adequate care, the Engagement Ethic develops fully and leads to values of compassion, openness, and tolerance (Eisler & Levine, 2002). Care-deprived infants develop aberrant brain structures and brain-behavioral disorders which lead to greater hostility and aggression towards others (Kruesi, Hibbs, Zahn, Keysor, Hamburger, Bartko, & Rapoport, 1992). Inadequate care leads to deficiencies in the brain wiring, hormonal regulation, and system integration that lead to sociality (Weaver, Szyf, & Meaney, 2002). The self in the present, in relationship, in emotional context, drives our relational moral orientation towards trust, love, and reciprocity (engagement) or towards mistrust, uncertainty, and shame (security; see Schore 1994).

An Engagement moral self has a greater capacity for meaningful relationships and a deeper sense of connection to others, along with a sense of responsibility for the welfare of others (Oliner & Oliner, 1988). In fact when the security ethic runs amok, the more humane engagement ethic may provide a counter pressure if awakened by particular events, as in *Herzog* when the titular hero is about to avenge himself on his ex-wife and her lover. Seeing his wife bathing their daughter, his humanity is touched and his heart melts.

The third ethic is the Ethic of Imagination, which links primarily to these recently evolved parts of the brain, the neocortex, particularly the prefrontal cortex. In one way the Imagination Ethic has been studied extensively in moral psychology, at least in terms of deliberative reasoning. Deliberative reasoning, which resides in explicit memory and develops slowly through experience and training, was Kohlberg's focus of study and that of the cognitive developmental tradition more generally. However, as noted above, many researchers in cognitive science have come to the conclusion that most human decisions and actions are carried out automatically and without conscious control (e.g., Bargh & Chartrand, 1999). Most of what is learned is learned implicitly, resides in tacit memory, and is not available to explicit description (Keil & Wilson, 1999). So a distinction has been made between the deliberative, conscious mind and the "adaptive unconscious" (Wilson, 2002) or intuitive mind. Triune Ethics Theory suggests that the real work of moral judgment and decision making has to do with the coordination of these two "minds." That coordination is handled by the Imagination Ethic.

In the parlance of Triune Ethics Theory, the Imagination Ethic responds to and coordinates the intuitions and instincts of the Engagement Ethic and the Security Ethic. The Imagination Ethic sorts out the multiple elements that are involved in moral decision making in a particular situation. The Imagination Ethic has two powerful tools. One is the ability to countermand instincts and intuitions with "free won't" (Cotterill, 1998), the ability that allows humans through learning and willpower to choose which stimuli are allowed to trigger emotional arousal (Panksepp, 1998). Humans appear to be the only animals with this capability. For example, an enraged parent can counter the instinct to beat up a disobedient child. The other powerful tool is the ability to explain behavior. The deliberative mind, largely through the brain's "interpreter" (Gazzaniga, 1985), is facile in explaining any behavior, sometimes unaware that it is "making things up." Typically, the interpreter adopts the narratives of a cultural, familial, or affiliative group. The social narrative is further refined into a personal narrative, both of which also drive behavior (Grusec, 2002). Krebs (2005) reinterprets Kohlberg's stages through the lens of evolutionary psychology, viewing the stages as social strategies reflecting the evolution of respect for authority, altruism, cheating, justice, and care.

Like the brain areas related to the Engagement Ethic, the development of brain areas related to the Ethic of Imagination requires a nurturing environment. The prefrontal cortex and its specialized units take decades to fully develop and are subject to damage from environmental



factors, both early (Anderson, Bechara, Damasio, Tranel, & Damasio, 1999) and late in development (Newman, Holden, & Delville, 2005).

The Imagination Ethic provides for a greater moral sense than the other ethics. Although humans have evolved to favor face-to-face relationships and have difficulty imagining those not present (such as future generations), the work of the Imagination Ethic provides a means for a sense of community that extends beyond immediate relations. Indeed, a self grounded in the Imagination Ethic is broadly aware of human possibilities, including the power of relational co-creation in the moment. Such a self is broadly reflective, demonstrating exquisite self-command for envisioned goals. The Imagination Self has unpinning itself to particular security, it is not caught in local particularities, but rather finds meaning in an autopoietic self-expansion (Varela, 1992). Humans are at their most moral, following Darwin's moral evolution (Loye, 2002), when the Ethic of Engagement is linked with the Ethic of Imagination.

As noted, the Security Ethic is the default system when all else goes wrong. The other two ethics must be developed through proper nurturing and environmental support. Although parenting provides the most important context for early brain wiring for engagement and imagination, educators can have an influence on which ethic dominates the classroom and school, and which orientation is nurtured in the classroom. The Integrative Ethical Education model seeks to provide stepwise guidance to cultivating ethical expertise in the engagement and imagination ethics.

### Step-By-Step Integrative Ethical Education

The Integrative Ethical Education model (IEE; Narvaez, 2006, 2007a) provides an intentional, holistic, comprehensive, empirically derived approach to moral character development. It is informed deeply by both ancient philosophy and current science about what contributes to cultivate human flourishing. As Aristotle pointed out, human flourishing necessarily includes individuals and communities, a perspective corroborated by the biological and social sciences. No one survives or flourishes alone. In fact, humans are biologically wired for sociality and love (Maturana & Verden-Zöllner, 1996). With the proper care and environment humans can be deeply empathic, with ethics of high engagement and imagination (e.g., Dentan, 1968; Wolff, 1994).

The IEE model is presented in a step-by-step format. Ideally the steps take place simultaneously. It is recommended that new teachers plan to start at the beginning and add each step as they feel comfortable (for more details, see Narvaez, 2006, 2007a).

#### *Step 1: Establish a Caring Relationship with Each Student*

Establishing a caring connection is fundamental to any mentoring relationship; that is, the type of relationship that allows mutual influence for mutual benefit. Greenspan and Shanker (2002) describe how parental interaction with infants establishes the cognitive propensities that a child has for learning and being. A pleasurable relationship allows for open communication and for mutual enhancement. Ideally, the family home provides deep emotional nourishment for the child, but this rarely happens in a typical U.S. household these days, due in part to both parents working and a variety of distracting activities. In a day when children are emotionally malnourished, much rides on the adults they see every day—educators. In fact the most important protective factors against poor outcomes for a child are caring relationships with adults, first, with an adult in the family, and second, with an adult outside the family (Masten, 2003). Why is caring so vital? As mammals, we are primarily social-emotional creatures; we are evolutionarily prepared for the rewards of caring, emotionally engaged relationships. The cool logic of a nonemotional Dr. Spock is a sign of pathology, not health (Damasio, 1999). It is through caring relationships and supportive climates that we nurture an engagement ethic.

When students have good relationships with their teachers, they are more likely to feel welcome in the classroom and have a greater sense of belonging, which is related to higher motivation and achievement (Klem & Connell, 2004; McNeely, Nonnemaker, & Blum, 2002; Roeser, Midgley, & Urdan, 1996). Teacher caring and support are related to increased student engagement in learning (Libbey, 2004), especially among at-risk students (Connell, Halpern-Felsher, Clifford, Crichlow, & Usinger, 1995; Croninger & Lee, 2001). Teachers can individualize their care for students, like a good parent. Of course, this means getting to know the child, respectfully, as much as possible. Watson (2003; chapter 10 this volume) richly portrays an elementary school teacher's establishment of caring relationships with her students, students with all types of emotional backgrounds, pointing out generally effective approaches such as guiding students in their self-development through supporting autonomy, building competence, and fostering a sense of belonging. It must be said that establishing a caring relationship is easier with some children than others, and it is easier for elementary school teachers than for high school teachers who see many students for relatively brief periods of time. Nevertheless, as long as teachers maintain a humane classroom, students will be more likely to feel safe and engaged in learning, including moral learning (see Noddings, chapter 9 this volume).

Human minds and hearts are wired for emotional signaling and emotional motivation (Greenspan & Shanker, 2004; Lewis, Amini, & Lannon, 2000; Panksepp, 1998). If these are ignored or mishandled by the educator, then the security ethic will predominate. The students may spend much of their energy in self-protection, leaving little energy for openness to learning. The educator needs to establish healthy emotional signaling with each student in order to influence his or her emotional drive. An emotional connection provides the bridge for communication and influence. Without it, academic motivation is reliant on the residue of family motivation—which may be enough for many Asian Americans, for example, but is not sufficient for other students in American classrooms (Steinberg, 1996; Li, 2005).

### *Step 2: Establish a Climate Supportive of Achievement and Ethical Character*

In simpler times, children learned morality through observation and direct contact with adults during the basic chores and activities of life at home and in the local community. Divorced from the everyday life of most adults and placed in the artificial learning setting of the school, children's social life today revolves around the classroom and school. It is here they learn how to get along with peers, how to participate in group work and decision making, how to be a citizen, and many other skills they take with them into adulthood: "The only way to prepare for social life is to engage in social life" (Dewey, 1909/1975, p.14). As Dewey argues, the school should be constructed as a social institution that integrates both intellectual and moral training.

Organizational climates and cultures shape perceptions and behavior (Power, Higgins, & Kohlberg, 1989; Power & Higgins-D'Alessandro, chapter 12 this volume). In the broad sense the climate includes the structures of the social environment, the overt and hidden systems of rewards and punishment, the goals and aspirations of the social group, and the general discourse about goals. In the specific sense, climate has to do with how people treat one another, how they work together, how they make decisions together, what feelings are encouraged, and what expectations are nurtured.

Considerable research points to the importance of a caring climate for critical student outcomes. Students in classrooms perceived as poorly managed have a decreased sense of belonging (McNeely, Nonnemaker, & Blum, 2002) whereas a positive climate that meets the needs of the individual fosters a sense of belonging to the larger group (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). When classrooms have climates of mutual respect and caring, students feel greater physical and

psychological safety, leading to a greater sense of belonging (Anderman, 2003; Ma, 2003). Bonding to school not only increases school engagement and commitment to learning among students (Goodenow, 1993), but growth in achievement (Libbey, 2004) and healthy development generally (Catalano et al., 2004, chapter 23 this volume). A caring classroom (and school) climate with high expectations for achievement and behavior is related both to high achievement and to moral behavior (Battistich, chapter 17 this volume; Zins et al., 2004).

Climates and cultures shape intuitions about what “works” for attaining personal goals and what is valuable (Hogarth, 2001). Moral character educators should ensure that the school and classroom environments are teaching the right intuitions that promote prosocial behavior, virtue, and moral identity development. Prosocial behavior is nurtured in climates that foster flourishing and the “developmental assets” that support resiliency (Benson, Leffert, Scales, & Blyth, 1998; Wang, Haertel, & Walberg, 1998). In fact, caring schools and classrooms have specific features that are associated with multiple positive outcomes for students. According to Solomon et al. (2002), caring school and classroom communities have the following characteristics: Students are able to demonstrate autonomy, self-direction, and influence teacher decisions. Students interact positively with one another, collaborating and discussing course content and classroom policies. Students are coached on social skills. Teachers exhibit warmth towards and acceptance of students, providing support and positive modeling. The teacher provides multiple opportunities for students to help one another. A well-structured environment for teaching character has these characteristics.

In a caring classroom, discipline is not punishment but is coached character development. Educators can use the Ethic of Imagination (Who should I be?) to promote and emphasize the Ethic of Engagement (e.g., How can we show respect for one another? How can we help one another feel cared for in the classroom?). Educators can foster awareness of the heart intelligence that leads to prosocial behavior and happiness (HeartMath, 2001). Schools can establish programs that take up part of the burden for developing empathy and fostering compassion that stressed families are unable to address (e.g., Roots of Empathy; Schonert-Reichl, Smith, & Zaidman-Zait, 2005).

Steps 1 and 2 are integral to best practice teaching, yet in an era where children have few positive role models in popular culture these are no longer enough to help students develop fully functioning moral character. The next three steps identify the deliberative practices that educators can employ for moral character cultivation in students.

### *Step 3: Teach Ethical Skills across the Curriculum and Extra-Curriculum Using a Novice-to-Expert Pedagogy.*

As mentioned above, training for ethical expertise includes developing appropriate intuitions and sophisticated deliberations in at least four areas: Ethical Sensitivity, Ethical Judgment, Ethical Focus, and Ethical Action. But what competencies can or should be emphasized in school? The Integrative Ethical Education model suggests skills and subskills for each of the four processes.<sup>1</sup> These are skills critical for social and emotional intelligence and living a good life generally (see Elias et al., chapter 13 this volume). These skills are also important for active global citizenship. The policy experts in the Citizenship Education Policy Study Project (Cogan, 1999) identified the public virtues and values that a global citizen should have in the 21st century. All these characteristics reside in the Engagement Ethic, the Imagination Ethic, or a combination of the two. These characteristics are needed by all citizens in order to maintain peace among nations and peoples. In a multipolar world, educators can help students minimize the Security Ethic and develop engagement and imagination. See Table 16.1 for the suggested skills for each of the four processes.

**TABLE 16.1**  
**Ethical Skills**

<i>Ethical sensitivity</i>	<i>Ethical judgment</i>
Understanding emotional expression	Understanding ethical problems
Taking the perspectives of others	Using codes & identifying judgment criteria
Connecting to others	Reasoning critically
Responding to diversity	Reasoning ethically
Controlling social bias	Understanding consequences
Interpreting situations	Reflecting on process and outcome
Communicating well	Coping and resiliency
<i>Ethical focus</i>	<i>Ethical action</i>
Respecting others	Resolving conflicts and problems
Cultivating conscience	Asserting respectfully
Helping others	Taking initiative as a leader
Being a community member	Planning to implement decisions
Finding meaning in life	Cultivating courage
Valuing traditions & institutions	Persevering
Developing ethical identity & integrity	Working hard

How should moral character education be structured? As in training for expertise, educators instruct both the deliberative mind and the intuitive mind. The intuitive mind is cultivated through imitation of role models and the appropriate feedback from the environment. The deliberative mind can be coached in fine tuning action and in how to select good environments for intuition development. By providing theoretical explanation and chance for dialogue, the deliberative mind builds understanding. By providing a grand prosocial narrative, the child internalizes a personal narrative and the deliberative mind's imagination is engaged in activities that bring it about.

Learning involves an active and interactive process of transforming one's conceptual structures through selective attention and by relating new information to prior knowledge (Anderson, 1989). Best practice instruction provides opportunities for students to develop more accurate and better organized representations and the procedural skills required to use them (ibid). In order to do this, children must experience an *expert-in-training pedagogy* for each skill that they learn. Teachers can set up instruction to help students develop appropriate knowledge by designing lessons according to the following four levels of activities (Narvaez et al., 2004; Narvaez, 2005):

*Level 1: Immersion in examples and opportunities.* Teachers provide models and modeling of the goal, draw student attention to the "big picture" in the subject area, and help the students learn to recognize basic patterns.

*Level 2: Attention to facts and skills.* As students practice subskills, teachers focus student attention on the elemental concepts in the domain in order to build more elaborate concepts.

*Level 3: Practice procedures.* The teacher allows the student to try out many skills and ideas throughout the domain to build an understanding of how skills relate and how best to solve problems in the domain.

*Level 4: Integrate knowledge and procedures.* The student finds numerous mentors or seeks out information to continue building concepts and skills. There is a gradual systematic integration and application of skills and knowledge across many situations.

The expertise development approach was formulated in the Minnesota Community Voices and Character Education project. In the final evaluation year, after being familiarized with the framework of skills and pedagogical approach, teacher teams determined which skills their students needed and which academic courses would integrate which skills. Using materials provided by the project designers and teacher-designed lessons, the skills approach had a significant effect on students in schools that implemented them broadly over a one-year period in contrast to a comparison group and to low implementing schools (Narvaez et al., 2004).

#### *Step 4: Foster Student Self-Authorship and Self-Regulation*

Plato understood human existence to be a problem to the self, “the problem of deciding what to become and endeavoring to become it” (Urmson, 1988, p. 2). In other words, the final responsibility for character development lies with the individual. In their choices and actions, orientations and time allocations, individuals address the question: Who should I be? Who are my role models and how do I get there? In an enriched moral environment, students are provided with tools for self-regulation in character formation. Aristotle believed that mentors are required for character cultivation until the individual is able to self-monitor, maintaining virtue through the wise selection of friends and activities.

Individuals can be coached not only in skills and expertise but in domain-specific self-efficacy and self-regulation (Zimmerman, Bonner, & Kovach, 2002). The most successful students learn to monitor the effectiveness of the strategies they use to solve problems and, when necessary, alter their strategies for success (Anderson, 1989). Coaching for self-regulation requires enlisting the deliberative mind to help the intuitive mind. Armed with theoretical knowledge, the deliberative mind, for example, plays a critical role in learning by selecting the environments from which the intuitive mind learns effective behaviors, thereby accelerating implicit learning (Hogarth, 2001). For example, different intuitions are developed when reading a good book than when playing violent video games. Students can learn the metacognitive skills that moral experts have, such as guiding one’s attention away from temptations, self-cheerleading when energy flags, and selecting or redesigning an environment to maximize goal completion (Zimmerman, 1998).

Self-regulation (equilibration) has been a central, driving force of evolution and development within organisms (Darwin, 1871/1981). Self-authorship (autopoiesis) is what living systems do (Varela, Maturana, & Uribe, 1974). Theorists across disciplines have identified self-actualization as the driving force in evolution, particularly human evolution (e.g., Bergson, 1910/1983; Maslow, 1954; Whitehead, 1928). Self-authorship requires a coordinated partnership between the different minds (intuition and deliberation) in a type of reflective abstraction (Piaget’s *prise de conscience*; Gruber & Voneche 1995), and among the different ethics (Security, Engagement, Imagination).

#### *Step 5: Restore the Village: Asset-Building Communities and Coordinated Developmental Systems*

It bears emphasizing that the good life is not lived in isolation. One does not flourish alone. IEE is implemented in and with a community. It is the community that establishes and nourishes the individual’s unique moral voice, providing a moral anchor, and offering guidance as virtues are cultivated. Indeed, both Plato and Aristotle agreed that a good person is above all a good citizen. Hunter (2000) suggests that we find the answers to our existential questions in the particularities that we bring to a civic dialogue: “Character outside of a lived community, the

entanglements of complex social relationships, and their shared story, is impossible” (p. 227). It is in the community that students apply and hone their ethical competencies.

Truly democratic ethical education empowers all involved—educators, community members, and students—as they form a learning community together, developing ethical skills and self-regulation for both individual and community actualization (Rogoff, Turkkanis, & Bartlett, 2001). The purpose of ethical behavior is to live a good life *in the community*. Together community members work out basic questions such as: How should we get along in our community? How do we build up our community? How do we help one another flourish? Each individual lives within an active ecological context (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) in which, ideally, the entire community builds ethical skills together.

Overall, we can strengthen the connections among children’s life spaces: home, school, and community at various levels. Children who live with coordinated systems are adaptationally advantaged (Benson, Leffert, Scales, & Blyth, 1998). The type of person a child becomes is determined in large part by the dynamic interaction among community, family, and culture. Caring communities with high expectations and involved adults are more likely to raise morally engaged citizens.

## TUNING MORAL PERCEPTIONS

*Who tells the stories of a culture really governs human behavior. It used to be the parent, the school, the church, the community. Now it’s a handful of global conglomerates that have nothing to tell, but a great deal to sell.* ( Gerbner, 1994)

At no time in U.S. history have children’s minds been more shaped by advertisers and purveyors of popular culture. Brain research shows the effects of popular media on growing brains, and much of it is worrisome (Quart, 2003; Kasser, 2002). For example, playing violent videogames may thwart normal brain development, negatively influencing areas of the brain critical for moral and social behavior (Mathews, Kronenberger, Wang, Lurito, Lowe, & Dunn, 2005).

The effects can be seen in the manifestation of ethics today. The ethic of security is activated by media from which we develop a “mean world syndrome,” desensitization towards violence (it’s fun and rewarding) and towards victims of violence, culminating in a general lack of trust in others (Cultivation Theory; Gerbner, 1994). The ethic of security is aggravated when we see what others have that we do not (“affluenza”; Hamilton & Denniss, 2005), promoting addictive status seeking. The ethic of imagination is hijacked by artificially manufactured desires so that virtue is converted into being a good consumer (e.g., “being a good citizen” means going shopping, as President Bush recommended to U.S. citizens as a response to the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001). The ethic of engagement is twisted into interaction with electronic media, leaving individuals spending more time interacting with media than with their families or neighbors (Vandewater, Bickham, & Lee, 2006).

Children’s goals, dreams, motivations, perceptions, sensibilities are significantly shaped by forces beyond the family and local community. Educators and parents can step in to offer a human counterinfluence to encourage aspirations that go beyond looks, fame, celebrity, and materialism. Educators can “market morality” in the same way that advertisers market products—by fostering a teacher discourse that draws attention to moral issues and by providing satisfying social experiences. Social-cognitive moral personality theory suggests that a moral personality is built from social and practical experiences that foster automatized moral schemas (Lapsley & Narvaez, 2004; Narvaez & Lapsley, 2005). In fact, making automatic the use of moral filters for



social information processing is what moral “chronics” do (Narvaez et al., 2006).

Hutto (2007) contends that children learn cultural narrative structures and when to use them through direct experience with stories that provide reasons for action (Narrative Practice Hypothesis). Competency with one’s cultural narratives helps one understand self and others. The narratives in popular culture emphasize self-interest and ruthlessness to “have it your way.” These narratives teach children to view themselves and others as selfish beings who compete with their own interests for status and pleasure. Teachers can foster narratives to counter the hedonism and status-enhancing messages of popular media.

Teachers are, first and foremost, role models. They can model a moral orientation to life by thinking aloud about their own moral decisions, telling stories about striving for moral goals, reading stories that develop students’ moral imaginations. Teachers can encourage students to construct their own moral goals and moral life story (e.g., how are you going to make the world a better place for everyone? What skills do you need for it? How will you develop them?). Individuals operate according to the narratives they tell themselves (McAdams, 1993; Schank, 1999). Adults help structure personal narratives by the types of questions they ask (e.g., how did you help someone in school today? What positive actions did you take over vacation? What positive goals do you have for today?) (Nelson & Gruendel, 1981). Adults influence children’s narratives by what they emphasize, expect, and encourage in the environments they design for children. Adults can fill children’s memories with positive concrete experiences in which they helped others and adults can remind them of these times.

## CONCLUSION

Moral character development has perhaps never been more challenging in the United States. In the electronic-media culture that pervades children’s lives, what were considered vices for millennia are touted as virtues. Extended families are often spread far and wide; overworked parents are as distracted as children by the barrage of information and tempting distractions. In light of the current context, educators play a large role in the moral character development of their students. The Integrative Ethical Education model encourages educators to take on an intentional, conscientious approach to cultivating moral character. IEE provides an empirically derived framework for considering how best to approach such an important responsibility.

## NOTE

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# 17

## The Child Development Project: Creating Caring School Communities

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[Y]oung people today and tomorrow would lead better and richer lives, and their world would be a better place, if they were a little less preoccupied with themselves, a little more responsible, and a little more interested in helping others and their communities. Brown (1978)

One might say that the school reform program that was eventually to become known as the Child Development Project began in the summer of 1978, when Dyke Brown retired as Director of the Athenian School in Danville, CA, and set out on an inquiry into the nature of prosocial development. As indicated in the quote above, Brown, a graduate of Yale Law School, founder of the Athenian, and a former Vice President of the Ford Foundation, was concerned about what he and others (e.g., Lasch, 1979) saw as excessive self-interest and declining social responsibility and concern for others among youth. With support from the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, he spent a year interviewing scholars and researchers in the social sciences about both the antecedents of altruism, empathy, cooperativeness, and similar qualities and, especially, about how one might intervene during childhood to effectively promote the development of such prosocial characteristics. His summary report of expert opinion on these matters (Brown, 1979) was sufficiently encouraging that the foundation decided to fund a pilot project to develop, implement, and evaluate a school-based program to promote children's positive social development. So began the educational experiment called the Child Development Project (CDP).

In this chapter, I describe and discuss the origins and evolution of CDP, including its theoretical foundations, program elements, approach to implementation, and evaluation methods and findings. Detailed descriptions of the program and its components, the research designs and methods used in evaluating it, and the specific findings from these studies have been provided elsewhere and will not be repeated here (e.g., Battistich, 2003; Battistich, Schaps, Watson, Solomon, & Lewis, 2000; Battistich, Schaps, & Wilson, 2004; Battistich, Solomon, Watson, & Schaps, 1997; Battistich, Solomon, Watson, Solomon, & Schaps, 1989; Battistich, Watson, Solomon, Schaps, & Solomon, 1991; Solomon, Watson, Battistich, Schaps, & Delucchi, 1992, 1996; Solomon et al., 1985; Solomon, Watson, Delucchi, Schaps, & Battistich, 1988; Solomon, Watson, Schaps, Battistich, & Solomon, 1990; Watson, Battistich, & Solomon, 1997; Watson, Solomon, Battistich, Schaps, & Solomon, 1989; Watson, Solomon, Dasho, Shwartz, & Kendzior, 1994). Rather, this chapter will provide a general overview of the development of the CDP

program and the major studies conducted to implement and evaluate it, including discussion of some of the research design features that resulted in CDP being widely considered an exemplary, evidence-based program. The final section of the chapter will discuss some general conclusions that can be drawn from this work and implications for comprehensive school reform in general and the fields of moral and character education in particular.

## SCOPE OF WORK ON THE CHILD DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

The work on the development, implementation, evaluation, and refinement of CDP spans over fifteen years and may be described in terms of three largely distinct demonstration trials. The first spanned the period from 1980 through 1989 and involved a small number of elementary schools in a single, suburban school district in northern California that served a predominantly White, middle-class population. During this period, the program's theoretical rationale, program elements, and approach to working with schools to implement the program were developed and refined. Development and refinement of the program's formal curriculum materials also began during this period, but was not completed until the program's third demonstration trial. The first comprehensive and rigorous evaluation of the effects of the CDP program was conducted as part of this initial trial.

The second demonstration trial, which occurred from 1988 through 1991, also involved a small number of schools in a single district in northern California, but this was an urban district that served an ethnically and linguistically heterogeneous, predominantly working-class population with substantial numbers of immigrant families. The primary purpose of this trial was to assess how the program might need to be adapted to effectively serve urban schools and ethnic minority and disadvantaged students. Although evaluation research was conducted as part of this demonstration trial, it was based on a weaker design and was much less rigorous than that conducted during the first demonstration trial. In many ways, this phase of the work largely served as preparatory to the subsequent, third and largest demonstration trial.

The final CDP demonstration trial took place between 1991 and 1995, and involved a large number of elementary schools (12 program and 12 comparison schools) from six school districts across the United States. Collectively, these schools were very diverse, including urban, suburban, and rural schools; those serving ethnically homogeneous (including 100% minority) and heterogeneous student populations; and those serving socioeconomically advantaged and poor student populations. Like the initial demonstration trial, this study included a rigorous evaluation and, arguably, provides the most extensive and generalizable findings about the CDP program.

## PROGRAM ORIGINS AND EVOLUTION

A proposal for a five-year project to develop, implement, and evaluate an elementary school program to enhance children's prosocial development was developed during the summer of 1980 and subsequently funded by the Hewlett Foundation.<sup>1</sup> An interdisciplinary team to conduct the pilot project was formed during late 1980 and early 1981, under the leadership of Eric Schaps. The project team was initially composed of a research group, led by Daniel Solomon (and including myself, Judith Solomon, and Marilyn Watson), and a program group (consisting of Carole Cooper, Wendy Ritchey, and Patricia Tuck). The team began working in early 1981 to design the program, the implementation approach, and the evaluation research, and to identify an appropriate group of schools to serve as program and comparison sites for the pilot project.

A school district in the suburban San Francisco Bay Area was identified as the pilot site in the fall of 1981, and six elementary schools were selected and randomly assigned to implement the program or serve as comparison schools. Program planning and orientation for what was now called the Child Development Project continued during the winter and spring of 1982, and implementation of the CDP program began in the fall of 1982 at the three program schools. This first demonstration trial was initially funded for five years (the 1982–83 through 1986–87 school years), but was subsequently extended for two years (through the 1988–89 school year) to allow following the longitudinal cohort of students who had entered the schools in kindergarten in the fall of 1982 through their completion of elementary school in sixth grade.

### Initial Derivation of the Program

As originally conceived (Brown & Solomon, 1983; Solomon, Watson, et al., 1985), the CDP program was largely empirically derived, drawing particularly upon research on effective parenting practices (e.g., Baumrind, 1967; Hoffman, 1975), development of empathy and perspective-taking (e.g., Chandler, 1973; Hoffman, 1976; Iannotti, 1978), cooperative peer interaction (e.g., Saltzstein, 1976; Youniss, 1980), and modeling (e.g., Staub, 1978; Yarrow & Scott, 1972). Theoretically, the approach was based primarily on social learning theory (e.g., Bandura, 1969), with some (although relatively minor at this point) influence from constructivist models of learning and development (e.g., Piaget, 1932/1965).

From the beginning, the intent of the program was to provide a set of consistent and mutually reinforcing school and home experiences that would positively influence children's general prosocial tendencies.<sup>2</sup> CDP was initially described in terms of five program components, each of which was theoretically justified and supported by considerable prior research, but which had not previously been combined into an overall intervention program (Solomon, Watson et al., 1985): (1) cooperation, including both collaborative learning structures (e.g., Aronson, Bridgeman, & Geffner, 1978; Johnson, Skon, & Johnson, 1980) and cooperative games (e.g., Orlick, 1978); (2) routine helping activities (e.g., Staub, 1975); (3) modeling of positive behavior (e.g., Mussen & Eisenberg-Berg, 1977; Yarrow, Scott, & Waxler, 1973); (4) role playing and other activities to enhance interpersonal understanding (e.g., Feshbach, 1979; Iannotti, 1978); and (5) "positive" discipline, which included clear communication of rules and norms that balanced the rights of the individual with responsibilities to others, and discipline techniques based on a caring adult-child relationship, use of induction (Hoffman, 1975; Hoffman & Saltzstein, 1967), minimal use of extrinsic control, and provision of developmentally appropriate autonomy and decision-making opportunities to children. Although the naming of program components, the organization and nature of specific activities, and their relative emphasis changed over time, these basic elements were represented in the program throughout its refinement, implementation, and evaluation.<sup>3</sup>

Individually and collectively, the program components were expected to create environmental conditions that facilitated the development in children of cognitive (e.g., perspective-taking skills, moral reasoning), affective (e.g., empathy, guilt in response to personal transgressions), and behavioral characteristics (e.g., skills at communicating and working effectively with others) that theoretically mediated the relationships between situational demands and opportunities and prosocial behavior. In early descriptions of CDP, the overall aim was described as the cultivation of a "balance" in social attitudes and behavior between consideration of one's own rights and needs and the rights and needs of others (Battistich, Watson, et al., 1991; Watson et al., 1989). This reflected the assumption that people have both individualistic needs and a need for positive

relationships with others (cf. Bakan, 1966), and that the goal of socialization is to help children learn to balance or integrate these sometimes conflicting tendencies (cf. Perloff, 1987; Waterman, 1981). Correspondingly, the program blended elements of traditional, adult, or “sociocentric” models of socialization and moral development (e.g., Durkheim, 1925/1961) with the more autonomous developmental emphases of constructivist theory (Piaget, 1932/1965) in its overall approach (see Battistich, Watson, et al., 1991; Watson et al., 1989)

### Subsequent Development

CDP underwent a number of important conceptual and programmatic changes during its initial demonstration trial. The principal architect of these changes was Marilyn Watson, who moved from the research group to become CDP’s program director shortly after the project began. Watson’s perspective on children’s sociomoral development, which integrated theory and research on attachment (e.g., Ainsworth, Blehar, Waters, & Wall, 1978; Bowlby, 1968) and socialization within the family (e.g., Maccoby & Martin, 1983; Staub, 1979) with constructivist theory (e.g., Piaget, 1932/1965; Vygotsky, 1978), added considerable theoretical coherence to the program, and under her leadership the program components were redefined and important elements were added. There also were major changes in the program’s approach to implementation, including its curricular materials, as described in the next section.

#### *Changes in the Description of Program Components*

In its first reconceptualization (Watson et al., 1989), the program was still described in terms of five components, but these differed somewhat from those described above. Cooperative learning, helping, and interpersonal understanding were still included, but positive discipline was renamed to “developmental discipline,” and modeling was replaced with “highlighting prosocial values” to emphasize the critical role of moral discourse in prosocial development (cf. Oser, 1986).<sup>4</sup> These program components were described as vehicles for providing students with five types of experiences considered to be necessary for promoting their prosocial development: (1) supportive adult–child relationships; (2) opportunities for positive peer interaction and prosocial action; (3) experiences that promote understanding of others; (4) experiences that promote understanding of societal values and how they are manifested in social norms and behavior; and (5) opportunities to think about and discuss moral issues (Watson et al., 1989).

Ultimately, CDP came to be described in terms of its three areas of intervention: a classroom component, a school wide component, and a family or home-school component (Battistich, Solomon et al., 1997; Solomon, Battistich, Watson, Schaps, & Lewis, 2000; Watson, 1995). The classroom program was now described in terms of three major elements. Two of these, cooperative learning and developmental discipline, remained from the previous description. The third, a literature-based reading and language arts curriculum, represented a newer emphasis on classroom discussions of high quality, values-rich children’s literature as a means of enhancing social and moral understanding and promoting moral discourse, and reflected the development and increasing use of formal curriculum materials in CDP (see the next section). The explicit inclusion of school wide and family components in the program description made the scope of the program more apparent (i.e., made it clear that CDP was not solely a classroom-based intervention), acknowledged the importance of these extra-classroom activities as part of the overall program, and reflected the increasingly more systematic and formal nature of the program’s whole-school and parent involvement activities.

## Central Concepts

At the core of CDP are certain assumptions about human nature, the centrality of interpersonal relationships to human development, and the school as a socializing institution. These assumptions are most clearly reflected in two central program concepts, one focused on the teacher–student relationship, and the other having to do with the social organization and climate of the classroom and school.

### *Developmental Discipline: The Nature of the Child, Teacher–Student Relationships, and Socialization*

CDP's view of schooling and development, including its perspective on schools as communities (described below), is predicated upon certain beliefs about children and learning. These beliefs have been most clearly conveyed by Marilyn Watson (Watson, 1982, 1984; Watson & Battistich, 2006; Watson & Ecken, 2003; Watson et al., 1989), and are embodied in the developmental discipline component of CDP. In contrast to behaviorist views of learning and development, children are not considered to be “blank slates” whose development is solely determined by reinforcement from the environment. Nor are they assumed to be entirely egoistic organisms who must be socialized to temper self-interest for social purposes. Rather, because humans are social organisms, children are dependent upon relationships with others for fulfillment of their basic needs, and are considered to have innate prosocial characteristics (Hoffman, 1978, 1984, 2000), and to be predisposed to form positive relationships with others (Bowlby, 1968). Likewise, children are not viewed as passive recipients of knowledge conveyed by adults or requiring extrinsic reinforcement to motivate their learning. Instead, consistent with most current views of learning and development, children are seen as intrinsically motivated to acquire knowledge about the world, and learning is viewed as an active process of constructing meaning through interactions with the physical and social world, particularly through collaborative interactions with more accomplished others around socioculturally meaningful tasks (Piaget, 1950; Rogoff, 1990; Tharp & Gallimore, 1988; Vygotsky, 1978). From this perspective, learning in the social and moral domains does not differ fundamentally from learning in the academic domain.

Education and socialization from this perspective is not fundamentally a matter of training and controlling children, but an inherently collaborative process in which the teacher, as more accomplished other, “scaffolds” (Wood, Bruner, & Ross, 1976) and supports the child's learning through instruction, explanation, modeling, guidance, and encouragement. Developmental discipline is thus a teaching approach to discipline and classroom management in which children are generally seen as allies and partners, and where the emphasis is on developing their understanding of the reasons for norms and rules (and hence of the values which underlie them), and their motivation and ability to abide by them.

Ultimately, the effectiveness of developmental discipline requires mutual trust and respect, and thus is dependent upon the quality of the teacher–child relationship. Misbehavior is considered to be as likely to result from misunderstanding or lack of skill as from antisocial intent, and is regarded as an opportunity for problem-solving and developing self-control rather than punishment. Of course, many children are socially unskilled, and some are oppositional or distrustful and fearful of others. Establishing a positive relationship with children who have come to see adults and the world as uncaring or even hostile is difficult and time consuming for teachers, but is considered necessary for effective socialization, and may play a critical role in the social and moral development of “difficult” students (Watson, 2006; Watson & Ecken, 2003)

Developmental discipline blends the constructivist emphasis on the child's development of

autonomous understanding through discourse and social negotiation among those of equal status and power with the traditional emphasis on teaching children the basic norms and fundamental values of their society and recognition of the important role of adults, as more knowledgeable, experienced, and competent members of society, in facilitating and supporting the child's optimal development. In the same way that the teacher, as more knowledgeable other, scaffolds and supports the development of individual students, he or she similarly plays a critical role in establishing and maintaining a classroom environment that scaffolds and supports the development of all students. And, for both teacher-child interactions and interactions among students, the nature and quality of social relationships is of critical importance to developmental outcomes.

### *Schools as Communities*

The conceptualization of schools as "caring communities of learners" emerged gradually in the early work on CDP, and became the central organizing construct for characterizing CDP's view of the school as an environment that promotes the full social, moral, and intellectual development of students (Battistich, Solomon, et al., 1997). The conceptualization borrows heavily from Dewey's perspective on schools as democratic communities (Dewey, 1899, 1916), and incorporates care theory (Noddings, 1988, 1992), self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Deci, Vallerand, Pelletier, & Ryan, 1991), and constructivist theories of social and moral development (Kohlberg, 1978; Piaget, 1932/1965; Vygotsky, 1978). Like Dewey, CDP's approach assumes that children will best develop the knowledge, skills, and values necessary for active and effective participation as citizens in a democratic society through direct experience as members of a participatory, democratic school community. Collectively, CDP's program elements provide students with the experience of membership in a democratic community: a feeling of belonging, shared values, participation and influence, and cooperative work toward the attainment of common goals (Bryk & Driscoll, 1988; Dewey, 1916; Kohlberg & Higgins, 1987; McMillan & Chavis, 1986; Sarason, 1974).

Consistent with self-determination theory, it is assumed that people have basic psychological needs for autonomy, belonging, and competence (Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Deci & Ryan, 1985; White, 1959). Active participation in a caring and democratic school community is hypothesized to meet these fundamental needs of students, resulting in their attachment or "bonding" to their teachers and to the school community (Ainsworth et al., 1978; Bowlby, 1968). Attachment, in turn, promotes acceptance of community norms and values, continued engagement in community life, and development of the knowledge and skills necessary for effective participation in the community: in short, the social, moral, and intellectual capacities and orientations necessary to be a good person and an effective citizen in a just and democratic society (Battistich, Solomon, et al., 1997; Schaps, Battistich, & Solomon, 1997; Solomon, Watson, et al., 1992).

It is worth noting that CDP's focus on schools as democratic communities shares much with another grand experiment in education: Kohlberg's Just Community (Higgins, 1991; Kohlberg, 1985; Kohlberg & Higgins, 1987; Power, 1988). Although there are clear differences between the two programs in specific practices, in large part due to developmental considerations (elementary vs. high school students), both programs are clearly consistent with Dewey's vision of schools as participatory democracies, combine "traditional" and "constructivist" views of socialization (Kohlberg & Higgins, 1987; Watson et al., 1989), and take advantage of the moral issues inherent in the everyday life of schools as opportunities for "instructional" discourse about values of justice, caring, equality, respect, and inclusiveness. Both also are "ecological" interventions (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) that seek to influence the development of students by shaping the social context of the school-as-a-whole, and thus view social-psychological characteristics of the



school environment (sense of community, moral atmosphere) as direct targets of intervention and critical mediating variables in their theoretical models of developmental outcomes.

## APPROACH TO IMPLEMENTATION

The approach to working with teachers and schools to implement CDP evolved in two major ways during the three demonstration trials. These developments were predicated on corresponding changes in thinking about what resources and experiences were needed for educators to accomplish significant changes in practices. First, it became apparent that motivation and a conceptual understanding of the CDP program and its pedagogical elements alone were not a sufficient basis for many teachers to significantly change their practices. Rather, more concrete supports and “scaffolding” were needed. Consequently, as indicated above, formal curricular materials were developed for the classroom, school-wide, and home-school program components. In addition, the program’s professional development materials were revised and new materials developed, including an extensive videotape library of program activities being conducted in a large and diverse sample of classroom and school settings.

Second, the basic “unit” of change and the focus of professional development activities expanded from individual teachers and classrooms to the entire school. This reflected an increasingly systems-oriented view of effective school change processes, moving from a model where the teacher was the primary unit of change and the school, including the principal as school leader, was the primary context that facilitated or inhibited implementation, to a model where the entire school was the primary unit of change, and school-level implementation was influenced not only by characteristics at the school site (e.g., teacher motivation, principal leadership) but by district policies and practices.

### Materials Development

Initially, CDP was a program without a curriculum. There were no formal teacher guides or lesson plans. Rather, professional development activities were focused on developing educators’ understanding of the program’s developmental theory and the fundamental principles underlying each program element and the program as a whole. Although many teachers were able to apply this understanding and effectively change their practices, many others had difficulty seeing how their current practices would need to be changed to be consistent with program principles, or encountered problems changing their existing practices or implementing program practices that were not part of their existing repertoire (e.g., cooperative learning). More generally, the initial approach to professional development was based on the naïve assumption that once teachers understood program principles, they would easily be able to modify their current practices and curricula, as well as develop new activities and lessons consistent with the program. Upon reflection, it was apparent that this approach seriously underestimated the amount of time and effort needed for teachers to reflect deeply on their practices with respect to their implications for students’ social and moral development (in addition to their learning of subject matter), and to make fundamental and enduring changes in long-standing practices in light of these understandings.

In response to these difficulties, program staff began developing formal curricular materials for each of the major program elements during the initial demonstration trial (although, as noted above, the work was not fully completed until the end of the final demonstration trial). This work was motivated by the belief that most teachers needed more structure and concrete guidance to effectively implement the program, particularly at the beginning, and that curricular materials

were one means of providing this initial support. However, it is important to note that while curriculum guides were developed for the components of CDP, the program never became rigidly “curricularized.” That is, CDP program materials were not developed as highly detailed lesson plans with a defined scope and sequence to be implemented in a scripted fashion. Rather, the curriculum materials were conceptualized and written more as frameworks or guidelines for practice consistent with program principles, with examples of effective activities that could be used if desired and modified as needed by the teacher to meet the exigencies of the situation.

For example, the program’s curriculum guide for cooperative learning (Developmental Studies Center, 1997) is organized as a framework or set of “blueprints” for structuring learning activities as collaborative group tasks that can be used flexibly and interchangeably across academic content areas, and its guide for conducting class meetings (Developmental Studies Center, 1996b) is organized around the various goals for these activities (e.g., building relationships, setting class norms, solving group problems) and the meeting structures and processes that best serve these goals. Similarly, the program’s curriculum guides for the cross-grade “buddies” program (Developmental Studies Center, 1996a) and home-school activities (Developmental Studies Center, 1995) are organized as sets of activities that can be selected and used by teachers for various purposes and to connect with content being covered in the academic curriculum.<sup>5</sup> The curriculum materials thus seek to provide educators with relatively easy-to-implement activities that facilitate their success during initial use of the program, and that scaffold their developing understanding of program principles and mastery of program practices. The central goal remains that of building educators’ deep understanding of CDP’s vision of schooling and their ability to structure the entirety of a school’s practices and processes into a coherent, mutually reinforcing system of influences consistent with this vision.<sup>6</sup>

### Intervention Model

From the beginning, CDP’s approach to professional development was designed to develop educators’ understanding of the program as much as possible through direct experience. That is, like the program itself, its professional development activities were intended to develop a sense of community among participants, and teachers learned the program through participating in “class” meetings, collaborative learning activities, and group planning and decision making, and spent time reflecting upon and discussing their experiences. The approach, in large part, attempted to have educators experience for themselves the type of learning environment we wished them to create for their students (Coburn & Meyer, 1997, 1998; Kendzior & Dasho, 1996; Watson, Kendzior, Dasho, Rutherford, & Solomon, 1998).

Although this basic approach to working with individual educators remained essentially unchanged during the three CDP demonstration trials, the overall intervention model underwent a fundamental shift following the first demonstration trial, as noted above. During the initial trial, professional development activities were largely focused each year on teachers at a single grade level at the program schools—those who were teaching at the grade level of the cohort of students who were being assessed each year in the evaluation. As described elsewhere (Battistich, Solomon, et al., 1997), this approach was problematic in a number of respects. Pragmatically, it meant that individual teachers typically received professional development only for a single year, and that students experienced the program from teachers who were still in the process of learning to understand and implement it. More importantly, this approach was inconsistent with the model of *schooling* as the influence on children’s development (Battistich, Schaps, Watson, & Solomon, 1996; Battistich, Schaps, et al., 2000), and hence of the entire school as the unit of intervention and change. Consequently, after the initial demonstration trial, implementation ef-

forts were focused on the school as a community, and all school staff (classroom teachers, the principal, resource teachers, as well as support staff and parent volunteers whenever possible) participated in professional development activities.

In general, then, the changes in approach to program implementation mirrored those in program conceptualization, becoming more explicitly focused over time on the school as a functional community. CDP thus became even more of a systems-oriented, ecological intervention (Barker, 1968; Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998) in the course of its development, anticipating in significant respects the current emphases on contextual influences in theory and research in child development, prevention, and health promotion (e.g., Earls & Carlson, 2001; Eccles, Lord, & Roeser, 1996; Linney, 2000; McLaren & Hawe, 2005; Sampson et al., 2002).

## PROGRAM EVALUATION

The Child Development Project is undoubtedly among the most thoroughly and rigorously evaluated of school-based positive youth development programs. From its inception, CDP was approached as an educational experiment and comprehensive, systematic research was an integral part of the program's development and implementation. The quality of this research and the resultant body of findings indicating the program's effects on students' social, ethical, and intellectual development have led to CDP being widely recognized as an exemplary, evidence-based program for enhancing the positive development of youth (e.g., Berkowitz & Bier, 2005; Catalano, Berglund, Ryan, Lonczak, & Hawkins, 2002; Clayton, Ballif-Spanvil, & Hunsaker, 2001; Collaborative for Academic Social and Emotional Learning, 2003; Greenberg, Domitrovich, & Bumbarger, 2001). Rather than discuss this research in detail, which is referenced here and has been reviewed and summarized in the publications just indicated (among others), attention here will be focused on major features of the research conducted to evaluate the program and the role these decisions about research design played in supporting general conclusions about program effectiveness.

Aside from some basic features of good research design, such as random assignment of schools to treatment or comparison status (first demonstration trial) or careful matching of program and comparison schools on multiple characteristics that might plausibly be associated with outcomes as the foundation for a sound quasi-experiment (third demonstration trial); use of reliable and valid measures; and use of multiple informants (students, teachers, independent observers, program staff) and data sources (questionnaires, interviews, observations, ratings, sociometric assessments);<sup>7</sup> there were two fundamental research decisions that contributed greatly to the body of evidence supporting the conclusion that CDP was effective at enhancing students' social, moral, and intellectual development. One was the decision to "cast a broad net" and examine potential program effects on a wide range of outcome variables. The other was the decision to assess program implementation as carefully and rigorously as expected outcomes and, as importantly, to examine and measure relevant practices in comparison as well as program classrooms and schools.<sup>8</sup> These decisions were both somewhat controversial and unusual at the time, and the rationale and eventual results of each are described below. This is followed by a more general discussion of the strengths and limitations of the research on CDP.

### Choosing Breadth over Depth in Assessment of Potential Program Outcomes

In the late 1970s and early 1980s, most school-based character and moral development programs were individual-level interventions focused on the development of relatively specific and discrete characteristics, such as moral reasoning (e.g., Blatt & Kohlberg, 1975) or social problem-solving

and conflict resolution skills (e.g., Johnson & Johnson, 1996; Spivack, Platt, & Shure, 1976). Even where the program model was focused on the school environment, as in the case of the Just Community schools (Kohlberg, 1985; Power, 1988), evaluation was narrowly focused on a small number of outcome variables (in this case, primarily moral reasoning ability at the individual level and moral atmosphere at the school level; see Higgins, 1991; Kohlberg, Lieberman, Power, Higgins, & Coddling, 1981). In contrast, CDP was designed as a comprehensive, environmental intervention that was intended to broadly impact the range of attitudes, motives, and abilities presumed to be necessary to the development of the “complete moral person” (Berkowitz, 1997). In evaluating a project with such broad goals, a fundamental decision had to be made about whether assessment should be focused on measuring the few most important developmental outcome variables with as much psychometric rigor as possible, or to sacrifice precision in the measurement of specific outcome variables for the sake of assessing a wider range of potential program outcomes with less rigor. After extensive discussion, it was decided that the best strategy was to pursue assessing a broad range of outcomes, representing variables in each of several domains (see below) with acceptable measurement quality.<sup>9</sup>

Although there were undoubtedly some costs incurred by choosing to measure broadly (in particular, it is likely that with greater reliability and precision of measurement an even larger number of statistically significant effects on individual outcome variables would have been observed), the decision appears to have been a sound one. Much of the recognition of CDP as an exemplary program in such seemingly diverse areas as character education (Berkowitz & Bier, 2005), social and emotional development (Collaborative for Academic Social and Emotional Learning, 2003), mental health (Greenberg et al., 2001), and prevention of violence (Clayton et al., 2001), and drug use (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, nd), is a result of its demonstrated effects on outcomes in a range of distinct domains. More specifically, the research on CDP has found positive program effects on students’ school-related attitudes (e.g., sense of school community, enjoyment of school, trust in teachers, learning motivation), social attitudes, skills, and values (e.g., concern for others, conflict resolution skill, commitment to democratic values), interpersonal relationships (e.g., peer acceptance), social adjustment (e.g., social anxiety), self-concept (e.g., self-esteem, sense of efficacy), and positive and negative behaviors (e.g., altruistic behavior, drug use).<sup>10</sup> Moreover, a number of these effects have been replicated among different samples, across different studies, and using different measures. It is this body of evidence, rather than effects observed for any particular outcome variable, that most strongly warrants the conclusion that CDP is an effective program (Battistich, 2003; Battistich, Schaps, et al., 1996; Battistich, Schaps, et al., 2000; Battistich, Schaps, & Wilson, 2004; Battistich, Solomon, et al., 1989; Solomon, Battistich, et al., 2000; Solomon, Watson, et al., 1996; Solomon, Watson, Delucchi, et al., 1988; Watson, Battistich, & Solomon, 1997). Table 17.1 provides a summary of the most consistent outcomes found in the evaluations of CDP, including information on how these variables were measured, whether the effects have been replicated in different studies or among different cohorts of students, and effects that have been observed in follow-up studies of program and comparison students.<sup>11</sup>

## ASSESSING PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

From the perspective of research design, the most innovative feature of the studies of CDP was the systematic and rigorous assessment of the actual use of program practices and processes. At the time of the initial study of CDP, the predominant approach to assessing the effectiveness of educational programs was the “black box” design (see, e.g., Gresham, Gansle, Noell, Cohen,

**TABLE 17.1**  
**Summary of Effects of the Child Development Project**

<i>Domain/outcome</i>	<i>Measurement procedure(s)</i>	<i>Effects in elem. school</i>	<i>Replicated</i>	<i>Effects at follow-up</i>
<b>School/classroom-level outcomes</b>				
Sense of community	Student report Teacher report	Yes	Yes	N/A
Positive student behavior	Observation Student report Teacher report	Yes	Yes	N/A
Positive teacher–student relations	Teacher report	Yes	Yes	N/A
<b>Student-level outcomes: Academic</b>				
Attachment/bonding to school	Student report	Yes	Yes	Yes
Trust in/respect for teachers	Student report	Yes	*	Yes
Learning motivation	Student report	Yes	Yes	Yes
Engagement in class	Teacher rating	N/A	—	Yes
Educational expectations and aspirations	Student report	No	*	Yes
Grades	School records	N/A	—	Yes
Achievement test scores	School records	No	—	Yes
<b>Student-level outcomes: Personal</b>				
Self-esteem	Student report	No	—	Yes
Sense of efficacy	Student report	Yes	N/A	Yes
Sense of autonomy	Student report	Yes	*	N/A
<b>Student-level outcomes: Interpersonal relationships</b>				
Peer acceptance/popularity	Sociometric Teacher rating Student report	Yes	Yes	Yes
Loneliness	Student report	Yes	Yes	Yes
Association with prosocial peers	Student report	N/A	—	Yes
Association with antisocial peers	Student report	N/A	—	Yes
<b>Student-level outcomes: Social attitudes, values, skills</b>				
Intrinsic prosocial motivation	Student report	Yes	Yes	N/A
Social understanding	Interview	Yes	*	N/A
Moral reasoning	Interview	Yes	*	N/A
Concern for others	Student report	Yes	Yes	Yes
Acceptance of out-groups	Student report	Yes	*	N/A
Commitment to democratic values	Student report	Yes	Yes	Yes
Conflict resolution/social problem-solving skills	Interview Student report	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>Student-Level Outcomes: Behavior</b>				
Altruistic behavior	Student report Teacher rating	Yes	*	Yes
Drug use	Student report	Yes	*	Yes
Delinquent behaviors	Student report	Yes	*	Yes
Misconduct at school	Student report Teacher report	N/A	—	Yes
Involvement in positive youth activities	Student Report	N/A	—	Yes

Note. N/A=not assessed.

\*Only assessed in single sample/study.

& Rosenblum, 1993). That is, it was assumed that individuals in the treatment condition implemented the intervention program (and that those in the comparison condition did not do so), and the effectiveness of the program was determined by simple comparisons of outcomes among study participants in the treatment and no treatment groups.<sup>12</sup> When actual use of the program was assessed at all, it typically was done through a separate “formative” evaluation component of the research, rather than as an integral part of the “summative” evaluation of the program.

Such approaches are clearly problematic. Given that the educational reform literature is replete with examples of the difficulties of implementing educational innovations (e.g., Fullan, 1992; Lieberman, Darling-Hammond, & Zuckerman, 1991), to simply assume that a program will be implemented as intended (or even implemented at all) by those who are supposed to do so is both naïve and risky. Absent evidence of program implementation, any conclusions about program effectiveness based on observed outcomes, whether positive or negative, is clearly quite tenuous. Although an improvement, information on implementation from a separate process evaluation can document implementation variation, but such data are only descriptive and are of limited usefulness in attempting to account for observed differences in outcomes in the treatment and comparison conditions. To fully and fairly evaluate the effectiveness of an intervention program, valid and reliable measures of program implementation must be obtained and the data provided by these measures should be formally incorporated into analyses of program effects.

Systematic assessment of program practices and processes was therefore an integral part of the evaluations of CDP. Equally important, assessments were conducted in both program and comparison schools in order to estimate the actual differences between conditions on these dimensions. These data were primarily provided through repeated observations by independent observers who were “blind” to treatment conditions, with supplementary measures of implementation provided by teacher and student report. (For detailed information on how implementation was assessed, and on the reliability and validity of these measures, see Solomon, Battistich, Schaps, et al., 2000; Solomon, Watson, & Deer, 1988; Solomon, Watson, Delucchi, et al., 1988).

The implementation data contributed to the evaluation of the program in two primary ways. First, they allowed discrimination among program schools with respect to fidelity of implementation. As is true with most comprehensive educational innovations, there was substantial variation among program teachers and schools in their use of program practices. Having measures of this variability provided a sound basis for classifying schools according to implementation fidelity, and for incorporating this information into analyses of program effects. This was particularly important in the third and largest evaluation of CDP, where very large differences in implementation were observed among the program schools and simple study wide comparisons yielded only a small number of statistically reliable differences between program and comparison students, some of which favored the comparison group. For the subset of schools where the program was widely implemented by teachers throughout the school, however, there were a large number of significant differences in outcomes between program students and students in the matched comparison schools, and none of the observed differences favored the comparison group (Solomon, Battistich, et al., 2000). Thus, absent reliable data on actual use of program practices, the findings would have suggested a very different conclusion about the effectiveness of the CDP program.

Even more important than their utility for discriminating among members of the treatment group in terms of degree of program utilization, the data on use of program practices and processes allowed for explicit, empirical testing of major aspects of CDP’s program theory. Such model testing analyses have consistently supported the validity of the general theoretical model. Specifically, they have demonstrated that: (1) sense of school community is positively associated with a wide range of student attitudes, values, and behaviors in the academic, social, and moral domains (Battistich & Hom, 1997; Battistich, Solomon, Kim, Watson, & Schaps, 1995);



(2) use of practices consistent with the program is strongly associated with students' sense of community (Solomon, Battistich, Kim, & Watson, 1997); (3) implementation of CDP reliably leads to significant and large increases in sense of community (Solomon, Battistich et al., 2000; Solomon et al., 1996); and (4) almost all of the program's observed effects on student outcomes are mediated through its intervening effects on students' sense of school community (Solomon, Battistich, Schaps, et al., 2000). Moreover, these effects on sense of community during intervention in elementary school appear to reflect an increase in students' "bonding" or "connectedness" to school in general, which persists at least through middle school, and is similarly associated with a wide range of positive student outcomes at follow-up (Battistich & Hong, 2002; Battistich, Schaps, & Wilson, 2004). Such findings add considerably to the body of evidence on the effectiveness of the CDP program.

### ON BALANCE: EVIDENCE OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE CDP PROGRAM

Although the findings from the evaluations of CDP and the quality of this research have supported widespread recognition of CDP as an effective program, as noted above, it is important to acknowledge that this conclusion is not unassailable. The research designs used in evaluating the program were quite rigorous, but they did not achieve the "gold standard" of design for making a strong causal inference of treatment effect: the fully randomized experiment. The closest approximation to this standard was the first evaluation study, where schools were randomly assigned to program or comparison status. Of course, randomization at the school level is generally not sufficient to assure pre-treatment equivalence of the members of the program and comparison groups unless very large numbers of schools are involved, which was not the case in the CDP studies (the initial study involved three program and three comparison schools, and the largest study only involved 12 schools per condition). Other than in the initial study, program and comparison schools were not randomly assigned to condition, although they were matched as closely as possible on relevant school and student characteristics. The research designs used for evaluating CDP were thus quasi-experiments rather than true experiments, making causal conclusions inherently more tenuous.

A related issue is unit of analysis. CDP is a whole school intervention, and the proper unit of analysis is the unit of treatment. However, like many evaluations of educational interventions, too few schools have been involved in the CDP studies to provide adequate statistical power for analyses at the school level. Most of the analyses of CDP program effects have therefore been conducted with individual students as the unit of analysis (although not all: see Solomon, Watson, Delucchi et al., 1988). This failure to take the clustering of students within schools into account in statistical analyses generally results in downward bias in the estimated standard errors used for evaluating the statistical significance of observed treatment effects, resulting in "alpha inflation." When analyses are conducted at the school level, or when the degree of non-independence of observations is taken into account in analyses (i.e., multi-level analysis), the number of statistically significant program effects is considerably reduced, as would be expected. Of course, the direction and size of the observed differences between program and comparison students remain unchanged; only the estimated probability that any observed difference could occur due to sampling error (i.e., "chance") is affected.<sup>13</sup> Conclusions about the effectiveness of CDP based on the results of statistical analyses therefore require due consideration of both the likelihood of making Type I errors (i.e., rejecting the null hypothesis of no program effect when it is true) and the likelihood of making Type II errors (i.e., failing to reject the null hypothesis when it is false). In this context, it is worth noting that, "alpha inflation" aside, statistically significant differences be-

tween program and comparison students have been observed on over 20% of the tests conducted and, of these, well over 90% have favored program students.

Ultimately, despite these recognized deficiencies in research design and statistical analyses of outcome data, the preponderance of evidence strongly suggests that CDP had positive effects on students. Program effects have been observed on a wide range of outcome variables across multiple studies and across a wide range of schools and student populations. Effects on individual outcome variables, such as sense of school community and conflict resolution skill, have been repeatedly found across different studies, different cohorts of students, and using different measures. Moreover, follow-up studies suggest that the differences between program and comparison students in school-related, social, and moral outcomes observed during treatment in elementary school remain throughout the middle school years. Few interventions have amassed as large of body of supportive empirical evidence.

## CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

The Child Development Project was a grand experiment in transformative, comprehensive school reform. Although the findings from the research on the program were positive and have been widely disseminated, the ultimate impact of CDP on the practice of moral and character education or on educational practice in general, remains to be seen. Certainly, CDP has had a lasting influence on the practice of many of the individual educators and at least some of the schools who were involved in the demonstration trials (Coburn, 2003), and the CDP program as described here continues to be implemented and evaluated in some schools (Munoz & Vanderhaar, 2006). However, the full CDP intervention program is no longer being disseminated. Professional development and curriculum materials for certain components of CDP are still being offered by the Developmental Studies Center as the Caring School Community program ([www.devstu.org](http://www.devstu.org)), and this “scaled-down” version of CDP has recently been implemented and evaluated in some large-scale, experimental studies, with quite positive results (Cooperating School Districts, 2007), but for all intents and purposes, program development and primary research on CDP is finished. In concluding this chapter, then, it is perhaps most appropriate to touch on some of the areas where the work on the Child Development Project seems to have contributed to the field of school-based programs to promote the positive development of youth, and some of the issues and remaining work that needs to be done in these areas.

Clearly, the work on CDP has contributed substantially to the emergence of the now extensive body of theory and research on schools as communities that began in the 1980s with the publication of Coleman’s comparative analysis, which argued that the higher achievement of students in private than public schools was due to the more communal organization of private schools (Coleman & Hoffer, 1987). This positive relationship between school community and the academic performance of students has been repeatedly confirmed (e.g., Bryk & Driscoll, 1988) and further analyzed (e.g., Phillips, 1997; Shouse, 1996) and, as with the research on CDP, extended to a wide range of other student outcomes (e.g., Battistich & Hom, 1997; Battistich, Solomon, et al., 1995; Payne, Gottfredson, & Gottfredson, 2003; Rutter, 1988; Wehlage, Rutter, Smith, Lesko, & Fernandez, 1989). Other research has demonstrated the benefits of school community for teachers as well as students (Coburn & Meyer, 1997; Hausman & Goldring, 2001; Irwin & Farr, 2004; Louis, Marks, & Kruse, 1996; Westheimer, 1998). The idea that schools should be functional communities is now so widely accepted that few would disagree, and school community has become a central element in many definitions of effective schools (e.g., Beland, 2003; Irwin & Farr, 2004; Oxley, 1997; Wehlage et al., 1989).

Although the importance of school community for students and teachers has become widely accepted and it is now commonplace to talk about schools as communities, there is not as yet a clear, consensual definition of school community. Certainly there are common elements in various definitions, but there are also significant differences (Watson & Battistich, 2006). Further work is needed to examine these conceptual differences and identify their importance for practice. In addition, while it seems clear that there are many benefits associated with school community, there also are potential risks to building community in schools. Among these are the danger of creating strong “in-group–out-group” boundaries that foster intolerance and discrimination toward those who are not members of the school community (e.g., Noddings, 1997; Peshkin, 1986). Even in explicitly democratic school communities, there are inherent tensions between the requirement of shared values among community members and democratic values of respect for differences and tolerance of dissent, and the dangers of the “tyranny of the majority” and marginalization or alienation of those with different beliefs (Shutz, 2001; Strike, 1999, 2000). Of course, these difficulties are not unique to *school* communities, but are perhaps most problematic for public schools that strive to be communities, given their responsibility as social institutions of developing in students the beliefs and values necessary to maintaining a democratic society.

From a methodological perspective, the careful assessment of program implementation in the research on CDP and the utilization of these data in analyses of program effects has certainly influenced the field. Traditionally, “intent to treat” analyses were considered the only justifiable approach to the analysis of outcome data from experimental evaluations of interventions. That is, all participants assigned to the treatment condition were included in a single treatment group, regardless of whether or how well the intervention was delivered, or whether or not the participant actually was exposed to the intervention. To do otherwise was considered very likely to introduce significant “selection” bias into the analysis, and thus threaten the validity of a conclusion that observed outcome differences were due to the effect of the treatment. Although certainly a legitimate concern, to ignore sizeable differences in exposure to a program and treat all participants assigned to the treatment condition, including those who may not have been exposed to the program at all, as if they had experienced equivalent, full exposure to the program also seriously threatens the validity of conclusions about program effectiveness. The publication in peer-reviewed journals of the findings from analyses of the effects of CDP that discriminated within the treatment condition on the basis of extent and quality of program implementation (Battistich, Schaps, Watson, et al., 2000; Battistich, Schaps, & Wilson, 2004; Solomon et al., 2000) was unusual and somewhat controversial, although not unprecedented (e.g., Jones, Gottfredson, & Gottfredson, 1997). Less controversial and more influential was the incorporation of implementation data into analyses focused on testing the validity of CDP’s program theory (Battistich & Hong, 2002; Battistich, Solomon, et al., 1997; Solomon, Battistich et al., 2000). As developers of “scientifically proven” school-based interventions have moved from tightly controlled experimental evaluations of efficacy to evaluations of program effectiveness in “real world” settings, attention to implementation and its assessment as a critical element of sound evaluation design has grown dramatically (Zins, Elias, Greenberg, & Pruet, 2000a, 2000b), and increasing attention has been paid to statistical approaches to taking measures of implementation into account in analyses of intervention effects (Lochman, Boxmeyer, Powell, Roth, & Windle, 2006).

Finally, CDP is one of the few truly “ecological” interventions for promoting the positive development of youth. Although there has been considerable discussion of the need for “integrating” practices in moral and character education into the school curriculum, CDP set out to systematically change the entire social context of the school. With such an approach, *schooling* is the “intervention program.” Although this also is apparently the intent of various comprehensive school reform programs focused largely on enhancing students’ academic performance, with

the exception of the Just Community, I am unaware of other similarly ambitious intervention programs focused explicitly on the social and moral development of students. Thinking about schools themselves as *contexts* than influence the development of youth, rather than simply as the places where particular programs or specific practices are implemented, is a very different way of thinking about developmental processes and effective interventions. Recent empirical work has begun to document the importance of contextual influences on development, and theoretical work has begun to attempt to explain the mechanisms through which such effects operate, but there are significant conceptual issues and methodological problems that remain unresolved (Battistich, in press; Roeser, Eccles, & Sameroff, 2000). What seems clear is that we need to begin thinking differently about developmental processes and how to intervene to promote optimal developmental outcomes. When interventions are conceptualized as ecological, as dynamic and interacting systems of influence, it makes little sense, for example, to raise questions about the effectiveness of particular program elements or otherwise attempt to understand the effects of the system by studying its components in isolation. To borrow from Vygotsky, if we are concerned with understanding the effects of complex, holistic systems, we “need to replace the method of analysis into elements with the method of analysis into units” (1986, p. 5).

#### AUTHOR NOTE

The work described here represents a collaborative effort on the part of a large number of educators and social scientists over a period of many years. Although space precludes listing all of those who contributed in important ways, the program of the Child Development Project (CDP) would not have been developed, nor would the work have been anywhere near as successful, without the seminal contributions of Eric Schaps, Marilyn Watson, and the late Daniel Solomon. Similarly, among the many agencies that funded aspects of the work on CDP over the years, the initial and continuing support of the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation must be particularly acknowledged. I would like to thank Eric Schaps and Marilyn Watson for their helpful comments on this chapter. Needless to say, the opinions expressed here are entirely my own and any factual inaccuracies are my sole responsibility.

#### NOTES

1. Based on his successful record of working with public schools to implement intervention projects, Dyke Brown contacted Eric Schaps, then with the Pacific Institute for Research and Evaluation, about conducting the pilot project for the Hewlett Foundation. The initial proposal was written by Daniel Solomon and Nancy Eisenberg, with important contributions on research design and methods from Joel Moskowitz.
2. Although the central elements of CDP were primarily classroom practices, activities designed to influence parent–child relationships and strengthen family–school connections were part of the overall program from the beginning. These have involved two basic types of activities: (1) school-wide family involvement activities, such as family read-aloud nights or cooperative family science fairs, and (2) “homework” activities that involve children and their caregivers in conversations related to learning activities at school.
3. For example, positive discipline was later renamed developmental discipline, and the use of literature rather than role playing activities became a primary vehicle for enhancing children’s social understanding. Similarly, cross-grade “buddies” activities were implemented as part of the original CDP program (see Solomon et al., 1985), but didn’t become identified as a prominent program component until later.

4. Note that this change did not imply that modeling was not considered an important influence on children's development, but rather that modeling of prosocial behavior was pervasive in the CDP program, and it thus made little conceptual sense to describe it as a discrete program component.
5. CDP's literature-based language arts curriculum (Developmental Studies Center, 1998a, 1998b) is perhaps the most structured of the program's curricula, with each lesson being focused on a specific book or other selection of quality children's literature selected for its potential to allow examination of fundamental aspects of the human experience, exploration of moral issues, or enhancement of social understanding and understanding of human cultural and other diversity. Even here, however, teachers choose which books they will use in their classrooms, and the units are not scripted, but provide general guidelines for discussion and suggested activities that may or may not be used by the teacher to structure the lesson and extend students' learning.
6. These changes, while providing more concrete guidance and structure to teachers than initially, were perhaps still not sufficient for assuring that most teachers could achieve high quality implementation of all elements of CDP. Eric Schaps (personal communication, March, 2007) has argued that widespread, quality implementation of a program like CDP can only be achieved if desired practices are highly structured and temporally arranged; in effect, a specific, formal curriculum with concrete lesson plans in a defined scope and sequence is needed. This more highly structured approach has been taken by the Developmental Studies Center in revising CDP curricular materials and in new program development work.
7. For information on the battery of assessments used in evaluating CDP, see Battistich (1988), Deer, Solomon, Watson, and Solomon (1988), Solomon, Watson, and Deer (1988), Stone, Solomon, Tauber, and Watson (1989), and Tauber, Rosenberg, Battistich, and Stone (1989).
8. The decision to systematically assess comparison as well as program conditions (and to use observers who were unaware that a program was being comparatively evaluated) had drawbacks as well: notably, measurement scales had to be applicable in both contexts, making it impossible to focus on aspects of CDP practice that were highly distinctive, and thereby decreasing the sensitivity of the measures to specific program features.
9. This issue of scope and quality of measurement was a matter of some debate at the first meeting of the project's initial panel of advisors, which included Marilyn Brewer, Martin Hoffman, David and Roger Johnson, Thomas Lickona, Paul Mussen, Marian Radke-Yarrow, Ervin Staub, and David Weikart. In addition to the necessary tradeoff between measurement quality and scope, there were also issues of measurement burden (i.e., the time required by participants to provide data on many outcome variables) and availability of appropriate measures for use with young children. One of the costs of electing to assess a broad range of outcome variables was the need to undertake extensive work to develop measures (see the articles referenced in note 7), as there either were no published measures of relevant outcome variables, or those that were available were developmentally inappropriate or required too much assessment time.
10. It should be noted that the evaluations of CDP have not found consistent evidence of program effects on students' academic achievement during elementary school. However, at follow-up in middle school, program students had significantly higher course grades and achievement test scores than comparison students (Battistich et al., 2004).
11. Program and comparison students in both the initial study and the large, multisite study were subsequently assessed during middle school (Battistich et al., 2004; Solomon, Battistich, & Watson, 1993)
12. Interestingly, concerns about "diffusion of treatment" (i.e., implementation of the intervention by individuals in the no treatment condition) and similar "contamination" of the comparison group were recognized as a threat to the internal validity of experiments long before concerns about "failure to implement" by individuals in the treatment condition (Campbell & Stanley, 1966).
13. Similar considerations apply when adjustments are made to account for the number of significance tests conducted in a study.

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# 18

## Constructivist Approaches to Moral Education in Early Childhood

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Constructivist approaches to early childhood education focus on developmentally appropriate practices for children from birth to eight years of age (Bredekamp, 1987; Bredekamp & Copple, 1997). The goal of constructivist education is to promote children's development in all areas of the curriculum (science, mathematics, language and literacy, social studies, and the arts), and in all developmental domains (intellectual, physical, social, emotional, and moral) (DeVries, Zan, Hildebrandt, Edmiaston, & Sales, 2002; Fosnot, 2005).

The term “constructivist,” as it will be used in this chapter, comes from Piaget's theory of development. According to Piaget, children *construct* their knowledge and intelligence through interactions with their physical and social worlds (Piaget, 1970; Kamii & Ewing, 1996). Constructivist education is deeply rooted in the progressive education movement and draws theoretical and practical inspiration from educational philosophers such as John Dewey (1909, 1913, 1916, 1938) and almost a century of action research in the classroom (DeVries, 2002; Goffin & Wilson, 2001; Mayhew & Edwards, 1936; Read, 1966; Tanner, 1997; Weber, 1984).

In their book, *Moral Classrooms, Moral Children: Creating a Constructivist Atmosphere in Early Education*, DeVries and Zan (1994) state that the first principle of constructivist education is to create a sociomoral atmosphere where mutual respect is continually practiced. “Sociomoral atmosphere” refers to the entire network of interpersonal relations in the classroom—child–child relationships, adult–child relationships, and adult–adult relationships observable by children.

The main goal of constructivist education is for children to become autonomous, life-long learners. Autonomous people do not act through blind obedience. Their thoughts and actions are guided by reason, conviction, and commitment. A major premise of constructivist education is that children cannot become autonomous intellectually or morally in authoritarian relationships with adults. According to Piaget (1932/1965):

If he [the child] is intellectually passive, he will not know how to be free ethically. Conversely, if his ethics consist exclusively in submission to adult authority, and if the only exchanges that make up the life of the class are those that bind each student individually to a master holding all power, he will not know how to be intellectually active. (p. 107)

Similarly, Dewey (1938) writes:

Since freedom resides in the operation of intelligent observation and judgment by which a purpose is developed, guidance given by the teacher to the exercise of the pupil's intelligence is an aid to freedom, not a restriction upon it.... (p. 71) [Teaching] is a co-operative enterprise, not a dictation; development occurs through reciprocal give-and-take, the teacher taking but not being afraid also to give—the essential point is that the purpose grow and take shape through the process of social intelligence. (p. 72)

In constructivist classrooms opportunities for learning about moral issues and behavior are based, whenever possible, on direct experience. This is consistent with the idea that children must construct their moral understandings from the raw material of their day-to-day social interactions (DeVries & Kohlberg, 1987/1990). The classroom is seen as a mini-society, a community of learners engaged in activity, discourse, interpretation, justification, and reflection (Fosnot, 2005). Constructivist teachers facilitate children's social and moral development by engaging them in resolving their conflicts, making decisions (even decisions about rules), voting, and discussing social and moral issues that are relevant to them. As with other areas of the curriculum, constructivist teachers' aim is to appeal to children's interests and purposes, to promote reasoning and experimentation, and to foster cooperation between all members of the classroom community.

In this chapter, we begin by providing an overview of the theoretical and historical bases of constructivist moral education. We then turn to a description of the components of constructivist moral education with children aged three to eight years, especially with regard to adult authority, conflict resolution, rule making and decision making, group games, and social and moral discussions. Next, we review empirical research on the effects of constructivist early education on children's social and moral understandings and behavior, with special emphasis on studies comparing constructivist classrooms with traditional and eclectic classrooms. Finally we discuss common misconceptions about constructivist education as well as current criticisms of constructivist theory and practice.

## THEORETICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Throughout the history of constructivist moral education there has been a dynamic tension between *traditional education*, where instruction is primarily teacher-centered and morality is defined by the rules and dictates of authority, and *progressive education*, where the classroom is primarily child-centered and moral development is seen as the gradual construction and application of principles of justice, equity, and compassion. In this section, we provide an overview of the work of major theorists in the area of constructivist moral education and contrast them with traditional educators of their time.

### Piaget's Theory of Moral Development

Piaget believed that social life among children is a necessary context for the development of intelligence, morality, and personality (Piaget, 1948/1973; DeVries, 1997). He stressed that "social life is a necessary condition for the development of logic" (Piaget, 1928/1995) and that "the development of the child is an adaptation of his mind to the social milieu as much as to the physical milieu" (Piaget, 1976, p. 45, cited in DeVries & Edmiaston, 1998). According to Piaget, all development emerges from action and reflection. Children construct and reconstruct their knowledge of the world in order to make sense of it, eventually arriving at more and more adequate forms of reasoning and behavior.

One of Piaget's most influential works in the area of social and moral development is *The Moral Judgment of the Child*. Written in 1932, between the two world wars, it is a landmark work in the area of developmental psychology. Although little of what is written in the book is aimed directly at educators, it has formed a strong theoretical basis for current practices in moral education.

The main question of the book is "How do children's moral judgments develop?" Piaget was well aware of the deep social and moral implications of this question, especially for Western Europe at that time. With the rise of fascism and other totalitarian forms of government, it was important to determine how children's moral reasoning and behavior could be developed so that the actions of future generations could be based on justice and reason rather than on blind submission to dictatorial rule.

Using naturalistic observations and semi-structured clinical interviews, Piaget studied children's understanding of rules governing childhood games, property damage, lying, stealing, and retributive and distributive justice. He chose these topics because they occur, in one form or another, in all cultures. Following a stage in which the child is unaware of the existence of rules, Piaget found a gradual shift from heteronomy (reliance on rules given by an external authority) to autonomy (understanding that rules can be generated through a process of mutual consent). In this gradual shift from heteronomy to autonomy, children become increasingly capable of taking other people's perspectives into account and making their own judgments about moral issues.

According to Piaget, changes in children's moral reasoning and behavior are due to changes in their cognitive structures. Piaget characterized the thinking of young children as predominantly egocentric. Egocentric thinkers have difficulty coordinating their own views with those of other people. In fact, they may not even realize that other people have thoughts and feelings that differ from their own. In social situations, egocentrism sometimes leads young children to project their own thoughts and feelings onto others. Conversely, it can also lead to a unilateral view of rules and power relations, in which they accept the rules of others without question.

Egocentrism can also lead to various forms of "moral realism," such as "objective responsibility." Objective responsibility can manifest itself in a number of ways, such as valuing the letter of the law above the spirit of the law, or focusing on the consequences of actions rather than the intentions behind them. Moral realism is also associated with a belief in "imminent justice," or the expectation that punishments automatically follow all acts of wrong-doing, either immediately or at some later time. Egocentric children often believe that the amount of punishment should correspond to the amount of damage, regardless of extenuating circumstances or intent. They also have difficulty thinking about the fair distribution of goods and services in terms of equality or equity. The relative powerlessness of young children, coupled with childhood egocentrism leads to a heteronomous orientation toward morality. However, through social interactions with peers and supportive adults, children can construct increasingly autonomous ways of thinking about rules based on more general principles concerning underlying justice, welfare, and the rights of others.

Piaget's findings provided evidence against French sociologist Emile Durkheim's views of moral development and education (1925/1961). Durkheim, along with Piaget, believed that morality resulted from social interaction and immersion in a group. However, Durkheim believed that moral development is a natural result of an emotional attachment to the group which manifests itself in respect for the symbols, rules, and authority of the group, along with a "spirit of discipline" that helps channel and control behavior. In contrast to Durkheim, Piaget demonstrated that morality was not simply a set of internalized symbols, rules, and norms. He characterized the child's moral development as a progressive construction of increasingly more powerful and inclusive ways of thinking about justice, equity, and respect for persons. He showed that children

construct their understanding of morality through struggles to arrive at fair solutions to everyday problems, particularly in the context of interactions with peers. Piaget contrasted the educational implications of these two views of moral development in the following way:

Durkheim regards all morality as imposed by the group upon the individual and by the adult upon the child. Consequently, from the pedagogic point of view, whereas we would be inclined to see in the “Activity School,” “self-government,” and the autonomy of the child the only form of education likely to produce a rational morality, Durkheim upholds a system of education which is based on the traditional model and relies on methods that are fundamentally those of authority, in spite of the tempering features he introduced into it in order to allow for inner liberty of conscience. (Piaget, 1932/1965, p. 342)

Piaget advocated a progressive approach to moral education involving cooperative relationships between children and between children and adults. Based on his observations of more traditional educational and child rearing methods of the time, Piaget warned parents and teachers against the use of coercion and indoctrination as a means of moral education. Indoctrination reinforces the young child’s natural tendency toward a heteronomous reliance on external regulation. Coercion can lead to rebellion, mindless submission, or calculation (where children are obedient and follow adult rules only when the adult is watching). When adults minimize the exercise of unnecessary authority, it opens up more possibilities for children to construct their own reasons and feelings of necessity about rules and other social relationships.

Piaget emphasized the importance of children’s social interactions with peers because social and intellectual equality is often easier to attain in relations with age-mates than in relations with adults. In particular, Piaget saw clashes with peers as fruitful because they confront children with perspectives other than their own and thus contribute to the overcoming of egocentrism. Piaget concluded that schools should emphasize cooperative decision making and problem solving, and nurture moral development by requiring students to work out common rules based on fairness. Piaget’s focus on cooperation and mutual respect continues to be an important component of constructivist early moral education today.

### John Dewey’s Philosophy of Moral Education

Constructivist early moral education also draws extensively from the work of American philosopher and educator, John Dewey. His goal was to educate children so that they could become productive members of a democratic society (Dewey, 1916). To this end, children “must be educated for leadership as well as for obedience” and “must have the power of self-direction and power of directing others, powers of administration, and ability to assume positions of responsibility” (Dewey, 1909, p. 54).

