Character education through secondary school literature classes

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Character education through secondary school literature classes

Curfman, Mary Elizabeth, M.A.

University of Nevada, Las Vegas, 1992

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CHARACTER EDUCATION THROUGH
SECONDARY SCHOOL LITERATURE CLASSES

by

Mary Curfman

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

in

Ethics and Policy Studies

Ethics and Policy Studies
University of Nevada, Las Vegas
May, 1992
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ABSTRACT

Although it is not uncommon for members of the older generation to decry the values of youth and to criticize the moral decay of society, the situation in present-day America is more extreme than it has been in the past. Even the majority of young people who, in general, treat others in a pleasant and friendly manner seem morally uninformed and impotent. Perhaps because of a lack of knowledge about American history and tradition, youth are disconnected from society and feel no obligation or responsibility to others. While American public schools traditionally taught values and ethics, most no longer do so in any consistent or systematic fashion.

This thesis will defend a synthesis of the thinking of certain influential moral philosophers and learning theorists on the nature of moral character and its development. These will include Plato, Aristotle, Thomas Aquinas, Gandhi, Piaget, Dewey, Kohlberg, Gilligan, and others. Since its recommendations are for improving character education in public secondary school literature classes in the Clark County School District, Las Vegas, Nevada, the thesis will also include legal documentation from Nevada School Law and relevant U.S. Supreme Court decisions which indicate the permissibility of teaching for character development in the
public school setting. This thesis will also offer a rationale for teaching for character development especially through literature. The rationale will identify any existing goals stated in the curriculum guides of certain Clark County School District secondary literature classes which relate, either directly or indirectly, to teaching for character development. Finally, this thesis will offer constructive suggestions for increasing and improving character education and social awareness through literature classes in secondary schools.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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INTRODUCTION

It is common human experience, not only in the United States but in other nations as well, for the older generation to decry the values and behavior of youth. Every generation has had its Jeremiah prophesying doom and criticizing the moral decay of society. Modern America is no exception. Ministers, politicians, educators, and parents are vocal in expressing concern about the amoral nature of some of today's young people.

The situation in present-day American society is more extreme than it has been in the past. According to the National Institute of Youth Ministry in San Clemente, California, every 30 minutes in this country 29 adolescents attempt suicide, 57 run away, 14 unmarried teenaged girls give birth while 22 have abortions, and 685 teenagers use some form of narcotics. It is not unusual for the media to carry news stories about gang violence and murders or acts of destruction against property committed by teenagers. The term "wilding," meaning a spree of random violence and rape, is a recent addition to the English language.

Also disturbing is the fact that some educators see the majority of mainstream young Americans, those teenagers who responsibly attend school, try to prepare for the future, and,
in general, treat others in a pleasant and friendly manner, as neither "great-souled" nor "mean-spirited" but morally uninformed and impotent. According to Allan Bloom in *The Closing of the American Mind* and Robert Bellah in *Habits of the Heart*, an overemphasis in America on individualism has resulted in a sense of isolation and a loss of civic connectedness. Because young people do not feel part of society as a whole, they do not feel affected by its calamities and inequities.

Bloom's book and E. D. Hirsch's *Cultural Literacy: What Every American Needs to Know* both claim that today's students are lacking the historical background and traditional education they need to feel part of a common American culture. Bloom maintains that the university students with whom he has come in contact have no vision of the world, no "profound sense of connection," no worthy models of action, no rituals or ceremonies to bind them to family, and no "myths and revelations" to expose them to right moral behavior. (Bloom, p. 57) To make matters worse, they are the product of a society that has an open belief in progress and little regard for the wisdom of the past. They are spiritually unconnected and isolated because they face an "open-ended future and a lack of a binding past." (Bloom, p. 87) According to Bloom, another problem with American young people is their lack of a serious book (Bloom advocates the Bible) to give them a vision of a moral cosmos, a notion of rewards and punishments, and an
opportunity to see protagonists and antagonists in moral dilemmas. They are other-directed as opposed to inner-directed because they have no vision of the true nature of things. They do not know that "a value is only a value if it is life-preserving and life-enhancing." (Bloom, p. 201) They do not have what Nietzsche, Hegel, and others including Bloom have called a shared sense of the sacred that is essential to a culture. (Bloom, p. 188)

In Cultural Literacy: What Every American Needs to Know, Hirsch maintains that the "civil ethos" of national values and traditions shared by Americans is the sacred element which binds the culture together. This ethos is broad in character and includes patriotism, loyalty, tolerance, benevolence, cooperation, equality, altruism, honesty, respect for law, cultural revision, and the Golden Rule. (Hirsch, p. 98) Its "Bible" includes the Declaration of Independence, the Gettysburg Address, the Pledge of Allegiance, and Martin Luther King Jr.'s "I Have a Dream" speech. While some children may acquire traditional values at home, all children should be taught them at school because they are essential for success in mainstream culture and for the preservation of the culture as a whole. The best way to teach this "civil ethos" is through a standard and traditional, national system of education that teaches essential skills in the context of essential shared knowledge and values. (Hirsch, p. 73) While new information must be
added as American society becomes more pluralistic, and while
tolerance of diversity and new ideas must be taught, they must
be incorporated under the umbrella of national unity. (Hirsch, p. 97) For Hirsch, shared knowledge is the key to
communication, connectedness, and ethical behavior. The goals
of education, in addition to eliminating illiteracy, raising
the national standard of living, and making the United States
competitive in the international marketplace, must include
empowering citizens to participate in politics and achieving
greater social justice. (Hirsch, p. 145)

The cultural literacy movement in education which is
based in part on the work of Hirsch and Bloom calls for a
rebirth of traditional education in American public schools.
While imparting knowledge of the history and literature of the
past is one goal of the movement, another goal is the
imparting of ethical values and the development of moral
character in young people. As will be documented in Chapter
3 of this thesis, American schools of the nineteenth and early
twentieth centuries were considered to be the bastions of
culture and wisdom, and it was their duty to educate children
to be upright, civic-minded adults. Some lay citizens and
educators today are calling on the schools to reassume a
position of leadership in the area of character education. At
the same time, however, no consensus exists as to the most
efficacious methodology to use in order to promote the growth
of moral character.
While educators often rely upon the results of research and experimentation conducted by learning theorists and other psychologists to select and justify methods of instruction, these same educators seem unaware of the philosophical underpinnings of their pedagogy. In the study of how virtuous character develops, the work of moral philosophers as well as learning theorists contributes to a more complete understanding of what good character is and how it is acquired. This is appropriate because the work of character development theorists such as Piaget, Kohlberg, and Gilligan share some commonalities with the philosophical analyses of character found in Aristotle, Kant, Dewey, and Gandhi (as will become more plain in Chapters 1 and 2 of this thesis). Furthermore, the thinking of moral philosophers on the subject of moral character is important because, as William T. Braithwaite, professor at the Loyola School of Law, maintained in his review of The Closing of the American Mind, "Thinking, and hence also what the greatest minds have thought, do matter. How we live is affected by how we think we ought to live (however inarticulate those thoughts may sometimes be)."

Moral philosophers have influenced traditional European and American notions of how man ought to live and, therefore, should be included in the study of the development of ethical character.