Dewey emphasized the role of experience, experimentation, purposeful learning, and freedom in education (Dewey, 1938). He saw education as a scientific method by which the individual studies the world, reconstructs knowledge, meanings, and values, and uses these as data for critical study and intelligent living. He believed that activities in early childhood should be familiar, direct, and concrete in character—rather than synthetic, artificial, and symbolic. Moral education should be fully integrated with other areas of the curriculum and should deal with real-life issues that are of interest and importance to children. In *Democracy and Education*, he writes,

Moral education is practically hopeless when we set up the development of character as a supreme end, and at the same time treat the acquiring of knowledge and the development of understanding,

which of necessity occupy the chief part of school time, as having nothing to do with character. (Dewey, 1916, p. 411)

Like Piaget, Dewey warned against the use of coercive methods of instruction. Commenting on the enforced quiet and acquiescence demanded by teachers in traditional classrooms, he writes:

They place a premium upon preserving the outward appearance of attention, decorum, and obedience. And everyone who is acquainted with schools in which this system prevailed well knows that thoughts, imaginations, desires, and sly activities ran their own unchecked course behind this façade. (Dewey, 1938, p. 62)

According to Dewey (1938), the need for coercion on the part of the traditional teacher is often because “the school [is] not a community held together by participation in common activities” (p. 56). He describes traditional education as “an imposition from above and from outside”:

It imposes adult standards, subject-matter, and methods upon those who are only growing slowly toward maturity. The gap is so great that the required subject-matter, the methods of learning and of behaving are foreign to the existing capacities of the young. They are beyond the reach of the experience the young learners already possess. Consequently, they must be imposed; even though good teachers will use devices of art to cover up the imposition so as to relieve it of obviously brutal features. (p. 18)

He goes on to write that, “the gulf between the mature or adult products and the experience and abilities of the young is so wide that the very situation forbids much active participation by pupils in the development of what is taught” (pp. 18–19).

In Dewey’s Laboratory School at the University of Chicago, moral education permeated every aspect of the curriculum and school life (Tanner, 1997). In an issue of the *Elementary School Record* devoted to kindergarten, Dewey (1900) wrote that the school’s primary responsibilities were to teach children to live in cooperative and mutually helpful ways, to use educational activities and games as “foundational stones of educational method,” and to reproduce on the children’s level “the typical doings and occupations of the larger maturer society” of which they will finally become a part (p. 143). The Laboratory School was organized as an informal community in which each child felt that he or she had a share in the work to do. The teachers did not treat the children with condescension or confine their exchanges to direct instruction. The spirit of the school was one in which teachers were there to help if a child had a problem, with the aim of guiding the child toward solving his or her own problems in the future. The school sought to develop the kinds of habits that lead children to accept responsibility, cooperate with others, and engage in creative and practical work. Dewey believed that every method that fosters the child’s “capacities in construction, production, and creation marks an opportunity to shift the center of ethical gravity from an absorption which is selfish to a service that is social” (1909, p. 26).

Even though Dewey criticized some progressive schools for being too “unstructured” and “improvisatory” and for not being sufficiently open to lessons from the past, he believed that progressive schools were more in accord with democratic ideals than traditional schools and that their “methods are humane in comparison with the harshness so often attending the policies of the traditional school” (Dewey, 1938, p. 34). Dewey could not see any reason why schools should continue to follow the traditional, autocratic methods that were so damaging to children’s intellectual autonomy and creativity.

## Lawrence Kohlberg's Legacy

Among researchers who studied moral development in the 20th century, perhaps none are more well-known than Lawrence Kohlberg. His landmark research on stages of moral development has profoundly influenced all subsequent work in the field of moral education. Kohlberg extended Piaget's theory by proposing a six-stage sequence of moral development progressing from heteronomous to increasingly more autonomous reasoning and behavior (Kohlberg, 1984). Although Kohlberg's research focused primarily on the development of older children (ages 10 and above), it continues to have important implications for early childhood as well.

In addition to his basic research outlining stages of moral reasoning, Kohlberg conducted applied research in the area of moral education, primarily at the high school level (for a summary, see Power, Higgins, & Kohlberg, 1989). Kohlberg's Just Community approach to moral education draws heavily from the work of both Piaget and Dewey. Although Kohlberg's research made use of hypothetical moral dilemmas to draw out and assess individuals' stages of moral reasoning, he maintained that children (and indeed, humans of all ages) develop morally through a process of struggling with issues of justice and fairness that arise out of their everyday life experiences. His Just Community approach took advantage of spontaneously arising situations to engage children in reasoning about what is right and wrong, fair and unfair.

Kohlberg recognized that within every school is a "hidden curriculum"—a system of norms and values that regulates behavior and discipline at the school. Kohlberg's aim was to transform the hidden curriculum into a curriculum based on justice and fairness. Describing Kohlberg's approach, Power, Higgins, and Kohlberg write that "to learn 'to understand and feel justice,' students have to be both treated justly and called upon to act justly" (1989, p. 25).

Kohlberg and his colleagues used a small "school-within-a-school" model to create a sense of belonging among members of the group. Regular community meetings were conducted in which moral issues related to school life were discussed and democratically decided, with equal value placed on the voices of both students and teachers. Teachers played a crucial role in guiding group discussions, creating a delicate balance between letting students make their own decisions and advocating higher-level reasoning and behavior. The overall goal was to establish collective norms that were fair to all members of the community.

Although the Just Community approach was designed primarily for high school students, many of the same principles can (and have been) used at the early childhood level (DeVries & Kohlberg, 1987; DeVries & Zan, 1994). Although some constructivist early childhood educators might argue with Kohlberg's characterization of young children's developmental strengths and limitations, few would deny the importance of his work for constructivist early education.

## The Domain Approach

Turiel and his colleagues extended both Piaget's and Kohlberg's research by distinguishing three domains of knowledge: moral, social conventional, and personal (Turiel, 1983, 2002). Moral issues are those pertaining to justice, welfare, and the rights of others. Examples of moral issues in the classroom would be physical harm (e.g., hitting, pushing), psychological harm (e.g., teasing, name-calling), and justice or fairness (e.g., stealing, destroying others' property, failing to share common goods). Social conventional rules pertain to uniformities or regularities serving functions of social coordination. In a preschool classroom, examples of social convention might be table manners, forms of greeting, or modes of dress. Personal issues pertain to actions that do not entail inflicting harm or violating fairness or rights, and that are not regulated



formally or informally. Examples of personal issues in a preschool classroom might be choices of friends, recreational activities, and other activities designated as “free choice” (Nucci, 1981, 1996, 2001). The personal domain, in particular, is important in forming a sense of moral agency or autonomy. Consistent with the work of Piaget and Dewey, domain theorists believe that “personal freedom is not in opposition to morality. A sense of identity and personal agency contributes to the nature of social relationships, including those of reciprocity and cooperation” (Turiel, 2001, p. xiv).

Studies in the United States and in other cultures consistently show that children, adolescents, and adults judge moral issues to be obligatory, not contingent on authority dictates, rules, or consensus (e.g., the acts would be wrong even if no rule or law exists about it), and not contingent on accepted practices within a group or culture (e.g., the act is wrong even if it were an acceptable practice in another culture) (for a review of this literature, see Turiel, 1998). Since the mid-1970s, more than sixty published articles have reported research demonstrating that morality is a distinct domain that emerges from an early age (for reviews, see Helwig, Tisak, & Turiel, 1990; Nucci, 2001; Smetana, 1995; Turiel, 1998). This finding has been demonstrated across a wide range of cultures, including those in the United States, Israel, Brazil, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, the Virgin Islands, India, Turkey, Nigeria, and Zambia, as well as in urban/rural, and high/low SES settings (for a complete listing of these studies, see Turiel, 1998, 2002).

As noted above, young children are not entirely heteronomous in their moral judgments about the acceptability of different acts based on considerations of harm and welfare (Nucci & Turiel, 1978; Smetana, 1981, 1985). In responding to hypothetical stories, young children do not generally accept the legitimacy of an adult’s directive to engage in acts judged to violate moral precepts such as commands to steal or cause another person harm. Damon (1977) found that with acts entailing theft or physical harm to persons, young children (aged 4–7 years) judge the act itself rather than the status of the authority allowing or forbidding it. Laupa (1994) found that preschoolers (aged 4–6 years) accept peer and adult authorities based on the type of act commanded rather than their position in the school. They accept persons who lack authority attributes as legitimate when they give commands directed toward preventing harm (telling children not to fight), and reject persons who possess authority attributes when they give commands that could lead to harm (allowing children to fight).

As children’s ability to make their own moral and social conventional judgments increases, they also begin to judge authorities on the basis of how well they make such judgments. For example, Killen, Breton, Ferguson, and Handler (1994) found that preschool-aged children prefer teachers to use interventions that are consistent with the domain of the transgression (e.g., telling a child who has hit another child, “You shouldn’t hit because it hurts the other person”) rather than ones that are inconsistent with the domain (e.g., “You shouldn’t do that; it’s against the rules to hit” or simply saying, “That’s not the way a student should act”).

Interpersonal conflicts can stimulate children to take different points of view in order to restore balance in social situations, to produce ideas as to how to coordinate the needs of self and others, and to consider the rights of others—especially claims to ownership and possession of objects. For example, research by Killen and her colleagues (Killen, 1989; Killen & Naigles, 1995; Killen & Nucci, 1995; Killen & Sueyoshi, 1995; Rende & Killen, 1992) has demonstrated that in the absence of adult intervention, young children are often quite capable of addressing social conflicts with peers producing solutions that take the needs of others into account. In one study, approximately 70% of preschool children’s disputes during free play were resolved by the children themselves, either through reconciliation by the instigator or through compromising or bargaining (Killen, 1991). In another study, Eisenberg, Lundy, Shell, and Roth (1985) found that preschool children justified meeting the requests of peers with references to the needs of others

and to one's relationships with others while reasons for meeting the requests of adults were justified with references to authority and punishment. It is therefore clear that preschool children are already capable of reciprocity or its precursors in many situations.

In light of this research, it is clear that from early intuitions about harm to others, young children gradually construct moral understandings about fairness based on moral reciprocity and considerations of equity (Davidson, Turiel, & Black, 1983; Damon, 1977; Nucci, 2001). Children construct their moral understandings in the context of both peer and adult interactions. They do so through their own experiences and observations, as well as through direct teaching from peers and adults. Because young children generate their initial understandings of morality out of direct experiences in social interactions, the primary contribution of schools is to help children frame these experiences in moral terms.

### Constructivism Compared to Other Approaches

Tension between traditional and progressive approaches to moral education has existed for over 100 years and continues to this day. One of the best-known and most vocal proponents of the traditional approach is William Bennett, whose books (*The Book of Virtues* and *The Children's Book of Virtues*) are compilations of stories to be used in children's moral education (Bennett, 1993, 1995). Bennett criticizes constructivist educators such as Kohlberg and his colleagues who encourage children to judge, examine, and critically evaluate moral matters on their own. He disapproves of such programs because of their emphasis on children's choices, decisions, deliberations, and judgments. Most constructivist early educators believe that telling children stories can be useful, but only if the children actually understand the story and moral principles involved (Narvaez, 2002). Here, again, the debate is over whether the acquisition of morality involves primarily the direct transmission of societal norms and values, or children's construction of those norms and values based on their understandings of justice, rights, and the welfare of others (for a further critique of traditional approaches to moral education, see Turiel, 2001).

Contemporary versions of traditional moral education include programs such as Character Counts. In Character Counts, moral conduct is learned through direct instruction about the Six Pillars of Character: Trustworthiness, Respect, Responsibility, Fairness, Caring, and Citizenship. Children are presented with examples of good acts associated with each virtue, listen to stories about people whose behavior exemplifies these virtues, learn step-by-step procedures for ethical decision making, and engage in school-wide contests with awards for learning the virtues and applying them to their daily lives. Although there is a balance between rote memorization and the application of reasoning and problem solving, Character Counts is predominantly a "top-down," "teacher-centered" approach to moral education. For a review of several commercially available character education curricula, see Goodman and Lesnick (2004).

In addition to traditional approaches to early moral education, there have been a number of "blended" approaches that combine elements of traditional, adult-centered, or "sociocentric" models of socialization and moral development (e.g., Durkheim, 1925/1961) with the more autonomous developmental emphasis of constructivist theory (Piaget, 1932/1965). For example, the Child Development Project combined constructivist theory, social learning theory, attribution theory, and attachment theory to create a broad, evidence-based approach to children's prosocial development involving classroom, school-wide, and home-school activities (Battistich, 2007; Battistich, Watson, Solomon, Schaps, & Solomon, 1991; Watson, Solomon, Battistich, Schaps, & Solomon, 1989). The Character Education Partnership is also a broad-based, blended approach to social and moral development based on eleven principles of effective character education (Lickona, Schaps, & Lewis, 2003).

## COMPONENTS OF CURRENT APPROACHES TO CONSTRUCTIVIST EARLY MORAL EDUCATION

The central feature of current approaches to constructivist moral education is the establishment of a sociomoral atmosphere based on mutual respect. This sociomoral atmosphere permeates every aspect of the child's experience at school. Recognizing that children's convictions about fairness and justice develop when they have the opportunity to reflect on social and moral problems in their lives, constructivist teachers strive to provide children with a safe environment in which they can make mistakes, experience the consequences of their actions, and develop their own reasons for behaving in particular ways. Constructivist teachers also recognize the power of the "hidden curriculum." Teachers constantly convey moral messages—messages about what is right and wrong, good and bad—and these messages, conscious or unconscious on the part of the teacher, influence children's moral development in profound ways. Therefore, constructivist teachers recognize that they engage in social and moral education throughout the school day.

According to DeVries and Zan (1994), teachers can create an atmosphere of mutual respect by cooperating with children, minimizing the exercise of external authority to the extent possible and practical, and sharing power with them as appropriate. The components of constructivist education that are most salient to children's moral development include encouraging children to make classroom rules and decisions, providing children with opportunities to play group games, assisting children in resolving their conflicts, and supporting children in reflecting on social and moral issues in literature and in the classroom.

### Minimizing the Exercise of External Authority

One of constructivist teachers' primary aims is for children to become more and more able to regulate their own behavior in the absence of adult authority. In order to promote autonomy and prevent an overbalance of heteronomy, constructivist teachers consciously monitor their interactions with children. Authoritarian demands, emotional intimidation, and arbitrary punishments have no place in a constructivist classroom; neither do passive permissiveness or "letting children run wild"—that is, failing to take action when rules are broken and when children engage in unsafe, aggressive, or defiant behaviors.

Constructivist teachers strive to support children in constructing internal feelings of necessity about behaving in socially acceptable ways. One way they do this is by refraining from punishing children, and instead looking for opportunities for children to learn from the logical or natural consequences of their actions. For example, when a child splashes water out of the water table, rather than lecturing or punishing, a constructivist teacher may point out the natural consequence—that others could slip on the wet floor. The teacher may then invoke a logical consequence and require that the child clean up the water.

Young children are not naturally self-regulating, and so the exercise of adult authority is sometimes necessary, especially when children's safety is involved. However, even in these situations, constructivist teachers try to find ways to promote children's autonomy as they exert authority over them. They do this by explaining to children, in language that children can understand, the reasons why they must take certain actions. For example, if a child behaves aggressively on the playground, the teacher may insist that the child play apart from the other children for the remainder of the outside time. The constructivist teacher will take the time to explain to the child that his or her actions hurt other children and that it is the teacher's job to keep all of the children safe; because the child continued to hurt other children, he or she cannot be allowed near

them. The teacher will also actively support the child in learning how to take the perspective of others, find alternative ways to negotiate with others, and develop satisfying peer relationships.

### Sharing Power: Rule Making and Decision Making

Constructivist teachers consciously seek opportunities for children to exercise authentic power in the classroom. Given the ages of the children they teach, this can sometimes be challenging. Young children lack the knowledge and maturity to make many decisions concerning life in the classroom. Yet, some decisions (such as what to name the class pet, where to go on the next field trip, how to arrange the classroom, what to display on the walls, or what project to undertake as a class) are within children's capabilities. When children are supported in making decisions that affect their common life in the classroom, they gain in experience, maturity, and confidence; they learn that their actions can have a positive effect on their environment; and they gain experience in participatory democracy.

Young children are quite capable of making rules that dictate how they wish to be treated in the classroom. DeVries and Zan (1994) describe several instances of young children suggesting rules for their classroom, such as a rule made by four-year-olds prohibiting name calling—"Call them your name. Don't call them naughty girl or naughty boy" (pp. 130–131)—and rules made by kindergarteners concerning safe treatment of the class guinea pig—"Don't squeeze, drop, or throw him. Hold him gently. Hold him like a baby" (p. 129). DeVries and Zan stress that teachers should assist children in thinking about the reasons for rules, and that they should encourage children to include the reason in the statement of the rule. A teacher at the constructivist laboratory school where DeVries and Zan conduct research, reports on a rule made by her first graders one year that stated: "Don't laugh when people pass gas. It might hurt their feelings" (B. Van Meeteren, personal communication, 2002). This rule reflected an issue that was important to them because many of them had experience with just such an embarrassing situation. When children make rules concerning problems they care about deeply, they tend to remember these rules and insist that others follow them.

### Group Games

Group games are a vital part of the constructivist curriculum, both because of the opportunities for academic learning (number, logical reasoning, literacy, etc.) and also because of their implications for moral development. Games provide a unique opportunity for children to voluntarily submit to a system of rules that govern their behavior in a specific context. In order to play a game successfully, children must agree to the rules, abide by the rules, and accept the consequences of the rules. Therefore, even if a game is competitive, children must cooperate in order to play it (Kamii & DeVries, 1980; DeVries, Zan, & Hildebrandt, 2002; Hildebrandt & Zan, 2002; Zan, 1996).

Games also provide opportunities for children to take the perspective of another person. A simple game such as Tic-Tac-Toe includes opportunities to play using both offensive and defensive strategies. In order to do the latter, children must think about where the other player is likely to place the next marker. Card games also provide children with opportunities to take the perspective of another. Basic concepts such as keeping one's cards hidden so another cannot see them reflects the ability to understand that if another player sees one's cards, that person will have an advantage (something that is not obvious to the egocentric child).

Games also present unique opportunities for children to learn what happens when someone does not follow the rules. When players cheat, other players become upset and protest. When children consistently cheat at games and find that no one wants to play with them, the teacher

takes the time to explain that the other children's reactions (refusing to play the game with them) are due to their cheating, and that if they want other children to play with them, they will have to stop cheating. The teacher also works with the child to overcome the circumstances that lead him or her to feel the need to cheat.

### Conflict Resolution

Conflicts are part of the constructivist curriculum and contribute to children's moral education. When children work to resolve their conflicts with others, they develop their ability to take the perspective of another and negotiate with others. Constructivist teachers take a very active role in supporting young children in resolving their conflicts. They help children learn how to speak their minds to each other and listen to each other. They sometimes serve as translators, clarifying and stating the problem so that all of the participants in the conflict have a shared understanding of what happened. They support children in thinking of possible solutions, and when children cannot think of solutions themselves, they make suggestions. Perhaps most importantly, they help children repair broken relationships without forcing children to be insincere (for example, by requiring apologies, no matter how meaningless or unfelt).

### Moral Discussion

Discussions of social and moral dilemmas, both real-life and hypothetical, are important means of helping children take the perspectives of others. Each type contributes to children's moral development.

Real-life events in the classroom are valuable because of their relevance to children. Children are very familiar, for example, with how it feels when a group of children takes all of the blocks in the block center and does not allow others to use any of the blocks. A discussion about how it feels, and how they might come up with a fair way to share the blocks, is likely to elicit considerable discussion concerning the rights of others. As children hear others describing how they experience the situation, they have the opportunity to take the perspectives of their friends and classmates and feel empathy for their experiences.

Hypothetical dilemmas also have a role to play. Sometimes real life events are so highly charged emotionally that children cannot talk about them without falling apart. In such cases, teachers can use fictional situations to explore classroom dilemmas. It is amazing how children can enter into a problem acted out, for example, by the teacher using puppets, and generate all sorts of ideas concerning how the puppets might feel, what they should do, and why.

Children's literature provides opportunities for children's experiences to be broadened even more. Good literature has the potential to transport children into the lives of others and experience emotions that they might otherwise never experience. For example, hearing books about the experiences of recent immigrants to the United States can give native-born children a chance to understand what it might feel like to look and sound completely different from everyone else in the culture. The Developmental Studies Center (Developmental Studies Center, 1995) has developed an entire curriculum (grades K–8) around the use of literature to support children's ethical development (Battistich, chapter 17 this volume).

## RESEARCH ON CONSTRUCTIVIST EARLY MORAL EDUCATION

Research on the effects of constructivist moral education on young children's social and cognitive development is relatively sparse. Studies of most relevance to the evaluation of constructivist

education are those that compare constructivist and non-constructivist classrooms, and those that compare democratic and authoritarian teaching styles.

DeVries, Haney, and Zan (1991) and DeVries, Reese-Learned, and Morgan (1991) studied the classroom atmospheres of three kindergarten classrooms: a direct-instruction classroom, a constructivist classroom, and an eclectic classroom. The teacher in the direct-instruction classroom provided a program of small- and large-group instruction that used primarily recitation and fast-paced drills. Children spent a good portion of their day at desks in rows completing worksheets. Learning centers were never used. The teacher's interactions with children were highly authoritarian. The teacher used punishment, threats of punishments, and rewards to control children's behavior. The constructivist teacher implemented a program similar to the constructivist approach described above. The curriculum was child-centered and interest-driven. Children engaged in freely chosen activities. Instruction was embedded in learning centers and naturally occurring events. The teacher established a classroom atmosphere based on mutual respect, minimized her own exercise of authority, cooperated with children as much as possible, and engaged children in conflict resolution. She did not use punishments, threats of punishments, or rewards, but instead worked to help children learn how to regulate their own behavior. The Eclectic teacher (the label came from her) provided a program that contained elements of both the other two programs, including some direct instruction and some child-centered activities. The sociomoral atmosphere of the eclectic classroom was slightly less authoritarian than the direct instruction classroom, but not as cooperative as the constructivist classroom. The teacher used some punishments and rewards, but her control of the children was not as absolute as that of the direct-instruction teacher.

Analysis of the sociomoral atmospheres of the three classrooms focused on the levels of interpersonal understanding reflected in the teacher-child interactions that occurred during two complete days in each of the three classrooms. Using an adaptation of Selman's (Selman, 1980; Selman & Schultz, 1990) conceptualization of Enacted Interpersonal Understanding, over 20,000 teacher-child interactions were micro-analytically coded from transcripts and video.

Results of the analysis (DeVries, Haney, & Zan, 1991) showed great differences in teachers' enacted interpersonal understanding. The direct-instruction teacher's interactions with children were primarily low level, unilateral interactions, with a few higher level reciprocal interactions, and even fewer mutual interactions. The eclectic teacher's interactions were much like those of the direct-instruction teacher, predominantly at a unilateral level, with a few reciprocal interactions, and fewer mutual interactions. The constructivist teacher had much fewer unilateral interactions and much more reciprocal and mutual interactions. The conclusion was that the sociomoral atmospheres as assessed by the teachers' interactions with children were very different in the three classrooms. The constructivist classroom atmosphere was much more cooperative, and the other two classrooms' atmospheres were much more authoritarian.

The companion study compared the sociomoral development of the children in these three classrooms (DeVries, Reese-Learned, & Morgan, 1991). The results reflected the sociomoral atmospheres of the classrooms. Pairs of children ( $n = 56$ ) were videotaped in two naturalistic situations outside the classroom (playing a board game and dividing up some stickers), and their interactions were coded according to the Selman levels. Results showed that although a predominance of unilateral interactions characterized all three groups and impulsive behavior was about the same for all three groups, children from the direct instruction and eclectic classrooms engaged in less reciprocal behavior than did children from the constructivist classroom. In addition, children from the constructivist classroom resolved significantly more of their conflicts than children from the other two classrooms.

In an earlier study, DeVries and Göncü (1987) used the board game format to compare interpersonal understanding between four-year-old children from constructivist and Montessori



classrooms. The pattern of findings was similar to those described above. Children from the constructivist classroom had a significantly higher proportion of reciprocal interactions and resolved a significantly higher proportion of their conflicts than children from the Montessori classroom.

Araujo (1999) conducted a longitudinal study of moral autonomy in 56 six-year-old children in three kindergartens. One center, serving children from low-income families, was constructivist and had a cooperative, democratic classroom climate. The other two centers, one serving children from low-income families and one serving children from middle- or upper-income families, were traditional, and had more authoritarian classroom climates. All children went to traditional authoritarian schools in subsequent years.

Children responded to eight moral dilemmas adapted from Piaget (1932/1965) in 1992 (kindergarten year), 1995, and 1999. Children's responses were categorized as heteronomous, autonomous, or transitional. Results showed that children from the constructivist center expressed higher personal autonomy in 1992 and 1995 than children from the authoritarian centers. In 1999, autonomy scores of the children from the authoritarian centers were higher than children from the constructivist center C. The author speculates that this finding is due to "values education" in one of the traditional schools during the last two years of the study period.

### COMMON MISCONCEPTIONS AND CRITICISMS OF CONSTRUCTIVIST EARLY MORAL EDUCATION

Within the moral domain, we have encountered three common misconceptions about constructivist education: (1) constructivist education is permissive; (2) constructivist education is spontaneous and unstructured; and (3) constructivist education is limited to "discovery learning."

Some educators mistakenly believe that constructivist education is permissive, that teachers take an entirely "hands-off" approach to classroom discipline and children do whatever they want to do. DeVries and Edmiaston (1999) point to two possible sources for this misconception. The first is the mistaken belief that Piaget's stages of development are maturational and unfold according to a biologically predetermined plan. According to this view, the teacher's role is to create the least restrictive environment so as to foster children's natural, preordained growth. The second source of this misconception is the fact that constructivist teachers encourage child initiative and choice. During activity time, children in constructivist classrooms are free to choose activities that appeal to their interests and purposes. To the unformed observer, these classrooms may appear chaotic because there are so many different types of activities going on at the same time. However, to the informed observer, children's actions occur within a general framework of order, including rules to which everyone has agreed. When conflicts occur, children are encouraged to resolve them, with or without the help of the teacher. If children's engagement with the materials appears to be shallow and unproductive, the teacher redirects the child's attention toward more challenging activities.

Another common misconception is that constructivist education is spontaneous and unsystematic. In the moral realm, there are no lists of character traits to memorize, no "values of the week," and no tangible rewards for good behavior. To an outside observer, the moral curriculum may well appear to be "improvised" based on problems that naturally occur in the classroom. Although there may be standard procedures for conflict resolution (such as rules for the Peace Bench), children are not expected to memorize and follow them exactly. A typical conflict resolution for two four-year-olds might be:

*David:* I didn't like it when you hit me.

*Sam:* Well, I didn't like it when you took my truck.

After this exchange, the two boys might choose to jump up from the Peace Bench and resume play without any plan for future action. If the children are satisfied with the exchange, the teacher may not interfere, assuming that this is the level of discourse that is developmentally appropriate for them at this time.

Whereas it is true that some constructivist teachers' approach to moral education is more spontaneous and improvised than others, this does not mean that there are no lesson plans. Constructivist teachers do have lesson plans, but they try to keep these plans flexible in case there are "teachable moments" in which children can construct new knowledge within the moral domain.

Yet another misconception is that constructivist moral education is limited to "discovery learning." Allowing children to construct their own knowledge through "error informed experimentation" is fine in many areas of the curriculum. However, there are many social behaviors and activities that are not safe, either physically or psychologically. Therefore, constructivist teachers do need to intervene in order to make sure children are safe. Many constructivist teachers have non-negotiable rules such as those preventing children from hurting each other in the classroom.

### Criticisms of Constructivist Early Moral Education

A number of criticisms of constructivist early moral education have emerged both from within the ranks of constructivist researchers and educators and from without. Current tensions revolve around the appropriate amount of direct teaching for children of different ages, the appropriate amount of "discovery learning," what actions should be considered negotiable and non-negotiable, and the amount of coercion coming from the teacher.

In an exchange between DeVries and her colleagues (DeVries, Hildebrandt, & Zan, 2000; DeVries, Zan, & Hildebrandt, 2002), and Goodman (2000, 2002), Goodman lodged several criticisms against constructivist moral education. According to Goodman, many examples of constructivist early education are developmentally inappropriate for most preoperational children because they are egocentric and incapable of moral reflection. Goodman advocates that teachers should "exploit the child's natural heteronomy by advancing clear rules" (Goodman, 2000, p. 49). According to Goodman, young children are not ready to make their own rules. Goodman explains that "Encouraging premature autonomous thinking is analogous to giving premature reading instruction—you may get decoding but not understanding" (Goodman, 2000, p. 48).

It is possible that one source of Goodman's criticism of DeVries's approach to constructivist moral education rests not in its tenets but rather in Goodman's understanding of the capabilities of very young children. In fact, some of the practices advocated by Goodman closely resemble DeVries and Zan's principles of teaching. For example, Goodman and Lesnick, in their book *Moral Education: A Teacher-Centered Approach* (2004), state that moral education programs "should provide opportunities for student participation and student decision making. This participation must be developmentally staged: less for the younger child, in whom the cultivation of habits and compassion takes center stage; more for the older child" (p. 188). Goodman's criticism of DeVries and Zan's approach seems to be rooted in part in an underestimation of just how much moral reasoning and deliberation young children are capable of engaging in. DeVries and Zan (1994) describe numerous examples of preschool-aged children reasoning about fairness, justice, and compassion in their own words. If the moral issues that teachers bring to young children

are selected carefully for their ease of understanding, young children are remarkably capable of engaging with them.

In the social domain, where children are notoriously egocentric, incipient decentering can often be found in the classroom. Research shows that young children do not suddenly overcome egocentrism. It is overcome little by little, in thousands of small decentrations that eventually lead to reciprocity (Flavell & Miller, 1998; Wellman & Gelman, 1998). A large body of research by Turiel and his colleagues has shown that young children do understand the intrinsic negative consequences of hurting others (see reviews by Kahn, 1999; Killen, 1996; Nucci, 1999; Smetana, 1995; Tisak, 1995; Turiel, 1998). Whereas questions concerning justice are understood somewhat later in development, they can also be addressed from an early age. Thus, from a constructivist perspective, the notion of a continuum from egocentrism to reciprocity guides teachers' thinking about children's development. In contrast to the waiting approach (*laissez faire*), or the tell-them-what-to-do approach (authoritarian), teachers strive to create the kinds of situations in which children gradually come to feel a necessity to treat others in moral ways. Constructivist education offers strategies teachers can use to help children begin to overcome egocentrism and become autonomous, reflective, and decentered. These strategies are detailed in DeVries and Zan (1994) and summarized in DeVries, Hildebrandt, and Zan (2000).

Piaget argued that authorities' injunctions (such as not to lie) simply cover up and conceal the child's egocentric misunderstanding and do not help to change it. Simply enforcing rules when children do not understand them is not likely to change their thinking. Teachers need to make an effort to help children begin to understand why certain behaviors are wrong in terms of the effects of the behaviors on others and on relationships. Children do not need to be concrete operational to begin to understand the reciprocity of sharing, turn taking, and perspective taking. It is true that even for some five-year-olds sharing may mean "getting" or "giving up" something. However, in an environment where the adult emphasizes the feelings and rights of others, children even at age three begin to understand the reciprocity involved in sharing and turn taking and to take the perspectives of others. The constructivist strategy is to create situations in which children will be confronted with the differing ideas and desires of others, and to encourage them to decenter and consider the others' points of view. Thus through these processes egocentrism is gradually overcome.

### Need for Further Research

Creating an optimum balance between direct instruction and discovery learning, spontaneous and planned activities, and actions that are negotiable and non-negotiable is an ongoing challenge among constructivist teachers. Since teaching is both an art and a science, we expect that further refinements of constructivist methods will be developed for many years to come.

Many of these problems are best addressed through systematic research. In this chapter, we reviewed research comparing constructivist with other types of classrooms. There is also a growing body of research conducted exclusively in constructivist classrooms (e.g., Zan & Hildebrandt, 2003; Zan & Hildebrandt, 2005). Much more research is needed in order to test and refine constructivist early moral education for all children, regardless of culture and socioeconomic status.

### FOR MORE INFORMATION ON CONSTRUCTIVIST EARLY MORAL EDUCATION

The main professional organization for constructivist teachers and researchers is the Association for Constructivist Teaching (ACT). The ACT holds a yearly conference and publishes an online

journal called *The Constructivist*. Another source of information about constructivist education is the Jean Piaget Society (JPS), which also holds a yearly conference; its main journal is *Cognitive Development*.

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# 19

## Smart & Good Schools: A New Paradigm for High School Character Education

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Writing in the *Journal of Research in Character Education*, character education researcher and historian James Leming (2006) points out a paradox: On the one hand, a “motivating rationale” for contemporary character education has been adolescent behavior such as “suicide rates, teen violence, declining academic performance, increasing drug usage, and precocious sexual activity”; on the other hand, “to date general character education efforts have been primarily focused on elementary and middle school levels” (p. 83). Although character-related challenges are perceived to be greatest at the high school level, character education interventions have primarily targeted the elementary and middle school developmental levels.

Leming’s assessment that character education efforts “have made few inroads in high schools” (2006, p. 84) is corroborated by Berkowitz and Bier’s (2006) *What Works in Character Education*. In this monograph, thirty-three character education programs or strategies are identified that have demonstrated empirical effectiveness; the great majority of these approaches, they note, were developed for the elementary or middle school levels (Berkowitz & Bier, 2006). Since 1998, the Character Education Partnership has sponsored an annual National Schools of Character competition (c.f., Character Education Partnership, 2006); the ten schools named as winners each year are typically elementary schools, occasionally middle schools, and only rarely high schools; in fact, in the last two years of the program, no high schools were recognized as National Schools of Character (Character Education Partnership, 2005, 2006). Since the mid-1990s, approximately 5,000 school leaders and teachers from thirty-five states and sixteen countries have attended our annual Summer Institute in Character Education ([www.cortland.edu/character](http://www.cortland.edu/character)); a relatively small percentage of the total have been high school personnel.

If high schools do in fact have less interest in character education than elementary and middle schools, that phenomenon cannot be explained by lack of interest in school improvement. On the contrary, for more than a decade, strengthening high schools has been at the forefront of the national school reform debate. At least a dozen educational organizations are dedicated to promoting one or another high school reform model (c.f., National Research Council, 2006). Philanthropic groups such as the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation have poured extensive resources into promoting small learning communities, school connectedness, and other efforts to increase high school academic achievement, especially among historically underserved students (Vander Ark, 2005).

If problems such as underachievement, drop-outs, academic dishonesty, violence, drugs, and sexual activity are most pronounced in the high school years, why, then, have high schools not embraced character education as a central school improvement strategy? Leming offers as one reason the fact that “high school teachers tend to identify themselves as subject matter specialists and give less emphasis to character development than teachers in elementary and middle schools. High school teachers, when asked to define their professional focus, tend to say, ‘I teach history’ or some other subject area” (Leming, 2006, pp. 83–84). This tendency of high school educators to define their role as subject matter specialists is reinforced by the high-stakes testing environment created by No Child Left Behind (Berliner & Nichols, 2007). The upshot of all this: If academic achievement is the focus of high schools, they are likely to see character education as relevant only to the extent that it supports the academic mission, narrowly defined as teaching and learning the formal curriculum.

In the past, character educators have argued that by helping to create a safe, caring, and orderly school environment, character education creates the conditions conducive to teaching and learning and in that indirect way fosters academic achievement (e.g., Beland, 2003; Lickona, 2004; Schwartz, Beatty, & Dachnowicz, 2006). In fact, research by the Developmental Studies Center at the elementary level (Schaps, Watson, & Lewis, 1996) indicates that students’ sense of the school as a caring community is a mediating variable in a diverse range of important school outcomes, including reading comprehension and other academic indicators. However, once teachers have established a safe, caring, and orderly classroom, is there any other, more direct role for character development in fostering academic achievement? Do character strengths, for example, have an ongoing role in helping a student succeed at math, science, and writing, and if so, how? In our experience, high school teachers typically do not see character as contributing directly to academic learning because they tend to equate character education with “discussing ethics” or with “touchy-feely” social and emotional activities, which they view as peripheral to the demands of the academic curriculum. As one chemistry teacher told us, “I teach chemistry; I don’t teach character. Occasionally, I might touch on an ethical issue, but I don’t have a lot of time for that” (Lickona & Davidson, 2005, p. 27).

## OUR TWO-YEAR STUDY OF HIGH SCHOOLS

Our interest in how high school educators think about character education, what they currently do and don’t do (intentionally or unintentionally) to develop character, and what can be done to promote the wider implementation of character development practices in the adolescent years led us to undertake a two-year study of high school character education, *Smart & Good High Schools* (Lickona & Davidson, 2005). We began with the belief that the development of character is a worthy pursuit in its own right, not simply for the other desired outcomes it can bring to a school (e.g., academic achievement, school retention, etc.). We believe in the importance of character

in all phases of life. From this perspective, the most important goal of character education is to prepare all young people to lead a flourishing life. The work of the Search Institute (Scales, Benson, Leffert, & Blyth, 2000), and more recently the positive psychology movement (Peterson & Seligman, 2004) have emphasized the value of “asset-building,” identifying and developing those human strengths that enable us to become all we are capable of being. It was this broad purpose of character education—to help all young people maximize their potential for meaningful, fulfilling lives—that most deeply informed our study.

However, we also recognize a second legitimate purpose of character education: to help reduce the negative behaviors by which young people hurt themselves and society. Booker T. Washington asserted that “character is power”; we see character and culture as a largely untapped power source that can help to address a range of acute challenges facing schools and society. Indeed, character educators (e.g., Lickona, 1991, 2004; Lickona & Davidson, 2005) have long argued that the troubling behaviors we observe in young people—and in many of the adults who set the example for youth—have a common core: namely, the absence of good character. Developing good character offers the hope of striking at the root of anti-social or self-destructive behaviors and thereby helping to correct and prevent them. This line of argument has sometimes been referred to as the “instrumental” case for character education because it is being offered as a means of ameliorating social ills. But we view this as a legitimate and eminently practical purpose of character education at all developmental levels and especially in high schools, when problematic behaviors such as a lack of responsibility toward schoolwork, academic dishonesty, bullying, substance abuse, and sexual activity typically reach higher levels, as Leming (2006) has pointed out.

## Research Methodology

In carrying out our two-year study of “promising practices” in high school character education, we conducted a “grounded theory” research methodology (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1994): (1) assembling a database of more than 1,400 books, research studies, reports and other materials on adolescent development, character education, and high school reform; (2) full-day site visits to each of twenty-four diverse, award-winning high schools—eighteen public and six private—in every geographical region of the country; (3) input and feedback from a National Experts Panel (thirty-two authorities on different aspects of adolescent development, character education, and high school reform) and a National Student Leaders Panel (one boy and one girl nominated by each school studied); and (4) supplemental interviews with other high school educators, parents, coaches, community members, and leaders of youth development programs. We established three criteria by which a practice could be considered “promising”: (1) research validation (for example, experimental research has found the practice to be effective, or to be related to a variable—such as sense of community—that has been shown to mediate positive character outcomes); (2) relevance to important adolescent outcomes (e.g., development as an ethical thinker) or important school outcomes (e.g., reduced discipline problems); and (3) the testimony of credible sources (e.g., an award for excellence from a credible educational organization such as the U.S. Department of Education or the Character Education Partnership). Most of the practices we identified as promising met the first of these criteria (research validation) in that they were directly or indirectly linked to a research base.

In the remainder of this chapter, we lay out some of the core constructs, relevant research, and illustrative practices that define our Smart & Good Schools framework. Our beginning premise is that throughout history, education rightly conceived has had two great goals—to help students become smart (in the multidimensional sense of intelligence) and to help them become good (in the multidimensional sense of moral maturity)—and that they need character for both.

## A NEW DEFINITION OF CHARACTER

The first major construct of our Smart & Good Schools model is its conception of human character as having two major parts: performance character and moral character. Our research has led us to propose a paradigm shift in the way we think about character and character education. We came to realize that character isn't just about "doing the right thing" in an ethical sense; it is also about doing our best work. If that is true, then character education isn't just about helping kids get along; it is also about teaching them to work hard, develop their talents, and aspire to excellence in every area of endeavor.

However, this broader conception of character education—as fostering best work as well as best ethical behavior—tends not to be reflected in media accounts of character education. For example, a newspaper article appeared in the *Minneapolis Star Tribune* about character education under the headline, "Don't Lie, Don't Cheat, Be On Time" (Draper, 2006). The article quoted a state senator as saying, "I would call this 'golden rule education'" (Draper, 2006). The headline and the article conveyed the message that character is about doing the right thing ethically and *not* doing the wrong thing ethically. However, we would ask: Is it enough if students simply don't lie, cheat, and show up late? Is that enough to render character relevant to every high school in America? Is this vision of character a vision of human flourishing? What about the role of character in helping students to do their best work—to give their best effort in the classroom, on the athletic field, in the workplace, and in every area of their lives?

An expanded conception of character education as fostering best work as well as best ethical conduct requires an expanded conception of character. Based on our high school research, we propose a definition of character as having two essential and interconnected parts: *performance character* and *moral character* (depicted in the Figure 19.1 graphic below).

We describe performance character as a "mastery orientation." It consists of those qualities—including but not limited to diligence, perseverance, a strong work ethic, a positive attitude, ingenuity, and self-discipline—needed to realize one's potential for excellence in any performance environment, such as academics, extracurricular activities, the workplace, and throughout life. Moral character is a "relational orientation." It consists of those qualities—including but



FIGURE 19.1 Performance character and moral character

not limited to integrity, justice, caring, respect, and cooperation—needed for successful interpersonal relationships and ethical conduct. Moral character enables us to treat others—and ourselves—with respect and care and to act with integrity in our ethical lives. Moral character also has the important job of moderating our performance goals to honor the interests of others, to ensure that we do not violate moral values such as fairness, honesty, and caring in the pursuit of high performance.

## RESEARCH RELEVANT TO PERFORMANCE CHARACTER AND MORAL CHARACTER

Support for the importance of performance character and moral character comes from four sources: (1) research on lives of character; (2) research on talent development; (3) research on academic performance; and (4) the voices of teachers and students.

### Research on Lives of Character

If we examine lives of character, we invariably find both strong performance character and strong moral character at work. In their book, *Some Do Care: Contemporary Lives of Moral Commitment*, Colby and Damon (1992) profile twenty-three men and women of exemplary character, including religious leaders of different faiths, business leaders, physicians, teachers, heads of nonprofit organizations, and leaders of social movements. Their contributions spanned civil rights, the fight against poverty, medical care, education, philanthropy, the environment, peace, and religious freedom. Viewing these portraits of character through the lens of the performance character and moral character construct, one sees, again and again, the interplay of these two sides of character: high ethical goals combined with diligence and determination in the pursuit of those goals.

To take just one example: Colby and Damon describe the work of Cabel Brand, a businessman who over three decades developed a small family company into a multimillion dollar corporation. Motivated by his belief that “the weakness in our capitalistic democratic system is the number of people who don’t participate,” he launched a social action program in the Roanoke Valley called Total Action Against Poverty (TAP). TAP initiated one of the nation’s first Head Start programs; developed programs for high-school drop-outs, the elderly, ex-offenders, drug addicts, and the homeless; and created a food bank, a program to bring running water to rural people, economic development programs for impoverished urban areas, and community cultural centers.

Brand’s combination of drive, expertise, organizational skills, and concern for the welfare of others typifies the exemplars in this study. Colby and Damon’s book could have been titled, *Some Do Care—And Those Who Care Most Effectively Are Very Good At What They Do*. None of the noble accomplishments of these exemplars would have been possible without the synergistic contributions of performance character and moral character.

### Research on Talent Development

Studies of talent development show that performance character qualities such as self-discipline and good work habits are essential for developing innate ability. In their book *Talented Teenagers*, a five-year longitudinal study of 200 talented adolescents, Csikszentmihalyi, Rathunde, and Whalen (1993) begin by noting that underachievement on the part of talented youth is quite common in fields as varied as athletics, art, science, mathematics, and music. Why do some talented

teens develop their potential while other equally gifted peers do not? This study found that adolescents who were more successful in developing their talents were characterized by a stronger “achievement and endurance orientation” and habits conducive to talent development—such as focusing on goals whether doing talent-related work or general schoolwork, being able to spend time alone, and, when they did spend time with friends, collaborating on hobbies and studying instead of simply “hanging out.” Strong performance character was the distinguishing mark of teens who made the most of their talent potential.

Similarly, Ericsson (Ericsson, Charness, Feltovich, & Hoffman, 2006) investigated the origins of expert performance, utilizing performance statistics, biographical details, and their own laboratory experiments with high achievers. Based on their research, they argue that talent is generally overrated as a predictor of excellence, whereas deliberative practice (defined as setting specific goals, obtaining immediate feedback, and concentrating as much on technique as on outcome) is a much more powerful predictor. They assert that across a diverse sampling of fields, “stars”—expert performers—are made, not born. In other words, it is performance character, not simply talent that leads to expert performance. Narvaez and Lapsley (2005) reach parallel conclusions in their work on expertise.

### Research on Academic Performance

Given their focus on academic achievement, high schools will be especially interested in evidence that improvement in students’ performance character leads to improved academic performance. For example, Duckworth and Seligman (2006) sought to understand why throughout elementary, middle, and high school, girls earn higher grades than boys in all major subjects, in spite of the fact that boys outperform girls on measures of achievement (e.g., SAT, ACT, AP) and IQ. Previously, this performance difference was explained by gender differences favoring boys in these tests. However, using student measures of delayed gratification and self-report, as well as teacher and parent ratings, Duckworth and Seligman’s research (2006) identifies the character strength of self-discipline as giving girls the performance edge over boys.

There are multiple theoretical grounds for predicting this positive relationship between performance character (e.g., self-discipline) and higher academic performance. Educational, sociological, and social psychological theories of the learning process have long recognized student effort as central to student learning (e.g., Sørensen & Hallinan, 1977; Yair, 2000). In their book *Classroom Instruction That Works*, Marzano and colleagues (2001) report that students who believe that achievement is something they earn through effort, and not primarily the result of innate abilities, do best in school. Students’ academic effort and achievement are, in turn, enhanced by a school climate focused on excellence (Bryk, Lee, & Holland, 1993; Schouse, 1996). High school students who become more oriented toward excellence are more likely to choose advanced courses, which are likely to result in skills and credentials that students need to achieve success in college and in the labor market (Davenport et al., 1998; Kerckhoff, 1993). The kinds of courses students take do in fact predict academic achievement and college matriculation (Lukas, 1999; Stevenson, Schiller, & Schneider, 1994).

Moreover, when students’ development of performance character leads to their improved effort and quality of work, the classroom conditions for learning and teaching also improve. With more students focused on work and fewer distractions, teachers are able to devote more time to teaching content and working with individual students. A reciprocal expectations-obligations relationship tends to emerge between students and educators, with both sides feeling a stronger commitment to higher quality of teaching and learning (Coleman, 1988, 1990; Khmelkov & Power, 2000; Portes, 1998).



## The Voices of Teachers and Students

Wentzel (1997) asked middle school students, “How do you know when a teacher cares about you?” Students identified two behavior patterns as crucial: The teacher teaches well (makes class interesting, stays on task, stops to explain something if students don’t understand), and the teacher is respectful, honest, and fair (doesn’t embarrass, interrupt, ignore, or yell at students). In short, the teacher displays performance character and moral character—the integration of excellence and ethics. Even though the question asked of middle school students (i.e., “How do you know when a teacher *cares* about you?”) pulled for a moral character response, the student responses clearly demonstrate that they see care as a function of both moral character and performance character in their teachers. In the view of students, teachers “care” when they treat you with respect *and* demand excellence from you.

In our high school study (Lickona & Davidson, 2005), we observed that both teachers and students found performance character and moral character to be meaningful categories when reflecting on their experience of schooling. When we asked teachers what student attributes were necessary for academic success in their classroom, even teachers who did not at first self-identify as “character educators” described performance character qualities. They said students needed diligence, or commitment to doing a job or assignment well; perseverance in the face of difficulty; dependability, including the ability to do their part on a project; responsibility for having the required supplies or materials; orderliness in their work; the ability to set goals and monitor progress toward the realization of those goals. For example, the chemistry teacher we interviewed (who initially said, “I teach chemistry, not character”) explained that she emphasized many facets of “academic responsibility” (i.e., performance character) with her students:

I tell my students, “You’ll do better in this class if you keep an organized notebook. But it’s your responsibility to do that; I’m not going to check it. You’ll also do better on tests and in the course as a whole if you do the homework. But that’s your responsibility as well.” And I tell them that if they miss a class, a responsible student calls his or her lab partner to get the assignment.

At this point in the discussion, it is as if a light bulb goes on and practitioners say, “If *this* is what you mean by character education, then, yes, I’m a character educator. In fact, I spend much of my time and energy trying to get these outcomes, because without them, it’s unlikely that students will be able to succeed in this class.” “Performance character” thus gives high school educators a new character language for describing the academic endeavor of teaching and learning that is the focus of their daily work.

Of course, good high school teachers, as they develop performance character, also pay attention to moral character: how students treat the teacher, treat each other, care for classroom materials and equipment, honor expectations of honesty on tests and other work, and so on. “I run a classroom based on respect,” the above-quoted chemistry teacher said. The chair of the math department in this same high-performing school told her students, “Teaching and learning are based on a relationship. If you cheat, it damages our relationship. It creates a lack of trust between us.” Our point here is that defining character to give a prominent place to performance character as well as moral character profoundly alters how secondary-level educators see character education. Character development as the pursuit of excellence in learning, not just as the fostering of ethical behavior, is, for high school teachers, a “fit.”

We also found that high school students readily responded to questions about how persons and programs in their high school experience had impacted their performance character and moral character. Speaking about performance character, one girl said:

The person who has most profoundly affected my performance character is my basketball coach. During the first week of practice, Coach B. moved me from a wing player to a power forward—a position physically grueling and emotionally demanding for someone who is only 5'4". When I became frustrated in games, I would become upset quickly and use my height as an excuse. But Coach never allowed me to give up. He told me directly when he expected more from me, and he never forgot to mention when he was proud of me. Before playing for him, I had never been asked to do something so far out of my comfort zone—never had to persevere in the face of what I saw as an impossibility.

Speaking about moral character, a girl at another school said:

Everything about my school, from the peer-counseling program to the religious studies courses, tremendously influences the moral character of its students. We are taught from the very beginning that plagiarism and all forms of cheating are wrong, that any kind of cruelty toward other students is not to be tolerated, and that taking initiative and responsibility in all situations is required. We often have assemblies that discuss how to promote peace in society and issues that prevent such peace from being achieved. Graduation requirements include 100 hours of community service, but our school encourages us to do more. There is an unspoken expectation throughout the campus to do what is right and stand up for what is just.

In sum, performance character and moral character prove to be concepts that both teachers and students find useful in reflecting on the character dimensions of high school life.

To summarize our conceptualization of performance character and moral character, we offer the following propositions:

#### A Person of Character Embodies both Performance Character and Moral Character

Washington State University historian Richard Hooker (1996) notes that the Greek notion of *arête* is often translated as “virtue” but is actually better translated as “being the best you can be” or “reaching your highest human potential.” To become a person of character is to become the best person we can be—to develop our full human potential. Clearly, being the best person we can be includes doing our best work (performance character) as well as doing the right thing in our relationships (moral character).

#### Performance Character and Moral Character both Carry Obligation

Performance character, like moral character, has an ethical dimension; it is a moral failure, for example, when we do shoddy work. Green (1999) refers to this moral notion of performance as “conscience of craft.” He states: “To possess a conscience of craft is to have acquired the capacity for self-congratulation or deep self-satisfaction at something well done, shame at slovenly work, and even embarrassment at carelessness” (1999, p. 62). All of us have a responsibility to develop our talents, use them to enhance the lives of others, and give our best effort as we perform the large and small tasks of life (performance character). We have this obligation for two reasons: (1) respect for ourselves requires us not to waste our talents but to use them to develop as persons and to perform to the best of our ability in whatever we undertake; and (2) caring about others requires us to do our work well, since the quality of our work, especially in the world beyond school, affects the quality of other people’s lives. When we do our work well—whether as a parent, teacher, mechanic, or doctor—other people typically benefit; when we do it poorly, other people suffer. In a similar way, we have a responsibility to be our best ethical self (moral character)—both out of

self-respect and because our ethical conduct affects the lives of those around us. If we treat others with respect and caring, we contribute to their welfare and happiness; if we do the opposite, we demean them and subtract from the quality of their lives.

### In a Person of Character, Performance Character and Moral Character Support Each Other in an Integrated Way

In a person of character, the two sides of character are interdependent; each needs the other. Consider what can happen if we have performance character without moral character. We might choose selfish goals (such as making a lot of money that we spend only on ourselves) or even evil goals (such as blowing up innocent people). Or we might choose a good goal (such as doing well in school or fighting terrorism) but corrupt our pursuit of that goal by using unethical means to achieve it (such as plagiarizing papers or employing inhumane methods to interrogate suspected terrorists). Moral character is what motivates us to choose moral goals and then pursue them in a fully ethical way. Or, consider what happens if we have moral character without performance character. We might have good intentions but poor ability to execute them. We might want to help others—through a community service project, for example—but lack the confidence, organization, ingenuity, and perseverance to carry that out effectively. In this vision of the interdependence of performance character and moral character, excellence and ethics harmonize to make possible an act—or a life—of character.

## WHAT IS THE ROLE OF CHARACTER IN ACADEMICS?

Having argued the case for a concept of character that gives a central role to both performance character and moral character, we return to the question that has until now been difficult for character educators to answer: “What is the connection between character and academics?” We believe this question is easier to answer if we apply our expanded definition of character as comprised of performance character and moral character. From this theoretical perspective, one can identify four important roles for character in academic life (and work in general):

1. Students *need* performance character (work ethic, self-discipline, perseverance, initiative, teamwork, etc.) in order to do their best academic work.
2. Students *develop* their performance character (the ability to work hard, overcome obstacles, find joy in a job well done, etc.) from their schoolwork.
3. Students *need* moral character (respect, fairness, kindness, honesty, etc.) in order to create the classroom relationships that make for a positive learning environment.
4. Students *develop* moral character from their schoolwork (e.g., by helping their peers to do their best work through a “culture of critique” that offers constructive feedback, by studying ethical issues in the curriculum, and by using their curricular learning in service projects that help solve real-world problems).

In short, both performance character and moral character are *needed for* and *developed from* every area of academic work. Character is no longer the “other side of the report card” (i.e., “the ethical” or “social-emotional side”); it is “the whole report card” in that character is a foundation for, and a critical outcome of, all academic and ethical endeavors. The ethical and social-emotional outcomes of character education are not replaced or de-emphasized; instead, in this new paradigm, character is wrapped around every element of the formal and informal curriculum.

Schools no longer need to talk about “balancing academics and character education” as if there were a tension between the two. In the Smart & Good Schools paradigm, teaching academics and developing character are opposite sides of the same coin. Done effectively, they occur simultaneously in mutually supportive ways.

## EIGHT STRENGTHS OF CHARACTER (DEVELOPMENTAL OUTCOMES)

Although performance character and moral character increase character education’s relevance to the school’s academic mission, we believe these two major parts of character will be more practically useful to educators if they are defined in terms of specific strengths of character that can serve as target developmental outcomes. Our Smart & Good Schools framework proposes eight such strengths of character as the crucial outcomes of schooling: (1) lifelong learner and critical thinker; (2) diligent and capable performer; (3) socially and emotionally skilled person; (4) ethical thinker; (5) respectful and responsible moral agent; (6) self-disciplined person who pursues a healthy lifestyle; (7) contributing community member and democratic citizen; and (8) spiritual person engaged in crafting a life of noble purpose (defined inclusively to encompass non-religious as well as religious world views and to focus on universally important existential questions such as “What is the meaning of life?” and “What is authentic happiness?”).

We see these Eight Strengths of Character not as narrow “traits” but rather as broad psychological assets needed for a flourishing life. (Table 19.1 describes each of these eight strengths in terms of what we see as their sub-components; empirical clarification of these constitutive components, as well as the factor analysis of the Eight Strengths themselves, is a focus of our current research.) The Eight Strengths are similar in some ways to the “internal developmental assets” that the Search Institute (Benson et al., 1998) has identified and found through its research to be strongly predictive of adolescent thriving. Our Eight Strengths of Character represent our best answer to a question that has long concerned educators: “What does it mean to educate the ‘whole person’?” The Eight Strengths are, we believe, the assets we need to develop our full human potential—“to be the best person we can be.”

We draw these Eight Strengths of Character from cross-cultural research on character, notably Peterson’s and Seligman’s *Character Strengths and Virtues* (2004); classical conceptions of a meaningful life (e.g., Frankel, 1959); positive psychology (Seligman, 2002); moral psychology (e.g., Blasi, 2004; Kohlberg, 1976; Lapsley, 1996); research on social-emotional learning (e.g., CASEL, 2002; Elias et al., 1997; Goleman, 1995); educational research (e.g., Marzano et al., 2001; Pallas, 2000); work on the development of purpose (e.g., Damon, Memon, & Bronk, 2003) and the role of spirituality in education (e.g., Kessler, 2000; Palmer, 1999); research on service learning (e.g., Billig, 2000); theory and research on intellectual character (e.g., Richhart, 2002; Sternberg, 1997); the input of our Experts Panel and Student Leaders Panel; and our own grounded theory research. The next phase of our research will be designed to empirically substantiate the existence and predictive power of these developmental outcomes.

Just as we see performance character and moral character as mutually supportive, we also see the Eight Strengths of Character as interdependent, each needed for the optimal functioning of the others. Being a diligent and capable performer, for example, affects how hard we work at developing all the other strengths of character. Consider, for example, the hard, persevering work it takes to become a socially and emotionally skilled person who listens well to others and can solve conflicts effectively. Being an ethical thinker—bringing discerning moral judgment to bear on every situation—guides how we live out all the other strengths. Being a self-disciplined person who pursues a healthy lifestyle will clearly affect our ability to actualize all the other strengths

**TABLE 19.1**  
**Eight Strengths of Character: Assets Needed for a Flourishing Life**

- 
- 1. Lifelong learner and critical thinker**
    - Strives to acquire the knowledge that characterizes an educated person
    - Approaches learning as a lifelong process
    - Demonstrates skills of critical analysis
    - Takes seriously the perspectives of others
    - Seeks expert opinion and credible evidence
    - Makes connections and integrates knowledge
    - Generates alternative solutions
    - Demonstrates willingness to admit error and modify thinking.
  - 2. Diligent and capable performer**
    - Strives for excellence; gives best effort
    - Demonstrates initiative and self-discipline
    - Knows standards of quality and creates high-quality products; takes pride in work
    - Sets personal goals and assesses progress
    - Perseveres in the face of difficulty.
  - 3. Socially and emotionally skilled person**
    - Possesses a healthy self-confidence and a positive attitude
    - Demonstrates basic courtesy in social situations
    - Develops positive interpersonal relationships that include sensitivity to the feelings of others and the capacity for “care-frontation”
    - Communicates effectively
    - Works well with others
    - Resolves conflicts fairly
    - Demonstrates emotional intelligence, including self-knowledge and the ability to manage emotions.
  - 4. Ethical thinker**
    - Possesses moral discernment, including good judgment, moral reasoning, and ethical wisdom
    - Has a well-formed conscience, including a sense of obligation to do the right thing
    - Has a strong moral identity that is defined by one’s moral commitments
    - Possesses the moral competence, or know how, needed to translate discernment, conscience, and identity into effective moral behavior.
  - 5. Respectful and responsible moral agent committed to consistent moral action**
    - Respects the rights and dignity of all persons
    - Understands that respect includes the right of conscience to disagree respectfully with others’ beliefs or behaviors
    - Possesses a strong sense of personal efficacy and responsibility to do what’s right
    - Takes responsibility for mistakes
    - Accepts responsibility for setting a good example and being a positive influence
    - Develops and exercises capacity for moral leadership.
  - 6. Self-disciplined person who pursues a healthy lifestyle**
    - Demonstrates self-control across a wide range of situations
    - Pursues physical, emotional, and mental health
    - Makes responsible personal choices that contribute to continuous self-development, a healthy lifestyle, and a positive future.
  - 7. Contributing community member and democratic citizen**
    - Contributes to family, classroom, school, and community
    - Demonstrates civic virtues and skills needed for participation in democratic processes
    - Appreciates the nation’s democratic heritage and democratic values
    - Demonstrates awareness of interdependence and a sense of responsibility to humanity.

*(continued)*

**8. Spiritual person crafting a life of noble purpose**

- Considers existential questions (“What is the meaning of life?”, “What is happiness?”, “What is the purpose of my life?”)
- Seeks a life of noble purpose
- Formulates life goals and ways to pursue them
- Cultivates an appreciation of transcendent values such as truth, beauty, and goodness
- Pursues authentic happiness
- Possesses a rich inner life
- Pursues deep, meaningful connections—e.g., to others, nature, or a higher power.

of character. As we grow as spiritual persons, deepening our sense of purpose in life, that process brings new energy and resolve to the development of the other strengths. And so on.

As the intended outcomes of a Smart & Good High School, the Eight Strengths of Character represent what we think is a needed expansion of character education theory, especially if it wishes to address the real-world challenges faced by high schools. Most previous approaches have defined desired character outcomes more narrowly. Moral education has focused on ethical thinking as the central developmental outcome at the high school level. The social and emotional learning field has viewed social and emotional skills as the major desired outcome. Civic education and service learning have seen democratic citizenship as the central goal, and so on. In reality, however, the varied academic and behavioral challenges faced by high schools and the short- and long-term outcomes society desires from high schools, require a more comprehensive character theory with a broader set of character outcomes. Without an adequate vision of end-goals, character education gets chopped into such small pieces as to have limited relevance to the array of acute challenges confronting high schools and society. We offer the Eight Strengths of Character as a set of developmental outcomes that we think are more commensurate with the need.

#### FOUR KEY STRATEGIES FOR DEVELOPMENT OF PERFORMANCE CHARACTER, MORAL CHARACTER, AND THE EIGHT STRENGTHS OF CHARACTER

In a Smart & Good School, how are performance character, moral character, and the Eight Strengths of Character developed? Most of our 227-page *Smart & Good High Schools* report (Lickona & Davidson, 2005) is devoted to describing nearly a hundred promising practices, culled from our research, for developing these outcomes. In our ongoing efforts to implement the Smart & Good Schools model, however, we have found a simpler “master strategy” emerging that can be applied to any of the Eight Strengths of Character and across different subject areas, co-curricular activities, advisories, remedial assistance, school and classroom discipline, and any other aspect of schooling. We call this overarching strategy the “4 KEYS for Developing Performance Character and Moral Character” (4 KEYS for short). The 4 KEYS are:

1. *The Ethical Learning Community (ELC)*—developing a community (classroom, advisory group, team, whole school) that both supports and challenges and whose members pursue the realization of their own potential for excellence and ethics *and* seek to bring out the best in every other person.
2. *Self-Study*—engaging students in assessing their strengths and areas for growth in performance character and moral character, setting goals for improvement, and monitoring their progress.



3. *Other-Study*—learning from exemplars of performance character and moral character by analyzing and emulating their pathways to success.
4. *Public Performance/Presentation*—using public performances and presentations as experiential learning and authentic assessment of students' performance character and moral character.

Let us illustrate each of these 4 KEYS to show their supporting research, diverse practical applications, and examples of how high schools and teachers have actually used them.

### The Ethical Learning Community (ELC)<sup>1</sup>

The first of the 4 KEYS, the Ethical Learning Community, recognizes that character develops in and through community, and that the norms of a community are a potent force in shaping character. Creating an Ethical Learning Community seeks to take character education beyond its focus on the psychological assets of the individual (the Eight Strengths of Character) to address the assets of the culture in which the individual lives and dwells, and where the psychological assets are developed. Focusing on creating an Ethical Learning Community fulfills Kohlberg's exhortation to "change the life of the school as well as the development of the individual" (Power, Higgins, & Kohlberg, 1989). As Power and colleagues (Power et al., 1989) argue, "The teaching of justice, as the teaching of reading or arithmetic, is set in a context of a classroom and a school, and how the students experience the life of the classroom and school will have a shaping effect on what they learn from what the teacher teaches" (p. 20).

In attempting to map the human ecological system, Garbarino (1990) argues that the habitat of youth includes "family, friends, neighborhood, church, and school, as well as less immediate forces that constitute the social geography and climate (e.g., laws, institutions, and values), and the physical environment" (p. 78). In its largest dimensions, the Ethical Learning Community is an ecological system comprised of all the stakeholder groups that affect the culture of the school and the character development of its members. Those stakeholder groups include faculty and staff, students, parents, and the wider community. The ideal of an Ethical Learning Community is that all four of these groups will support and challenge each other in doing their best work (performance character) and being their best ethical selves (moral character). No one is exempt from the norms of excellence and ethics.

However, this "macro-ELC" is made up of many "micro-ELCs," such as individual classrooms, advisory groups, clubs, teams, and other groups. Any group, whatever its size, will maximize its potential for excellence and ethics if it functions as an Ethical Learning Community. In defining an Ethical Learning Community as a community that supports *and* challenges, we are advocating an environment where participation in the community means not simply "passing the put-up" (the "warm-fuzzy" stereotype of character education held by many high school educators) but constantly challenging each other to be the best persons we can be. In many ways, the Ethical Learning Community seeks to create what Vygotsky (1978) called a zone of proximal development, defined as "the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem-solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem-solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers" (p. 86). An Ethical Learning Community is a place where we intentionally and proactively structure opportunities for individuals to pursue their personal best through the assistance of teachers, parents, or peers.

Our theoretical model of the Ethical Learning Community (Lickona & Davidson, 2005) posits six principles by which any Ethical Learning Community is developed, sustained, and continuously improved. These six principles are: (1) develop shared purpose and identity; (2) align

practices with desired outcomes and relevant research; (3) have a voice; take a stand; (4) take personal responsibility for continuous self-development; (5) practice collective responsibility; and (6) grapple with the difficult issues that affect excellence and ethics. Each of these six principles is supported by our first-hand observation of award-winning high schools and also by relevant theory or research from our extensive database of empirical studies, theoretical books, reports on high school reform, and so on (Lickona & Davidson, 2005).

For example, Principle 1: *Develop shared purpose and identity* draws on research on “school connectedness” as a predictor of adolescent flourishing (Resnick et al., 1997) and also on research on high-performing businesses and non-profits that used a “touchstone” (a creed that expressed core values) to promote excellence and ethical conduct in the way they carried out their work (Collins, 2001). Principle 3: *Have a voice; take a stand* draws on research on the experience of democratic school community as a predictor of adolescents’ use of their highest available moral reasoning (Power et al., 1989), reduced discipline problems (Freiberg, 1989), and civic participation after high school (Grady, 1994). Principle 5: *Practice collective responsibility* builds on research showing the power of positive peer pressure to influence the behavior even of previously anti-social youth, especially when coupled with direct instruction in perspective-taking and communication skills (e.g., Gibbs, 2003).

## Self-Study

The second of the 4 KEYS is Self-Study. In the Self-Study process, we are engaging students in assessing their strengths and areas for growth in performance character and moral character, setting goals for improvement, and monitoring their progress. Terman and colleagues (1959) found that intellectually gifted high school students who learned to set and pursue goals went on to achieve higher levels of success than equally gifted students who did not learn to set goals. The goal of Self-Study as a pedagogical strategy is student engagement and personalization; it seeks to move the locus of control from outside of the individual to inside the individual. With Self-Study we attempt to take the character words (posters, slogans, etc.) “off the wall” and to put them inside students’ hearts and minds. Through Self-Study, students have direct access to plan, monitor, and change their own behaviors.

In Csikszentmihalyi’s *Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience* (1990), he provides insight into the importance of Self-Study. He describes “flow” as “deep concentration, high and balanced challenges and skills, a sense of control and satisfaction.” The experience of flow is one that Csikszentmihalyi identified in concert pianists, athletes, artists, factory workers, and others. He states that the requirements for flow include:

1. Setting an overall goal and as many sub-goals as realistically feasible;
2. Finding ways of measuring progress in terms of goals chosen;
3. Continuing concentrating on what one is doing in order to keep making finer and finer distinctions in the challenges involved in the activity;
4. Developing the skills necessary to interact with the opportunities available;
5. Raising the stakes if the activity becomes boring.

As we see it, the flow process described by Csikszentmihalyi is a prescription for Self-Study, a way to assist students in the development of a task orientation (Duda & Nicholls, 1992; Nicholls, 1984, 1992). Like Csikszentmihalyi’s flow theory, the literature on achievement motivation helps us understand self-study and in particular the relation of self to others. This research suggests that an ego (or performance) orientation is one where a person is motivated to show competence in

relation to others by showing superiority (e.g., by winning, getting the most right, being able to list the most kind deeds one has done), whereas with a task (or learning) orientation, the person competes against self-referenced personal achievement (e.g., a better time than before, more right on this test than last time, fewer unnecessary interruptions of the class today than yesterday). In addition to facilitating numerous positive performance outcomes (academic, athletic, and other), a task orientation tends to promote self-reflection and awareness, to support strong intrinsic motivation, and to reduce helpless response to failure (Duda & Nicholls, 1992; Nicholls, 1984, 1992).

### Other-Study

Our third Key is Other-Study. With Other-Study we have students study people and products that exemplify performance character and moral character. From Other-Study, students learn the skills of analyzing and emulating the pathways to success. Other-Study builds upon social-cognitive learning theory (Bandura, 1991). “Growing out of behaviorism, social learning theory focuses on the ways in which individuals learn from others and their surroundings—including the mechanisms of modeling, imitation, and social reinforcement” (Lapsley, 1996, p. 193). Social-cognitive learning theory, Bandura’s later version of the initial theory, attempted to capture the cognition involved in the imitation process. Bandura (1991) states:

Modeling is a dynamic constructive process. People do not passively absorb standards of conduct from whatever influences happen to impinge on them. Rather, they construct generic standards from the numerous evaluative rules that are prescribed, modeled, and taught. This process is complicated because those who serve as socialization influencers, whether designedly or unintentionally, often display inconsistencies between what they practice and what they preach. When these two sources of social influence conflict, example often outweighs the power of precept. (p. 54)

The Other-Study process helps students understand, internalize, and master the requisite skills for reproducing high levels of excellence and ethics in their own lives. As Green states: “We encounter the conscience of craft being formed whenever we observe the novice coming to adopt the standards of some craft as his or her own” (Green, 1999, p. 61).

Other-Study isn’t just a strategy for studying people as models; it also serves as a powerful model for studying products of excellence and ethics. For example, Berger (2003) argues for providing students with examples of beautiful, powerful, important work created by their fellow students or by professionals. He sees these models as providing inspiration for students—a standard to strive for. He states:

When my class begins a new project, a new venture, we begin with a taste of excellence.... We sit and we admire. We critique and discuss what makes the work powerful: what makes a piece of creative writing compelling and exciting; what makes a scientific or historical research project significant and stirring; what makes a novel mathematical solution so breath taking. (Berger, 2003, p. 31)

As a strategy for promoting excellence, studying products of excellence challenges students to ask: What does excellence look like, where does it come from, what does it take to create excellence in your own work? Questions like these have the potential to help students understand better how to develop their own performance character.

Schools can also use Other-Study by inviting successful graduates back to speak about the performance and moral character qualities that have helped them in their careers and in their lives. Teachers can have students analyze the character qualities, good and bad, of contemporary

and historical figures and how their strengths or shortcomings of character impacted their lives and the lives of others. Current events are a rich source of both positive and negative examples of character. *Virtue in Action*, an online current events resource for grades 6–12 ([www.virtuein-action.org](http://www.virtuein-action.org)), offers compelling in-the-news examples of integrity, compassion, and courage as well as instances of greed, disrespect, violence, and dishonesty. One *Virtue in Action* lesson, for example, featured Shirin Ebadi, the first Muslim woman and the first person from Iran to win the Nobel Peace Prize. After presenting a character exemplar such as Shirin Ebadi, the teacher would have students reflect on questions such as the following:

1. What strengths of character enabled this person to do what he or she did?
2. What obstacles did this person have to overcome?
3. What is one character strength possessed by this person that you would like to develop to a higher degree? Make a plan.

Contemporary and historical examples of man’s inhumanity to man can offer equally compelling forms of Other-Study. *Facing History and Ourselves* ([www.facing.org](http://www.facing.org)) is one of the thirty-three programs identified as having research validation by *What Works in Character Education* (Berkowitz & Bier, 2006). An evaluation of this curriculum showed gains in students’ moral reasoning and relationship maturity as well as reduced fighting and racist attitudes. Kohlberg argued, “The main experiential determinants of moral development seem to be amount and variety of social experience, the opportunity to take a number of roles and to encounter other perspectives.” Other-Study programs like *Facing History* clearly provide students opportunities for new roles and perspectives.

Regarding the influence of modeling, Lapsley (1996) argues that the “literature leaves little question that observing prosocial models can have powerful effects on children” (p. 193). He argues that prosocial models have been shown to enhance altruistic behavior, generosity, and resistance to temptation; further, he argues that the effects of modeling endure over time.

### Public Performance/Presentation

The last of the 4 KEYS is Public Performance/Presentation. Public Performance/Presentation functions pedagogically for us as both experiential learning (Kolb, 1983) and authentic assessment (Wiggins & McTighe, 1998; Darling-Hammond, 1993) of students’ performance character and moral character. For example, service learning provides a public performance activity that provides students with a chance to “exercise” moral character as they serve others. It gives them an opportunity to practice moral character “in the real world.” A ten-year compilation of research on the impact of service learning indicates that it helps develop students’ sense of civic and social responsibility and citizenship skills, improves school climate, increases respect between teachers and students, and improves the interpersonal development and ability to relate to diverse groups (Billig, 2000).

In his book, *An Ethic of Excellence: Building a Culture of Craftsmanship with Students*, master teacher and master carpenter Ron Berger (2003) makes a strong case for the motivational power of presenting one’s work publicly. He points out that for most students, the audience for their work is an audience of one—the teacher. For many students, that is not audience enough; they don’t care if the teacher gives them a bad grade. More powerful, Berger says, is a classroom culture where students have to regularly present their work to their peers and where their peers expect them to do their best. Every student wants to fit in, and if the peer norm is to do your best work, students will strive to fit in to that culture.

Essential to creating this kind of classroom is what Berger calls “a culture of critique.” Students regularly share their work with the whole class, as the teacher guides the process. There are rules for critique: “Be kind; be specific; be helpful.” Students presenting a piece of work first explain their ideas or goals and state what they are seeking help with. Classmates begin with positive comments and phrase suggestions as questions: “Would you consider (e.g., adding X, deleting Y, changing Y, etc.)...?” The teacher uses the critique session as the optimal opportunity for teaching necessary concepts and skills. Following critique sessions, students have the opportunity to use the group feedback to do revisions, sometimes many revisions. Berger laments that in most schools, students turn in first drafts—work that doesn’t represent their best effort and that is typically discarded after it has been graded and returned. By contrast, in the workplace, where the quality of one’s work really matters, one almost never submits a first draft. An ethic of excellence requires revision.

Following revision, students present their work to a wider audience. *Every* final draft students complete is done for some kind of an outside audience—whether a class of kindergartners, parents, the whole school, the wider community, or the local or state government. In this kind of classroom, the teacher’s role is not as the sole judge of their work but rather similar to that of a sports coach or play director—helping them get their work ready for the public eye.

## CONCLUSION

We conclude our chapter with two quotes. The first is from Martin Luther King, Jr. On the evening before his assassination, King addressed the striking sanitation workers of Montgomery, Alabama, with these words:

You must discover what you are made for, and you must work indefatigably to achieve excellence in your field of endeavor. If you are called to be a street sweeper, you should sweep streets even as Michelangelo painted, or Beethoven composed music, or Shakespeare wrote poetry. You should sweep streets so well that all the hosts of heaven will pause to say, here lived a great street sweeper who did his job well.

The second quote is from a high school teacher we interviewed in our *Smart & Good High Schools* study. He commented:

Students today are growing up in a world where it seems okay to cheat to get ahead. When I find out about an incident of cheating in my class, I give a little talk to my students:

There are two roads in life: a high road and a low road. The high road is harder, but it takes you somewhere worth going. The low road is easy, but it’s circular—you eventually find yourself back where you started. If you cheat now, you’ll cheat later. Your life won’t get better—and *you* won’t get better—on the low road.

There are certainly many forces in human nature and in society that can influence young people to take the low road. But we believe that deep within every young person, there is also a desire to lead a flourishing life. It falls to us as parents and teachers to point out—and make accessible—the high road of character as the reliable pathway to a flourishing life. That high road includes both the summons to excellence of which King spoke and the call to ethical integrity of which the high school teacher spoke.

To prepare our young to lead flourishing lives, we therefore need a broader vision of character education than the one that has thus far guided the field. To date, the field has focused on ethics (moral character) while neglecting excellence (performance character). We need to view character education as the *intentional integration of excellence and ethics*—the systematic effort to develop performance character, moral character, and the Eight Strengths of Character through every phase of school life. The academic curriculum, school routines, rituals and traditions, discipline, co-curricular activities, service learning, and teachable moments all become opportunities to develop the full range of assets needed for an ethical, productive, and fulfilling life.

This broader definition of character education represents, we think, a paradigm shift for the field. We believe this is an essential paradigm shift for character education in high schools—because it makes character education directly relevant to the school’s central mission of teaching and learning.

## NOTE

1. In the *Smart & Good High Schools* report, this key was originally referred to as, “Community that Supports and Challenges.”

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# 20

## Fostering the Moral and Civic Development of College Students<sup>1</sup>

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My colleagues and I have argued elsewhere (Colby, Beaumont, Ehrlich, & Stephens, 2003; Colby, Ehrlich, Beaumont, & Corngold, 2007) that colleges and universities ought to make moral, civic, and political development central goals of undergraduate education. In this chapter, I will lay out what I believe are the key developmental dimensions that higher education ought to support if moral and civic functioning are to reach their full potential. A clear understanding of these dimensions is critical to formulating both the goals and strategies of moral and civic education at the college level.

### MORAL AND CIVIC DEVELOPMENT PRIOR TO COLLEGE: WHAT STUDENTS TYPICALLY BRING

Both students who come to college soon after high school and those who enter college later in their lives bring with them a lot of personal history. They have been affected by the cultures in which they grew up, many aspects of their family environment, the schools they attended, peer relationships, participation in religious institutions, jobs they have held, community involvements, and activities such as participation in clubs or sports.

Patterns of habitual morality, at least roughly aligned with the norms of their society, develop over time for most people based on their increased understandings, on sanctions for non-compliance, and on experiences in families, schools, and peer groups. Although many are only partially compliant, late adolescents know the rules of the main settings in which they operate (including school, home, peer situations, and the like), and most have developed habits of basic honesty, civility, and self-regulation. Most late adolescents have also come to understand that it is legitimate for others to hold them accountable for their actions and choices (Damon, 1988; Turiel, 1998).

In addition to these basic moral habits, by late adolescence most (though not all) people have the capacity to think about moral dilemmas from the perspective of a member of a moral community. They understand, at least in a simple way, the shared norms and expectations about what it means to be a good friend, parent, and other social roles, and they have an appreciation of the moral significance of interpersonal trust (Colby et al., 1983).

Basic empathy develops very early in life and is reshaped during childhood and early adolescence by an increasing capacity to see situations from another's point of view (Hoffman, 1981; Selman, 1980). Likewise, a sense of fairness is present in early childhood, but young children are unable to appreciate impartial criteria for fair distribution or the legitimacy of equity, as opposed to strict equality (Damon, 1975). By the time they reach late adolescence, most people understand basic principles of impartiality and equity, even if they cannot apply them in complex situations or do not practice the distributive and procedural justice of which they are capable when impartial fairness conflicts with their self-interest.

In addition to these habits and cognitive capacities that develop in the course of ordinary life, some high school graduates have achieved a good basic understanding of American history and government, although studies of the effectiveness of high school civics courses reveal that all too few secondary school students achieve this understanding to any significant degree (Dionne, 1991). For example, only 30% of 12th graders scored at or above the proficient level on the National Assessment of Educational Progress 1998 Civics Assessment (Lutkus, Weiss, Campbell, Mazzeo, & Lazer, 1999). Many students participate in volunteer work in high school or belong to other organizations that help develop leadership and other civic skills.

### IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENTAL ISSUES STILL TO BE CONFRONTED

In spite of the dramatic developmental changes that take place in the first eighteen years of life, many developmental issues remain only partially resolved for undergraduates, especially for the late adolescents or young adults who come to college soon after high school. Other dimensions of moral and civic character continue to develop throughout life, so are open to further growth even for adults returning to college after a longer time out of school.

Although by age eighteen most people know the rules and follow them much of the time, even many adults are inconsistent in their moral practices, especially under pressure. We know, for example, that cheating in college is widespread (McCabe & Trevino, 1997), as is cheating on taxes and some other forms of dishonesty in adulthood. Only a minority of adults achieves a deep understanding of the social system and a wise and sophisticated grasp of difficult moral and political issues. In recent years we have also seen a decline in civic engagement, especially among younger cohorts (Putnam, 2000), and there is a great deal of evidence that younger Americans lack interest and trust in politics (Astin et al, 1997; Sax, 1999; Sax et al, 1999). Although most late adolescents and adults have the capacity for both empathy and impartiality, few can claim to exhibit these consistently in the most challenging situations. By early adulthood, most people have a sense of responsibility and accountability, but these may be compromised by habits of self-deception and rationalization or may be limited to immediate family and friends. Virtually everyone has moral weaknesses as well as strengths, so moral growth is a work in progress for all but the saintly few.

Research on human development reveals three major clusters of capacities that are critical to fully mature moral and civic functioning, and all three can continue to develop in adulthood under some circumstances. The first main area is moral and civic understanding. This includes interpretation, judgment, knowledge, understanding of complex issues and institutions, and a sophisticated grasp of ethical and democratic principles.

The second major area has less to do with understanding what is right than motivation to do the right thing. This cluster includes goals and values, interests, commitments, conviction, and perseverance in the face of challenges. It also includes a sense of efficacy and emotions such as compassion, hope, and inspiration. Closely related to these dimensions is the individual's identity, the sense of who she is and what kind of a person she wants to be.

The third broad category is the domain of practice. Fully effective citizenship requires a well-developed capacity for effective communication, including moral and political discourse; skills of political participation; the capacity to work effectively with people, including those who are very different from oneself; and the ability to organize other people for action. Political action, for example, is rarely a solitary activity.

Both within and across these categories, the various underlying dimensions are only loosely linked together developmentally if they are linked at all. People can be advanced on some, yet quite undeveloped on others. It is not unusual, for example, for a person to exhibit a sophisticated capacity for moral judgment without feeling at all politically efficacious. Likewise, there is no reason to assume that people who are highly caring and generous will understand the systemic dimensions of the issues they are dealing with on a person-to-person level (Colby & Damon, 1992).

Even though knowledge, judgment, values, identity, and skills may develop independently to some extent, at any one time, they operate as one system, intersecting and interconnecting in many ways. Of course, knowledge and judgment play a critical role in moral and political discourse, and interpretation is very much influenced by values and interests and emotions such as hope and inspiration. For the sake of explication, we will treat these three clusters as more separate than they are in reality. Moral and civic education is no doubt most effective when it addresses as many of these facets of development as possible, and they cannot and should not be dealt with separately. Any one program or experience is likely to affect many of these dimensions, and changes in one dimension can contribute to changes in others.

First year college students exhibit a wide range of development in all of these areas, especially considering the range of ages and life experiences that characterize college students in the contemporary United States. Students who enter college as adults may be more fully developed on many of these dimensions than younger students. But this is not necessarily true, since most studies show developmental variables to be more highly correlated with educational attainment than with age.

### Moral and Civic Understanding, Judgment, and Knowledge

The ability to think clearly about difficult moral issues is important not only in the domain of personal morality but also in civic and political affairs because they so often entail moral issues such as balancing the rights and welfare of individuals and groups.

#### *Moral Judgment*

Fortunately, we know quite a lot about the development of moral judgment because this has been a very active research area for several decades. The cognitive-developmental theories of moral judgment put forward by Jean Piaget (1932) and especially Lawrence Kohlberg (1969) were ground-breaking when they were introduced and have dominated the field ever since.

Kohlberg spoke of “the child as moral philosopher,” by which he meant that children are not the passive recipients of socialization, but instead, through their social experiences, actively construct and reconstruct their understanding of moral concepts like justice, rights, equality, and welfare. This is even more obviously true for college students than for young children. The cognitive-developmental view of morality and moral development emphasizes the importance of individuals’ moral judgments and moral thinking more generally, holding that the way people *understand and think about* moral issues makes an important difference in their moral functioning.



This may seem obvious to many readers, especially to educators, but it is still disputed by some psychologists and philosophers (Haidt, 2001; Kagan, 1984; Noddings, 1984). Jonathan Haidt, for example, refers to “the emotional dog and the rational tail,” arguing that moral conduct is driven by moral emotions that are fundamentally non-rational. In his view (which is linked to biological and ethological theories of human behavior), what people offer as reasons for their behavior are, in fact, *post hoc* constructions formulated after the fact to explain or justify automatic, emotionally based moral intuitions.

This is not the place to articulate the rather complicated theoretical disputes surrounding the relationship between moral judgment, emotions, intuitions, and conduct. For our present purpose, it is sufficient to say that in contemporary theory and research, positions that begin from a cognitive perspective and those that are more fundamentally intuitionist have converged, such that both sets of positions have begun to acknowledge the importance of both moral intuitions and moral judgments, although they conceive of the relationship between them somewhat differently.

In response to research findings and critiques of various kinds, many features of cognitive-developmental theory have been questioned and revised, and moral judgment has been re-conceived as only one component in a complex set of processes. Even so, Kohlberg’s (1969) description of the increasing sophistication of people’s capacity to think about difficult moral issues remains a useful tool for operationalizing what we mean by the intellectual side of moral growth. Kohlberg proposed that the underlying logic or structure of individuals’ thinking about moral issues can be described independently of the content of their beliefs, and that this logic becomes more sophisticated and functionally adequate as development proceeds.

In Kohlberg’s scheme, moral judgment moves from simple conceptions of morality grounded in unilateral authority and individual reciprocity to judgments grounded in shared social norms to an appreciation of a more complex social system to a perspective that is capable of evaluating the existing social system in relation to some more fundamental principles of justice. These shifts have important implications for people’s understanding of and judgments about a whole range of important issues (see chapter 6 this volume for further discussion of Kohlberg’s stages).

For example, when Candee (1975) asked a sample of college students to think about the Watergate scandal shortly after it took place, he found that only respondents at Kohlberg’s Stage 5 were consistently clear that it was wrong for members of President Richard Nixon’s Committee to Re-elect the President (CRP) to cover up their involvement in the Watergate break-in. For many respondents at Stages 3 and 4 (as well as for the Watergate defendants themselves), loyalty to President Nixon and to their colleagues in the CRP or a concern for national security was sufficient to justify the initial violations of civil rights and many laws in the subsequent cover-up. Only at Stage 5 does a clear understanding emerge that human rights constitute the foundation of a democracy and cannot be overridden by considerations such as those cited by the defendants. Here we see one way in which achievement of a high level of moral development has important implications for civic development.

Some critics have argued that the conception of morality at the heart of Kohlberg’s theory is too narrowly defined around justice and individual rights and fails to take account of other equally valid conceptions of morality, including those based on perspectives of divinity, community, or interpersonal care (Gilligan, 1982; Shweder, Mahapatra, & Miller, 1987). Cross-cultural research supports the argument that there are several kinds of broad ethical framework, each of which approaches moral questions in a different way and not all of which are captured by Kohlberg’s scheme. However, Kohlberg’s description of development within a framework of justice is particularly important, both for connecting with civic development and for thinking about the civic goals of American higher education because justice and human rights are central to the way the American systems of politics and law should function. For this reason, Kohlberg’s

descriptions of the development of moral judgment and his emphasis on justice can be a useful way to think about the increasing maturity of thinking in the intersection of moral with political, civic, and legal issues.

### *Related Dimensions of Social Cognition*

Moral judgment is part of the broader domain of social cognition, which includes a number of other dimensions that have also been framed in cognitive-developmental terms. Investigators studying the development of individuals' understanding of friendship, interpersonal perspective-taking, political understanding, and religious faith have all described trajectories of increasing maturity, which are said to emerge from individuals' attempts to interpret their experience as they interact with other people and social institutions. Although development within an individual can proceed at different rates in the various domains of social cognition, the basic patterns of developmental change within these domains show striking parallels.

Studies of political understanding (Adelson & O'Neil, 1966; Helwig, 1995; Jankowski, 1992; Raaijmakers, Verbogt, & Vollebergh, 1998) have revealed developmental shifts toward increasingly subtle and complex conceptions of social and political institutions. Concepts such as civil liberties, methods of social control, and governance show regular patterns of elaboration as development proceeds. Political thinking has been described as moving from the personal or authoritarian toward greater comprehension of social structures and general principles. For example, younger adolescents are usually insensitive to individual liberties and opt for authoritarian solutions to political problems. At the same time, they are unable to achieve a differentiated view of the social order, and thus cannot grasp the legitimate claim of the community upon the citizen (Adelson & O'Neil, 1966).

What does all this mean? First, it is clear that social, moral, and political development all have an important intellectual core. It is, therefore, impossible to divide moral and civic development sharply from intellectual or academic development because much of moral and civic development *is* intellectual. Second, this insight reinforces our central argument that there are important links between moral, civic, and political development. It also points to an essential compatibility between efforts to foster these intellectual aspects of moral and civic development and the academic endeavor more broadly.

### *Moral Interpretation*

Even though the way people think about moral issues is important, this does not mean that morality is always conscious, rational, reflective, and deliberative. Although this is sometimes the case, often it is not. It is useful to distinguish between two quite different kinds of moral process, which have been termed "reflective morality" and "habitual or spontaneous morality" (Davidson & Youniss, 1991; Walker, 2000). In daily life, reflective morality, which involves careful evaluation and justification, comes into play relatively infrequently, when the right course of action is not obvious or when one's initial moral response is challenged and there is time to reflect. In contrast, most moral actions—the many unremarkable moral choices and actions that characterize daily life—are not preceded by conscious reflection, but instead are immediate, seemingly intuitive responses. For example, most people do not have to stop and think before paying a blind newspaper salesman, rather than only pretending to pay. This kind of routine honesty is taken for granted. As the name implies, habitual morality is based in repetition over time, not only behavioral repetition, but also repetition of ingrained habits of "reading" or interpreting moral situations.

One reason that moral interpretation is so important is that in real life, moral dilemmas do not come neatly packaged like hypothetical dilemmas, which typically involve a given set of simple facts. Almost any real moral dilemma or question involves significant ambiguity, and interpretation of the situation can differ from one person to the next. Thus, in order to find meaning amid the moral ambiguity of real-life situations, people must develop habits of moral interpretation and intuition through which they perceive the everyday world. People with different habits of moral interpretation see the world in very different terms and are, therefore, presented with very different opportunities and imperatives for moral action. Through the aggregate of their moral choices in daily life, they actively shape their own moral reality (Walker, 2000).

But even habitual morality has important underlying cognitive elements. Our thinking processes rely on our capacity to recognize patterns in the environment, and this pattern recognition depends on cognitive schemas that derive from many sources. One source is the set of concepts and assumptions represented by cognitive-moral development. Even though it seems clear that people don't think or argue through every moral situation in a way that mirrors the kinds of moral argumentation elicited in research interviews, different cognitive-moral frameworks (like Kohlberg's moral judgment stages) represent different sets of assumptions that help inform and shape their reactions to the many small moral decisions of both habitual and reflective morality. In this sense, their conceptual frameworks, including understandings associated with their developmental stage, provide patterns or schemas that shape moral interpretations. The way people understand fairness, for example, will be a backdrop to the way they react to perceived injustices. Concepts such as distributive justice, moral authority, trust, and accountability are central to morality, and the way they are understood plays an important part in shaping the individual's understanding of ambiguous moral situations.

However, the developmental aspects of individuals' implicit assumptions are only one source of schemas that shape moral perceptions, interpretations, and actions. Individuals also learn what constitutes a meaningful pattern through interaction with their social environment. As they participate in cultural routines, they acquire habits of interpretation consistent with that culture. The impact of the social context on habits and schemas is part of the broader issue of socialization of values, to which we will return later in this chapter.

Cognitive schemas can influence interpretations, judgments, and behavior without the conscious awareness of the actor, but it is also possible for individuals to reflect on and discuss with others their moral interpretations. These processes can lead to moral growth. In the many brief moments of moral decision we encounter every day, we have the capacity to reflect, and we have some room to choose the interpretation we settle on, over time creating new habits of interpretation that can lead in a different direction. This can involve considering and resolving several conflicting interpretations or questioning one's original interpretation after confronting an uneasy feeling that one's interpretation may be self-serving or biased in other ways. The capacity to override or change one's own habits of interpretation is important, because by doing so we can actively shape our future moral habits. In this view of moral development, people can grow morally by making an effort to become more aware of their own interpretive habits, acknowledging and trying to overcome their biases, and working to understand and take seriously others' interpretations (Walker, 2000).

### *Development of Moral Judgment and Interpretation during College*

What do we know about the development of moral judgment and interpretation during college? First, we know that many college students do experience moral growth. In part due to the availability of a measure that is fairly easy to use (James Rest's Defining Issues Test, see Rest,

1979), moral judgment as conceived by Kohlberg has been included in many studies of college student development (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). Investigators have found consistently that attending college does increase students' scores on this measure, and many studies have found a significant correlation between years of higher education and scores on Kohlberg's Moral Judgment Interview as well as on the DIT. This is true regardless of the students' age. Moral judgment stage is more likely to stop increasing at the end of formal education than at any particular age. In fact, some studies have shown a small negative correlation of DIT scores with age (probably a cohort effect) and a larger positive correlation of DIT with educational attainment (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005).

Given the evidence that higher education contributes to higher levels of moral judgment, it may seem that colleges and universities do not need special programs aimed specifically at fostering moral development. However, the research in this area makes clear that there is significant room for educational improvement even with regard to moral judgment itself. Despite the positive impact of higher education on moral judgment stage, most college-educated adults do not achieve the highest level of moral judgment, most reasoning at Stage 4 or some combination of Stages 3 and 4 (Colby et al., 1983). Because a deep understanding of the American constitution and legal system requires a Stage 5 perspective in which the social system is understood to be grounded in fundamental human rights, the failure of many citizens to achieve that developmental level raises questions about their capacity to fully appreciate the foundations of American democracy.

A large body of research makes it clear that the experience of grappling with challenging moral issues in classroom discussions or in activities that require the resolution of conflicting opinions contributes significantly to the increasing maturity of individuals' moral judgment. This is especially true when the teacher draws attention to important distinctions, assumptions, and contradictions. If these kinds of ethical discussions are integrated into the college curriculum, the maturity of students' thinking about moral issues has been shown to increase (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005).

The college experience can also be a powerful opportunity for students to develop more reflective and mature habits of moral interpretation. Students bring their own characteristic habits of interpretation with them when they enter college, but their experiences in college have significant potential to reshape those habits. Much of the positive impact of programs that foster understanding across the diversity of a campus and its environment may reside in the power of those programs to make students aware for the first time of their previously unquestioned interpretive schemes, to bring their biases to light, and to highlight the inherent ambiguity of moral situations that previously appeared clear-cut.

This view of moral change also clarifies the significance of the reflection component that is known to be critical to the success of service-learning courses. Reflection on service activities often includes discussions in which students share with each other their interpretations of the common experience, along with written assignments in which they explore the ways in which the service experience changed their understanding of the people with whom they worked, the social issues their work confronted, and their relationship to those people and issues. This kind of activity is ideally suited for revealing alternative interpretations of common experiences and helping students see the personal significance of those alternative interpretations through self-examination (Eyler & Giles, 1999).

In addition to programs explicitly designed to foster moral and civic growth, colleges and universities can also transform students' interpretive frames, for better or worse, through traditional academic course work. Faculty members often talk of transforming student understanding through their teaching. Along with substantive and theoretical disciplinary learning, this transformation can entail changes in students' frameworks of interpretation. For example, a powerful

course can open students' eyes to global economic interdependence or the influence of opportunity structures on individual achievement. Some of these interpretive shifts may contribute to greater moral and civic responsibility, while others may have a potentially negative effect on students' moral and civic responsibility. For example, some reductionist psychological theories and many economic models run the risk of leading students to see all behavior as motivated by self-interest, ignoring the complex and ambiguous reality of the economic, political, and moral worlds. Over-reliance on this kind of narrow frame to interpret their own experience can affirm some students' cynicism and help them rationalize self-serving behavior. Likewise, an ethics or other moral philosophy course that does no more than critique one theory after another may lead students to believe that all ethical perspectives are seriously flawed and that, therefore, all ethical questions are matters of personal taste and opinion.

### *Moral Relativism*

As students begin to question their unexamined assumptions and appreciate the multiplicity of interpretations inherent in any situation, they may conclude that there are no grounds for evaluating the relative validity of different, sometimes conflicting, moral or intellectual interpretations.

At least some degree of both epistemological and ethical relativism are part of the predictable developmental sequence that college students go through as they begin to grapple with uncertainty and question the simple absolutes they previously understood as the "right answers" to complex and subtle questions. William Perry (1968) and others (e.g., Knefelkamp, 1974) trace a developmental pattern that shifts gradually from seeing the world in polar terms of right vs. wrong and good vs. bad to a point at which all knowledge and values are seen as contextual and relative, then eventually to a point at which it is possible to orient oneself in a relativistic world through the development of commitment, which is experienced as an ongoing activity through which identity and responsibilities are affirmed. Empirical studies of college students' progression through this sequence reveal that many students move from the initial "dualistic" stage to the more relativistic positions during college, but very few reach the most advanced level—the stage of commitment (Knefelkamp, 1974; Perry, 1968).

In light of consistent findings that college students tend to leave behind absolutistic thinking but generally do not reach a full understanding of grounds for intellectual and moral conviction, it is not surprising that faculty report a great deal of epistemological and ethical relativism among their students. Although we are not aware of any systematic research on how widespread *moral* relativism is among college students (aside from the studies of Perry's stages, which do not distinguish between epistemological and ethical relativism), many faculty and other observers have noted its pervasiveness.

This relativism can take several forms, often combining elements of positions that are philosophically distinct. Faculty often report a pattern that combines a number of different views into a system which is internally inconsistent but despite its internal contradictions is apparently quite widely held (e.g., Ricks, 1999; Trosset, 1998). "Student moral relativism," as Ricks has called it, includes elements of cultural relativism (moral standards are relative to culture), ethical subjectivism ("right" means "right for me"), moral skepticism (nothing can ever be *proven* in ethics, since people will still disagree), moral nihilism (there are no truths in ethics), and (surprisingly) an overriding concern for moral tolerance and respect for others' views. (We say this is surprising because moral claims like "We must be tolerant of people who have beliefs different from ours" are inconsistent with the belief that when individuals or cultures hold different moral views there is no basis for arguing that one position is better than another. If this relativist perspective were valid, there would be no grounds for justifying the claim that we ought to be tolerant.) This

position may reflect an unwillingness to think hard about challenging ethical questions or at least a limited understanding of what should count as convincing evidence and argumentation in the moral domain, a related reluctance to have one's own views and actions subjected to serious scrutiny by others, and an inability to distinguish between making reasoned judgments about the moral legitimacy of actions or views on the one hand, and being judgmental, intolerant, or disrespectful toward other individuals or cultural groups on the other.

Despite the concerns of some social commentators (Bennett, 1992; Bloom, 1987) that moral relativism leads to immoral behavior, there is no evidence that this is the case. The very inconsistency of the most widespread versions of relativism may protect against this, since students' normative positions on specific ethical questions often seem to be unaffected by their relativism on the level of meta-ethics. But, even so, college students' relativism ought to be cause for concern among educators, because beliefs such as "everyone is entitled to his own opinion and there is no way to evaluate the validity of those opinions," prevent students from engaging fully in discussions of ethical issues, learning to articulate and effectively justify their views, and adopting new perspectives when presented with high quality evidence and arguments. In essence, "the stakes drop out of ethical deliberation" and students are less likely to take it seriously (Trosset, 1998, see also Ethics in Society website, <http://www.stanford.edu/dept/EIS>).

### *Knowledge*

Even intellectually sophisticated reasoning and judgment cannot be powerful forces for effective action if they are abstract or disembodied. Being deeply knowledgeable about the issues is also essential. In addition to fostering clearer reasoning and more mature judgment, colleges can promote students' moral and civic learning by imparting broad and deep knowledge bearing on civic, political, and moral issues.

At a minimum, foundational knowledge in a range of fields provides support for moral and civic effectiveness. The need for an understanding of basic philosophic concepts, for example, is evident in the phenomenon of student moral relativism discussed above. Students often fail to distinguish between a moral principle of respect and tolerance and the challenges inherent in evaluating the relative validity of moral claims. Insofar as these are developmental issues, it may take time for students to work their way through them. But course work and classroom discussions focusing directly on these issues can contribute a great deal to clarifying the intellectual issues involved. Developmental research indicates that without foundational knowledge of basic political concepts, it is impossible to understand political stories or assimilate new information about political issues (Stoker, 2000).

Likewise, students need to develop foundational knowledge of democratic principles, as well as an understanding of complex social, legal, and political structures and institutions if they are to be fully prepared as engaged citizens. Research on the context-specificity of expertise suggests that programs fostering generic analytic capacities are not sufficient preparation for effective action. A general grasp of critical thinking and problem solving that is not specific to the field in question does not suffice. Research on expertise in such disparate fields as chess (Chase & Simon, 1973), the analysis of business problems (e.g., Selnes & Troye, 1989), and medical diagnosis (e.g., Patel, Arocha, & Kaufman, 1994) makes it clear that novices and experts differ dramatically in their perceptions of and approaches to problems in their field, differences which are grounded in their experience with and in-depth knowledge of the particular domain of expertise. Expert knowledge is organized into higher order schemas that permit the expert to recognize patterns that are invisible to novices, permitting the expert to approach complex situations in ways that are qualitatively different from those of novices.



It will be beneficial to their graduates' effectiveness if colleges and universities can help students begin developing expertise in their areas of civic interest, even while recognizing that few students will be true experts when they graduate. But expertise in the nonacademic world is not entirely analogous to expertise in the academic world. Advanced undergraduate study in some academic disciplines is sometimes said to educate students as if they all intended to become professors (e.g., Menand, 1997). To the extent this is true, the knowledge and skills acquired in mastering even the major may have a fairly loose relationship to knowledge and skills the graduates will need in their later lives. This underscores the value of student engagement with well-structured internships, challenging volunteer programs, and other forms of complex practice that connect with but go beyond academic learning, even the kind of advanced learning that takes place in the student's major field.

### Motivation for Moral and Civic Responsibility

Clearly, understanding and judgment are essential elements of moral and civic maturity, but they are not sufficient to explain what makes a morally and civically effective person. Some people with very advanced levels of understanding fail to take responsibility for or act on their understanding. These people may have the *capacity* for effective action while lacking the *motivation* to act. Like understanding, motivation is multi-faceted, and includes values and goals; identity or sense of self; a sense of efficacy or empowerment; faith; and various aspects of moral emotion such as hope and optimism, as opposed to alienation and cynicism. Although the connection of higher education with moral and civic motivation may be less obvious than its connection with knowledge and understanding, colleges have great potential to contribute to students' development in this area as well.

#### *Values and Goals*

There is a large body of evidence that a college education affects students' values, goals, and attitudes. Some of these are shifts that support increased moral and civic responsibility, whereas others are changes in attitudes toward political and social issues that would be evaluated differently depending on one's perspective on those issues.

Despite the pluralism of American values, there are some values that most people would agree colleges and universities ought to promote and support if they are committed to graduating engaged and responsible citizens. These include respect and tolerance for others, including social minorities, respect for civil liberties and other key elements of our democracy, and an interest in politics and in contributing to positive social change, however that is defined. Part of the value of higher education is that it does contribute to the development of these values.

We know that changes in college students' values depend partly on characteristics of the college they attend and on students' entering characteristics, including gender, religiosity, and their own and their parents' political views. For example, shifts toward increased political liberalism appear to be greatest in highly selective institutions (Astin, 1977; Knox, Lindsay, & Kolb, 1988). Even so, ever since the 1940s when research on these questions began to emerge, students in most colleges and universities showed some common shifts in their values, including increased socio-political tolerance, greater concern for civil rights and civil liberties, more egalitarian views of gender roles, declines in authoritarianism and dogmatism, and more secular religious attitudes. Higher education is also associated with a modest increase in knowledge of and interest in politics (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). Longitudinal studies indicate that most of these changes in attitudes and values are maintained in the years after college (e.g., Newcomb, et al, 1967).

These changes in values and attitudes, along with documented increases in intellectual dispositions such as interest in and knowledge of cultural and intellectual issues, tolerance for ambiguity, flexibility of thought, rational and critical approaches to problem solving, and receptivity to further learning, are at the heart of American higher education's espoused mission. The importance of higher education lies as much in these outcomes as in subject matter knowledge and vocational preparation.

This research raises a question for us: If higher education is already doing a good job of encouraging these broadly supported values and attitudes, then why do we need to encourage colleges and universities to pay special attention to moral and civic education? The answer is that despite the undisputed positive impact of higher education, there is still immense room for improvement. Some changes, though statistically significant, are small. For example, the impact of higher education on students' social conscience and humanitarian values appears to be very modest (Pascarella et al, 1988; Pascarella, Smart, & Braxton, 1986). In addition, some positive shifts during college are not maintained in the post-college years. Sax (1999) reports, for example, that the percentages of students who rate as very important helping others in need, participating in community action, and influencing the political structure show temporary increases over the four years of college, but almost all of these increases disappear in the five years after college graduation. Finally, the rates of political participation among college educated Americans are higher than among those without a college education, but only a third of the college-educated follow public affairs regularly and less than two-thirds vote regularly in both national and local elections. Participation numbers are significantly lower for the youngest cohorts of college graduates (Putnam, 2000; Galston, 2001).

When considering the impact of college on students' values and political participation, it is important to keep in mind that most colleges and universities have few programs that specifically address the moral and civic development of their students, and a great many students make it all the way through college without participating in any of those programs. If higher education can have positive effects on students' values and civic engagement, albeit fairly weak effects, without addressing them directly, it is reasonable to believe that the impact will be striking when more intentional programs are put in place. In fact, there is clear evidence that this is the case with regard to service learning (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005; Youniss, McLellan, & Mazer, 2001).

The college environment is an extremely rich source of influences on students, and we do not know exactly what leads to the shifts in values that have been so consistently documented. Data on the differential impact of different kinds of institutions (more or less selective, religiously affiliated or not, and so on) suggest that peers play an important role. For example, in the Sax (1999) study, the experience factor that best predicted students' increases in social activism during college (controlling for entering level) was the degree of commitment to social activism among undergraduates at the college they attended.

Predominant attitudes among peers are one important aspect of campus culture or climate that can affect many dimensions of students' moral and civic development (Colby et al., 2003). In their book, *Involving Colleges: Successful Approaches to Fostering Student Learning and Development Outside the Classroom*, George Kuh and his colleagues (Kuh, Schuh, Whitt, et al. 1991) point to the importance of several other features of the campus culture (history, traditions, language, heroes, sagas, physical setting, and symbols) that express unifying assumptions and democratic values, along with policies that consistently follow from the core mission and philosophy. Just as the "involving colleges" Kuh writes about make it clear that they stand for particular values, they also work to maintain open dialogue and sensitivity to student concerns. In an in-depth analysis of twelve colleges and universities that have shown unusual commitment to undergraduate moral and civic education, my colleagues and I saw this same effort to establish a

positive and unifying culture around some core values, balanced with opportunities for reflection on and critique of that culture (Colby et al., 2003). The importance of settings, stories, rituals, and other practices that we describe in that study are clear parallels of the features of campus culture reported by Kuh.

Students' values and goals can also change through the activities they seek out, the people they encounter in the course of those activities, and the new demands that are made on them as a consequence. Among the most important of these activities for the development of humanitarian social concern and values are leadership programs (Kuh et al., 1994; Kuh, 1993) and community service (Youniss & Yates, 1997). Colby and Damon (1992) have written about how participation in prosocial activities like this can lead to a gradual transformation in a person's moral values and goals.

By "transformation of goals" we mean a process in which development occurs as a result of the interaction of the goals, motives, values, and beliefs a person brings to a situation and the social influences she experiences once in that situation. People may enter situations in order to meet a particular set of goals and then, by engaging with the situation and the people in it, their goals are changed. So, for example, students might initially choose to participate in a leadership training program in order to learn skills for career advancement but then become unexpectedly engaged in civic life in the process of cultivating leadership skills through work with community organizations, especially if they come in contact with inspiring and engaging moral and civic leaders.

Political scientist Richard Brody (2001) has written about the same phenomenon in the development of political engagement. In his exploration of the question of how people become politically active, Brody distinguishes between "consummatory" and "instrumental" participation in organizations (see Sills, 1972, for Herbert McClosky's original discussion of these terms). Consummatory participation refers to organizational members' involvement in the activities of the group as an end in itself, for the sake of enjoyment. For example, many people join the Sierra Club in order to take part in the hikes and other outdoor activities the Club offers. Instrumental participation in organizations refers to members' participation in collective political action through the organization in order to work toward a shared political goal. The Sierra Club is not only a recreational organization, it also pursues a political agenda relating to protection of the environment. In an analysis that shows striking parallels with Colby and Damon's (1992) concept of transformation of goals, Brody describes consummatory organizational participation as an important opportunity for some participants to begin developing an interest in political affairs. By participating in an organization like the Sierra Club for the sake of its recreational activities, people then become exposed to the political issues and debates in which the club engages. At least some of these people will feel strongly either for or against the positions the club takes on political and policy matters. These individuals, even though previously politically inactive, may care enough about some of these issues to become active participants, trying to help shape the club's positions and goals, helping the club pursue those goals, or even leaving the organization because of disagreement with its political and policy positions and working against those positions from a different forum.

Because of this process of transformation of goals, the undergraduate experiences that are most powerful are those that connect with and build on the interests, commitments, and concerns students bring to their college experience, such as care and concern for family and friends or an interest in volunteering and helping others on an individual level. These kinds of values are important and need to be nurtured. By themselves, however, they are insufficient and can co-exist with insularity, lack of participation in the democratic process, and an inability to really understand social issues from a broader, system-level perspective. At their most effective, opportunities

for moral and civic learning in higher education find ways to connect with the interests, values, and goals students bring to college and to engage them in experiences that broaden their goals and commitments.

### *Moral and Civic Identity*

Despite the acknowledged importance of fostering values such as social responsibility and concern for those less privileged than oneself, we know that these values are sometimes only marginally evident in the lives of even those who strongly endorse them. Yet for other people, moral and political convictions are deep enough to compel action, and espoused values play powerful roles in their lives. A key to understanding this differential impact of values on action is personal *identity*, including moral, civic, and political identity. The question here is what place these values, goals, and feelings have in one's sense of self.

Psychologists who study moral understanding and judgment are well aware that, taken alone, these capacities are inadequate to explain moral conduct. After describing the development of more mature moral judgment, we are still left with the questions, "Why be moral?" or "Why do some people act on their moral understanding and others do not?" Most explanations of the psychological constructs and processes that mediate moral judgment and action have converged on the important role of an individual's sense of moral identity. In this view, moral understanding acquires motivational power through its integration into the structures of the self (Bergman, 2002; Lapsley & Narvaez, 2004).

Following Erik Erikson (1968), we understand identity to be the core or essential self (those aspects without which the individual would see himself or herself to be radically different). It follows that people will be motivated to act in ways that are consistent with this core self, to maintain a sense of consistency in regard to these essential features of his or her identity. When these essential features of the self include moral beliefs and convictions, there is strong internal pressure to maintain consistency with those beliefs. Of course, sometimes people act morally simply in order to avoid negative consequences. But we know that often people act morally even when sanctions are not involved. In these cases, we believe they do so because not to would be a violation of their core self; to do otherwise would be to betray one's true self (Bergman, 2002).

The ways in which the core self is understood and experienced changes and develops over time. In fact, the integration of moral convictions into one's core sense of self is one of the most important challenges of moral development. Damon and Hart (1988) traced the development of self-understanding from childhood through adolescence, finding that younger children tended to focus on physical characteristics, skills, and interests when asked to define and describe who they are. Study participants did not begin to include moral qualities such as honesty or loyalty in their self-definitions until they reached adolescence.

Erikson's (1968) life-span theory also focuses on adolescence as a critical time for the development of identity. For Erikson, the development of a mature identity requires young people to question some of the fundamental beliefs they have previously taken for granted and to come to their own resolutions of a number of important questions about life choices and ideologies; to rethink what they believe in as well as what they plan to do in life. But like all of Erikson's developmental issues or "crises," the issue of identity is not resolved once and for all in adolescence but rather is revisited over and over throughout life. The college years have long been understood as a time when students, especially although not exclusively students who come directly from high school, begin to question and redefine their core sense of who they are.

Despite some developmental patterns that seem to hold for most people, both adolescents and adults vary in the degree to which morality is central to their sense of self and in the content

of that morality. In “The Moral Self,” John Dewey (1932/1998) wrote, “The real moral question is what kind of self is being furthered or formed” (p. 346). We see the importance of “what kind of self is formed” in studies of people who are especially morally and civically committed. Daniel Hart and Suzanne Fegley (1995), for example, found that in highly altruistic adolescents, moral concerns were more likely to be central to their sense of self and their ideal selves than in adolescents from a comparison group of normal but not especially altruistic adolescents.

Similarly, Colby and Damon (1992) found that a close integration of self and morality formed the basis for the unwavering commitment to the common good exhibited by “moral exemplars” who had dedicated themselves for decades to fighting against poverty or for peace, civil rights, and other aspects of social justice. Moral behavior depends in part on moral understanding and reflection, but it also depends on how and to what extent the individuals’ moral concerns are important to their sense of themselves as persons.

Others have written about the development of political or civic identity in a way that parallels this conception of moral identity (e.g., Flanagan & Sherrod, 1998; Verba, Schlozman, & Brady, 1995; Youniss & Yates, 1997). For example, Youniss and Yates present data showing that the long-term impact of youth service experience on later political and community involvement can best be explained by the contribution these service experiences make to the creation of an enduring sense of oneself as a politically engaged and socially concerned person. In their view, civic identity—which entails the establishment of individual and collective senses of social agency, responsibility for society, and political-moral awareness—links certain kinds of social participation during adolescence and young adulthood with civic engagement by these same people later in adulthood.

This question of the development of a civic or political identity may help explain why some changes that take place during the college years last well beyond college while others do not. McAdam (1988) studied adults who as college students had spent a summer taking part in the 1964 Freedom Rides, which sought to integrate interstate bus lines in the South during the Civil Rights Movement. This powerful and dangerous experience had a long-term impact on those who took part, and they followed quite different life trajectories than others who had volunteered to participate but were unable to join the group in the end. The follow-up data showed that the Freedom Riders’ lives were permanently altered by the experience, and many went on to be leaders in community organizing for social justice, the movement against the Viet Nam War, the women’s movement, and other efforts to promote social change. The Freedom Ride experience had changed their understanding, beliefs, and values in a number of ways, and also seems to have changed the way they understand their own identities. McAdam explains one aspect of the difference between participants and the comparison group this way: “Having defined themselves as activist, a good many of the Mississippi veterans had a strong need to confirm that identity through [further] action” (p. 187). In a 1985 interview, one of the volunteers observed that “you learned too much [in Mississippi] to go back to what you were doing before...part of what you learned was that you were part of the struggle...” (p. 188).

In contrast, Linda Sax’s (1999) longitudinal study of college students revealed that many who became more civically engaged during college, apparently as part of a peer culture that supported activism, did not remain engaged in the years after college. In the same study, Sax reports one group of student volunteers who persist in their volunteering after college, with a larger group who do not. Although Sax did not report a measure of civic identity, we might surmise that only those whose increased volunteerism and activism persisted beyond college had come to view their activism as an essential part of their sense of who they were.

This interpretation that changes in personal identity play a crucial role in determining behavior is consistent with longitudinal studies of blood donors by Piliavin and Callero (1991). The



authors distinguish between externally motivated blood donors whose initial donation is determined by strong social pressure and internally motivated donors who make a personal decision to give blood, without significant pressure by others. With repeated donations, the “internals” begin to cite community responsibility and moral obligation when asked to describe their motives for donating blood. Eventually, with enough donations, what the authors call “role-person mergers” begin to occur, in which the blood donor role is viewed as part of the self. In these cases, the values become part of the donor’s identity or self-concept and social recognition is less important as a motivator than confirmation of the self and expression of values appropriate to the self-concept.

Identity is one of a number of psychological mechanisms through which culture can have a long-term impact on an individual’s behavior. The stories, images, and routines that constitute the cultural context can be incorporated into the participating individuals’ sense of self, thus becoming a stable aspect of their orientation to themselves, other people, and the world (Newman, 1996). This can work for either good or ill, depending on the cultural messages that are internalized. A recognition of this lies behind the requirement some colleges have adopted that students attempt to trace the various contexts that have affected their sense of identity. On some of the campuses my colleagues and I highlighted in our book (2003), members of the campus community were also quite aware of the positive potential of this phenomenon. At the small Catholic women’s college, College of St. Catherine, for example, stories of the courage and resourcefulness of the founding nuns were common knowledge for all students and were understood to mean that “We here at St. Kate’s are women of unusual strength and moral courage.” The hope and expectation of educators at the college was that graduates would take with them a sense of self that included these virtues.

A large body of research on moral and civic identity makes it clear that the place of moral and civic values in one’s self-definition or essential self is a critical element in determining behavior. But this does not mean that people always behave in accordance with even their most deeply held values and beliefs. People vary not only in their self-definitions but also in the psychological strategies they use to protect themselves from internal contradictions.

We have referred to the tendency to maintain a sense of internal consistency in the elements of the core self and the role this plays in motivating moral behavior. There is more than one way for individuals to accomplish this sense of internal consistency around one’s moral beliefs. The first is a straightforward pattern of fidelity to one’s beliefs and values. A consistent pattern of this kind of fidelity is generally what people are referring to when they describe someone as “a person of integrity.” Other approaches to maintaining consistency involve strategies that justify individuals’ making exceptions when it serves their self-interest to do so. Prominent among these strategies are biased interpretations of the situation and other rationalizations (e.g., Bandura, 1986). Almost everyone rationalizes at times, but part of what we mean by moral character is that this kind of defensive strategy is used only infrequently. Differences in the extent to which people really live their espoused moral values lie partly in the extent to which they habitually use these strategies for avoiding the awareness of inconsistency.

One aspect of moral growth is the capacity to become aware of these self-serving tendencies in oneself and to work toward reducing them. In her studies of moral interpretation, Janet Walker (2000) documents people’s differential tendencies to become aware of their interpretive habits, to give weight to others’ interpretations of conflict situations, and to acknowledge and try to reduce their own biases. People who make a consistent effort to be open-minded and take others’ perspectives seriously are facilitating their own moral development even though they may not experience themselves as self-consciously pursuing integrity or moral growth.

Usually moral development seems to proceed without a conscious effort at self-improvement.



This does not mean, however, that conscious effort at self-reflection and moral growth cannot have an effect. Many psychologists (Bergman, 2002; Blasi, 1995; Markus & Nurius, 1986; Walker, 2000) have written about people's capacity to use self-reflection to play an active role in their own development by working to shape what kind of person they become. For example, Blasi (1995) has studied children's growing capacity to "bring their moral understanding to bear on their already existing motives" (p. 236)—having desires about their own desires. This kind of reflexivity can bear on the question of what kind of person they are and want to be. In this way, the question of the moral self connects back with the concepts of moral understanding and interpretation we discussed earlier in this chapter.

What are the implications of this work for moral and civic education? We know that identity development takes place in part through identification with admired others (Bandura, 1977, 1986). Hazel Markus (Markus & Nurius, 1986) has described the interplay between people's actual and possible selves, which can include both the selves they hope to become and the selves they are afraid of becoming. Markus and Nurius (1986) argue that the self-construct is not singular but "a system of affective-cognitive structures (also called theories or schemas) about the self that lends structure and coherence to the individual's experiences" (p. 955). They present data suggesting that individuals can reflect on their possible selves, and they understand development as a process of acquiring and then either achieving or resisting certain possible selves.

Experience with people who provide either positive or negative models can contribute to the construction of possible selves and eventually to the individual's actual self. Exposure to faculty members, residence life mentors, members of the community, and other students who represent an inspiring vision of personal ideals can play an important role in fostering the incorporation of moral and civic values into students' sense of who they want to be and eventually who they feel they are. Likewise, awareness of why they do not want to emulate some others with whom they have contact can provide a motivating force through avoidance of a feared possible self.

Undergraduate programs that adopt an outcomes-based approach often include self-understanding and self-reflection among their goals, asking students to think about questions like "What kind of self should I aspire to be?" as well as the perennial college student question, "Who am I?" If reflections on questions like these are to have lasting impact on students' sense of self, they must be of more than theoretical or academic interest. This can happen best when the questions are asked in the context of engagement with complex moral pursuits such as those provided by high quality service learning, when students are engaged in this work with people who represent inspiring models with whom they can identify, and when the campus culture supports the development of habitual moral schemes that are consistent with important moral values. Both academic and co-curricular activities can contribute to students' awareness of and reflection on what is important to them and to their sense that they can play an active role in determining what kind of people they become. Pedagogies of active engagement can be especially powerful in linking intellectual work in higher education to its significance for what kind of person the student wants to be.

### *Political Efficacy and Moral and Civic Emotions*

Colleges and universities can also help foster students' sense of efficacy. In order to be civically and politically engaged and active, people have to care about the issues and value this kind of contribution. But socially responsible values alone are not sufficient to motivate action. People also have to believe that it matters what they think and do civically and politically and that it is possible for them to make some kind of difference. This belief is what we mean by having a sense of political efficacy. Much of the research on sense of efficacy has focused on personal efficacy

or personal control, a sense of active agency in one's life, that one has a significant degree of control over the shape and direction of one's life. Although personal and political efficacy are not independent of one another, they are only modestly correlated, and political efficacy is more predictive of political activity and civic engagement than is personal efficacy (e.g., Bandura, 1997). Many people feel they have control over their personal lives but do not feel that anything they might do politically could have an impact. This pattern is no doubt fostered by the cynicism about the political structure and process that has become more widespread in recent decades.

It also makes sense that political efficacy would be lower in disempowered groups, and research data indicate that this is the case (Bandura, 1997). Both lower socioeconomic groups and racial minorities (even in comparable socioeconomic groups) score lower on measures of political efficacy (Lake, Snell, Perry, & Associates, 2002; Verba et al., 1995). Given some of the items on the scale (e.g., "How much influence do you think someone like you can have over local government decisions?" and "How much influence do you think someone like you can have over national government decisions?") (Verba et al., 1995, p. 556), it is not surprising that many people, especially poor people and groups that have experienced discrimination, would choose not to endorse those items.

But we know from American and world history that ordinary people, including members of disempowered groups, can make a difference politically if they work together and believe there is some hope for change. Offering that hope and galvanizing collective action around those goals is the essence of leadership, and we know that people can be transformed by inspiring leaders, coming to believe that they can make a difference. The question for higher education is how to foster in students a sense that individuals' civic and political actions matter.

Contemporary American young people are much more likely to do volunteer work in which they help others directly than they are to participate actively in politics (Yates & Youniss, 1997). Part of the explanation for this is their feeling that by working in battered women's shelters and neighborhood clean-up efforts they can make a noticeable difference, at least on a small, local scale. Community service of this sort has been shown to reduce alienation (Calabrese & Schumeler, 1986) and increase the likelihood of further volunteering (Sax, 1999).

Social scientists agree that a sense of political efficacy is critically important in supporting political action. But having a strong sense of efficacy does not mean one believes that political action will always have an immediate impact. And it does not mean that one must evaluate the likely impact of each act and proceed only when chances for success are high. Ironically, it is clear that politically engaged people often act even when it is very unlikely their actions will make any difference. As former Czech Republic president and author Vaclav Havel said:

When a person behaves in keeping with his conscience, when he tries to speak the truth and when he tries to behave as a citizen even under conditions where citizenship is degraded, it may not lead to anything, yet it might. But what surely will not lead to anything is when a person calculates whether it will lead to something or not. (As quoted in Meadows, 1991, p. 48)

Likewise, studies of people who have dedicated their lives to serving others and improving their communities have found that these extraordinary individuals rarely asked themselves whether they were making actual progress toward their goals (Colby & Damon, 1992). Especially when working to fight poverty, as many were, they would have become discouraged if they had focused on the question of how much progress they were making in relation to the magnitude of the remaining problem.

Others have suggested that promoting students' political interest also requires imparting a sense of passion and even playfulness about politics. Political scientist Wendy Rahn (2000)

argues that what students really need to learn about politics is “a love of the game and a sense of sportsmanship.” If they do that, the question of whether they are making a difference with each specific act is less central. And yet, fostering this love of the game, which pushes the question of efficacy into the background, is no doubt one of the most effective ways to foster a sense of political efficacy.

When one takes on great moral and political causes such as poverty or political reform, this immersion in the process of collective action can preserve one’s spirits and determination. Thus, a love of the activity for its own sake, passion for the cause, and solidarity with others working toward the same goals can all sustain moral and civic commitment in the face of difficulties that would otherwise be very discouraging. An important question for educators, then, is how to help students achieve this kind of satisfaction in their moral, political, and civic discussions and action.

Moral emotions play an important role in motivating action (Haidt, 2001; Hoffman, 1981), and many programs of moral and civic education include efforts to elicit some kind of moral emotion, either negative or positive—outrage at injustice, disgust with hypocrisy, compassion for the poor, hope for peace, and inspiration through solidarity. Research indicates that the motivational impact of negative and positive emotions can be quite different. It is important to be aware of this, because many educators rely heavily on eliciting negative emotions as a means to rouse students from self-absorption. Out of concern for social justice, faculty often take a critical stance toward American history, culture, and politics. The goal is to shock students out of their complacency and motivate them to act through a sense of outrage. The irony is that in many cases, this critical approach, instead of solving the apathy problem, *contributes* to the growing sense of alienation and cynicism that students feel, and finally to a lack of conviction that anything can be done about the injustice, which seems so pervasive as to be unavoidable. The belief that corruption, exploitation, and greed are rampant (and perhaps even part of the human condition) can be used to justify a life of self-interest as well as a life dedicated to improving society.

A study of political advertising helps to illuminate this phenomenon. This experimental study (Rahn & Hirshorn, 1999) looked at the effect of arousing positive or negative feelings about the state of the country and found that both positive and negative feelings can lead to more involvement in community and political action. That is, feeling either more outraged or more inspired and hopeful can lead to more engagement. But the investigators also found an interaction between emotion and sense of efficacy. In this study, positive emotions (hopefulness or inspiration) led to greater interest and engagement among study participants who began with *either* a low or a high sense of political efficacy. In contrast, negative feelings like outrage mobilize those who begin with high efficacy, but demobilize even more those who start with low levels of efficacy.

It is likely that the teachers who create a sense of outrage by focusing very heavily on abuses and injustice have higher political efficacy than their students, so it makes sense that the teachers would feel mobilized by vivid critiques of the status quo and would expect students to be mobilized as well. But students who begin with low levels of efficacy could actually be further immobilized by the apparent hopelessness of the situation. An emerging understanding of this dynamic is contributing to a growing consensus that what we need now is an approach that combines an appreciation of the ideals of our democratic system—that democracy is unrealized but not unrealizable—with a realistic sense of where we have fallen short of the ideals (Gutmann, 1996; Rahn, 1992). We need to find ways to avoid naive, uncritical complacency while at the same time also avoiding cynicism. In practice, this is difficult to achieve. But teachers at all levels need to ask themselves which is the greater challenge (and thus worth the greatest attention and effort)—to make students more realistic or to make them more idealistic (Gutmann, 1996).

## Civic and Political Skills or Expertise

We have said that if we are to educate engaged citizens it is important for students to have a sense of political efficacy. But what about actually *being* efficacious as well as *feeling* efficacious? In addition to understanding and caring about justice, people need to develop the skills and expertise of civic and political practice if they are to be engaged and effective citizens.

Amy Gutmann (1996) reminds us that national boundaries, though not morally salient, are *politically* salient and that it is primarily through our empowerment as citizens of particular nations that we can further the cause of justice, either at home or abroad. She points out that in order to achieve full participation as citizens, we need to be educated to skills, understandings, and values that are particular to our own political system.

Our obligations as democratic citizens go beyond our duties as politically unorganized individuals, because our capacity to act effectively to further justice increases when we are empowered as citizens, and so therefore does our responsibility to act to further justice. Democratic citizens have institutional means at their disposal that solitary individuals or citizens of the world only, do not. (p. 71)

In order to take full advantage of these institutional means, people need to know a lot about how to negotiate their own political systems, to learn the particular mechanisms afforded by the various political and social structures and institutions of their local and national communities. This involves knowing how things work, including, for example, which issues and actions are appropriate to address at which level of government.

Prominent among the needed civic and political capacities are skills of deliberation, communication, and persuasion, including the capacities for compelling moral discourse—how to make a strong case for something, ensure that others understand one’s point of view, understand and evaluate others’ arguments, compromise without abandoning one’s convictions, and work toward consensus (Colby et al., 2007). These capacities go to the heart of moral and civic functioning because individuals’ moral and political concepts are both developed and applied through discourse, communication, and argumentation. Individuals take positions in the context of social interactions or discourse, which helps to shape the way those positions are played out, modified, and reconstructed (Habermas, 1993; Turiel, 1997).

Having these political and civic competencies not only makes effective action possible, it naturally leads to a greater *sense* of efficacy or empowerment, and leads people to see themselves as politically engaged and thus to be further motivated toward engagement (Lake et al., 2002). That is, the development of skills contributes to and interacts with the development of values, understanding, and self-concept. Kuh and colleagues (1991) report, for example, that participation in leadership activities during college is the single most important predictor of students’ development of humanitarian social concern and values. The significance of developing these practical competencies is also evident in longitudinal research on civic engagement. In a comprehensive review, Kirlin (2000) found that involvement with organizations that teach adolescents how to participate in society by learning how to form and express opinions and organize people for action is the most powerful predictor of adult civic engagement.

## RELATIONSHIPS AMONG THE DEVELOPMENTAL DIMENSIONS

Clearly, moral and civic development is a complex, multi-faceted phenomenon, implying the need to pay attention to many different aspects of student development. We have touched on a

number of the key dimensions here, although by no means all that could have been included. Furthermore, within each broad area—moral, civic, and political understanding, motivation, and skills—there are many layers of further complexity.

For the purposes of explication we have treated these various dimensions of moral and civic development as more separate than they are. In reality, there are multiple and dynamic relationships among them such that they inextricably intersect with and influence each other in multiple feedback loops. For example, we know that part of what gives a person a sense of efficacy is political knowledge and understanding. This sense of efficacy then contributes to shaping interests and values, which then serve to increase the individual's knowledge, which feeds back to increase the sense of efficacy. Emotions such as hope and cynicism are also connected with sense of efficacy that can lead to different patterns of behavior in response to classroom and real world experiences. These different responses in turn influence many aspects of the individual's self-understanding. Likewise, moral and political understanding are created in part through discourse and, of course, shape the discourse one takes part in. At the same time, effective discourse is a practical skill that is essential to political and civic action. Values, interests, moral and political beliefs and convictions, characteristic habits of moral interpretation, and a sense of one's own competence and efficacy can all be part of one's identity or sense of self. When important aspects of these change, as they often do during college, this can amount to a real transformation in the student's sense of who she is and what she stands for.

## NOTE

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# 21

## What Works in Character Education: What Is Known and What Needs to Be Known

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As we sip from the cup of knowledge about the effectiveness of character education, there are two related problems. First, there is the half full/half empty problem. Are we drinking from the full half or the empty half? Are we, in other words, looking at the problems with research in the field or are we looking at the substantial body of data about character education's impacts? Second, through which straw are we sipping? There are two main straws to choose right now and, unfortunately, they look very similar, largely because they have very similar names: "What Works in Character Education" and "The What Works Clearinghouse: Character Education." In this chapter, we will address these two problems, as well as others, in an attempt to better understand what we can and cannot conclude about the effectiveness of character education based upon, cumulatively, 87 research studies of 45 character education programs. Certainly there are many cases studies (Dovre, 2007), as well as enthusiastic endorsements and equally enthusiastic condemnations of character education. What we want to explore is what scientific research can tell us about such effectiveness. Beyond that, we will discuss what still needs to be known, suggest some research studies that should be done, and note some forthcoming reviews of the research literature that may shed additional light on this question.

### THE TOWER OF BABEL

Before we can turn to the research, however, we need to turn to one of the obstacles in describing the research: the problem of language and definition. This has proved to be a rather intractable problem (Berkowitz, 1997; Smagorinsky & Taxel, 2005). The authors currently work under the rubric of "character education" but have all also done the same work under other names; for example, moral education, child development, social-emotional learning, primary prevention, positive youth development, and youth empowerment. And our colleagues have worked under still other rubrics for the same or similar work, such as service learning and science technology

and society (STS). Defining each term so that it is clear is difficult enough, but defining them so that they are clearly distinct from each other appears impossible because of the remarkable overlap between most of them. We will not attempt to create a taxonomy of the disparate terms and fields that intersect when one attempts to promote healthy and positive development of youth in educational settings, because (1) it is beyond the purview of this chapter; (2) we have made some attempts to do this elsewhere (Berkowitz & Bier, 2005b; Berkowitz et al., 2006); and (3) it may be impossible because of the ill-defined boundaries of many of these fields.

Instead we will simply carve out our turf by trying to define what we include when we talk about character education. Character education occurs in educational settings. Whereas there are many educational settings, for practical purposes more than for any other reason, we try to limit our scope to pre-kindergarten through 12th grade schools. We also try to limit our scope to what happens during the regular school day, thus avoiding after school programs and extracurricular programs that occur outside of regular school hours, although they may be bundled with school day implementation strategies. Certainly these are artificial lines we have drawn, but when one focuses on intentional efforts to promote positive character in youth, one has to draw lines because so much (albeit not enough) of a society's efforts are directed toward this fundamental human project. This is not to devalue the other spheres of influence (certainly families and more particularly parenting are the primary "character educators" and we have become increasingly concerned about the powerful impact of the media on youth character as they have become more ubiquitous and uncensored); rather it is merely to make a practical choice.

Within those educational settings, we focus on those activities and processes that should influence student character development. That in itself is rife with difficulties. By what basis *should* they have such an influence? Must we individually justify each process and practice we examine? While one could argue affirmatively to the latter question, we will take the authors' prerogative and allow ourselves some slack here. As experts in the field, we will use our professional judgments to decide what can reasonably be included in the domain of character education, knowing full well that there is extensive disagreement about this. But another issue about the selection of variables of influence has to do with intentionality. While we would prefer to examine only intentionally targeted influences, given the nascent state of this field, some fishing is warranted. For instance, we believe a powerful, even critical, variable in the effectiveness of character education is the nature of school leadership, especially the degree to which leadership understands deep school reform-based character education, is committed to it, and can serve as an instructional leader for it. Yet little is known about the impact of school leadership and rarely is it an intentionally targeted aspect of character education (Devaney et al., 2006; Kam et al., 2003). An even stronger but related argument can be made for the nature of the adult culture in schools, another variable for which there is little research (Bryk & Schneider, 2002). In one sense this is a moot argument, as we can only report on that which has been studied thus far, and these unintentional variables almost by definition are not typically studied. However, as we also want to address what needs to be known, it is worth making this point.

The final piece of the definitional puzzle has to do with outcome variables. Up to this point we have really focused on the second word in the term "character education"; that is, education. We defined it as pre-K to 12th grade, during the school day, and expected to impact student character development. However, that still leaves the first word, "character." If, for us, character education is the set of practices and programs during the pre-K to 12th grade school day that should influence student character development, what is this student character that we expect to develop? Here we will simply rely on a definition that we have been using for a while: character is the set of psychological characteristics that motivate and enable an individual to function as a competent moral agent. In other words, it is those aspects of one's psychological makeup that

impact whether one does the right thing, whether it is telling the truth, helping an unpopular student who is in jeopardy, resisting the temptation to cheat or steal, or some other matter of moral functioning. Clearly this leaves open the question of what is moral, but we will not attempt to define this other than to rely on the millennia old wisdom of philosophers and simply refer the reader back to them.

## THE TWO “WHAT WORKS” PROJECTS: HOW WE KNOW WHAT WE KNOW

Central to this chapter are two important reports that each, albeit quite differently, review the existing research on the effectiveness of character education. As noted above, an unfortunate problem is that they use very similar titles. It is clear that this has and will continue to create confusion, but we offer no ultimate solution to that here, other than to provide a discussion of their similarities and differences before we report what each has to tell us about the core question for this chapter: what do we know about the effectiveness of character education? An important caveat to this is that because two of the authors of this chapter were intimately involved in one of the two endeavors (*What Works in Character Education*), and none of the authors were centrally involved in the other (*What Works Clearinghouse: Character Education*), we will spend more time on the former than on the latter.

### What Works in Character Education (WWCE)

In 2000, the Character Education Partnership and the first and third authors partnered to write a proposal to the John Templeton Foundation to review the existing research in the field of character education, with a goal of moving the field forward by identifying an empirical base, reaching conclusions about the effectiveness of character education, and crafting a research agenda for needed future research. To do this, the *What Works in Character Education* (WWCE) authors (Berkowitz & Bier, 2005b) recruited a panel of experts representing diverse but related fields and began, in collaboration with the expert panelists, to search the literature for all examples of scientifically sound outcome research within a specified set of parameters. Technical reports of each study were sought and a database of these studies was built. The goal was to paint a picture of the field, not to engage in a meta-analysis or re-analysis of the studies. In part because the authors did not expect to find many eligible studies (they were in fact surprised by how many they did unearth), they were liberal in their inclusion criteria (e.g., they did not limit the set to randomized experiments but included quasi-experimental designs, and they included limited or incomplete research reports if the general design could be ascertained from them). They also used the above broad definitions of character and character education in order to include more relevant research. (A more detailed description of the research design is available in Berkowitz & Bier, in press.)

In the end, the set of included studies (many others did not meet the study criteria) numbered 69 and represented 33 character education programs (since then more studies have been done, but the WWCE database has not yet been updated). There are two explanatory points worth noting here. First, the studies all address specific defined character education programs. It was not the original intention of the WWCE project to focus exclusively (or even predominantly) on formal programs, but that is in fact where the research was. Second, there are actually many more studies of two specific approaches to character education: moral dilemma discussion and cooperative learning. As research reviews have been done on each of these, the WWCE relies on these summaries in its research review. In the case of moral dilemma discussion, only summary conclusions are utilized, in most cases, as so many studies (nearly 100) exist on this approach.

In the case of cooperative learning, a specific character education program has been built on this model (Teaching Students to Be Peacemakers) and hence literature reviews of research on it were included in lieu of all the individual studies of cooperative learning.

The WWCE project therefore is a database of 69 program outcome evaluations plus reviews of outcome evaluation studies of moral dilemma discussions and the Teaching Students to Be Peacemakers program (plus nine more studies of six more programs that were not found to be effective, and hence not included in the conclusions). The database includes program implementation elements, outcome variables, and significance tests, as well as other descriptors of the programs, most notably the grade levels targeted and assessed. This project examined which variables were found to be significant (or not) for each program and which implementation strategies were most common among the 33 effective programs. These findings will be discussed below, after we introduce the other source for this chapter; the What Works Clearinghouse's study of character education.

### What Works Clearinghouse—Character Education (WWC)

Established in 2002 by the U.S. Department of Education's Institute for Educational Sciences, the What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) "collects, screens, and identifies studies of effectiveness of educational interventions (programs, products, practices, and policies)" (<http://www.what-works.ed.gov>). At the time of this writing it covered seven educational areas, one of which is character education. The character education project of WWC (the only one to be discussed here) was implemented as a contract to the American Institutes of Research (AIR). All of the WWC databases are ongoing and updatable. David Osher of AIR is the Principal Investigator for the WWC character education project.

The WWC has a three-stage screening process for inclusion in their database. First, they screen all studies for relevance for, in this case, character education, plus how fully the data are reported and how sound the measurement instruments are. Second, for those that pass the first screening, the strength of the evidence is categorized as strong ("meet evidence standards"), weaker ("meet evidence standards with reservations"), or insufficient ("does not meet evidence standards"). Required for the first two categories is an eligible research design, with the first requiring a strong design. Third, the data are examined for each study in the first two strength of evidence categories (i.e., meet standards, and meet standards with reservations) to insure that conclusions reached are warranted based on study characteristics. Details are available on the WWC website ([www.whatworks.ed.gov](http://www.whatworks.ed.gov)). To date 13 character education programs have been found with at least one study that meets the evidence standard with or without reservations. Together there are 93 studies (of 41 programs) reviewed, of which seven meet evidence standards and 11 meet evidence standards with reservation. Hence the WWC conclusions are based on 18 studies. (One could alternatively argue that the WWC conclusions are based on all 93 studies.) The WWC is an ongoing contract and more programs and studies are currently under review. Hence the WWC database should expand as more of these reviews are completed and posted on the WWC website.

### Comparing the Two What Works Databases

There is substantial overlap between the two databases, which is not surprising given that WWC had the WWCE database at its disposal when it was being built. Nonetheless, in the end there are quite substantial differences between the two projects (see Table 21.1 for a review of important differences and similarities). Of the 33 WWCE programs and 13 WWC programs, only six are



the same. Actually one more overlaps; however, WWCE did not list programs for which the evidence did not suggest effectiveness whereas WWC did; hence Heartwood was included in WWC but excluded from WWCE (both reviews found it ineffective). Even with this, there is a large difference in the cited programs. This is also due to (1) WWC uncovering some studies that were not uncovered by the WWCE search (which came earlier) and (2) WWC still being in the process of reviewing programs; but this is mostly due to a different definition of what counts as character education and a much more rigorous set of inclusion criteria for adequacy of research design in WWC than for the WWCE. As stated on the WWC website,

The What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) review of this topic focuses on character education programs designed for use in elementary, middle, or high schools with attention to student outcomes related to positive character development, pro-social behavior, and academic performance. Closely related program areas, such as social-emotional learning, conflict resolution, violence prevention, social skills training, service learning, and the like, may be addressed in future WWC reviews but are not intended to be covered by this one.

Most notably, the WWC project focuses primarily on programs that explicitly target a set of named character values or moral and ethical reasoning development. The focus is on the content of the program and the targeted change in students' thinking and action. Hence, some areas included in WWCE are not included in the WWC database. This is not as strong a difference as it may seem, as many character education programs include both character development as more narrowly defined by WWC and aspects of excluded fields like violence prevention, drug prevention, etc. For example, WWC includes the triadic set of programs Too Good for Drugs, Too Good for Violence, and Too Good for Drugs and Violence as character education.

WWC also uses much more rigorous methodological inclusion standards than does WWCE. In fact of the seven education areas in the overall WWC database, the character education section has more programs (13) than any of the other six (range 1–8), and tied for the most studies meeting requirements (18) with early childhood education, whereas the other five areas ranged from 4 to 11 such studies. (Of course, all of these are ongoing contracts, so these numbers are expected to change substantially. Indeed, by the time this volume is published, the picture may well have changed significantly.) Hence the smaller number of studies included in WWC than WWCE is apparently due mainly to the more stringent inclusion criteria, as underscored by the large percentage of studies that were reviewed but not found to meet inclusion criteria (67%).

A final distinction between the two databases is that WWC does not examine implementation characteristics of the programs under investigation, whereas WWCE does. This is largely because the goals of each project are somewhat different. WWC intends to identify which programs are effective whereas WWCE is more focused on what is effective practice in promoting student character development. Hence different kinds of conclusions can be reached from each project.

## Safe and Sound

There is one other similar project worth noting: the Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning's (CASEL) *Safe and Sound* program review (see [www.casel.org](http://www.casel.org)). This review overlaps substantially with WWCE, focuses more specifically on social-emotional learning studies (hence it does not overlap substantially with WWC), and focuses more on describing the nature of the reviewed programs and relatively less on the results of evaluation studies. Hence it is not included here but is highly recommended as a resource, particularly for those wishing information about the specifics of different implementation options (e.g., cost, availability, professional development).

**TABLE 21.1**  
**Comparisons of What Works In Character Education (WWCE) and What Works Clearinghouse:**  
**Character Education (WWC)**

<i>WWCE</i>	<i>WWC</i>
<b>Program Identification</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Comprehensive and systematic search for studies involving hand searches of relevant journals and review chapters, searches of electronic databases, conference proceedings, website searches, recommendations from expert panel members, and contacts with topic experts and relevant organizations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Comprehensive and systematic search for studies involving hand searches of relevant journals, searches of electronic databases, studies submitted to WWC, conference proceedings, website searches, and contacts with topic experts and relevant organizations, solicitations from program developers, and searches of review articles.</li> </ul>
<b>Program Selection Criteria</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pre-K-12</li> <li>• Programs during regular school day</li> <li>• Both comprehensive (whole school, integrated) and “modular” (classroom)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• K-12</li> <li>• Programs during regular school day</li> <li>• Both comprehensive (whole school, integrated) and “modular” (classroom)</li> </ul>
<b>Relevant Program Goals</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Broad: “psychological characteristics that enable individual to function as a competent moral agent”</li> <li>• Includes both comprehensive and focused programs (conflict resolution, moral reasoning, etc.)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Positive character development, pro-social behavior, academic performance</li> <li>• Promote values “generalized across domains” rather than focused on single domain (drug use, violence, etc.)</li> <li>• Specific set of character virtues: intrapersonal (e.g., honesty), interpersonal (e.g., caring), civic (e.g., good citizenship)</li> </ul>
<b>Study Selection Criteria</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Comparative designs, both experimental and quasi-experimental</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Randomized experimental designs, strong quasi-experimental designs</li> <li>• Psychometrically sound measures</li> <li>• Adequacy of reported data</li> </ul> <p>[Note. Only a randomized controlled trial or a regression discontinuity design that do not suffer from attrition, disruption, etc., can “meet evidence standards” and only a randomized trial or regression discontinuity design with problems or a strong quasi-experiment can “meet standards with reservations” (see below). Weak quasi-experiments and non-comparative designs do not meet evidence screens and their findings do not contribute to the rating of effectiveness. See the WWC Evidence Standards for further details]</p>
<b>Review Focus</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Effective <i>practices</i></li> <li>• Program components/elements</li> <li>• Statistically significant outcomes (<math>p &lt; .05</math>)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Effective <i>programs</i></li> <li>• Statistically significant outcomes (<math>p &lt; .05</math>) or Effect size <math>\geq .25</math></li> </ul>
<b>Statistical Adjustments (Type I Error)</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <math>p</math> values adjusted for clustering within classrooms and schools (using intraclass correlation rather than analysis at the cluster level) if necessary</li> <li>• <math>p</math>-values adjusted for number of individual significance tests performed within an outcome domain if necessary</li> </ul>

(continued)

**TABLE 21.1**  
**Continued**

<i>WWCE</i>	<i>WWC</i>
<b>Review Classification</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Effective (ineffective not mentioned/included in review)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meets evidence standards</li> <li>• Meets standards with reservations</li> <li>• Does not meet evidence screens (not reviewed for effectiveness)</li> </ul>
<b>Identified Programs</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 33 effective (6 ineffective are not identified)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2 positive effects in at least on outcome domain</li> <li>• 7 potentially positive effects in at least one outcome domain</li> <li>• 4 no discernable effects</li> <li>• 28 programs did not receive intervention reports because no studies could be located or no studies of these programs met evidence screens</li> </ul>

## THE TWO “WHAT WORKS” PROJECTS: WHAT WE NOW KNOW

Because the two projects include substantially different studies and programs, use different inclusion criteria, and, more importantly, because only WWCE includes information on effective strategies, conclusions cannot be presented in a fully integrated manner. Nonetheless, where possible, an attempt will be made to integrate the two projects.

### Effective Programs

WWCE identified 33 programs with evidence of effectiveness, and six with data not supporting effectiveness (the latter six were not included in the WWCE report as the intention was to describe “what works”, not “what does not work”). WWC identified nine programs with any evidence of effectiveness (although one, *Lessons in Character*, only showed effects on academic achievement and no effects on character behavior, knowledge, or attitudes), and four with data not supporting effectiveness. Interestingly, of the seven programs that overlap between the two projects, there is disagreement on two of them. WWC concludes that neither *Facing History and Ourselves* nor *Lions Quest Skills for Action* (their high school curriculum) have evidence of effectiveness, whereas WWCE concludes that both do have evidence of effectiveness. This is likely due to the more stringent scientific criteria applied in the WWC project. We can therefore conclude that both projects agree there is evidence of effectiveness of *Building Decision Skills* (with community service), *Child Development Project* (although WWC confuses matters by using the name *Caring School Communities* which is really a derivation or next generation of the *Child Development Project*, although the reviewed research was on the original CDP), *Lions Quest Skills for Adolescence* (their middle school curriculum), and *Positive Action*. WWC further identifies five effective programs not included in the WWCE report: *Connect With Kids*, *Lessons in Character* (only effective in promoting academic achievement), and the three *Too Good for Kids* programs. WWCE, however, identifies a total of 33 effective programs, only four of which overlap with WWC (as noted, two of which WWC finds ineffective). Table 21.2 lists the programs included in both reports. Regardless of which project one considers, there is clearly evidence that character education *can* work. WWCE presents a more positive picture in identifying 33 effective programs (out of 39 identified with research; 85%) and would likely have included most if not all of the six programs examined for WWC but not identified during the WWCE literature search.

**TABLE 31.3**  
**Programs Included in Both What Works Projects**

<i>Program</i>	<i>WWCE</i>	<i>WWC-CE</i>		
		<i>Beh</i>	<i>KAV</i>	<i>Acad</i>
Across Ages	X			
All Stars	X			
Building Decision Skills	X		X	
Child Development Project*	X	X	0	0
Connect With Kids		X		
Facing History & Ourselves	X	0	0	
Great Body Shop	X			
Heartwood Ethics Curriculum	0	0	0	
I Can Problem Solve	X			
Just Community Schools	X			
Learning for Life	X			
Lessons in Character				X
Life Skills Training	X			
Linking Interests of Families & Teachers	X			
Lions Quest (middle school)	X	X		
Lions Quest (high school)	X		0	
Michigan Model	X			
Moral Dilemma Discussion	X			
Open Circle Program	X			
PeaceBuilders	X			
Peaceful Schools Project	X			
Peacemakers	X			
PATHE	X			
Positive Action	X	X		X
Positive Youth Development	X			
Project Essential	X			
Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies	X			
Raising Healthy Children	X			
Resolving Conflict Creatively Program	X			
Responding in Peaceful & Positive Ways	X			
Roots of Empathy	X			
Seattle Social Development Project	X			
Second Step	X			
Social Competence Promotion Program	X			
Social Decision-Making/Problem-Solving	X			
Teaching Students to be Peacemakers	X			
Teen Outreach	X			
Too Good for Drugs and Violence			X	
Too Good for Drugs		X	0	
Too Good for Violence		X	X	
Voices LACE			0	

\*Called Caring School Communities in WWC-CE.

Beh = Behavior; KAV = Knowledge, Attitudes and Values; Acad - Academic Achievement

X = positive effect; 0 = null effect; blank space = not studied

WWC only identifies nine programs with any evidence of effectiveness, but that still represents 69% of the programs for which they identified adequate research

### What the Effective Programs Impact

Unfortunately, the two What Works projects categorize outcome variables differently, so it is difficult to combine them in examining what character education does and doesn't impact. However,

there are a few points of overlap that may be helpful. First, we will report the separate findings of the two projects, and then turn to the areas of overlap.

### *What Works in Character Education*

WWCE generated a very broad, multi-leveled taxonomy of character education outcome variables (see Table 21.3). For the sake of this section, we will report the results as they are reported in Berkowitz and Bier (2005b), which is at the middle level of the taxonomy. There are 25 middle level variables. The 10 most commonly reported significant effects were for:

1. Socio-moral cognition (82 significant findings out of 111 tested)
2. Pro-social behaviors and attitudes (71 out of 167)
3. Problem-solving skills (54 out of 84)
4. Drug use (51 out of 104)
5. Violence/aggression (50 out of 104)
6. School behavior (40 out of 88)
7. Knowledge/attitudes about risk behavior (35 out of 73)
8. Emotional competency (32 out of 50)
9. Academic achievement (31 out of 52)
10. Attachment to school (19 out of 32).

Clearly, these numbers are an artifact of the number of times such variables are measured. For instance, much research has been done on moral reasoning development; hence, socio-moral cognition has been measured 111 times in this data set. In fact, if these variables were ranked by the number of times tested, the ordinality would hardly vary from this presentation by number of significant effects. (If, however, the ineffective program data were included, this relationship might change.) Therefore, another way to examine these data is by the *percentage* of significant tests that showed a significant effect for a given variable. The variables with the highest percentage of tests showing significance are:

1. Sexual behavior (91%; 10 out of 11)
2. Character knowledge (87%; 13 out of 15)
3. Socio-moral cognition (74%; 82 out of 111)
4. Problem-solving skills (64%; 54 out of 84)
5. Emotional competency (64%; 31 out of 49)
6. Relationships (62%; 8 out of 13)
7. Attachment to school (59%; 19 out of 32)
8. Academic achievement (59%; 31 out of 52)
9. Communicative competency (50%; 6 out of 12)
10. Attitudes toward teachers (50%; 2 out of 4).

### *What Works Clearinghouse*

The WWC categorized outcomes more parsimoniously, using a three category scheme. Outcomes were coded as either “behavior”, “knowledge, attitudes and values,” or “academic achievement.” The WWC website describes the outcomes as following the Character Education Partnership tri-partite model of understanding (knowledge, reasoning), caring about (motivation, valuing), and acting upon (behavior) core ethical values. Hence they claim to categorize outcomes

**TABLE 21.3**  
**Variable Outcome Taxonomy**

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**1. Risk Behavior**

- 1.1 Knowledge and Beliefs Re: Risk
  - 1.1.1. Reactions to situations involving drug use
  - 1.1.2. Knowledge about substance abuse
  - 1.1.3. Normative beliefs about high-risk behaviors
  - 1.1.4. Intentions to use substances
  - 1.1.5. Attitudes towards use
  - 1.1.6. Attitudes towards guns and violence
  - 1.1.7. Risk-taking
- 1.2. Drug Use
  - 1.2.1. Frequency of use
  - 1.2.2. Quantities used
  - 1.2.3. Polydrug use
- 1.3. Sexual Behavior
  - 1.3.1. Sexual activity
- 1.4. Protective Skills
  - 1.4.1. Refusal skills
  - 1.4.2. Knowledge of violence-related psychosocial skills
- 1.5. Violence/Aggression
  - 1.5.1. Ridiculing/bullying
  - 1.5.2. Physical aggression and injury
  - 1.5.3. Name calling and verbal putdowns
  - 1.5.4. Threats and verbal intimidation
  - 1.5.5. Verbal aggression
  - 1.5.6. Dominance-aggression
  - 1.5.7. Victimization
  - 1.5.8. Fighting
  - 1.5.9. Breaking things on purpose
  - 1.5.10. Bringing weapons to school
  - 1.5.11. Non-physical aggression
  - 1.5.12. Self-destructive behavior
- 1.6. General Misbehavior
  - 1.6.1. Gang activity
  - 1.6.2. Lying
  - 1.6.3. Court contacts
  - 1.6.4. Rude behavior
  - 1.6.5. Defiance of adult authority
  - 1.6.6. Stealing
  - 1.6.7. Vandalism

**2. Pro-Social Competencies**

- 2.1. Socio-Moral Cognition
  - 2.1.1. Ethical decision-making ability
  - 2.1.2. Ethical understanding
  - 2.1.3. Understanding multiple perspectives
  - 2.1.4. Moral reasoning
- 2.2. Personal Morality
  - 2.2.1. Sense of justice/fairness
  - 2.2.2. Other moral values
  - 2.2.3. Respect
  - 2.2.4. Honesty
  - 2.2.5. Ethical sensibility
  - 2.2.6. Taking responsibility for one's actions
  - 2.2.7. Respecting the property of others
  - 2.2.8. Leadership skills

*(continued)*



**TABLE 21.3**  
**Continued**

- 
- 2.2.9. Following rules
  - 2.2.10. Self-discipline
  - 2.3. Pro-Social Behaviors and Attitudes
    - 2.3.1. Ethnocentrism
    - 2.3.2. Sense of social responsibility
    - 2.3.3. Keeping commitments
    - 2.3.4. Getting along with others
    - 2.3.5. Respect and tolerance
    - 2.3.6. Caring and concern for others
    - 2.3.7. Teamwork and cooperation
    - 2.3.8. Helping others
    - 2.3.9. Including others
    - 2.3.10. Inclination to do community service
    - 2.3.11. Empathy
    - 2.3.12. Sharing
    - 2.3.13. Attitudes and knowledge about community service
    - 2.3.14. Ethical conduct
    - 2.3.15. Participation in positive extra-curricular activities
    - 2.3.16. Participation in civic and social actions
    - 2.3.17. Desire for wealth
  - 2.4. Communicative Competency
    - 2.4.1. Communication skills
    - 2.4.2. Attentive listening
  - 2.5. Character Knowledge
    - 2.5.1. Understanding of character attributes
    - 2.5.2. Ethical decision making
  - 2.6. Relationships
    - 2.6.1. Friends, family
    - 2.6.2. Value intimacy
  - 2.7. Citizenship
    - 2.7.1. Democratic values
    - 2.7.2. Desire for influence/power
  - 3. School-Based Outcomes**
    - 3.1. School Behavior
      - 3.1.1. School attendance
      - 3.1.2. Compliance with school rules and expectations
      - 3.1.3. Detentions, suspensions, and expulsions
      - 3.1.4. Skipping school without permission
      - 3.1.5. Overall classroom behavior
      - 3.1.6. Participation in classroom activities
    - 3.2. Attachment to school
      - 3.2.1. Bonding to school
      - 3.2.2. Sense of school as community
      - 3.2.3. Attachment to school
      - 3.2.4. Feeling of belonging to school community
      - 3.2.5. Levels of classroom interest and enthusiasm
    - 3.3. Attitudes Toward School
      - 3.3.1. Sense of responsibility to school
      - 3.3.2. General school climate is more positive
      - 3.3.3. Adjustment to new school
      - 3.3.4. Safety
    - 3.4. Attitudes Toward Teachers
      - 3.4.1. Trust and respect for teachers
      - 3.4.2. Feelings about whether teachers are trustworthy, supportive, fair and consistent
    - 3.5. Academic Goals, Expectations, and Motives
      - 3.5.1. Motivation to do well in school

- 3.5.2. Educational expectations—how far students expect to go
- 3.5.3. Task mastery goals
- 3.5.4. Performance oriented goals
- 3.6. Academic Achievement
  - 3.6.1. Academic achievement including grades, test scores
  - 3.6.2. Promotion to the next grade
- 3.7. Academic skills
  - 3.7.1. Creative learning strategies
  - 3.7.2. Study skills
  - 3.7.3. Ability to focus on work/stay on task

#### **4. General Social-Emotional**

- 4.1. Self-Concept
    - 4.1.1. Self-perception
    - 4.1.2. Self-esteem
    - 4.1.3. Appreciates his/her schoolwork, work products and activities
    - 4.1.4. Refers to himself in generally positive terms
  - 4.2. Independence and Initiative
    - 4.2.1. Undertakes new tasks willingly
    - 4.2.2. Valuing independence
    - 4.2.3. Making decisions that affect students
    - 4.2.4. Makes good choices
    - 4.2.5. Self-direction and independence in activities
    - 4.2.6. Initiates new ideas relative to classroom activities and projects
    - 4.2.7. Asks questions when he/she does not understand
    - 4.2.8. Makes decisions regarding things that affect him/her
    - 4.2.9. Acts as a leader in group situations with peers
    - 4.2.10. Readily expresses opinions
    - 4.2.11. Assertiveness
  - 4.3. Coping
    - 4.3.1. Adapts easily to change in procedures
    - 4.3.2. Copes with failure by dealing with mistakes or failures easily and comfortably
    - 4.3.3. Takes criticism or corrections in stride without overreacting
    - 4.3.4. Self-efficacy
    - 4.3.5. Depression
    - 4.3.6. Negative expectations for the future
    - 4.3.7. Coping skills
  - 4.4. Problem Solving Skills
    - 4.4.1. Alternative solutions
    - 4.4.2. Consequential thinking
    - 4.4.3. Behavioral adjustment
    - 4.4.4. Conceptualizing cause-and-effect
    - 4.4.5. Conflict resolution strategies
  - 4.5. Emotional Competency
    - 4.5.1. Ability to discuss emotional experiences
    - 4.5.2. Recognizing emotional cues
    - 4.5.3. Understanding how emotions change
    - 4.5.4. Stress/anxiety reduction techniques
    - 4.5.5. Feelings vocabulary
    - 4.5.6. Understanding simultaneous feelings
    - 4.5.7. Expressing emotions appropriately
    - 4.5.8. Impatience
    - 4.5.9. Emotionality
    - 4.5.10. Impulsivity
    - 4.5.11. Shyness
    - 4.5.12. Hyperactivity
  - 4.6. Attitudes, Knowledge, Beliefs re: Elders
    - 4.6.1. Knowledge about older people
    - 4.6.2. Attitudes towards school, elders, and the future
    - 4.6.3. Attitudes towards older people
-

as values knowledge, valuing, and values-based behavior, plus academic achievement. However, the three categories noted above collapse the cognitive (understanding, knowledge) and affective (caring about, motivation) aspects into the knowledge, attitudes, and values category and leave the behavioral aspects separate.

The 13 programs with studies meeting the design criteria variably evaluate one or more of these three outcome domains. Nine evaluated behavior, 10 evaluated knowledge, attitudes, and values, and three evaluated academic achievement. For behavior, six of nine programs were found to be at least potentially positive. For knowledge, attitudes, and values, only three of 10 were found to be at least potentially positive. For academic achievement, two of three were found to be potentially positive.

### *Overlap between the Two What Works Projects*

There are two ways that we can explore an overlap between the outcome data reported in the two What Works projects. First, we can examine academic achievement separately in WWCE and it is already a separate category in WWC. As noted above, WWC finds that three programs tested for effects on academic achievement (Caring School Community/Child Development Project, Lessons in Character, Positive Action). They report no effects for CSC, but significant positive effects for the other two. WWCE found that 11 programs tested for effects on academic achievement, and 10 of the 11 found significant positive effects. WWCE did not include Lessons in Character in its review, so no comparison is possible there. WWCE agreed with WWC that Positive Action had a significant positive impact on academic achievement, but is in disagreement with WWC about the Child Development Project. This is likely due to WWC's adjustments for clustering within classrooms and schools and its more rigorous inclusion standards excluding some CSC/CDP studies that were included in the WWCE database.