This thesis is based upon certain assumptions. First, it assumes a cognitive development theory rather than a
psychoanalytic or social learning theory of moral development. Second, it assumes that community is essential for moral development and that schools, as part of the community, contribute to the moral foundation of children. Third, it assumes that principles guide (or at least should guide) behavior. Therefore, there is a connection between ethical knowledge and ethical behavior. And finally, this thesis assumes that practice and habit bring fruition to ethical reflection and help bring about ethically sound character, which produces ethical behavior.

It is not the purpose of this thesis to add anything original to the debate on how moral character develops. Rather, the focus of this thesis is to defend a synthesis of the thinking of certain influential moral philosophers and learning theorists on the nature of moral character and its development. These will include Plato, Aristotle, Thomas Aquinas, Gandhi, Piaget, Dewey, Kohlberg, Gilligan, and others. Since its recommendations are for improving character education in public secondary school literature classes in the Clark County School District (CCSD), Las Vegas, Nevada, the project will also include legal documentation from Nevada School Law and relevant U.S. Supreme Court decisions which indicate the permissibility of teaching for character development in the public school setting. Based on that synthesis and review of the law, it will then offer a rationale for teaching for character development through
literature. The rationale will identify any existing goals stated in the curriculum guides of certain CCSD secondary literature classes which relate, either directly or indirectly, to teaching for character development. Finally, the thesis will offer constructive suggestions for increasing and improving character education and, thus, cultural literacy, through literature classes in CCSD secondary schools.
Notes

Please note: Subsequent references to any of the works listed below will be cited parenthetically in the text, e.g. (Goble, p. 23).


CHAPTER 1
WHAT IS CHARACTER?

Before discussing how and why character education should be included in public school curricula, it is necessary to define the term "character" and briefly to chronicle the development of the concept in order to connect the modern Western notion of character to its traditional and historical roots.

As early as 2500 B.C., human beings were apparently interested in virtue and right behavior. The Sumerians, whose culture and civilization flourished for centuries in Mesopotamia, wrote elaborately in cuneiform script about what a person of good character should be and do. Recorded hymns praising the virtuous character of rulers indicate that they prided themselves on having restored order, fairness, compassion, honesty and justice to the society of their generation. Sumerian gods and goddesses, too, are recorded as having been lovers of truth, justice, righteousness, and morality. The goddess Nanshe is described as despising those

"who transgress the established norms, violate contracts, who looked with favor on the places of evil, who substituted a small measure for a large measure, who substituted a small weight for a large weight, who having eaten [something not belonging to him] did not say, 'I have eaten it.'"

Honesty was valued by the Sumerians.
The Sumerian interest in right behavior is also evident in their written codes of law. The earliest law code, which preceded even the famous Babylonian Code of Hammurabi (dated between 1850 and 1750 B.C.) is attributed to a Sumerian king named Ur-Nammu. The prologue to the document indicates that the king re-established justice and honesty in the land, while the laws themselves suggest a monetary fine used as punishment in lieu of less humane "eye for an eye" tactics. (Kramer, p. 54) Some value was evidently placed on human safety and well-being, in addition to honesty, since money could now be considered compensation for crimes in place of various body parts. Although the term "character" is not defined directly in these early documents, the concept of a person of good character as being one who practiced the virtues of honesty, fairness, justice, and compassion toward his fellow citizens can be inferred.

Another ancient source to consider when trying to summarize the historical development of the concept of character is the heroic poems of Homer, ancient Greek writer and historian. In pre-classical Greece, character involved doing what one must do to perform one's social function. "Morality as something distinct did not yet exist," says Alasdair MacIntyre. Therefore, such excellences (from the Greek areté) as accountability, courage, wisdom, and fidelity were deemed necessary in different proportions in the soldier, the king, and the teacher because they each played different
roles in the social order. Goodness was not tied to universalities but rather to social functions of various members of the community.

The Greek philosopher Socrates continued the development of the notion of character. In Plato's Gorgias, Socrates asserts to Polus that a happy man of good character is a man with no evil in his soul. Goodness in life does not necessarily equal pleasantness. To Socrates, goodness meant observing limits on behavior and practicing self-control. He further discussed character in terms of opposites: good and bad; honorable and disgraceful; beautiful, meaning both pleasant and useful, and ugly. Socrates claimed that what is good cannot be learned through authoritative teachers or religious revelation but seems to suggest that good character can be developed by emulating good people. For Socrates, the excellences of any man and citizen were justice, wisdom, courage, and self-control. Finally and in accordance with the heroic tradition, Socrates saw character in terms of a person's function as a human and as a citizen of the polis.

Plato, too, continued in that tradition but added the notion that one's character develops in certain ways because of an inborn tendency to be dominated by one of the three parts of the soul. Plato's tripartite soul is divided into appetite, reason, and spirit. The appetitive realm involves physical needs and pleasures and must be controlled by temperance. Reason is the rational part of the soul, and its
excellence is wisdom. Teachers and kings become what they are because of the initial dominance and continued development of reason in their characters. If a man is dominated by spirit, the third part of the soul, then he is a soldier, who needs courage as he proceeds to play his role in the social order. A man's character has justice when each part of his soul is functioning properly and all of his basic needs are being met. Justice, then, is the total ordering of the soul which can be found in a man of good character.

With this work of some 2200 years behind him as a legacy and context, Aristotle deviated from the traditional idea of character and morality as tied to social function and began to shift the emphasis to the idea of character as the set of habits by which one chooses and, thus, the quality of one's active being. Aristotle called character "second nature" because it is not born in man and defined it as the sum of one's habits taken together. Based on that definition, a person may be of good or bad character. Good character is the result of an individual fully developing the wholeness of his own being. According to Aristotle, character develops from habitual action. (Aristotle's theory of character development will be more fully explained in Chapter 2.) Aristotle saw bad character as habitually harmful and wrong choices. He saw moral weakness as a confusion or inner conflict of habits that makes ethical choices unclear. A man of virtuous character, by contrast, knows how and chooses to make right choices in
accordance with a mean which balances extremes of emotion or action.

Good character involves both deliberating and knowing how to apply one's knowledge and experience in a given situation. The virtue or excellence of this work Aristotle calls prudence; doing it poorly is imprudence. Other virtues which he includes in the *Nicomachean Ethics* are courage, temperance, liberality, magnificence, greatness of soul, good temper, wittiness, modesty, and being agreeable company. For Aristotle, the basis of man's character is his ability to act in accordance with "deliberate desire" guided by his reason. His behavior can be judged by rational principles. His happiness and well-being (eudaimonia) increase in direct proportion to how well his habits conform to the standards of a person of good character.

For centuries the ancient Greeks discussed and refined their theories of character development. The Judeo-Christian tradition offers another approach to the nature of man's character. Both the Old and New Testaments of the Bible suggest that the basis of good character is love and obedience to God. Man was created by God to love and worship Him. Wisdom is considered to be moral and religious enlightenment applied to decision making, and a righteous lifestyle is the highest good because it imitates God. Good character includes justice, holiness, mercy, kindness, and humility. As articulated by St. Augustine in the fourth and fifth
centuries, the Christian view of man is that he is ignorant and blind to truth but that his concupiscence, or general capacity to love, moves him to glimpse and begin to partially understand truth. In Of True Religion, Augustine asserted that the soul and the body are two separate entities. While the body desires earthly things (cupiditas), the soul loves and seeks the divine (caritas). A man's duty, regardless of his role in society, is to develop his concupiscence by seeking the divine light, so gradually to put cupiditas in its place and to allow caritas to rule his behavior. As he loves things to the extent they are loved by God, he loves as God loves. Then his character develops as God intended, and he will begin to be able to approach God.