The second area of overlap concerns the Character Education Partnership three-part definition of character (understanding, caring about, and acting upon). As noted above, WWC relied partially on this category scheme in reporting outcome variables (although they collapsed the understanding and caring about variables into a single category). In the WWCE report, there is also an attempt to follow the CEP scheme. We have already seen that WWC finds a 67% significance rate for behavior but a 30% significance rate for the combined cognition and affect category (note that WWC does not rely merely on statistical significance, rather considers effect size, and makes other adjustments of author-reported significance; WWCE simply uses author-reported statistic significance; hence the comparisons are not exact). WWCE reports a 49% significance rate for behavior, a 62% significance rate for the cognitive domain (54% if the large number of moral reasoning studies are excluded), and a 45% rate for the affective domain. Combining the latter two, as done in WWC, yields a 53% significance rate for the cognitive/affective combined domain. Hence it appears that, compared to WWCE, WWC finds a much higher significance rate for behavior (67 to 49) and a much lower significance rate for the cognitive/affective domain (30 to 53). This disparity may be due to the specific categories applied to specific outcome variables. The overall significance rates were very similar: for WWCE it was 51% and for WWC it was 50%.

### What Causes the Effects?

Only the WWCE project attempted to address the implementation strategies that cause the observed effects of the included character education programs. WWC does promise to offer a "topic report" eventually, and perhaps that will address implementation strategies.

Although this is probably the most interesting topic for practitioners, the question of which

implementation strategies actually “work” can only be addressed in very limited ways. First, most character education programs include multiple implementation strategies. WWCE reports an average of between seven and eight implementation strategies across the 33 effective programs. Second, there is almost no research on individual implementation strategies. Exceptions are moral dilemma discussions, cooperative learning, and some prevention strategies, although the latter are not typically isolated in character education programs but rather in purely prevention programs. Therefore, all that can be culled from the WWCE database is the relative frequency of individual implementation strategies across the 33 reported programs. There is no way to know if the more frequent strategies are in fact the more operative ones as well. Furthermore, because the ineffective programs were not included in the analyses, it is not clear which practices appear equally frequently in effective programs.

WWCE examined this question in three ways: (1) most frequent implementation strategies in the 33 programs; (2) research on individual implementation strategies; (3) a single study of “grass roots” character education strategies.

### *Most Frequent Implementation Strategies*

WWCE approaches the frequency of implementation strategies in two ways. First, it reports the most common content of character education implementation strategies (typically character education lesson content). The most common contents were: explicit character education topics; social and emotional curricula; and integration of moral and values topics into the academic curricula. The most common were the social-emotional topics, with 27 of 33 programs including some form of these. The most common social-emotional content areas were (1) social skills and social awareness; (2) personal improvement and self-management and awareness; and (3) problem solving and decision making. Eighteen of the 33 programs included content that explicitly focused on such elements as character, values, virtues, and morality. Fourteen of the 33 programs integrated such content into the academic curriculum. Interestingly all programs claimed to do this, but most simply inserted character lessons between academic lessons. Not surprisingly, language arts and social studies were the academic subjects most likely to have character content integration.

The second way of parsing the issue of frequency of implementation strategies is to look at the pedagogical approaches utilized, using the term “pedagogy” very loosely. The most common such strategies are:

1. Professional development (33 of 33 programs)
2. Interactive teaching strategies (33 of 33 programs)
3. Direct teaching strategies (28 of 33 programs)
4. Family and/or community participation (26 of 33 programs)(Berkowitz & Bier, 2005b)
5. Modeling and/or mentoring (16 of 33 programs).

Three other common (but less than 50%) strategies worth noting are: classroom and behavior management strategies, school-wide strategies, and community service/service learning. These are all broad categories and much is included in each of them. For example, the category of interactive teaching strategies includes peer classroom discussions (class meetings, moral dilemma discussions, etc.), role-playing, cooperative learning, and other such methods. Similarly, family participation is a complex and diverse set of strategies (Berkowitz & Bier, 2005a), including parent training, informing parents, and parents as partners. For a fuller explication of each one of the identified strategies, see Berkowitz and Bier (2005b).

### *Individual Implementation Strategies*

WWCE identified two sets of research on individual implementation strategies: moral dilemma discussions and cooperative learning. There are nearly 100 separate studies of the effects of classroom discussions of moral dilemmas on, typically, moral reasoning development. Cumulatively, there is strong evidence that classroom moral dilemma discussions promote significant development of moral reasoning competencies. Similarly, there are many studies of the impact of cooperative learning. These studies (and reviews of the studies) demonstrate consistent significant impacts on conflict resolution skills, cooperation, and academic achievement. Teaching Students to be Peacemakers, one of the 33 effective programs identified in WWCE, is centrally a cooperative learning program. There may be other individual strategies with substantial research, but WWCE did not identify or examine them.

### *“Grass Roots” Character Education Strategies*

Because so much of what falls under the title of character education is home grown, it is important to look beyond the structured formal programs that serve as the core of the two What Works databases. Unfortunately, little is known about the nature of such “grass roots” character education interventions. However, Benninga, Berkowitz, Kuehn, and Smith (2003) reported a study of 120 elementary schools in California, most of which created their own character education programs. In this study, the quality of character education was related to academic outcomes and a significant relationship was reported for both language and math scores on the California state assessment tests. For our purposes here, the more relevant finding was an examination of which specific implementation approaches accounted for this relationship. The four strategies that correlated significantly with academic achievement were:

- Parent and teacher (1) modeling of character and (2) promotion of character education
- Quality opportunities for students to engage in service activities
- The promotion of a caring community and positive social relationships
- Ensuring a clean and safe physical environment.

## CONCLUSIONS ABOUT WHAT WE KNOW

Although the two What Works projects have relatively different databases, purposes, selection criteria, and analytic approaches, much can still be gleaned from the intersection and comparison of these two projects. In some ways their differences are a challenge; that is, they cannot be meaningfully combined on some dimensions. But in other ways, the differences are a strength: for example, when two such different projects support similar conclusions about the effectiveness of character education, it lends more validity to those conclusions.

### *Character Education Can Effectively Promote Character Development*

In both reports, a majority of programs that had scientific outcome research revealed significant impacts on student character development: 85% of the programs reviewed in WWCE and 69% of the programs reviewed in WWC. Across the two reviews, a total of 39 effective character education programs have been identified.

### *Character Education Impacts Academic Achievement*

In both reviews a clear majority of the programs evaluating academic outcomes demonstrated significant academic gains. For WWC, there were only three programs with academic outcome measures, two of which were significantly positive. For WWCE, there were 11, 10 of which were significantly positive. In the WWCE report, 59% of all statistical tests of academic achievement as an outcome were significantly positive. Across these two reviews, Positive Action was found by both to have a significant impact on academic achievement, they disagreed on whether the Child Development Project/Caring School Community had an impact (yes for WWCE; no for WWC), and there were nine programs included in only one of the two reports but for which that report showed significant academic gains. Only one program (Open Circle in the WWCE report) had no evidence of academic effects.

### *Character Education Impacts Many Aspects of Character Development*

WWCE offers a much more differentiated categorization of character outcomes than does WWC. In the WWCE report, there is clear evidence of diverse significant effects with the most frequent being social-moral cognition, pro-social behavior and attitudes, problem-solving skills, reduced drug use, and reduced violence and aggression. The most consistently impacted outcomes were sexual behavior, character knowledge, and socio-moral cognition. When applying the Character Education Partnership three-part definition of character (cognitive, affective, behavioral), there is substantial variation between the two projects; however, when looking across all variables, in both reports about half of all statistical tests were significant.

### *Character Education Tends to Be a Set of Implementation Strategies*

WWCE reports between seven and eight separate implementation strategies per program. Whereas the current state of research does not allow us to reach firm conclusions about effective individual implementation strategies, WWCE offers some interesting tentative conclusions. The most common content areas for character education are social and emotional curricula (social skills and awareness, personal improvement and self-management/awareness, and problem solving and decision making); explicit focus on character concepts (values, virtues, morality, ethics, etc.); and integration of either or both of these into the actual academic curriculum (most commonly language arts and social studies). The most common pedagogical strategies were professional development, interactive teaching methods, direct teaching of character concepts, family or community participation, and modeling or mentoring. Furthermore, there is substantial research on the effectiveness of moral dilemma discussions and cooperative learning strategies. Finally, a study of home-grown (grass roots) character education reveals that effective character education (in terms of impact on academic achievement) includes adult modeling and promotion of character, opportunities for student service, the promotion of a caring community and positive relationships, and a safe and clean environment.

## THE LIGHT SOMEWHERE IN THE TUNNEL

Clearly we already have a sizable body of research on the effects of character education and can reach some reasonable, albeit tentative conclusions. There is some reason for hope in the near future as well because of some other projects that promise to shed more light on these and



other questions. Most notably, the Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL) has completed a large-scale meta-analysis of social-emotional learning led by Roger Weissberg and Joseph Durlak and colleagues (see chapter 13, this volume). It is hoped that their systematic analysis will reveal some more specific relationships within this field. Second, the Social and Character Development project of the Institute for Education Sciences and the Centers for Disease Control includes seven different character education studies and a meta-study of common variables across the seven different character education programs. This is a very rigorous scientific project with quite varied programs, locations, and methods. At this point in time, however, only first year data are available and are showing no significant effects. Third, of course, is the future expansion of WWC (and perhaps WWCE). Together, these and individual studies of character education outcomes will greatly expand what we can conclude and increase the confidence with which we can reach such conclusions. Finally, outlets like the *Journal for Research in Character Education* offer a place for such research to be reported and consumed.

### SETTING A RESEARCH AGENDA

There is so much that still needs to be done to shed adequate light on the question of the impact of character education that it is difficult to select some key future directions for research in this field; however, we will nonetheless offer a few here.

- Generally more resources are needed for research in character education (and related fields). Some funders (e.g., The John Templeton Foundation, the W.T. Grant Foundation, the U.S. Department of Education) have seen fit to apply significant resources to the systematic scientific study of character education outcomes. However, much more funding is needed to build an adequate body of scientific research to effectively guide educational practice.
- Too many studies (in fact the vast majority) are program outcome studies of individual character education programs. Reviews like WWC and WWCE, as well as the CASEL meta-analysis and the SACD study, try to span multiple studies. Funding for more large-scale studies like the SACD study are needed, however.
- As a counterpoint to this, we know very little about individual character education strategies. More research that parses out individual practices is also needed.
- More research on implementation in general is also needed. We know very little about the stages of implementation, the complex interactions of different contextual and implementation variables, and other aspects of what works and what does not.
- Longitudinal follow-up studies of existing and proposed studies are also rare. We do not know which effects are ephemeral and which are enduring, other than a few studies of the Child Development Project, the Seattle Social Development Project, and Positive Action.
- Better research instrumentation and better knowledge about existing instrumentation are also needed.

In order for much of this research to happen, practitioners need better supports on how to do meaningful outcome (and implementation) research. The Character Education Partnership offers a number of such resources, but more is needed as most practitioners understandably struggle with the complexities of rigorous scientific research.

## THE BOTTOM LINE

Right now, thanks to the What Works in Character Education (Berkowitz & Bier, 2005b) and What Works Clearinghouse projects we can reasonably conclude that character education can be quite effective in promoting both character development and academic achievement. With forthcoming information from other related projects, we hope these conclusions will be validated and expanded. Nonetheless, much more research is warranted to paint a more complete picture of how, when, and why character education effectively promotes student development and learning.

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## 22

# Education for Integrity: Connection, Compassion and Character

Rachael Kessler with Catherine Fink  
*PassageWays*

Across America, parents, educators, and civic leaders are concerned about the destructive behavior that continues among our adolescents. I awoke one day to this news in my local newspaper:

The fourth hit-list in five months was reported at a...District school, sheriff deputies said Wednesday. The latest list...was an email message allegedly written by an eighth-grade girl that named three students, a teacher and a para-educator...

Two 12-year-old girls were turned in last week by students at [another school] who accused them of writing a hit list that included the names of 40 students and teachers. Both girls were arrested....

In January, a hit list was discovered in a student's notebook at [an additional middle school]. The boy said he made the list because he was "bored" and decided to include the people in his class he didn't like. (Reid, 2002, pp. 1A-2A)

As I read further, I saw that in the fourth incident, one boy had been found guilty and faced up to two years in a juvenile detention center. *What happened?*

"It's about communication with the kids about what we will tolerate and what we won't," said the administrative official concluding the report (Reid, 2002, pp. 1A-2A).

Is that all this is about—"communicating what we will tolerate and what we will not"? Incidents like these and those with more fatal consequences have become alarmingly common across the country, often in our most privileged communities (Powers, 2002). State and federal governments have passed legislation for "character education" so our young people can be taught the difference between what is tolerable and what is not. Certainly the transmission of ethics, moral inquiry, and reflection, and the structure of discipline are essential to fostering character in our children. But there is more.

As you hold the disturbing news item above, hold also this letter from Leah, an eighteen-year-old girl who knew first-hand the kind of hate we see erupting in our youth.

Remember all those times I said I hated everyone at my high school and that none of them were worth my time? Well, suddenly, I didn't hate anyone anymore. That's one of the things I learned that has impacted me the most—that we are all the same. We all have fears and pains and some

good sides and some bad sides. I judged people so easily before, I felt hate so easily. Senior Passages showed me a whole new way to look at people. I discovered the beauty of an open mind. (Kessler 2000, pp. 151–152)

What might happen if all of our students had the support to open their minds and hearts in this way?

In this chapter, I will offer another piece of the puzzle—another analysis of “what this is all about.” I will explore an additional dimension that is essential for educators to explore if they are to meet the challenge of preparing children to act with respect and compassion for themselves and others.

The theoretical approach and practical application presented in this chapter grow out of two decades of experience and practice—first briefly in the youth development field and then in education. While I am not a researcher by formal training, the theory I will share that has been constructed over time is similar to “grounded theory”<sup>1</sup>—it has grown from observation of my own students, personal experience, and shifting cultural patterns as well from listening to other practitioners engaged in similar reflective practice. Not until I began to write about this emerging theory in 1990 did I begin to search for existing theory in related fields that validated, expanded, and refined my own ideas. I found many theorists and researchers who shared similar principals and were experimenting with similar practices. I seized opportunities to collaborate with these leaders and authors to learn from and contribute to the growth of new fields within education and positive youth development. So, while many of the ideas presented here do not consciously derive from or deliberately build on other historical and theoretical movements, they now co-exist with and interact with this broader context. Later in this essay, my colleague Catherine Fink and I will provide a brief overview of this larger context.<sup>2</sup>

## PREVENTION A BRIEF HISTORY

I began my work with adolescents in the late 1970s, when our culture was just beginning to understand the concept of “a generation at risk.” In education and social service, we began to see that alarming numbers of American teenagers across the lines of class, race, and geography were hurting themselves and others. We began to develop “prevention” strategies for all youth.

“Let’s inform the mind,” was the first approach, growing out of a traditional educational model. “If they understand the dangers (of substances, pregnancy, and sexually transmitted diseases, etc.), students will make the right choices.” But the field of prevention began to discover what I had learned from my own adolescence: the mind can be well informed, but a teenager chooses danger and destruction in a moment when something other than the mind is in charge.

What, then, is in charge? From whence arise the “decisions,” the behaviors, the actions that bring harm? I believe that a clue to this essential question can be found in what Gandhi called “the will to do no harm.” For Gandhi, this was the essence of non-violence. It was not the knowing in the mind of what is right and what is wrong. That knowing is necessary but not sufficient. What makes the difference is the deeper desire to cause no harm to self or others.

This desire doesn’t arise from “shoulds.” It comes from a place beyond reason, a place we might locate in the heart, or in the soul. Most often, it arises from the feeling of meaningful connection. Connecting deeply to oneself and to others gives rise to feelings of respect and empathy; and empathy can grow into compassion, and even communion. This chapter is about how we can help adolescents form those meaningful connections that lead to compassion, and how compassion, in turn, can lead to strength of character. What climate, principles, and practices can

classrooms provide so students experience “a convergence between what I feel I am supposed to do and what I want to do” (Mayeroff, 1990, p. 11).

To understand how to promote respectful and caring behavior in our youth, we must also explore the deeper roots of what leads them to harm. Such acts rarely come from a thoughtful decision-making process. Instead, these behaviors often spring from what Daniel Goleman has called “emotional hijacking”—a physiological mechanism that suppresses rational thought (1995, p. 13). These behaviors also arise as misguided coping strategies to deal with a variety of increasingly common conditions for American children and youth: social isolation, unrelieved stress, eroded self-worth, inability to learn, and poor decision-making skills. These are the “root causes” identified by the field of prevention science as it searched for an alternative to the failed strategy of providing information and even skills to reduce destructive behavior. Many social scientists agreed these root causes arose from the breakdown of family and community, from economic changes which lead to more mobility and a dramatically widening gap between rich and poor, and from messages from the media which convey that joy and intimacy can be found through alcohol and sexuality, conflicts resolved through violence, and meaning found in what is external.

These key factors however do not fully address the roots of pain and destructive behavior of young people. Beginning in the 1980s, my work with adolescents revealed three unaddressed root causes: *unexpressed grief*, *fear*, and *a spiritual void*.

*Grief* is a normal reaction to both traumatic loss and the ordinary losses of growth and change. In the dominant American culture many adults who are responsible for nurturing children are unprepared to grieve and to support the grief of others. Young people today experience a great deal of traumatic loss—a high incidence of relocation required by our economy, a high divorce rate and a high level of exposure to violent death personally and in the media. Unexpressed grief often leads to numbness (Kessler, 2003). It is much the same with fear.

Many of us are afraid to feel our own *fear*. “Anxiety” is a vague, generalized sense of dread or agitation that overtakes us when we avoid a direct confrontation with the sources of our fear—and anxiety is a pervasive disease of our adult culture. Often hidden and unexpressed, fear permeates the lives of children. John Holt writes:

What is most surprising of all is how much fear there is in school. Why is so little said about it? Perhaps most people do not recognize fear in children when they see it. They can read the grossest signs of fear; they know what the trouble is when a child clings howling to his mother; but the subtler signs of fear escape them. It is these signs, in children’s faces, voices, and gestures, in their movements and ways of working, that tell me plainly that most children in school are scared most of the time, many of them very scared. Like good soldiers, they control their fears, live with them, and adjust themselves to them. But the trouble is, and here is a vital difference between school and war, that the adjustments children make to their fears are almost wholly bad, destructive of their intelligence and capacity. The scared fighter may be the best fighter, but the scared learner is always a poor learner. (1964, p. 49)

Giving students opportunities to express their fear is the first step in helping them learn to deal with it without going numb. Even before the tragic events of September 11, 2001, young people with whom I worked expressed fear of the future—or fear of having no future. “Will I die when I wake up? I’ve been thinking a lot about that lately,” said a young woman in Washington, DC, explaining why she chose the coffin image among symbol cards with primarily positive images. An activity that invites students to anonymously write their personal questions<sup>3</sup> often evokes statements like, “I wonder about nature—are we doing irreparable damage with our lack of concern?” and “Will the environment survive for my children and their children?”

Natural numbing mechanisms set in during early adolescence that bury the fear and grief but mark it with a tombstone labeled despair.<sup>4</sup> If the natural mechanisms are not enough protection, young people are drawn to the powerful numbing quality of addiction. “The future is uncertain, so eat dessert first” becomes the mentality of many teenagers gobbling up experiences their bodies and souls are not ready to digest.

Beyond fear and unexpressed grief is another critical root of youth violence: the *void of spiritual guidance* and experience. Many teenagers suffer from a feeling of emptiness inside, of meaninglessness and alienation that comes when social and religious traditions no longer provide a sense of meaning, continuity, and participation in a larger whole. This void of adult guidance toward constructive forms of connection often leaves adolescents with a misguided and often damaging search to meet these needs. I wrote about this dynamic in my first published article about the approach that has now evolved into the PassageWays model in 1990 (Kessler, 1990). I then addressed it more fully in 2000 in *The Soul of Education* (Kessler, 2000). In the decade between, I could find virtually no scientific corroboration of the relationship between the spiritual void in youth and harmful behavior. Not until the tragic events at Columbine High School in 2000 did social scientists and political leaders wake up to see “the spiritual emptiness so many young people feel”<sup>5</sup> as a source of destructive behavior. In 2003, this dynamic was emphasized in *Hardwired to Connect*—a pioneering report from the Commission on Children at Risk, a panel of 33 leading children’s doctors, neuroscientists, research scholars, and youth service professionals,<sup>6</sup> who drew upon a large body of recent research in several fields showing that children are biologically primed (“hardwired”) for enduring connections to others and for moral and spiritual meaning. The authors warned that:

Denying or ignoring the spiritual needs of adolescents may end up creating a void in their lives that either devolves into depression or is filled by other forms of questing and challenge, such as drinking, unbridled consumerism, petty crime, sexual precocity, or flirtations with violence. (Institute of American Values, 2003, p. 31)

These conclusions from the scientific community verified from research across several fields what I had observed for over two decades. When this void is not filled with authentic nourishment and guidance from responsible elders, many young people seek connection, joy, creativity, and transcendence through sexuality and drugs; they seek meaning and beauty in what can be bought and sold; they seek initiation through self-designed rituals and badges of adulthood.

In the new millennium, I saw another factor producing the numbness that undermines caring behaviors for adults and children alike. It is the force of *speed* that has overtaken our culture—the impact of moving too fast and doing too much. Many young people today grapple with too much emptiness and too much fullness. They are empty of the resources that sustain the human spirit—devoted love, a sense of meaning and purpose, a feeling of ongoing connection to something larger than themselves, adults who model integrity, serenity, and peace. And they are glutted with sensationalism, stuff, and speed. This toxic overload often results in numbness.

Numbness begets violence—to the self and to others. The young person who is numb can feel little or no empathy or compassion for herself or for another. When the heart closes down, it becomes increasingly difficult to access the inclination to care and protect the self and others. Many young people live through a perpetual cycle of loss, grief and numbness that generates more of the same. Numbing can lead to implosion or to explosion when an unexpected trigger unleashes all the pent up feeling.

An increasingly pervasive source of this numbness in both adults and youth is the pace of life. “Too much, too fast, too soon” is a recipe for trauma for many youth, says Melissa Michaels,



Ed.D who has developed an approach that uses movement and other expressive arts to move from trauma to dynamic well-being.

With our fast pace, our children don't have time to digest, assimilate and to practice that which they're ingesting...to eliminate, or to metabolize life. Or to build a relationship with a musical instrument, a friend, themselves, or their families.

With the strong imprinting of media, and the fast pace of our culture, our kids have not had the opportunity to organically develop. Instead of discovering life, it is being given to them in ways that are not necessarily beautiful or good—in the sense of modeling virtue or being life giving.

Michaels calls this the “ghetto of too much” (Michaels, interview, 2002).<sup>7</sup>

In professional development that explores the “teaching presence”<sup>8</sup> that is vital to safely inviting students' deeper concerns into a classroom, I ask teachers to observe their own hearts over a month. When are their hearts open, when do they close? What forces in their lives appear to close their hearts and what they have learned about how to open up again? Using this practice, I have seen that when I move too fast, my capacity to feel deeply dulls or shuts down. And speed is also a byproduct of numbness: when I unconsciously shut down my emotions to protect against vulnerability, I often slip into overdrive. Many who guide the growth and development of children are infected by this cycle of speed and numbness.

“Too much, too fast, too soon” can produce another byproduct, apparently the opposite of numbness: over-stimulation. Michaels notes that a state of heightened sensitivity and unmanageable stress can lead to hair-trigger responses not easily controlled by an ethical framework. And beyond excessive stimulation, numbing and over-stimulation in students can come from excessive exposure to violence.

Our children have seen more violence in an up-close way than ever before. Yes, we have had war throughout time, but there's a different quality now to the exposure. My daughter said to me recently, “In my high school years, I have seen the President have an affair, I saw the Oklahoma City bombing, I witnessed Columbine and 9/11.” And now, up close, in the last few weeks, she has known one of the “good boys” from our community shoot two girls and then kill himself. (Michaels, 2002)

The violence, says Michaels, is a cry for help, a way of saying *I don't know what to do with all this energy in my system*. “It explodes,” she says, “Or implodes with eating disorders, cutting. Our kids have all this energy in their system—we call it ADD and ADHD and anxiety. They don't have a way of dealing with it.”

Talking about good behavior is not going to change people's behavior. We have to give them tools for unwinding their tightly wound systems. They haven't even grown their bones yet; their brains are still developing. We want them to make good choices but they are so stressed. So amped. We have to give them tools for unwinding and for re-patterning. For developing healthy communications and authentic expression.

What are these tools for developing healthy communication and authentic expression? How can we create the safety that makes it possible to speak in meaningful ways? How can we offer students experiences that help them to unwind their nervous systems?

## PASSAGEWAYS A DEEPER APPROACH TO PREVENTION AND POSITIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

Since the mid-1980s, I have worked with teams of educators and youth development specialists around the country in both private and public school settings to create curriculum, methodology, and teacher development that can feed the awakening spirit of young people as part of school life. The PassageWays Model is a set of principles and practices for working with students that integrates nurturing the inner life with a strong academic curriculum. This curriculum of the heart arose as a response to the “mysteries” of teenagers: their usually unspoken questions and concerns are at its center.

This approach was initially developed in the 1980s at the Crossroads School in Santa Monica, California, where I chaired the department of human development, building the team that built the Mysteries Program. In the 1990s, I began to take the gifts of Mysteries into schools around the country—adapting, refining, and expanding the curriculum to include what I learned from colleagues in the new and growing field of social and emotional learning (SEL) to meet the needs of public schools. By the mid-1990s, this new amalgam was renamed Passages to better highlight its focus on the transition years, then PassageWays, and now PassageWorks. Beyond social and emotional learning, this model always included a dimension that led students to comment that there was something “spiritual” about our classes. In those first years, I could not explain this. After all, we were not—and are not—practicing religion or even talking about religion. After many years of seeing the impact of the model on students in diverse settings—public and private, urban, rural, and small town—I began to understand what the students were recognizing.

### Classrooms that Welcome Soul

When soul is present in education, attention shifts: We listen with great care not only to what is spoken but also to the messages between the words—tones, gestures, the flicker of feeling across the face. We concentrate on what has heart and meaning. The yearning, wonder, wisdom, fear, and confusion of students become central to the curriculum.

Questions become as important as answers. When soul enters the classroom, masks drop away. Students dare to share the joy and talents they have feared would provoke jealousy in even their best friends. They risk exposing the pain or shame that might be judged as weakness. Seeing deeply into the perspective of others, accepting what has felt unworthy in themselves, students discover compassion and begin to learn about forgiveness.

### A Broader Context

In this section, we will briefly summarize the larger historical context for the emergence of the PassageWays theory and model. We will highlight those theorists and movements that offered an approach to education that paralleled or led to essential principles and practices of our approach. Those essentials include practices that are experiential and embodied; foster meaningful connection to self, teacher, and the classroom community; promote justice and peace; honor student voices; and integrate the inner life of students and teachers—the emotional, social, and spiritual dimensions of growth and learning. Following this section on context, I will describe and illustrate specific classroom practices and core principles of the model.

As mentioned above, the PassageWays approach arose in a manner similar to “grounded theory”—in that it was and continues to be developed inductively from a body of experience

(Borgatti, 2006). As it has developed from the mid-1980s to today, the PassageWays model has at times coexisted with related theories, at times been influenced by, and at other times was a source that informed several movements in education, including:

- Humanistic/Affective Education
- Waldorf and Montessori Education
- Holistic Education
- Prevention and Positive Youth Development
- Conflict Resolution
- Multiple Intelligence theory, Emotional Intelligence theory and Social and Emotional Learning
- Learning and the Brain
- Character Education
- Education and the Inner Life, including:
  - Spirituality in Education
  - Soul in Education
  - Contemplation in Education
  - Transformative Professional Development

What follows is a chronological review of these historical movements, with the exception of Primary Prevention and Positive Youth Development described briefly above.<sup>9</sup> We will look separately at the end of this section at the evolution of “spirituality in education”—still in the early phases of becoming a coherent pedagogical movement. In many ways it is the field most influential in shaping and most influenced by the PassageWays theory and model.

Over time, American public schools became ever more divorced from the inner life of students. Since the “common school” movement of the 1800s, American public schools have been consciously secular, reflecting the Constitutional division of church and state. However, there was often an implicit set of values in schools that (some would say, unfairly) reflect the dominant Protestant American worldview. For example, the curricula developed under the influence of Horace Mann “featured the more generic aspects of Protestantism and...led to the development of substantial numbers of Catholic private schools” (Anderson, 2004, p. 38). Catholic families left public schools in order to more explicitly integrate their religious beliefs and practices into their children’s education. By 1908, schools were based on a concept of “social efficiency” that emphasized “reductionism,” “meritocracy,” “hierarchy,” and “materialism” (Miller cited in Glazer, 1999, p. 191). Many, if not most, of these values are pervasive in today’s public school system.

Yet simultaneously, European and American theorists were thinking deeply about education and experimenting with alternative models. In the 1800s, Johann Pestalozzi, a Swiss educational reformer, worked to bring education to the poor and to pace academic instruction according to the needs of individual children (PestalozziWorld, 2006); Friedrich Froebel started the first kindergarten in 1836, which he centered on the notion of keeping children engaged through play and sensory stimulation as they absorbed knowledge from their classroom environment (FroebelWeb, 2006). In America, Bronson Alcott and the American Transcendentalists brought into schools the idea that learning was an open-ended dialogue between students and teachers and a belief in children’s innate goodness (Alcott.net, 2006). By the turn of the 20th century, John Dewey began to promote a philosophy of “progressive education” and “progressive schools” in which each student’s *experience* was central to learning and young people were viewed as citizens who needed to be thoroughly prepared to participate in democratic society. Defining the “moral meaning” of democracy, John Dewey wrote that “the supreme task of all political institutions...shall be the

contribution they make to the all-round growth of every member of society” (1957, p. 186). The progressive schools flourished between 1915 and 1950, and then fell on hard times as American society became more conservative politically and socially in the 1950s and progressivism was lumped together with communism as dangerously radical (Ron Miller, 2006).<sup>10</sup>

Elsewhere mid-century, pioneers such as Maria Montessori and Rudolf Steiner developed educational models based on educating the “whole child.” The Montessori curriculum “creates environments which foster the fulfillment of [children’s] highest potential—spiritual, emotional, physical and intellectual—as members of a family, the world community and the Cosmos” (Countryside-Montessori.com, 2006). Steiner’s Waldorf School philosophy works to actively nurture children’s spiritual development and requires teachers to act as spiritual role models. The entire Waldorf curriculum is designed to correlate with the healthy moral and spiritual development of students at an age-appropriate level. Through myth, story, recitation, poetry, art, movement, and actual school materials, students explore the human condition, as it is connected (in a non-denominational way) to the Divine and to Nature (Thom Schaefer, 2006).<sup>11</sup> Both Montessori and Waldorf schools of thought mostly remained separate from mainstream American education until recently when schools in the charter movement and other public alternative school structures have adopted or adapted these philosophies and methods.

It wasn’t until the late 1960s and early 1970s that (mostly young) Americans began to question the exclusion of the inner life of students and teachers from schools. The civil rights movement, the women’s movement, the anti-war movement, and the environmental movement all created a climate of cultural change that influenced students, educators, and parents to re-examine and transform American education. The resulting pedagogy emphasized children’s emotional life and looked at students as individuals, not to be filled with knowledge, but allowed to experience their world and to construct meaning and personal relevance between learning and life. Teachers were encouraged to work with students in a more authentic, personal way—as mentors and friends, not strictly professional educators. Several widely read books such as *Summerhill* by A. S. Neill (1960) and *How Children Fail* by John Holt (1964, revised 1995), initiated the “free school” movement. Although the Free Schools lost support during the 1970s, some of the ideas on which they were founded have since been integrated into Holistic Education (Ron Miller, 2006).

The late 1960s and early 1970s saw the growth of the Affective Education movement, which introduced classroom methods for developing self-concept, self esteem, values clarification and conflict resolution. The early development of the PassageWays Model was strongly influenced by practical hands-on texts such as *Values Clarification* (Simon, Howe, & Kirschenbaum, 1971) and *101 Ways to Develop Student Self-Esteem and Responsibility* (Canfield & Siccone, 1976) which provided activities that were widely used by classroom teachers and later refined and incorporated by curriculum developers for Social and Emotional Learning Programs. In 1971, George Brown wrote “Human Teaching for Human Learning: An Introduction to Confluent Education” which describes a pedagogy in which the emotional life is as much a part of classroom education as is the intellectual life (cited in Miller, 2006).

The “constructivist” movement built on the Swiss psychologist Jean Piaget’s research showing that children need to interact with the world in order to “build” their understanding of it. (R. Miller, 2006). “Cooperative learning” also came into mainstream conversation at this time, presaging what would eventually become recognition of the importance of relationships in education.

During the 1980s, researchers began to look at implications of brain function for teaching and learning. In 1984, Howard Gardner’s groundbreaking book, *Frames of Mind*, revealed that humans come to know their world in many different ways—not just cognitively. Gardner’s Multiple Intelligence theory originally identified eight “intelligences,” providing a foundation for

teachers to respond to and cultivate not only cognitive intelligence, but a broad range of human capacities including interpersonal (social) and intrapersonal (emotional) intelligences. Later, in *Intelligence Reframed: Multiple Intelligences for the 21st Century* (Gardner, 1999), he added more intelligences, including “existential intelligence”—the capacity to ask profound questions about the nature of life and death.

At this same time, however, the main thrust of public education was “back to basics,” following the 1983 report from the Reagan Administration: *A Nation at Risk*. Gardner’s findings were at odds with the report’s emphasis on the “New Basics”—recommendations for more rigorous standardized testing and longer school days, which resulted in the reduction of arts/music and affective programs in favor of more direct, academic instruction.

The growing alarm over self-destructive behavior in youth led to a series of “prevention wars” in schools during the 1980s—one fad after another of disconnected programs, fading as attention moved on to new issues and approaches (Shriver & Weissberg, 1996). Later the field of Social and Emotional Learning developed a systematic, integrated, theory-based approach that comprehensively addressed these issues. Conflict Resolution Education (CRE) was also introduced to schools beginning in the mid-1980s. Some CRE program leaders, such as Linda Lantieri, then with the Resolving Conflict Creatively Program, systematized and broadened the scope of CRE through collaboration with SEL and contributed relevant CRE methods to comprehensive SEL programs.

Outside of public education, another movement was gaining ground in the 1980s: holistic education. Ron Miller, a historian of alternative education and founder of the *Holistic Education Review*, describes this pedagogy as “the art of cultivating meaningful relationships” (R. Miller in Glazer, 1999, pp. 193–196) and is based on three principles: connectedness, inclusion, and balance (R. Miller, cited in J. P. Miller, 2005, p. 2). The holistic education philosophy builds on the humanistic and progressive education interests in educating the whole child, and adds a “spiritual aspect” (J. P. Miller, 2005, p.2), expressed in the principle of “connectedness.” In *To Know as We Are Known*, Parker Palmer began to write about what came to be known in the 1990s as the “spiritual formation” of students and teachers. Also raising awareness about the importance of meaningful relationship to learning in higher education, Palmer emphasized the use of silence in learning and wrote that “knowing is a profoundly communal act” (Palmer, 1983, p. xv), describing “ethical education” as a process “that creates a capacity for connectedness in the lives of students” (Palmer, 1993, p. xviii). Although written in the early 1980s, this early exploration of the spiritual dimension of education was not discovered by most K-12 educators until after the millennium.

“The schools have traditionally encouraged the concept of caring in a variety of ways.... However, the stress on competition and individuality narrows and undermines this impulse to care and nourish,” wrote David Purpel in *The Moral and Spiritual Crisis in Education*, noting the short shrift emotions had thus far been given. Purpel also cites Matthew Fox’s distinction between *compassion* and *sentimentality*, noting that, “Compassion is feelings with moral meaning” (Purpel, 1989, pp. 40–42).

The desire to explicitly incorporate moral growth into school curricula found a prominent voice in the Character Education movement of the 1990s. These programs identify and encourage students to embody specific moral values considered non-religious in nature. Lickona’s definitive *Educating for Character: How Our Schools Can Teach Respect and Responsibility* (1992) created a foundation for a field that has subsequently become organized and systematized through collaborative efforts both within the character education partnership and with related fields, such as social and emotional learning.

In the 1990s several related fields began to address the importance of emotions and human relationships in learning: emotional intelligence theory, social and emotional learning, learning

and the brain, and spirituality in education. Prior to the publication of his bestselling book *Emotional Intelligence* (1995), Daniel Goleman introduced the concept of *emotional literacy*—“a shorthand term for the idea that children’s emotional and social skills can be cultivated, and that doing so gives them decided advantages in their cognitive abilities, in their personal adjustment, and in their resiliency through life” (Goleman, 1994, pp. 33–34). This definition and the solid research behind it, gave educators a language and legitimacy for an aspect of education that has often been little understood or respected.

While researching his book, Goleman identified the scientists, social scientists, and educators who had been working for years to understand the key elements of emotional intelligence and to design programs that systematically enhanced children’s social and emotional competencies—recognizing and managing emotions, developing care and concern for others, making responsible decisions, creating and sustaining positive relationships, and resolving problems constructively. In 1994, researchers and implementers were convened to begin systematically building the field of social and emotional learning with the formation of the Collaborative for the Advancement of Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL). (Later CASEL changed its name, replacing “advancement” with “academic” to better address the immediate needs of school decision-makers.) Despite different approaches and styles, we shared a common set of principles and many similar practices that had emerged from implementing, researching, and refining programs since the late 1970s or early 1980s. Our first project was the truly collaborative writing of a guidebook to respond to an outpouring of interest among educators following Goleman’s book to define practical guidelines for fostering EQ in the classroom. I was part of a team of nine CASEL researchers and practitioners who collaborated to write *Promoting Social and Emotional Learning: Guidelines for Educators* (Elias et al., 1997) which introduced SEL broadly into mainstream public education. CASEL has subsequently worked to widely disseminate information on SEL best practice, to help educational leaders bridge science and practice by putting research and theory into action in schools, and at the policy level, to help develop state legislators create SEL learning standards.

At the same time, the field of the brain-based learning emerged with theorists such as Eric Jensen, Renate and Geoffrey Caine, Pat Wolf, and Robert Sylwester recognizing the central importance of emotion in learning. “Emotion is very important to the educative process,” wrote Sylwester, “because it drives attention, which drives learning and memory” (Sylwester, 1995, p. 72). To ensure effective learning, he emphasized the need for a positive emotional climate in the classroom and an emotionally rich curriculum.

In summary, the PassageWays Model integrates many principles and practices of the movements and theoretical models that precede it, and adds another layer of growth. PassageWays combines the following: the Humanistic, Waldorf, Montessori, and Holistic views of students as multi-layered “seekers, as young pilgrims well aware that life is a finite journey and...anxious to make sense of it” (Coles, 1990, p. xvi); the Constructivist, Montessori, Cooperative Learning, and Parker Palmer’s belief in learning as a communal act that must engage students on various levels; the acknowledgment of social and emotional forms of intelligence inherent in MI theory as well as the EQ, Learning and the Brain, and CRE belief that emotional intelligence and social competency are life-skills that can and must be taught if students are to succeed and individuals and schools are to be safe; and the Character Education conviction that ethical behavior can and should be developed in secular schools. Yet the approach I have shepherded and developed into the PassageWays Model since its inception in 1985 added several layers by including theory and practices for nurturing the inner life of students and teachers and creating practical as well as theoretical connections between the teacher’s personal growth and presence and the safety and possibility of student development in this domain.



## EDUCATION AND THE INNER LIFE

Distinct from the exploration of religion in American education, the inquiry into a non-religious spirituality<sup>12</sup> in teaching and learning was launched in the 1980s with Parker Palmer's book described above, *To Know As We Are Known* (1983). In the early 1990s, I published a definition of the spiritual dimension of student learning and of the professional development of teachers based on my own observations of students, teachers, and practices in the Mysteries Program and in dialogue with colleagues at national conferences on holistic education (Kessler, 1990, 1991). In 1994, the Fetzer Institute launched the field of "teacher formation" in collaboration with Palmer, which led to the Courage to Teach program. This approach focuses on the personal and professional renewal of educators, and asserts a connection between the renewal of a teacher's spirit and the revitalization of public education. At the same time, University of Toronto professor Jack Miller, a longstanding leader in holistic education, began to publish extensively on contemplative teacher preparation, and later, on a curriculum that includes the spiritual dimension. The development of theory and practice to address the relationship between the teacher's inner life and his or her effectiveness as a teacher—a core concept in the PassageWays model—was central to these early programs and others such as the Contemplative Education Department at Naropa University founded by Richard Brown in 1990. Since 2001, this focus on renewing and transforming the inner lives of teachers can be seen in Lantieri's Project Renewal, the Mind and Life Institute's Emotional Balance Project, the Fetzer Institute research initiative on "Transformative Professional Development: The influence of emotional, spiritual, and personal development of educators on public education," as well as the Garrison Institute's Initiative on Awareness and Concentration for Learning.

Throughout the 1990s, this exploration of spirituality was extended to the classroom, although primarily in alternative school settings and in colleges and universities where holistic education professors were developing theory and practice specifically focused in this new domain.<sup>13</sup> In public schools, there was a growing tension between the yearning of many teachers for deepening and broadening their practice to address the inner life and forces driving these practices even further out of public schools. The "culture wars" of this era created a climate of fear around any ideas or practices that might be identified with religion or spirituality. Liberals feared that "fundamentalists" would sue them as "New Agers" if they introduced a spiritual dimension into the classroom. Christians feared that secularists would paralyze their efforts to provide spiritual guidance to children in schools. Seeking a respectful way to deal with our differences, we educators turned away from matters of religion and spirituality altogether (Kessler, 2000).

Not only spirituality but also the arts and anything related to the affective domain were systematically diminished or excluded from K-12 classrooms and teacher education in response to early interpretations of the standards movement launched by the publication of *A Nation at Risk*, and culminating in 2000 with the revision of the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act.

In the late 1990s, when for the reasons above a narrow academic focus was controlling the agenda of schools, ASCD, the largest organization of mainstream educators, sensed a strong undercurrent among teachers of yearning for something more. When they took the risk of devoting an entire issue of their journals to "spirit in education," they received more unsolicited manuscripts of outstanding quality and follow-up inquiries than they had for any previous issue. Within the covers of *Educational Leadership* and *Classroom Leadership* were the seeds of a dialogue, long overdue in public education, about integrating the spiritual dimension into education. Their decision to publish *The Soul of Education* as a membership book, sending it to over 110,000 educators, grew directly out of their recognition of the need to inform and stimulate

this conversation. Two key factors allowed ASCD to risk publishing a book about the spiritual dimension of education in such a political and educational climate that was resistant and even hostile to this realm: (1) in “Seven Gateways to the Soul of Students,” the theoretical framework for understanding the domains of experience that nurture “soul” comes not from any religious or philosophical tradition but from fifteen years of listening to and observing students themselves; and (2) the concepts and practices included carefully respect the diversity of educator and family worldviews so that the book was endorsed across the spectrum of political and educational belief. In the years following ASCD’s groundbreaking initiatives, a steady stream of publications continue to bring the dialogue into public education, including an issue devoted to the “spiritual dimension of leadership” in *The School Administrator* (2002), which went to every superintendent in the country, and numerous collections such as Linda Lantieri’s *Schools with Spirit: Nurturing the Inner Lives of Children and Teachers* (2001), Jack Miller and Yoshiharu Nakagawa’s *Nurturing Our Wholeness: Perspectives on Spirituality in Education* (2002), journal articles on education and in the popular press, and new conceptual frameworks such as Palmer’s *The Courage to Teach* (2002) and Tobin Hart’s *From Information to Transformation: Education for the Evolution of Consciousness* (2001) and *The Secret Spiritual Life of Children* (2003).

Since the first Naropa Conference on Spirituality in Education in 1997 and increasingly in this century, the Dalai Lama has inspired groups of educational practitioners and researchers, as well as neuroscientists, to include in mainstream schools the tools to foster compassion and emotional balance. Carefully distinguishing this call from religious education or moral dicta, he talks about a secular spirituality (Glazer, 1999, p. 87) as a practical requirement for survival (McLeod, 2007, p. 61).

Calling this work by many names—“spirituality in education,” “soul in education,” “contemplation in education,”<sup>14</sup> “transformative professional development,” and “teacher formation”—educators, researchers, and institutes creating practice, theory, and research on the inner life in schooling have not yet progressed to the systematic field building, coordination, codification, and collaboration that now characterize the fields of SEL or Character Education. Many efforts have been made in this direction by a number of groups, some of which overlap. For example, since 1997 a series of international conferences on Spirituality in Education, Soul in Education, and Contemplation in Education have brought together practitioners and theorists to define a vision and best practices for this domain. In the late 1990s, a Spirituality and Education Special Interest Group was formed in the American Educational Research Association (AERA) under the leadership of Professor Bob London and the holistic education strand of ASCD changed its name to include Spirituality in Education.<sup>15</sup> Their efforts have focused on spirituality in higher education (not the focus of this chapter), on the professional development of teachers, and on methods that can be integrated with students in pre-K-12 public education. In the new millennium, several groups are working to map current programs and to promote collaboration in this field, including the Transformative Professional Development initiative of the Fetzer Institute, the Contemplation and Education initiative of the Garrison Institute, and the Spirituality and Education Network, which hosted in 2007 an international spirituality and education summit, convening leading scholars and practitioners to build from a loose network to more systematic collaboration, field mapping, and the creation of a journal for the field. The Garrison Report (Schoeberlein & Koffler, 2005) details a variety of programs nationwide that promote a sense of calm presence, emotional balance, and compassion in students and teachers. Through these initiatives and the changing climate in public education, the field of SEL has also begun to explore the incorporation of principles and practices that go beyond social and emotional competency to include a deeper connection to the inner life.

## Defining the Model

Through two approaches, the PassageWays Model provides systematic strategies for nurturing the inner life and providing a transformative approach to character development that addresses the neglected root causes of destructive behaviors. PassageWays Level One provides professional development in core principles and practices that can be integrated by the teacher into any grade level or subject area. Level Two builds upon that learning and provides carefully sequenced curricula for the school transition years.

For either level, safety in the classroom is the essential first step if we are to welcome the inner life into a classroom and help students make the choices that build and sustain a life of compassion and integrity. Students need to feel safe:

- to feel and know what they feel;
- to tolerate confusion, uncertainty;
- to express what they feel and think;
- to ask questions that feel “dumb” or “have no answers”;
- to take risks, make mistakes, grow and forgive;
- to wrestle with the impulses inside that lead us to harm.

To achieve this safety and openness, students and teachers in a classroom informed by PassageWays work together carefully for weeks and months to build the healthy relationships that lead to authentic community. “Creating community,” writes Ruth Charney in *Teaching Children to Care*, “means giving children the power to care.” She offers a perspective on discipline that speaks to the dual challenge we face in helping students cultivate the will to do no harm: “Teaching discipline requires two fundamental elements empathy and structure” (1994, pp. 14–15). Providing students with both of these elements takes commitment on behalf of the teacher and the school. In this volume, in chapter 9, “It takes time to develop relations of care and trust (Watson, 2003), and schools must make it legitimate for teachers to spend time doing this. Everything else should go better as a result” (pp. 167–168).

The PassageWays Model provides a framework for establishing both structure and a caring classroom environment. Early in the semester, students and teachers collaboratively create *agreements*<sup>16</sup>—conditions that students name as essential for speaking about what matters most to them. In classroom after classroom, across the country and the age span, students call for essentially the same qualities of behavior: respect, honesty, caring, listening fairness, openness, and commitment. Teachers add or emphasize “the right to pass”—the respect for individual pacing in the realm of the heart that is essential to safety and success in working with the inner life in schools. “A circle of trust consists of relationships that are neither invasive nor evasive” (Palmer, 2004, p. 64)—they also add “the willingness to learn about forgiveness when we make mistakes.” This inquiry about agreements raises awareness and makes explicit an ethical framework to which students become willing to hold each other accountable.

Sometimes, it becomes necessary for teachers to hold students accountable for their actions or comments, that is, to discipline them. For educators who strive to foster strong personal connections and create equitable, compassionate classrooms, disciplining disrespectful students becomes very complex. Yet, in the PassageWays model, adults *must* accept the responsibility for ensuring the emotional, social, and physical safety of all students (Kessler, 1991). Marilyn Watson, educational psychologist and author of “Developmental Discipline and Moral Education,” (chapter 10, this volume) explains how teachers can constructively address this dilemma, writing:

When teachers need to take controlling actions in order to create a caring and productive learning environment, they try not to display anger and try to honor the child's good will by providing some autonomy and the message that the student is still part of the community. To help students see such disciplinary actions as efforts to solve problems rather than punishments, teachers can either explain these procedures or ideally generate with the students non-punitive ways teachers can solve problems of student misbehavior (Battistich, Watson, Solomon, Schaps, & Solomon, 1991; DeVries & Zan, 1994; Nucci, 2003). During calm moments, when their self-interest is not immediately pulling them toward misbehavior, students know that they should be kind, respectful, and fair and work hard at their learning tasks, and they understand the teacher's responsibility for maintaining order and balancing the needs of individual students with the needs of the whole class. (Watson, this volume, p. 195).

This approach to discipline “invites soul” in that it places teachers and students in the roles of co-creators of classroom success. The teacher's response to misbehavior arises from an assumption that students ultimately want to belong to a caring classroom community. Nel Noddings takes a similar approach, saying, “It is not tougher penalties that will produce acceptable behavior, but, rather, the deeply held desire to remain in a cherished caring relation” (chapter 9 this volume). As always in the PassageWays model, the teacher and student(s) collaborate to create an environment where authenticity, connection, and compassion can emerge despite and often resulting from challenges and conflicts.

PassagesWays uses *play* to help students focus, relax, and become a team through laughter and cooperation. In addition to strengthening community and helping students to wake up and be fully present, games and *expressive arts* engage students in moving their bodies—essential for unwinding the nervous system and a process by which students can learn to cope with overstimulation and stress.

*Symbols* that students create, bring into class, or choose from the teacher's collection allow teenagers to speak indirectly about feelings and thoughts that are awkward to address head on. In PassagesWays, symbols are a powerful way to help students move quickly and deeply into their feelings. “Take some time this week to think about what is really important to you in your life right now,” we tell the high school seniors in a course designed to be a rite of passage from adolescence to adulthood. “Then find an object which can symbolize what you realize is so important to you now.” Responding to this assignment, students tell their stories:

This raggedy old doll belonged to my mother. I have been cut off from my mother during most of high school. We just couldn't get along. But now that we know I'm going to leave soon, we have suddenly discovered each other again. I love her so much. My relationship to my mother is what is really important to me now.

A principal in Canada shared a story during one of my workshops from her days of teaching a first and second grade class where she also worked with symbols:

I talked with my students about life being like a journey. As little as they were, they seemed to understand. Then I asked them to look for an object in nature that reminded them of themselves and of their journey.

A second grade boy brought in two jars filled with shells. “I call these ‘brain shells,’ he said pointing to the first jar. “They remind me of me because I'm very smart.”

Then, he held up the jar in which the same shells were crushed. “These crushed shells remind me of me too. They remind me of how hard I am on myself when I don't do things just right.”

While symbols are particularly important for adolescents because they allow an indirectness of expression at a time when young people need to create a separate sense of self, we see that even for young children, symbols lead to profound self-awareness; and self-awareness, which Goleman (1995) considers the foundation skill of emotional intelligence, is essential to deep connection to the self and to meaningful communication that allows deep connection with others.

Symbols can also be used as a private exercise in reflection and self-awareness. In *PassageWays*, teachers give students many opportunities to work in this way: “Draw or sculpt a symbol of what you are feeling right now. You don’t need to show it to anyone else. It’s just for you.” Or, “Write a metaphor about what friendship means to you. You can share it with the group or keep it for yourself, putting it in your folder to look at when the semester ends.” As with the “right to pass,” these expressions of teacher respect for student privacy and pacing encourage self-respect and invite a deeper dimension into the classroom. “If we want to welcome the soul,” writes Parker Palmer in *A Hidden Wholeness*, “we must avoid pressure of any sort” (Palmer, 2004, p. 78).

*Questions of wonder* or *mysteries questions* are another tool in *PassageWays* for encouraging students to discover what is in their hearts. Once trust and respect has been established in the classroom, we give students the opportunity to write *anonymously* the questions they think about when they can’t sleep at night, or when they’re alone or daydreaming in class.

- Why am I here? Does my life have a purpose? How do I find it?
- I have been hurt so many times, I wonder if there is a God.
- How does one trust oneself or believe in oneself?
- How can I *not* be a cynic?
- Why are we so cold in taking care of our planet?
- Why this emptiness in this world, in my heart? How does this emptiness get there, go away, and then come back again?
- Why am I so alone? Why do I feel like the burden of the world is on my shoulders?
- Will the environment survive for my children and grandchildren?
- Why do I feel scared and confused about becoming an adult? What does it mean to accept that this is *my* life and I have responsibility for it?
- Why was I given a divorced family?
- When will the war end?

These are some of thousands of questions I have gathered from teenagers aged 12 to 18 since the mid-1980s. And from students in our *PassageWays* Newcomer Transition Program, we read questions such as:

- What would have happened if I hadn’t come?
- How will my life be if I continue to feel so alone?
- Will I have a family in the future?
- I wonder if I’ll ever be able to see my mom again.
- I wonder if some day I’ll be able to forget all the bad things that were said and done to me and perhaps speak again to the person without resentment.

When students hear the collective “mysteries” of their own classroom community read back to them by their teachers in an honoring tone, there is always one student who says, “I can’t believe I’m not alone anymore.” And then another will say, “I can’t believe *you* people wrote *those*

questions.” Sharing their deep concerns, their curiosity, wonder, and wisdom, students begin to discover a deep interest in their peers—even the ones they have always judged to be unworthy of their attention and respect. The capacity for empathy is stirred.

Into this profound interest in their peers, we introduce the practice of Council, the core of the PassageWays approach and of several other programs as well.<sup>17</sup> With everyone sitting in a circle where all can see and be seen, the Council process allows each person to speak without interruption or immediate response. Students learn to listen deeply and discover what it feels like to be truly heard. As each student reflects on the same theme, or tells a story from their life that illustrates how they currently think or feel about the theme, students who listen deeply find themselves “walking in another person’s shoes.” “Multiple perspective-taking” (a core concept in SEL) is a skill and an experience that leads not only to critical and creative thinking but to the development of empathy and compassion as well.

This newfound empathy leads to the softening of social barriers amongst students. “I remember you guys, and I bet you remember me,” said Richard, his voice quavering as he said his good-byes to the students in his Senior Passages course:

I was the guy you threw food at in the lunchroom. I was the kid you hurled insults at—like geek and dork. Well, you know what? I’m still a geek. I’m still a dork. I know that and so do you. But I also know something else.

In the weeks and months of listening to your stories, and you listening to mine, I’ve seen that even the most beautiful girls in this class—the most beautiful girls in the world—have suffered with how they look or how others see them. I’ve shared your pain and you’ve shared mine.

You guys have really taken me in. You’ve accepted me and respected me. I love you guys, and I know you love me.

“Apprehending the other’s reality, feeling what he feels as nearly as possible,” says Nel Noddings in *Caring: A Feminine Approach to Ethics and Moral Education*, “is the essential part of caring from the view of the one caring. For if I take on the other’s reality as possibility and begin to feel its reality, I feel also that I must act accordingly” (1984, p. 16). In Richard’s story, we can see clearly the possibilities for compassion and caring that arise when students have the opportunity to meet as a group in ways that go beyond civility, beyond cooperation, to discover a genuine communing—heart to heart, soul to soul. Even students who are estranged, alienated, or who see themselves as enemies have experienced through PassageWays the joy of transcending mistrust, stereotypes, and prejudice that felt like permanent barriers.

In *Turning to One Another*, Meg Wheatley (2002) describes the practice of “bearing witness” that captures the experience that many young people discover as they sit in a Council circle, silently supporting their peers.

A few years ago, I was introduced to the practice of “bearing witness.” This is not a religious practice. Rather, it’s a simple practice of being brave enough to sit with human suffering, to acknowledge it for what it is, to not flee from it. It doesn’t make the suffering go away although it sometimes changes the experience of pain and grief. When I bear witness, I turn toward another and am willing to let their experience enter my heart. I step into the picture by being willing to be open to their experience, to not turn away my gaze. (2002, p. 82)

As our students learn to keep their hearts and minds open to both the suffering and joy of their schoolmates, the will to do no harm is awakened or strengthened. “You cannot harm a man whose story you have heard,” says Toke Moller, a Danish leadership educator, quoting an



unnamed Kenyan poet. A sixth grade student in a PassageWays class put it this way: “When I really get to know someone, I just can’t be mean to them any more.”

In a time when many children are programmed into full time social situations from an early age, students also yearn for solitude and silence. In PassageWays, we offer students an opportunity to experience stillness, solitude, and silent reflection practiced in the company of others. *Silence* becomes a comfortable ally as we pause to digest one story and wait for another to form or when teachers call for moments of stillness, self-containment and/or reflection through the practice of “solo time,” or when the room fills with feeling at the end of a class.

In the weeks before we introduce Council, we offer many activities designed as building blocks for learning deep listening and authentic speaking—listening and speaking from the heart. Learning to tolerate and enjoy silence, to communicate in ways that allow us to be truly seen and heard, students gain further tools for unwinding their nervous systems from the trauma of too much, too fast, too soon. Numbing begins to melt as their feelings are called forth in the mirror of other students’ stories or in the silence and stillness that slows the busy mind.

*Initiation*, or a “rite of passage,” is the final core principle in the set of practices included in the PassageWays approach. We provide teachers systematically sequenced curricula that support and mark the pivotal and vulnerable transitions students make as they navigate the losses, challenges, and thrill of moving from one stage of development to another, and one school level to the next.

Some American teenagers are blessed with meaningful confirmations, bar and bat mitzvahs, quinceanera ceremonies in the Mexican community, or initiation journeys offered by the Buddhist or African-American communities. But most of our youth today have no opportunity to be guided by responsible adults through the loneliness and confusion of the adolescent journey. Not only the youth but the entire community suffers. “Because of the unhappy loss of this kind of initiatory experience, the modern world suffers a kind of spiritual poverty and a lack of community,” says Malidoma Some. “Young people are feared for their wild and dangerous energy, which is really an unending longing for initiation” (1994, p. 68). Students who have had the opportunity to experience the support of a school program designed to be a rite of passage learn that they can move on to their next step with strength and grace. “A senior in high school must make colossal decisions whether he or she is ready or not,” writes Carlos, a student in the Senior Passage Program, describing the meaning of PassageWays for his life. He adds:

The more people can be honest about and aware of their own needs when making these decisions, the healthier the decisions will be. This class has provided me with an environment that allows me to clear my head, slow down, and make healthy choices for me.

A young woman from Colorado described it this way:

It is difficult for me to express the depth and meaning of this group in a way that does it justice. It has taught me that I have the power to control my destiny, but also to let it guide me when necessary. I have learned to see the beauty in myself, others, the world. Along with this I have become more accepting of my weaknesses. The group has created an environment for all of us to see and learn things that have always been present, just not recognized.

One of the most moving “prevention strategies” I have ever witnessed was a circle of parents honoring their 8th grade daughters in a ceremony to culminate the rite of passage program designed to prepare these young women for the transition to high school. As their mothers and fathers reflected out loud on the growth and strength they saw in their daughters, tears streamed down the faces of the girls, melting the veneer of sophistication of these “popular girls” whose parents had been so afraid of the dangers that lay ahead. Witnessing this circle, I felt these young

women were being inoculated with a strong dose of self-worth and love that would protect them against the “lure of risk” (Elias et al., 1997, p. 9) awaiting them in 9th grade. One girl (who later became a leader in her high school) spoke through her tears: “I always thought that you saw me the way I do when I think the worst of myself. I had no idea you saw all these good things in me.” Honoring ceremonies for students in the PassageWays curriculum for the completion of elementary school provide a similar protection for students as they begin middle school. And, teachers who have used the curriculum for “Entering the Culture of Middle School” note that this program often interrupts the slide into incivility and meanness common to many middle school cultures: “With PassageWays, my students this year are so much kinder than I’ve ever seen in sixth grade” (Lamb, 2004).

Mythologist Michael Meade captures the dire consequences to our society when elders neglect the responsibility for initiating our youth. “If the fires that innately burn inside youths are not intentionally and lovingly added to the hearth of community, they will burn down the structures of culture, just to feel the warmth” (1993, p. 19).

What does it take for teachers to claim the role of elders who will “intentionally and lovingly” shepherd the energies of children and adolescents so their journey becomes one of awakening to their own responsibility, caring, and integrity?

### Teachers Who Welcome Soul

Since “we teach who we are” (Palmer, 1998, p. 1) teachers who invite heart and soul into the classroom also find it essential to nurture their own spiritual development. This may mean personal practices to cultivate awareness, serenity, and compassion, as well as collaborative efforts with other teachers to give and receive support for the challenges and joys of entering this terrain with their students.

We can have the best curricula available, train teachers in technique and theory, but our students will be unsafe and our programs hollow if we do not provide opportunities for teachers to develop their own souls, their own social and emotional intelligence. Students are reluctant to open their hearts unless they feel their teachers are on the journey themselves—working on personal, as well as curriculum integration. Professional development in the PassageWays Model integrates the four dimensions of “The Teaching Presence” into learning about theory and practice: Presence, an Open Heart, Discipline, and Emotional Range.

Here I will briefly summarize one of those dimensions—an open heart—or the *willingness to care*.

The capacity of the teacher to care deeply for students is the foundation of all the classroom practices described above. When students don’t trust adults—all too common in today’s society—they are not motivated to learn from those adults. And they will certainly not embrace our values or ethical beliefs. “The bonds that transmit basic human values from elders to the young are unraveling,” wrote Brendtro and colleagues in “Adult Wary and Angry.” “If the social bond between adult and child is absent, conscience fails to develop and the transmission of values is distorted or aborted” (Brendtro, Brokenleg, Van Bockern et al., 1995, pp. 35–43).

In their classic book *Reclaiming Youth at Risk*, Brendtro et al. note that “research shows that the quality of human relationships in schools and youth service programs may be more influential than the specific techniques or interventions employed....”

Relationship-reluctant children need corrective relationships to overcome insecure attachments. The helping adult must be able to offer warm, consistent, stable, and non-hostile attachments.... Long before science proved the power of relationships, pioneers in psychology and education discovered this on their own. (Brendtro et al., 1990, pp. 71–72)

Nel Noddings adds another dimension to understanding the crucial role of the caring bond between teachers and students:

Kids learn in communion. They listen to people who matter to them and to whom they matter... Caring relations can prepare children for an initial receptivity to all sorts of experiences and subject matters. (Noddings, 1992, p. 36)

Because his teacher cared deeply for his subject matter and for his students, my youngest son fell in love with physics after hating it for weeks and struggling with a failing grade. Inspired and supported by the extra care from that teacher, he took with him not only the “A” for achievement, but an attitude of openness to science and to all sorts of things that might not be appealing on first glance. The receptivity Noddings speaks of which grows out of authentic caring from adults is critical not only to academic learning but to the “transmission of values,” the willingness of our students to embrace the values and caring behavior we practice and preach.

Caring deeply for our students is essential, but it is not enough if we are to become the elders who can guide them through the confusions and complexity of living and choosing from a place of integrity and compassion. I believe that teachers and parents who are best able to lead adolescents on this journey are those who have been willing to wrestle with their own obstacles to a compassionate life. What are the conditions which bring out the worst in us? What triggers our own impulses to harm ourselves or others? When have we been hurt so deeply that our minds and hearts filled with thoughts of revenge and hate? How have we learned to forgive and what do we know about that journey? When have we acted in ways that produced suffering and how do we relate to those moments in our history? Can we take responsibility for our actions, make amends, and express remorse and accountability, while still bringing love and compassion and forgiveness to ourselves?

It may or may not be appropriate for us to speak directly to our students about these questions. The boundaries of their development as well as the boundaries of our own privacy often require us to keep the answers to ourselves. But the quality of our being with students, especially with adolescents, will reflect the degree to which we have lovingly and honestly reflected on our own moral development and the challenges and mistakes we have made along the way. The more that we can ride the paradox of being a person who is committed to living with integrity at the same time that “nothing human is alien to me,” the more our students will instinctively trust our guidance.

Dr. Rachel Naomi Remen describes the process that adults must undergo to discover the authentic wholeness that is, I believe, essential for a teacher seeking to guide the development of character in children. “Reclaiming ourselves usually means coming to recognize and accept that we have both sides of everything,” she writes in *Kitchen Table Wisdom*. “We are capable of fear and courage, generosity and selfishness, vulnerability and strength.... It is not an either/or world. It is a real world” (Remen, 1996, p. 37). No one, at no time, has an ear more tuned to what is real and what is pretense, what is character and what is hypocrisy in a teacher or parent than an adolescent with whom we are engaged in the enterprise of educating for character.

## FUTURE DIRECTIONS

The theory and model described throughout this essay continues to be expanded, refined, disseminated, and evaluated through the work of the PassageWays Institute (PWI), founded in 2001 to inspire, prepare, and support educators, on a broad systemic basis, to implement our model for

nurturing the inner lives of students. By “inner life” we refer to that essential aspect of human nature that yearns for deep connection, grapples with difficult questions about meaning, and seeks a sense of purpose and genuine self-expression. Building on over 20 years of professional and curriculum development and implementation in both public and private schools, PWI focuses in three areas that essential to bringing an innovative model from the margins to the mainstream: Research and Demonstration, Professional and Curriculum Development, and Outreach and Collaboration.

### Going to Scale

At several levels, PWI is working to open doors for wide-scale integration of the PassageWays Model into mainstream public schools on a systemic basis. In 2005, after several years of planning and coalition building, PWI launched a multi-year demonstration and research project in a large, diverse public high school in Northern Colorado with 1,800 students, 100 educators, and the support and collaboration of eight partner organizations. An additional demonstration and research project began in 2006 in two Missouri elementary schools, grades pre-K to 6 with 600 students and 60 educators. These pilot sites provide the opportunity to serve students and teachers while we learn and refine the PassageWays’ curriculum, leadership, and professional development models to meet the needs of mainstream public educators. Ideally, they will become flagship schools where we demonstrate the impact of our model on systemic transformation to create a culture of caring, self-awareness, reflection, and meaningful relationship with the potential to impact teacher satisfaction and retention, academic improvement and school safety, and the development of students’ and teachers’ inner lives.

The elementary school pilot program is working primarily at PassageWays Level One—a set of principles and practices that grow the “teaching presence,” foster learning readiness, and a caring learning community and can be infused and adapted by teachers into their existing practice with students. The high school pilot is working at Level Two—in which PassageWays provides detailed, carefully sequenced curricula for a more in-depth, systematic, and developmentally responsive use of our principles and practices. These curricula include advisory programs for incoming and outgoing high school students—*Journey into High School* and *The Senior Passage Course*—that are designed to build community, promote identity definition and resilience, and take students and teachers on an inward exploration of meaning, self-awareness, and a healthy process for navigating transitions. We are also developing a *Junior Service Learning Curriculum* that integrates the PassageWays model for nurturing the inner life with an explicit ethos of service and represents a new paradigm in service learning—one that integrates the outer life of service with the inner search for meaning, purpose, compassion, reflection, and reciprocity. This curriculum is designed to take students beyond a rule-based virtue to an empathy-based virtue. And the *Newcomers Transition Curriculum* serves high school students who are immigrants, offering them an opportunity to honor the people, lands, cultures, and personal identities they have left behind; reclaim and integrate aspects of their past identities; and become empowered to move with strength and confidence as they transition into a new school, culture, and country.

These pilot programs also allow us to begin to gather the evidence essential for any educational program to broadly enter the public educational system. The research team’s preliminary review of Year One quantitative data results pertaining to the effect of our curricula on teachers in the high school reveals promising differences over time of measured variables. These differences were most notable by gender, with male teachers reporting more positive changes over time than did females. Males identified such changes as: having more strategies to help students form relationships and handle issues constructively; being more comfortable in being flexible with lesson plans to take advantage of “teachable moments”; and feeling that their students were more

comfortable expressing compassion and practicing tolerance. Females showed modestly significant positive differences on how capable they felt in being able to provide the kind of education they want to offer in their classes and in their effectiveness in creating opportunities for students to develop meaningful connections with each other (Marquart & Edwards, 2006).

In addition, PWI continues to provide the Soul of Education Foundation Course for educators who come individually and in small teams from schools around the world. Some of these teachers return home to integrate Level One into their own classrooms, others implement a PWI curriculum in their classroom, or become catalysts for more grade-wide or school-wide implementation of our curricula.

To serve the demonstration sites and prepare for broad dissemination, PWI is completing a series of curricula for elementary, middle, and high school transitions and preparing and supporting a core faculty who provide professional development.

Finally, the Institute is committed to ongoing efforts to form strategic alliances with program leaders, theorists and researchers in related fields, to add to the body of knowledge available to the education community regarding appropriate strategies for integrating the inner lives of students into teaching and learning, and to work with strategic allies to continue to influence the national dialogue regarding this dimension of education.

## CONCLUSION: CHARACTER EDUCATION OR EDUCATION FOR INTEGRITY

I have had more than an intellectual interest in the subject of educating for character and preventing violence to self and other. While my mother carried me in her womb, she learned that her three sisters and their entire families had been buried alive in the Ukraine by German soldiers. My father's parents were lost in the concentration camps in Poland. They named me for two of these women. The legacy of violence was in my marrow.

My professional mission has been to discover, cultivate, and share with as broad an audience as possible, the tools for educating a generation of children who would come to adulthood with the capacities and the motivation to create lives of compassion, peace, and meaning.

Students who have discovered a sense of meaning in their lives, who have a deep sense of belonging and reverence for life are protected from the self-destructive and violent impulses that ravage so many of their peers. They often have the will and the incipient tools for building social structures that can foster peace and justice at a larger scale.

In more than 20 years of working with the principles and practices of PassageWays, I have watched with deep satisfaction how students and their teachers begin to develop the fundamental capacities for inner peace and harmony with others:

- understanding and expressing their own feelings;
- empathy and compassion for others;
- managing the stress and anger, which unrelieved, becomes a hair-trigger for conflict or the erosion of health;
- decision-making skills that are responsive to their own health and well-being;
- conflict-resolution skills and group problem solving;
- sensitivity to, tolerance for, and appreciation for diverse cultures, learning styles, and beliefs.

The movement for character education has found a strong voice today in our schools and in 80% of our state legislatures. All of us, across the spectrum of belief, are hungering for a way

to build strong character in our youth. The word “character” comes from the word “to engrave.” Surely there is value when character education seeks to engrave in the minds of students a set of virtues, a capacity for moral discernment. But imprinting at the cognitive level is not enough. The best character education programs out there know this now.

When we are looking at character from the perspective of the soul, it is perhaps more useful to speak of educating for “integrity.” Integrity comes from the root “integer”—which means “undivided.”

The divided self is still capable of moral action. We can and should teach our children impulse control, and the ethical capacities to distinguish right from wrong, and to respect the commandments hallowed by great traditions. But we must also help young people discover an inner experience that is aligned with an outer life of action without harm. While it is not always simple and seamless, young people can develop an inner core of *being* peace, compassion, and respect, from which the doing and choosing of caring, fair, and just behaviors can flow in an undivided self.

Connection—meaningful, deep connection—is, I believe, the root of such compassion, attachment, and bonding. Teachers can create the conditions in the classroom that allow students to discover healthy relationships, meaningful attachment, and constructive bonding to people who deserve to be trusted.

Students who feel deeply connected don’t need guns to feel powerful. They don’t need danger and risk to feel fully alive. Out of connection grows compassion for themselves and for others—even for “Others” who have previously seemed alien and beyond the bounds of respect and care. And out of compassion grows character, a quality of character that recognizes in ourselves and in others the dangers of human frailty and the pervasive threat of the degradation and dehumanization we call evil. Out of connection and compassion comes a wanting inside that may start as a fragile whisper but matures into a loud voice determined to honor and protect life.

## NOTES

1. The phrase “grounded theory” refers to theory that is developed inductively from a corpus of data. (Analytictech.com)
2. For a more detailed account of the early formation of the PassageWays theory and model in relationship to the field of social and emotional learning and peace education, see Kessler (1997).
3. See page 14 for an explanation of the “questions of wonder” activity from which these derive.
4. When researchers studied the feelings of children and youth about the nuclear threat in the 1980s, they discovered that until the age of 13 or 14, children were very conscious of their fears, but also had hope that something could be changed. At 14, when the mechanisms of denial set in, teenagers lost their conscious awareness of their fear. With that loss came despair. The work of JoAnna Macy (1983) revealed that empowerment for change could only be reclaimed by going through the layers of numbness to feel the despair and the fear.
5. James Garbarino, April 22, 2000, on National Public Radio panel commenting on the Columbine school tragedy.
6. Including T. Berry Brazelton, Robert Coles, James P. Comer, Alvin Poussaint, and Judith Wallerstein.
7. Younger colleagues often take another view on the new pace of life. Particularly as this pace relates to technological innovation, they see it fostering evolutionary growth. “Rapid activity can increase spatial and visual learning,” says Katia Borg: “We also have to be more present in the moment—we don’t have as much time to prepare.... And, it’s teaching us to be comfortable with ambiguity and the unknown” (K. Borg, personal communication, Feb. 20, 2004).
8. For further information, see “The Teaching Presence” in *Virginia Journal of Education*, November 2000, Vol. 94, No. 2 or an extended version on [www.passageways.org](http://www.passageways.org).



9. For a thorough history of the field of Primary Prevention and Positive Youth Development, see chapter 1, *Positive Youth Development in the United States: Research Findings on Evaluations of Positive Youth Development Programs*; <http://Aspe.Hhs.Gov/Hsp/Positiveyouthdev99/> Dec. 31, 2006.
10. Ron Miller is a historian of alternative education, founder/editor of the *Holistic Education Review*, and author of eight books, including *What Are Schools For? Holistic Education in American Culture* (1990). Brandon, VT. He was interviewed by phone by Catherine Fink on December 22, 2006.
11. Thom Schaefer is the Pedagogical Dean of Faculty at the Shining Mountain Waldorf School in Boulder, CO. He was interviewed by phone by Catherine Fink on December 29, 2006.
12. We are not including here the endeavors to bring education about religion into schools and youth development programs, which is a large movement and field unto itself. While these two arenas often overlap and cross-fertilize, we focus here on theory and practice that can be included in public schools. The Search Institute recently launched The Center for Spiritual Development in Childhood and Adolescence,
13. See the early work of professors such as Richard Brown, Bob London, Aoestre Johnson, Jack Miller, and David Marshak, and for a more current "Survey of Transformative and Spiritual Dimensions of Higher Education," see Duerr, M., Zajonc, A., & Dana, D., *Journal of Transformative Education*, Vol. 1, No. 3, 177–211 (2003)
14. For a comprehensive look at practices considered "contemplative," see the beautiful visual created by the Center for Contemplative Mind in Society [www.contemplativemind.org/practices/tree.html](http://www.contemplativemind.org/practices/tree.html)
15. An interview with Professor Bob London, Director of the Spirituality and Education Network, confirmed much of the unwritten history of this movement. (December 2006)
16. In the language of adult groups, agreements would be called "ground rules" or "norms." We find the term more effectively engages students in a sense of empowerment over their classroom.
17. For an in-depth exploration of the practice of council, see Zimmerman and Coyle (1996). I am grateful to Jack Zimmerman for his original design of the model for the Mysteries Program and the mentoring he provided to me for many years.

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# **IV**

## **MORAL AND CHARACTER EDUCATION BEYOND THE CLASSROOM**



# 23

## Positive Youth Development in the United States: History, Efficacy, and Links to Moral and Character Education

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In the 20th century, childhood and adolescence came to be increasingly regarded as special periods of development in which children were provided extra support to learn and develop. Early in the century, American society assumed an increased sense of responsibility for the care of its young people, including increasing the reach of education, delaying entry into the workforce, and providing supports for families who, historically, had nurtured the development of children. As the century progressed, changes in family socialization created changes in conceptualization of school and community practices to support the family in its mission to raise successful children. (Weissberg and Greenberg, 1997)

In the mid-20th century, increases in juvenile crime and concerns about troubled youth led to the inception of federal funding initiatives to address these issues. These trends accelerated during the 1960s, as did national rates of poverty, divorce, out-of-wedlock births, family mobility, and single parenthood (Bumpass & Lu, 2000).

At first, interventions to support families and children were focused on reducing juvenile crime or transforming poor character in youth (e.g., Chilton & Markle, 1972). As youth problems became more prevalent, intervention and treatment responses for a wide range of specific problems were developed. In the last four decades of the 20th century, both services and policies designed to reduce the problem behaviors of troubled youth expanded. The effectiveness of these approaches has been extensively examined in a variety of research studies on substance abuse, conduct disorders, delinquent and antisocial behavior, academic failure, and teenage pregnancy (cf. Agee, 1979; Clarke & Cornish, 1978; Cooper, Altman, Brown, & Czechowicz, 1983; De Leon & Ziegenfuss, 1986; Friedman & Beschner, 1985; Gold & Mann, 1984).



Another approach to address youth problems was to prevent problems before they occurred. Prevention approaches emerged about a decade later than treatment approaches. These approaches sought to address the *circumstances* (families, schools, communities, peer groups) of children's lives. Often growing out of earlier treatment efforts, most prevention programs initially focused on the prevention of a single problem behavior (e.g., Berleman, 1980; Janvier, Guthmann, & Catalano, 1980; Moskowitz, 1989).

Prevention of youth problems in the 21st century has evolved from earlier models. Many early prevention efforts were not based on child development theory or research. As expanded investment in the evaluation sciences was initiated from the 1960s, prevention strategies changed as many approaches failed to show positive impact on youth problems including drug use, pregnancy, sexually transmitted disease, school failure, or delinquent behavior (cf. Ennett, Tobler, Ringwalt, & Flewelling, 1994; Kirby, Harvey, Claussenius, & Novar, 1989; Malvin, Moskowitz, Schaeffer, & Schaps, 1984; Mitchell DiCenso et al., 1997; Snow, Gilchrist, & Schinke, 1985; Thomas et al., 1992).

Faced with early failures, prevention program developers became increasingly aligned with the science of behavior development and change and began designing program elements to address predictors of specific problem behaviors identified in longitudinal and intervention studies of youth (Mrazek & Haggerty, 1994). A second generation of prevention efforts sought to use this information on predictors to interrupt the processes leading to specific problem behaviors. For example, drug abuse prevention programs began to address empirically identified predictors of adolescent drug use, such as peer and social influences to use drugs, and social norms that condone or promote such behaviors (cf. Ellickson & Bell, 1990; Flay et al., 1988; Pentz, Dwyer, et al., 1994; Pentz, MacKinnon, et al., 1989). These prevention efforts were often guided by theories about how people make decisions, such as the Theory of Reasoned Action (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980; Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975; Morrison, Simpson, Gillmore, Wells, & Hoppe, 1994), and the Health Belief Model (Janz & Becker, 1984; Rosenstock, Strecher, & Becker, 1988).

In the 1980s, these prevention efforts focused on predictors of a single problem behavior and came under increasing criticism. Critics urged prevention program developers to consider the co-occurrence of problem behaviors within the child, and the fact that there was extensive overlap in predictors across multiple problem behaviors. At the same time, prevention program developers were also encouraged to broaden their focus from individual predictors of problems to incorporate environmental predictors and individual-environment predictor interactions in their programs. Further, many critics advocated a focus on factors that promote positive youth development, in addition to focusing on reducing factors that predict problems. Such concerns, expressed by prevention practitioners, policymakers, and prevention scientists, helped expand the design of prevention programs to include components aimed at promoting positive youth development. These critics suggested that successful childhood and adolescent development required more than avoiding drugs, violence, school failure, or risky sexual activity. The promotion of children's social, emotional, cognitive, and moral development began to be seen as key to preventing problem behaviors (W. T. Grant Consortium on the School-Based Promotion of Social Competence, 1992).

In the 1990s, practitioners, policymakers, and prevention scientists adopted a broader focus for addressing youth issues (Pittman, O'Brien, & Kimball, 1993). Resourced with a growing body of research on the developmental etiology of problem and positive behaviors (Evans et al., 2005; Hawkins, Catalano, & Miller, 1992; Howell, Krisberg, Hawkins, & Wilson, 1995; Kellam & Rebok, 1992; Lipsey & Wilson, 1998; Moore, Lippman, & Brown, 2004; Mrazek & Haggerty, 1994; Newcomb, Maddahian, & Bentler, 1986) and comprehensive outcome reports from rigorous randomized and non-randomized controlled trials of positive youth development programs

(e.g., Durlak & Wells, 1997; Greenberg, 1996; Greenberg & Kusche, 1997; Hahn, Leavitt, & Aaron, 1994; Weissberg & Caplan, 1998), policymakers, practitioners, and prevention scientists were now converging in their focus on the developmental precursors of both positive and negative youth development.