In the thirteenth century, St. Thomas Aquinas suggested an Aristotelian view of man's character which also allowed for the basic tenets of Christianity. Like Aristotle, Aquinas defined character as the collection of a man's habits developed through repeated actions, but in contrast to the Aristotelian idea of a soul that is neither good nor bad but, rather, blank at birth, Aquinas said man is born with a natural inclination toward the good, which is God. Natural law is engraved on man's heart and allows him to seek after the divine, supernatural law of God that complements but surpasses natural law. However, man is also born with original sin, and he must use his reason, undergirded by sacred wisdom and divine grace, to transform his desire toward
moral ends and to overcome his sinful nature.

In Aquinas' view, man's character is a combination of original sin and a natural inclination toward goodness. It was not until the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries that Christianity began to place heavy emphasis on man's evil nature. Martin Luther and especially John Calvin further developed the Biblical idea of the total depravity of mankind. Man's character, according to this notion, is so permeated with original sin and so completely evil that his only hope for salvation is unconditional obedience to God and redemption through Jesus Christ. In the tradition of Luther and Calvin, there is no such thing as a man of truly good character, and man's reason can only lead him astray.

Although heavy emphasis has been placed on man's rational nature as philosophers through the centuries have attempted to define his true essence or character, some philosophers like David Hume and Adam Smith took an opposing stance. They believed that moral character and behavior are not derived from reason at all but from feelings and sentiment that are natural to mankind. They insisted that sympathy and the ability to imagine the pleasure and pain of others is the source of morality. People develop what Smith called "fellow feeling," a bond with other human beings which prevents one man from willing harm to another. The philosophy of Hume and Smith has influenced some modern psychologists to believe that
"man can not derive all his values from the norms of society and the rationalizations of the neocortex part of the brain. We must also allow for sources of feelings and needs that can not be subjected to logic alone." 5

While it is possible to include emotions in a broad definition of cognition that would encompass all of the brain activities which occur in human beings and, thus, separate man from other animals, that is not what rationalists intended. The ideas of Hume and Smith and, later, of John Dewey, are significantly different from those of philosophers who relied on reason to define a man's character. Both the rational-cognitive tradition and the sentiment-feelings tradition have advocates in modern Western culture.

An interesting combination of the two points of view which has also influenced the modern idea of character occurs in the philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi. According to Gandhi, character does not mean abiding by tradition, since sometimes it is moral to set out on one's own path, nor does it mean "gentlemanliness," since morality is more than good manners. Instead, good character means living in accordance with immutable moral laws and consistently and voluntarily doing what is good and right with no motive of self-interest. A man of good character is self-disciplined, self-reliant, and ruled not by physical needs but by the spirituality of the soul. He knows what is good and right based on study and rational thought and through meditation. He seeks truth and practices temperance, altruism, nonpossession, nonstealing, and
nonviolence. He recognizes his kinship with all men and tries to be of service to humanity. He is "one who is sincere in himself, bears no malice, exploits no one, and always acts with a pure mind." Gandhi's man of good character relies on both reason and sympathy, in addition to meditation and spirituality, to choose what is moral, good, and right.

A Case for Character Education by Frank G. Goble and B. David Brooks provides a definition of character which is reminiscent of Aristotle's constellation of habits but which also assumes a broad definition of reason and cognition. They call character "those aspects of personality--mental habits, attitudes, values, personal goals--that influence personal behavior." "Mental habits" implies reason and deliberation about choices. The word "attitudes" includes feelings and sentiments, and "values" are deeply held convictions and priorities. Because the development of good character will be shown to involve all these qualities, Goble and Brooks' definition seems, for the purposes of this thesis, to be adequate and appropriate. Therefore, the word "character" used herein will mean "those aspects of personality--mental habits, attitudes, values, personal goals--that influence personal behavior."
Notes

Please note: Subsequent references to any of the works listed below will be cited parenthetically in the text, e.g. (Kramer, p. 106).


CHAPTER 2

HOW DOES CHARACTER DEVELOP?

Introduction

The question of the relationship between moral education and the public schools is a multi-faceted one. For the sake of argument at the moment, the need for and desirability of character education in the schools is assumed. So is a consensus on a cogent definition of what is character. Still, there exists a seemingly endless parade of disparate points of view as to how character develops, and each of these entails its own moral pedagogy.

First there is the philosophic approach. The ancient Greeks must be considered; Plato and Aristotle, interested in both personal and civic virtue, had a great deal to say about how character develops. Then there was the philosophically religious element brought in by St. Thomas Aquinas as he attempted to correlate Christian belief with Aristotelian ethics. Michel de Montaigne also drew heavily from the ancient Greeks and Romans as he discussed his views on the appropriate upbringing of the young French of his day. Immanuel Kant articulated a moral theory that relied heavily on man's rational nature and his duty to behave in accordance with universal moral principles. Since each of those philosophers is considered by Hirsch to be significant to a
study of American cultural literacy and since the cultural literacy movement is one justification for the inclusion of cultural education in American public schools, it seems appropriate that their thinking on the development of moral character be included here. And because American culture has been affected by Asian philosophies, the "Nai Talim," or New Education, of Mahatma Gandhi provides one Eastern perspective.

However, to consider only the points of view of philosophers would be to ignore a significant body of research and observation gathered by educational theorists. Interested in maximizing a child's experiences in formal education and providing affective as well as cognitive learning, educators have also developed theories of how character develops. Jean Piaget and Lawrence Kohlberg studied the behavior of school boys at play to develop a cognitive model of the stages of moral development based on mutuality, fairness, and eventual recognition of the universality of moral rules. John Dewey, philosopher and educator, proposed a social morality, both practical and reflective, that develops because of problem solving and human sympathy. Carol Gilligan looked at the stages of moral development from what she sees as the female emphasis on caring and responsibility rather than justice and fairness, and Nel Noddings extended the ethics of caring to include both males and females.

The purpose of this chapter is two-fold. First, it will present summaries of theories on character development
presented by the philosophers and educational theorists already mentioned. Second, it will endeavor to sift and evaluate them in order to propose a more encompassing picture of how character develops which is, hopefully, more helpful than any of them taken alone to the modern educator who wants to stimulate and encourage character development in the secondary school setting.

The Philosophical Perspective

One of the earliest recorded philosophers to discuss the development of character was Plato. He claimed all men are born with certain tendencies and capacities, that they possess a sort of inborn intelligence. However, as children, they are also impressionable, and their characters or souls are easily molded within the parameters of their inborn capacities. They are capable of an intuitive understanding of what is good before they develop a capacity for rational acceptance, which may continue to develop into adulthood. Therefore, moral education should begin at a very young age and should progress in stages.

According to Plato, infants and young children should be exposed early on to psychically moving tales, myths, songs, and other arts of the Muses. (The reader will notice the resemblance to Bloom and Hirsch.) This stage of education Plato and the ancient Greeks called "mousiké." Its purpose is to stimulate the imagination and emotions of the child and to help him begin to sense truth and recognize vice and virtue
affectively. Aesop's Fables, for example, are suitable; so are the tales of heroes. In the Republic, Plato insists that the stories children hear be "well told and dispose them to virtue."¹ They must also be written in "pure style" so that the very young can begin to appreciate the beauty of language. (Plato, p. 67) Plato claims that

"nurture in the arts is the most important because their rhythm and harmony permeate the inner part of the soul, bring graciousness to it, making a man gracious if he has the right kind of upbringing." (Plato, p. 71)

The second stage of education for Plato and the ancient Greeks was gymnastiké, which emphasized overall physical well-being. While exercise and active play were necessary, so were lessons in nutrition, hygiene, and health. One goal of gymnastiké was the development of a strong, healthy body. However, Plato also believed that physical training was necessary for good character and the development of the soul. What he called the "wisdom-loving" and the "spirited" parts of the soul need a balance of physical culture and artistic training to keep a man's character from being too harsh, on the one hand, and too soft and gentle on the other. Physical training is also supposed to integrate stories with play so that a mythic sense of physical courage can develop.

The character development of older children continues in the next stages through their (by now) academic training. Plato believed that it is not possible to separate moral and intellectual development. The child was taught arithmetic,
geometry, astronomy, and dialectic, or critical thinking, in that order, since each subject presupposed an understanding of the one before. The reason for cultivating curiosity and developing the powers of reason was to create a sort of second nature which would allow the adult, within the level of his capabilities, to make correct judgments based on the recognition of distinctions. This education and knowledge of the good comes from authoritative teachers who can rationally understand and logically analyze concepts, moral or otherwise. Ideally it should continue into adulthood.

Another Greek philosopher who addressed the question of how moral character develops was Aristotle. In Book II of the *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle begins with a habit-taking human being who is neither virtuous nor evil at birth. He asserts that, although the intellectual virtues of wisdom and understanding develop from teaching, moral virtues (such as generosity and self-control) are the result of habit. They do not come from nature but from repeated actions. Man receives from nature the capacity to do well or poorly; which one he chooses is a matter of upbringing, emulation, and reflection on past actions. His nature tends toward health of the soul as well as the body, thus providing a natural foundation for moral growth. But it is habit "which brings this ability [for virtue or vice] to completion and fulfillment."  

Because habits begin to form in infancy, Aristotle asserts the importance of virtuous parents. They are a
child's first teachers, and an infant develops by watching and emulating them. Parents should be young enough to parent effectively but old enough to possess the wisdom and understanding which will command the respect of their children. Aristotle suggested in his time that women become mothers between the ages of eighteen and the early twenties but that men should not become fathers until they were closer to middle age, which, given the average life expectancy of the ancient Greeks, probably meant in their middle thirties. Settled, mature adults would make the best role models for the early development of a child and would thus assure the formation of good character.

As an individual grows, he or she becomes just by practicing just acts, courageous by doing courageous acts, self-controlled by exercising control over his appetites. Similarly, vice, the opposite of virtue, comes from repeatedly doing unjust, cowardly, and self-indulgent acts.

"In a word, characteristics develop from corresponding activities. For that reason we must see to it that our activities are of a certain kind, since any variations in them will be reflected in our characteristics." (Aristotle, p. 34)

For Aristotle, the repetition of a behavior becomes habit, and habit builds character. If a person repeatedly does virtuous acts and takes pleasure in doing them, he develops a virtuous character. Wickedness is also voluntary.

Man makes choices about his behavior based on deliberation. Deliberation is the consideration of possible
scenarios and appropriate means for achieving a desired end. Deliberation requires a knowledge of causality, and the ability to deliberate develops through maturation and experience. Deliberation allows a man to make reasoned choices about his actions.

In order to make virtuous choices, a person must know his own propensities well enough to be able to recognize the two vices of excessiveness on the one hand and deficiency on the other and to arrive at the balanced behavior which Aristotle called the "mean relative to one's self." (Aristotle, p. 42-43) This mean is not the same for everyone because people have different propensities. A person must know himself well enough to discover his own mean. He must be especially careful to avoid any vice which seems to come naturally to him. For example, in the appetitive realm, a woman with an acquired propensity toward craving sweets must not indulge herself by eating as much candy as she wants even if such over-indulgence "feels right" to her. This is because bad habits can be felt as pleasing and appropriate once an individual has sufficiently developed them. Rather, the woman must use reason to discover the harm of the bad habit and knowledge to determine how to start building a new one—in this case, a balanced diet. In addition, she can also rely on feedback from others and can adjust her behavior according to what others tell her about her eating habits. Ultimately a person is better able to choose virtuous rather than wicked
acts once he has developed knowledge of the mean that is best for him or her and which results in virtuous character. Character development in Aristotle, then, is reciprocating in nature since act leads to habit, habit and deliberation lead to character, and character leads to other virtuous acts (though the reciprocity can be broken, as when we say, "she's not herself today").

St. Thomas Aquinas, who undertook in the thirteenth century to Christianize Aristotelian philosophy, also concerned himself with the relationship between habit and character. In the *Summa Contra Gentiles*, Book III, Chapter 2, he examines the nature and origins of habit and their effect on virtue. St. Thomas asserted the existence of certain natural laws, for example, nonharming, which are God-given and toward which man has a natural inclination. These laws are an essential part of man's rational nature from birth and allow him to seek goodness and truth and to know God. But habits are necessary to men because the human soul can operate in many ways. It needs habit to direct its power toward good or evil.  

While a man may have a natural or God-given inclination toward a certain behavior due to his own temperament, the action is not developed without habit. (Aquinas, p. 549) One act is not enough to create a virtuous character because man's appetites and desires are inclined in many ways and because something must be repeated often to be impressed upon man's
memory.

Like Aristotle, Aquinas asserts that human beings choose to behave in wicked or virtuous fashions and that the experience of repeatedly doing good causes virtuous action to become habitual. Character develops from habit. However, St. Thomas also allows room for intervention by God when he maintains that divine grace can alter a person's character. Occasionally a person seems suddenly, for no observable reason, to do a virtual 180 degree turn in behavior and character. Aquinas would attribute this change to God's grace.

The sixteenth-century French philosopher Michel de Montaigne offers insight into the question of how character develops in his essay, "Of the Education of Children." Education in this sense refers to upbringing rather than academic training alone. Harkening back to ancient Greek and Roman philosophers, Montaigne sees no separation between the physical, intellectual, and moral self. "It is not a mind, it is not a body that is being trained; it is a man; those parts must not be separated." Indeed, Montaigne maintains that both a well-educated mind and a well-toned body are important for the development of moral character. Although a man is born with certain natural propensities which can not be changed, his judgment and character can be cultivated by art. The aim of all study is the recognition of virtue and vice and the regulation of one's own behavior so that a person can know
himself, live well, and die well. As Allan Bloom implied centuries later, Montaigne claimed that philosophy is "the molder of judgment and conduct." (Montaigne, p. 31) It can be understandable to young children if they are led by an insightful tutor of good character in reading and discussing the relatively simple thoughts of the great souls of ages past. According to Montaigne (and Bloom), students should read the works of the best classical authors—the most noble poetry, the greatest tragedies, the most insightful comedies, in order to "essay" their judgment by high quality challenges. As they read, students should be looking for examples after whom to pattern themselves. They should discover the greatness and nobility of the best characters of classical literature, and they should apply what they learn to making appropriate judgments in their own lives. In addition, the understanding of logic, physics, geometry, and rhetoric are important because they train the reason and because "both conscience and virtue are . . . guided only by reason." (Montaigne, p. 18) Rational thinking allows people to doubt and critically examine the beliefs of others, which is to be desired. The best way to develop this strength is to "rub and polish our brains by contact with those others." (Montaigne, p. 15)