In the late 1990s, youth development practitioners, the policy community, and prevention scientists reached similar conclusions about promoting better outcomes for youth. They all called for expanding programs beyond a single problem behavior focus and considering program effects on a range of positive and problem behaviors (Catalano, Hawkins, Berglund, Pollard, & Arthur, 2002; Kirby, Barth, Leland, & Fetro, 1991; National Research Council & Institute of Medicine, Chalk, & Phillips, 1996; Pittman, 1991). Prevention and developmental research provide substantial evidence that many youth outcomes, both positive and negative, are affected by the same predictors, including risk factors that increase the likelihood of problems and protective factors that appear to promote positive behavior or buffer the effects of risk exposure (Howell et al., 1995). The evidence that risk and protective factors are found across family, peer, school, and community environments led to recommendations that positive youth development interventions address multiple socialization forces—across family, school, community, peer, and individual (National Research Council & Institute of Medicine et al., 1996). This convergence in thinking has been recognized in forums on youth development including practitioners, policymakers (Pittman, 1991; Pittman & Fleming, 1991), and prevention scientists (National Research Council & Institute of Medicine 2002; National Research Council & Institute of Medicine et al., 1996; Weissberg & Greenberg, 1997) who have advocated that models of healthy development hold the key to both health promotion and prevention of problem behaviors.

## POSITIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT CONSTRUCTS

In reviewing the literature and conducting a consensus meeting of leading scientists sponsored by the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and National Institute for Child Health and Human Development (Catalano, Berglund, Ryan, Lonczak, & Hawkins, 1999), an operational definition of positive youth development constructs was created in 1997. This definition was further developed by a meeting of scientists organized by the Annenberg Sunnyslans Trust (Seligman et al., 2005). The following section provides a listing followed by a description of constructs addressed by youth development programs.

1. Promotes bonding
2. Fosters resilience
3. Promotes social competence
4. Promotes emotional competence
5. Promotes cognitive competence
6. Promotes behavioral competence
7. Promotes moral competence
8. Fosters self-determination
9. Fosters spirituality
10. Fosters self-efficacy
11. Fosters clear and positive identity
12. Fosters belief in the future
13. Provides recognition for positive behavior
14. Provides opportunities for prosocial involvement

15. Fosters prosocial norms
16. Fosters positive emotions
17. Promotes life satisfaction
18. Promotes strength of character

These constructs are described below.

### Promotes Bonding

Bonding is the emotional attachment and commitment a child makes to social relationships in the family, peer group, school, community, or culture. Child development studies frequently describe bonding and attachment processes as internal working models for how a child forms social connections with others (Ainsworth, Blehar, Waters, & Wall, 1978; Bowlby, 1973, 1979, 1982; Mahler, Pine, & Bergman, 1975). The interactions between a child and a child's caregivers build the foundation for bonding which is a key to the development of the child's capacity for motivated behavior. Positive bonding with an adult is crucial to the development of a capacity for adaptive responses to change, and growth into a healthy and functional adult. Good bonding establishes the child's trust in self and others. Poor bonding establishes a fundamental sense of mistrust in self and others, creating an emotional emptiness that the child may try to fill in other ways, possibly through drugs, impulsive acts, antisocial peer relations, or other problem behaviors (Braucht, Kirby, & Berry, 1978; Brook, Brook, Gordon, Whiteman, & Cohen, 1990; Kandel, Kessler, & Margulies, 1978).

The importance of bonding reaches far beyond the family. How a child establishes early bonds to caregivers will directly affect the manner in which the child later bonds to peers, school, the community, and culture(s). The quality of a child's bonds to these other domains is an essential aspect of positive development (Brophy, 1988; Brophy & Good, 1986; Dolan, Kellam, & Brown, 1989; Hawkins, Catalano, & Miller, 1992).

### Fosters Resilience

Resilience is an individual's capacity for adapting to change and stressful events in healthy and flexible ways. It has been identified in research studies as a characteristic of youth who, when exposed to multiple risk factors, show successful responses to challenges and use this learning to achieve successful outcomes (Hawkins, Catalano, Morrison et al., 1992; Masten, Best, & Garmezy, 1990; Rutter, 1985; Werner, 1989, 1995). The National Research Council & Institute of Medicine (1996, p. 4), have defined resilience as "patterns that protect children from adopting problem behaviors in the face of risk."

### Promotes Competencies

Competence covers five areas of youth functioning: social, emotional, cognitive, behavioral, and moral competencies.

#### *Social Competence*

Social competence involves a range of interpersonal skills that help youth integrate feelings, thinking, and actions in order to achieve specific social and interpersonal goals (Caplan et al., 1992; Weissberg, Caplan, & Sivo, 1989). These skills include encoding relevant social cues; ac-

curately interpreting those social cues; generating effective solutions to interpersonal problems; realistically anticipating consequences and potential obstacles to one's actions; and translating social decisions into effective behavior (Consortium on the School-Based Promotion of Social Competence, 1994).

### *Emotional Competence*

Emotional competence is the ability to identify and respond to feelings and emotional reactions in oneself and others. Salovey and Mayer (1989) identified five elements of emotional competence: knowing one's emotions, managing emotions, motivating oneself, recognizing emotions in others, and handling relationships. The W.T. Grant Consortium's list of emotional skills includes: "Identifying and labeling feelings, expressing feelings, assessing the intensity of feelings, managing feelings, delaying gratification, controlling impulses, and reducing stress" (W.T. Grant Consortium on the School-Based Promotion of Social Competence, 1992). Goleman (1995) has proposed empathy and hope as components of emotional intelligence.

### *Cognitive Competence*

Cognitive competence includes two overlapping but distinct sub-constructs. The W.T. Grant Consortium (1992, p. 136) defined the first form of cognitive competence as the ability to develop and apply the cognitive skills of "self-talk...the reading and interpretation of social cues...using steps for problem-solving and decision making...understanding the perspective of others...understanding behavioral norms...a positive attitude toward life, and self awareness."

The second aspect of cognitive competence is related to academic and intellectual achievement. The emphasis here is on the development of core capacities, including the ability to use logic, analytic thinking, and abstract reasoning.

### *Behavioral Competence*

Behavioral competence refers to effective action. The W.T. Grant Consortium (1992, p. 136) identified three dimensions of behavioral competence: Nonverbal communication ("through eye contact, facial expressiveness, tone of voice, gestures, style of dress"), verbal communication ("making clear requests, responding effectively to criticism...expressing feelings clearly"), and taking action ("walking away situations involving negative influences, helping others, participating in positive activities").

### *Moral Competence*

Moral competence is a youth's ability to assess and respond to the ethical, affective, or social justice dimensions of a situation. Piaget (1952, 1965) described moral maturity as both a respect for rules and a sense of social justice. Kohlberg (1963, 1969, 1981) defined moral development as a multistage process through which children acquire society's standards of right and wrong, focusing on choices made in facing moral dilemmas. Hoffman (1981) said that the roots of morality are in empathy, or empathic arousal, which has a neurological basis and can be either fostered or suppressed by environmental influences. He also asserted that empathic arousal eventually becomes an important mediator of altruism, a quality that many interventions try to promote in young people. Nucci (1997, 2001) considered fairness and welfare as central concerns for moral judgments.

### *Fosters Self-Determination*

Self-determination is the ability to think for oneself and to take action consistent with that thought. Fetterman, Kaftarian, and Wandersman (1996) defined self-determination as the ability to chart one's own course. Much of the literature on self-determination has emerged from work with disabled youth (Brotherson, Cook, Cunconan Lahr, & Wehmeyer, 1995; Field, 1996; Sands & Doll, 1996; Wehmeyer, 1996) and from cultural identity work with ethnic and minority populations (Snyder & Zoann, 1994; Swisher, 1996). While some writers expressed concern that self-determination may emphasize individual development at the expense of group-oriented values (Ewalt & Mokuau, 1995), others linked self-determination to innate psychological needs for competence, autonomy, and relatedness (Deci & Ryan, 1994).

### *Fosters Spirituality*

To incorporate religiosity and nontraditional forms of applied spiritual practice, spirituality is defined here to include affiliation, belief in a transcendent hierarchy of values, and practice relevant to both formal religion (which considers God-given values to be at the top of the hierarchy of values) and also less formal conceptions of spirituality such as internal reflection and considering a transcendental hierarchy of solely humanistic values (Berube et al., 1995). Although well-controlled evaluation studies are lacking, belief and practices related to spirituality have been associated with overall improvements in both physical health (Levin, 1996), mental health (Seybold & Hill, 2001), and happiness (Myers, 2000), and in some research with the development of a youth's moral reasoning, moral commitment, or a belief in the moral order (Hirschi, 1969; Stark & Bainbridge, 1997). Recent reviews of the relationship between religiosity and adolescent well-being found that religiosity was positively associated with prosocial values and behavior, and negatively related to suicide ideation and attempts, substance abuse, premature sexual involvement, and delinquency (Benson, 1992; Benson, Donahue, & Erickson, 1989; Donahue & Benson, 1995). As there are research findings that challenge the contribution of spirituality (Sloan, Bagiella, & Powell, 1999); better designed studies are required to convincingly establish the contribution of spirituality to youth development and to explain the underlying processes.

### *Fosters Self-Efficacy*

Self-efficacy is the perception that one can achieve desired goals within specific domains (e.g., educational attainment) through one's own action. Bandura (1989, p. 1175) stated that "Self-efficacy beliefs function as an important set of proximal determinants of human motivation, affect, and action. They operate on action through motivational, cognitive, and affective intervening processes." Others have documented that the stronger the perceived self-efficacy, the higher the goals people set for themselves and the firmer their commitment to them (Locke, Frederick, Lee, & Bobko, 1984).

### *Fosters Clear and Positive Identity*

Clear and positive identity is the internal organization of a coherent sense of self. The construct is associated with the theory of identity development emerging from studies of how children establish their identities across different social contexts, cultural groups, and genders. Identity is viewed as a "self-structure," an internal, self-constructed, dynamic organization of drives, abili-

ties, beliefs, and individual history, which is shaped by the child's navigation of normal crises or challenges at each stage of development (Erikson, 1968). Erikson described overlapping yet distinct stages of psychosocial development that influence a child's sense of social identity throughout life, but which are especially critical in the first 20 years. If the adolescent or young adult does not achieve a healthy identity, role confusion can result. Developmental theorists assert that successful identity achievement during adolescence depends on the child's successful resolution of earlier stages.

Stages of identity development may be linked to gender differences in preadolescence and adolescence (Josephs, Markus, & Tafarodi, 1992). Investigations of the positive identity development of gay and bisexual youth have become a focus for some researchers (Johnston & Bell, 1995). For youth of color, the development of positive identity and its role in healthy psychological functioning is closely linked with the development of ethnic identity (Mendelberg, 1986; Parham & Helms, 1985; Phinney, 1990, 1991; Phinney, Lochner, & Murphy, 1990; Plummer, 1995), issues of bicultural identification (Phinney & Devich Navarro, 1997), and bicultural or cross-cultural competence (LaFromboise, Coleman, & Gerton, 1993; LaFromboise & Rowe, 1983). Some have suggested that it is healthy for ethnic minority youth to be consciously socialized to understand the multiple demands and expectations of both the majority and minority culture (Spencer, 1990; Spencer & Markstrom Adams, 1990). This process may offer psychological protection through providing a sense of identity that captures the strengths of the ethnic culture and helps buffer experiences of racism and other risk factors (Hill, Piper, & Moberg, 1994).

#### *Fosters Belief in the Future*

Belief in the future is the internalization of hope and optimism about possible outcomes. This construct is linked to studies on long-range goal setting, belief in higher education, and beliefs that support employment or work values: "Having a future gives a teenager reasons for trying and reasons for valuing his life" (Prothrow-Stith, 1991, p. 57). Research demonstrates that positive future expectations predict better social and emotional adjustment in school, while acting as a protective factor in reducing the negative effects of high stress on self-rated competence (Wyman, Cowen, Work, & Kerley, 1993).

#### *Provides Recognition for Positive Behavior*

Recognition for positive involvement is the positive response of those in the social environment to desired behaviors by youths. According to social learning theory, behavior is in large part a consequence of the reinforcement or lack of reinforcement that follows action. Behavior is strengthened through reward (positive reinforcement) and avoidance of punishment (negative reinforcement) or weakened by aversive stimuli (positive punishment) and loss of reward (negative punishment) (Akers, Krohn, Lanza-Kaduce, & Radosevich, 1979; Bandura, 1973). Reinforcement affects an individual's motivation to engage in similar behavior in the future. Both external and intrinsic reinforcers are generally agreed to have important influences on behavior, although there are differences of opinion regarding their relative importance.

#### *Provides Opportunities for Prosocial Involvement*

Opportunity for prosocial involvement is the presentation of events and activities across different social environments that encourage youths to participate in prosocial actions. Providing prosocial opportunities in the non-school hours has been the focus of much discussion and



study (Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development, 1992; Pittman, 1991). In order for a child to acquire key interpersonal skills in early development, positive opportunities for interaction and participation must be available (Hawkins, Catalano, Jones, & Fine, 1987; Patterson, Chamberlain, & Reid, 1982). In adolescence, it is especially important that youth have the opportunity for interaction with positively oriented peers and for involvement in roles in which they can make a contribution to the group, whether family, school, neighborhood, peer group, or larger community (Dryfoos, 1990).

### *Fosters Prosocial Norms*

Prosocial norms are healthy beliefs and clear standards for a variety of positive behaviors and prohibitions against involvement in unhealthy or risky behaviors (Hawkins, Catalano, & Miller, 1992; Hawkins, Catalano, Morrison et al., 1992). These norms may or may not be internalized depending on one's opportunities, one's abilities and experiences in these opportunities, and how well the beliefs and standards produce results valued by the individual, including recognition from valued others. Over time, these standards or modified standards become part of the individual's value system and help to determine which activities the individual views as morally acceptable. In terms of antisocial behavior and drug use, there is evidence that healthy beliefs and clear standards for behavior inhibit the initiation of minor offending (Agnew, 1985), drug and alcohol use (Catalano, Kosterman, Hawkins, Newcomb, & Abbott, 1996; Lonczak et al., 2001), and violence (Huang, Kosterman, Catalano, Hawkins, & Abbott, 2001).

### *Fosters Positive Emotions*

Emotions like joy, contentment, and love have been linked by research to the broadening and building of psychological skills and abilities (Fredrickson, 2000, 2002).

### *Promotes Life Satisfaction*

Life satisfaction is the overall judgment that one's life is a good one (Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffin, 1985). Among youth, life satisfaction is associated with the presence of desirable psychological characteristics and the absence of negative characteristics, including problem behaviors and psychological disorders (Park, 2004b).

### *Promotes Strength of Character*

Positive traits like curiosity, kindness, gratitude, hope, and humor are components of strength of character (Peterson & Seligman, 2004). Among young people, such strengths are robustly linked to life satisfaction and can function as buffers against the negative effects of stress and trauma (Park, 2004a).

## YOUTH DEVELOPMENT THEORY

In the early 21st century, efforts have begun to emerge that attempt to tie this long list of youth developmental constructs together in theories of positive youth development (Blechman, Prinz, & Dumas, 1995; Catalano, Berglund, Ryan, Lonczak, & Hawkins, 2002; Cicchetti & Cohen, 1995; Dryfoos, 1997; Durlak, 1998; Greenberg, Domitrovich, & Bumbarger, 2001; Kellam & Rebok,

1992; Kirby et al., 1991; Lerner, 2000; Lopez & McKnight, 2002; Mrazek & Haggerty, 1994; Perry et al., 1996; Pittman & Fleming, 1991; Seligman, 2001; Seligman et al., 2005). These theories attempt to improve our understanding of the mechanisms through which different risk and protective factors influence positive youth development and problem behavior.

While the field of positive youth development is characterized by several theories of positive youth development, no theory predominates. Rather than review theories, we briefly present our theory as an example guide to mechanisms that produce youth development. The social development model (SDM; Catalano & Hawkins, 1996, 2002) is a theory of human behavior that attempts to provide an explanation of the development of positive and problem behavior. It recognizes that development is a product of an individual's behavior in multiple social environments across development. The SDM is explicitly developmental. Four developmental submodels of the SDM have been specified. The same constructs are included in each submodel, although their specific content is defined differently by individual development and changes in social environments. These developmental periods include preschool, elementary school, middle school, and high school, corresponding to major transitions in socializing environments (Catalano & Hawkins, 1996). The developmentally specific submodels have been constructed as recursive models; however, the SDM hypothesizes reciprocal relationships between constructs across developmental periods.

The social development model builds on social control theory (Hirschi, 1969), social learning theory (Bandura, 1977; Cressey, 1953), and differential association theory (Cressey, 1953; Matsueda, 1988). Control theory is used to identify causal elements in the etiology of problem and positive behavior. Social learning theory is used to identify processes by which patterns of positive and problem behavior are learned, extinguished, or maintained. Differential association theory is used to identify parallel but separate causal paths for prosocial and antisocial processes. This synthetic theory pays particular attention to resolving competing theoretical assumptions of these different theories (Catalano & Hawkins, 1996). The SDM hypothesizes that children and youth must learn patterns of behavior, whether prosocial or antisocial. These patterns are learned in families, schools, peer groups, and the community. It is hypothesized that socialization follows the same processes of social learning, whether it produces positive or problem behavior. Children are socialized through processes involving four constructs: (1) perceived opportunities for involvement in activities and interactions with others; (2) the degree of involvement and interaction; (3) the skills to participate in these involvements and interactions; and (4) the reinforcement they perceive from these involvements and interactions (see Figure 23.1).

When socializing processes are consistent, a social bond develops between the individual and the socializing unit. Once strongly established, the social bond has power to effect behavior independently of the above four social learning processes. The social bond inhibits deviant behaviors through the establishment of an individual's "stake" in conforming to the norms and values of the socializing unit. It is hypothesized that the behavior of the individual will be prosocial or antisocial depending on the relative influence of norms and values held by those to whom the individual is bonded. While departing from traditional control theory and attachment theory, which assert that secure bonding always inhibits deviance, the SDM builds on evidence that bonds exist with drug-involved and delinquent peers (Agnew, 1991; Cairns, Cairns, Neckerman, Gest, & Garipey, 1988) and family (Fleming, Brewer, Gainey, Haggerty, & Catalano, 1997; Foshee & Bauman, 1992; Hoppe et al., 1998), and such bonds are associated with increased levels of deviance. Social and emotional bonds are only expected to inhibit antisocial behavior if those to whom a child is bonded hold norms clearly opposed to the antisocial behavior. Individuals who develop bonds to antisocial family, peers, or school personnel are expected to be encouraged to engage in antisocial behavior. Thus, two paths are hypothesized with similar socialization

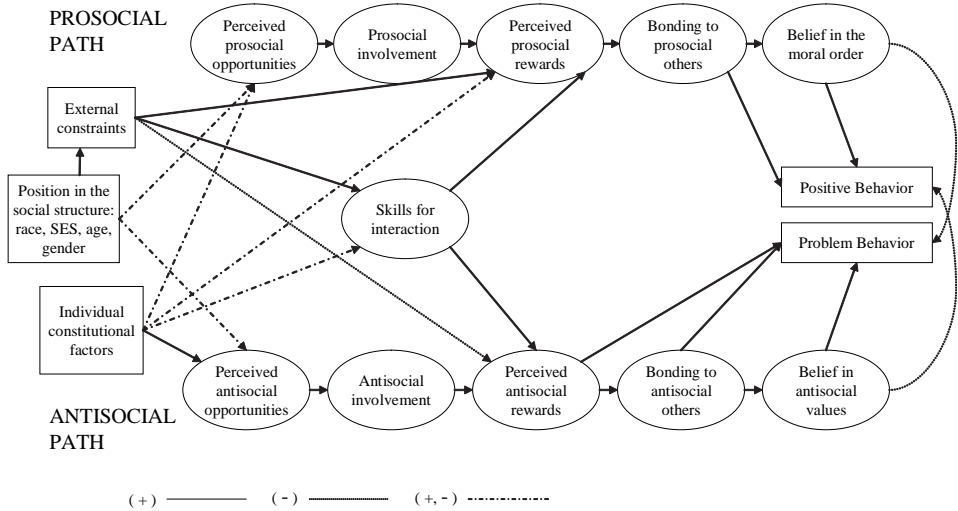


FIGURE 23.1 The social development model: General model.

processes operating, one a prosocial (protective) path, and one an antisocial (risk) path. Both paths influence positive and antisocial behavior.

Several environmental and individual exogenous factors are incorporated into this model. The effect of these variables is expected to be mediated by other SDM constructs. These factors are: external constraints (e.g., family management practices), which are hypothesized to affect both prosocial and antisocial rewards and skills; position in the social structure (gender, race, and age), which affect prosocial and antisocial opportunities; and constitutional factors (individual traits, biological, or genetic factors), which affect both prosocial and antisocial opportunities, rewards, and skills.

### POSITIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT AND MORAL AND CHARACTER EDUCATION

The constructs included under the umbrella of positive youth development have emerged through consensus meetings involving scientists, practitioners, and policymakers synthesizing findings across the developmental, evaluation, and behavioral sciences. These efforts have married diverse science and practice across a range of disciplines and have achieved an encompassing scope in the characterization of positive youth development such that domains that form the focus in the moral and character education movement have been included. The moral and character education movement shares historical similarities with many areas of positive youth development in the youth domains that have been addressed, the interventions that have been developed and tested, and in the challenges faced in attempting to integrate research and practice (Lapsley & Narvaez, 2006; Leming, 1993).

A common starting point evident in the writing of supporters of moral and character education has been the concern that modern socializing institutions have failed to reinforce the moral development of children and young people (Bebeau, Rest, & Narvaez, 1999; Leming, 1993). Many of the trends that have been of concern, including youth homicide, gun carrying, teen pregnancy, and substance abuse (Leming, 1993), have also been the targets of broader programs endeavoring to advance positive youth development.

A recent review focused on character education programs that had been designed to increase student outcomes related to positive character development, prosocial behavior, and academic performance. This review defined character education programs as “activities and experiences organized...for the purpose of fostering positive character development and the associated core ethical values (also described as moral values, virtues, character traits, or principles).” Character is defined in terms of both moral and ethical qualities and their “demonstration in emotional responses, reasoning, and behavior” (Institute of Education Sciences, 2006).

Concern about the decline in national character during the economic boom of the 1920s led to the initial rise of the character education movement. Curricula during this period encouraged students to reflect on and adhere to defined codes for moral living, and used policy and peer strategies to inspire higher standards of conduct. With the emergence of empiricism in educational and behavioral research, the heavily didactic teaching strategies employed in these programs were submitted to scientific evaluation. A large and pioneering study involving behavioral observations of over 10,000 students found the early character education programs had largely failed to encourage either moral thinking or prosocial behavior (Hartshorne, May, Maller, & Shuttleworth, 1928–1930). Character education waned in American schools until the 1960s when efforts to apply Kohlberg’s theory of moral reasoning and growing interest in values clarification seeded a range of moral education applications that were distinctive in facilitating students to clarify a personally meaningful morality. These programs were often based in scientific efforts to test aspects of cognitive development theory. Experimental studies tended to find that these programs improved student moral reasoning but had little influence on social behavior (Leming, 1993).

In the 1970s and 1980s, new moral development and prosocial behavior programs began to emerge that focused on social organization and relationships. These programs emphasized social interaction and structural influence processes as important theoretical drivers of prosocial behavior, and introduced strategies such as cooperative learning and democratic participation in discipline policies. Experimental and controlled evaluations suggested a number of these programs had positive effects in reducing student behavior problems and increasing prosocial behavior and educational outcomes (Battistich, Watson, Solomon, Schaps, & Solomon, 1991; Slavin, 1990). These programs have provided important insights that have been influential within the broader positive youth development movement.

The moral and character education programs that are most commonly used in American schools do not appear to reflect the diversity of underpinning theory and practice evident in the history of this movement. Following their resurgence through the 1990s, many programs utilize school curricula with the aim of encouraging a common code of values, and, in this sense, resemble the programs developed in the earliest period of the character education movement (Bebeau et al., 1999; Leming, 1993); recent reviews and evaluations of programs have shown mixed effects, with some programs demonstrating no effects (Institute of Education Sciences, 2006; Leming, 1993). Bebeau et al. (1999) comment that the implicit theory underpinning a number of curriculum-based programs is that didactic teaching of traditional values, reinforced with a behavioral code reflecting these curriculum values, will be effective in changing both values and behavior.

The review of character education programs conducted by the Institute of Education Sciences (2006) identified four programs that had been submitted to evaluations that at least partly met quality evidence standards. None of the programs evaluated was found to have impacted prosocial behavior and only one program (Building Decision Skills combined with service learning) was found to have had potentially positive effects on attitudes and values (Leming, 2001), while one other program (The Lessons in Character curricula) was found to have potentially positive effects for academic achievement (Devargas, 1999; Dietsch & Bayha, 2005; Dietsch, Bayha, & Zheng, 2005).

The growing emphasis on the evaluation of character and moral education programs reflects the broader emphasis on evidence-based practice. Interest in character education has seeded innovative programming and scientific investigation that have influenced positive youth development programs. The recent failure of a number of evaluations to find effects for character education programs (Institute of Education Sciences, 2006) has led to calls to better integrate the practice of character education with the lessons from the evaluation of programs that have successfully promoted positive youth development (Leming, 1993).

## EVALUATIONS OF POSITIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

In 1997 we published a systematic review of the unpublished and published literature to find programs that met the following criteria:

- Address one or more of the positive youth development constructs.
- Work with youth age 6 to 20. Because there have been extensive reviews of early child development programs, we excluded programs that focused on children younger than age 6. We chose to include programs aimed at youth up to age 20 to capture the essence of youth development rather than young adult development. Since our 1997 review, much has been written about the developmental stage of emerging adulthood and much has come to light about the development of the brain continuing into the 20s. These concepts and physiological development findings did not drive our review; rather, the review was driven by the concept of youth development, excluding early child development and young adult development.
- Involve a universal sample of youth (not a sample selected because of their need for treatment).
- Address at least one youth development construct in multiple socialization domains, or address multiple youth development constructs in a single socialization domain, or address multiple youth development constructs in multiple domains. Programs that addressed a single youth development construct in a single socialization domain were excluded from this review.

In addition to these program criteria, the program's evaluation had to meet the below criteria. Complete description and operationalization of these inclusion criteria can be found in Catalano, Berglund, Ryan, Lonczak, and Hawkins (2002).

- Adequate study design and outcome measures
- Adequate description of the research methodologies
- Description of the population served
- Description of the intervention
- Description of implementation
- Effects demonstrated on behavioral outcomes

A diverse range of programs met our selection criteria, some of which may be described as positive youth development programs, some as promotion programs, and others as primary prevention programs. We found that a number of programs, traditionally considered primary prevention interventions, incorporated many of the same positive youth development constructs as programs usually viewed as positive youth development programs.

One hundred sixty-one programs were identified as potentially within the scope of that review. Seventy-seven of these positive youth development programs had evaluations that met the initial criteria for the analysis. Eight of the 77 programs with evaluations had to be removed from the review due to missing information. Thirty-nine programs did not have adequate evaluations, and five did not have positive effects on behavioral outcomes. Twenty-five programs incorporated positive youth development constructs into universal or selective approaches, had strong evaluation designs (experimental or quasi-experimental with viable comparison groups), had an acceptable standard of statistical proof, provided adequate methodological detail to allow an independent assessment of the study's soundness, and produced evidence of significant effects on youths' behavioral outcomes.

### SUMMARY OF YOUTH DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM OUTCOMES

Program results are briefly summarized in this section, organized by effects on positive and negative outcomes. Illustrative references to articles describing outcomes of these programs are provided when the program is first mentioned. More complete descriptions of the programs, research designs, behavioral outcomes, and complete references are available elsewhere (Catalano, Berglund et al., 2002).

Positive outcomes for youth in these programs included a variety of improvements in emotional competence, including greater self-control (PATHS—Greenberg & Kusche, 1997; Bicultural Competence Skills—Schinke, Orlandi, Botvin, Gilchrist, & Locklear, 1988), frustration tolerance (Children of Divorce—Pedro-Carroll & Cowen, 1985), increased empathy (PATHS), and expression of feelings (Fast Track—Conduct Problems Prevention Research Group, 2002; PATHS). Improvements in social competence included interpersonal skills (Child Development Project—Battistich, Schaps, Watson, & Solomon, 1996; Life Skills Training—Botvin et al., 2000; Social Competence Promotion Program—Weissberg & Caplan, 1998; Children of Divorce; Fast Track), greater assertiveness (Bicultural Competence Skills; Children of Divorce), greater self-efficacy with respect to substance use refusal (Project Northland—Perry et al., 1996), healthy and adaptive coping in peer-pressure situations (Bicultural Competence Skills), improvements in acceptance of authority (Fast Track), and improvements in race relations and perceptions of others from different cultural or ethnic groups (Woodrock Youth Development Project—LoSciuto, Freeman, Harrington, Altman, & Lanphear, 1997). Increases in cognitive competence included decision making (Life Skills Training) and better problem solving (Children of Divorce; PATHS; Social Competence Promotion Program). Increases in behavioral competence included better health practices (Growing Healthy—Smith, Redican, & Olsen, 1992; Know Your Body—Walter, Vaughan, & Wynder, 1989) and greater self-efficacy around contraceptive practices (Reducing the Risk—Kirby et al., 1991). Positive youth development programs were associated with improvements in parental bonding and communication (Seattle Social Development Project—Hawkins, Catalano, Kosterman, Abbott, & Hill, 1999; Big Brothers/Big Sisters—Tierney, Grossman, & Resch, 1995; Reducing the Risk). Positive outcomes also included increased acceptance of prosocial norms regarding substance use (Project ALERT—Ellickson & Bell, 1990; Life Skills Training). A variety of positive school outcomes were also achieved by some youth development programs, including higher achievement (Teen Outreach—Allen, Philliber, Herrling, & Kuperminc, 1997; Valued Youth Partnerships—Cardenas, Montecel, Supik, & Harris, 1992; Success for All—Slavin, 1996; Big Brothers/Big Sisters; Seattle Social Development Project), higher school attachment (Seattle Social Development Project), increased high school attendance (Quantum Opportunities—Hahn et al., 1994; Big Brothers/Big Sisters), increased high school



graduation (Across Ages—LoSciuto, Rajala, Townsend, & Taylor, 1996; Quantum Opportunities Program; Seattle Social Development Project; Valued Youth Partnerships), and increased post-secondary school and college attendance (Quantum Opportunities Program; Seattle Social Development Project). Other positive youth outcomes included higher levels of voluntary community service (Across Ages) and use of community services when needed (Creating Lasting Connections—Johnson et al., 1996).

Problem behaviors were also reduced or prevented. For several programs, substance use was lower, including alcohol or drug use (Midwestern Prevention Project—Pentz et al., 1994; Big Brothers/Big Sisters; Child Development Project; Life Skills Training; Project Alert; Project Northland; Seattle Social Development Project; Woodrock Youth Development Project; Bicultural Competence Skills) and tobacco use (Child Development Project; Growing Healthy; Know Your Body; Life Skills Training; Midwestern Prevention Project; Project ALERT; Project Northland; Woodrock Youth Development Project). Several programs reduced delinquency and aggression (Responding in Peaceful and Positive Ways—Farrell & Meyer, 1997; Metropolitan Area Child Study—Guerra, Eron, Huesmann, Tolan, & Van Acker, 1997; Adolescent Transitions Program; Big Brothers/Big Sisters; Fast Track; PATHS; Seattle Social Development Project; Social Competence Promotion Program). Youth contraception practices increased, and initiation and prevalence of sexual activity were reduced in two programs (Reducing the Risk; Seattle Social Development Project), and Teen Outreach and the Seattle Social Development Project reduced teen pregnancy. Negative school outcomes were reduced, including truancy (Big Brothers/Big Sisters) and school suspension (Responding in Peaceful and Positive Ways).

## CHARACTERISTICS OF EFFECTIVE POSITIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

Summary of the characteristics of these 25 effective positive youth development programs is instructive. These programs may not be typical of positive youth development programs in general. These programs were fortunate to have attracted funding to support strong evaluations. Thus, we expect that they are at a later stage of development, having convinced funding sources of their evaluability: this usually entails a strong rationale for the program components and evidence of replicability; for example, manualization of procedures and curricula specifying the logical links between procedures and outcomes.

### Youth Development Constructs

All of the effective programs in this review addressed a minimum of five positive youth constructs. Most interventions addressed at least eight constructs, and three-domain programs averaged 10 constructs. Three constructs were addressed in all 25 well-evaluated programs: competence, self-efficacy, and prosocial norms. In over half of the 25 programs, several other constructs were addressed, including: opportunities for prosocial involvement (88%), recognition for positive behavior (88%), and bonding (76%); and 50% of the well-evaluated programs addressed positive identity, self-determination, belief in the future, resiliency, and spirituality.

### Structured Curriculum

Having a structured curriculum or structured activities is critical for program replication. Twenty-four (96%) of the well-evaluated effective programs incorporated a structured curriculum or program of activities. One program, Big Brothers/Big Sisters, did not focus on a structured cur-

riculum skill-based strategy to build social competence, but rather, assumed that positive outcomes are mediated by bonding and other aspects of positive interaction (such as the presumed modeling of effective behavior by the adult) within the mentoring relationship.

### Program Frequency and Duration

Twenty (80%) effective, well-evaluated programs were delivered over a period of 9 months or more. A number of these, often those operating in a school domain, applied their interventions during the academic year. In the interventions shorter than 9 months, programs ranged from 10 to 25 sessions, averaging about 12 sessions per intervention.

### Program Implementation and Assurance of Implementation Quality

Fidelity of program implementation is one of the most important topics in the positive youth development field. Implementation fidelity has repeatedly been shown to be related to effectiveness (Battistich et al., 1996; Botvin, Baker, Dusenbury, Botvin, & Diaz, 1995; Gottfredson, Gottfredson, & Hybl, 1993). Among multiyear, well-funded studies, separate evaluations of implementation, in addition to outcome evaluation, are becoming more common. The effective positive youth development programs reviewed here consistently attended to the quality and consistency of program implementation. Twenty-four (96%) evaluations in some way addressed or measured how well and how reliably the program implementers delivered the intervention.

## POSITIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM CONCLUSIONS

We found a wide range of positive youth development approaches that resulted in promoting positive youth behavior outcomes and preventing youth problem behaviors. Nineteen effective programs showed positive changes in youth behavior, including significant improvements in interpersonal skills, quality of peer and adult relationships, self-control, problem solving, cognitive competencies, self-efficacy, commitment to schooling, and academic achievement. Twenty-four effective programs showed significant improvements in problem behaviors, including drug and alcohol use, school misbehavior, aggressive behavior, violence, truancy, high-risk sexual behavior, and smoking. This is good news indeed. Promotion and prevention programs that address positive youth development constructs are definitely making a difference in well-evaluated studies.

Although a broad range of strategies produced these results, the themes common to success involved methods to: strengthen social, emotional, behavioral, cognitive, and moral competencies; build self-efficacy; shape messages from family and community about clear standards for youth behavior; increase healthy bonding with adults, peers and younger children; expand opportunities and recognition for youth; provide structure and consistency in program delivery; and intervene with youth for at least 9 months or more. Although one third of the effective programs operated in only a single setting, it is important to note that for the other two thirds, combining the resources of the family, the community, and the school was important to success.

### Implications of Evaluations of Positive Youth Development Programs for Moral and Character Development Programs

Common and overlapping roots are shared by positive youth development programs and moral and character development programs. Both fields have been driven by a common concern that modern socializing institutions have failed to reinforce the positive or moral development of

children and young people. Both types of programs have been built on a common concern with the increasing rates of youth problems, including homicide, gun carrying, teen pregnancy, and substance abuse. Both have shared concerns that development of the individual is more than an absence of problems. Character and moral development programs seek to encourage moral reasoning and ethical standards of conduct. Positive youth development programs seek to encourage a variety of positive developmental experiences, such as taking advantage of positive opportunities in contributing to the socialization units in which they participate, developing strong bonds to positive members of these socialization units, and developing competencies that include moral competence. Both traditions have fostered program development to encourage positive aspects of youth development with the hope that enhancing positive aspects of youth development will also prevent involvement in problem behaviors. Both traditions have also grown in their theoretical and conceptual rigor and increasingly have been submitted to empirical tests of program efficacy.

The constructs addressed by effective positive youth development programs provide some confirmation of character and moral development program elements as well as some potential extensions. While these youth development constructs were not tested individually, their presence in effective, positive youth development programs is suggestive of their importance. It appears that addressing multiple positive youth development constructs was associated with positive program impact. All of the programs that demonstrated positive effects addressed competence, the self-efficacy of the individual to use these competencies, and prosocial norms. It is clear that the constructs of prosocial norms and moral competence are components of character and moral development programs. In addition, program components that addressed individual characteristics, including a clear and positive identity, self-determination, resiliency, spirituality, and a belief in the future, were present in at least 50% of the effective positive youth development programs. These are program elements that could also be considered part of character and moral development programs. However, it appears that other elements of youth development programs were also important, in particular, teaching social, emotional, and cognitive competencies; providing opportunities for prosocial involvement; providing recognition for positive behavior; and fostering bonding. Program components that addressed each of these constructs were present in most effective programs. Character and moral development programs might utilize this information to broaden the concepts addressed and the processes used in programming to enhance the efficacy of existing models.

Almost all of the effective positive youth development programs had a structured curriculum. Most had a duration of at least 9 months and had checks for assessment of fidelity and quality of program implementation. These program characteristics enhance evaluability, appear to be associated with positive outcomes, and are likely to be important components of effective character and moral development programs.

In sum, although the full promise of the programs reviewed here rests on demonstration of long-term effectiveness in reducing problems and promoting positive development, there is clear evidence from well-conducted trials that positive youth development programs can be effective. Many of the elements of character and moral development have been included in the programs reviewed here. Some extensions of character and moral development programs are also suggested by this review of positive youth development program evaluations. Both character and moral development and positive youth development programs are fuelled by a desire to enhance positive development in order to reduce youth problems. Both types of programs experienced substantial theoretical and program development over the years. Cross-fertilization of programming and theory could lead to improvements in our understanding of youth development.

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# 24

## The Moral and Civic Effects of Learning to Serve

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Recent statistics show that America's children, youth, and young adults are volunteering in record numbers. In a 2003 survey sampling 924 colleges, 1.7 million students were involved in service, 22,000 faculty members reported service-learning involvement, and 37 courses was the average number of courses being offered per campus, all substantial increases from five years previously (Campus Compact, nd). Additional figures showed in 1999, 64% of all public schools had students participating in service activities, and that between 1984 and 1999 the number of high schools offering community service opportunities rose from 27% to over 80% (National Center for Education Statistics, nd). Finally, 65 million American adults are currently volunteering, which is an increase of 10% from 2005, contributing close to \$150 billion in service work (Corporation of National and Community Service, 2006). Given the economic value of volunteering to our nation, one should not be surprised that national leaders are calling the American people to service.

Service work may not only advantage the community, but also foster development among its participants. Recent reviews have claimed a multitude of benefits for students ranging from increases in academic performance to increases in self-esteem (Billig, 2000; Root, 2005). Given the prosocial, civic nature of community service, it is not surprising that the consensus among these reports is that community service particularly supports moral and character development. These presumed benefits have led many school boards to encourage the development of service-learning programs in their schools. The extent to which service-learning facilitates development and is associated with good outcomes, and the paths through which service might effect moral and character development, are explored in this chapter. Specifically, we begin by briefly reviewing the service-learning literature, highlighting the various theoretical paradigms and the empirical research findings as they relate to moral and civic attitudes and behaviors. We then

explore the practical similarities between service-learning and community service programs as revealed in research and discuss possible implications of these similarities. Finally, we present recent research on volunteering that raises important issues for service-learning and community service practitioners.

### THEORETICAL ROOTS TO SERVICE-LEARNING PROGRAMS

As a precursor to an examination of the effects of community service on moral and character development, it is useful to consider the theoretical assumptions of advocates for community service and service learning. The theoretical roots to service-learning programs are diverse. Many service-learning researchers and practitioners cite the writings of John Dewey who wrote extensively on the link between education and society, and envisioned communities of students working together to identify and respond to the social problems of their times (Kahne & Westheimer, 2001). Dewey also wrote about the transformative nature associated with real-life educational experiences (Giles & Eyler, 1994). Dewey's work is interpreted to suggest that through continuous, interactive, and reflective experiences with the world—community service and service-learning—students gain new perspectives on and skills for solving social, moral, and civic problems.

Others have imagined the potential benefits of service-learning to occur through slightly different pathways. For example, Kenny, Simon, Kiley-Brabeck, and Lerner (2001), and Warter and Grossman (2001) emphasized the transactional reciprocity between student and context. For these theorists, each community in which participants volunteer provides a unique cultural, environmental, political, and historical context. Students learn about civic matters and social issues in each of these milieus and each of these contexts contribute to students' thinking on social issues.

Some theorists are sensitive to the developmental opportunities of service-learning programs. According to Yates and Youniss (2001), service-learning activities often place youth in contact with a broader network of people holding a diversity of values. These interactions can cause students to reflect on, elaborate, and revise their beliefs about social justice, social institutions, and civic matters. This expansion of students' current ideological beliefs and socio-moral framework provides a path through which they may achieve identity as described by Erikson (1968).

Still others have viewed service-learning from a social learning perspective, having argued that students acquire their civic attitudes and behaviors through the modeling and expectations communicated by significant adults (e.g., Scales, Blyth, Berkas, & Kielsmeier, 2000; Switzer, Simmons, Dew, Regalski, & Wang, 1995). In the context of service-learning, witnessing adults engaged in serving others and discussing the significance of such actions facilitates the acquisition and internalization of similar socially responsible attitudes and behavior by students.

Finally, some researchers have focused their work around Eisenberg's model of prosocial reasoning and behavior. According to Batchelder and Root (1994), service-learning experiences trigger empathic responses in students toward the people they serve, thus bringing conscientious attention to another's need and motivating them to respond. Having students discuss their service-learning experience may facilitate students' prosocial-reasoning development, which should, in turn, increase their motivation to respond to those in need (Blasi, 1995).

The diverse theoretical perspectives suggest that community service and service-learning may affect many domains of children's and adolescents' lives—self-esteem, identity, academic achievement, moral and civic development have been identified by advocates as benefiting from the influence of community service—and may do so through cognitive, social, emotional, and cultural processes. The many claims regarding benefits together seemingly suggest that service-

learning and community service may be a solution to the flaws and problems of children and adolescents.

In our view, the diversity of outcomes and proposed mechanisms of influence suggests that the field lacks the kinds of compelling research findings that constrain theorizing in other domains. If a field lacks clear findings about mechanisms and routes of influence, then the relation of theory to findings cannot be judged, and all theories are equal. To a degree, this is the current state of affairs in relating the study of community service to theories of moral and character development. For example, assertions have been made that children and adolescents can learn a great deal of academic knowledge from community service experiences. Yet there are relatively weak empirical findings in support of such a connection. We hope that the findings and conceptual integration that we propose in this chapter help theorists move in directions that are grounded in empirical research, an issue to which we return in the conclusion. Theoretical perspectives on community service and service-learning are also curiously independent of many of the kinds of activities in which children and adolescents are actually engaged, an issue that we examine in the next section.

### WHAT IS SERVICE-LEARNING?

Currently, no consensus has been reached on how to define service-learning. Surveying the literature, Furco (2003) claimed that there are over 200 different definitions of service-learning in use. Often service-learning has been used interchangeably with terms such as community service or service-learning internships. However, some researchers make clear their distinction between service-learning and community service. For instance, Furco (1996) sees service-learning programs as a *combination* of community service activities with learning through academic, elective, or vocational courses. The Corporation for National and Community Service (nd) describes the term this way:

Service-learning offers a unique opportunity for America's young people—from kindergarten to university students—to get involved with their communities in a tangible way by integrating service projects with classroom learning. Service-learning engages students in the educational process, using what they learn in the classroom to solve real-life problems. Students not only learn about democracy and citizenship, they become actively contributing citizens and community members through the service they perform.

While there is a diversity of definitions, service-learning programs typically possess some or all of the following features (Pritchard, 2001): (1) Clearly identified learning objectives; (2) Student participation in selecting service activity; (3) A theoretical base; (4) Integration of the service experience with an academic course; and (5) Student reflection.

One example of a service-learning program was described by Yates and Youniss (2001), who conducted a case study of a mandatory grade eleven service-learning program at an urban parochial high school. The purpose of the program was to involve youth in moral and political issues, and encourage them to contemplate their role in effecting societal change. The program was a year-long daily social justice class that involved working in a downtown soup kitchen four times during the year. In addition, teachers had students read articles and watch films on social issues such as poverty and racism, and then discuss them. They also had to write reflective essays on their soup kitchen experiences. This program possesses many of the defining features of ideal service-learning programs.

In contrast, community service typically refers to programs that focus on the recipients who benefit from the service activity (Furco, 1996). While these programs may foster the development of participants' moral and altruistic disposition, often these programs do not emphasize the formal integration of a classroom learning component or other educational curriculums with service work, and may not include formal reflection activities.

Interestingly, some researchers differentiate between service-learning and community service programs based on the underlying goal of the service program. For example, Alt (1997) and Kahne and Westheimer (2001) distinguish between "change" and "charity" goals. Programs that have "change" as their goal hope to transform participants by enhancing their academic motivation and learning as it relates to civic issues associated with the service-learning experience. Programs that have "charity" as their focus hope to foster participants' altruistic and moral nature. This latter goal is more prevalent in community service programs as Pritchard's (2001) research illustrates. Pritchard asked administrators of community service and service-learning programs to report their program objectives. He found that community service administrators were more likely to identify moral and altruistic goals such as "To help students become more active members of the community" and "To encourage student altruism or caring for others," while service-learning administrators were more likely to identify learning goals such as "To teach critical thinking and problem-solving skills."

Given the diversity of uses of the constructs "service-learning" and "community service," it is unsurprising that an array of programs has been claimed as members of each. Consequently these programs vary enormously from each other, differing substantially in program content (e.g., a focus on poverty or the environment), the intensity and duration of the program, the size of the student groups participating, and the degree of choice students have in selecting projects (Furco, 2003). Moreover, students enter these programs with different interests and abilities (Roots, 2005). Finally, because these programs take place in natural settings typically unobserved by researchers, it is difficult to know exactly what experiences students receive during service-oriented activities (Waterman, 2003).

## WHAT ARE THE EFFECTS OF SERVICE-LEARNING?

The diversity of service-learning and community-service programs makes it difficult to summarize findings on their effectiveness.

### Reduction of Negative Behaviors

Not surprisingly, articles reviewing this research showed mixed results (Billig, 2000). Melchior (1999) investigated service-learning programs embedded in seven middle schools across the U.S. These programs involved intensive, hands-on service involvement plus opportunities to reflect on the experience through discussions, journal writing, research papers, and presentations. Melchior found that by the end of the program service-learning participants were less likely to be pregnant or have made someone pregnant, and less likely to have been arrested in the previous 6 months than comparison students who were not enrolled in the service-learning program. Moreover, the effect was maintained for a year following the termination of the program. Finally, students who continued to be involved in organized service a year later consumed less alcohol compared to students who did not continue their involvement.

Similar behavioral outcomes were reported by Switzer et al. (1995). They compared junior high students whose class was either randomly assigned to a mandatory "helper" program or to

a control group. In the helper program, junior high school students were required to participate in a helping activity, while no such requirement was made of the control group participants. In the study, this took the form of activities such as tutoring younger students and providing help at senior citizens facilities. In addition, some “helper” students were involved in weekly group seminars where they discussed their activities and were asked to keep a weekly journal describing their activities and associated feelings. Switzer et al. found that the helper program mostly impacted boys. Compared to those in the control group, boy “helpers” were more involved in school and community activities, had fewer problem behaviors in school, and were more likely to report that they felt like a better person.

Allen, Philliber, Herrling, and Kuperminc (1997) evaluated the effectiveness of the Teen Outreach Program in a study featuring random assignment. Participants in the program performed voluntary service in community settings, discussed their service experiences, and received as well classroom-based social skill development. Students entered the program through random assignment, thus ensuring equivalence of participants and those in the control groups. Those students in the control group were offered the regular health or social studies curricula. Programs at 25 different sites were evaluated. At the completion of the academic year program, participants were less likely than adolescents in the control group to have failed a class, have been suspended, or to have become pregnant. Allen et al. were not able to determine whether a specific element of the program—service, reflection, or social skill building—was responsible for the benefits of the Teen Outreach. However, number of hours spent in community service by an adolescent was a better predictor of benefits than was the number of classroom sessions attended. This suggests (but does not prove) that it was the community service, not the reflection or social skill-building that was important. Together, the results from the above studies show that participation in service-learning programs can positively influence students’ prosocial behavior. However, for the most part, these studies shed little light on the mechanisms through which change was effected and consequently do little to inform theory on service-learning and community service.

### Impacts on Moral Development

In studies exploring the impact of service-learning on moral development—a key issue in this chapter—the results have been generally positive (Roots, 2005). For example, Conrad and Hedin (1982) chose 30 “experiential education programs,” based on excellence of reputation, to evaluate. All the programs were integrated into the general school curriculum but operated outside the conventional classroom, and shared an emphasis on students learning by doing “with associated reflection” (p. 58). The authors collected information using pre- and post-test measures, including Rest’s (1979) Defining Issues Test, which assesses the sophistication of moral judgment. On this measure, relative to students in the comparison group, students in the experiential programs showed significant gains in moral reasoning. The authors conclude that “the combination of significant role-taking experiences and active reflection to be an effective means of promoting growth in this aspect of development” (pp. 64–65).

Boss (1994) compared university students randomly assigned to one of two ethics classes, both of which involved moral dilemma discussions as a standard part of the curriculum, with one of the classes requiring students to perform 20 hours of community service work and keep a journal of their experiences. After controlling for pre-test moral reasoning scores, students in the service-learning class were found to have higher post-test moral reasoning scores than students in the standard class. Thus, Boss’s research, and the research of others, suggests that community service experiences in association with opportunities to reflect stimulate the development of moral reasoning in students.

Billig's (2000) review article also cited studies showing that service-learning programs influenced prosocial personality characteristics such as trustworthiness, empathy, and dependability. For instance, Scales et al. (2000), found that middle school students involved in service-learning programs have greater concern for the welfare of others compared to students in a control group. In addition, students who performed more than 30 hours of service during the year had a greater perceived efficacy in helping others compared to those students who performed less service. Finally, students involved in service-learning, and who reported that their participation made them more interested in their other classes, scored higher than comparison students in their concern for others' welfare, and their perceived efficacy in helping others. For Scales et al. (2000), the service-learning experience and the reflection on this experience are important in maintaining students' concern for others and the belief they can effect change in helping others.

### Service-Learning's Effects on Civic Engagement

Many studies report a positive link between service-learning and civic engagement. Yates and Youniss (1996), for instance, examined the essays of service-learning participants (described above) for "transcendent" ideological reflections, and found that service-learning experiences can stimulate change in students' ideological perspective. The authors noted a movement away from a concrete description of and judgmental attitude towards homeless people and a movement towards connecting their experience with abstract constructs such as social inequality and societal responsibility. These results suggest that service experiences may be stimulating change in students' cognitive-developmental structures.

In her review, Root (2005) reported that service-learning programs increase students' interest in politics, attitude toward community involvement, willingness to take political action, and political activity level. Similarly, Billig's (2000) review revealed that students in service-learning programs have an increased understanding of government function and were more likely to vote up to 15 years later. Billig also reported that students in service-learning programs were more likely to be aware of community needs, believed they could make a difference, and were committed to service now and later in life.

Interestingly, Melchior (1999) found that students involved in service-learning programs showed improved attitudes toward civic participation (e.g., "A good citizen to me is someone who puts back into the community"). However, this effect was not evident a year later, and thus highlights a limitation associated with studies lacking long-term follow-up assessments. The absence of long-term longitudinal assessments leaves open important questions, including whether programs really have the transformational impacts claimed by theorists and whether financial and curricular investments in the programs are warranted by outcomes.

### Summary

The research evidence generally suggests that service-learning has beneficial effects on adolescent development. Reductions in problem behaviors have been reported, as have increases in school engagement and academic achievement. The research evidence is particularly compelling for outcomes most closely linked to theory; these include moral and civic development. Reviewers have attempted to infer from the studies reviewed above how service-learning characteristics facilitate moral and civic development. Billig (2000), for example, lists the following program characteristics that she believes are necessary to maximize the effects of service participation: (1) A high degree of student responsibility for the service; (2) autonomy, student choice; (3) direct contact with the service recipient; and (4) reflection. Others have added that students must be



involved in leadership positions, be directing the project themselves, and have a voice in the process (Melchior, 1999; Morgan & Streb, 2001). While each of these program characteristics can be linked to one or more theoretical perspectives reviewed and to one or more empirical findings reported, there remain too many gaps in the research to claim that any one of these characteristics is indispensable. In our view, the weight of the available evidence does not make clear which of the elements of community service and service-learning are important for beneficial outcomes. Moreover, the processes through which these effects occur have not been identified.

## THE EFFECTS AND CAUSES OF VOLUNTEERING CAN INFORM AN UNDERSTANDING OF COMMUNITY SERVICE AND SERVICE-LEARNING

Researchers and practitioners often presume that service-learning is fundamentally different from volunteering. The two types of activities are ordinarily distinguished from each other by the degree to which entry into and duration of the activity is voluntary, and by the extent of reflection that occurs. Generally, an individual must choose to participate in an activity for it to be considered volunteering (Penner, 2002). Service-learning often lacks this voluntary quality, as students' participation is usually required as a condition of a course or for graduation. Second, service-learning ordinarily is defined by an emphasis on structured reflection on the activity. An example would be students discussing their soup-kitchen experience in a classroom context. While these conceptual distinctions theoretically make volunteering and service-learning substantially different activities, the limited research on the matter fails to substantiate the importance of these distinctions in terms of the activity's effect on children and adolescents.

### Service-Learning and Volunteering Have Similar Effects

Volunteering and service-learning show similar effects on participating children and adolescents. For instance, compared to non-volunteers, volunteers scored higher on measures of positive emotions, social skills, sympathy, and emotion regulation (e.g., Davis, Mitchell, Hall, Lothert, Snapp, & Meyer, 1999; Omoto & Snyder, 1995; Penner, Fritzsche, Craiger, & Freifeld, 1995; Unger & Thumhuri, 1997). In addition, research has found volunteering to be a protective factor for youth. For example, Uggen and Janikula (1999) found that high school non-volunteers, compared to volunteers, were significantly more likely to be arrested in young adulthood even after controlling for gender, race, income, and past volunteer experience. These results parallel those in the service-learning literature reviewed, thus making it difficult to draw distinctions between service-learning and community service programs based on outcome differences.

### Comparisons of Service-Learning and Community Service Yield Few Differences

Research directly comparing service-learning and community service experiences also show few outcome differences. For example, Furco (2001) studied over 500 students at two high school sites. These students were enrolled in one of four classes/conditions: community service, service-learning, service-based internship program (in which students spent time learning about a particular career), and no service. The effects of the program were assessed in academic, career, ethical, social, personal, and civic domains. On most of these measures the two service-oriented groups scored significantly higher than the no service group. However, no outcome differences were found between service-learning and community service participants. If measurable differences between community service participants and those enrolled in service-learning programs

are lacking, then perhaps the characteristics that distinguish them from each other have little effect on developmental outcome.

Recent evidence suggests that whether service activity is voluntary or mandated matters little for developmental outcome. Hart, Donnelly, Youniss, and Atkins (in press) used data from the National Educational Longitudinal Study (NELS: 88) to compare the long-term civic outcomes of required and voluntary community service in high school. Students were surveyed in twelfth grade about their community service activities that were either completely voluntary or required. Eight years later, the participants were asked about their volunteering and voting. Those who reported involvement in high school community service—whether required or voluntary—also reported higher levels of voting and community involvement in early adulthood. Few effects were detected between students who had entered into community service voluntarily and those who were mandated.

Metz and Youniss (2003, 2005) made use of a naturally occurring transition whereby a required service-learning program replaced a voluntary one within a high school to study the effects of such a change on students' later volunteering and civic engagement. Cohorts of students were followed longitudinally for two years before and after the imposition of the mandatory service requirement. The question Metz and Youniss sought to answer was whether such an imposition would diminish or increase students' interest in voluntary community service and civic participation. The results indicated that rather than having a diminishing effect, requiring community service of students in this school *increased* interest in volunteering and civic participation.

The research by Hart et al. (in press) and Metz and Youniss (2003, 2005) suggest that researchers and theorists have over-emphasized the importance of voluntary entrance into community service for the effects of the activity on outcome. Critics of service-learning—who dismiss its value—probably over-estimate the perceived coerciveness of service-learning to participants. There is so much to the role of student that is prescribed by law, regulation, and tradition that a service-learning requirement probably adds little discernible burden. Unless autonomy is seriously undermined by the requirement, the community service activity is likely to benefit its participants.

Researchers and theorists are also likely to over-emphasize the voluntary nature of volunteering. While it is true that some people are more likely to volunteer than others as a result of personality predispositions (Hart, Atkins, Markey, & Youniss, 2004; Matsuba, Hart, & Atkins, in press), the fact is that most people become involved in volunteering because they are asked to do so by someone else (Matsuba et al., in press) and that the activity usually occurs in the context of a social institution. No doubt participating in community service in order to fulfill a school requirement is somehow different from participating in the same activity because a friend or admired adult (minister, troop leader, or teacher) asked one to do so. Nonetheless, it is important to recognize that in both cases that there are external incentives to participation.

A second quality distinguishing service-learning from community service/volunteering is the former's emphasis on structured reflection on the activity. The idea is that only through discussion or written consideration of the service activity can adolescents derive the full benefit of participation. Yet only a few studies support this claim. In a recent study, Kahne and Sporte (2006) used a large sample of third-year students in 47 Chicago high schools to determine if particular curricular experiences fostered commitment to civic participation. In 2005, students in these schools were given a survey that included measures of their level of commitment to civic participation, civic-related curricular practices, and other demographic and individual characteristics. After controlling for the demographic and individual characteristics, students' "service-learning experiences" predicted their civic participation commitment. In addition, the civics-related curricular activities of "meeting civic role models," "open classroom discussions,"

“study topics I care about,” “learned ways to improve community,” and “required to keep up with politics and government” contributed significantly to predicting civic participation commitment, with the latter two being particularly consequential. The effect sizes of these civic curricular activities ranged from 0.04 to 0.08.

In our own research (e.g., Hart, Atkins, Markey, & Youniss, 2004), we have used data from the U.S. National Household Survey of 1999 (National Center for Education Statistics, nd; Nolin, Montaquila, Lennon, Kleiner, Kim, Chapman, Chandler, Creighton, & Bielick, 2000), which is a representative survey of households in the United States. In the 1999 survey, thousands of adolescents nation-wide were questioned by phone concerning their community service activities, and whether these activities were required by their schools. Participants were asked if they were provided opportunities to discuss in class as well as write about their service activities. The survey also included the outcome measures of political knowledge, tolerance, political efficacy, and political skills (for the descriptions of these measures, see Hart, Atkins, Markey, & Youniss, 2004; McIntosh, Hart, & Youniss, in press).

Only 288 adolescents reported school-required involvement in community service activities. We regressed political efficacy scores on a set of variables corresponding to each participant’s demographic statuses (age, gender, race), control variables (academic achievement, extracurricular participation), and most importantly, dummy variables corresponding to (1) verbal discussion of service activities, and (2) written reflection on service activities. If verbal discussion and written reflection amplify the value of service, then we would expect that the dummy variables corresponding to these activities would be associated with political knowledge. Surprisingly, talking about the service activity in class was related to *lower* levels of political efficacy ( $beta = -.13$ ), while writing about service was a positive predictor ( $beta = .20$ ).<sup>1</sup> We have no compelling explanation for the positive associations between written reflection and political efficacy; however, research consistently confirms the psychological benefits associated with writing interventions (Pennebaker, Mehl, & Niederhoffer, 2003). No effects for reflection were found for tolerance, political knowledge, or political skills.

Our results, along with Kahne and Sporte’s (2006) findings, suggest that curricular activities have weak and uncertain relations with the outcomes of service-learning. In our view, there is a need for much stronger research on the effects of curricular components for the effectiveness of service-learning.

## Summary

Distinctions made between service-learning and volunteering do not seem clearly linked to differences in outcomes. Both service-learning and volunteer studies are associated with positive developmental outcomes in the moral and civic domains. Some of the components assumed to be critical to service-learning programs, such as student autonomy and opportunities for reflection, do not seem essential for beneficial impacts.

## WHAT DOES THE RESEARCH ON VOLUNTEERING SUGGEST ABOUT LONG-TERM OUTCOMES AND DEVELOPMENTAL PROCESSES?

### Long-Term Outcomes

Much of the research showing positive outcomes among service-learning participants only tests for short-term effects. Few studies have considered long-term consequences of service-learning

as they related to moral and civic development. In contrast, studies of volunteering have considered its long term impact. For example, using the National Educational Longitudinal Study data set, Hart, Donnelly, Youniss, and Atkins (in press) found that both voluntary and school-required community service were associated with volunteering in adulthood even after controlling for other relevant predictors and demographic variables. As well, Astin, Sax, and Avalos (1998) found that volunteering in college predicted volunteering nine years post-graduation; Wilson and Musick (1997) report similar findings.

### The Nature of Community Service Matters

Service-learning theory and research has tended to ignore the importance of the *nature* of community service that is performed by program participants. It is as if theorists and practitioners assume that what children and adolescents *do* matters less than *reflection on*, and *integration into* the curriculum of the activity. Youniss and his colleagues (e.g., Metz, McLellan, & Youniss, 2003) have been particularly persuasive in arguing for the centrality of activity for understanding the effects of community service on adolescents. They compared adolescents who performed “social cause service” (activities that put students in contact with people in need) to “standard service” (activities that did not involve contact with people in need) and to no service. Metz, McLellan, and Youniss (2003) found that students in the social cause service group had the greatest intentions of engaging in future, unconventional activities such as boycotting a product, demonstrating for a cause, and working for a political campaign.

To extend these findings, we reanalyzed data from the National Education Longitudinal Survey of 1988 (NELS: 88; for a description of this study, see Hart, Markey, Youniss, & Atkins, in press). We used the NELS data set to investigate the links between type of volunteering and civic attitude (i.e., “important to help others in community”), locus of control and self-worth among grade 12 students. Students were asked if they were involved in community service, and those who responded affirmatively ( $n \sim 7,000$ ) were asked whether the service was occurring in the context of the following volunteer activities: youth groups, general unspecified “service,” political, church, community, educational, hospital, and environmental groups. We regressed civic attitude on a set of demographic variables and on a set of dummy variables corresponding to the eight volunteer service contexts. Controlling for demographic variables, in-service groups ( $beta = .03$ ), political organizations ( $beta = .04$ ), community groups ( $beta = .07$ ), hospital ( $beta = .05$ ), and environmental ( $beta = .04$ ) contexts were associated with higher levels of valuing helping others in the community. We repeated the same type of analysis for locus of control, controlling for demographic variables and as well for grade 10 locus of control. Adolescents reporting community service in the context of environmental ( $beta = .03$ ) groups had changed toward more internal locus of control between grades 10 and 12 than those performing community service in other groups. Finally, we used the same approach to assess the relationship of the type of community service to change in self-esteem. We regressed grade 12 self-esteem on demographic variables and grade 10 self-esteem and found that adolescents involved in community groups ( $beta = .04$ ) increased in self-esteem while those volunteering in environmental organizations ( $beta = -.03$ ), declined in self-esteem.

Both our pilot findings and those of Metz et al. (2003) suggest that some types of community service activities may be more beneficial than others in fostering the commitment to volunteer and to participate in civil society. Rarely discussed is the possibility that some types of community service may actually *depress* future volunteering and *retard* the development of qualities that service-learning aims to foster. Such a finding is suggested by our finding of an inverse relationship between environmental group participation and self-esteem.

A particularly compelling example of the potentially retarding effect of community service on the development of civic qualities is described by Kahne and Westheimer (2006). They compared two school-based service-learning programs. Participants in one program worked in collaboration with the local government to improve the delivery of services. The various governmental offices in which students worked were interested in educating students about government, and had identified projects that ensured that students would both learn and succeed.

Students in the other program chose their own projects based on a set of readings that emphasized social injustice and community problems. Projects included lobbying the county government to build a new health clinic to better serve women's health needs, lobbying the state legislature to introduce new legislation concerning juvenile delinquency, and efforts to investigate child labor and biased standardized testing. Together these projects can be characterized as challenging the current state of community and state government; not surprisingly, most of these efforts failed.

Students were tested on measures of political efficacy, political leadership, and civic knowledge prior to entry into the programs and following the completion of them. Perhaps not surprisingly, students in the first program—the one in which students worked in collaboration with government officials who were interested and prepared to offer meaningful community service experiences to adolescents—showed increases in political efficacy, political leadership, and civic knowledge compared to a control group not enrolled in the program. Of particular importance for our point in this section was the finding that adolescents in the other program—the one in which community service projects challenged the status quo and often failed in achieving change—had diminished political efficacy in comparison to those in the control group who did not participate in the program.

Kahne and Westheimer (2006) portray the second program not as a failure but as providing an opportunity for adolescents to learn about the challenges to effecting change in social structures. In a sense, students in the second program were acquiring a deep appreciation for the resistance to change that characterizes political systems. Whether Kahne and Westheimer are correct in that interpretation, our point is that *what* participants *do* in community service may matter in determining the effects of participation on developmental outcome.

## Processes in Volunteering

There has been considerably more research on the processes that culminate in, and in turn are influenced by volunteering than is true in the service-learning domain. Matsuba, Hart, and Atkins (in press) have proposed a model of volunteering that synthesizes the literature on the roots of volunteering, and have tested the model in a representative sample of American adults. The same model has organized research on volunteering in adolescence (Hart, 2005; Atkins, Hart, & Donnelly, 2005). The details of the model are not crucially important here; what is useful, however, is the model's specification of domains of psychological functioning that are related to volunteering. Matsuba, Hart, and Atkins propose that volunteering is the product of, and in turn influences, (1) moral judgment and civic attitudes; (2) self and identity; and (3) relationships and institutions. The research evidence indicates that those with sophisticated moral judgment and prosocial attitudes are most likely to volunteer. The service-learning research—reviewed in an earlier section—suggests that community service can, in turn, foster the development of moral development and heighten civic attitudes.

Identity and self-related cognitions are also associated with volunteering. Piliavin and Calero (1991) studied the emergence of the role-identity of *blood donor* among those who regularly volunteered to give blood. They found that those volunteers for whom the identity was elaborated

and salient were more likely to persist over time in blood donation. Lee, Piliavin, and Call (1999), using a nationally representative survey, found that those who reported thinking a lot about their identities as donors judged the likelihood of future donations to be higher than those for whom donor identities were less salient in consciousness. Matsuba, Hart, and Atkins (in press) reported that adults who think often about their contributions to the community and who believe themselves efficacious in helping others are more committed to volunteering than adults who do not hold these beliefs. Hart and Fegley (1995) found that adolescents deeply engaged in volunteer community service viewed their activities as integral components of themselves in the future and of their ideal selves, a constellation of self-representations suggesting that the volunteer activities had been synthesized into their identities. Self and identity are clearly affected by community service as well. Youniss and Yates (1996), for example, discuss at length the transformations in identity that occur in the context of a service-learning program. Similarly, Kahne and Westheimer (2006) (previously discussed) have documented how service-learning programs can affect beliefs about the self's political efficacy.

The third domain of psychological functioning identified by Matsuba, Hart, and Atkins (in press) as related to volunteering is social capital or social networks. People typically enter into volunteering because they are asked to do so by family, friends, and the institutions to which they belong. Consequently it is not surprising that people who volunteer are also more likely to be attending church, meeting with friends, and so on. Remarkably, little research has examined the effects of volunteering or community service on social networks. In our view, this is a major deficit in the literature. Our hypothesis is that community service participants—whether they are volunteers or service-learning students—are deepening their connections to the social institutions and individuals associated with the service activities. Indeed, we believe that this effect largely accounts for the benefits of community service that are unrelated to the moral/civic and the self/identity domains. For example, we predict that the effects of service-learning on problem behavior reduction are likely to be accounted for (mediated by) deepened attachments to relationships (family, adult mentors) and institutions (churches, community groups) that insulate adolescents from delinquency. Similarly, if service-learning does improve academic achievement—a claim of which we remain skeptical due to a lack of a compelling theoretical model specifying processes—it is likely to occur as a result of deepening adolescents' connections to their schools.

To the best of our knowledge, the service-learning research has not examined the effects of community service on relationships to social institutions. To explore this issue, we again made use of data from the NELS: 88 (described in an earlier section). Students in the NELS were asked in 12th grade whether they had participated in community service in the previous two years, and whether that service was (1) voluntary, or (2) required. They were also asked about the frequency of their participation in religious activities and the amount of time they spent in extracurricular activities, with parallel questions about religious and extracurricular participation asked in 10th grade. We compared the students who reported having been required to participate in community service in the last two years to those students who reported no community service of any type in the past two years. If our hypothesis is correct—that community service deepens connections to social institutions—then we would expect that students reporting required service would show greater increases in extracurricular and religious participation between grades 10 and 12 than students who reported no community service.

To test this hypothesis, we regressed grade 12 frequency of religious participation on demographic variables (parental SES, gender, race), grade 10 frequency of religious participation, and a dummy variable representing either required community service or no service. The results confirmed our hypothesis; those students reporting participation in required community service were higher in religious participation in grade 12 ( $\beta = .05$ ), even after controlling for grade



10 participation, than were students not involved in community service. The same pattern was observed for extracurricular participation ( $\beta = .04$ ).

These results are only suggestive, as the correlational design of the NELS: 88 does not permit strong inferences concerning causality. Nonetheless, the results indicate that even required community service is associated with the strengthening of bonds to social institutions in the community. In our view, future research ought to pay more attention to the possibility that one of the main benefits of service-learning is its effects on social capital.

## CONCLUSION

Our goal in this chapter was to raise important issues concerning service learning and its effects on moral and civic functioning. Like many others, we are advocates for the potential developmental benefits of service-learning and community service. Yet our review cautions against complacent acceptance of the notion that service-learning is well-understood and always growth-facilitating.

Our review suggests that theory concerning service-learning is only weakly tied to research findings. There are a number of consequences that follow from the lack of synthesis of theory and data. The first of these is that all theories are plausible, and consequently neither practice nor research can rely on set of guiding principles. Moreover, the benefits that are claimed by advocates for service-learning seem little connected to theory or to the actual practice of service-learning. Finally, the disconnects among theory, practice, and research have resulted in very little evidence for any of the psychological processes that have been proposed to connect service-learning to the multitude of outcomes that are supposedly associated with the practice.

Although the state of theorizing concerning service-learning is very weak, there is good reason to correct this deficiency. The available evidence suggests that service-learning and community service are associated with development. There is solid evidence that service-learning influences moral development, civic attitudes, and civic participation and the sense of self and identity. Although the evidence is not completely compelling at this point, research also suggests that service-learning may be associated with decreases in risk behavior and increases in positive behavior (e.g., academic achievement).

Our review has been critical of claims by advocates that service-learning has distinct effects on development. In particular, the integration of service-learning with curriculum material, freedom of choice in the selection of service activities, and the opportunity to reflect on the service activity either through discussion or writing have been claimed by advocates to be essential elements of development-fostering educational practice. However, we find little compelling evidence for the importance of any of these features. First of all, research comparing service-learning programs with curriculum integration to community service programs without curriculum integration finds no differences. Second, students required to participate in community service seem to benefit from it as much as do students given freedom of choice. Finally, we found little solid evidence to conclude that structured reflection is indispensable for adolescents to gain from service-activities.

Indeed, our review suggests that there is little evidence to indicate that service-learning has different effects on adolescent development than does volunteering. Both are associated with changes in civic and moral reasoning and attitudes, and in the sense of self and identity. The parallels between service-learning and volunteering suggested to us that the former might increase social capital as has been observed with the latter. Our analyses of data from the NELS: 88 were supportive of the idea that service-learning increases social capital, as those involved in required mandatory community service were characterized by increases in religious and extracurricular participation when compared to those not involved in any sort of community service.

Finally, our review suggests that more attention ought to be paid to the activities in which participants are involved. All community service is not alike; in our analyses of the NELS: 88, we reported that community service in some institutional contexts seemed more advantageous than others. Moreover, we reviewed research by Kahne and Westheimer (2006) that suggested that community service in some contexts may actually be associated with decrements in qualities usually believed to increase as a result of service-learning. We know too little about how the nature of service activity influences adolescents, and we suspect that practitioners are too little concerned with this issue as well.

There are too many gaps in theory and research for an accurate appraisal of the value of service-learning to facilitate development. We cannot in good conscience at this time recommend service-learning as the answer to all problems and challenges faced by adolescents. However, there are real reasons to be optimistic. Most research finds that adolescents benefit from service-learning and we have a general idea about the areas that are influenced by service-learning. There are tremendous opportunities for theorists, practitioners, and researchers to contribute to adolescent development through the application and evaluation of service-learning.

## NOTE

1. Details of this analysis and subsequent ones can be obtained by contacting the first author.

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# 25

## Sport and the Development of Character

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For centuries, those interested in character have often sought to enlist sport as an ally. As far back as Plato, sports have been seen as a test of a competitor's moral fiber. When Pierre de Coubertin resurrected the Olympics Games in the 1890s, he was inspired by the Greeks, and was convinced that through sport, better people would be created. When the modern social sciences began to flourish around the same time as the modern Olympics, many in the emerging field of physical education sought to promote sports in schools for their supposed character-building properties. In the U.S., this belief carried forward a legacy from 19th-century British boarding schools where sports had been embraced as a means to promote character. Today, numerous educational leaders continue to reaffirm the belief that sports promote positive values. However, survey research (e.g., Shields, Bredemeier, LaVoi, & Power, 2005) also highlights numerous ethical problems attending sports. What is the truth about sports and character?

In this chapter, we review literature connected to two central components of character, moral desire and moral will. We then discuss the burgeoning literature on sport morality and achievement motivation. We then discuss efforts to integrate character education into physical activity programs and conclude with recommendations for practice.

### TOWARD A MODEL OF MORAL CHARACTER

To structure our discussion, we draw from Blasi's (2005) components of moral character. Character, according to Blasi, taps two central dimensions of "will." The first is "will as desire," which involves a "moving forward" of the person toward that which is desired. The second is "will as self-control," which involves self-restraint. We use the terms *moral desire* and *moral will* to refer to these two dimensions of character.

The core of moral character is moral desire. Our character reflects the things, values, relationships, or states of being that we cherish. Moral desire includes moral beliefs, attitudes, and ideals that reflect, in part, one's best moral reasoning. Moral desires arise in the course of development from a synthesis of socializing influences and the individual's unique processes of appropriation. Moral desire gives moral meaning to action, and it is highly influential in guiding behavior, especially when morality is core to identity (Blasi, 1993).

But desiring something is not the same as doing it. To act on one's moral desires, one must

exercise moral will (Blasi, 2005). To “say yes” to one’s moral desires, one must “say no” to other competing desires. In popular usage, willpower is needed. Willpower, however, is not primarily a matter of strength or exertion. Rather, moral will consists of a set of interlocking skills, such as the ability to focus attention, keep distant goals in mind, and break down goals into a sequence of specific tasks. Though the term *moral will* is singular, it consists of a set of executive skills, operating in the prefrontal cortex, that work together to accomplish a goal.

While moral desire can give birth to moral virtues, the moral will can blossom into what might be called *performance* virtues, such as persistence, self-control, resiliency, and courage. The distinguishing feature is that these character virtues are not intrinsically moral but only become so when used to pursue moral ends. In our terminology, moral education focuses on the development of moral desire, while character education is broader and incorporates a focus on all components of moral character, including performance virtues (Shields & Bredemeier, 2007).

## SPORT AND MORAL DESIRE

Several lines of sport research are relevant to the moral desire component of character. Researchers have investigated moral values, sportspersonship, moral reasoning, game reasoning, and the moral atmosphere of teams. We review each of these areas in turn.

### Sport and Values

Studying a person’s values provides a window into their desires. Schwartz (1994, p. 21) has defined values as “desirable transsituational goals, varying in importance, that serve as guiding principles in the life of a person or a social entity.” Influencing values is often one of the key objectives of character educators.

Like all social institutions, sports convey values, and they do so both through their structure and culture. Sport rules, for example, are carefully designed to balance offense and defense, opportunity with limitation. The moral values of fairness and welfare permeate the formal regulations of most sports. In addition, sports are cultural institutions and reflect the changing norms of the societies in which they exist. In 19th-century British schools, sports were used to instill values essential for leaders of an empire, such as leadership, allegiance, and courage (Mangan, 1986). In contrast, the values of obedience, dedication, and dependability were embedded in American sport culture early in the last century as it sought to prepare a new wave of immigrants for the workplace (Sage, 1998).

The fact that the values taught through sports change with time and circumstance also means that sports may reflect and transmit values that, in historical retrospect, we wish they hadn’t. Just a few decades ago, sports embodied the value of racial segregation. Throughout history, most sports have supported conventional gender roles, sometimes exaggerating to dangerous levels the values traditionally associated with *femininity* (e.g., Ryan, 1995) and *masculinity* (e.g., Messner, 1992). According to Beamish (2002), sports inevitably support the power of dominant classes by socializing youth into the values that sustain the status quo.

Broad sociohistorical analyses of sports are one method for investigating sport values. A complementary approach is through psychological inquiry. In a highly influential investigation, Webb (1969) developed a simple instrument to assess the value priorities of sport participants. In the original Webb Scale, respondents were asked to rank-order the values of winning, playing fair, and playing well. The value of having fun was added by a number of subsequent investigators. Research utilizing the Webb Scale has generally supported the contention that children tend



to move from an initial *play orientation*, in which fairness or fun are of greatest value, to a *professional orientation*, in which winning is valued most and fairness least (e.g., Blair, 1985; Mantel & Vander Velden, 1974).

Later researchers (e.g., Knoppers, 1985) pointed out significant limitations of the Webb scale. Its rank-order methodology does not reveal information about how important each value is to the respondent; the value terms themselves are open to multiple interpretations; and ranking values devoid of contextual information is not a reliable way of accessing value priorities. Though some of these problems were addressed in later revisions (e.g., Lacy & Greer, 1992), most researchers have moved on to other approaches.

More recently, Lee has sought to renew interest in values among sport psychologists (Lee & Cockman, 1995) and, together with colleagues, developed the Youth Sport Values Questionnaire (Lee, Whitehead, & Balchin, 2000). Value items were derived from analysis of moral dilemma interview data. Pilot tests have demonstrated that respondents generally valued enjoyment and personal achievement over winning.

A more qualitative approach to investigating how sport experiences influence the moral desire of participants has been adopted by a number of sport sociologists. Boys playing Little League filtered the messages through interpretive lenses colored by preadolescent developmental issues, such as defining *masculinity* as toughness, dominance, and disdain for the feminine (Fine, 1979, 1987). In contrast, a women's hockey team studied by Theberge (2000) developed a sense of camaraderie and community in the locker room that helped them to define their playing experience and their lives beyond in a manner that was dissonant from the dominant culture of male ice hockey. The emotional intensity of the locker room fueled poignant conversations about themselves, their relationships, their sport, and their beliefs, in a team culture of inclusivity and equality. Looking at the studies of Fine and Theberge together, it is clear that it is not sport *per se* that is influential in shaping moral desire. Rather, it is the relationships and cultural contexts that permeate the sport setting that is influential.

## Sportspersonship

When people think of morality and sport, often what first comes to mind is sportsmanship or, more gender-neutrally, *sportspersonship*. Sportspersonship can be thought of both as a set of attitudes or values and as behavior that gives expression to them. Sportspersonship has been a topic of considerable, but intermittent, interest to sport psychologists who have developed a number of inventories assessing it over the years (see Bredemeier & Shields, 1998).

Today, the most widely used assessment of sportspersonship is the Multidimensional Sportspersonship Orientations Scale (MSOS; Vallerand, Briere, Blanchard, & Provencher, 1997). While the MSOS has performed better than earlier measures, questions about its psychometric properties have been raised (e.g., Gano-Overway, Guivernau, Magyar, Waldron, & Ewing, 2005; Lemyre, Roberts, & Ommundsen, 2002; McCutcheon, 2000). To date, we do not know if scores on the MSOS correlate with different types of sport experience, nor do we know if it can capture developmental value shifts.

Both the study of moral values and the study of sportspersonship focus on the content of moral thought and behavior. A limitation of these types of studies is that they do not describe or explain the underlying psychological processes. Consequently, it is often difficult to understand how people choose among conflicting values; how and to what degree people's attitudes, especially incongruent ones, inform behavior; and how people's development impacts their attitudes, values, and behavior. Another important dimension of moral psychology that addresses some of these limitations is moral reasoning.

## Moral Reasoning

When Piaget (1932/1965) and Kohlberg (1981, 1984) pioneered the structural developmental approach to morality research it opened a new avenue for exploration. The central feature of this approach is the identification of regular, age-related changes that occur in patterns of moral thinking. Among the numerous variants in the structural developmental paradigm, the theories of Kohlberg and Haan have been most influential in sport research.

For those who see sports as a natural ally to moral education, initial studies were not encouraging. Utilizing Kohlberg's interview, Hall (1986) found that intercollegiate basketball players scored lower on moral judgment than reported college norms. Bredemeier and Shields (1984b), using Rest's (1979) Defining Issues Test (DIT), also found that their sample of intercollegiate basketball players scored lower than reported norms of college students. However, in a study of high school students, Rulmyr (1996) found no differences in DIT scores between athletes and nonathletes.

A second line of sports research features Haan's (1977, 1991) model of interactional morality, a model featuring levels of development that more directly taps the common, everyday contexts of moral decision making. Haan was less interested in how people reason about abstract moral issues than in how they sought to engage in interpersonal moral negotiation.