More importantly, however, man's intellect and understanding are broadened by travel and a variety of experiences in the real world. According to Montaigne, it is
important for a person to experience as much of the whole world as possible so that he can see beyond regional concerns and put things in proportion. It is ignorant and narrow-minded to believe, for example, that a harsh, early winter is a sign of God's displeasure with mankind because in another part of the world, balmy weather might be producing record harvests. Travel also allows a person to critically examine other cultures and to judge the worth of his own. "Wonderful brilliance may be gained for human judgment by getting about in the world." (Montaigne, p. 21)

But physical games, exercise, and even a certain degree of physical hardship and danger are also essential for character growth. While steadfastness, sincerity, faith, generosity, and humility may develop through understanding; valor, prowess, and fearlessness are increased when a person has physical stamina and can endure pain. When a youth is so used to discomfort that he scarcely notices it, then he can act more courageously in the face of possible danger, torture, or even death than another young person could who grew up never testing his physical limits. Moreover, physical strength is proof that an individual of character does not "refrain from doing evil for lack of power or knowledge, but for lack of will." (Montaigne, p. 34) If a man is too weak to beat another human being, then refraining from doing so can hardly be called a virtue. A virtuous man is one who, for example, is capable of inflicting harm on another but chooses
not to. Furthermore, "... the value and height of true
virtue lies in the facility, utility, and pleasure of its
practice." (Montaigne, p. 28)

A true man of good character has been trained to take
pleasure in practicing virtue and to do so in a facile manner.
His capacity to judge has been so well developed through his
upbringing that he is able to correctly assess his own
behavior and the actions of others.

Immanuel Kant probably cringed at Aristotle and
Montaigne's linking of pleasure and virtue. It is not that
acting virtuously should necessarily cause displeasure or pain
but that, for Kant, pleasure is irrelevant. Kant sees duty as
the source of virtue and morality. The ability to use one's
reason to rise above desire and natural impulses, to recognize
and do one's duty, is the end product of moral growth because
it produces a good will.

Kant believed in the existence of an a priori, universal
rational principle which controls moral judgment in all men.
To become more moral, a man strives to be more rational. But
he must not just develop theoretical reason through knowledge;
he must also use reason to guide and direct his will. Kant
calls this concept practical reason. "A will which is
determined by rational principles is a moral will." Otherwise, a man is at the mercy of his inclinations. To do
one's duty means to rationally understand and commit to one's
obligation despite personal desires or natural inclinations.
The test for a good will in Kant is found in what he calls the categorical imperative. One formulation is that "I am never to act otherwise than so that I could also will that my maxim should become universal law." (Kant, p. 19) In other words, a person should rationally choose an action in a certain situation which he would accept as morally appropriate in principle for anyone else in the same situation. Another formulation of the categorical imperative explains that morality rests on the recognition of the dignity and worth of each individual. Kant said, "So act as to treat humanity ... in every case as an end withal, never as a means only." (Kant, p. 46)

Kant's principle of the autonomy of the will rests on this idea of human dignity and worth. As a rational creature, man is able to free himself from the constraints of nature; he is not at the mercy of "necessitation from without." Rather, "It follows incontestably that, to whatever laws any rational being may be subject, he being an end in himself must be able to regard himself as also legislating universally in respect of these same laws." (Kant, p. 55)

In other words, man is autonomous because, when he acts according to the categorical imperative, he is a sovereign who makes the laws which he, as subject, must also obey. Autonomy to Kant means man is both ruler and ruled. For an individual to develop moral character, he must see himself as a lawgiver, must accord that same respect to others, and must use his reason to recognize and perform his obligations.
More than a century after the death of Immanuel Kant, Mahatma Gandhi presented his "Nai Talim," or New Education, as one of several tools for achieving the emancipation of India from British rule. Although "Nai Talim" presented a comprehensive educational philosophy that was tailored specifically toward preparing the India of Gandhi's day to become a proud, spiritual, and independent nation, it also provides insight into Gandhian beliefs about how character develops.

Like the ancient Greeks, Gandhi believed that what Vinoba called "interior education," or the development of the mind and soul, could not occur without attention to the physical and intellectual aspects of a human being. But for Gandhi, this notion carried a special significance because he believed that certain foods, especially animal flesh and some spices, increased man's animalistic behavior and made self-control and spiritual growth more difficult. So a fundamental part of character development was dietary change. Gandhi advocated vegetarianism.

Secondly, "Nai Talim" calls for character development through direct instruction in moral issues. It is possible, according to Gandhi, to begin to train the spirit through the memorization and recitation of hymns and the reading of books on morality. Students should be exposed to many religious faiths so that they can assimilate the best of many religions and learn to see the "rock bottom unity of all religions and
afford a glimpse also of that universal and absolute truth which lies beyond the 'dust of creeds and faiths.'" (Gandhi, p. 53) But such study is not enough. Because learning comes "from the hand and the senses to the brain and the heart," intellectual and character development can only occur through real life experience. Therefore, students must do physical work such as building, farming, and cleaning up after themselves, in addition to acts of public service, to promote self-reliance and the growth of a virtuous character.

The third and possibly the most important factor in the development of an individual's character is the guidance of a teacher who can be a living example and "eternal object lesson." (Gandhi, p. 22) Gandhi believed that both parents and teachers should order their lives so that they serve as examples for young people to emulate. On both an intellectual and spiritual plane, "the true textbook for the pupil is his teacher." (Gandhi, p. 20) The guru, a man of exemplary character, meditates, serves others, and exercises self-control. He influences his students to develop the same virtues.

The Psychological Perspective

If some philosophers emphasize repetition, the development of habit, study, deliberation, or the emulation of worthy examples to explain how character and judgment develop, some educational theorists have approached the growth of moral character as a cognitive function that comes about in
developmental and experiential stages. Among these are Jean Piaget, John Dewey, Lawrence Kohlberg, Carol Gilligan, and Nel Noddings.

In *The Moral Development of the Child*, Piaget asserts that moral norms are not innate but, rather, are a result of man's innate need for organization, understanding, and structure. He found that moral norms develop in four stages through the normal socialization and intellectual development of a child. Under the age of two, a child's behavior is random at first and then ritualized into certain patterns. This first stage of development is controlled by human motor responses and man's natural tendency to repeat and structure his physical movements. The second stage of moral development, egocentrism, occurs between the ages of two and five. At this stage, children merely imitate examples of ruled behavior which they see in the adults around them. Rules are neither codified nor coercive in themselves. Behavior is still controlled by adults, and children understand that being good is equivalent to obedience to the letter of someone else's law. Punishment at this stage is often painful, harsh, arbitrary, and unrelated to the undesirable behavior. Piaget insists that this condition of unilateral respect is insufficient for creating moral character.