Bredemeier and Shields (1986c) utilized Haan's (1977) model to assess the moral reasoning of 100 high school and college basketball players and nonathletes. Within the college sample, they found that the athletes had significantly less mature moral reasoning than their peers. However, a follow-up study that added 20 swimmers found no significant differences in moral reasoning development between the swimmers and the nonathletes (Bredemeier & Shields, 1986c). Within the high school sample, there were no differences between the athletes and nonathletes. Because athletes from only two sports were assessed, it is unclear whether the observed college differences were due to factors internal to some types of sports (e.g., team versus individual, contact versus noncontact) or factors extrinsic to the athletes' sport experiences (e.g., GPA was not controlled for in the study).

In a study of children in the fourth through seventh grades, Haanian interviews were given to 106 girls and boys (Bredemeier, Weiss, Shields, & Cooper, 1986). The researchers found that boys who participated in high-contact sports and girls who participated in medium-contact sports (which was the highest level of contact sport that the girls had participated in) were significantly less mature in their moral reasoning than children who had participated in other sports or had not participated in any organized sport program. Level of physical contact may be an important variable because children may have difficulty distinguishing between athletic aggression and physically forceful but nonaggressive play. The investigators also asked the children to identify which sports they most enjoy watching. While girls' moral reasoning was not related to sport interests, boys who liked to watch higher contact sports tended to have lower levels of moral reasoning. In fact, for the boys, sport interest predicted moral reasoning maturity and aggression tendencies better than actual sport participation. These findings suggest that there may be sports-related developmental pathways other than direct participation.

Some researchers have designed sport-specific measures of moral reasoning that are less closely tied to major theories of moral development. Best known is the Hahm-Beller Values Choice Inventory (HBVCI) (Hahm, Beller, & Stoll, 1989; Stoll & Beller, 1989), a sport-specific measure of "deontological" reasoning. Based on research with the HBVCI, Stoll and colleagues claim that the longer athletes participate in sport, the less adequate their moral reasoning becomes (Beller & Stoll, 1995; Stoll & Beller, 2000). Much of the data on which these conclusions are drawn, however, remains unpublished. An exception is a longitudinal study of 631 U.S. Military

Academy cadets by Priest, Krause, and Beach (1999) who found a negative impact of sports participation on moral reasoning. These results need to be viewed with caution, however, since the psychometric properties of the HBVCI have yet to be subjected to adequate peer evaluation (Bredemeier & Shields, 1998).

Overall, the results from these studies suggest that there may be a weak negative correlation between participation in some sports and moral reasoning maturity. However, results are mixed, and none of the published studies, except for the Priest et al. (1999) investigation, allow for any causal attributions. Controlling for selection effects should be a high priority in future research. The mixed results also suggest that it is important not to lump all sports and sport participants together. Not only do the rule structures of the various sports promote different types of social interaction, but each sport tends to have its own subculture and implicit moral norms, and each individual sport team develops its own unique moral microculture through the influence of particular coaches, athletes, fans, parents, and programs. Moreover, even in a single sport environment, participants' subjective appraisals of the experience may vary substantially. We need additional research that targets specific variables operative in the sport milieu, such as coaching styles and behaviors, as they relate to or impact moral reasoning.

While research on the impact of sport involvement on moral reasoning has raised more questions than it has answered, there is greater clarity about a related question: is moral reasoning maturity related to moral judgments and behavior in the sport context? The evidence suggests that moral reasoning maturity does make a difference.

In one study, Bredemeier, Weiss, Shields, and Cooper (1987) administered moral interviews to 78 children and showed them slides of potentially injurious sport behaviors. The researchers found that children with less mature reasoning judged a significantly greater number of potentially injurious acts to be acceptable than their more mature peers. Similarly, Bredemeier (1985) found that moral reasoning maturity negatively correlated with acceptance of aggression within a sample of basketball players at the high school and college level.

Most sport studies that have looked at behavior in relation to moral reasoning have focused on aggression. Preliminary evidence that the two are related was reported in a basketball study (Bredemeier & Shields, 1984b) discussed previously. In addition to administering a moral maturity measure, the researchers asked the athletes' coaches to rate and rank their players on aggression, defined as behavior intended to injure another. The researchers found that athletes' preconventional reasoning was positively correlated with coaches' evaluations of aggressiveness, while postconventional reasoning was associated with low aggression scores. In another study, Bredemeier (1994) found that children's moral reasoning was predictive of self-reported assertive and aggressive action tendencies in both sport and daily life. Similarly, Stephens (2001; Stephens & Bredemeier, 1996) found that players' endorsement of preconventional moral motivations was predictive of self-reported temptation to cheat, lie, or aggress.

## Game Reasoning

Do people's moral desires about moral interactions within sports differ from their moral desires about relationships and behaviors outside of sports? This question drove another line of research that focused on how people think about, process, and organize moral situations in sports. Do they do so in the same way, through the same reasoning structures, as they do in other contexts?

Structural developmental theorists have traditionally held that a person's moral reasoning level will remain fairly constant across different types of contents and situations (Kohlberg, 1984; cf. Carpendale & Krebs, 1995). Still, although general consistency is expected, a few highly irregular contexts have been shown to alter the person's level of moral reasoning. Kohlberg,

Hickey, and Scharf (1972), for example, found that inmates used lower stages of moral reasoning in response to prison dilemmas than when they discussed standard hypothetical dilemmas. Bredemeier and Shields (1986b, 1994) hypothesized that when people reason about moral issues in sports they will use a pattern of reasoning that is more egocentric than the one used to reason about moral issues in most other contexts. This hypothesis was generated in light of two sets of observations, one theoretical, the other empirical.

The theoretical observation draws from a social science tradition that posits that play, games, and sports are often seen by participants and observers alike as “set apart” from everyday life (e.g., Huizinga, 1955). The separate world of sports is governed by artificial rules and roles; sport activities are directed toward goals with no intrinsic meaning or value; and sport activities occur in their own special places and times, replete with designations of “in bounds” and “out of bounds” and “time in” and “time out.” Handelman (1977) suggests that entry into this realm requires “a radical transformation in cognition and perception” (p. 186). Given this literature, it seemed reasonable to hypothesize that moral reasoning might shift upon entry into sport.

The empirical observation comes from moral interviews that included both standard “life” dilemmas and a second set of parallel “sport” dilemmas. In these investigations, the life scores were significantly higher than the sport scores (Bredemeier & Shields, 1984a, 1986b). This finding was quite robust, holding for athletes and nonathletes, swimmers and basketball players, college and high school students, males and females. The gap between sport and life reasoning seems to appear around the upper elementary years (Bredemeier, 1995).

Based on these findings, we proposed a theory of *game reasoning* (Bredemeier & Shields, 1986a, 1986b). The theory holds that sport elicits a temporary adaptation in moral reasoning such that egocentrism, typically the hallmark of immature morality, becomes an acceptable principle for organizing the moral exchange (within limits). Thus, sports allow for a “legitimated regression” (Shields & Bredemeier, 1984) to a form of moral reasoning that is similar to less mature moral reasoning. The term *regression*, however, is not meant literally. The egocentric reasoning that flourishes in sports is not identical to the preconventional reasoning of young children. It is *playful* egocentrism. When the play character of game reasoning is lost, as sometimes happens, ethical lapses are likely to result. Thus, game reasoning can take the form of an *illegitimate regression*. Additional research is needed to understand how, when, and why such a shift occurs.

People’s values, their views of sportspersonship, and moral reasoning patterns help give concrete form to their moral desires. These variables are psychological in nature. As we indicated earlier, moral desire originates from an interaction between the person and socializing influences. While there is an irreducible autonomous dimension to the construction of moral desire, it is also a socially mediated process (Blasi, 2005). The experiences that one has in real groups and communities can either expand or restrict moral imagination, allowing some to believe that truly just and compassionate social relations are possible, while others become cynical and constricted in their moral outlook. We turn now to investigations that focus on the moral atmosphere of sport teams.

### The Moral Atmosphere of Sport Teams

The term *moral atmosphere* was introduced by Kohlberg and his colleagues (Higgins, Power, & Kohlberg, 1984). These investigators sought to characterize the collective norms that develop in groups over time either spontaneously or as a result of interventions designed to build shared norms. Kohlberg and his colleagues demonstrated that the collective norms of a group can be highly influential in shaping individual moral desires (Higgins et al., 1984), and that shared understandings about what is and is not appropriate behavior for members of a group can be the focus of intervention work (Power et al., 1989).

Empirical investigation of the shared moral norms of sport teams began with studies by Shields, Bredemeier, Gardner, and Bostrom (1995) and Stephens et al. (1997). Shields et al. (1995) developed the *Team Norm Questionnaire* (TNQ) to assess the strength of team norms prohibiting cheating or aggression. Simple in design, the questionnaire asks respondents to estimate how many of their teammates would cheat or aggress if doing so would ensure victory in an important game. If, for example, there is a strong collective norm on a particular team against cheating, then, it is expected, most athletes on that team will respond that none or only a few of their teammates would cheat to win. Additionally, respondents are asked to indicate whether their coach would approve of cheating or aggressing if needed to win. Shields et al. (1995) found that age, year in school, and years playing baseball or softball all correlated positively with expectations of peer cheating and aggression, and with the belief that the coach would sanction cheating if necessary to win.

Stephens and Bredemeier (1996; Stephens et al., 1997) sought to determine the best predictors of athletes' self-described temptation to aggress. In their investigation, they examined moral atmosphere and motivational variables and found that the strongest predictor of players' temptation to aggress was their beliefs about the number of teammates who would aggress in a similar situation. This finding, based originally on a sample of young female soccer players, was replicated with coed soccer players at three age levels (Stephens, 2000), girls' basketball players at two competitive levels (Stephens, 2001), and Canadian male ice hockey players (Stephens & Kavanagh, 2003). Kavussanu, Roberts, and Ntoumanis (2002) also found that moral atmosphere has a direct effect on components of moral functioning (judgment, intention, and behavior).

Guiverneau and Duda (2002) modified the moral atmosphere measures to include a broader range of potential influences on likelihood to aggress. In a study of adolescent soccer players, they included questions about a range of significant others. Consistent with earlier research, Guiverneau and Duda found that athletes' perceptions of team norms were the most consistent predictors of self-described likelihood to cheat or aggress. Results from the study also indicated that players' perceptions of their coach's norms for cheating and aggression were more influential than perceptions of whether best friends, most popular players, team captains, best players, or parents would want them to cheat or aggress.

These investigations of moral atmosphere do not allow for cause-effect relationships to be determined. Nonetheless, based on research in schools (Power et al., 1989), it seems likely that a team's shared norms are important influences on the moral reasoning and behavior of individual team members. Future research is needed to clarify subcomponents within the moral atmosphere, the multiple influences on shared norms, cultural variations in how moral norms are expressed, and developmental issues.

## MORAL WILL

According to Blasi (2005), the second dimension of moral character is self-control or moral will. In itself, willpower is a skill and, like memory, is morally neutral. It becomes part of moral character to the extent that it is directed by moral desire.

Little research has been conducted by sport psychologists that directly investigates the moral will component of character. Still, it seems reasonable to hypothesize that sports participation can develop qualities like goal-setting, delay of gratification, sequential thinking, and attention focusing. Such skills, due to their instrumental value, are often the focus of coaching. That these same



qualities may also lead to success in school was the rationale for several early investigations that found sport participation associated with positive academic outcomes. However, after reviewing these investigations, Stevenson (1975) concluded that they failed to control adequately for selection effects. Moreover, Coleman (1961), in his classic work on adolescents, suggested that sport involvement is detrimental to academics because it takes time away from schoolwork.

More recent longitudinal investigations have partially addressed the selection bias. Rather than supporting Coleman's (1961) zero-sum model, most of this work suggests that sport participation benefits schoolwork. These investigations shed indirect light on the moral will dimension of character through examining variables that can be seen as rough proxies for this character component.

Based on analyses of longitudinal data sets, it appears that participation in high school athletics increases later educational attainment (e.g., Broh, 2002; Eccles & Barber, 1999; Mahoney, Cairns, & Farmer, 2003; Marsh & Kleitman, 2003), reduces school drop-out (Mahoney & Cairns, 1997), and makes a positive contribution to self-esteem (Marsh & Kleitman, 2003) and social self-concept (Marsh, 1993). Exceptions to these trends, however, have also been reported (e.g., Eide & Ronan, 2001; Hanson & Kraus, 1998) and Shulman and Bowen (2001) document academic underperformance by college athletes.

Even when well-designed studies demonstrate positive academic outcomes, most investigations have not shed light on the processes at work. Broh (2002) suggests that athletes' success in school is attributable to the impact of sports on individual character traits that support achievement in multiple domains, but this remains a hypothetical tenet. Other theorists have suggested that participation in sports may have academic benefits because it enhances attachment to the school, provides adult mentorship, buttresses prosocial attitudes and values, and teaches specific skills that can transfer to the classroom.

One approach to investigating these processes is to examine the subjective experiences that youth have during their participation in various activities. Larson (2000) found that when youth were asked to report on their experiential states during sports, they reported experiences that combined challenge, deep concentration, and heightened intrinsic motivation. Larson, Hansen, and Walker (2005) suggest that these experiences are essential for the development of initiative, defined as the ability to direct attention and effort toward a challenging goal. It is a concept that maps well onto moral will.

Interestingly, despite the positive connection between sports participation and academic performance, a "jock" identity may be detrimental. Miller, Melnick, Barnes, Farrell, and Sabo (2005), for example, found that female athletes (and to a lesser extent Black athletes) who claimed the label of *jock* reported lower grades than did other athletes. Being a "jock" seems to connect with other problematic behaviors as well, including school misconduct (Miller et al., 2005), heavy drinking (e.g., Miller, Hoffman, Barnes, Farrell, Sabo, & Melnick, 2003), high risk sex (Miller, Farrell, Barnes, Melnick, & Sabo, 2005), and violence or bullying (Miller, Melnick, Farrell, Sabo, & Barnes, 2006).

What can be affirmed at this point is that sports are potent contexts for influencing a number of processes that directly or indirectly connect to moral will. However, the picture is far from complete. Despite the advantages of longitudinal research, selection biases may still account for some of the results. Another limitation of the research to date is that it lumps all types of sport experience together. Additional research is needed to determine what specific features of various sport contexts (e.g., coaching behaviors, team characteristics) interact with what characteristics of individuals to influence outcomes of interest. One area of research where these more complex questions have begun to be addressed focuses on achievement motivation.



## ACHIEVEMENT MOTIVATION AND CHARACTER

Achievement motivation is of considerable interest to sport psychologists. Not surprisingly, several investigators have turned to achievement motivation theory to deepen our understanding of sport morality. Achievement motivation research sheds light on both the moral desire and moral will components of character and may provide a helpful bridge. Investigators have focused both on individual variations in achievement motivation and on how motivational cues embedded in contexts are related to individual motivation and behavior. In the sections that follow, we address these two themes in turn, followed by a discussion of achievement ethics.

### Achievement Motivation

Nicholls' (1989) work has been the primary resource for investigators. His theory is organized around two distinct types of achievement motivation. People are *task-oriented* to the extent that they define success in self-referenced terms and experience competence when progressing toward goals related to growth, effort, and development. People are *ego-oriented* when their subjective sense of success is dependent on favorable social comparison, and outperforming greater numbers of peers is the measure of increasing competence. While people have general tendencies toward task or ego motivation, they are not mutually exclusive and people often fluctuate between being task-involved or ego-involved during specific activities.

In 1989, Nicholls suggested that there is a logical relation between a person's achievement motivation and the salience that moral issues have for them. In 1991, Duda and colleagues conducted a seminal study that demonstrated an empirical link between achievement motivation, on the one hand, and sportpersonship attitudes and legitimacy judgments about aggressive behaviors, on the other (Duda, Olson, & Templin, 1991). Since then, there have been a plethora of studies demonstrating links between motivational and moral variables.

For those interested in promoting moral behavior, the general conclusion of this research is that one should nurture task motivation and discourage ego motivation. Task motivation has been shown to predict at least some aspects of good sportpersonship (e.g., Duda et al., 1991; Gano-Overway et al., 2005), prosocial behavior (Kavussanu, 2006), and higher levels of moral functioning (Kavussanu & Ntoumanis, 2003). Ego motivation, by contrast, is associated with low level moral reasoning (Todd & Hodge, 2001), approval of poor sport behavior or cheating (Kavussanu & Ntoumanis, 2003; Kavussanu & Roberts, 2001), intention to engage in poor sport behavior (Stuntz & Weiss, 2003), approval of aggression (Duda et al., 1991; Kavussanu & Roberts, 2001), self-reported likelihood to aggress (Stephens & Kavanagh, 2003), and a range of anti-social behaviors in sport (Kavussanu, 2006; Sage Kavussanu & Duda, 2006).

While the expected moral-motivational associations generally have been supported, there have been exceptions reported (e.g., Gano-Overway et al., 2005; Kavussanu & Roberts, 2001; Stephens, 2000, 2001). These inconsistent results highlight the need for more complex investigations that examine various motivational profiles, as well as interactions between dispositional orientation and the motivational climate (see below).

The *task* and *ego* orientations are orthogonal. This allows for the investigation of a number of interesting combinations. For example, Hardy (1998) suggested that a high task orientation may moderate the detrimental effects of ego orientation. A study by Dunn and Dunn (1999) partially supported this idea. They divided their sample of elite male ice hockey players into four goal orientation profile groups based on a mean-split protocol (see Kavussanu, 2006, for a critique of this methodology). The authors reported that high task orientation groups (irrespective of ego orientation levels) had higher sportpersonship levels than low task groups. The most detrimental

motivational pattern combined a low task orientation with a high ego orientation. Lemyre et al. (2002) also found that sport participants who were high in task orientation consistently endorsed sportspersonship. However, unlike Dunn and Dunn (1999), they found that those who were high in both task and ego did not consistently endorse good sportspersonship. Lemyre et al. (2002) also examined perceived ability and found that players high in ego orientation and low in perceived ability expressed the lowest respect for rules and officials, and endorsed more cheating behavior.

Thus far, we have considered studies that tied motivational orientations directly to moral variables. It is also possible that motivational orientations mediate the effects of other variables. Kavussanu and Ntoumanis (2003), for example, found that length of contact sport participation positively predicted ego orientation which, in turn, predicted low levels of moral functioning. The direct effects of sport participation on moral functioning became nonsignificant in the presence of ego orientation. This suggests that it is not participation in contact sport *per se* that leads to poorer moral functioning, but rather the adopted goal perspective that often accompanies longer sport participation.

Research on the role of motivational orientations in sport morality can be extended by more careful consideration of issues of gender, culture, age, developmental level, perceived competence, and previous sport experience. We know little about the potential mediating effects of these variables on the relationships among motivational and moral variables.

### Motivational Climate

The term *motivational climate* refers to elements within the context that tend to pull for one type of motivational orientation over the other (Ames, 1992). A *mastery* motivational climate—characterized by such features as intrateam cooperation and an emphasis on effort and improvement over performance and outcome—tends to elicit and augment *task*-involvement. A *performance* climate, which features intrateam rivalry, unequal recognition, and punishment for mistakes, tends to draw out and support *ego*-involvement.

Research indicates that athletes' perceptions of the motivational climate are predictive of a range of morally relevant variables. In brief, when athletes perceive a performance climate, they engage in more antisocial behavior or less prosocial behavior (Kavussanu, 2006; Kavussanu, Seal, & Phillips, 2006); they accept more aggression as legitimate (Miller, Roberts, & Ommundsen, 2005); and they embrace at least some dimensions of poor sportspersonship (Boixados, Cruz, Torregrosa, & Valiente, 2004; Miller, Roberts, & Ommundsen, 2004). On the other hand, perception of a mastery climate relate positively to various aspects of sportspersonship (Boixados et al., 2004; Gano-Overway et al., 2005; Miller et al., 2004), and prosocial behavior (Kavussanu, 2006; Kavussanu et al., 2006).

### Achievement Ethics

Achievement motivation has emerged as a fruitful area of sport morality research. Both moral desire and will are likely influenced by one's achievement motivation. If Nicholls (1989) is correct that people's motivational orientation (task or ego) predisposes them to greater or lesser moral sensitivity, then their orientation is likely an important influence on their moral desire. In addition, to the extent that people are highly motivated within achievement settings (high task or high ego), they are likely to develop skills related to willpower.

While the connections between achievement motivation and moral constructs may seem relatively straightforward, there is an ambiguity that needs to be addressed. The ambiguity can

be expressed in the form of a question: Are the “task” and “ego” variants of achievement motivation descriptive categories or prescriptive ones? Are we talking about two types of achievement motivation or two achievement ethics? It may be that the two goal orientations (task and ego) *contain* within themselves implicit moral theories (Shields & Bredemeier, 2007). For the task oriented person, self-development, learning, growth, and striving toward excellence are embraced as intrinsically good. They help define what is morally desirable. For the ego oriented person, developing one’s capacities is instrumentally good in that so doing can lead to demonstrations of superiority. What is desirable is to be the best.

Nicholls (1992) did not shy away from the negative moral connotations of the ego orientation when he wrote: “Ego orientation implies that one’s purpose is the egotistical one of establishing one’s superiority over others” (p. 271). With regard to task motivation, Nicholls (1989) wrote, “I count myself among those who advocate task orientation rather than ego orientation. I consider that, ethically, it is more desirable” (p. 102). It is the content of a person’s moral desire that defines the goals toward which motivation is directed. Nicholls suggests that prosocial moral desire is embedded within the task orientation.

The prescriptive and descriptive dimensions of the concepts defining motivational climates also need to be clarified. Research has demonstrated that there are close relations between motivational and moral climates (Kavussanu et al., 2002; Kavussanu & Spray, 2006; Ommundsen et al., 2003), but it is unclear as to whether the two constructs correlate simply because they overlap. A careful analysis of the descriptive and prescriptive dimensions of achievement motivation theory is needed.

In conclusion, research demonstrates that motivational variables are important to consider if we seek to increase the likelihood that athletes will choose to act on their best moral judgment. If their aim is to reduce problematic behaviors or to increase prosocial behaviors, coaches would be well advised to increase task motivation and decrease ego motivation. Over time, they can do this by creating a mastery climate. To date, however, no reports have appeared in the literature of sport-based character education programs that take advantage of this strategy.

## SPORT AND CHARACTER EDUCATION

We return now to the question with which we began: Can sports promote positive character? Clearly, playing sports does not automatically lead to more mature moral reasoning, better values, or improved sportpersonship. On the other hand, sustained sport participation, at least at the high school level, does seem to predict improved academic functioning. To what extent better school performance stems from character gains transferred from the playing field to the classroom is unclear, however.

In this section, we review intervention research (for a more extended review see Bredemeier & Shields, 2005). It is important to note, however, that there are virtually no published studies on character-related interventions in competitive sport contexts. As a result, we review studies conducted in other physical activity settings, most often physical education (PE). Clearly, generalization to sports is problematic, though these studies may provide future researchers with some initial foundations on which to build.

Most of the early intervention research was designed to test or compare the efficacy of strategies derived from either the structural developmental (SD) or social learning (SL) approach to moral development. For example, Bredemeier, Weiss, Shields, and Shewchuk (1986) utilized a summer sports camp to compare the efficacy of such SL strategies as modeling and reinforcement with the SD strategies of dialogue and negotiation. The camp participants (ages 5–7) were

randomly placed into one of three groups, two of which employed theoretically derived teaching strategies. For six weeks, the three groups implemented a common sports curriculum infused with a consistent progression of moral themes. Within-group analyses showed that both experimental groups gained in moral reasoning, but the control group did not. A similar study by Romance, Weiss, and Bockoven (1986) documented the efficacy of a public school PE class that utilized SD strategies to promote moral reasoning advance.

Gibbons and her colleagues, in two investigations involving children in the 4th through 6th grades, sought to test the effectiveness of the *Fair Play for Kids* program which utilizes pedagogical strategies rooted in both SD and SL approaches. In their first study (Gibbons, Ebbeck, & Weiss, 1995), the researchers compared three groups: (1) fair play when used across the curriculum; (2) fair play when used only in PE classes; and (3) a control group that did not use the fair play curriculum. After a seven month intervention, the researchers found that both experimental groups improved significantly on a measure of moral functioning, while the control group did not. There were no discernable differences between the two experimental groups.

In the second study, Gibbons and Ebbeck (1997) focused only on the PE class. Class-level analyses demonstrated that both experimental groups scored higher than the control group on moral judgment or intention, but only the SD group scored higher than the controls on moral reasoning. Student level analyses demonstrated that the students in the experimental groups improved more in prosocial behavior than controls.

One of the most impressive efforts to implement a PE program that incorporates moral concerns is that of Hellison and his colleagues. Over the years, Hellison has refined a model of developing self- and social responsibility through PE. First proposed in 1978, the model has benefited from continual refinement in response to extensive use in the field (e.g., Hellison, 1978, 1995, 2003). At the core of the model is a set of heuristic levels, reflecting increasingly more difficult social goals, through which program participants can move as they progress toward both full participation in the program and full responsibility. Hellison's model has received unparalleled praise from curriculum and pedagogy experts (e.g., Siedentop, Mand, & Taggart, 1986; Winnick, 1990).

Another impressive effort to create a PE program that incorporates moral education was developed by Ennis (1999). *Sports for Peace* focuses on the development of responsibility, conflict-resolution skills, and a supportive community. In a qualitative study of its effectiveness, the program was implemented by 12 teachers in six urban schools in a nine-week unit on basketball. The researchers concluded that the program met its goals. As with any omnibus program, however, it is difficult to know what program elements were responsible for what outcomes.

Finally, Solomon employed SD theory in a sociomoral education program with second-grade youth in a PE context. Using a pre- and posttest design with experimental and control groups, she demonstrated gains in moral reasoning following a 13-week program that focused on trust, helping, problem-solving, and body awareness (Solomon, 1997). Her interventions included work on communication skills, cooperation, and sharing.

There are numerous other efforts at character education through PE or sports that are not reviewed here, either because the empirical data on them is limited (e.g., Miller, Bredemeier, & Shields, 1997; Beller & Stoll, 1992, 2000) or because character education is only tangentially related to the intervention, such as Danish's "life skills" programs (e.g., Danish, 2002; Danish, Petitpas, & Hale, 1995). Still, those who wish to design interventions may find helpful suggestions in these works.

The cumulative impression left by the various intervention efforts reviewed here is that PE and sport programs, when deliberately designed to do so, can be used to improve the moral functioning of participants. Even when interventions are successful, however, it is often unclear

which component of the program, or which combinations of components, is responsible for the gains. Future researchers should also seek to address issues of program implementation fidelity.

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PRACTICE

The literature reviewed in this chapter presents a mixed picture regarding sports participation and character. With regard to the moral desire component of character, the cumulative evidence is worrisome. Researchers have investigated a broad range of topics (e.g., values, sportspersonship, moral reasoning). When significant results are reported, they point to potential negative effects of sport involvement, though most methodologies do not allow cause-effect conclusions to be drawn. While none of these findings are definitive, one searches in vain for studies demonstrating positive moral effects or correlates of sport participation. In contrast, with regard to the willpower dimension of character, the preponderance of evidence suggests that sports may have a salutary effect (though probably not large). Numerous studies suggest that sports involvement promotes positive academic outcomes. Some of this may be due to the development of character skills that transfer from sports to other domains. To what extent this is true will need to be clarified by future research.

Given the current imperfect state of knowledge, what is a coach or sport administrator to do? Are there concrete recommendations for practice that have a reasonable likelihood of supporting positive character development? We believe there is reason for optimism in this regard. The current lack of supportive evidence for sports may simply point to the need for coaches and other sport leaders to make a deliberate effort to incorporate character education goals and strategies into their programs. Professional training opportunities should be provided to assist coaches in this effort.

Borrowing from studies of sports and other voluntary structured youth programs, it is possible to offer a number of specific recommendations. We conclude our chapter with the following seven. A quality, character-nurturing sports program needs to:

1. *Ensure physical and psychological safety.* Character development is unlikely in environments that are perceived as unsafe (Eccles & Gootman, 2002). The moral principle of respect for persons requires that adults who have organizational responsibilities for young sport participants need to ensure that their safety is paramount. This principle is violated when dangerous sports equipment is used, when there is fear of aggression or harassment from others, when people experience discrimination or prejudice, when athletes are required or encouraged to practice or compete while injured, when coaches engage in behavior that is verbally or physically abusive, when fans yell offensive comments, when mistakes are ridiculed leading to embarrassment, and so on. Coaches need to proactively work to ensure that the physical and psychological environment is safe.

2. *Foster athlete empowerment.* Eccles and Gootman (2002) note, “[P]ositive development is not something adults do to young people, but rather something that young people do for themselves with a lot of help from parents and others. They are the agents of their own development” (p. 103). To be effective agents of their own development, youth need to be empowered to exercise age appropriate responsibility. Young athletes should be involved in setting up team rules, in writing codes of conduct, in thinking through team strategies, in setting team goals and designing practices, in working through interpersonal conflicts, and in evaluating team performances (athletic and ethical). Adult leaders should remember that they are there to mentor youth—to

provide guidance, to build supportive relationships, to scaffold skill development—not to take all authority and responsibility on themselves.

3. *Promote a mastery climate.* The most beneficial form of achievement motivation is nurtured when the coach builds a mastery climate. To create such a climate, coaches need to place the emphasis on participation, individual progress, and task mastery. Coaches can foster a mastery climate by supporting cooperation among team members, by helping everyone, especially the lesser skilled, feel valued and included, and by emphasizing effort and mastery more than ability and outcome. In a mastery climate, every member of the team is focused on self-calibrated skill improvement, feels that they have an important role, and feels supported and affirmed by teammates.

4. *Put winning in perspective.* It goes without saying that all sport participants want to win. Nonetheless, coaches need to be keenly aware of the fact that competition, as traditionally understood, has a tendency to prime negative attitudes and behaviors (Kohn, 1992). This can be counteracted by emphasizing that true competition, as the etymology of the word suggests, involves striving *with* the opponent. The goal of true competition is to challenge one's limits, to quest for excellence. In true competition, competitors push each other toward ever higher levels of achievement. Learning to experience exhilaration in pushing to one's physical and psychological limits is one of the great lessons of sports. It helps center moral desire on living to one's full capabilities. Learning that lesson, however, is sacrificed when winning becomes the ultimate value.

5. *Develop the team into a value-based community.* As noted earlier, moral desire is both irreducibly individual and socially constructed. For moral desire to reflect a deep moral commitment to such values as justice, compassion, fairness, respect, and responsibility, those values need to be experienced within a community to which one feels attached. One of the realities of sport is that athletes tend to invest a great deal of themselves into the experience. Alert coaches can take advantage of this fact by building their teams into caring and responsible communities that embrace moral values as core to their collective identity. To develop a moral atmosphere conducive to character development and prosocial behavior, coaches can encourage team dialogue, focus on the common good, and promote collective responsibility (Power et al., 1989). Every athlete needs to feel a sense of ownership in the team so that when team norms are violated, they do not look to authority figures to deal with them. The role of the coach is not to impose ideas or values, but to stimulate, facilitate, and guide the necessary dialogue that leads to shared understanding, common interest, and mutual commitments.

6. *Connect sport to everyday life.* Character lessons learned in sports do not automatically transfer to life beyond the playing field or gym. Coaches can help athletes see, for example, that dedicated effort in the service of a worthy goal is not only a winning strategy in sports but can enrich other areas of life, such as school. They can help athletes see that their life as citizens in the broader society can be informed by team experiences with dialogue, problem-solving, and compromise. When a coach fosters the democratic skills of seeking the common good through sharing perspectives, sensitive listening, negotiating differences, and seeking commonality, the coach can help athletes see how those same skills are needed in workplaces and political spheres. One effective way of bridging sports to life is to engage the team in community service. Working together on a community service project can help build the team as a value-based community and it can connect the life of the team to life outside the team.

7. *Encourage critical thinking.* It is important to transfer insights from sports to life. But it is equally important to think critically about sports and to resist drawing incorrect conclusions about broader life. It is important, for example, to resist seeing most social relations as win/lose contests. And it is important for athletes to learn that competition in many areas of life is quite



different from competition within sports. For example, in sports people win or lose based to a significant extent on their mastery and execution of relevant skills. But people's economic standing in the broader society does not reflect a similar meritocracy. In the economic game, "players" don't start from an initial position of equality and the connection between merit and reward is much looser than in sports. Similarly, athletes should be encouraged to think critically about the lessons they are taking away from sports regarding gender roles, sexuality, the body, conflict resolution, race and class relations, human equality, and the connection between performance and a sense of self-worth. Finally, coaches should facilitate the development of a critical attitude toward the sports media. Athletes can be encouraged to become critical consumers when broadcasters, for example, hype rivalries, celebrate aggression, offer platitudes about the "character" of winners, define success narrowly in terms of the scoreboard, and congratulate cheaters who escape detection.

By utilizing strategies such as those identified above, we believe sports can be highly potent and positive venues for character education. We hope that future research will confirm this hypothesis.

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# 26

## The Community Contribution to Moral Development and Character

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In the early hours of the morning of March 14, 2006, two female strippers left a house belonging to several of the members of the Duke University Lacrosse team. Exactly what took place inside the house earlier that night may never be entirely clear to anyone other than those present. However, the following morning the campus was rocked by allegations of rape. Members of the media swarmed the campus and camped out in front of the now notorious house, which soon was festooned with posters and flyers supporting and condemning the accuser and the accused.

In the days that followed, leaders on campus decided steps needed to be taken not only to address this particular issue, but to address the “culture of crassness” that had slowly come to pervade the Duke campus. Examples of lewd behavior and sexually explicit language were cited as reasons for the need for a communitywide discussion. Members of the administration, religious communities, and the student body gathered in the Duke Chapel to address the issue and to talk about ways of improving the campus culture. In this way, members of a community spontaneously came together in the *hopes of influencing the moral and character development of its young people*.

This chapter is dedicated to reviewing the academic literature that addresses community involvement in the development of moral and character education efforts. The Duke incident points to the need for such discussions. In our minds, community discussions would ideally take place before such unfortunate occurrences happen, though not only as preventative, but as community and character building opportunities for our youth and for every member of the community.

The importance of community contribution to youth moral development cannot be overestimated. Strong communities are arenas that may provide young people with a sense of identity and belonging (Benson, 1997). In its best form, therefore, community support can provide youth with positive purposes in life, and thereby motivate them to act in highly ethical ways. In its worst form, community support may direct young people toward less positive purposes, leading to destructive behavior. This is not intended, however, to preclude a recognition of the potentially

positive role that youth resistance to institutional authority can play in individual moral and social development.

Any comprehensive examination of the moral and character education of youth requires a consideration of the contributions of the community in developing the programs that promote such ends. It is to a discussion of contributions that this chapter now turns. Of particular interest are the means and models by which the community has and can be engaged in the development of programs that promote positive youth development. Although the community context within which a character education program or a community participation program is created and implemented undoubtedly affects its outcome, it is an all too rare phenomenon that the broader community is engaged in the development of such efforts.

This chapter intends to give emphasis to the importance of engaging various aspects of the community, beyond the schools themselves, in the development process of such programs. Groups such as professionals, policy makers, law enforcement officials, church leaders, youth pastors, and concerned citizens' groups, among others, bring their own perspectives to the process as well as a nuanced appreciation for the particular needs of the young people in the community. Lorion and Sokoloff (2003) point out the inherently social nature of the positive experiences and qualities that young people need to have in order to develop in healthy directions, and suggest that lasting positive change in developmental trajectories is unlikely if limited to only the individual or the family. They have observed that not only are family-level changes needed to sustain individual change, but that family support is "heartier if echoed by neighbors, by those in developmentally significant settings, and ideally by local norms and values" (p.122). Support for sector and setting collaborations are similarly supported by other writers in the community development field (Barton et al., 1998; Annie E. Casey Foundation, 1995; Hawkins, Catalano et al., 1992).

Asserting the responsibility of various sectors in young people's moral development, Lickona and his colleagues (Lickona, Schaps, & Lewis, 2007) emphasize the importance of engaging parents and community members as full partners in the process of building character in their eleven principles of effective character education. They assert that:

A school's character education mission statement should state explicitly what is true: Parents are the first and most important moral educators of their children. Next, the school should take pains at every stage to communicate with parents about the school's goals and activities regarding character development—and how families can help.... Finally, schools and families will enhance the effectiveness of their partnership if they recruit the help of the wider community—businesses, religious institutions, youth organizations, the government, and the media—in promoting the core ethical values. (p. 7)

This chapter explores the academic literature that addresses community involvement in the development of moral and character education efforts, and looks at some of the literature on civic engagement and service-learning. We recognize that there may be many programs and initiatives that include community voices in their actual development, yet in the scientific literature, there is a paucity in the documentation of the community contribution to the development of such initiatives. As is often the case, the development process of such programs gets short shrift by the time the implementation and outcomes are submitted for publication in professional and academic journals.

Undoubtedly, there are also many programs that include community development concerns in their vision and are well-documented, yet oftentimes the preliminary discussions and program development takes place within narrow interest groups, such as school communities or civic organizations, without engaging wider input. Sometimes programs are imported for use within a

particular community context that are assumed to address the target needs of the community; often the primary aim of these programs is to address community needs by engaging young people in programmatic action. Kohlberg and his colleagues' Just Community Schools approach, for instance, aims to build community through democratic decision making among group members, such as in schools or in other smaller community units (e.g., Power, 2002; Power, Higgins, & Kohlberg, 1989). The focus in these types of programs is on the moral development of young people *through* their contribution to community rather than on the community's contribution to youth development. There is a crucial and legitimate approach but not one that this chapter intends to address. Instead, we focus here on the contributions of the community to such programs. Typically, the focus of the reports of such projects is on the program aims, implementation, and results, rather than on the program's development and the degree to which the community may have been engaged in the process. It is this latter less attended to feature that interests us here.

Though we acknowledge the valuable contributions of all attempts to enhance the moral character of our youth, and the ways in which such programs contribute to local community, we focus here on three primary initiatives: specifically, William Damon's (1997) Youth Charter approach; Darcia Narvaez and colleagues' Community Voices and Character Education project (Narvaez, Endicott, Bock, & Lies, 2004); and Peter Benson and colleagues' Developmental Assets Approach (Benson, 1997, 2003a, 2003b). All these initiatives view the engagement of diverse elements of the community, the deepening of the relationships among community members, and the development of common purpose among members, as key to young people's moral development.

There are a number of pro-active youth development initiatives and programs that focus on community collaboration beyond those that we've chosen to examine. Our choice of initiatives reviewed here however, is dictated in large part by their explicit focus on the moral and character development of youth, combined with the value they have for demonstrating some general principles around community contributions to this type of human development, and the degree to which documentation of findings were available. In reviewing these approaches and the research findings around them, we ask the question: How can communities contribute to the moral and character development of their young people, and what are the processes by which communities can, and have been observed to, go about doing this?

It is broadly recognized that community plays an important role in the moral and character development of young people. While our focus is on the community contribution to programs and initiatives that enhance moral and character development, a review of the literature reveals a wealth of evidence that many of the programs that engage community from development to implementation have had considerable success in improving the lives of both our youth and our communities (<http://aspe.hhs.gov/HSP/PositiveYouthDev99/execsum.htm>: "Positive Youth Development in the United States: Executive Summary: The State of the Field"). Most scholars who study the impact of education that takes place in formal educational settings agree that experiences outside the classroom can enhance important and valued attributes, particularly among adolescents (Astin, 1977, 1993; Bowen, 1977; Chickering & Rieser, 1993; McNeel, 1994; Pascarella & Terrenzini, 2005). For instance, many have pointed to the positive influence of community service in adolescent moral development. Yates and Youniss (1996; 1998) note that community service engagement helps promote identity development among high school students. Alternatively, those students who limit their involvement solely to traditional curricular pursuits do not show the same gains as students who are involved in a broader range of activities (Astin, 1984). It stands to reason that the success of any community service program or project is one in which the needs of the community are first articulated and then addressed. The importance of the community voice in engaging young people becomes all the more clear.

Cahill (1997) suggests that both community development and youth development are enhanced by civic engagement, especially in urban contexts. It's clear that it is not only the community that gains from the participation of young people in community based learning and service. Students who engage in service-learning, a particular variant on the community service spectrum, benefit in a number of ways. Most noteworthy from a moral development perspective, they are provided with an opportunity to make a difference in the society in which they live, and to come to know their own communities of contact in ways that they would not otherwise have (Ellis, 1978). Other scholars point to service-learning as having a particularly positive impact on moral development, over the long term, including relationship to society, and future involvement in service (Hill, Brandenberger, & Howard, 2006). The research indicates a variety of other benefits as well. For example, some of the research on service-learning outcomes indicates an increase in self-esteem and an enhancement of social skills for those who engage in such enterprises (Bojar, 1991), as well as a number of other valued attributes (Astin, 1977, 1993; Bowen, 1977; Chickerling & Rieser, 1993; Lies, 2005; McNeel, 1994; Pascarella & Terrenzini, 2005). Service-learning advocates consider a well-rounded education as including social and civic responsibility, leadership development, moral and ethical development, as well as career development (Kendall et al., 1990).

Eyler and Giles (1997) examined the factors that provide optimal service-learning experiences. They found that three factors were particularly important for an optimal experience: duration (longer experiences showed more positive results); reflection (an intentional practice involving journaling, presentations, informal discussions, and weekly discussions); and site and task selection (placement should be in a site where a tangible difference can be made and where feedback is offered). It is plainly evident that for successful outcomes to be observed in our youth, the community's engagement in providing opportunities that match talents with appropriate tasks is essential.

It is clear to us that in the ideal, if we are to optimize the experience of young people in programs intended to strengthen their moral character, the communities in which such programs exist need to be engaged. Optimally, a whole array of institutions, constituencies, and persons would be involved to determine how community needs might best be served while, at the same time, considering the potential impact on the young people who will be involved or affected. Our focus is on models which encourage the involvement of varying sectors of the communities in which they have or might be employed. The remainder of this chapter lays out some worthy models that have been articulated and attempted in community engagement, even as they meet up with the realities of pragmatic limitations.

## THE YOUTH CHARTER APPROACH

The Youth Charter approach (Damon, 1997) is a model for engaging the many and varied voices of a locality in attending to the moral development of their youth. It systematizes the engagement of parents and wider and more diverse members of the community. The Youth Charter approach delineates an ideal, thoughtful, and systematic process by which community standards are discussed and agreed upon. A wide variety of concerns and interests are brought together in the interest of attending to the complex social and educational needs of a community and its youth. The Youth Charter approach is not a step-by-step how-to approach to developing community standards, but an adaptable process that engages a particular context in ways deemed most effective and practicable. Developed by William Damon (1997),

A youth charter is a set of standards and expectations, written or unwritten, that are shared among adults who are in a position to influence the community's young people. A youth charter addresses the core issues of character and competence that young people need to become responsible citizens. It also includes plans for communicating high standards and expectations to young people. How a youth charter is developed depends on the needs and resources of each community. (p. 204)

In other words, created through community consensus, the youth charter lays out in a coherent manner standards and expectations that a community holds for its young people.

A youth charter can be beneficial to both a community at large and to the youth who live in that community. The fragmentation of today's communities undermines the constructive efforts of parents, teachers, and other adults concerned with the welfare of young people to foster positive youth development. It can be difficult for parents to set fair rules for their children if they do not know what rules other parents set. A mother who tries to impose a strict curfew will have a difficult time doing so if her son contends that all of his friends are allowed to stay out later and his mother does not know her son's friends' parents. On the other hand, if this same mother communicates frequently with these parents, not only will her son's protest be stymied, but the curfew is also more likely to be upheld since his friends are likely to be abiding by a similar one. One of the goals of a youth charter is to put parents into contact with each other so that these kinds of discussions can occur. In this way, not only can a youth charter help parents and others set limits and expectations that their children are likely to uphold, but it can also foster a stronger community feeling by diminishing a sense of isolation.

By providing a widely shared set of standards and expectations, a youth charter can help children develop in positive directions. In the absence of a sense of community consensus that a youth charter can provide, children are likely to be bombarded by a cacophony of contradictory messages regarding how they are supposed to behave and what is expected of them. For example, parents may want their children to be honest and respectful, while a coach may encourage youth to win at all costs, and the mass media may celebrate young people who are cynical and rebellious. With a youth charter in place, standards and expectations for youth become more uniform, so children and adolescents know how they are expected to act, and not only is the message clearer, but it is also more powerful since it is being reinforced by a variety of sources. While many communities today consist of diverse cultural, ethnic, and racial groups who prize different values, *The Youth Charter* argues that most parents, regardless of their ethnic or cultural background, want essentially the same things for their children. For example, most parents want honest, caring children who do well in school and engage in prosocial activities in a safe environment. In this way, this approach can function in virtually any community.

Finally, a youth charter can be a useful tool for solving serious social problems. For a community dealing with underage drinking, a youth charter can serve as a means to getting everyone focused on solving the problem; or for a community interested in enhancing opportunities for children and adolescents, a youth charter can help bring together resources and engender collective resolve.

An effective youth charter requires a wide swath of community involvement. Anyone can initially sponsor the effort, but for it to work, a youth charter needs to gain traction among a broad range of community members. Buy-in should be sought from parents, school administrators, coaches, religious leaders, police, local media, employers, and any other adults who frequently interact with young people. The content of a youth charter, in other words the standards and expectations it lays out, should reflect the values and beliefs of the broader community.

Because beliefs and values vary by community, no two youth charters will look the same. A youth charter can outline a wide range of evolving standards and expectations regarding the community's young people, including the following: moral standards such as honesty, compas-

sion, fairness, and respect; work related standards such as excellence in academic or extracurricular pursuits; standards of behavior, such as refraining from substance abuse; standards of health, such as avoiding junk food; spiritual goals, such as transcendence; or expectations of service, to one's family, friends, or community. The standards or expectations it includes should reflect the values and beliefs of the community in which it was created. While the standards and expectations should be somewhat stable, they are not unalterable. As the values and beliefs of the community slowly morph, so too should the youth charter evolve.

A youth charter not only identifies shared standards and expectations for children and adolescents, but it also sets in motion efforts to uphold them. Creating a youth charter calls for a grassroots effort. While there is no tightly prescribed process to follow, creating a youth charter generally begins with a committed group of community members coming together and sharing its thoughts regarding its young people. Over the course of a few months, this small group of concerned citizens—likely consisting of parents, teachers, local media, law enforcement, employers, and other community leaders—share their hopes and concerns for the community's young people with one another and with others in the community. They build coalitions among representatives from community organizations, and eventually some members of this core group of adults may become the governing body of the youth charter initiative. Along with other interested parties they identify, such as potential facilitators, individuals willing to help with publicity and registration, and school officials, this core group convenes a town-wide meeting. This effort requires finding a meeting site, setting a date, and making as many people in the community as possible aware of the meeting. This meeting may include an invited guest who gives a short presentation on problems and opportunities facing the community's young people.

The town meeting can take place in a variety of venues. A school auditorium or a community center is a likely choice. Ideally the location should have one large room to accommodate the general meeting and a number of smaller rooms for break-out sessions. The meeting locale should be strategically chosen to maximize community-wide input.

Following the large group meeting, smaller discussion or focus groups assemble. The aim of these focus groups is to "define clear standards and high expectations for youth." Each group includes a facilitator who moderates and records the group's discussion and should be composed of people from different parts of the community; for example, a small group may consist of a few parents, a couple of teachers, a local business owner, a religious leader, and a coach. While differences of opinion are bound to surface, the group should seek to identify points of agreement. Experience reveals that people do not differ nearly as much as they might expect when it comes to the hopes they share for the younger generation (Damon, 1997). For example, most adults want young people to act honestly, to have healthy lifestyle habits, and to be active in the community. Any or all of these aims could form the basis of a youth charter.

Following the break-out meetings, the larger group reconvenes and each small group offers a summary of the standards and expectations they discussed. A consensus is likely to emerge. At this point, task forces should be formed to implement plans to support these standards and expectations, to tackle youth crises that may arise periodically, and to establish clear lines of communication to foster continued conversation.

After the town-wide meeting, one of the follow-up task forces shares the meeting proceedings, through local media outlets, with the wider community. This group gathers feedback from the community and shares it with the individual task forces in order to help them redirect the charter in response to suggestions. This can be handled by hosting an additional town-wide meeting or more informally through small focus groups. New task forces are likely to be established and existing ones are likely to gain new members. A governing body should also be established, if this has not already happened.



Finally, youth should be engaged in the effort. It is important to note that the youth charter perspective sees young people as potential community resources and assets. As such, they deserve respect from the adults in the community and should be encouraged to play an active role in the creation, implementation, and updating of the youth charter. After the initial meeting among the adults, the young people's perspectives, needs, and concerns must be solicited and integrated into the ongoing work. Without young people's participation, this ambitious project is unlikely to succeed.

The youth charter should be reviewed at least yearly. At this meeting, community members should take stock of the progress made to date. Community concerns that have not yet been addressed should be identified and task forces should form to tackle these issues. As a group, community members should reflect on the appropriateness of the charter's mission given the changing needs of the community, and changes should be made to ensure that the charter remains relevant.

How might a youth charter play out in practice? While the following scenario is fictional, it helps make real the seemingly abstract nature of a youth charter. Imagine a middle class community where children and adolescents are pushed to achieve both academically and athletically. In fact, the local high school basketball team, which boasts a record high number of student-athletes, has competed at the statewide level for the past five years. The team's players are treated like local heroes. That is until they are suspected of cheating. Spurred by the growing suspicion of several of the high school teachers and aided by anonymous tips from a group of concerned students, the high school principal uncovers a cheating scandal that involves most of the basketball team.

No one can agree how to respond. On one end of the spectrum, a group of teachers and parents are calling for each of the cheating students to be suspended, kicked off the basketball team, and put on academic probation. However, another vocal group of parents and teachers (and the basketball coach) argue that while cheating is wrong it is unfair to punish the students when adults cheat all the time. The students who helped bring the cheating scandal to light feel disillusioned. They had expected the administration to come down hard on the basketball players, but instead nothing has happened. Sadly, a similar incident was uncovered a couple of years ago and nothing was done. According to other students, cheating is rampant, cheaters are rarely caught, and even more rarely punished. While everyone agrees it would be better if students did not cheat, no one seems to know what to do with the basketball team, let alone how to keep this from happening again.

From this morass, a core group of concerned adults emerge, consisting of a couple of parents, an English and drama teacher, and the swim coach. This group decides that the cheating incident must be confronted, and that a system must be put into place to curb cheating in the future. Through informal conversations and meetings with members of the PTA, religious leaders, the school board, local employers, law enforcement, and others in the community the core group learns that many others share their concerns for the community's youth; therefore, they make plans to convene a town-hall type meeting inviting representatives from an array of constituencies as well as members of the community.

At the prearranged date and time approximately 400 people from the community show up in, of all places, the high school basketball arena. One of the journalists from the local paper agrees to keep minutes from the meeting. The conveners share their concerns and outline a rough agenda for the meeting, and then they solicit comments from the members of the audience. At first people are not quite sure what to say, but eventually questions, concerns, and hopes regarding youth are aired.

Small break-out groups address the standards and expectations they hold for the youth in

their community, and when the large group reconvenes, a consensus emerges: Cheating is a symptom of a larger problem of self-centeredness. The young people in the community are so focused on their own goals and aims that they do not see cheating as a problem, unless they are caught. The adults in the community want the youth to take a more active role in community service. Task forces are assigned to address a variety of related issues.

The cheating task force is busy. First they decide to create a statement that clearly outlines what constitutes cheating and lays out consequences for cheaters. They see that this document goes before the school board and that it is implemented at the local schools and presented at school-wide assemblies that explain the new guidelines to students. Beyond the school, however, the document is also shared with the local religious leaders so that they can lead discussions on the topic at youth group meetings, and coaches are encouraged to talk with their players about cheating, in the classroom and on the playing field.

While the preceding example is a fictional one, youth charter initiatives like this have taken place. One of the earlier youth charter initiatives took place in Wellesley, Massachusetts. Along with local children and adolescents, community members in Wellesley created a youth charter aimed at three objectives. First, a task force emerged around youth sports. In conjunction with other town members, this group instituted, among other things, an amateur sportsman statement to be signed by both coaches and players. The document reminds all involved that youth sports exist to foster good sportsmanship, personal growth in physical skills, self-esteem, and a sense of community involvement and allegiance. Another task force tackled the issue of drug and alcohol use in the community by providing substance-free recreational environments, clear guidelines on the law and how it will be enforced, student leadership opportunities, information, resources, and support. Finally, the Wellesley youth charter initiative put forth a “shared view of sound moral standards and ethical values which parents, teachers, public servants, and others in the community can use to teach children the difference between right and wrong and guide them into responsible and loving adulthood” (1997, p. 236). Stemming from this belief, a task force outlined precisely which values the community shared and ways for them to be fostered in the local youth.

We are not, at the same time, entirely naïve to the challenges faced in engaging sometimes competing constituencies as well as the youth that are intended to be aided by such pursuits. We are all familiar with examples of underground non-compliance by various parties within such pacts, even as they may support such efforts publicly. Additionally, there is the real possibility that building a coalition of community support for positive youth development can be seen by some as just another means to control youth. While beyond the intended scope of this chapter, the contributions of Smetana (2005) and Lightfoot (2005) are particularly instructive in this regard. In an effort to counter the widely held view of adolescence as defined exclusively by storm and stress, the research on youth resistance points out that moderate amounts of resistance to parental authority may be normative, and that resistance and subversion may actually be developmentally appropriate (Smetana, 2005). Risk-taking, too, is seen by some as a necessary aspect of adolescent social life and experience, particularly as it informs a developmental conception of the self as a moral being (Lightfoot, 2005). There must be an appreciation of the developmental aspects of youth resistance and risk-taking (Smetana, 2005; Lightfoot, 2005), even as efforts are made to minimize their potentially negative impact to individuals and communities.

The intentions and methods laid out in the Youth Charter can be an effective means of bringing together a community around a particular concern. In its ideal form, it provides a model for the positive participation of a variety of interests in addresses community concerns for youth. Beyond the examples above, the Youth Charter appears to have been employed in other communities in part or in whole, though these efforts are rarely written about in any formal manner for popular dissemination. (For scholarly references to the Youth Charter, the interested reader is

directed to Damon & Gregory, 2003; Benson, 2003b). Therefore, it is difficult for us to know how widespread the youth charter effort actually is in practice.

### THE COMMUNITY VOICES AND CHARACTER EDUCATION (CVCE) PROJECT<sup>1\*</sup>

Community Voices and Character Education (CVCE) project was a statewide program developed under the auspices of the Minnesota Department of Education and the University of Minnesota (Narvaez, Bock, Endicott, & Lies, 2004). CVCE was a collaboration among state agency leaders, researchers, school administrators, and teachers within each participating school. The program crafted site-specific projects that attended to the perceived local need of the school and the community. Created within the theoretical framework of the Four Component Model of Morality (Narvaez & Rest, 1995), the project provided a framework for *what* to teach based on the four major processes in moral development: sensitivity, judgment, motivation (or focus), and action. These processes were broken down into seven skills each. For example, Ethical Sensitivity includes taking the perspectives of others and controlling bias. Ethical Judgment includes understanding and applying codes and cognitive resiliency skills like optimism. Ethical Focus includes finding meaning in life and valuing traditions. Ethical Action includes resolving conflicts peacefully and taking initiative as a leader.

The CVCE project also presented a framework for *how* to teach. The ethical skills were to be developed through four levels of instruction based on novice-to-expert learning (i.e., immersion, attention to facts and skills, practicing procedures, and integrating across contexts). Thus educators did not have to think up what skills to teach or how to teach them, these were provided in the research-based framework. The project also emphasized creating a supportive climate and student self-regulation for virtue development. Project materials included activity booklets with hundreds of ideas, supports for lesson planning and implementation, leadership manuals, as well as posters, bookmarks, and other materials. The process by which the project materials were developed entailed multiple revisions based on feedback from educators statewide who reflected the needs of the local site and educators implementing the project (Narvaez et al., 2004).

In attempting to create a framework that provided necessary scaffolding for teachers on what and how to teach character, every attempt was made to allow *maximum flexibility* of its use to meet the expectation of local control of curricula and the needs of the local community. As a result, the CVCE framework balanced two formative components critical to its implementation, top-down principles for implementation and bottom-up fidelity to the needs of the community. The top-down portion was the research-based set of guidelines for optimal functioning (28 ethical skills) garnered from ancient ethics and contemporary psychological science, and an instructional approach built on cognitive science (novice-to-expert instruction). The bottom-up portion was the adaptation of the research framework to local needs which resulted in a unique character education design.

At the beginning of the four-year project and annually thereafter, an invitation was made to all local school districts in the state of Minnesota. Local districts were given the option to participate or not, and to involve those within each district who might most wish to involve themselves in a locally adapted character education program. Each participating site identified a team of educators and community members who represented the “bottom-up” portion of the model. Each local team discussed the framework in terms of specific community perspectives, interests, and needs. Local teams were encouraged to incorporate ethical skill development into all teacher-led activities of the school, particularly standards-driven instruction. The local team decided which skills were needed, who would teach them, when and how often. This approach allowed the

teachers maximum flexibility in how to cultivate character, whether in their academic lessons, in homeroom/advisory, or in school-wide projects (Narvaez et al., 2004).

As a critical bottom-up feature, the skill categories were to be embedded in the cultural context where they were taught. To some degree, each community was expected to have its own understanding of the skills. For example, “self-command” is understood differently in different cultures (e.g., don’t make too much noise or bring notice to yourself vs. show that you have style and verve). Likewise, the identification of ethical problems and possible responses varied among communities (Narvaez et al., 2004).

Leaders of site teams met together regularly with researchers for two-way feedback. The educators offered suggestions for tools needed. The researchers developed various tools which included activity ideas for bringing into the classroom community role models and using community mentors in the development of particular ethical skills. (A more complete description of the approach can be found in Anderson et al., 2004; Narvaez, 2006; Narvaez, this volume; Narvaez, Bock & Endicott, 2003).

In the final year of the project, pre-post evaluation was performed at participating schools and a comparison school. Sites that infused ethical skill development more deeply (in classes, homeroom/advisory, and school-wide projects) were more successful in improving the targeted skills among student participants (Narvaez et al, 2004) when compared to the comparison school and to the low implementing schools. The unique approaches at high implementing schools worked in improving moral character.

Thus in the CVCE model, universal principles and skills meet local particularities and are melded together by the community itself. Optimal functioning is grounded in the specific context of the individual and his or her community. This top-down and bottom-up combination allows each community to have its mark on the set of guidelines but within certain parameters, those of optimal functioning within a pluralistic democracy and a global community. In summary, the CVCE model provides an invitation to participating communities to influence the content and emphases of the local character education program. The flexible framework, which incorporates ancient and contemporary views of character, is offered for the benefit of those who know their local contexts, both school and community, better than anyone; and who will ultimately be faced with implementing the details and content of the program.

## THE 40 DEVELOPMENTAL ASSETS APPROACH

The Search Institute has been engaging communities for nearly 50 years to help identify and develop resources for young people in order to enhance their development. The theoretical core of their approach is their framework of Developmental Assets—a set of 40 experiences, opportunities, and internal capacities which are essential for young people’s health and success (Benson, 1997, p. 3).

Contrasted with the CVCE program, which specifically pinpoints young people’s moral development as a primary consideration, the Search Institute framework is more comprehensive in nature, addressing positive youth development broadly. The 40 Developmental Assets, which are based on empirical research, are varied. They include “external assets” such as different kinds of *social supports*, having *personal boundaries and expectations*, having a *sense of empowerment*, and the *ability to constructively use one’s time*, and “internal assets” such as a *commitment to learning*, *positive values*, certain *social competencies*, and having a *positive identity*. Halfon (2003) writes that,

Developmental assets (DA) are an important bridging concept that encompasses and organizes rich empirical and theoretical traditions in developmental psychology and human development in a way that makes these traditions available for community practice. (p. 223)

We expand on Halfon's observation by noting that the Development Assets concept also connects young people's moral development with community development; and that it does this by placing the child's moral development needs within a broader system including his or her more extensive developmental needs. The *positive values* and *social competencies* assets as articulated by Benson for instance have explicit moral implications and are therefore significant for moral and character development. *Positive values* include the moral capabilities of being caring, valuing equality and justice, having integrity and honesty, taking personal responsibility, and exercising restraint. *Social competencies* include moral characteristics like having empathy, the ability to mix harmoniously and comfortably with people of different cultural racial and ethnic backgrounds, the ability to peacefully resolve conflict, and the ability to resist negative peer pressure (Benson, 1994). Simpson and Roehlkepartain (2003) argue that these assets, along with the assets of *sense of purpose* and *positive view of personal future* (assets 39 and 40 respectively in Benson's schema) also correspond to one of the main tasks of adolescence, which is to identify meaningful moral standards, values, and belief systems (p.163). Furthermore, studies in the developmental assets framework support negative associations with the number of assets possessed and behaviors often considered to be immoral or unhealthy for adolescents. For example, Leffert et al. (1998) assessed the developmental assets of 99,462 sixth to twelfth graders from 213 cities and towns and found that young people with more assets are less likely to evince violent and other anti-social behaviors.

The assets are also positively associated with behaviors considered to be important for character development. Among other positive behaviors, Scales et al. (2000) found a link to the number of assets and various aspects of thriving, which arguably have moral connotations, such as helping others and delaying gratification, and to various attributes related to contributing to civil society (see also Lerner, 2003, pp. 9–10 for a discussion of these findings).

The Search Institute produces resources to help communities engage many sectors in designing and implementing a coherent set of strategies to build Developmental Assets, including values and social competencies. Additionally, beyond the programmatic support the Institute provides, they also focus on more informal strategies of relationship-building and system transformation (Benson, 2006).

The Search Institute's transformative strategies attempt to incorporate the developmental assets into a variety of settings (e.g., work, school, etc.) in order to transform individual, community, or corporate practices. The local interventions are similar to those described in the Youth Charter approach, with invitations made to important members of the community to talk about their concerns and their vision for the community. The Search Institute literature (i.e., Fisher, 2003) acknowledges the difficulty and, often, impracticality, of community-wide approaches. As an alternative, Fisher talks about the "attach it" approach which recognizes existent and effective initiatives already in place in a community and links them with asset building methods in hopes of further strengthening their effectiveness. Also, the "bubble up" approach is proposed wherein ideas are scattered among interested parties and groups to see if the asset idea takes root more widely, before further interventions are pursued. In these ways, the work of the Search Institute attempts to honor local environments, invite participation, and build on the recognized strengths of the community. A particularly impressive dimension of the Search Institute, and which sets it apart from a number of other programs, is the concerted effort that is made to involve young people in a significant way in the asset initiative from the outset.



As a rule, the Search Institute's approach is not merely programmatic in nature; it rather seeks to effect a transformation in the worldview of community members regarding their beliefs about young people. It offers communities a new vision of youth development by sharing the concept of developmental assets with community members, specifically helping them to see youth development from a positive, rather than a negative, deficit-oriented point of view. Often-times, survey data about their own youth population will be shared with these communities to give them a sense of how their young people are faring in the developmental assets. As a shift in thinking occurs in these communities, members across sectors begin to create their own initiatives to provide the positive experiences which are the foundation of the external assets, and which bolster the internal ones.

### Building Community Purpose around Young People's Moral Development: Strategies and Processes

The Search Institute's "Asset Building Communities" (ABCs) are those that have succeeded in helping their young people develop the 40 Developmental Assets, but, as we discuss above, these assets include positive values that have important implications for character development. A host of studies have been conducted by the Search Institute on various aspects of their framework. A picture of the processes by which communities go about uniting around the common purpose of educating their young, and the characteristics and challenges of such initiatives, however, is very evident in one study conducted by Mannes and his colleagues (Mannes, Lewis, Hintz, Foster, & Nakkula, 2002). They profile cases of four communities, which applied some aspect of the developmental assets paradigm. Using focus groups and other types of interviews with youth and adults, and numerous site visits, the researchers studied the strategies and processes by which these communities worked to secure the positive development of their young. This process, termed "Community-Based Human Development" (CBHD) by the researchers, was observed to emerge naturally and gradually out of the efforts of community members across sectors. They also observed that each initiative had a unique flavor in each community, suggesting a self-organizing tendency to the work that arises out of the specific needs and conditions of each locality (p. 49). Working from a five phase theory of change, which includes community members' openness to change, their awareness of the possibilities of change, their mobilization for change, their action towards change, and the continuity of change initiatives, the researchers observed how the dynamics of each phase interplay with others across these four communities (see Mannes, et al., 2002, pp. 52–54 for an in-depth explanation of these phases).

Findings from this study suggest a number of characteristics of community initiatives that contributed to the positive, and by implication, the moral development of the young. It also points to challenges that they experienced. First, when the researchers refer to "community initiatives," it is clear in all of these cases that various sectors of the community were involved in, and shared a common vision and concern for their youth. Confirming a principle espoused by some of the thinkers mentioned earlier in this chapter (i.e., Lorion & Sokoloff; 2003, Simpson & Roehlkepar-tain, 2003; Benson, 1997; Lickona et al., 2007), multiple sectors were engaged in the initiatives across the four communities, including government, education, media, business, youth, and family-serving organizations, law enforcement, religious organizations, and foundations.

Though the Mannes et al. (2002) study provides a set of more nuanced insights into the processes of community collaboration, four of the main findings are briefly summarized here. One trend observed was that when a shift in adults' attitudes occurs, away from seeing youth as objects which need to be controlled and towards seeing them as partners, co-decision makers and co-participants in community development, then an important change happens: Authentic



relationships between adults and youth are developed, and youth become more motivated to participate in and initiate service to their communities (p. 137).

It was found that enthusiastic and inspiring leaders with a passionate commitment to the change initiative were often implicated in the good relationships observed by the researchers. These leaders are often described as having a “fire in their bellies” which makes them go “above and beyond” the initiative (p. 141). They are usually formal directors with a particular talent to foster meaningful relationships among the adults and young people in their communities.

Another finding of the study was an integration of mind and heart that participants in the initiative experienced (p. 138). Community members were observed to be deeply moved, stimulated both emotionally and intellectually, by the process, and came to share their experience with other participants. Cognitively, participants were united in a commitment to raise the consciousness of other adults and youth to make community-based human development happen, and emotionally they identified and become attuned to the affective states of other members (p. 139).

Two last findings refer to challenges experienced by communities in maintaining a certain spirit in the change process. This has to do on the one hand with the way members encourage and promote change with the rest of the community and with each other, and on the other hand with maintaining a tolerance with the uncertainty that comes with the long-term nature of the community change process. For effective change efforts, it was found that community members had to strive to find and sustain a delicate balance between gently, rationally, and purposefully imparting new norms to other members of the community, and more persuasively imposing them through campaigns and other tactics (p. 142). Community players also had to manage the tension between stability and instability which occurs in long-term initiatives. Indeed, initiatives need to be seen as “complex and adaptive ventures that unfold in nonlinear, dynamic, and unpredictable ways.” They therefore experience periods of both stability and regularity, and instability and uncertainty about what will happen in the future (p. 146). The researchers found that all of their case study communities, though not adopting identical response models, experienced at some time a painful period of instability and were grappling for ways to deal with it. They liken this process to the identity crisis which occurs in adolescence, pointing out that successful negotiation of this period can lead to new found potential and positive change (p. 147; see also Erikson, 1968, for an explanation of the identity crisis).

## IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE/FURTHER IMPLEMENTATIONS

The Youth Charter approach, the Community Voices and Character Education (CVCE) project, and the Search Institute provide fitting and diverse models for including community voices in developing programs that attempt to address local needs and issues. The Youth Charter approach outlines the ideal scenario in which a vast array of community members and constituencies are engaged in order to best serve both local youth and local needs. The CVCE project, though focusing solely on moral development, is an example of what can be accomplished with regard to adapting programs and projects to local settings and needs. Finally, and much further along in terms of both application and outcomes research, is the work of the Search Institute. Indeed, on both a community and individual moral development level, the study of how change occurs is still in its infancy (Benson, 2003b, p. 214). Among other research endeavors, for instance, longitudinal prospective studies would be useful in establishing more insights into the linkages between the developmental assets—particularly those having to do with moral development—and developmental outcomes, and which of these moral assets are best affected at the community versus other levels of intervention (Lorion & Sokoloff, 2003, p. 123). A plethora of questions related to

processes at the community level also still need to be addressed by researchers according to Benson (reference); such as, how efficacious are specific relationships in assisting youth to develop the assets, such as relationships with adults, positive peer influence, families, neighborhoods and schools, programs and policy? In addition, how is community a “viable ‘delivery system’” for young people’s positive development? (2003b, p. 214). Benson and Pittman (2001) note that with a few exceptions (e.g., Connell & Kubisch, 2001; Elder & Conger, 2000) it seems that in both the basic research tradition of developmental psychology and the more applied tradition of the youth development field, research has rarely made it beyond the study of naming and measuring the developmental nutrients and outcomes. Much more attention should be given to examining the sources of these nutrients, increasing access to them (see also Benson, 2003b, pp. 215–216).

As stated at the outset, one of the great challenges in considering the community contribution to programs that attend to the moral education of youth is the dearth of documentation of such issues. Often the engagement of community members and organizations takes place in the seedling stages of program development, or programs are actually considered or developed in response to a crisis, a perceived community need, or an apparent lack. Too often, the reporting on such programs, whether in journals, pamphlets, or brochures, begins with implementation rather than program development.

Some organizations, to their credit, have attempted to recognize the quality and effectiveness of community based programs. America’s Promise Alliance, a coalition of organizations concerned with the well-being of young people, has reviewed and recognized communities for their attention to the needs of local youth. In their recent identification of “100 Best Communities for Young People” across the United States, the Alliance profiled the activities of various communities that are excelling in providing the things children and youth need for their well-being. The selection criteria, in describing the rationale for choosing one of the selected cities, described the efforts of youth planning and development, parks and recreation, libraries, police, fire and emergency medical services, sheriff, schools, social services, mental health support services, juvenile detention home, human resource management, and others. As similarly suggested in Mannes et al.’s (2002) case study findings, the comprehensiveness of the community contributions intended to enhance youth thriving was recognized as instrumental in insuring the success of their local efforts. In other citations of selected cities, faith-based communities and partnerships with local churches are also cited.

## CONCLUSION

The need for community engagement in developing character in our youth is one that seems so obvious that one might deem a chapter that examines it unnecessary. And yet it is evident that there are many instances in which community constituencies are not included in the lead-up to character development programs for area youth. There may be a number of reasons for this: first, schools often take up programs that have been created and implemented elsewhere but which have, over time, developed a reputation for impact and effectiveness, whether supported empirically or not. Second, the ideal of engaging a wide swath of community members, organizations, and constituents, as described in the youth charter approach, while obviously desirable, is difficult to accomplish in practice. Finally, but not exhaustively, limited time and resources tend to prevent the sort of comprehensive engagement that is suggested by the models outlined in this chapter.

The reality is that many character education programs, and other attempts to enhance the moral development of our children, do not appear to hold up the wider engagement of community

as a priority. The rigor of adequately engaging a wide spectrum of contributors is undoubtedly a great challenge. Nonetheless, when community members and constituencies are engaged and fully participate in the development of our youngest citizens, there can be little doubt that both the local youth and the community itself will be greatly aided by the endeavor.

## NOTE

- 1 Materials related to the Community Voices and Character Education Project can be found at the following website: <http://cee.nd.edu>.

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# 27

## Media and Prosocial Behavior in Children and Adolescents

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Children and adolescents increasingly grow up in a world permeated by mass media—at home, at school, during leisure hours, staying connected with widening circles of friends, and even establishing identity. Parents and other adults involved in the lives of young people worry and wonder about the influence of media—not only about the harmful influences of images and messages, but also how to recognize and promote positive and healthy themes. If media depictions can lead to negative attitudes and behaviors in some children and adolescents, could prosocial, tolerant, and helpful attitudes and behaviors also be learned and imitated by young media consumers? As stated in 1973 by Federal Communications Commission chairperson Johnson: “...all television is educational television. The only question is, what is it teaching?” (Liebert, Neale, & Davidson, 1973).

### PROSOCIAL MEDIA

Although a simple, strictly agreed upon definition of “prosocial” does not yet exist, the gist of the concept is not difficult to grasp. Prosocial attitudes and behavior are not equivalent to educational outcomes. The research on prosocial media suffers from the lack of a uniform definition (not unlike the elusive definition of media violence!), not only of prosocial content in media but also of prosocial outcome measures. Is increased library card use or book buying reflective of watching prosocial media? And, especially over time, how does a researcher measure empathy or altruism? In the end, “your prosocial may not be what my idea of prosocial is.” A basic tenet of media literacy is that no two people experience media in the same way (American Academy of Pediatrics, 1999) and reasonable people, whether parents or media experts, may differ on the definition of prosocial media or prosocial outcomes.

Gentile and Crick (2006) define prosocial behavior empirically and have devised a prosocial behavior subscale asking peers to nominate children in their class:



- Who does nice things for others?
- Who tries to cheer up other kids who are upset or sad about something? Who tries to make these kids feel happy again?

They also created a five-point subscale for the teacher:

- This child says supportive things to peers.
- This child tries to cheer up peers when they are sad or upset about something.
- This child is helpful to peers.
- This child is kind to peers.

Mares and Woodard (2001) define prosocial content and effects in a somewhat narrower fashion: friendly interaction, aggression reduction, altruism, and stereotype reduction. Learning, reasoning, and logic are not included, though arguably easier to measure. Essentially, prosocial content has “the potential for fostering social interactions that are nonviolent and positive in tone” (Mares & Woodard, 2001).

Legislative definitions of prosocial media content proved difficult at best, especially when regulators struggled to define prosocial content and hours for the 1990 Children’s Television Act. They finally arrived at programming that “further[s] the social development of the child in any respect, including the child’s cognitive/intellectual or emotional/social needs” (Federal Communications Commission, 1991).

## CONTENT ANALYSES

Woodard found that four of the top twenty mainstream television programs contained prosocial messages in 1999 (1999), but in 2001, only two of the most popular shows featured friendliness, aggression reduction, or altruism. Only one show in the latter season was made specifically for children, a Disney production (Mares & Woodard, 2001). Content analyses (Woodard, 1999) showed some prosocial content in children’s programming for 1998 to 1999 when 50% of children’s shows contained at least one social lesson.

“Media are not intrinsically ‘good or bad’” (Strasburger & Wilson, 2002). A carefully crafted educational show for preschoolers may lack impact on a little viewer without a co-viewing adult present to comment on content, and similarly, a less than savory adult-themed program may offer a key opportunity for coaxing a child or teen to think creatively about a controversial topic—if a co-viewing adult seizes the moment. This concept is especially relevant when we reflect on the reality of children’s television viewing habits. Few shows are created with prosocial ideas and modeling in mind, but indeed, children commonly view cartoons, situation comedies, and adult fare lacking deliberate prosocial messages. Content analyses show that the vast majority of prosocial shows, 72% for children, are on public television and 77% are aimed at the preschool audience (Mares & Woodard, 2001). “Therefore, perhaps the most important question is not how much prosocial content there is in children’s programming but how much there is in adult programming that children are likely to watch” (Mares & Woodard, 2001; Strasburger & Wilson, 2002).

## HOW CHILDREN USE MEDIA

The Kaiser Family Foundation (2006) monitors the amount of time spent with media and media use habits across the country and across age groups. The most recent data stun readers with the

sheer weight and breadth of media in the lives of young children, although the trends are in a slightly positive direction since the last survey. In a “typical day, more than eight in ten (83%) children under the age of six use screen media, with those children averaging about two hours a day.” Obviously, screen time increases with age, from 61% of infants less than one year to 90% of five-year-olds. This large survey (more than 1000 parents) found other startling realities of family media use in America in 2006 (Kaiser Family Foundation, 2006):

- In many homes, the television is “a constant presence”; in 32% of homes, the television is on “all the time or most of the time” and in 30%, during mealtime.
- 33% of children in the study have a television set in their bedroom, including 19% of infants.
- Parents have many explanations for allowing so much media screen time, including observing benefits on learning and behavior in children, having more personal time to “get things done” and “regroup,” and appreciating that children seem more calm when watching television.
- Parents are evenly split on believing television to be mostly helpful (38%) or mostly harmful (31%).

The Kaiser Family Foundation study also analyzed participating parents’ view of the effect of television on their children (Kaiser Family Foundation, 2006). More than half (53%) believe that television calms their children, while only 17% report television exciting them. Almost 70% of parents surveyed have seen their child imitate some behavior seen on television:

- Imitation of aggressive behavior was observed in 23% (kicking or hitting).
- Imitation of positive behavior was observed in 68% (sharing or helping).
- Older children were more likely to imitate behavior (83% of 4–6-year-olds compared with 27% of children less than 2 years).
- Boys were more likely than girls to imitate aggressive behavior (45% of 4–6-year-olds).
- Children watching educational programs were more likely to imitate positive behavior than those watching more entertainment television (76% versus 59%).

Clearly, the Kaiser Family Foundation survey demonstrates that “for many families, media use has become part of the fabric of daily life” (Kaiser Family Foundation, 2006).

## RESEARCH-BASED IMPACT OF MEDIA EXPOSURE

Media use affects children and adolescents in a myriad ways, from violent and aggressive behavior, to sexual attitudes and behavior, to substance use; the former outcomes have been abundantly researched, the others less so.

Decades of scholarly research conclude that young consumers of media are affected by the content of those media, especially violent images and messages. Many disciplines have weighed in, including pediatrics, psychology, and sociology, using a variety of methods—experimental, correlative, longitudinal, and meta-analytic. Young viewers of violent media are more likely to exhibit aggressive behavior, to be desensitized to violence, and to be fearful, believing they live in a “mean and scary world” (Anderson, Berkowitz, Donnerstein, Huesman, Johnson, Linz, Malamuth, & Wartella, 2003; Cantor, 1998; Hogan, 2001; Huesman, Moise-Titus, Podolski, & Eron, 2003; Kunkel & Zwarum, 2006; Strasburger & Wilson, 2002). Researchers have also shown outcomes of relational aggression in some young people, to be distinguished from more overt

physical aggression or threats (Gentile, Walsh, Ellison, Fox, & Cameron, 2004; Ostrov, Gentile, & Crick, in press). New longitudinal research documents that exposure to violent media in childhood leads to aggressive behavior that persists into adolescence and adulthood (Huesman et al., 2003; Johnson, Cohen, Smailes, Kasen, & Brook, 2002). The implications of long-term negative changes in behavior related to childhood viewing practices are grave. Another recent study gives cause for optimism; children watching less television became less aggressive toward their peers (Robinson, Wilde, Navracruz, Haydel, & Varady, 2001). Apparently both violent content and the amount of exposure play important roles in outcome.

Exposure to violent media themes is certainly not the most important cause of the violence rife in American cities today, but it is a remediable factor. Poverty, racism and racial tension, substance abuse, and other enormous social issues impact children and teens in a very real way, often leading to anger, frustration, and violent behavior. Violent media messages and images may add fuel to the fire for many vulnerable young people and certain children and teens may be uniquely susceptible to these media themes.

Many theories are advanced to explain the impact of violent media on young consumers. Most accepted is Bandura's social learning theory, also called the observational learning theory (Bandura, 1977). Children are great imitators, modeling behavior they see, especially when the models are attractive and believable, whether in real life or on a screen. Children who view violent media learn "scripts" for behavior in given instances, a theory advanced by Huesman in his social information processing model (Huesman, 1998). This model proposes that young children acquire scripts for behavior through either personal experience or by viewing media portrayals. "A script typically includes information about what events are likely to happen, how a person should behave in response to these events, and what the likely outcome of these behaviors will be" (Strasburger & Wilson, 2002). For example, how does one respond to a threat, to a scary situation? Media scripts may suggest that guns are a sure and effective way to resolve a conflict. Media depictions also suggest roles based on gender, social class, and ethnicity. Who are most likely to be aggressors? The victims? The media world is overpopulated with cops and gun-toting bad guys—what does this teach a child about the real world? And, the fact that both villain and "good guy" turn to violence as a first resort in solving a conflict teaches young media consumers a powerful lesson.

Another salient explanation for the connection between viewing violent media and aggressive behavior is the priming theory. "An encounter with an event or stimulus can prime, or activate, related concepts or ideas in a person's memory even without the person being aware of this influence" (Anderson, Berkowitz, Donnerstein, Huesman, Johnson, Linz, Malamuth, & Wartella, 2003). Finally, media violence is exciting for most young viewers in a physiological sense. The arousal increases the strength of whatever the viewer's dominant action is at that moment. This theory, arousal and excitation transfer, explains how individuals may respond aggressively to provocations after viewing violent media. Taken together, these explanations, including aggressive scripts and arousal, form the General Aggression Model proposed by researchers at Iowa State University (Bushman & Anderson, 2002). It is interesting to speculate that this model may explain why aggressive behavior after viewing violent media generalizes. In other words, the violent action may not be an exact imitation of the violent scene viewed (Anderson, Berkowitz, et al., 2003).

## RESEARCH ON PROSOCIAL MEDIA AND EFFECTS ON CHILDREN

Experts postulate that there exists no inherent reason why media should have only negative effects on viewers (Mares & Woodard, 2001). Negative effects of media messages and images are due primarily to two mechanisms:

1. Children learn by observation how to do things and whether it is appropriate, including incorporation of scripts into their behavioral repertoire.
2. Emotional responses while watching TV affect responses to similar real-life events.

Logically, these mechanisms are also relevant to prosocial media viewers. Young viewers could imitate positive behaviors, draw upon scripts for behavioral to use in parallel situations, and exhibit various emotional responses to compelling, prosocial mediated images. Rushton (1979) writes that “prosocial could have stronger effects on viewers than antisocial content because prosocial behaviors are more in accord with established societal norms” (cited by Mares & Woodard, 2001). This inference led to a burgeoning of studies similar in design to the more comprehensive body of research on media violence.