Instead, he maintains that mutual respect is "the source of moral understanding." (Piaget, p. 171) Mutuality begins
to develop between the ages of seven and eight at the cooperation stage. In his observations of school boys, Piaget noticed that this stage involves cooperative play and competition governed by sacred, untouchable, mutually agreed upon rules. Boys at play are interested in fairness and mutual respect. At age eleven or twelve, the rules of play become codified, detailed, and clear, and the boys in Piaget's experiments seemed to delight in posing possible scenarios and discussing the moral behavior required in each situation. This fourth stage, codification, is also based on mutuality and reciprocity. Children develop an autonomy which allows them to participate in the formulation of rational rules and to voluntarily abide by them. (The reader will notice the similarity to Kant's approach.) They come to understand the reciprocal nature and universality of moral rules, to consider such concepts as intentionality and subjectivity, and to think in terms of the spirit rather than the letter of the law.

"[Moral] autonomy therefore appears only with reciprocity, when mutual respect is strong enough to make the individual feel from within the desire to treat others as he himself would be treated." (Piaget, p. 196)

Although constraint and unilateral respect from child to parent provide the first type of logical and moral self-control, it is cooperation among equals, mutual respect, that allows for moral discussion, criticism, autonomy, and the development of moral values. According to Piaget, mutuality leads to the interiorization of moral rules, and moral
judgment develops to replace ritualized or egocentric behavior.

Like Piaget, John Dewey believed that morality develops, at least in part, through reciprocity and social interaction. Customary morality, which is a level of behavior based on the acceptance of social mores and the modification of desires and behavior so that one can do what is socially and legally required, develops from social interaction. Customary morals are practical, traditional rules that must be obeyed. In this sense, character develops through learning established traditions and obeying socially approved laws. However, a changing world means that new problems and situations arise with which old customs and beliefs can not cope. In Theory of the Moral Life, Dewey explains the need for a reflective morality which develops principles rather than traditional rules. Principles, according to Dewey, are intellectual judgments that can be applied in a particular situation. They are tools which can be used to analyze a certain circumstance so that theoretical morality can be put into appropriate concrete practice. Reflective morality rests on the notion that moral consciousness permeates everyday life and that a conscientious individual must be constantly "concerned to revise and improve his standard [of judgment]."^3

But how does a man develop his moral judgment? First, an individual can rely on the information provided to him in childhood by morally wise parents. Then he should begin to
rationally develop his own moral standard by examining a variety of moral codes; the history of legal, judicial, and philosophical thinking; and the information provided by the social, physical, and biological sciences. He can then reflect upon this body of knowledge and discuss it with others. He judges a situation as wisely as he is able with the knowledge he has and later reviews how well he did and tries to improve his judgments if he can.

Knowing more and having better information is vital, according to Dewey, to the growth of moral character. However, morality also requires doing the right thing. For Dewey, part of reflective morality is acting, then thinking back on the results of the action and determining how to respond in a similar situation the next time. An individual must deliberate about possible courses of action and use rational insight to determine what is best.

"What is desirable is that a person shall see for himself what he is doing and why he is doing it; shall be sensitive to results in fact and in anticipation, and shall be able to analyze the forces which make him act as he does." (Theory, p. 132)

Thus, in a sort of "after the fact" way, an individual develops his capacity to behave morally next time by "revision, by personal observation of consequences, and crossquestioning of the quality and scope" of his previous actions. (Theory, p. 132) What Aristotle and others considered to be moral intuition is actually a rapid judgment of what is appropriate in a situation, based on experience.
Dewey's book *Moral Principles in Education* defines morality as "social intelligence" and calls upon public schools to encourage "the formation of habits of social imagination and conception."¹⁰

"It is out of the question to keep direct moral consideration uppermost. But it is not out of the question to aim at making the methods of learning, of acquiring intellectual power, and of assimilating subject matter, such that they will render behavior more enlightened, more consistent, more vigorous than it otherwise would be." (Moral, p. 2)

He calls for the formation of "trained judgement" (Moral, p. 51) but insists like Montaigne that the power of judgment cannot be developed without practice in forming and testing decisions. In Aristotelian fashion, he says moral judgment develops from "the formation of habits of social imagination and conception." (Moral, p. 40) But Dewey would also have agreed with Gandhi that learning comes best from real life experiences. *Moral Principles in Education* advocates the structuring of the whole school environment to reflect the moral attitudes which are vital to community welfare and progress. Thus, it is not enough to have students habitually practice "school virtues"; they must have a chance to practice the virtues they will need in society.

It is important here to note a significant difference between Piaget and Dewey regarding the development of morality. While Piaget insists that reciprocity and mutual respect must develop in order for moral behavior to occur, Dewey stresses the importance of what he, like David Hume in
the eighteenth century, calls sympathy, the ability to see oneself in another's situation.

"It is sympathy which saves consideration of consequences from degenerating into mere calculation, rendering vivid the interests of others and urging us to give them the same weight as those which touch our own honor, purse, and power. To put ourselves in the place of others, to see things from the standpoint of their purposes and values, to humble, contrariwise, our own pretensions and claims till they reach the level they would assume in the eye of an impartial sympathetic observer, is the surest way to attain objectivity of moral knowledge." (Theory, p. 130)

Although it would seem that what Dewey is advocating is really empathy rather than sympathy, his point is that the ability to step out of one's personal bias and to conceptualize the response of someone else "furnishes the most efficacious intellectual standpoint." (Theory, p. 130) Like Hume and Adam Smith, Dewey sees this sympathy or "fellow feeling" as a gentle, natural capacity which schools and other social institutions can cultivate.

Another recent educational theorist, Lawrence Kohlberg, draws heavily upon Piaget's notion of developmental stages in the growth of good character. In "Moral Education in the Schools: A Developmental View," Kohlberg defines moral conduct as a combination of the developmental level of a child's moral concepts (which closely correlates with cognitive development) and the child's ego ability. Ego ability is said to include the capacity to intelligently predict consequences, the postponement of instant gratification in favor of more satisfactory long term goals,
and the ability to maintain focused attention. Although "conventional didactic ethical instruction" is not effective in assuring moral conduct,

"recent research suggests that the major consistencies of moral character represent the slowly developing formation of more or less cognitive principles of moral judgment and decision and of related ego abilities.""!

The following is a summary of Kohlberg's six stages in the development of moral judgment:

**LEVEL I--PREMORAL**

**Stage 1.** Obedience and punishment orientation. Egocentric deference to superior power or prestige, or a trouble-avoiding set. Objective responsibility.

**Stage 2.** Naively egoistic orientation. Right action is that instrumentally satisfying the self's needs and occasionally other's. Awareness of relativism of value to each actor's needs and perspective. Naive egalitarianism and orientation to exchange and reciprocity.

**LEVEL II--CONVENTIONAL ROLE CONFORMITY**

**Stage 3.** Good-boy orientation. Orientation to approval and to pleasing and helping others. Conformity to stereotypical images of majority or natural role behavior, and judgment of intentions.

**Stage 4.** Authority and social-order-maintaining orientation. Orientation to "doing duty" and to showing respect for authority and maintaining the given social order for its own sake. Regard for earned expectations of others.

**LEVEL III--SELF-ACCEPTED MORAL PRINCIPLES**

**Stage 5.** Contractual legalistic orientation. Recognition of an arbitrary element or starting point in rules or expectations for the sake of agreement. Duty defined in terms of contract, general avoidance of violation of the will or rights of others, and majority will and welfare.

**Stage 6.** Conscience or principle orientation. Orientation not only to actually ordained social rules but to principles of choice involving appeal to logical universality and consistency. Orientation to conscience as a directive and to mutual respect and trust. (Kohlberg, p. 7)
The assertion that character development happens in stages implies several things. First, moral behavior is age-related and stage-consistent. It is also sequential, although people fixate at particular levels. In addition, there is a universality to the sequence regardless of cultural variants. In fact, in an experiment involving both American and Taiwanese boys, Kohlberg discovered the same developmental pattern in both groups. (Kohlberg, p. 10)

The paradigm of moral development as a cognitive, rational function suggests that one can stimulate the growth of moral character, especially in the school setting. According to Kohlberg, this does not occur through direct ethical instruction or through the rewarding of good habits and the punishing of bad. Nor does it happen because students attempt to pattern their behavior after that of the teacher. Instead, the exposure to many moral views encourages students to grow in directions toward which they were already tending. Moreover, the discussion of real and difficult hypothetical moral situations in age-appropriate language and on the intellectual level of the child stimulates decision making and allows children to discuss and compare their own judgments. This experience will help people develop maturity of judgment, defined by Kohlberg as the ability to recognize universal and consistent moral behavior and to behave on principle. Empowerment and a sense of participation also stimulate moral growth and suggest that Kohlberg accepts Piaget's notion of
mutuality as the key factor in getting people to develop moral character and conduct. Hirsch and Bloom would probably add that empowerment and a sense of participation are best developed when students learn about their cultural traditions as they also discuss moral principles.

Carol Gilligan, another learning theorist and one-time student of Kohlberg, accepts the idea of stages of moral development but points out that the sequence may be different for girls than it is for boys. Her book *In a Different Voice* maintains that the growth experience of female children in American society is different enough from that of male children to merit a separate look at a different model of character development than the ones put forth by either Piaget or Kohlberg, who both excluded females in their studies. Based on the assumption that the way people use language to talk about their lives reveals how they see the world and respond in it, Gilligan creates a "different conception of moral reality" from interviews with women at various stages of life.

While the observations of Piaget and Kohlberg led to a moral hierarchy based on autonomy, conflicting rights, fairness, and mutual respect, Gilligan's paradigm rests on caring relationships and conflicting responsibilities. While men tend to define themselves through detachment and separation, Gilligan observed that women seem to define themselves through attachment and connection. Therefore, what
seems in women to be moral confusion and a reluctance to make judgments may be the result of their empathetic concern for others and their sense of responsibility and connectedness. Most women whom Gilligan interviewed expressed "the hope that in morality lies a way of solving conflicts so that no one will be hurt." (Gilligan, p. 65) That is a very different notion than the hope that rules will guarantee each player his or her fair chance to play and possibly win the game.

If Kohlberg reinforces Piaget's view of moral growth as being tied to the development of cognitive and reflective thought, which ultimately brings a sense of universal law, Gilligan's conception of moral growth is based on a woman's conflict of selfishness versus responsibility. She sees three developmental stages. First, there is selfishness, corresponding perhaps to Kohlberg's egocentric stage. At this young age, an individual is enveloped in SELF to the exclusion of concern for others. The second stage involves the loss of self. For many years a woman's "identity is defined in a context of relationships and judged by a standard of responsibility and care." (Gilligan, p. 160) Because of her sense of responsibility to others, she subjugates concern for self. Finally, when she is morally mature, a woman reaches the level of interconnection and sees an interdependency of self and others. She finally recognizes "the right to include oneself in the compass of a morality of responsibility." (Gilligan, p. 134) At this third stage, a woman achieves a
balance of selfhood and other-mindedness.

Gilligan refuses to accept that these two different models of human growth and development are solely a result of gender. Observation and common sense indicate that differences between the sexes are not absolute. As Margaret Mead has pointed out, human characteristics exist on a continuum with the majority of men and women falling on either end but with sufficient evidence of cross-sexual occurrences as well. But the differences do exist and create different visions of the development of moral character.

"The morality of rights is predicated on equality and centered on the understanding of fairness, while the ethic of [mutual] responsibility relies on the concept of equity, the recognition of differences in need. While the ethic of rights is a manifestation of equal respect, balancing the claims of the other and the self, the ethic of responsibility rests on an understanding that gives rise to compassion and care." (Gilligan, p. 164)

To be fully human, a person should act in accordance with a balanced concept of equality and equity. Fairness and responsibility are both essential to the just treatment of individuals within a society.

Educator and learning theorist Nel Noddings further developed the idea that an individual's moral character and judgment grow through caring and connectedness. In a way reminiscent of cultural literacy's emphasis on myth, knowledge, and communication, Noddings champions a move away from empirical analysis and a logical, scientific approach to knowing about the world and movement toward a reliance on
drama, metaphor, and narrative as tools for understanding the human experience.

"Stories can join the world of thought and feeling, and they give special voice...to the power of emotion, intuition, and relationships in human lives. They frequently reveal dilemmas of human caring and conflict...in which we meet the other morally."

Through stories, whether historical, autobiographical, biographical, or fictional, one person can fully enter another's life and experience. Because the moral self is formed and given meaning in the context of relationship to others, the reader or listener grows as he or she imaginatively and empathetically connects with the main character of the story. Furthermore, narrative affects the transformation of culture as well as the formation of the self because stories are "a journey into the realm of practical ethics." (Noddings, p. 4) Noddings assumes that what the reader or listener learns through vicarious experience will transfer to real life moral dilemmas.

The ethics of caring is not developmental in the sense of sequential stages. It is more like an ever-widening ripple or an interconnected web of relationships. Caring begins with particular attachments and ends in caring for society and the world and its harmony. It is most easily learned when, as a child, a person is the recipient of care, called the "one cared for." The child then learns to respond in kind and to become a "one caring." (Noddings, p. 6) For Noddings, the foundation of ethics is not moral reasoning capacity but "our
memory of caring and our longing for goodness." (Noddings, p. 90)

Dialogue and communication are essential to the ethics of caring. Action is based on "interpersonal reasoning" which seeks to understand the needs of another and to select an appropriate response. (Noddings, p. 95) A priori principles are not the basis of morality. Rather, moral action comes from dialogue to achieve a mutually balanced and agreeable solution which is moral if it fits into the context of a general notion of morality. The ethics of caring is flexible because it examines a range of possible moral responses and chooses the one most appropriate to the situation. For Noddings, education involves learning about both the quest for life's meaning and "the call to care for persons." (Noddings, p. 2)

The ethics of caring is very different from both Kohlberg's and Kant's formulations of moral behavior based on the supremacy of rational principles. For Kant, the categorical imperative is always the absolute, inviolable measure of right action. There is no range of possible moral responses appropriate to a situation. There is one action whose "maxim" can be regarded as universally applicable in that situation. Similarly, Kohlberg's moral hierarchy is based on the supremacy of rules, laws, and, at the highest level, rational universal principles to guarantee fair and equal treatment for everyone.
It would be easier to apply Kant's and Kohlberg's type of morality to everyday life if moral issues were always clear cut and obviously a question of good versus evil. However, ideals and obligations sometimes conflict with one another, and persons, as moral agents, must prioritize, compromise, and deliberate to determine the best action. The needs of others should be recognized and considered during the decision-making process.