The bulk of research on the impact of media on prosocial behavior dates back decades to the 1970s and 1980s with very little new data having emerged; for example, no robust longitudinal studies yet exist in the literature. However, the extant research is undeniably important:

If observational learning from TV has such striking and lasting antisocial consequences, it is reasonable to expect that the medium also has the potential for modifying behavior in desirable, prosocial directions. Recent studies in laboratory and naturalistic settings have provided evidence supportive of this hypothesis, although the correlations are not generally as strong or as clear as those between viewing TV violence and subsequent aggressive behavior. (Eisenberg & Mussen, 1989, p. 103)

Some fine research on programming specifically targeting children will be discussed later, but experts identified a clear need to investigate prosocial effects from programming not intended for a young audience (Mares & Woodard, 2001). Research strategies varied from one-shot exposures, repeated exposure or field studies, and surveys, to correlational studies and meta-analyses of existing studies (Rushton, 1982). Suffering from the previously discussed definitional ambiguity of prosocial measures, most studies measured at least some cognitive/educational rather than social outcomes.

Friedrich and Stein (1973, 1975) contributed two early, seminal studies. In 1973, children ages 3 to 5 years were randomized to three groups for four weeks, assigned to watch either aggressive cartoon segments (*Batman*, *Superman*), a prosocial television program (*Mr. Rogers' Neighborhood*), or a neutral program. Those in the prosocial group showed more positive behavior, including obedience, persistence at completing tasks, and self-control. Children from lower socioeconomic groups exhibited more cooperation, nurturing, sympathy, and verbal skills. The effects lasted at least two weeks. The second study in 1975 randomized kindergarteners to five groups: a prosocial show with verbal labeling; a prosocial show followed by role-playing; a prosocial show with verbal labeling (discussion) and role-playing; a prosocial show with unrelated game playing; or a neutral show. The researchers assessed learning of content, generalization of learned behavior to other settings, and helping behavior. Exposure to prosocial content led to positive behavior and generalization of that behavior, but helping behavior was noted only in the group with both prosocial media and role-playing. Verbal labeling enhanced the helping behavior of girls, but not of boys. The researchers concluded that “socially desirable outcomes after prosocial television can be amplified by combining prosocial programs with other experiences” (Eisenberg & Mussen, 1989), specifically role-playing (puppets and dialogue) or verbal labeling (discussion).

The clear effects of TV and training... suggest that this type of prosocial TV can have a strong impact on children who watch it in naturalistic contexts where viewing can occur over a much longer period of time than one week. These results appear to be readily applicable to naturalistic settings because the children generalized both learning and behavior to situations quite different from

those to which they were exposed in the TV and training and because this generalization occurred in all measures administered 2–3 days after the TV viewing. (Friedrich & Stein, 1975, p. 37)

Turning to *Lassie* and Timmy for prosocial content, Poulos and colleagues (Poulos, Rubinstein, & Liebert, 1975) exposed first graders to an episode in which the boy risks his life to save his dog. Control groups viewed either an episode of *Lassie* without altruism or a neutral program. Subsequently, all children were given the chance to aid distressed puppies, at the cost of losing a chance to win a prize. The viewers of the altruistic and helping *Lassie* episode gave more aid to the puppies, pressing the help button twice as long. This one-shot study has obvious limitations, but intriguing results.

Another one-shot study, Collins and Getz (1976) used the popular show *The Mod Squad*, showing one of three episodes to a group of 9-, 12-, and 15-year-old children, featuring either a constructive response by a hero to an interpersonal conflict (the hero negotiates), an aggressive response by a hero (the hero gets even), or a wildlife documentary. All children were then given an opportunity to intervene with a peer by pushing a “hurt” or “help” button. Those who viewed the constructive episode pushed the “help” button more.

Pingree studied stereotypes (1978) with 227 children in third and eighth grade who viewed women in traditional and nontraditional roles. Stereotyping decreased when the young viewers learned that women in nontraditional roles were real people. Unfortunately, eighth grade boys held higher stereotypes for nontraditional roles; it is interesting to speculate that the one-shot design of the study may be a reason for this observed outcome.

Another study of older children (cited in Rushton, 1980) observed behavior of Little Leaguers, hockey players, and lacrosse players during a game, before and after a video intervention. One group saw a videotape of antisocial play with roughness and cheating, while the prosocial group’s videotape featured play with encouragement, helping behavior, respect, and apologizing. Prosocial media increased prosocial behavior during play for hockey and lacrosse players, but not for baseball players. They also found that children who play in a prosocial manner tend to prefer prosocial media at home.

Ahammer and Murray (1979) conducted a field study with 97 preschool children, using twenty programs, each thirty minutes long. The children viewed both prosocial episodes and neutral episodes from several popular television series not primarily aimed at a child audience. Prosocial episodes contained low aggression, high concern, empathy, or sympathy. Compared with a pretest, boys in the prosocial group showed increased cooperation and increased helpfulness. All children generalized behavior to other situations. However, incorporating role-playing and other teacher training activities with prosocial content was more effective than viewing prosocial episodes alone, although the prosocial programming still had a clearly positive influence.

Other field experiments yield intriguing results. Elias (1983) used videos about bullying, feelings, and peers with a group of emotionally and behaviorally disturbed boys. The positive outcomes lasted at least two months. A large field study (Johnston & Ettema, 1982) with 7000 children in grades four through six found that viewers of *Freestyle* who also were involved in discussion groups had a strongly positive prosocial outcome.

Correlational studies examine the impact of prosocial television when children simply self-select to watch at home (Mares & Woodard, 2001). In these studies, everyday viewing is analyzed, and so, the causal direction is unknown. Do prosocial children choose to watch programs with prosocial content, or do programs with prosocial content effect children’s behavior? And, is there a third variable, for example, parent influence, gender, socio-economic status?

A correlational study with 500 school-age children featured a measuring tool with teachers and peers who nominated children based on prosocial attributes. Strongest predictors of prosocial

behavior were background variables: academic achievement, parent education, and gender. Interestingly, television viewing was a weaker variable, but the influence was still clear. Total television viewing was negatively related to prosocial nomination, but children who watched prosocial programs received more nominations for positive behaviors (Sprafkin & Rubinstein, 1979).

Singer and colleagues (cited in Mares & Woodard, 2001) studied preschool children's television viewing habits and behavior and although causality could not be determined, television viewing in general was related to aggression. Educational television, however, was positively correlated with prosocial behavior and cooperation during free play. Girls and more intelligent children were likelier to watch more prosocial television and to play cooperatively.

A more recent correlational study assessed young school-age children and their viewing of prosocial adult situation comedies compared with prosocial behavior based on parent ratings. The findings were inconsistent, as mothers rating helping behavior and sharing found no relationship between prosocial viewing and behavior for most children, except first graders. Researchers believe that the young children didn't comprehend the moral lesson (Rosenkoetter, 1999).

A rare longitudinal study of 466 second and third grade children in the Netherlands evaluated peer nominations for prosocial behavior. There was no relationship between viewing prosocial media and prosocial behavior because children who saw more prosocial television were simply heavy viewers and watching prosocial television was highly correlated with also watching antisocial programming (Wiegman, Kuttschreuter, & Baarda, 1992).

A meta-analysis by Hearold (1986) incorporated 230 studies completed prior to 1978 and found the prosocial effect to be twice as strong as the antisocial effect. Antisocial outcomes included aggression, criminality, and stereotyping while prosocial outcomes included book buying, library use, safety activism, and conservation activism. Hearold found that not only were the prosocial effects stronger, but they were also more enduring, both in the laboratory and in natural settings. Her findings supported Rushton's hypothesis of stronger prosocial outcomes (Rushton, 1979). Two other meta-analyses from 1994 and 2001 found a less impressive prosocial effect. Paik and Comstock (1994), defined aggression and criminality as antisocial outcomes and reported antisocial outcomes equivalent to prosocial outcomes. Mares and Woodard (2005), analyzing 34 studies done after 1978, looked at positive interaction, aggression reduction, altruism, and stereotype reduction. They found prosocial media to have a weak to moderate effect, strongest for altruism, but less impressive for the other outcomes. Their "best guess is that the effects of violent content and prosocial content are reasonably close in magnitude, though violent content may be somewhat more powerful" (Mares & Woodard, 2001).

A recent study (Ostrov, Gentile, & Crick, in press) assessed the longitudinal association between violent and educational media exposure and not only various subtypes of aggression, but also prosocial behavior. The study results suggest that both violent and educational media may have "important effects on young children", mainly relational aggression for girls and physical aggression for boys. The researchers speculate that "identification with same-gender television and media characters is a key component of this process." Parental monitoring of media use was negatively associated with aggression in both genders, relational for girls and physical for boys. In this study, exposure to educational media was not associated with positive behaviors (prosocial), and the association with relational aggression suggests that not only is content important, but also too much media consumption can have negative consequences for peer interaction. The authors also speculate that relational aggression may be frequently modeled in educational programming. They cite an example of children excluding friends on the playground, only to reconcile at the end of the show and note that research shows that preschoolers have trouble understanding plots and may not attend to the overall "lesson." The young viewer may attend to each of the behaviors modeled (Ostrov, Gentile, & Crick, in press).



Reflection on the bulk of available studies suggests that “for young children, viewing prosocial TV per se facilitates acquisition or enhancement of prosocial behavior” (Eisenberg & Mussen, 1989). However, the results suggest “the influences are not as powerful or direct as influences of specially designed school programs, training in role taking, or a combination of prosocial TV, role-playing and verbal labeling” (Eisenberg & Mussen, 1989). It could be that prosocial actions modeled on TV may be “less salient for young children or less attention-grabbing than active participation in role-playing and discussion. Young children are less likely to think about or remember the messages of the programs or make inferences and generalizations” (Eisenberg & Mussen, 1989). In a study of moral theme comprehension for third grade, fifth grade, and college students, Narvaez and colleagues found that the youngest children do not comprehend the intended theme of a story most of the time, while fifth graders understood the theme half of the time (Narvaez, Gleason, Mitchell, & Bentley, 1999). Caring adults clearly have a vital role, as “caregivers and parents can make the messages of prosocial TV more effective if they engage the children in discussion, and possibly role-playing of the program and its lessons” (Eisenberg & Mussen, 1989).

### RESEARCH ON SPECIFIC PROGRAMMING CREATED FOR CHILDREN

Prosocial behavior and values can be taught through planned programming (Rushton, 1979, 1982; Huston, Donnerstein, Fairchild, Feshbach, Katz, Murray, Rubinstein, Wilcox, & Zuckerman, 1992). Such programming includes the well-known TV shows *Sesame Street*, *Mr. Rogers' Neighborhood*, *Electric Company*, *3-2-1 Contact*, and newer creations, *Arthur* and *Barney & Friends*. These series are PBS productions, but “more recently, Nickelodeon and Disney have produced programming designed to meet the social and emotional needs of children” (Mares & Woodard, 2001).

The evolution of the popular, creative *Sesame Street* series illustrates many points. Initially developed with the goal of enhancing cognitive ability and fostering intellectual activity of preschool viewers, later seasons mindfully incorporated new goals to promote prosocial behavior and attitudes, including tolerance, cooperation, and friendliness (Mares & Woodard, 2001). Impetus for change came from several sources (Fisch & Truglio, 2001):

- Changing and diverse makeup of the U.S. population
- Professional understanding of children’s growth, development, and learning
- Societal changes demanding skills in communication and emphasis on cooperation

Television has documented effects on children’s behavior regardless of whether it is antisocial or prosocial. (Fisch & Truglio, 2001). Prosocial modeling is related to an increase in prosocial behavior and a decrease in antisocial behavior. For unknown reasons, children are less likely to generalize a modeled prosocial behavior (to a new situation) than imitate the behavior in a context and situation like that in the model.

As well as not generalizing prosocial behaviors shown on television, outcomes suggest that repeated exposure is necessary for any positive effects to occur. A one-time exposure is not enough.

Many noted experts have examined the legendary *Sesame Street* experience; results and conclusions are not always predictable.

- Paulson studied cooperation, finding *Sesame Street* viewers to be more cooperative than nonviewers. Not only were they behaviorally more cooperative, but they recognized the

scenes on the program featuring cooperation and judged this to be the best approach to a problem (Paulson, 1974).

- In 1980, Silverman and Sprafkin compared children viewing the resolution of conflicts in a prosocial manner with a group viewing only prosocial situations. The first group actually demonstrated less cooperation while no effect was noted in the latter group (Silverman & Sprafkin, 1980).
- Another repeated exposure study followed children after watching four episodes of *Sesame Street* and reported decreased aggression during free play over four days; a control group watched *The Little Rascals* (Bankart & Anderson, 1979).
- Gorn and colleagues studied tolerance in young viewers of episodes featuring multicultural inserts. The *Sesame Street* group chose multicultural playmates, but the effect did not last. (Gorn, Goldberg, & Kanungo, 1976). Also choosing to measure tolerance longitudinally, a 1979 study found no change in tolerance in the *Sesame Street* cohort after one year, but the same group exhibited more tolerance after two years (Ball & Bogatz, 1979).
- More recently, children in Montreal day care centers, divided into groups watching cognitive or prosocial content, were evaluated during cooperative activities, individual activities, or during free play. Children viewing prosocial content were highest in prosocial behaviors during planned activities and were lowest in antisocial behavior during free play (Zielinska & Chambers, 1995).

Other stated goals of the creators of *Sesame Street* were to build social competence, tolerance of diversity and nonaggressive ways to resolve conflict (Fisch & Truglio, 2001). The Recontact Study interviewed adolescents who had participated in studies as preschoolers. Not only did cognitive gains persist, but adolescents who often watched *Sesame Street* had lower levels of aggressive attitudes, greater even for boys than for girls (Fisch & Truglio, 2001). This study is the closest to a longitudinal design for prosocial media research.

*Mr. Rogers' Neighborhood*, another seminal television program designed for preschool-age children, articulated positive affective, social messages as primary goals, rather than intellectual activity or cognitive gain. On one of the longest running programs for preschoolers, Mr. Rogers modeled "such positive behaviors as nurturance and sympathy, task persistence, empathy, and imaginativeness from viewing the program" (Huston et al., 1992). In many studies, children in the group randomized to watch the program exhibited prosocial behaviors in natural settings when playing with other children and adults (Friedrich & Stein, 1973). In a related study of poor children, lessons were enhanced by incorporating play materials to be used in role-playing and verbal labeling after viewing the program (Friedrich & Stein, 1975). Other studies found fairly consistent outcomes:

- Tower and colleagues found that prosocial responses to *Sesame Street*, as compared with *Mr. Rogers' Neighborhood*, varied with viewer intelligence. They found viewers of the rapidly paced *Sesame Street* less likely to learn social messages (Tower, Singer, Singer, & Biggs, 1979).
- In two similar research studies (Friedrich & Stein, 1973, 1975), children watching *Mr. Rogers' Neighborhood* persisted on tasks, obeyed rules, and delayed gratification. Poor children showed more friendliness and cooperation during free play. In the second study, children watching *Mr. Rogers' Neighborhood* were better able to generalize prosocial lessons when combined with role-playing and discussion, which again led to questioning the benefit of watching prosocial programming alone. Viewing prosocial messages and images is most effective when combined with reinforcing activities.

- Friedrich-Cofer and colleagues exposed preschoolers in Head Start to *Mr. Rogers' Neighborhood* and found that those children viewing for more than eight weeks engaged in more imaginative play and positive social interaction when also provided with program-related play materials with prosocial themes, such as dramatic play props. Viewing the program alone did not increase imaginative play or enhance social interactions (Friedrich-Cofer, Huston-Stein, Kipnic, Susana, & Clewett, 1979).

*Barney & Friends*, starring the lovable purple dinosaur of preschool public television, features the absence of conflict, cooperation, and expression of positive affect. Singer and Singer studied three groups of preschoolers, one viewing a *Barney & Friends* show followed by a lesson; the other groups watched the show alone or participated in the lesson alone (Singer & Singer, 1998). Middle class children showed strong, moderate, and negligible outcomes, respectively. Interestingly, children of lower socioeconomic status did significantly better in the *Barney & Friends* show plus lesson group. Because the series aired so recently, little research exists.

### LESSONS LEARNED FROM RESEARCH

Prosocial programming leads to a greater effect on prosocial behavior in children ages three through seven years; the effect peaks at seven years, and declines thereafter from seven through twelve years of age (Mares & Woodard, 2001). Researchers credit lack of skepticism and poor ability to critically view media at younger ages as reasons for the differential age outcomes (Paik & Comstock, 1994). As important, the bulk of deliberately prosocial programming is aimed directly at the youngest children, while older children view programs created for adults or non-prosocial child programs, including cartoons (Woodard, 1999). Socioeconomic status mediates response to prosocial programming with a typically greater effect for more affluent children, with educated and prosperous parents. Prosocial messages may “resonate with these kids.” Intriguingly, no gender differences were noted in studies of response to prosocial media (Mares & Woodard, 2001).

For older children,

exposure to prosocial media may help foster prosocial development, at least in certain areas. Perhaps being in a more advanced stage of cognitive development, older children may pay more attention and formulate generalizations from observational learning. These generalizations may be stored in memory and subsequently serve as mediators between the child's perception of other people's needs and the child's response (help, sharing, and cooperation) to those needs. (Eisenberg & Mussen, 1989, pp. 106–107)

Research consistently emphasizes the large, positive role of adult co-viewing with “successful mediation as simple as labeling or commenting on prosocial acts” (Mares & Woodard, 2001). Using television as a babysitter deprives children of important life lessons (Mares & Woodard, 2001; Hogan, 2001). Several studies described above demonstrate the importance of coupling prosocial media with related lessons or activities, ranging from age-appropriate discussion to role-playing, whether in an educational or family setting.

The body of prosocial media research suggests several lessons and raises questions for interested professionals and parents (Mares & Woodard, 2001). For prosocial content to be incorporated by children and translated into positive behavior, the model should be specific. Children respond to the exact steps, an opportunity to imitate the behavior, and an immediate time frame.

Conversely, research suggests that children impacted by viewing media violence generalize the lessons learned; specific violent acts may be imitated, but more importantly, aggressive behavior per se is incorporated into the viewer's behavioral response. For example, an aggressor hits with a hammer, but a young viewer throws a punch. As well, in the media violence literature, long-term behavioral changes are noted (Huesman et al., 2003; Johnson et al., 2002), whereas information about the longevity of imitation of prosocial behavior is not available.

1. The combination of prosocial content and aggression may be subtly undermining because of the extensive mayhem brought about in the name of social justice followed by very brief punishment. Violence that is unadulterated with a prosocial goals may be less damaging (Mares & Woodard, 2001).
2. In the media violence literature, behavior that is rewarded, justified, presented with humor, and realistic for the viewer (he or she can relate with the aggressor), is more likely to be imitated. Mares and Woodard raise fascinating questions (2001):
  - a. Should prosocial behavior in the media, for example, altruism, be rewarded? Should the reward be extrinsic or intrinsic? Are there implications for rewarding an altruistic act?
  - b. Is prosocial behavior short-lived? How critical is timing and must the viewer see the example just before the chance to imitate it? Most projects measured prosocial behavior with short time delay.
  - c. To increase the likelihood that prosocial behavior is imitated, would the incorporation of humor, animals, realistic characters, or other features be attractive for young viewers?

## INTERACTIVE ELECTRONIC MEDIA

Children and adolescents increasingly purchase and play video games, important constituents of this multi-billion dollar market (National Institute on Media and the Family, 2005). A Kaiser Family Foundation study of 2000 children from eight to eighteen years of age found that over 80% owned at least one video game player and 49% had a video game player in their bedrooms (Rideout, Roberts, & Foehr, 2005). A growing body of behavioral science research demonstrates a link between playing violent video games and aggressive behavior (Anderson et al., 2003; Bushman & Anderson, 2002; Gentile & Anderson, 2006).

To date, there are no studies specifically addressing positive behavioral outcomes after playing video games modeling prosocial behaviors and situations, although in parallel with the discussion about prosocial television programming and positive behavioral outcomes, one might predict a similar effect.

There is evidence suggesting that playing violent video games leads to decreased prosocial behavior. A study of 100 elementary school children found exposure to video game violence associated with lower measures of empathy when compared to exposure to real-life violence or other forms of entertainment violence. Decreased empathy raises concern about desensitization as an outcome of violent video game use, possibly unique to this type of media because of "the active nature playing video games, intense engagement, and the tendency to be translated into fantasy play" (Funk, Baldacci, Pasold, & Baumgardner, 2004). Similarly, a meta-analysis of 35 research reports on playing violent video games found increased aggression and decreased prosocial behavior in children and young adults. The authors wrote that "exposure to violent video games is negatively correlated with helping in the real world" (Anderson & Bushman, 2001).

In an Iowa State University study of the General Aggression Model, 224 participants played either a violent or a nonviolent video game and then were asked to complete a story about potential interpersonal conflict. Those viewing the violent video game described the story character as more aggressive and angry, in thought and behavior, than those in the nonviolent group (Bushman & Anderson, 2002). A follow-up study looked specifically at prosocial as well as violent effects after video game viewing (Narvaez, Mattan, & MacMichael, 2007). Participants played a violent, prosocial, or neutral video game and then completed three stories. The violent video game group produced more aggressive endings to the stories, while the prosocial group produced more prosocial endings, defined as helpful, empathic, or supportive. Both studies concluded that “playing video games creates social biases that influence feelings, attitudes, and behavior” (Narvaez et al., 2007).

With seemingly endless morphing of new forms of media, digitalization, convergence, and the Internet, we have much yet to learn about the impact of these media on the prosocial behavior of children and youth.

### ROLE OF PARENTS AND OTHER ADULT MONITORS OF CHILDREN'S MEDIA HABITS

Children's advocacy groups and professional organizations committed to the holistic health of children, including the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Psychological Association, and the National Institute on Media and the Family strongly urge parents to monitor the media habits of children and teens. Encouraging parents and other adult stakeholders to intimately involve themselves in the media lives of young people will allow prosocial programming to be identified, emphasized, and used appropriately for education or entertainment. Obviously, the same adult involvement will ideally mitigate the potentially harmful impact of negative media offerings, whether violent, sexual, or commercial. Government censorship is not the solution, but rather media literacy or media education.

A media literate individual is able to understand basic lessons about media, and then, deconstruct and neutralize the negative images and messages, while embracing the positive and prosocial. The basic tenets of media literacy include the following (American Academy of Pediatrics, 1999):

1. All media images and messages are created.
2. Each form of media uses its own languages and techniques.
3. No two people experience media in the same way.
4. Media have economic, political, social realities.
5. Each media message has its own values and point of view.

Parents are in the best position to guide children in appropriate media habits in the home and to encourage media literacy. Not only are parents cultural teachers for their children, but they know their own child's strengths and vulnerabilities. Parents “understand the importance of family priorities and beliefs and how media images and messages affect the family” (Hogan, 2001). The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends the following measures to optimize media use habits (American Academy of Pediatrics, 1999; Hogan, 2001):

1. Limit media use to 1 to 2 hours of quality media time daily.
2. Avoid media use for children less than 2 years of age.

3. Make wise media choices for the family.
4. Arrange your home to be a positive, healthy media environment, including keeping media out of children's rooms and keeping the television off during meals.
5. Co-view media with children and teens. Critical viewing and critical thinking are cornerstones of media literacy.
6. Incorporate media education into children's daily lives.
7. Be a positive media role model.
8. Be an advocate and an activist for healthy, positive media for children.
9. Of course, emphasize alternative activities, including reading, active pursuits, and creativity.

### NEXT STEPS

Children and families live in a media-dependent world. The potential harmful effects of media use are well described, but less is known about the positive impact of media images and messages on young consumers. Apart from its replacement of healthier activities, it is possible for media to be positive, healthy and prosocial for children and adolescents.

1. Creativity: "Perhaps if prosocial programs could be made more attractive to children—incorporating more action, music—their potential for modifying children's behavior might be expanded" (Eisenberg & Mussen, 1989, p. 107). From the extensive media violence literature, attractive and appealing role models (easily identifiable for children) increase the chance of imitation.
2. Reinforcing activities: Educators, parents, and other adults involved with children should incorporate discussion, role-playing, and other related activities into the experience of watching prosocial media. These activities would be most effective if age-appropriate, relevant, timely, and fun.
3. Funding: Excellent prosocial programming is currently available, but aimed at a narrow (yet important!) preschool audience. Public television remains the leader in such marvelous programming, but especially in recent years is under fire and scrutiny by Congress and funding is always precarious. European countries value public television and funding is wisely guaranteed.
4. Research: The scholarly approach to evaluating prosocial media is not as robust as for antisocial outcomes, unquestionably (at least in part) because of difficulty measuring prosocial behavior and attitudes. Longitudinal studies are lacking, as are studies evaluating adolescent viewers and their response to prosocial programming. Systematic comparisons of explicit and specific modeling of behaviors with more general modeling of goodness have not been done.
5. Ratings: Television, movies, video game, and software ratings remain hopelessly confusing and often inaccurate, based on surveys of parents (Gentile & Walsh, 1998), as each medium boasts its own rating system. Ratings should not only reflect potentially harmful content, but also prosocial messages, enabling parents to make wise media choices with their children. Specifically for children's media, the Good Media Good Kids Project proposes a positive rating system, scoring ethical sensitivity, ethical judgment, ethical focus, and ethical action (Gomberg, Orlova, Matthews, & Narvaez, 2004). Many experts believe that a content-based universal rating system would be of substantial benefit to parents (Gentile, Humphrey, & Walsh, 2005).



6. Barriers: Although we know that prosocial programming, through examples of positive behavior and attitudes, "...can facilitate generosity, tolerance, cooperation, and other modes of behaving that promote constructive interaction" (Comstock & Scharrer, 2001), many additional barriers exist to populating the media landscape with prosocial programming for children, or even adding positive messages to traditional programming.
  - a. Advertisers demand a broad media audience in order to sell their wares, leading to narrow short-term, profit-driven interests rather than social well-being.
  - b. The industry goal to maximize the adult audience for profit runs counter to the call for improved children's media.
  - c. Parents, for often understandable reasons, lack time or incentive to provide optimal supervision and involvement in children's media time. Sometimes this is simply a matter of inconvenience, but lack of knowledge about the impact of media plays an important role.

## CONCLUSION

Our twenty-first century world is complicated for adults and children to navigate: earth-shattering events, economic realities, state and global crises. On the individual, family, and community levels, strengthening communication skills, relationships, tolerance, and encouraging altruism and empathy are vital for coping and thriving. With the knowledge that our lives will only become more interwoven with media—an undeniable partner as children grow—what does it teach and model? "Inevitably, children will be influenced by what they see and hear on television, for television arouses emotions, communicates values, norms and standards, and provides models whose actions will be imitated—all factors that modify a child's behavior" (Eisenberg & Mussen, 1989, p. 102; Rushton, 1979). And in the new millennium, television is only part of the equation.

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# V

## PROFESSIONAL ISSUES





# 28

## **Guided by Theory, Grounded in Evidence: A Way Forward for Professional Ethics Education**

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Professionals play key roles in our lives, from the physician who cares for us even before our birth to the attorney who manages our estate following our death. It is our professionals who are there during the most emotionally charged moments of life. We trust them to manage our deepest fears and pain, and call on them to fight for and defend our civil rights. With the advent of new technologies and changing definitions of societal institutions, ethical issues have become increasingly complex. Never before has it been more critical to examine how professionals are socialized and educated to assist us through some of the most critical moments of our lives. This chapter provides a guided reflection on the state of theory, research, and practice for ethics education in the professions.

We offer an evidence-based theoretical approach to ground professional ethics education, followed by an overview of the nature of professionalism in society, the status of ethics education, including current educational practices, approaches used in assessing professionalism, and alternative options for assessing and promoting the broadly defined capacities guided by theory as necessary conditions for ethical and professional behavior. Last, we offer a view for advancing professional ethics education that integrates divergent visions gleaned from our review of post-baccalaureate ethics education programs in the health professions and law.

### A THEORETICAL APPROACH TO PROFESSIONAL ETHICS EDUCATION

Rest (1983) extended Kohlberg's theory of moral reasoning, first by designing an easy-to-score and administer measure of moral judgment (Rest, 1979) and then by defining the Four Component Model (FCM) of morality to explain how cognition, affect, and social dynamics interact to influence moral action (Rest, Narvaez, Bebeau, & Thoma, 1999). The FCM articulates psychological processes involved with how the individual perceives and reasons about a social issue, how issues are prioritized compared to others, and how effectively the individual engages in action. Table 28.1 provides operational definitions for each of the components (we refer to them

**TABLE 28.1**  
**The Four Component Model of Morality**

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Starting with the question “How does moral behavior come about?,” Rest (1983) suggested that the literature supports at least four component processes, all of which must be activated for moral behavior to come about. The four components are a useful way to conceptualize the capacities required for effective moral functioning.

**Moral Sensitivity**

Moral sensitivity focuses on the interpretation of a situation, the various actions that are available, and how each action might affect the self and others. It involves imaginatively constructing possible scenarios (often from limited cues and partial information), knowing cause–consequence chains of events in the real world, and having empathy and role-taking skills. Both cognitive processes (perception, appraisal, and interpretation) and affective arousal (e.g., anger, apathy, anxiety, empathy, and revulsion) contribute to the interpretation of problematic situations.

**Moral Judgment**

Once a person is aware that various lines of action are possible, one must ask which line of action is more morally justified. This is the process emphasized in the work of Piaget and Kohlberg. Even at an early stage, people have intuitions about what is fair and moral, and make moral judgments about even the most complex of human activities. The psychologist’s job is to understand how these intuitions arise and what governs their application to real-world events. The educator’s job is to understand how best to promote reasoning development, especially for students who have not developed the ability prior to professional education.

**Moral Motivation and Commitment**

Moral motivation and commitment involves prioritizing moral values over other personal values. People have many values (e.g., careers, affectional relationships, aesthetic preferences, institutional loyalties, hedonistic pleasures, excitement). Whether the individual gives priority to moral concerns seems to be a function of how deeply moral notions penetrate self-understanding, that is, whether moral considerations are judged constitutive of the self (Blasi, 1984). For behavior to occur, the moral agents must first decide on a morally correct action when faced with a dilemma, and then conclude that the self is responsible for that action. One is motivated to perform an action just because the self is at stake and on the line—just because the self is responsible. Moral motivation is a function of an internal drive for self-consistency. Blasi (1991) argues: “The self is progressively moralized when the objective values that one apprehends become integrated within the motivational and affective systems of personality and when these moral values guide the construction of self-concept and one’s identity as a person.”

**Moral Character and Competence**

Moral character and competence is having the strength of your convictions, having courage, persisting, overcoming distractions and obstacles, having implementing skills, and having ego strength. A person may be sensitive to moral issues, have good judgment, and prioritize moral values; but if he or she is lacking in moral character and competence, he or she may wilt under pressure or fatigue, may not follow through, may be distracted or discouraged, and moral behavior will fail. This component presupposes that one has set goals, has self-discipline and controls impulse, and has the strength and skill to act in accord with one’s goals.

It is noteworthy that the model is not conceived as a linear problem-solving model. For example, moral motivation may affect moral sensitivity, and moral character may constrain moral motivation. In fact, Rest (1983) makes clear the interactive nature of the components. Furthermore, and in contrast to other models of moral function that focus on the traditional three domains—cognitions, affect, and behavior—the Four Component Model of Morality assumes that cognition and affect co-occur in all areas of moral functioning. Thus, moral action is not simply the result of separate affective and cognitive processes operating as part of an interaction. Instead, each of the four components is a mix of affective and cognitive processes that contribute to the component’s primary function.

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Source: Adapted from Bebeau, Rest, and Narvaez (1999); Bebeau (2006)

as capacities or abilities) and describes their interactive nature. The text below describes their importance for professional ethical development.

## The Four Component Model (FCM): Implications for the Professions

### *Moral Sensitivity*

For individuals being socialized to professional practice, ethical sensitivity involves the ability to see things from the perspective of other individuals and groups (including other cultural and socioeconomic groups), and more abstractly, from legal, institutional, and organizational perspectives. Thus, it includes knowing the regulations, codes, and norms of one's profession, and recognizing when they apply. This process highlights the idea that moral behavior can only occur if the professional codes the situation as moral.

### *Moral Judgment*

Because professional practice is essentially a moral enterprise in which new issues are likely to arise with societal change and technological advances, the ability to reason carefully about the dilemmas of one's profession is an essential capacity for practitioners. Rest and colleagues (1999) advanced the application of Kohlbergian stage theory to professional education by defining and validating three schemas associated with moral thinking in adults: the *personal interest* schema, characterized by decisions motivated by self-interest, fear of authority, and lack of autonomy or personal responsibility; *maintaining norms* schema, focused on enforcement of existing norms, rules, codes, and laws; and the *postconventional* schema, centered on concepts of justice, fairness, duty, and the evolutionary nature of morality in society and in the professions.

Recent interest in applying schema theory to professional education has centered on providing the individual with a baseline profile indicating which moral schema is predominant for the individual at entry to professional school, then providing posttest information to show whether the educational program has facilitated development (Bebeau, 2002). Of particular interest in professions education is the documented relationship between advances in moral reasoning measured by life-span measures like the DIT and profession-specific measures of ethical reasoning (Thoma & Bebeau, 2007).

### *Moral Motivation and Commitment*

Concerns for the development of a professional identity are the focus of two lines of research. One emerges from developmental psychology (Forsythe, Snook, Lewis, & Bartone, 2002; Monson & Bebeau, 2006; Roehrich & Bebeau, 2005; Rule & Bebeau, 2005). A second flows from philosophers' observations of models of professionalism that appear to guide moral action (Bebeau, Born, & Ozar, 1993; Kang, 2005; Thoma, Bebeau, & Born, 1998). During the admissions process, applicants state their interest and commitment to becoming a professional. However, seldom during the course of professional education are students encouraged to reflect on this initial commitment to professionalism or to refine it based upon new understanding (Bertolami, 2004).

### *Moral Character and Competence*

For the professional, technical competence, problem solving, interpersonal skills, and characterological dispositions must come together in the implementation of an action plan. Research on self-regulation illustrates the relation between cognition and affect as it applies to implementing

solutions to challenging problems (Bandura, 1977). If a person thinks of a task as “fun” or “challenging,” he or she is more likely to persist in efforts to resolve the problem. Conversely, if a problem is approached with dread, perseverance is less likely. Practice in resolving difficult and recurrent problems—like responding to an angry patient, or discussing a disciplinary issue with an offending peer—changes the expectations of efficacy, which in turn changes behavior. Apathy and cynicism arise when students can’t figure out how to effectively implement professional expectations. In research ethics education, such “survival skills” are deemed critical to the responsible conduct of research (IOM, 2002b, p. 105).

### Dynamic Processes of the FCM

The processes encompassed by the FCM are dynamic in nature. As the individual attempts influence in the social world, three basic conditions can exist. One, the moral action could conform to prevailing moral norms (moral status quo); two, the moral action could deviate positively from prevailing moral norms (possibly raising moral norms); three, the moral action could deviate negatively from prevailing moral norms (possibly resulting in sanctions against the moral agent, changing the moral agent’s moral identity, or in changing norms). In each of these three conditions, the potential exists for the moral action or the prevailing moral norms to have a positive or negative valence (i.e., moral or immoral). A fourth condition exists in which the moral agent’s action is not visible, is intentionally concealed, or is not perceived by others.

The individual’s moral capacities are inevitably influenced by the environment. Assuming that moral commitment or motivation (component three) is associated with a network of ideas and knowledge about the self within society, then the interaction with the social world may influence these attitudes. According to McGuire (1981), attitudes that are strongly held and linked to other related attitudes, knowledge, and beliefs are highly resistant to change. Thus, if an individual’s moral self is based on a strongly connected set of beliefs and attitudes about their identity in the social world, receiving negative sanctions for positive moral deviance (condition two, raising moral norms) would be unlikely to reduce the degree of commitment or motivation (third component) of the moral self.

However, if the moral self is less solidified (Blasi, 1984; Kegan, 1982) in the sense that the individual is still seeking to define who they are and how they view the social world, and they conform to prevailing norms that condone morally questionable behavior (condition two, moral status quo), they would be more vulnerable to inferring from their behavior their moral identity. According to self-perception theory, Fazio (1987) points out that individuals are most likely to infer their attitudes from observing their own behavior when those attitudes are not yet fully formed. With this last example, it then appears logical that individuals whose moral self is still forming are most vulnerable to adopting the status quo within organizations, and that feedback they receive from any three possible conditions (conforming to norms, positively deviating from norms, negatively deviating from norms) would be more likely to shape their moral identity than someone whose moral self is more developed.

## THE NATURE OF PROFESSIONALISM

Many people in today’s society refer to themselves as professionals, though society generally distinguishes among occupational groups based upon the presence or absence of particular attributes. Whether a particular occupation actually qualifies as a “profession,” based upon criteria sociologists advance, makes for interesting debate.

## Defining Professionalism

A look at the history of the emergence of professions (Freidson, 1988; Hall, 1975) indicates that occupational groups strive for professional status because of the power and privileges society confers—essentially the elimination of amateurs and monopoly control over “professional” practice. With the power, however, come lofty societal expectations. Persons in the so-called “learned professions” (e.g., law, medicine) are especially susceptible to public criticism for behaviors that are often tolerated elsewhere. Though societal expectations are seldom clearly articulated, a story involving a cheating scandal in one of the nation’s professional schools is considered newsworthy, in part because of the expectations society has for persons granted the most extraordinary power and privileges society can confer. The degree of power and privilege granted to a particular profession (self-regulation, privileged communication, the power to determine who gains entrance into a profession, and so on) depends upon a societal perception that the practice of the profession is essential to society’s health and welfare. Professions establish credentialing and regulatory processes, including admissions standards, codes of ethics, and certification exams to assure the public that the trust bestowed upon them is taken seriously. Less transparent, however, is the extent to which such high standards to ensure quality have historically served less noble functions, such as the exclusion of women and the oppressed from the “club” of professionalism (Luchetti, 1998). This history aside, our focus is on the formal and informal mechanisms that set powerful expectations for members.

By setting forth expectations of members in codes of ethics, and other oaths, a profession establishes the right to expect that persons who join the profession will conduct themselves in accord with such expectations. What distinguishes professions education from moral education, more generally, is an explicit set of agreed-upon expectations for membership. Thus, “[b]ecoming a professional is not only an intellectual process but also a social and moral process” (Egan, Kayhan, & Ramirez, 2004, p. 304). Whether there is congruence between societal expectations of professionals (that they put the interests of clients before the self, that they maintain competence, that they self-regulate as well as monitor the conduct of peers, that they collectively work to promote the health of society rather than the welfare of the profession) and the goals and purposes of ethics education, is a question deserving attention. Advancing the development of the individual is critical not only to the professional’s one-on-one relationship with patients/clients, but (and perhaps more importantly) to the very survival of the profession. Many today (e.g., Althouse, 2007; May, 1999; Rule & Veatch, 2004) see professions in a state of crisis, as commercialism overtakes a profession, and as political correctness and “customer satisfaction” undermine the role of the professional school educator (Althouse). Mann (2006) argues for “the development of a sociological consciousness, interdisciplinary thinking, and understanding of the economic and political dimensions of health care” (p. 167). Advancing the scholarship of teaching and learning in ethics education has as its first goal to develop good professionals, and as its second goal to develop good professionals who work collectively to advance the public good.

## Brief History of the Ethics Education Movement

In the health professions, the push for ethics education had its origins in technological advances in medicine that foreshadowed new and emerging problems for health care providers. Interest in the goals of professional ethics education were first articulated by Bok (1976), and promoted by early work of the Hastings Center (1980). The focus of think tanks like the Hastings Center was clearly on applied ethics, and ethics at bedside. In 1982, Rest was invited to write a paper for



the Hastings Center Report (Rest, 1982), in which he laid out an abbreviated version of his Four Component Model of Morality (FCM; Rest, 1983). Interestingly, the first three of Rest's components (sensitivity, reasoning, and motivation) are analogous to the goals Bok and the Hastings Center articulated—the need to develop moral perceptions and aspirations, in addition to moral reasoning). Absent from Bok's vision and the Hastings Center version is emphasis on Rest's Fourth Component—variously described as character or implementation.

In the early days of ethics education in the health professions, the predominant method for resolving ethical issues (Beauchamp & Childress, 1979—now in its fourth edition) was application of principles (autonomy, beneficence, nonmaleficence, and distributive justice) to the resolution of tough problems. If assessment of ethical decision making occurred, the methods were those typical of courses in philosophy—the analysis of written argument. Some alliances were formed between medical educators and moral psychologists in the late 70s (e.g., Dan Candee and Joe Sheehan) and a number of studies using Kohlbergian measures to assess moral judgment of medical students and physicians began to appear in the literature (e.g., Candee, Sheehan, Cook, Husted, & Borgen, 1982; Sheehan, Candee, Willms, Donnelly, & Husted, 1985). As we review the status of ethics education in the professions today, we see pockets of moral psychology's influence, sometimes in the structure and organization of ethics educational programs (e.g., Bebeau, 1994; Duckett & Ryden, 1994; Hamilton & Brabbit, 2007; IOM Report, 2002b), more often in efforts to assess the effects of instruction (Baldwin & Self, 2006; Bebeau 2002, 2006a; Rest & Narvaez, 1994). What is quite clear, however, is that unlike moral education in elementary and secondary education where moral psychologists have been the driving force behind the design and assessment of moral education (Lapsley & Narvaez, 2006), educators with grounding in moral philosophy and ethics have been the driving force behind much of professional ethics education. As has been argued elsewhere (Bebeau, Rest, & Narvaez, 1999), grounding education and assessment in a view that knowledge, skills, and attitudes are the processes that give rise to morality is less helpful than a vision like the FCM that helps to define researchable variables and create authentic measures of professional performance.

In contrast to the health professions, the impetus for ethics education in law was the egregious conduct of lawyers in the Watergate scandal (Graham, 1997). The typical approach to teaching professional responsibility courses in law (note they are not referred to as ethics courses) is to read opinions from appellate cases, judgments from the deliberations by association ethics committees, and to study state rules of professional responsibility or code of conduct (usually based on the American Bar Association Model Rules of Professional Conduct). Courses are designed to teach legal rules, rather than to teach legal ethics, and their primary purpose appears to be to prepare students for the professional responsibility licensing examination required in all states. As Egan et al. (2004, p. 309) point out, such “courses suffer from three main shortcomings: they are mostly rule-based, they seldom venture into actual ethical analysis, and they are often not taken seriously by students.” In addition, teaching to the profession's code perpetuates the notion that conduct not prohibited by the rules is ethically permissible. Thus, rather than promoting professional ideals to which one aspires, the rules serve as the prevailing ethical norms, rather than the minimum standards that keep you out of trouble.

## STATUS OF ETHICS EDUCATION

Despite the early work of the Hastings Center to define goals for ethics education, the most frequently cited review of the status of ethics education (Miles, Lane, Bickel, Walker, & Cassel, 1989) describes a surprising lack of consensus on goals and purpose, and no appeal to the psy-

chology of morality that would provide a theoretical orientation for the design of ethics education goals.

### Needs Assessment

What happens if insufficient attention is paid to the theoretical grounding for ethical decisions? Two studies address this question. Using four hypothetical cases involving end-of-life decision making, Wong, Eiser, Mrtek, and Heckerling (2004) observed that physicians were guided by (1) patient-focused beneficence; (2) a patient- and surrogate-focused perspective that included risk avoidance; and (3) best interests of the patient determined by ethical values, rather than self-interest concerns, such as (a) economic impact on the physician; (b) expediency in resolution of the situation; and (c) the expense of medical treatment. Whereas the values that appeared to be influential determinants of decisions were guided by biomedical principles, the participants' decision methods appeared to resemble casuistry more than principle-based decision making. Testing actual performance, Gisondi, Smith-Coggins, Harter, Soltysik, and Yarnold (2004) measured the uniformity of ethical decision making for 30 emergency medicine residents using five high-fidelity simulations. In only one ethical scenario did the residents perform all the critical actions. Residents performed the fewest critical actions for a patient confidentiality case. Whereas professional behaviors appeared to be learned through some facet of residency training—senior residents had better overall performance than incoming interns—this study, together with the Wong et al. study, highlight: (1) the need for more focused ethics instruction; (2) the value of performance-based assessment for providing authentic learning and testing experience; and (3) the importance of feedback that enables professionals to compare their performance with peers and against a standard (the criterion rating form).

### Accreditation Guidelines for Professional Ethics Education

A brief review of accreditation guidelines for the teaching of ethics and professionalism suggests a set of broad requirements that leave substantial room for interpretation (e.g., Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education [ACGME], 2006; Liaison Committee on Medical Education [LCME], 2006; National League for Nursing Accrediting Commission, Inc. [NLNAC], 2005; American Dental Association's [ADA, 2006] Commission on Dental Accreditation [CODA]; American Veterinary Medical Association's [AVMA, 2006] Council on Education [COE]). For example, the standards for accreditation of medical education programs require that a school "must teach medical ethics and human values, and require its students to exhibit scrupulous ethical principles in caring for patients, and in relating to patients' families and to others involved in patient care." Further, each school must assure that students are instructed in "appropriate medical ethics, human values, and communication skills before engaging in patient care..." and that "adherence to ethical principles be observed and evaluated, and reinforced through formal instructional efforts" (LCME, 2006, p. 13). In nursing, the standards state that the "program leads students to develop professional ethics, values, and accountability" (NLNAC, 2005, p. 97). Across health professions, ethics instruction is required, but content may be delivered as stand-alone courses or integrated into the curriculum.

Standards for law school accreditation state that the curriculum must include instruction in "substantive law" and "other professional skills" that are "generally regarded as necessary to effective and responsible participation in the legal profession" (American Bar Association Standards for Approval of Law Schools [ABASALS], 2006, p. 26). ABASALS also refer to the "values, rules, and standards" of the legal profession and its members (p. 27).

## Current Practices

Current practices in ethics education are documented to varying degrees. Methods range from surveys of school administrators or faculty to outcomes assessment with alumni.

### *Medicine*

Medical education appears to distinguish ethics instruction (i.e., promoting reasoning) from promoting professionalism (i.e., behavior). In a survey of 126 U.S. medical schools (Swick, Szenas, Danoff, & Whitcomb, 1999), 89.7 percent of the 116 responding schools offer formal instruction related to professionalism—teaching professionalism as a single course or incorporating it as part of multiple courses. Diverse strategies to promote professionalism include “white-coat ceremonies” and other orientation experiences. To determine the scope and content of required, formal ethics education, DuBois and Burkemper (2002) analyzed course syllabi from 121 U.S. medical schools. They observed: (1) ethics teaching occurs during the first two years in the preclinical setting, and just over half of the medical schools teach ethics for one year; (2) no single source, reading, or code shapes the curricula; (3) ten teaching objectives were identified, with the majority including these: to become familiar with medical ethics topics, and to develop ethical reasoning; (4) the most popular methods include discussion/debates, readings, writing exercises, and lectures; (5) evaluation methods described did not dispel the notion that courses are not rigorous; and (6) the most common method of grading is pass/fail and the most common criterion for grading is class attendance and participation. In sum, schools rarely engaged in formal assessment of the effectiveness of their courses—even when developing ethical reasoning is the most commonly-stated purpose.

The most recent review (Eckles, Meslin, Gaffney, & Helft, 2005) estimates actual curriculum time devoted to formal ethics instruction (51% of those responding) at 40 hours or less. Only 7 percent provided more than 60 hours; two provided 120 hours. Eighty percent have a formal course, but descriptions do not indicate how or whether students are assessed, including whether judgments are made beyond pass/fail. Eckles et al. conclude that there is no uniformity across schools, little effort to assess either skills or outcomes, little evidence to guide ethics educators, and a real need to “improve and validate this important area of medical education.” Given the broad range of readings and lack of consistency in goals (substantiating earlier observations by Miles et al.), it appears that the approach taken within a particular institution reflects the educator’s preference or background, rather than a carefully crafted analysis of the educational and developmental needs of the students.

### *Law*

Egan et al. (2004), contrasting legal education with medical education, note that legal ethics does not attempt to teach foundational frameworks for making moral judgments, and does not concern itself with the development of altruism, integrity, or character. Whereas in medicine the debate is over how to promote integrity, altruism, or strength of character, legal ethics is concerned with teaching legal rules to enable students to pass a professional responsibility examination required for licensure in all states<sup>1</sup> (National Conference of Bar Examiners [NCBEX], 2007). Efforts to influence moral judgment such as those reported by Hartwell (1995), the recent focus by St. Thomas University School of Law<sup>2</sup> to promote professionalism focused on ideals, or efforts to study the relationship between moral judgment and professional characteristics (Landsman & McNeel, 2004) are the exceptions in legal education.

### *Nursing*

Woods (2005), in a description of the general status of nursing ethics, points out the many possible philosophical and theoretical approaches to teaching ethics. He lists and references 14 philosophical approaches (e.g., traditional theoretical ethics, virtue ethics, values approaches, narrative ethics, casuistry, an ethic of care approach, codes of ethics) and an array of teaching methods (e.g., lectures, tutorials, debates, model emulation, cases studies, relational narratives, reflective practice, clinical supervision, or combinations of these). Whereas he argues for the need for a collective examination of teaching practices with an eye toward enhancing good nursing practice, he does not cite studies (e.g., Ryden, Duckett, Crisham, Caplan, & Schmittz, 1989) that ground their educational programs in a theory of learning that is linked to an assessment of competence.

### *Veterinary Medicine*

Ethics is required of all veterinary training programs and is offered as a stand-alone course (often with legal and practice management issues) or integrated throughout the curriculum at the discretion of the school (AVMA, 2006). Despite the variability in format and content of ethics in the veterinary curriculum (Lloyd & Walsh, 2002), alumni and faculty appear to be united on its importance. When asked for perceptions of the value of curricular content to their career success, alumni rated ethical judgment as the second most important skill, just behind a positive work attitude (Kleine, Terkla, & Kimball, 2002). With the increased status of companion animals in society and with the public's concerns for the welfare (beyond health) of agricultural animals, the landscape for ethics teaching is changing, as evidenced by the development of animal welfare courses and professorships<sup>3</sup> (Beaver, 2002; Broom, 2005).

### *Dentistry*

Berk (2001) summarizes the status of ethics instruction in dentistry citing positive changes in ethics instruction over the past 30 years (from rules-based lectures merged with jurisprudence, practice management, and dental history—typical until at least the mid-80s) to gradual introduction of case-based teaching as suggested by Bebeau (1985). In 1980, 76 percent of responding schools reported ethics lectures presented in the fourth year with some emphasis in the first year. In 1989, the ADA and the American Association of Dental Schools (AADS)<sup>4</sup> formed a task force of ethicists, dental educators, and practitioners to develop guidelines for the teaching of ethics (Commission on Dental Education, 1989). Grounded in Rest's FCM, the guidelines specified goals for ethics education that subsequently informed accreditation standards requiring ethics instruction in undergraduate dental education. By 1998, a survey indicated that 91 percent of responding dental schools included at least one ethics course. Contact hours, course content, and timing in the curriculum appeared to differ dramatically across schools, and Berk concluded—based on her literature review—that the situation in dentistry was similar to the situation in other health sciences professions: "...there is no comprehensively utilized gold standard with respect to ethics teaching in the health sciences" (p. 745). Whereas she cites "Bebeau's theory-driven and seminal work in ethics" as "innovative and critical to understanding dental student perceptions and needs in this domain," she complains that "while moral reasoning and ethical sensitivity may be measurable, the time commitment required to comprehensively, validly and longitudinally assess it for each student renders it an impractical option for dental education..." (p. 747). Like many ethics educators, Berk assumes that the components of morality are "knowledge, skills, and

behavior” and argues that because “knowledge and behavior are distinct and sometimes unrelated constructs,” there is not much that can be done.

### Reflections on Current Practices

Our review of reports on the status of ethics education suggests that most articles in the literature are “much ado about what to do” with little evidence as to what works. When evidence is presented (e.g., Jensen, 2003), it is student course evaluation data indicating whether students “like” the instructional strategies or “like” the professor. Like Jensen, in our experience, students “like” instruction when it is highly engaging, uses real cases with outstanding speakers /or commentators, but find fault with the professor and the instructional strategies when they are judged on the basis of the adequacy of their ethical arguments or on the adequacy of action plans and dialogs they design to demonstrate ethical competency (e.g., “respect for persons” or “informed consent”) in real or simulated situations.

Relying on student course evaluations as an indicator of the success or value of ethics instruction assumes that if students enjoy instruction, they will learn. This assumption is not supported by empirical evidence. First, ratings are associated with extraneous factors. For example, students rate more highly instructors who are entertaining, less stringent in grading them, or *quid pro quo* (Clayson, Frost, & Sheffet, 2006). Second, there is no evidence that ratings and learning are even correlated, let alone causally linked. The most compelling evidence, however, comes from application of Kirkpatrick’s (1959) four-level hierarchy of training effectiveness. Whereas, the model has been widely interpreted as *causal*—that participant reactions to instruction *cause* increased knowledge, skills, and attitudes; behavioral change; and organizational results (e.g., revenue generated or errors reduced)—empirical evidence (Alliger & Janak, 1989) indicates that participant reactions to instruction have very low or no correlation with the other three components. Only behavioral change and organizational results are correlated and then only moderately so (Noe & Schmitt, 1986).

Another possible confounding factor in student appraisal of ethics education is its potential to unintentionally polarize student opinions more than less value-laden topics, especially if students perceive the instruction as promoting a particular ideology. Because ideological viewpoints represent a web of interconnected beliefs and attitudes, when challenged, the individual will likely resist such a cognitive shake-up (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993). Further resistance or negative appraisal can occur if the design of the ethics instruction involves implementation (e.g., role playing or dialog construction) of a decision. With the nexus of communication and ethics, students may reject the exercise as ideologically biased and perceive the implementation as awkward or mechanical and discount it. To lessen these potential effects, Johnson and Johnson (2002) recommend that instruction include sufficient opportunities for students to practice and receive constructive feedback on their implementation. Johnson et al. also recommend the use of constructive controversy, where students master arguments on both sides of a controversial issue and work towards a resolution that integrates the interests of both positions.

### Emerging Concerns

Two areas of concern are evident in the recent professional ethics education literature. One, similar to the debate in elementary and secondary education, is whether to focus on the development of the individual’s character or reasoning and problem solving. The currency of this debate is evident in Volume 10 of *Advances in Bioethics* (Kenny & Shelton, 2006). As its title implies (*Lost Virtue...*), the concern is with character formation. Advantages for the character approach

are presented by physician ethicist Ed Pellegrino (2006) whose work with ethicist David Thomaasma (Pellegrino & Thomaasma, 1993) provides rich and useful operational definitions of the virtues of medical practice. A cogent critique of virtue ethics as a guide to educational program development is presented by Robert Veatch (2006). Other chapters argue for other dimensions of development, with no real resolution to the debate.

A second concern, reflected in *Measuring Medical Professionalism* (Stern, 2006), shifts the debate from questions of character or ethical competence to a concern for simple adherence to appropriate behaviors—an issue that has received recent attention (see p. 16, section on Linking Professionalism and Ethical Capacities). For example, the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME; 1999) defines professionalism “as manifested through a commitment to carrying out professional responsibilities, adherence to ethical principles, and sensitivity to a diverse patient population.” Efforts are underway to establish national standards for professionalism through the National Board of Medical Examiners (NBME). After defining 150 behavioral indicators of professionalism, NBME designed a survey instrument for use by the students’ mentors, faculty, or peers in a type of 360 feedback process. The Assessment of Professional Behaviors (APB) project is currently in field trials (NBME, 2007). Peiperl (2007) offers these cautionary notes for the use of 360 feedback in educational settings. People tend to overuse numerical ratings, and fail to offer more in-depth qualitative feedback to instigate personal reflection and growth. Further, numerical ratings do not take into account the context of the situation, which could weigh heavily in medical fields.

## PROFESSIONALISM AS THE FOCUS FOR ETHICS EDUCATION: A CRITICAL ANALYSIS

### Self-Interest and Commercialism

The recent focus on assessment of professionalism is not without critics. Best known for his work on the “hidden curriculum,” Hafferty (2006) argues that

[M]edicine must avoid the self-serving inconsistency of claiming to establish professionalism as an internalized and deep competency while willing to settle for graduates who manifest it only as a surface phenomenon. Such fence sitting, of course, calls into question just how core professionalism is to the nature and identity of medicine. A professionalism that is deep must exist at the level of identity. Surface professionalism . . . is nothing more than doing one’s job in a “professional manner.” Surface professionalism sidesteps issues of identity and treats professionalism as something physicians can put on and take off like one’s stethoscope. Professionalism as a deep competency might generate the same behavior, but the behavior in question is more real/authentic because the behavior is consequentially linked to the social actor’s underlying identity (as a professional) rather than to how the job was carried out (in a professional manner). (p. 283)

We agree. Tying too much of the assessment of professionalism to observable behaviors leaves unaddressed the internalization of professional expectations. Hence, our first recommendation for enhancing ethics education is to focus on identity formation (Component 3 of Rest’s FCM.)

Hafferty, however, is pessimistic about the possibility of educational efforts to promote professionalism—especially in the face of commercialism and self-interest perpetuated by the hidden curriculum—forces that are not, and are unlikely to be, addressed by organized medicine. Concern about the possibility of influencing the development of the individual, in the face of



enormous pressures to abandon or at least marginalize the central values of the profession, is reflected in Jordon Cohen's remarks in the foreword to Stern's (2006) book.

Whether by intent or otherwise, our country has chosen to rely on the commercial marketplace in an effort to control the escalating costs of health care. As a consequence, medicine is increasingly being viewed by policy makers and others as no different from any other commercial entity. In their view, medicine is just another business. Witness the terminology that has crept into common usage: doctors are commonly referred to as providers; patients, as consumers; health care services, as commodities. As a salient reminder of the fundamental differences between commercialism and professionalism, consider their starkly contrasting mottos. Commercialism is *caveat emptor*, buyer beware. Medicine is *primum non nocere*, first do no harm. (p. viii)

The danger posed by commercialism, he argues, comes not from adopting sound business practices, but in adopting its core ideology. "Self interest, the dominant paradigm of the market place, is the very antithesis of the self-sacrifice called for by medicine's commitment to the primacy of our patients' interest" (Stern, p. viii). Clearly, the outward manifestations of professionalism may help to maintain public trust, just as a customer service orientation may serve as an antidote to crass commercialism. However, such outward manifestations may not sustain the profession or the professional unless they are linked to a moral identity that not only keeps self-interest in check, but guides and promotes a doctor-patient relationship based upon trust.

### The Challenge of Social Influence Processes and Measurement

Assessment of complex psychosocial traits and attitudes comes with the challenge of measuring what may be immeasurable—the complexity of social influences (Cialdini & Goldstein, 2004). Mere outward compliance with stated expectations does not equate with persistence of the behavior change over time, the generalization or transfer of those behaviors to new situations, or personal awareness of the deeper corollaries of identity formation and attitude change. A one-shot assessment cannot monitor the climate of the school, the daily interactions between faculty and students, and the informal socialization process that may communicate a different set of expectations from that of the assessment process.

Professional and ethical issues are deeply embedded into every course and every clinical experience. Integrating ethics education and assessment strategies with other core topics (e.g., communication, treatment planning, clinical interviews) are likely to have the greatest impact and the least amount of resistance. This suggests an approach that structures an environment of collaboration and integration of content areas, as well as linking them with assessment (see Johnson & Johnson, chapter 11, this volume).

## CAPACITIES AS THE FOCUS OF ETHICS EDUCATION: A CRITICAL ANALYSIS

### Ethical Sensitivity

Studies using well-validated measures of ethical sensitivity—as Rest defined it (Bebeau, 2006a)—demonstrate that sensitivity is a construct that is distinct from moral judgment. Similar to studies of moral reasoning (see next section), both professionals and professional school students vary greatly in their ability to interpret the characteristics of patients/clients and responsibilities of the professional embedded in tests of ethical sensitivity. Further, some studies show that sensitivity

can be influenced by educational interventions, and in some cases small but significant gender differences are evident, favoring women.

In a recent review of the status of ethical sensitivity research, You and Bebeau (2005) identified 37 studies in which 23 measures were described to assess ethical sensitivity in dentistry, medicine, nursing, counseling, business, science, and school settings. After classifying the measures along several dimensions, including the extent to which the construct was elicited by the stimulus materials, they concluded that only seven of the measures met criteria, and most have not been extensively validated. Examples of validated measures that elicit the process include the Dental Ethical Sensitivity Test (DEST; Bebeau & Rest, 1982; Bebeau, Rest, & Yamoor, 1985) designed for dentistry and the Racial Ethical Sensitivity Test (REST; Brabeck & Sirin, 2001) designed for counseling psychology.

What distinguished measures like the REST and DEST is the extent to which the stimulus presents clues to a moral problem without ever signaling what moral issue is at stake or what professional responsibility is called for. In contrast, some test designers seemed to conceptualize “ethical sensitivity” as the ability to name the moral issue when a condensed synopsis of a moral problem is presented. For example, in a case like Heinz and the Drug dilemma, one could argue that naming the moral conflict as a tension between the rights of the druggist to his property and the rights of Heinz’s wife to her life is a matter of moral awareness or ethical sensitivity. In fact, Hebert, Meslin, and Dunn (1992) designed such a measure for assessing ethical sensitivity in medical education and observed wide variation in students’ abilities, finding it a useful assessment tool.

Such findings no doubt are of interest. However, when ethical sensitivity is simply defined as the ability to name the moral issue (e.g., patient autonomy, informed consent, distributive justice, or practitioner autonomy), important dimensions of ethical sensitivity may be overlooked. In fact, Rest (1983) thought that naming the moral issue was part of the reasoning and judgment process, and that the ability to diagnose what was happening from ambiguous clues and putting these together with sometimes vaguely understood professional and societal expectations was an unmeasured capacity that would provide insight into moral failings.

## Moral Reasoning and Judgment

Several approaches are used to assess moral reasoning and judgment, and each has its place in the design of ethics education. Following is a brief overview of the various techniques, their usefulness and appropriateness for assessing student learning, providing feedback, and assessing curricular effectiveness.

### *Classroom Assessment*

In ethics and philosophy courses, the essay is the preferred method for assessing and providing feedback to students on their developing reasoning ability. Whereas it is possible to achieve agreement on criteria and standards for assessment of essays (e.g., Bebeau, Pimple, Muskavitch, Borden, & Smith, 1995), most ethics educators in professions find such assessments time consuming or find themselves insufficiently equipped to develop criteria and standards to achieve sufficient interjudge agreement to use essays to assess learning outcomes across educational and institutional settings. What experience and evidence show (Bebeau, 1994; 2006a) is that students in professional education are intellectually mature and though they may come to professional education with low P scores on measures such as the DIT, they often learn quickly<sup>5</sup> to construct well-reasoned arguments and to apply criteria for judging the adequacy of an argument.

### *Standardized Measures of Life-Span Development*

Standardized tests like the DIT (Rest, 1979; Thoma, 2006) are frequently used to test the effects of professional education on moral judgment development. The interest is in establishing whether professional education adds value beyond the well-established finding—that moral judgment shows dramatic growth during college unless programs are narrowly focused on the technical aspects of career development or are dogmatic in their approach (McNeel, 1994; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). Following are findings from studies of moral judgment development in the professions.

1. *Education effects.* A review of 33 moral judgment studies (6,600 respondents) in medicine, dentistry, law, and veterinary medicine (Bebeau, 2002) confirms many individual reports (e.g., Baldwin & Self, 2006; Bebeau & Thoma, 1994) showing that professional school educational programs do not promote moral judgment development unless the program includes a well-validated ethics curriculum.
2. *Intervention effects.* Both Bebeau (2002, 2006a) and Baldwin and Self (2006) review the effects of instruction on moral judgment. Dilemma discussion (Schlaefli, Rest, & Thoma, 1985) is the technique most often used to promote reasoning development, a minimum number of hours extended over several weeks is required to influence change. Bebeau (2002) reported effect sizes of .77 to .97 for Hartwell's (1995) student-centered moral discourse in legal education, average effect sizes (.45) for data provided by a series of nursing studies, and an average effect size of .43 for a series of dentistry studies. The effect of Hartwell's technique—accomplished over a semester of discussions—is similar to the effect size (.80) attributed to college (McNeel, 1994). The studies in medical education that are summarized by Baldwin and Self (2006) tend to show statistically significant change in moral judgment for a variety of interventions, but most studies use volunteers or convenience samples.
3. *Subgroup differences.* Of the 33 studies reviewed by Bebeau (2002), 18 addressed differences within a profession. For example, faculty physicians performed better than practicing physicians, American-trained residents performed better than foreign-trained residents, and women in professions scored higher than men. Some recent studies on the use of Objective Structured Clinical Exams (OSCEs; Eva, Rosenfeld, Reiter, & Norman, 2004) suggest that ethics questions, together with other performance-based assessments designed specifically for making admissions judgments, are more effective than admissions interviews in predicting clerkship performance in medical school (Eva, Reiter, Rosenfeld, & Norman, 2004).
4. *Climate effects.* There are some suggestions that the moral milieu or climate of the institution (in medicine this is often referred to as “the hidden curriculum”) either inhibits growth or, in some cases, actually erodes growth in reasoning.<sup>6</sup> Disillusionment and cynicism about the possibility of applying the ideals of postconventional moral arguments in real life situations may drive such regression. Hafferty (2006) alerts us to the considerable challenge young physicians face in living up to professional ideals, when around them they see a health care system dominated by special interests and commercialism, and when they see peers who make obscene amounts of money by enrolling patients in studies sponsored by drug companies, or when they feel the pressure to compromise time spent with patients in order to meet quotas set for their day's work.<sup>7</sup>

### *Profession-Specific Measures of Reasoning and Judgment*

The question for educators in new and emerging areas like “integrity in scientific research,” is often whether to teach to the codes and policy manuals or to teach concepts particular to the discipline: intellectual honesty, humane care of animals, intellectual property, collegiality in scientific investigations, and so on (IOM, 2002a, pp. 36–40). Following Strike’s (1982) suggestion that measures of life-span development may not be sensitive to learning of profession-specific concepts taught in an ethics curriculum, Bebeau and Thoma (1999) devised the Dental Ethical Reasoning and Judgment Test (DERJT) as a prototype measure of intermediate concepts. Such concepts are thought to reside between the more prescriptive directives of codes of professional conduct and the more abstract principles (e.g., autonomy, beneficence, and justice) described by ethicists (e.g., Beauchamp & Childress, 1994). The DERJT is sensitive to dental ethics education interventions, is a useful measure for diagnosing deficiencies in reasoning and judgment as displayed by dentists disciplined by a licensing board (Bebeau, 2006b), and is moderately correlated with DIT scores (Thoma, Bebeau, & Bolland, 2007).

Currently, physician ethicists Catherine Caldicott and Kathy Faber-Langendoen (personal communication, February 12, 2007), at the Center for Bioethics and Humanities, SUNY Upstate Medical University, are devising a Medical Ethical Reasoning and Judgment Test (MERJT). To date, 22 profession-specific cases have been devised to assess eleven intermediate concepts—concepts defined through an extensive data collection process. Using strategies similar to those employed by Bebeau and Thoma (1999) in the design of the DERJT, respondents rate a list of possible action choices and justifications and then rank order the two best and the two worst actions and the three best and the two worst justifications. As with the DERJT, the action and justification choices were generated by professionals in the field. Only actions or justifications perceived as plausible choices by at least some professionals are included. The scoring key for the DERJT reflects consensus among a national sample of dental ethicists as to better, worst, and neutral choices and justifications. It does not prescribe a single best or worst action or justification. Scores are determined by calculating the proportion of times a respondent selects actions or justifications consistent with “expert judgment.” For the MERJT, Caldicott and Faber-Langendoen are using a national panel of physician-ethicists to refine the test, which they plan to field test with a larger sample of ethicists.

Similar work is being undertaken by Michael Turner and Steve Thoma (personal communication, February 6, 2007) on a “Military Leader Intermediate Concepts Measure.”

### **Moral Motivation and Identity Formation**

Development of a professional identity is an important outcome of the professional education and socialization process. One approach is to use essays or interviews to elicit a sense of professional identity. A second is to design sets of items to measure a professional’s role concept (Bebeau, Born, & Ozar, 1993; Retzler, Schwartz, Obenshain et al., 1992). Each is described.

#### *Professional Identity Formation*

Kegan (1982) proposed that one’s identity is first embedded with close others (i.e., family, friends, and co-workers), and through life experiences (including education) can become more inclusive, with an increasing sense of self-authorship (Baxter Margolda & King, 2004) and moral responsibility to society. The developmental challenge of forging one’s identity involves becoming authentic and shedding others’ definitions of us that are self-limiting or leave us

vulnerable to succumbing to pressures of self-interest or loss of autonomy. Forging a professional identity requires integration and meshing of professional values and expectations with personal ones. Validation studies of Kegan's model (Forsythe et al., 2002) conducted within the military profession support the constructivist's view that individuals move from self-centered conceptions of identity through a number of transitions, to a moral identity characterized by the expectations of a profession—to put the interests of others before the self,<sup>8</sup> or to subvert one's own ambitions to the service of society or to the nation. The fully integrated moral self (i.e., personal and professional values are fully integrated and consistently applied) tends not to develop until midlife—if it develops at all (Forsythe et al., 2002).

Recent explorations into the development of a professional moral identity (Monson & Bebeau, 2006; Roehrich & Bebeau, 2005) ask students to compose essays on questions derived from Kegan's interviews. Essays reflect a wide range of commitment to and understanding of professional values and expectations, the extent to which societal obligation to underserved populations is expressed, and whether such expectations are a core part of the entering student's personal value system. As with Forsythe and colleagues' studies of entering professionals, the predominate mode of identity was a Stage 2/3 transition, meaning a focus on self-interest with professional expectations is seen as external to the self, rather than a constituent of the moral self. Monson and Bebeau (2006) found that students at higher stages (about 37% of entering students) were more likely to incorporate issues of access to care, serving medical assistance patients, and volunteering to help those in need, as key expectations of the self.

### *Role Concept*

Two measures have been designed to elicit a professional's conception of professional role. *The Professional Role Orientation Inventory* (PROI; Bebeau et al., 1993) consists of four 10-item scales to assess dimensions of professionalism that are described in models of professionalism cited in the professional ethics literature. The PROI scales have been shown to consistently differentiate beginning and advanced student groups and practitioner groups expected to differ in role concept. The measure is sensitive to the effects of instruction and has performed well in construct validation studies (Kang, 2005; Thoma et al., 1989). Further, the measure has been adapted for other settings (e.g., physical therapy, Swisher et al., 2004), and is being adapted to dentistry in Korea by Jiyoung Choi and Min Kang Kim (personal communication, April 9, 2006).

*The Professional Decisions and Values Test* (PDV; Rezler et al., 1992) was designed to assess lawyer and physician action tendencies and underlying values in situations with ethical problems. Patterned after the Defining Issues Test and the Medical Ethics Inventory, the test consists of 10 case vignettes involving three themes: (1) obligation to the patient versus obligation to society; (2) respect for patient/client autonomy versus professional responsibility; and (3) protecting the patient's interest versus respect for authority. Though the test has not been extensively validated, it is cited because its format shows promise for the design of a role concept measure.<sup>9</sup>

Several studies confirm the need for professional socialization. Anderson (2001) concluded that graduate students do not intuit the values of the research discipline either from the curriculum or from their research mentors. Similarly, entering dental students (Bebeau, 1994) couldn't articulate professional expectation, sometimes even after explicit instruction. Further, whereas medical students (Feudtner, Christakis, & Christakis, 1994; Rennie & Crosby, 2002) believe they should report professional misconduct, most are unwilling or uncomfortable doing so. Both researchers cite situational factors that seem to work against professional self-regulation and point to the need for explicit professional socialization together with appropriate practice in confronting real or perceived misconduct.

### *Character and Competence: Implementation of the Decision*

The importance of practitioner attributes and practical skills are particularly evident when comparing physicians who have been sued for malpractice versus those who have not. Studies indicate that even a small increase in the amount of time spent in patient communication can reduce the likelihood of malpractice complaints (Ambady & Rosenthal, 1992; Levinson, 1994). As with the other capacities, both students and professionals vary considerably in the courage and capacity to address the tough problems they will likely encounter in practice. But sometimes what appears to be lack of courage is actually a manifestation of practical wisdom. Wading into a problem when you lack practical know-how may create a bigger mess than the failure to act.

Assessing fourth component capacities is commonly done through performance assessments or case simulations, and is routinely part of admissions processes where the individual's undergraduate co-curricular activities are used as a proxy for character. In medical education, Objective Structured Clinical Examinations (OSCEs) present the medical student with a "standardized patient" with whom they interact. Feedback on their effectiveness is provided. In dental ethics education (Bebeau, 1994), students are presented with realistic case scenarios with patients that examine a number of challenging ethical dilemmas.<sup>10</sup> Taking the role of a professional, students analyze their responsibilities in complex clinical situations and develop action plans and dialogs that are critiqued for their potential effectiveness. This practice builds confidence and provides a template for situations in practice that the student will encounter.

Rather than one assessment activity conducted in a separate ethics class, cases or simulations introduced elsewhere in the curriculum present opportunities for faculty to collaboratively assess the character and competence of the student. The benefit of an integrative approach to assessing implementation is that it can be reinforced more broadly by faculty across functional or disciplinary areas, sending a powerful signal of the value placed on ethics education by the school.

## A WAY AHEAD: DRAWING ON THE BEST OF BOTH VISIONS

At the beginning of this chapter, we attempted to raise the reader's consciousness about the trust we give professionals to safeguard our interests during times in our lives when we experience our greatest joy and also, our deepest sadness. As we reflect on professionalism as the focus for moral education versus the focus on capacities, as suggested by the Four Component Model, we see benefit in combining the two approaches. Our argument is buttressed by new research showing the links between the evidence from studies of professionalism as the outcome of education and evidence from the study of capacities as a way of understanding moral failings. After summarizing this new research, we offer recommendations for building an environment to support the development of both visions.

### Linking Professionalism and Ethical Capacities

A series of studies establish the link between behaviors exhibited during medical school and subsequent disciplinary action by a state medical board. First, Papadikis and colleagues (Papadikis, Hodgson, Teherani, & Kohatsu, 2004) found that problematic behavior during medical school predicted subsequent disciplinary action by a state medical board. In other words, students display warning signs of future disciplinary actions—negligence, inappropriate prescribing, unlicensed activity, sexual misconduct, fraud, criminal activity, and so on—while in professional school. Further, as educators often observe when trying to address behavioral issues, a link between



competence and professionalism was not particularly evident. Although a small but significant difference between those disciplined and a control group was apparent on GPA, differences were not evident on national board examinations—often assumed to serve as gate keepers for incompetence. In a follow-up study (Teherani, Hodgson, Banach, & Papadakis, 2005), three domains of behavior accounted for disciplinary outcomes: poor reliability and responsibility, lack of self-improvement and adaptability, and poor initiative and motivation. In a similar vein, Stern, Frohna, and Gruppen (2005) found that simple indicators of noncompliance and inaccurate self-assessments of performance during medical school, rather than data from admissions records, predicted future disciplinary action.

Whether habits/behaviors apparent during professional school are (1) reflective of character traits that are resistant to change, (2) are indicative of an underdeveloped professional identity, or (3) are associated with underdeveloped capacities in ethical sensitivity, reasoning, or implementation of defensible moral actions are questions of considerable interest to professions education. A retrospective analysis of performance data for 41 dentists referred for ethics instruction by a state dental board provides insight into actions judged by others to be unprofessional (Bebeau, 2006b).

Of the 41 dentists referred for ethics assessment, two were exempt from instruction based on pretest performance on five well-validated measures of the FCM, and 38 completed an individualized course designed to remediate deficiencies in ethical abilities identified at the pretest. Statistically significant change (effect sizes ranging from .55 to 5.0) was observed for ethical sensitivity (DEST scores), moral reasoning (DIT scores), and role concept (essays and PROI scores). Analysis of the relationships between ability deficiencies and disciplinary actions supports the explanatory power of Rest's FCM. Of particular interest is the way the model helped professionals deconstruct the usual summary judgments about character (unethical or unprofessional are some of the milder descriptors often used) and see themselves as lacking capacities that could be further developed. For example, in cases where disciplinary action was taken for insurance or Medicaid fraud, analysis of role concept and moral reasoning helped reinterpret what appeared to be acts to promote self-interest as an unbounded sense of responsibility toward others. The performance-based assessments (especially the DEST) were useful in identifying shortcomings in either ethical sensitivity or ethical implementation that accounted for the moral failing. Rather than trying to line his or her pocket—the usual attribution of such acts—the individual paternalistically manipulated the system in order to help the patient achieve much needed care.

In eight cases where disciplinary action was taken for providing specialty care below the standard of a specialist,<sup>11</sup> each dentist had acceptable ethical sensitivity scores, but seven of the eight had moral reasoning scores below the mean for dental graduates, and five of the eight had very low reasoning scores (DIT P scores in the low 30s). This finding is reminiscent of Baldwin and Self's (2006) observation showing a relationship between low DIT scores and frequency of malpractice claims. Of all the examples of shortcomings in capacities observed, the most compelling was the inability of 39 of the 41 referrals to articulate key professional expectations (e.g., the responsibility for lifelong learning, for self-monitoring, and regulation of the profession), expectations that come tripping off the tongues of the 10 moral exemplars studied by Rule and Bebeau (2005). This finding argues for the importance of an explicit focus on professional identity formation—something the disciplined dentists said they had not received and something they said they highly valued about the remedial ethics program. In fact, three insights about the design of ethics curricula emerged from a qualitative analysis of the referrals' self-assessments of learning. First, beginning the instructional process with a discussion of the distinguishing features of a profession and the expectations that follow is uplifting and renewing. Second, practitioners highly valued the insight gained from the diagnostic assessment of their strengths and weaknesses across the

four capacities that give rise to decision making. Third, practitioners highly valued the emphasis the course put on ethical implementation. Instead of stopping with “What is happening?” and “What ought to be done?” as is typical of much ethics instruction, the courses spent time focusing on how to implement an action plan, including what to say and how to say it.

### Building an Environment to Support Ethical Development and Professionalism

Two general conclusions guide our recommendations. First, there is ample evidence that our capacities to recognize, reason about, commit to, and implement actions judged by others to be moral, continue to develop across the life span. Second, there is also ample evidence that professional growth and personal development is best accomplished in a cooperative and collegial learning environment—one that uses multiple educational paradigms and multiple methods of assessment. Given such evidence, professional schools must reflect carefully on their responsibility for promoting developmental growth and should be held accountable by accrediting bodies for the evidence of their program’s educational effectiveness. Following are general recommendations for enhancing ethics education.<sup>12</sup>

First, ground the goals and purposes of ethics education in the FCM and begin the socialization process by focusing on the identity of the individual and its congruence with both societal and professional expectations. Ethics education often begins with a focus on moral quandaries, sometimes preceded by a brief review of moral theories. Such an approach is sure to engage students—maybe not the theory part—but it also can do them a disservice. Asked to take a position on an ethical dilemma when the student has had little opportunity to become acquainted with professional and societal expectations may encourage a defensive stance on personal moral values, rather than open reflection upon what it means to become a professional and, in effect, exploring whether the profession’s value system and one’s own are congruent. No one has to become a dentist or physician or lawyer, but if one decides to do so, doesn’t the profession have a right to expect that when the individual takes the oath of office that he or she not only means it, but knows what it means? Most students do not come to professional school with a clear vision of societal and professional expectations,<sup>13</sup> and are not likely to intuit them from the general educational process. Professional education must be conveyed as an opportunity to reflect on this important commitment. It should not be assumed that if one is in professional school that one has resolved personal and professional expectations and integrated these into one’s identity as a dentist, lawyer, or physician.

Second, design ethics curricula appropriate to the students’ level of professional development. Genetic engineering and cloning may be intriguing value problems for medical ethicists, but seldom are such problems of central concern to the novice. Rather, students worry about problems that are more mundane (e.g., performing a physical examination on a very ill patient, speaking up when noticing a questionable practice performed by a superior, managing conflicting directives given by a resident and an attending physician, responding to an angry patient, deciding whether the physician has the right to assert his or her values with respect to filling prescriptions for “the morning after pill”). As we have argued, students need not only decide on an ethically defensible response, but need to work out how to effectively implement their good intentions.

Third, professional education is expected to define professional expectations and develop reflective self-directed learners. Professional schools need to collaborate in order to design or utilize measures of ethical sensitivity, moral reasoning, and role concept, to provide students with insight about their own personal and professional development, thus enabling them to become reflective and self-directed. Tests of life-span development (e.g., DIT) can be used to provide

students with personal insight as to how their skills at reasoning and judgment compare with those of their peers and with expert judgment. Likewise, profession-specific measures like the DERJT or the PROI can be used to counsel students about the development of their abilities so each can engage in more reflective practice. A part of reflective practice is to set personal learning goals.

Fourth, behavioral indicators of professionalism must be defined and validated. These may include such things as meeting commitments, treating others (including faculty) respectfully, or self-monitoring the use of mood-altering drugs. By defining professional expectations, we include bottom-up processes of empowering students to articulate their understanding of professional expectations. By this, we mean that program evaluation and student development efforts designed to glean the opinions of students and empower them are successful to the extent the students who are given leadership and power have the vision and values to advance professional expectations. Coaching student leaders to raise the bar for their peers on community service may be necessary, as opposed to allowing a *laissez-faire* approach to shape student culture and values.

Fifth, the institution must attend to the moral milieu. Because students learn from observing peers and faculty, requiring the assessment of professional behaviors within an environment where those behaviors are not the norms would present a considerable challenge and risk being perceived as organizational hypocrisy. There must be a whole school commitment that includes modeling the professional behavior we wish to promote. Modeling will also extend, from time to time, to confronting issues of intolerance, arrogance, entitlement, or paternalism. When brought to professional settings, such behaviors can be devastating—to clients, patients, and to careers. This dimension of personal development cannot be relegated to a single ethics course, but rather must be woven into the fabric of school culture. The ultimate respect we can accord students is to act as swiftly in confronting these issues as would a human resources officer with an employee.

Last, a professional ethics curriculum needs to promote a sense of the profession's collective responsibility for the welfare of society. Only when professionals exercise their collective responsibility to promote the public good will the trust society has carefully given be maintained. The role of the educator is to raise such consciousness.

## NOTES

1. The Multistate Professional Responsibility Examination (MPRE) is a standardized exam of the National Conference of Bar Examiners (NCBEX) and is required for admission to the bar in all but three U.S. jurisdictions. The MPRE assesses mastery of the rules, principles, and codes contained within the American Bar Association's (ABA) Model Rules of Professional Conduct (MRPC) and Model Codes of Judicial Conduct (MCJC).
2. The Mentor Externship at the University of St. Thomas School of Law in Minnesota connects students to attorneys in the community with the purpose of introducing students to the basic tenets of professionalism in practice through extensive mentoring that includes mentoring for professional and personal integrity (Hamilton & Brabbitt, in press).
3. A notable example is the work of Temple Grandin (Grandin, nd), whose research has resulted in significant reduction in the stress, fear, and discomfort livestock animals experience in the food production process.
4. AADS is now American Dental Education Association (ADEA).
5. Dental students in the Minnesota curriculum demonstrate significant growth in the ability to develop a well-reasoned moral argument following 10 hours of small group dilemma discussions. In addition to the discussions, students receive written feedback during the course on five written essays.
6. Whereas it is hard to imagine actual erosion in the ability to reason in the sense that individuals who are able to comprehend more advanced moral arguments and therefore prefer them (which is what

selection of postconventional moral arguments on the DIT amounts to), suddenly lose the ability to comprehend such arguments, it is possible to imagine professional students becoming disillusioned and cynical about the possibility of applying such ideals in real-life situations. Selecting more self-interest or maintaining norms arguments at posttest may simply reflect students' concerns about the practice environment.

7. For a review of literature on moral climate as it applies to the moral milieu of professional schools, see IOM report (2002c).
8. See the behaviors of professionalism described by the National Board of Medical Examiners (2003–2004).
9. See IOM report (2002c) for a more extensive discussion of role concept measures.
10. Cases include how to manage a case of suspected child abuse, substandard work by a previous dentist, drug-seeking behavior of a patient, and patient requests for treatment that does not align with the dentist's values or judgment.
11. The Dental Practice Act does not prohibit the generalist from providing specialty care (e.g., endodontic or orthodontic care), but does hold the generalist to the standards of the specialist.
12. For a more extensive discussion of the implications for character development of each of the capacities in Rest's FCM, see Bebeau (2006a) and for specific ideas for designing educational programs that promote the capacities, see the IOM report (2002b).
13. See Bebeau (2006b) for a summary of research documenting students' misperceptions of professional expectations. For example, students conflate professional reporting of dishonesty or incompetence with "tattling" and are thus reluctant to engage in one of the hallmarks of professionalism—self-regulation and monitoring.

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# 29

## Teacher Education for Moral and Character Education

Merle J. Schwartz  
*Character Education Partnership*

### WHAT PLACE DOES MORAL AND CHARACTER EDUCATION HAVE IN TEACHER EDUCATION?

Today's teachers find themselves in a challenging position. Within the context of high stakes testing, much discussion seems to focus on how much teachers have on their figurative plates and what *needs* to be on the plate in order to improve student achievement. At the same time, there is growing interest nationally in viewing character education as *the plate* on which to rest the teacher's efforts for educating the whole child. How does the teacher create the plate? In other words, how are teachers acquiring the skills, knowledge, and dispositions to be effective character educators?

There are a number of national education-oriented organizations reaching out to schools and community members interested in forwarding moral and character education and the social and emotional skills necessary to develop "young people of good character who are responsible and caring citizens," as stated in the Character Education Partnership's mission statement (CEP, 2004). Support for character education, in the form of published materials, conference speakers, project work, or board memberships for related organizations has come from groups such as the American Association of School Administrators, the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, the National Association for of Secondary School Principals, the Association of Teacher Educators, the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Educators, the National Association of School Psychologists, the National Council for the Social Studies, and others (Haynes et al., 1997; Milson, 2002; Schwartz, 2005, 2006). There are a growing number of character-related organizations, such as the Character Education Partnership (CEP), Character-Plus, the National Center for Youth Initiatives, and Community of Caring that offer large-scale conferences featuring national experts as well as experienced practitioners. In fact, for many teachers, professional development at character education conferences and from home-grown local programming efforts appears to be the *only* place they receive professional development in character education.

## GOVERNMENT INVOLVEMENT

The U.S. Department of Education (USDOE) grants and state legislation are two types of government involvement which seem to create a need for, or endorse the need for, teachers to include character education in their efforts to educate their students. The USDOE has provided a total of 136 state and local education agencies with character education grants since 1994. This money is part of the No Child Left Behind expanded funding for the Partnerships in Character Education Program (U.S. Department of Education, 2006).

In the news release dated July 24, 2006, U.S. Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings stated that “Character education in the classroom supports students on a path to becoming honorable and compassionate.... Lessons in responsibility and respect are just as integral to a well-rounded education as lessons in reading, math and science.” The Partnerships in Character Education Program awards the grants to encourage state and local agencies to design and implement character education programs which “teach students core ethical concepts, such as: civics; citizenship; justice; responsibility; and respect for themselves and others.” Grants awarded in 2006 totaled \$15.5 million

From 1993 to 2004, there have been twenty-three states in the United States that have either passed new legislation or revised existing legislation addressing character or moral education (Glanzer & Milson, 2006). In their review of character education laws in the United States, Glanzer and Milson state that West Virginia was one of the only states to address teacher training by requesting that the state board assist county boards in developing in-service training regarding integrated character education (2006).

This section started with the question: What place does character education have in teacher education? If there are national conferences designated to help educators develop an understanding of how to do effective character education, expectations for character education legislated at the state level, and federal Department of Education grants to encourage character education, it would seem that a logical place for teachers to initially receive their training in this area would be their teacher preparation programs. In general, the vast majority of schools, colleges, and departments of education do not include character education as an integral part of how they are preparing teachers (Milson, 2002; Ryan & Bohlin, 1999; Williams & Schaps, 1999).

## THE STATE OF CHARACTER EDUCATION IN THE NATION'S SCHOOLS OF EDUCATION

In 1999, the Center for the Advancement of Ethics and Character at Boston University and the Character Education Partnership in Washington, DC, published their study on the state of character education in the nation's schools of education. The study surveyed 600 randomly chosen deans and department chairs from a list of 1,326 teacher education programs listed in Peterson's Educational Mailing Lists and Services to understand how they perceived the role of character education in teacher preparation (Jones, Ryan, & Bohlin, 1999). The schools represented a cross-section of the nation's teacher education programs. Of all the respondents, there were 29 percent public and 71 percent private, mirroring the national sample. It is important, however, to point out that almost 72 percent of teaching degrees are conferred by public colleges and universities because of their larger enrollments. Respondent schools were not stratified by graduate versus undergraduate teacher education programs.

Educators from 212 schools completed and returned these surveys—a response rate of more

than 35 percent. There were 21 closed questions and an additional 14 questions that allowed for open responses. This unique study specifically looked at the following areas:

- Degree of commitment to character education: What is actually being done in teacher education? How committed to character education are professionals in teacher education?
- Philosophical approach to character education: How is character education conceived? What approaches are the most prevalent in teacher education today?
- Impact of state certification: What impact has teacher certification had on the teaching of character education in teacher preparation?
- Satisfaction with current preparation of teachers in character education: Is there a desire to make character education a higher priority in teacher preparation? How can character development approaches be strengthened in teacher education (Jones, Ryan, & Bohlin, 1999)?

There are several important findings from the Teachers as Educators for Character study that form a baseline for the state of character education in schools of education in the United States.

### Finding One: A Broad Consensus

There was a broad consensus among the surveyed leaders from schools of education in support of character education with more than 90 percent agreement that core values can and should be taught in schools. When given the negative statement “Schools should avoid teaching values or influencing moral development,” 97 percent of the respondents disagreed. When asked if character education concerned these leaders, as deans, 87.2 percent responded that it did.

In open-ended survey questions, many respondents linked their concern for character education’s importance as an essential component of democracy.

### Finding Two: Rhetoric and Reality

While many respondents expressed the importance of character education, in reality, it is not a high priority in teacher education. Only 24.4 percent indicated that character education was highly emphasized within their program offerings for required and elective courses. Only slightly more, 35.5 percent, said that character education is highly emphasized informally in areas such as forums, lectures, and ceremonies. Of most importance, only 13.1 percent were satisfied with their institution’s efforts to teach character education.

#### *Public versus Private Institutions*

Private institutions rated their efforts more positively than their public counterparts, with 32.3 percent feeling that character education was highly emphasized in formal curricula and 45.3 percent felt it was emphasized in informal curricula. In contrast, only 6.6 percent of deans from public colleges and universities felt that character education was highly emphasized in their formal curriculum, with the informal curriculum rating at 13.1 percent.

#### *Types of Courses Covering Character Education*

Character education was covered as a unit in at least one required course for 70.1 percent of the respondents. Only 10.6 percent said that character education was provided as a required



course. In all, there were ten types of courses that covered character education in some way. These were:

- Methods/Pedagogy
- Psychology/Sociology
- Contemporary Issues in Education
- Philosophy and History of Education
- Religion/Theology
- Management/Professional Ethics
- Character Education/Values Education
- Curriculum/Subject Specialties

It was reported by 80.8% of respondents that efforts at including character education into coursework were hindered by an already crowded curriculum. In addition, the study stated that “in light of the mediocre evaluations deans give their character education efforts; it appears that character education is largely the result of isolated efforts by individual professors and is not generally addressed in a systemic, comprehensive fashion.” (p. 9). Examples of how character education is integrated into particular courses and addressed systemically across departments are included later in this chapter.

### Finding Three: One Movement, Many Voices

The study found that schools of education have very different perspectives and practices for addressing moral and character education in the teacher preparation programs. Participants from public, secular private and religious institutions were given a list of eleven approaches to character education and asked to rank order which approaches were most dominant to their teacher education program. The list was generated by a subcommittee of professionals from CEP and ATE, with effort to avoid loaded terminology and the understanding that approaches are often used in conjunction with one another.

As can be seen in Table 29.1, within the teacher education programs at both the secular private and public surveyed universities, there are similar approaches with an emphasis on reasoning, building a caring community, and service learning. Religious institutions take a more traditional approach to teaching morals that include religious education moral/virtue education, and ethics/moral philosophy.

### Finding Four: A Sense of Community

Two of the approaches used by the surveyed deans and summarized in Finding Three use “community” to frame character education efforts. In building a caring community within the classroom and school, the focus is on attempting to build cooperation and empathy into the educational environment. Service learning provides community service opportunities that allow students to connect with the community at large. As might be expected, the degree of commitment in teacher education programs to community service programs varies by type of institution with 76.0 percent of the religious institutions having service programs that clearly incorporate character development themes, 62.1 percent of secular private schools offering these programs, and only 40.7 percent of the public institutions.

**TABLE 29.1**  
**Approaches to Character Education from Teachers as Educators for Character Study**

<i>Approach</i>	<i>Description of approach</i>	<i>Top 3 selected dominant approaches to CE</i>
Values clarification/ values realization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Views values as highly individual in nature; teacher acts as a neutral facilitator.</li> <li>• Use of provocative exercises to encourage self-discovery and “clarification” of individual’s personal values.</li> </ul>	50.0% Secular, Private
Moral reasoning/ cognitive development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Character formation is viewed chiefly as a rational process.</li> <li>• Use of exercises involving hypothetical moral dilemmas to encourage students to higher stages of moral cognition</li> </ul>	51.7% Public 50.0% Secular, Private
Moral education/virtue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Character formation involves acquiring internal qualities (“virtues”) through the practice of good habits.</li> <li>• Draws from academic content, particularly literature and history, to help students gain knowledge about their civilization’s moral tradition.</li> </ul>	40.1% Overall 45.0% Religious
Life skills education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stresses the development of positive social attitudes.</li> <li>• Related themes included personal decision-making, self-esteem, communication, and work-related skills.</li> </ul>	44.6% Overall 60.3% Public
Service learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A pedagogy which de-emphasizes “book” learning in favor of “hands-on” experience to make learning more relevant.</li> <li>• Integrates community service opportunities throughout the curriculum.</li> </ul>	54.0% Overall 56.9% Public 62.5% Secular Private 52.0% Religious
Citizenship training/ civics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus is on teaching civic values on which America’s political system was founded.</li> <li>• Goal is to prepare future citizens to participate in our democracy, often is part of social studies or history classes.</li> </ul>	
Caring community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus on fostering caring relationships in the classroom.</li> <li>• Use of group learning activities to teach cooperation and empathy.</li> </ul>	76.7% Overall 79.3% Public 87.5% Secular Private 71.0% Religious
Health education/drug, pregnancy, violence prevention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus on preventing unhealthy, anti-social behavior.</li> <li>• Character development is generally an unstated goal; program-oriented approach to combating adolescent social problems.</li> </ul>	
Conflict resolution/peer mediation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Goal is to help students develop skills in resolving conflict constructively.</li> <li>• Students receive education to act as mediators in conflict among classmates.</li> </ul>	48.3% Public 50.0% Secular Private
Ethics/ moral philosophy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The explicit teaching of ethics or philosophy, usually as a separate course or unit, generally for older students.</li> <li>• Students study significant philosophers and thinkers who have made a contribution to moral philosophy.</li> </ul>	40.1% Overall 41.0% Religious
Religious education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Character formation occurs in the context of a faith tradition</li> <li>• Morality is understood to have a transcendent source, often is combined with an ethic of service to others.</li> </ul>	44.6% Overall 64.6% Religious

*Source:* Adapted from Jones, Ryan, & Bohlin (1999), *Teachers as educators for character*, with permission from CEP.

### Finding Five: Process vs. Content

There has been a move in recent years for teachers to move from a content-driven approach in character education to a process-oriented approach. In a content approach, character themes and ethical ideals are examined through the content of classes using, for example, historical figures or literature. In contrast, of the ten broad categories discussed in Finding Two, the most popular approach to character education involves building a caring community. This is a process-oriented approach with a focus on pedagogy and practical actions as opposed to building a knowledge base from the academic curriculum. It should be noted, however, that the deans interviewed for this study described courses that emphasized both approaches to character education.

### Finding Six: Related to Mission

There is a clear relationship between schools that mention character in their mission statement and schools that include character education in their teacher education programming. Only 39.7 percent of public institutions had teacher education mission statements that mentioned character education while 80 percent of private religious schools explicitly mentioned character goals in their mission. Private secular schools specifically mentioned character education in 43.3 percent of their responses. Schools including character in their mission statement tended to stress character across programs such as admissions policy, honor codes, rituals and ceremonies, community service, and student governance. Specific to teacher education, 16.5 percent of schools with character-driven mission statements had a separate required course in character education compared with 1.4 percent of schools without character-driven missions.

### Finding Seven: A Higher Priority in Schools with Religious Affiliation

Of the private schools participating in this study, 80 percent had religious affiliations. The mission-level commitment to character was clearly more evident across programs, as reviewed in Finding Six. In general for the religious institutions, character education was seen as important in the development of their students and was therefore clearly connected to the purpose of education. In addition, the deans from these secular schools saw character education as derived from the teacher's own moral framework rather than as a technique or issue to be covered.

### Finding Eight: A New Mandate?

At the time this study was done, deans did not seem to feel that there was a movement at state level for character education to be included in teacher certification. While 64.8 percent endorsed making character education a requirement, 35.2 percent argued against such legislation, and many more were concerned about overregulation that might lead to trivializing the importance of character education.

### Summary Statement for Teachers as Educators of Character Study

The study essentially found that in the United States, schools of education are “coming up short.” Specifically:

Despite high levels of commitment to character education, a disjunct between theoretical support and programmatic reality characterizes current teacher education curricula. Deans express

disappointment in the status of their own institution's character education efforts; they describe a situation in which character education is left to the efforts of individual professors rather than serving as a strong foundation for their teacher education programs. While there are undoubtedly models of excellence scattered throughout the country, teacher education as a whole needs to do more to convey to prospective teachers that character formation is at the heart of what it means to be a teacher. (Jones, Ryan, & Bohlin, 1999, p. 20)

## THE STUDENT AND THE STUDENT'S FUTURE STUDENTS

When it comes to teacher education for moral and character education, there are two sides to the coin. On one side, there is the necessary moral and character development of teachers-in-training that would allow them to serve as models for their future students. On the other side of the coin, there is the necessary preparation of teachers that provides them with the knowledge and skills to be able to establish appropriate classroom structures, deliver direct content instruction, build relationships, and make pedagogical choices important to moral and character education for their future students.

### Professional Dispositions

In 2000, the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE), a national accrediting body for schools, colleges, and departments of education authorized by the U.S. Department of Education, revised its expectations from a predominantly curriculum-based focus to an emphasis on outcomes for teacher candidates. With the new conceptualization came an understanding that teacher education needed to result in the development of teaching professionals who had necessary knowledge, skills, dispositions, and performance attributes (Sockett, 2006). Within this mandate, by using the word *dispositions*, there is a desired outcome that incorporates the moral and ethical dimensions of teaching. The NCATE language is as follows:

Candidates for all professional education roles develop and model dispositions that are expected of educators. The unit articulates candidate dispositions as part of its conceptual framework(s). The unit systematically assesses the development of appropriate professional dispositions by candidates. Dispositions are not usually assessed directly; instead they are assessed along with other performances in candidates' work with students, families, and communities. (NCATE, 2002, p. 19)

The NCATE introduction of dispositions was a call for institutions to participate in the moral and ethical foundation of the teaching profession. An examination of this emphasis leads to raising issues about the developing character of a future teacher and creates challenges programmatically for teacher education institutions. According to NCATE's president at the time of this writing, Arthur Wise, there are two *professional dispositions* in accreditation standards that candidates are expected to exhibit: (1) fairness and (2) the belief that all students can learn (2006). In an on-line commentary, Wise states:

Schools of education usually identify dispositions that encourage pre-service educators to be caring, collaborative, reflective teachers. They measure dispositions by translating them into observable behaviors in school settings. The caring teacher creates a classroom in which children respect each other. The collaborative teacher works with parents and other teachers to help students learn. The reflective teacher modifies instruction until students learn. (2006, p. 2)

## Teaching is a Moral Act

Words such as *fairness* and *caring* are implicit in the understanding that teaching itself is a moral act reflecting a teacher's moral character in the construction of appropriate classroom learning situations (DeVries & Zan, 1994; Fenstermacher, 1990; Hansen, 1995; Lasley, 1997; Schwartz, 2005, 2007; Sockett, 1993; Tom, 1984). This statement is highlighted clearly in Fenstermacher's (1990) statement below:

What makes teaching a moral endeavor is that it is, quite centrally, human action undertaken in regard to other human beings. Thus, matters of what is fair, right, just, and virtuous are always present. Whenever a teacher asks a student to share something with another student, decides between combatants in a schoolyard dispute, sets procedures for who will go first, second, third, and so on, or discusses the welfare of a student with another teacher, moral considerations are present. The teacher's conduct, at all times and in all ways, is a moral matter. For that reason alone, teaching is a profoundly moral activity...[and] the morality of the teacher may have considerable impact on the morality of the student. The teacher is a model for the students, such that the particular and concrete meaning of such traits as honesty, fair play, consideration of others, tolerance, and sharing are "picked up," as it were, by observing, imitating, and discussing what teachers do in classrooms (p. 133).

## Moral Disposition and Observable Behavior for Developing Teachers

If teaching is a moral act, what specific teacher actions linked to professional teaching dispositions are observable under the words *fairness* and *caring*? In other words, what are the observable attributes that teacher education programs should be striving to develop through their programming? An extensive literature review was completed by Schwartz (2005) looking at moral exemplars that could operationalize the construct of moral character. Based on this study, seven attributes were identified as behaviors and characteristics of individuals who model moral character:

The individual:

1. shows obvious moral concern and care for others;
2. has actions that indicate a commitment to the intellectual or emotional development of others (students);
3. has congruence between the individual's moral statements, understanding, and actions;
4. grants *leeway* (Hoare, 2002) to self and others;
5. demonstrates self-reflection and reasoning skill;
6. regulates his or her own behavior and emotions in accordance with the social good for others;
7. demonstrates empathy and perspective-taking. (Schwartz, 2005, p. 64)

The seven attributes were used to create a rating instrument that allowed high school students to rate their teachers and high school teachers to rate themselves on the degree to which they modeled each of these attributes. Using this measure to group teachers as modelers and non-modelers of moral character, a quantitative study was then conducted with results that linked the behaviors and characteristics of emotional competence—from the field of emotional intelligence, also known as Social and Emotional Learning (SEL)—and transformational leadership to the attributes of modeled moral character in K-12 education. In other words, the attributes that would be considered part of moral character (or moral disposition) are skills that can be developed from the fields of emotional competence, measured by the Emotional Competence Inventory (ECI-2)

(Boyatzis, Goleman, 1999) and transformational leadership, measured by The Leadership Profile (TLP) (Rosenbach & Sashkin, 2003). These grouped characteristics and behaviors are:

- Self-awareness
- Self-management and credible leadership
- Social awareness, care, and creative leadership (creating opportunities for others)
- Social skills and follower-centered leadership
- Self-confidence and confident leadership
- Organizational awareness and principled leadership
- Visionary Leadership (Schwartz, 2005, p. 127)

A final outcome of the Schwartz study was the generation of a definition of moral character that may be useful to teacher educators striving to develop moral dispositions in their students:

Moral Character is the consistent pattern of behaviors and expressed characteristics oriented towards self development and regulation of emotions in preparation for social and moral responsibilities to others. It is based on a concern for others that is manifested in ways of solving problems that benefit all those involved. Finally, moral character facilitates the development of others to reach higher levels of morality and accomplishment themselves (Schwartz, 2005, p. 127).

This definition takes a confusing term, *moral character*, and casts it in a descriptive light that is skill-based. A skill-based approach lends itself to assessment and curriculum development. By casting moral character in a skill-based light, the term avoids religious and philosophical overtones that may prevent common use by non-religious public schools and schools of education. Finally, this definition links transformational leadership and emotional competence in the context of moral character modelers, based on the statistically significant findings that showed a positive correlation between the three assessment instruments used to measure transformational leadership style, emotional competence, and moral character (Schwartz, 2005, 2007).

### NCATE Requirement for a Conceptual Framework

The Task Force on Teacher Education as a Moral Community of the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Educators (AACTE) has concluded that “the injection by NCATE into its procedures of an explicit attention to moral agency in students and teachers has left many institutions in difficulty” (Sockett, 2006, p. 7). To help give guidance on these difficulties, the task force created a publication presenting three papers titled *Teacher Dispositions: Building a Teacher Education Framework of Moral Standards* (Sockett, 2006). Relevant to this chapter is the description of the conceptual framework:

- A way of thinking for oneself, a way of seeing, thinking, and being that defines the sense of the unit across all its programs, thereby specifying the reasons for its existence and how life ought to be lived in the unit.
- The framework sets forth the operational manner of the unit regarding what candidates should know (i.e., content knowledge), what they should be able to do (i.e., curricular, technological, and pedagogical knowledge and skills), and to what they should be disposed (i.e., moral sensibilities).
- It describes the knowledge base(s), derived from sound research and best practice on teaching and learning, upon which the learning outcomes are grounded.



- It describes assessments and evaluation measures needed to produce the desired results in candidates' performance. (Dottin, 2006, pp. 27–28)

In the first work, “Character, Rules, and Relations,” Sockett (2006) presents three frameworks that can inform teacher education, each with implications for the moral development of the in-service teacher. The frameworks include the Aristotelian emphasis on character, the Kantian stress on rules, and the relational focus of recent times made popular by Nel Noddings (Sockett, 2006). In reviewing these frameworks, Sockett suggests that teacher educators may use these as a way of conceptualizing teacher dispositions:

*Dispositions.* The professional virtues, qualities, and habits of mind and behavior held and developed by teachers on the basis of their knowledge, understanding, and commitments to students, families, their colleagues, and communities. Such dispositions—of character, intellect, and care—will be manifest in practice, will require sophisticated judgment in application, and will underpin teachers' fundamental commitments to education in a democratic society, such as the responsibility to set high standards for all children, harbor profound concern for each individual child, and strive for a classroom and school environment of high intellectual and moral quality.

Dispositions as professional qualities of *character* imply such virtues as self-knowledge, courage, sincerity, and trustworthiness. Qualities of *intellect* imply such virtues as truthfulness, accuracy, fairness, and impartiality. Qualities of *care* imply such virtues as tolerance, tact, discretion, civility, and compassion. Institutions will determine their own emphases and commitments across these three broad categories, enriched by their own traditions, experiences, and orientations. (Sockett, 2006, p. 23)

The second paper, “A Deweyan Approach to the Development of Moral Dispositions in Professional Teacher Education Communities: Using a Conceptual Framework” discusses the Deweyan approach to disposition development and punctuates the need for connecting the knowledge acquired towards social ends (Dottin, 2006).

In the third paper, “Assessing Dispositions: Five Principles to Guide Practice” (Diez, 2006), specific approaches to the assessment of teacher candidates' dispositions are explored with suggestions for implications for teacher educators' practice. The five principles are as follows:

1. Assessing dispositions requires “making the invisible visible” through active means.
2. Dispositions can (and should) be assessed both in structured ways and through ongoing observation of the candidate in action.
3. Dispositions should be assessed over time, as part of an ongoing reflection process.
4. Criteria used in the assessment of dispositions should be public and explicit.
5. The process of assessing dispositions has moral meaning for teacher educators and for their practice. (Diez, 2006, p. 49)

## INTEGRATING MORAL AND CHARACTER EDUCATION INTO TEACHER EDUCATION

In 2003, the *Future Educators for Character* grant research program was created by the Character Education Partnership (CEP) to identify innovative practices that tried to make character education an integral part of the undergraduate and graduate training of teachers and educators for three selected sites. The University of Illinois-Chicago (UIC), Whitworth College, a faith-based school in Spokane, and a third school were originally selected for the two-year program.

The University of Missouri-St. Louis (UMSL) was substituted for the third school in the second year of the research grant. Site selections were based on a scoring rubric that included the alignment philosophically with the Character Education Partnership's *Eleven Principles of Effective Character Education*, and clearly defined outcomes with a strong evaluation component. Each grant site had a theoretical emphasis in their approach to character education. UIC used social domain theory as the guiding conceptual framework (Nucci, 2001). This framework allowed them to differentially focus efforts upon teaching practices related to students' construction of morality, social conventional values, and zones of privacy and personal control. UMSL also approached character education from a social justice perspective and Whitworth used an integrated college-wide framework that integrated "education of the mind and heart."

In addition to collecting qualitative and quantitative research on the approaches of each of the three institutions, CEP also conducted a qualitative study of the *process* each school used to facilitate working collectively on integrating character education within the teacher education program. In other words, the study-within-the-study was to look at how these grant sites were able to get teacher educators at the faculty level to work cooperatively around the theme of character education. In the following sections of this chapter, results will be reported that represent process learnings across the three sites, focusing on early actions, evolution of offerings, and assessment efforts.

## Initiating Considerations

Participating faculty members at each grant research site were interviewed before starting their two-year journey and at the end of the two-year period. The purpose of the interviews was to discover how faculty members viewed character education and its relevance for their work. The interview tapes were transcribed and coding procedures were applied to the data. An example of initial interview questions, created by Virginia Navarro, David Shields, and Marvin Berkowitz at UMSL for their faculty follows (see appendix 29.C).

### *Terminology and Concepts*

There are several advantages for using an interview format as a foundational step in building collaboration among faculty. First and foremost, it provides a method for establishing a baseline on how faculty think about moral and character education—what they know and do not know. In the participating schools for the CEP grant research program, there was a wide variety of understanding about the word *character* and the phrase *character education* among faculty; the pre-project comments made by faculty reflected the need to reach a common understanding about terminology. Examples of pre-project comments include:

I think *character* as a term has morphed. The vocabulary of character has replaced the vocabulary of moral education. The people I work with would never use the word *character*. They would use the word *morality*. They would talk about values, education, or ethics.

There is a broader umbrella around notions of character or citizenship or whatever you want to call it that encompasses a lot of different programs that I have had some contact with.

I look at character as something incredibly personal and you develop it; no one else can give it to you—it is something that is very internal.

A secular definition would be civility.

...developing as a caring person, a respectful person, and then extending that into establishing a

classroom that's a safe place for kids. And through developing that ethic of caring, they're actually helping their students develop character by modeling, like what we used to call socialization.

Character education is what makes good citizens. It includes developing a belief system that honors differences.

Intentional education settings in which one is trying to shape the student.

It is related to the dispositions and virtues that are internal to practices or values.

After the two-year grant research period, one faculty member couched character education clearly within the framework of the school's systemic approach:

I think my definition of character education has been solidified into an expanded view, beyond programs, that in and of itself is not what our focus has been. Our focus has been more on the principle of character education that it's a day in and day out process in terms of relationships with students. We are defining it in regard to the relationships that are established by our new teachers as shown in their vision statements. That's probably one of the biggest aspects that we've really looked at. And when they talk about outcomes, they talk about relationships; they talk about moral relationships, moral character, affirming children, being civic and civil. Those are the terms that our candidates are talking about because that's our emphasis.

Ultimately, there was a general agreement that character education had everything to do with moral development in character formation and that within teacher education, character education needed an intentional, systemic approach:

...that what we are doing does alter people's identity and their conceptions of who they are...and so we broaden character to mean something having to do with the construction of the person in *a moral sense*.

### *Building Collaboration among Faculty*

Without question, having a "champion" at each institution was a necessity in bringing faculty members together to participate in the character education grant. The fact that the group effort was part of a grant, rather than a mandate, facilitated the effort at the two state universities. In general, there were three themes that emerged from the state universities in terms of gathering interest in this grant from faculty; they were (1) having the support of the dean; (2) a desire among faculty to have the opportunity to work together in a collegial manner that makes explicit the goals of the program's conceptual framework; and (3) the need for tenured faculty to initially lead the charge. At Whitworth College, there was a commitment to education of the "mind and heart" and, as a smaller institution, the faculty was used to and comfortable with pulling together to approach new ways of doing things.

### *Educating the Faculty*

Each site engaged in multiple ways to educate interested faculty in the study of character education as related to teacher education programming. First, the grant coordinators themselves expanded their knowledge by attending CEP's annual national forum, each bringing a colleague with them. Whitworth began faculty education by choosing a number of recommended readings with various perspectives on character education, forming a book discussion group, and conducting "jigsaw" activities so that staff (and invited partner district teachers) could teach each other

major concepts. They later held a “character education open house” for staff, displaying newly acquired materials and a bibliography of all materials with ordering information. In addition, Whitworth held a minicharacter education conference on campus that included K–12 educators and faculty members.

UIC faculty began with a study of social domain theory, reading *Education in the Moral Domain* (Nucci, 2001). UMSL held a one-day faculty retreat that was facilitated by CEP’s director of education and research. All three sites invited Marilyn Watson to their programs to speak about developmental discipline. Two of the schools are using *Learning to Trust* (Watson, 2003) as part of their teacher education program.

## Assessment

In addition to the baseline interview information, there were additional data collected over time. Included in these efforts were syllabi review, surveys (teacher efficacy; CEP’s Quality Standards modified), and review of student-generated work. In order to infuse character education throughout the teacher education programming, each site engaged in initial syllabi review. UIC conducted an inventory of all course syllabi for the undergraduate elementary education program looking for content related to character education. In a similar vein, UMSL reviewed the syllabi for their seven core educational courses. Each item linked to character education specifically or self-knowledge, building community, and becoming culturally competent in ways that might be linked to character education, was boldfaced and cut and pasted into a document so that they could get a clearer overview of the existing components. Whitworth also looked across syllabi for an understanding of what was intentionally connected to character education.

Over the two-year period, significant changes were made to syllabi across the three higher education sites. UIC was able to make important changes to the Child Development and Elementary Education course including a five-week character education unit with elements of character education linking to four other courses. In addition, UIC expanded character education emphasis to field course work/experiences. UMSL set up an organizational site for all core course instructors using their Blackboard software system. This allowed them to post resources and communications that emphasized opportunities for faculty that included articles, websites, bibliographies, and film clips. Whitworth significantly increased the number of courses in their four programs that voluntarily participated in syllabi revision, seeking to include a more systematic approach to teaching character education.

UIC created a journal of project activities, observations of faculty implementation, student evaluations of moral development and education components of the child development course, along with exit questionnaires of student knowledge and sense of efficacy regarding social and moral development and character formation.

Whitworth used CEP’s Quality Standards, with some adaptation, to assess the degree to which their education programs were following CEP’s Eleven Principles of Effective Character Education (See appendix 29.A). They also assessed the students’ written reflections on the meaning of their experiences. UMSL used a pre and post test model to check student efficacy on how well students felt they were equipped to be educators of character (see appendix 29.B).

## Other Efforts

While the three sites had similarities in approaches, each program had unique elements. UMSL likened character education to multicultural consciousness, through selective literature. In this process, they had an urban focus on community acculturation, interrupting stereotypes, and look-

ing at gender development issues. They developed a structure, using technology, for reaching out to all faculty members and including adjuncts in the process. They completed an item analysis of an existing student–teacher character education efficacy instrument and modified it to be useful for students not yet doing student teaching.

Whitworth, the smallest of the three schools, approached a secondary assessment class from the perspective of academic honesty, how to prevent cheating, and establishing a classroom climate conducive to ethical conduct. They created criteria for “Whitworth Character Education Book Awards,” providing experiences for their students to select their character education award winner. This project-based experience was displayed throughout the school of education, providing opportunities for students to share their learning. Whitworth worked closely with partnering public schools throughout their grant program, as was evidenced in their mini-conference day. Whitworth also has sought to align character traits with NCATE’s requests for development of certain teacher dispositions.

UIC folded content on social and emotional learning into coursework, the result of a developing relationship with the Center for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL), a national organization. UIC employed the use of Taskstream, a web-based program by which students work in teams to construct lessons based on actual social studies and language arts materials from the Chicago Public Schools. Some of the lessons required of students were of a moral nature and reflected what the students had learned of educating in the moral domain. Video clips of social and moral reasoning interviews with young children and religious children helped students understand the distinctions between children’s concepts of morality and their concepts of convention.

## RESEARCH AND FUTURE DIRECTION

The three institutions involved in the character education grant research project began their work by establishing a baseline and evaluating their actions over the two-year period of the grant. The remaining question yet to be answered is,

to what extent does the integration of character and moral education into teacher education have a long-term effect on the way teachers present themselves in their future classrooms, the type of environments they are able to maintain over time, and the degree to which their students make positive gains academically, socially, emotionally, and morally as a result of their teachers’ actions and persona?

## SUMMARY

Many teachers are being asked to provide character education or social and emotional learning in their schools. There are many states with mandates for character education and the federal government has been providing millions of dollars to schools that are interested in discovering effective methods of doing character education. With all of the activity in the field, the institutions that prepare teachers have been relatively uninvolved in this effort, forcing educators to seek this information elsewhere.

With the inclusion of NCATE’s new standards requiring teachers to be prepared with certain *dispositions*, there becomes a clearer opportunity to link teacher education standards with moral, ethical, and character-related development. In this effort, future teachers themselves may de-

velop the skills and actions necessary for modeling characteristics and behaviors they hope their students will develop. Some effort resides in individual teacher education programs that seek to bring emerging conceptual frameworks to life through systemic efforts across coursework. There is a significant research need to track the effectiveness of these efforts.

Ultimately, tomorrow’s teachers need to do two things: they need to develop their own moral and ethical character so they can lead by example and they need to learn the *pedagogy* of moral and character education.

**APPENDIX 29.A**  
**Whitworth College Undergraduate Teacher Education Program**  
**Linking Existing Coursework to CEP’s Eleven Principles of Effective Character Education**

<i>Character Ed Principles</i>	<b>Sample</b>					
	<i>EDU 201 202 203 Intro Courses</i>	<i>EDU 320 Exceptional Learners</i>	<i>EDU 321 Int. Beh Mot</i>	<i>EDU 340 341 342 Curric Blk</i>	<i>EDU 440 441 442 Lit Blk</i>	<i>EDU 344 Child Lit</i>
1. Core ethical values	X	X	X	X	X	X
2. Character as thinking, feeling, behavior			?	X		
3. Proactive approach		X?		X		X
4. Caring community	X Negative Abuse			X		X
5. Moral action	X Negative Abuse	X	X		X	X
6. Challenging curriculum		X		X	X	
7. Self-motivation				X		
8. Moral community for staff						
9. Support for character ed						
10. Family as partners		Host Family			X	ESL
11. Evaluates character						

**APPENDIX 29.B**  
**Character Education Efficacy Belief Instrument**

As you read each of the following statements, please indicate your level of agreement by selecting the circle under the appropriate response. (Likert scale 1–5), from strongly disagree to strongly agree.

1. If I were teaching today, I would be comfortable discussing issues of right and wrong with my students.
2. When a student has been exposed to negative influences at home, I do not believe that I can do much to impact that child’s character.
3. I am confident in my ability to be a good role model.
4. Teachers are usually not responsible when a child becomes more courteous.
5. When a student shows greater respect for others, it is usually because teachers have effectively modeled that trait.
6. If I were teaching today, I would be at a loss as to how to help a student be more responsible.
7. I know how to use strategies that might lead to positive changes in students’ character.
8. If I were teaching today, I am not sure that I could teach my students to be honest.
9. When students demonstrate diligence it is often because teachers have encouraged the students to persist with tasks.
10. Teachers who spend time encouraging students to be respectful of others will see little change in students’ social interaction.



11. I am able to positively influence the character development of a child who has had little direction from parents.
12. If parents notice that their children are more responsible, it is likely that teachers have fostered this trait at school.
13. Some students will not become more respectful even if they have had teachers who promote respect.
14. If I had a student who lied regularly, I believe I could convince him to stop lying.
15. If students are inconsiderate it is often because teachers have not sufficiently modeled this trait.
16. If responsibility is not encouraged in a child's home, teachers will have little success teaching this trait at school.
17. If I were teaching today, I would find it difficult to persuade a student that respect for others is important.
18. When a student becomes more compassionate, it is usually because teachers have created caring classroom environments.
19. I will be able to influence the character of students because I am a good role model.
20. Teaching students what it means to be honest is unlikely to result in students who are more honest.
21. If I were teaching today, I would not know how to help students become more compassionate.
22. Teachers cannot be blamed for students who are dishonest.
23. I am continually finding better ways to develop the character of my students.
24. Teachers who encourage responsibility at school can influence students' level of responsibility outside of school.
25. In my university coursework, I would like to learn more about effective ways to promote good character.
26. I need to continuously work on my own character to become a better role model for my school community.

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## APPENDIX 29.C

### Interview protocol for levels I & II core course faculty

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#### Thanks for taking the time...

We have received a grant from CEP to help strengthen and integrate CE in the seven core pre-service education courses at UMSL. As a first step, we are interviewing each lead instructor.

1. I would like to begin with a definitional question—when you hear the term “character education,” what meaning do you attach to the word “character”? What does “character” mean to you?
2. Is “character” an appropriate domain for educational effort? Should teachers be concerned to promote positive character development?
3. What kinds of activities, pedagogies, or strategies do you think of in connection with the term “character education”?
4. Could you comment on the connections you see (or don't see) between issues of character development more globally and the field of “character education” more specifically in teacher education.
5. For purposes of our present discussion, I want to use a broad definition of character education, anything that focuses on moral, ethical or pro-social development. And let me frame the discussion in this way: Part of character education within a teacher education program pertains to promoting positive character within the students of the program, and part of it pertains to equipping those students with the knowledge and skills to incorporate character education goals into their own teaching. Let me begin with the first of these.
6. Do you see developing your students' character or ethical behavior as one of your goals? (Is it an implicit or explicit goal?). If so, how do you seek to make progress toward that goal? (Follow-up questions on curriculum/methods used in course)
7. How, if at all, do you make formal or informal assessments of students' character? In other words, what aspects of students' character are observable?
8. How do you know if you are making progress?
9. What problems have you encountered related to character education as a component of your courses? ...What are your concerns?
10. If you wanted to contribute to future teachers being the most responsible, pro-social professionals possible, what would you do?

#### OK, let's talk about equipping students to be character educators.

11. Do you see your course as helping prepare students to be character educators? (If so, how?)
12. Are there specific readings that you see as relevant to becoming character educators?
13. Are there classroom or field experiences that are relevant? (Invite reflection)
14. What other pedagogical strategies do you employ to help your students become effective character educators?
15. How effective do you think we are as a COE in equipping our students to be character educators? Is this a core value in our Futures and Knowledge Base statements?
16. Do you think it is a good idea to incorporate a focus on character education throughout the core curriculum?

17. If you wanted to optimally prepare our students to be effective character educators, what would you change about our teacher preparation program?
18. Have you engaged in any character education professional development experiences? If so, which and where?
19. Have you discussed character education with your pre-service faculty colleagues? If so, what was discussed and in what context?

Can we count on you to participate in one or two faculty seminars designed to develop this aspect of our program?

[Ask for one copy of a recent syllabus, and the names of any adjuncts who teach the core courses they oversee.]

Thank you for taking the time to share your ideas about CE with me.

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# 30

## Teaching Ethically as a Moral Condition of Professionalism

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From Alan Tom's initial identification of teaching as a moral craft (1984) to David Hansen's exploration of the moral heart of teaching (2001), from Goodlad et al.'s recognition of the moral dimensions of teaching (1990), to empirical studies that vividly reveal these dimensions (Jackson et al., 1993; Richardson & Fenstermacher, 2001), the academic and professional literature has increasingly illustrated how the moral aspects and complexities of K-12 teaching can be neither separated from its technical elements nor, worse, ignored as somehow extraneous to the central mission of education. Some connect these moral nuances, embedded in the daily life of classrooms and schools, to the professional role of the teacher and the ethical implications for professionalism more generally in teaching (Bergem, 1993; Campbell, 2003; Carr, 2000; Oser and Althof 1993; Sockett 1993; Strike & Soltis 1992; Strike & Ternasky, 1993). Within a context that integrates consideration of the moral nature of teaching with applied professional ethics in teaching, this chapter explores the concept of teacher professionalism as being inseparable from what I define as the teacher's ethical knowledge. This knowledge relates to both how teachers conduct themselves in morally appropriate ways and how they engage in moral education.

Specifically, the chapter addresses two interrelated areas, presented within discrete sections. The first argues that ethical knowledge can provide the basis of a renewed professionalism in teaching. It defines ethical knowledge and discusses teaching as unique among the professions, not least because of its moral and ethical layers. It further distinguishes ethical knowledge from formalized codes and standards. The second section, which constitutes the dominant part of this chapter, explores ethical practice as a professional imperative. It offers examples of moral agency, which underlies ethical knowledge, as illustrated by the teacher's actions as both a moral practitioner and a moral educator. Conversely, and contentiously, it further presents an argument against the co-opting of moral agency as a kind of politicized and ideological activism.

The overall theoretical framework underpinning this chapter is informed by three key assumptions or orientations to the concept of ethical knowledge that are woven throughout the discussion. First, I use the adjectives "moral" and "ethical" as more or less synonymous or interchangeable terms, a practice that seems to be increasingly defensible in an applied philosophical sense (Beckner, 2004). In either case, the conceptual basis of the terms is the same in that both relate to human virtues in an Aristotelian tradition, grounded in a rejection of moral or ethical relativism. As I have written elsewhere:

Increasingly critical of the rampant relativism embraced since the late 1960s...many philosophers and researchers interested in the moral dimensions of education assume, as part of varying ideological and conceptual frameworks, that at least a basic distinction between ethical right and wrong does not need a detailed defence. In other words, in insisting that a good teacher is neither cruel nor unfair, we need not haggle over why this is essentially a moral imperative, rather than merely a culturally and socially constructed norm reflecting the interests of some over others. (Campbell, 2003, p. 15)

This position echoes Clark's argument that, "In the moral domain, however, one opinion is *not* (author's emphasis) as good as any other.... Overarching principles have been agreed on in our society and within the teaching profession—principles dealing with honesty, fairness, protection of the weak, and respect for all people" (Clark, 1990, p. 252). It further borrows Fenstermacher's defense when he identifies virtues such as fairness, honesty, courage, and compassion as exemplary; he states, "I leave open here the very important issue of why these particular traits are to be regarded as virtues, doing so with the philosophically lame but empirically compelling claim that the literature, customs and norms of the vast majority of world cultures hold these traits in high regard" (Fenstermacher, 2001, pp. 640–641).

This non-relativist support for core virtues and the moral and ethical principles of professional conduct that build on them conforms to others' identification of a range of professional virtues such as fairness, justice, care, integrity, honesty, patience, constancy, responsibility, and various interpretations of the ancient principles of non-maleficence and beneficence (Haynes, 1998; Lovat, 1998; Reitz, 1998; Sockett, 1993; Soltis, 1986; Starratt, 1994; Strike & Ternasky, 1993). It is further reinforced by Nucci's (2001) clear distinction between the moral domain, with its universal set of values and a "basic core of morality" (p. 19), and the social domain that is more focused on conventions and variable preferences.

As a final note in relation to this first theoretical assumption, I acknowledge that I use both the language of virtues, in the spirit of Carr (2000) and Fenstermacher (1990, 2001), and the language of moral and ethical principles, in the tradition of Strike (1990, 1995, 1999) and his work with Soltis (1992) and Ternasky (1993). This may seem philosophically confused. However, this chapter is concerned with the applied ethics embedded in the real life practices of teachers, regardless of whether these are guided by virtuous habituation or adherence to overarching principles, rather than with moral and ethical theory. I also take comfort from Colnerud's argument in relation to teacher ethics as a research problem that, "a synthesis of ethics of virtue and ethics of principles might in this case be seen as a way to create a dialogue between the two viewpoints as complementary instead of conflicting positions" (Colnerud, 2006, p. 372).

The second key theoretical orientation informing this chapter concentrates on the intentions and behaviors of teachers, as expressive of their ethical knowledge, rather than on the impact their style and conduct have on students' moral growth and development. As an issue of teacher professionalism, the focus on ethical knowledge revolves around what teachers do or fail to do and why rather than on what students learn from their experience. Obviously, the latter is not inconsequential, and the separation between what teachers do and say and what students take from their actions in terms of moral messages is not so neat. Nonetheless, for the purposes here, the gauge of one's ethical knowledge as a professional imperative prioritizes transmitted virtue in action and intention, not the received impact. This may be just as well given that "the relationship between a teacher's moral character and a student's moral development is far more ambiguous and troubled than much of the extant literature assumes" (Osguthorpe, 2006, p. 2). As Hansen clarified in his investigation of the moral impact on students that teachers have, by virtue of their style and character, it is doubtful "whether a teacher's moral influence can ever be verified. Such

influence may not be a matter of cause and effect in any direct manner, and so may not be measurable in the familiar meaning of that term” (Hansen, 1993a, p. 418). Ultimately, this chapter is considerably less concerned with the philosophical question, “Can virtue be taught?” than with the professional question, “How can teachers conduct their work in schools virtuously?” One may note that this chapter’s title is “Teaching Ethically,” and not “Teaching Ethics.”

The third and last orientation is based on the premise that ethical knowledge is the domain of responsible and professionally accountable individual teachers, working both independently and collectively, rather than the expression of organizational structures, institutional influences, systemic realities, and other forces beyond the control of the individual practitioner. This is not to deny the obvious point that teachers work within systems and administrative structures, and that contextual elements have an evident influence on their daily working lives. Nonetheless, such realities should not obscure the moral responsibility of individuals for their own professional conduct and replace it with a kind of organizational culpability so sharply criticized by Sommers (1984) as the ideology that shifted the traditional “seat of moral responsibility” (p. 387) from being a matter of an individual’s personal virtue to society and its various institutions.

When people reminisce about their school days, in both positive and negative respects, they invariably recall, in terms that say much about human character, individual teachers who touched their lives, for better or worse, rather than referencing overall school policies, norms, and systemic forces. In one study, in which students were asked about the strengths and weaknesses of their schools, they uniformly based their answers on their teachers (Weissbourd, 2003). Hansen (2001) reminds us that, “character has to do with how the person (of the teacher) regards and treats others” (p. 29). Similarly, others have concluded that the character of the individual teacher is central to the moral nature of education (Luckowski, 1997; Sockett, 1996; Wynne & Ryan, 1997). Ethical knowledge is rooted in the individual teacher’s moral sensibility and character, and augmented through experience by communities of professionals sharing and refining this virtue based knowledge as it is reflected daily in schools.

### ETHICAL KNOWLEDGE AS THE FOUNDATION OF TEACHER PROFESSIONALISM

The teacher’s moral agency is an inevitable state of being that is revealed whenever the teacher, as a moral person, conducts him or herself in schools with honesty, a sense of fairness, integrity, compassion, patience, respect, impartiality, care, dedication, and other such core virtues. It is also demonstrated when the teacher, as a moral educator, invokes students to appreciate such similar virtues and to conduct themselves in ways that honor them. Teachers may reflect this dual concept of moral agency formally or informally, consciously and intentionally or not, and frequently or rarely.

By extension, ethical knowledge is quite simply the heightened awareness that teachers—some more than others—have of their moral agent state of being. It is the focused and self-conscious recognition of how moral agency influences their daily actions and interactions, and it compels their deliberate attentiveness to ensure that these influences are experienced positively in a moral and ethical sense. As Buzzelli and Johnston (2002) explain in their description of the teacher as a moral agent, “In this view, teaching is an activity involving a deep awareness of the significance of one’s choices and how those choices influence the development and well-being of others. An awareness of the moral significance of one’s work enlarges the understanding of that work” (p. 120). This level of awareness is cultivated when teachers develop the capacity to identify how moral and ethical values and principles are either exemplified or undermined



by their own actions, words, choices, and intentions. Such connections are made intellectually, emotionally, intuitively, philosophically, practically, and experientially as teachers engage in individual reflection and collective discussion with peers about the work they do daily. The concept of ethical knowledge assumes, as many sources from the scholarly literature confirm, that teaching is a moral profession with inherently ethical dimensions embedded in its practice and intent (Buzzelli & Johnston, 2002; Campbell, 2003; Colnerud, 1997; Fenstermacher, 2001; Goodlad et al., 1990; Goodman & Lesnick, 2004; Hansen, 2001; Haynes, 1998; Hostetler, 1997; Huebner, 1996; Jackson et al., 1993; Richardson & Fenstermacher, 2001; Sanger, 2001; Sockett, 1993; Starratt, 1994; Stengel & Tom, 1995; Strike, 1995; Tirri & Husu, 2002).

Ethical knowledge, albeit incomplete and ever evolving, based on the dynamics of new and unpredictable experiences, “illustrates teachers’ devotion to living through their actions essential moral and ethical principles descriptive of a human legacy in all its complexities and apparent contradictions” (Campbell, 2003, p. 138). Thus, on one hand, ethical knowledge is honed within school climates rife with dilemmas and tensions as teachers, like anyone else, interpret and prioritize core moral values and principles in divergent ways. They make decisions based on what Strike (1999) would characterize as “moral pluralism” in ways that are both conflicting and compatible along a wide spectrum of moral goods. And, as Sirotnik (1990) reminds us, in his defense of moral imperatives, “An anti-relativist position, however, does not automatically resolve fundamental questions, dilemmas, and issues” (p. 320).

On the other hand, ethical knowledge, while rooted in an individual’s sensibility and experience, is also, I would argue, an expression of applied professional ethics in teaching (Carr, 2000; Lovat, 1998; Nash, 1996; Schwartz, 1998; Sockett & LePage, 2002; Strike & Ternasky, 1993), and should ultimately embody a sense of collective professionalism, not individual subjectivity. This is what underpins the concept of “knowledge.” One may recall Goodson’s (2003) discussion of teachers’ professional knowledge and the importance of “principled professionalism” that “will develop from clearly agreed moral and ethical principles” (p. 132). And, as I have stated before, the extensive knowledge of some teachers, who are quite aware of and attentive to the moral and ethical elements of their practice, is “usable, sharable, and learnable” (Campbell, 2003, p. 139) in ways that may enable more teachers, who may be less aware, to develop it. As a body of knowledge, then, it can form the foundation of renewed professionalism in teaching in a sense that is unique among the professions (Campbell, 2004).

For those who study professional ethics in teaching as well as other disciplines, be it from an applied philosophical perspective (Nash, 1996; Strike & Ternasky, 1993) or a psychology based orientation (Rest & Narváez, 1994), some level of agreement on relevant ethical positions is a given, whether they are grounded in general core virtues or on related principles associated with the specifics of the profession, or, most likely, on both (Coombs, 1998; MacMillan, 1993; Thompson, 1997). However, unlike in medicine or law, where the ethical principles are applied to the practice of the dominant professional knowledge base (medical sciences or legal precepts and precedents, for example), in teaching the professional knowledge base is the ethical knowledge base. It is far more challenging to disentangle the ethics of teaching from the very process, practice, and intent of teaching as “the teacher’s conduct, at all times and in all ways, is a moral matter” (Fenstermacher, 1990, p. 133). As Carr (1993) claims, “The knowledge and understanding which should properly inform the professional consciousness of the competent teacher is... a kind of moral wisdom or judgement which is rooted in rational reflection about educational policies and practices and what is *ethically* (author’s emphasis), as well as instrumentally, appropriate to achieve them” (p. 265).

This ethical judgment (Hostetler, 1997) is called on every time a teacher strives to balance the fair treatment of an individual student with the fair treatment of the class group, or when the

teacher chooses curricular materials and pedagogical strategies with care and sensitivity, or when evaluation is conducted with scrupulous honesty accompanied by a concern for the emotional well being of students, or when kindness tempers discipline. While mastery of subject matter, proficiency in classroom management techniques, skilled understanding of pedagogy, and a comprehensive grasp of evaluation and assessment strategies are integral elements of the competent teacher's repertoire, it is the practical moral wisdom—the ethical knowledge—that is infused into every aspect of such technical abilities and the humanity teachers bring to their practice that distinguish them as professionals.

Furthermore, education as an ethical profession and a “thoroughly moral business” (Sockett, 1996 p. 124), is unique by virtue of the exceptional vulnerability and dependence of the primary “clients”—other people's children—in addition to their non-voluntary presence in schools (Bull, 1993; Colnerud, 2001, 2006; Dickinson, 2001; Soder, 1990). As well as having a significant fiduciary duty represented by the public trust in them, teachers are also considered moral exemplars and educators, implicitly and explicitly, and therefore must be concerned with the educative enrichment in ethical terms of their pupils in ways that other professionals need not be.

Ironically, despite its distinctive moral nature as a profession, many have observed that education lacks an “ethical language” (Strike, 1995, p. 33) or a “moral language” that could help teachers recognize, articulate and communicate with other teachers about the moral and ethical complexities of their work (Colnerud, 2006; Huebner, 1996; Sockett & LePage, 2002). Despite supporting the belief that most teachers generally try to be seriously committed to the well-being of students and act with intuitively good judgment, Sockett and LePage (2002) address the lamentable current state in the profession due to this lack of a moral vocabulary. They propose in its absence that teachers need a kind of “moral case law” (p. 170) to provide a base for making confident ethical judgments that transcend mere intuition.

Ethical knowledge has its origins in moral sensibility and intuitive perspectives on right and wrong; however, as it intersects with a deliberative awareness of one's own practice, as well as that of others, it moves into the realm of practical moral wisdom, a kind of professional virtue-in-action that could resemble “moral case law.” To be clear, this is quite distinct from formalized ethical codes and standards that idealize principles and virtues, rather than illuminate how they pertain to daily professional life, or focus so narrowly on legal and contractual issues that any moral emphasis is obscured. Traditionally, such adjectives as “inadequate, bureaucratic, and legalistic” (Watras, 1986, p. 13) and “platitudinous and perfunctory” (Strike & Ternasky, 1993, p. 2) have been leveled at ethical codes. While they may provide worthwhile inspiration to teachers by their very existence (Beckner, 2004; Bradley, 1998; Campbell, 2000; Freeman, 1998), they have not been regarded as an effective vehicle to enhance ethical practice or deepen the profession's appreciation of the moral nuances of the role (Campbell, 2001; Sergiovanni, 1992; Soltis, 1986; Strom, 1989). Ethical knowledge, not ethical codes, best captures the essence of professionalism in teaching as it enables teachers to appreciate the complexities of their moral agency.

## ETHICAL PRACTICE AS A PROFESSIONAL IMPERATIVE

We [teachers] have a lot of moral obligations to our students and we are very serious about them. I don't come here [school] to collect a pay cheque and go home. Everybody works because we all need to get paid. But, there is some sense of satisfaction in what you do when I can walk out of here feeling good about what I do. Sometimes, however, I feel terrible because I worry that I wasn't fair to somebody during the day or that I didn't get back to somebody who needed to talk to me. I'm always scared of giving messages to students that might be taken the wrong way. So, you find that your day is all over the place and you think, what did I do today? What did I get

accomplished because it just seemed like such a hectic day? I'm not a superhuman being, but I too have to make sure I make good choices. (elementary school teacher in Campbell, 2003, p. 46)

The previous section introduced the notion of moral agency in teaching as the defining characteristic of the role of the teacher. It is the teacher's astute awareness of the nuances and moral complexities of this role and how they are embedded in practice that measures his or her ethical knowledge. It further proposed that this ethical knowledge, as a kind of applied professional ethics, has the potential to provide the knowledge base in teaching to define its professionalism. This section focuses on practices in teaching that exemplify moral agency, firstly, by depicting them as being rooted in virtues and principles and, secondly, by presenting an argument against what I judge to be the co-opting of moral agency on the basis of politics, not principles.

### Reflecting Moral Agency as Daily Action

Integral to the moral and ethical nature of teaching and schooling is the role of the teacher as a moral agent and moral exemplar (Fenstermacher, 2001; Hansen, 1993b, 2001; Katz et al., 1999; Reitz, 1998; Sizer & Sizer, 1999). Closely associated with this role is the teacher's inevitable capacity to be a moral educator (Berkowitz, 2000; Borba, 2001; Campbell, 1997; Goodman & Lesnick, 2004; Halstead & Taylor, 2000; Lickona, 1991, 2004; McCadden, 1998; Nash, 1997; Noddings, 2002; Nucci, 2001; Ryan & Bohlin, 1999; Wynne & Ryan, 1997). Moral agency is a dual state that encompasses the teacher as a moral person engaged in ethical professional conduct and as a moral educator who teaches to students the same core virtues and principles that he or she strives to uphold in practice (Campbell, 2003). The connection between these two aspects of moral agency is evident as teachers live out through their actions, attitudes, and words the same virtues they hope to instill in their students. As one secondary school teacher explained, "If I don't want kids to yell at me, then I have to make sure I don't yell at them. It's as simple as that. If I want them to care about each other, then I have to show care towards them; so, sometimes I do things for them. As a simple example, if a kid drops her pen, I'll get it for her. I don't say, 'Well, you dropped your pen, get it yourself'" (Campbell, 2003, p. 37). It is the first characteristic of moral agency that enables the teacher to establish an ethical tone in the classroom that, by extension, models virtuous conduct and cultivates educative environments conducive to the purposes of the second characteristic, moral education (Goodman & Lesnick, 2004; Ravitch & Viteritti, 2001; Simon, 2001; Watson, 2003).

Hansen (1993b) wisely noted, "not everything that teachers do *necessarily* (author's emphasis) has moral significance, but any action a teacher takes *can* (author's emphasis) have moral import" (p. 669). In the terms of moral agency and ethical knowledge, what makes teachers' practices morally and ethically meaningful rests on whether core virtues and principles are evidently bound up in their intentions and actions. The ways in which these may be illustrated are as numerous as the teachers, students, and daily interactions in schools themselves. Perhaps they are reflected when a teacher exercises care in selecting and displaying student work, equitably allocating time, attention, privileges, and duties to students, organizing small work groups to ensure fairness to all, enforcing school and classroom rules with consistency, or when the teacher uses caution and wisdom in the choice of sensitive curricular resources or assesses student performance with honesty, fairness, and kindness. One can also hear ethical knowledge in the tone of a teacher's voice, the terms of politeness, respect, and warmth that are used, the distinction between sarcasm and humor, the refusal to embarrass or humiliate individual students in front of others, and the recognition that negative staffroom gossip about students and their families is not professional conduct. Ethical knowledge is also reflected each time a teacher consciously

reminds, admonishes, corrects, and instructs students on how their behavior affects others. The teacher's effort to cultivate a civil and caring climate in the classroom represents more than an organizing strategy for an efficient community of learners—it represents a sense of moral agency and moral purpose.

Since the early 1990s, we have been introduced to a variety of teachers through significant classroom based empirical studies whose daily practices, conscious or not, reflect the moral dimensions of teaching (Campbell, 2003; Hansen, 1993a, 2002; Jackson et al., 1993; McCadden, 1998; Richardson & Fenstermacher, 2000; Richardson & Fallona, 2001; Sanger, 2001; Simon, 2001; Sockett, 1993). Invariably, these teachers are shown to be fair, caring, honest, respectful, and empathetic, among other virtues. Their actions support a well-reasoned argument that the two ethics of justice and care should temper each other and not act as opposite extremes (Katz et al., 1999; Obidah et al., 2004; Walker & Snarey, 2004). Fairness or justice, as “the first professional principle” (Bricker, 1989, p. 28) is revealed to be far more complex than one might imagine, as interpretations of what is just and fair differ in varying contexts between equal or differential treatment of students (Colnerud, 1997; Fallona, 2000; Nucci, 2001). These and other virtues are both exemplified and challenged in seemingly mundane decisions the teacher makes from calling on students to take turns answering questions during class and when to allow extensions on assignments to more serious dilemmas involving students who cheat, colleagues whose conduct is potentially harmful to students (Campbell, 1996; Colnerud, 1997; Tirri & Husu, 2002), or involving suspicions of child abuse.

Not surprisingly, teachers cannot be ever cognizant of the moral and ethical implications of everything they do in the course of a day. Teaching is enormously demanding, frequently frustrating, occasionally overwhelming, and always an eclectic mix of planned formality and spontaneous serendipity. And, as Buzzelli and Johnston (2002) point out, teachers do have “blind spots in (their) ability to perceive the moral in situations” (p. 125). Nevertheless, their actions transmit moral messages, and the students are watching, to borrow a phrase from Sizer and Sizer (1999). Consequently, the teacher's role as a moral exemplar and educator extends from this.

As stated at the beginning of the chapter, this discussion of moral agency and ethical knowledge centers on the conduct of the professional teacher rather than on assessing the moral growth of students. So, as moral exemplars and educators, what are teachers' intentions, aspirations, and actions? For one elementary teacher, her responsibilities as a moral educator were defined not only by the immediate need to foster a positive relational climate in her classroom, but also by a larger societal expectation. She explained:

I see quite a bit of meanness among students, and I'm not going to tolerate it because we're two months into the school year now, and I think they should know right from wrong in a basic sense. Of course, you're going to get more complicated issues where naturally I'll help them through it, but they should know by now that if somebody drops something, you don't kick it. Also, when you keep disrupting you are disrespecting. You are telling the children around you that it doesn't matter to me that I'm stopping the whole class for attention or I'm stopping the whole class from their learning. What matters is that I want attention and I want it now. And, that's an ethical issue because students have to come to some understanding, maybe not at the moment, but eventually, that you can't function in a society like ours if you're constantly speaking out and you're not listening to others. (Elementary school teacher in Campbell, 2003, p. 48)

This is reminiscent of Grant's (1996) claim, in her discussion of hand-raising and taking turns in class conversations, that “teachers are quite self-consciously teaching both verbal skills and social skills during this time. But these social skills require certain moral capacities and qualities of character” (p. 471). In the language of this chapter, teachers' “self-consciousness” of

their moral instruction is indicative of their ethical knowledge. Similarly, one secondary school teacher explained her continuous efforts in the classroom to cultivate a sense of empathy for others, patience, tolerance, self-discipline, courage, personal responsibility, mutual respect, and honesty this way: “I’m planting the seeds, and the seeds will at some point in time in their lives, they’ll blossom. Maybe not right now; maybe one student out of the 28 may get it now. Who knows, but I’m optimistic, and if I can reinforce in them the right behaviour, at some point in their lives, they’ll get it. They’ll understand” (Campbell, 2003, p. 56).

Like many other teachers, these two were observed reinforcing good behavior by using combinations of the methods to foster moral conduct identified in Richardson and Fenstermacher’s “Manner in Teaching Project”: constructing classroom communities, didactic instruction, design and execution of academic tasks, calling out for particular conduct, private conversations, and showcasing specific students (Fenstermacher, 2001). Similarly, Jackson et al. (1993) empirically identified several categories of instruction in which moral education occurs both formally and informally, including official curricula, rituals and ceremonies, visual displays of moral content, spontaneous interjections or moral commentary, and rules and regulations. In a similar vein, Berkowitz (2000) includes in his list of “generic moral education” initiatives the promotion of a moral atmosphere, role modeling of good character, discussions of moral issues in class, and curriculum lessons in character. One of the most currently popular and referenced variants of moral education, which will be addressed further in the subsequent section, is “character education” (Lickona, 1991, 2004; Murphy, 1998; Ryan, 1993; Ryan & Bohlin, 1999). Described as “the methodical and deliberate inculcation of moral virtues through a variety of planned lessons and exercises that usually involve a school-wide initiative” (Campbell, 2004, p. 35), character education is dependent entirely on the role of the teacher as a moral agent and exemplar.

Moral agency, as it is discussed in this chapter, is an inevitable result of the teacher’s role and professional responsibilities. It is expressed and revealed in the daily practice of teachers who model, self-regulate, instruct, relate, admonish, and engage. It is the illumination of virtues and moral and ethical principles as they are woven through the intricacies of school and classroom life.

### Politicizing Moral Agency as Ideological Activism

This chapter has framed the discussion of moral agency in terms of the core virtues and ethical principles teachers personally exude or apply to their practice and, similarly, those they teach to students. It is reflective of a legacy of moral education that is historically, philosophically, and professionally defensible. By contrast, there is a significant conceptual distinction between this interpretation of moral agency as a natural extension of what ethical teachers do on a daily basis and some more contemporary trends towards the promotion of political and ideological agenda disguised as moral education and justified by teachers who corrupt their professional role as moral agents to inculcate such agenda in the classroom. Admittedly, this part of the chapter will be the most argumentative and, to some, contentious. However, it is also central to its conceptual foundation of which an underlying assumption is that moral agency, as well as the ethical knowledge teachers cultivate as a result of their awareness of their agency, is about generalized moral and ethical values relating to how human beings should treat one another (e.g., kindly, fairly, truthfully). This is quite distinct from partisan causes deemed to be moral by some because of a political based, rather than a virtue based, conviction or affiliation. By extension, the purpose of moral education is to develop ethical individuals who appreciate the demands of living in a free civil society, who develop empathy for others and a commitment to personal responsibility for one’s individual actions. This is in stark contrast to the cultivation of students as moralistic social



activists bent on enforcing their political will on others regarding controversial social issues that have not been fully debated, decided, or ultimately accepted within society.

There are many different approaches to teaching that satisfy the mandates of professionalism by honoring the moral agency role of teachers. There are others that, according to the argument explored here, have the potential to “cross the line” beyond professional virtue into the murky domain of indoctrination. This discussion addresses three broad conceptualizations of moral education: character education (Lickona, 1991, 2004; Murphy, 1998; Ryan & Bohlin, 1999; Wynne & Ryan, 1997) and its critics (Kohn, 1997; Nash, 1997), caring as moral education (Noddings, 2002), and social justice/critical democratic orientations (Beyer, 1991, 1997). The comparison will not be exhaustive; however, it will focus on the teacher as a moral agent and exemplar. It concludes that while the first two approaches have the potential to lead to the politicization of the classroom, they need not necessarily do so. On the other hand, the third approach, by its own definition and intention most deliberately politicizes moral agency.

Character education, as the formalized and direct method of instruction in virtues and principles of moral conduct (Lickona, 2004; Wiley, 1998), has been both championed and criticized more than any other approach to moral education in recent years. Grounded in a repudiation of moral relativism and in a philosophical and historical legacy of support for core virtues and universal moral values, its conceptual basis shares much with this chapter’s orientation to ethical knowledge. For many, character education is a natural extension of what teachers, as moral agents, do as part of the inevitable function of their role—helping to socialize children to become virtuous individuals capable of living in a society where principles such as honesty, fairness, kindness, respect, tolerance, integrity, and responsibility are widely valued and reflected in the social norms and legal foundations of the society. Studies have concluded that, in this respect, teachers do not necessarily see character education as controversial or politically motivated, but rather view it as a very significant aspect of their professional responsibilities (Jones et al., 1998; Leming & Yendol-Hoppey, 2004; Mathison, 1998). As these studies note, teachers may differ on their interpretation of what character education means as a pedagogical approach, but they generally do not question the underlying importance of reinforcing good moral values that transcend normative social or cultural differences among us and instead nurture a positive sense of our collective humanity. As one study noted, the “days of value neutrality are over” (Jones et al., 1998, p. 14).

While generally supportive of the theoretical essence of character education, some thoughtfully question its methods as a formal program. As Damon (2001) argues, “the moral atmosphere that students actually experience in their schools—the manner of their teachers, the integrity of the school codes, the quality of the peer relationships that they form—has more influence on character growth than do academic programs” (p. 132). Some critics focus on aspects of those programs that emphasize extrinsic rewards for good behavior, drill, and unreflective or simplistic acceptance of moral precepts or use what are seen to be gimmicky and contrived strategies to inculcate virtues. They see these elements as indefensible not only in a moral sense but also in a pedagogical one. However, even among such critics, there are those who would not dispute the importance of good moral values (Berkowitz, 1998; Nash, 1997; Noddings, 2002). In this respect, Sockett (1996) has referred to himself as a “sympathetic critic” (p. 124), as has Noddings (2002). Similarly, even in their pointed criticism of character education, Joseph and Efron (2005) refer to its advocates’ “good intentions” (p. 532).

Other critics are not at all sympathetic and vilify character education in political terms as a “right wing” attempt to indoctrinate children (Beyer, 1991, 1997; Kohn, 1996, 1997). Such critics, often but not exclusively writing from more radical perspectives of the ideological “left,” question not simply the methods of character education but mostly the conceptual justification



for the support of core virtues as well as the inherent implication that moral responsibility as well as negligence rest largely within the domain of individuals' actions and attitudes rather than in societal structures, systems, and economies. Fundamental differences in perspectives along broad political and ideological lines between these critics and those who support various philosophies of character education have been well documented by, among others, Nash (1997), McClellan (1999), and Smagorinsky and Taxel (2005).

In contrast to such critics, the conceptual basis of this chapter's discussion of moral agency and ethical knowledge in teaching is consistent with the virtues and principles advanced by the character educators, even though it agrees with previously mentioned criticism of some of their instructional methods. Not surprisingly, this line of argument views accusations against character education as political indoctrination to be overstated and arguable. Of course, character educators can politicize the public school classroom just as any other teacher can; and, if modeling and instruction in the virtues lapse instead into one-sided sermons about specific political, cultural, or religious beliefs and causes—from pro-life stances to creationism—then the line separating moral agency and ideological activism has been crossed. However, such political motivations do not define character education. A respect for good moral values that have wide support in the mainstream population and are the bedrock of the norms and laws of civil society is what defines it as a kind of moral education inseparable from the teacher's role as moral agent, model, exemplar, and educator.

As mentioned, there are those who share the character educators' non-relativist support for moral values, such as honesty and care, yet believe that they should be explored in a more nuanced sense and "problematized" in the classroom in ways that acknowledge differing and often conflicting contexts and controversies (Noddings, 2002; Simon, 2001; Sockett, 1996). They refer to the cultivation of "caring communities" (Joseph & Efron, 2005) as an alternative approach to moral education that, while contextualizing moral values more than character education does, still similarly emphasizes mutually supportive relationships, respectful and safe discourse, and fair and inclusive interactions. This relational approach is grounded in responsiveness, receptivity, and relatedness, rather than in moral reasoning (Valli, 1990, cited in Hansen, 1998). However, as with character education, the priority is on reinforcing morally positive values that enable empathy and responsibility to flourish within school and classroom based communities, and the role of the teacher as a moral agent is central. While politicization of this approach by means of "sermonizing" (Simon, 2001, p. 206) is certainly possible, as it is in character education, it need not be its primary intention.

In contrast, the third broad approach to a more obviously politicized version of moral education changes the teacher's professional role from moral agent to social activist. Advocates of this approach are among the harshest critics of character education, and their orientation to moral education is not that its purpose is to cultivate among individuals a dedication to core virtues and moral principles, but rather to engage students in the critical examination of such principles and more importantly of society's authority structures, systems, norms, and practices. Critics of this approach assert that it "fails as an ethical enterprise" (Grant, 1996, p. 472) for its potential to foster moral relativism, dogmatism, and partisanship in the classroom. Its focus is on "ideology and doctrine rather than on personal responsibility and practical decency" (Somers, 1984, p. 388).

Ideologically reflective of the political left, this broad approach encompasses a range of curricular orientations such as those frequently aligned with issues of equity and social justice (not to be confused with neo-classical virtue theory based on equality and justice), critical theory, anti-discriminatory pedagogy, liberationist perspectives, anti-racist and multicultural education, and critical democratic education (Adams et al., 2006; Apple, 1996; Doll, 1993; McLaren, 1994,

1997; Purpel, 1999; Slattery & Rapp, 2003). As a term used by many in education, “social justice” has worked its way into the mainstream discourse and is often indistinguishable as a political concept from character educators’ and others’ virtue based discussions about the need for all students, regardless of differences, to be treated fairly, kindly, with respect and dignity, and so on. Nonetheless, its modern roots lie, at least dominantly, within the political realm of Marxist as well as more general socialist theory and reflect a central emphasis on societal and material inequities (Koschoreck, 2006). In their defense of the ethic of critique, based on critical theory and social justice, in education, Shapiro and Stefkovich (2005) define its origins in “modified Marxian analysis,” “Freirian critical pedagogy that views classrooms as political and not only educational locations” (pp. 14–15), and they connect it closely to the call for political activism on the part of educators.

While advocates of this conceptualization tend not to use the language of virtue or moral and civic dispositions (Nash 1997), they often represent their critique as a moral or ethical stance, and such critique can take many forms in the classroom. For example, in their comprehensive presentation of “seven worlds of moral education,” Joseph and Efron (2005) identify three alternatives to character education that clearly emanate from this perspective. Firstly, they describe the “cultural heritage” world that promotes the teaching of “non-mainstream” values from “non-dominant cultures”; ironically, some of the moral values referenced such as “respect for one another,” and “empathy” are not unlike the virtues hailed by the character educators.

Secondly, the article introduces “peace education” that extends the idea of a caring community beyond the classroom, politicizes it along the lines of partisan causes representing varying interests from environmental education, global education, human rights and animal rights activism, to peace studies and conflict resolution. Even the authors, who are not opposed to this alternative, note that it is difficult to implement in public schools because of its “potential for conflict with community values” prevalent in mainstream society (Joseph & Efron, 2005, p. 529).

Thirdly, the article identifies “social action” as a desirable form of moral education that focuses on the political nature of society as a whole, challenges examples of perceived privilege and oppression, and works towards the goal of effecting critical social change. By way of example, we are told of a grade 5 history class in Colorado studying the U.S. Civil War and slavery. In order to make “students learn to view themselves as social and political beings” (p. 530), the teacher engaged them in an activity to raise awareness of slavery in the Sudan. “The children raised money to buy freedom for a few slaves...donations came in from around the world, and the class eventually purchased the freedom of more than 1000 people” (Joseph & Efron, 2005, p. 530). For those of us who view the teacher’s moral agency as rooted in the exercising and exemplifying of virtue and ethical principles rather than the crusading for political causes, such an example of “moral education” seems quite appalling. By tugging on the heartstrings of young children, this initiative essentially helps to sustain rather than disrupt the virulent slave trade by playing by its own terms (purchasing freedom) as if they are somehow morally justifiable or expedient rather than abhorrent, and probably did little more for the students than give them a self-satisfied sense of moral righteousness.

Others have addressed ideologically similar social action initiatives that reflect what Berkowitz (1998) has identified approvingly as a “much more expanded interpretation of character education than once conceptualized” (p. 2). Indeed, one may argue that such a redefinition of the term, “character education,” not simply expands its scope to include a highly diffuse range of activities, but also, more significantly, redirects its conceptual orientation into a different ideological arena. For example, Donahue (1999) advocates the use of “change-oriented service-learning” in schools as a way for teachers to “challenge social, political, economic structures that allow injustice” (p. 687). Politically motivated and activist in intention, this orientation to service

learning is quite distinct from other forms that some character educators support that tend instead to emphasize philanthropy, caring, the cultivation of empathy and other virtues in students, and social responsibility as opposed to social transformation. As Donahue notes, “a teacher’s intention behind assigning such a task shapes the way students reflect on the service, directing their learning toward one orientation or the other” (p. 688). He acknowledges the ethical dilemmas confronting teachers who differ over these two quite different orientations to a form of moral education. He favors the social transformation approach and recommends its introduction in pre-service teacher education as a way to prepare future teachers to understand the moral imperatives of their profession (p. 685).

Such a perspective is reminiscent of Valli’s (1990) “critical” approach within her framework for reflective teacher education in which the moral basis of teaching is emphasized. It also would likely resonate with Beyer (1997) who, like Donahue, promotes the political, cultural, and social contextualization of moral issues within teacher education programs as a way to enable teachers to raise critical questions about schooling and current teaching practices. He applauds the student teacher who has her pupils “critique their own texts” (p. 249) in the search for historical prejudices, and another teacher who represented to her grade 4 students a school rule about silence in the hallways as a political power struggle with an authoritarian school administration rather than a policy designed to respect other classrooms and guard against their disruption. To the teacher, and to Beyer, the rule is seen as politically based, not virtue based, and the moral lesson is to question authority, not to learn about the virtues of respect and consideration for others.

Such examples of “teaching against the grain” (Joseph, 2003, p. 12) represent the moral agency of teachers as deeply connected to wider social and political causes that are invariably controversial in the public sphere (Nord, 2001) and rarely evoke the language of professional *virtue* that is representative of moral agency and ethical knowledge as discussed in this chapter. Hansen (2001) notes that the “big ideals” about social betterment may motivate teachers in ways that are not necessarily bad. For example, despite his claims to political activism, Ayers (2004) refers to such big ideals not as partisan causes that extend beyond the teacher’s scope of authority but instead in the context of the individual teacher’s capacity to foster within the classroom a sense of respect for all, compassion, and “an unshakable commitment to helping human beings reach the full measure of their humanity” (p. 5). He even refers to the traditional Aristotelian virtue of friendship as a “truer model of what we should seek in teacher professionalism” (p. 85). These ideals parallel what the teacher as a moral agent strives to uphold in ways that exemplify the best of human virtue, not the agenda of social and political activists, regardless of their ideology. For, as Hansen (2001) cautions, “Ideals can become ideological or doctrinaire and can lead teachers away from their educational obligations and cause them to treat their students as a means to an end, whether the latter be political, social, or whatever” (p. 188).

Ethical teachers should be moral agents and moral models, not moralistic activists. Their professional responsibility in this moral sense is an immediate and direct one that honors the public’s trust in them and does not stray beyond the boundaries of their mandate. It is simply to hold themselves accountable for how they treat the students in their care and how they cultivate for them schooling experiences and relationships based on time-honored virtues such as fairness, honesty, integrity, civility, compassion, constancy, and responsibility, that are reflected in the best of societal values, norms, and laws and that parallel most parents’ reasonable expectations of public schooling. When teachers come to believe that the ethics of their profession relate more to how they can serve wider political agenda as social reconstructionists than to how they should monitor their daily practice and duties to their own students, their moral agency is compromised, and the prospect for the development of a virtue based professional ethics expressive of ethical knowledge in teaching is threatened.

In conclusion, moral agency may be broadly conceived in terms of not only what teachers teach students by direct curricular means, but also more significantly what teachers do themselves as ethical professionals in classrooms and the virtues and moral principles they reflect and, hence, model to students on a daily basis. As Nash (2005) claims:

The place we call school is an environment of moral interaction and sometimes moral struggle. Children's ability to expand moral sensitivity and ethical reasoning skills will very much depend upon how adults around them model ethical behavior and ethical reasoning. Essentially, a teacher's conduct, at all times and in all ways, is a moral matter. (p. 4)

While the emphasis of this chapter has been on the teacher's conduct rather than the students' moral growth, the point to be stressed is that teachers are answerable, individually and collectively, for the choices they make in the classroom, the motivations that drive them, the actions they take, and the words they use, regardless of whether the direct effect they may or may not have on students can be empirically proven. As a matter of professionalism, the measure of ethical teaching relies on the intentions of teachers, as much as on their influence. Their awareness of such intentions and their deliberative attention to the specificities of their daily practice, as filtered through the lens of virtues and moral principles, attest to their ethical knowledge. And, ultimately, it is this ethical knowledge that is a defining characteristic of professionalism in teaching.

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