**Evaluation**

Although the variety of philosophic and psychological viewpoints presented thus far might seem disconnected or even contradictory on the surface, closer examination reveals frequent interconnectedness. For example, Montaigne and Aquinas both borrowed heavily from Aristotle. Piaget's and Kohlberg's thoughts on participation and mutual respect and Dewey's social interaction echo Kant's notion of autonomy and the need to see oneself as a lawgiver. Dewey's use of sympathy for others as the basis for moral behavior echoes Hume and Smith and harmonizes with Gilligan's view that women create a morality based on caring for others. Recent theories are not born in a vacuum.

A further synthesis is possible which might help educators form a more complete picture of how character develops from birth through adulthood. This comprehensive theory of moral growth and character development could rely on a stage concept, meaning that the development occurs in a
relatively fixed sequence and that the later stages are assumed to reflect a more universal, more desirable level of moral maturity. This is a logical assumption because physical growth in the natural world and both physical and intellectual growth in children are observed to occur in stages. It would likely be that moral maturity does also. However, the stages need not necessarily be exclusively cognitive, and they are not mutually exclusive. In accordance with Plato and Aristotle, as well as Piaget and Kohlberg, they may be pyramidal, building upon and requiring the former for the development of the latter. I would suggest the following synthesis:

Stage 1. The first stage of development is precognitive in the sense that it precedes rational thought about what is good or virtuous. Whether a human being is a set of preferred potentials at birth as Aristotle maintained or is born with an intuitive intelligence or forgotten notion of goodness as postulated by Plato and Aquinas, his or her moral development begins at birth. Children are habit-taking creatures, and much of the parenting of infants aged four and below includes developing socially acceptable routinized behaviors. These behaviors range from matters of hygiene to issues of obedience and moral behavior. At this age children are great mimics of the habits of the adults around them, and they unconsciously assimilate the underlying attitudes as well—even though they can not yet verbalize or evaluate them.
Knowing this, it is logical to begin the moral instruction of very young children at the "mousikê" level suggested by Plato. Stories, songs, television programs, and cultural traditions that stimulate imaginative and creative thinking and which help little ones begin to sense truth and feel approval for virtue and disapproval for vice are important. For example, the story "The Little Red Hen" helps children see the need to help with the work around the house if they want to share in the benefits of living together. At this early level, it might be possible to mitigate the differences between the growth experience of male and female children which Gilligan describes. Some of the stories told at this level should portray men in roles of domestic responsibility and caring and women as leaders deciding issues of fairness and justice in order to promote a "greater convergence of judgment" in later adult life that would bring about a broader concept of moral maturity. (Gilligan, p. 167) In any case, it is not necessary or even advisable, as Piaget and Kohlberg imply, to wait for children to grow out of their egocentric stage in order to begin to encourage the development of moral behavior. It begins at a precognitive, habit-taking level from birth, and intuitive (or what Dewey calls rapidly formed) judgments and habits continue to influence behavior into adulthood.

Stage 2. A second stage of character development could be called the cognitive stage if cognition is broadly defined
to include perception, reasoning, and intuition, since a person gains knowledge and understanding through all three processes. Such an inclusive definition would not eliminate the metaphorical, intuitive, almost subliminal processing of experiential data which Noddings emphasizes.* All of the philosophers and educational theorists presented here base their analyses on the assumption that conscious thought should regulate appetites and influence decisions. Man is potentially a rational creature. As his verbal and intellectual skills increase, he uses them to master the situations in which he finds himself. He consciously and unconsciously, logically and intuitively synthesizes all the experiences he has. Moreover, he can reflect, can look back on past experiences to see what went well and what went poorly. The attitudes, motives, and corresponding actions which result are his character.

The acquisition of good character and the capacity to make moral judgments, however, does not occur in a linear progression the way mathematical skill does, for example. While part of the time a child is playing with his or her peers and experiencing Piaget's and Kohlberg's mutuality, another part of his day, much to Montaigne's satisfaction, is spent learning about a foreign culture in social studies class. After school perhaps he or she attends a scout meeting

*For more information on recent theories of the cognitive process, see Personal Knowledge by Michael Polang or Phenomenology of Perception by Maurice Merleau-Ponty.
where the scoutmaster, whom he or she admires and emulates, teaches about the needs of the elderly or takes the group to visit a shut-in in the neighborhood. The child has had an opportunity to practice caring and has experienced a moral lesson as Gandhi might have taught it. At the dinner table that evening, the child confides to his grandmother that his best friend told him to shut-up at the scout meeting. Grandma gently responds that that behavior was unkind but that he does have a tendency to talk too loudly and too much. Together they decide he will practice holding his tongue sometimes. The child has now experienced what Aristotle meant by the "mean relative to oneself," feedback, and deliberation in the modification of habit and the development of virtue. At this second stage of moral development, moral lessons are taught in many ways.

The example is exaggerated, but the point is that individuals in society today are surrounded by cognitive input. It is not possible to categorize one single type of experience which promotes moral growth. Rather, this cognitive stage of development, which includes the pre-school and school years and, ideally, should continue into early adult life, should consist of a whole set of factors that will allow character development to occur. This set includes academic training in math, science, and social science with an emphasis on causal understanding, conceptual development, and broad cultural knowledge, since these subjects help develop the
ability to discriminate and to make reasoned judgments.

Another educational goal during this second stage of moral growth is the development of principles, or universal standards of moral truth, which an individual sees as meaningful to living a virtuous life. For example, a fundamental principle of ethical behavior is that a person should not intentionally harm another. Other examples are that it is important to keep promises and that one person should not lie to another. During this stage of moral growth, young people can begin to understand why certain principles are essential to human well being. They should be encouraged to develop their skills in deliberating and making moral judgments.

As advocated by Bloom and Hirsch, wide reading in age-appropriate history and philosophy should occur because those subjects contain the wisdom of past thinkers. Quality narratives which present moral dilemmas (as suggested by Noddings) should be read and followed by Socratic discussions that encourage individuals to develop moral judgments. Doubts should be examined, and the critical analysis of a variety of viewpoints (as recommended by Dewey and Kohlberg) should be encouraged. Parents, teachers, and other adults directly or indirectly involved in the upbringing of children can model the moral behavior they expect young people to develop so that youth have appropriate adults to emulate. Children must become aware of causality. They must learn self-control and
accept responsibility for their actions. Young people do not always see themselves as causal agents; they tend to blame others or to see bad luck or unhappy coincidence as the reasons for their difficulties or failures. An essential aspect of moral maturity that must be developed in children is the recognition of self as a causal agent and the willingness to accept responsibility for the outcomes of one's own choices and behaviors.

Stage 2 includes experience and habit because young people need to practice the virtues which society wants them to possess as adults. School children of all ages should be involved in conservation or community service, for example, as part of their school day. They should learn the important traditions and knowledge of their culture and begin to develop a sense of belonging and commitment.

Stage 3. The insights and skills developed in the first two stages enable individuals to progress to a third level of moral development, the reflective or "meta" stage. The habits of deliberation, reflection, and metacognition (thinking about one's own thinking) allow individuals to examine their own behaviors in the past, modify them if necessary, and make rational decisions about what they will do in similar situations in the future. Reflection also enables man to consider universal notions of virtue and morality rather than merely accepting the traditional mores of his culture. (Dewey's customary morality.)
These habits develop gradually. If Aristotle was correct, and observation suggests that he was, the ability to reflect upon personal behavior does not develop until after puberty. It can happen only after a person has received enough feedback from others to be able to recognize his personal propensities and biases. The ability to judge and to make correct distinctions in the relatively concrete confines of one's own personal and civic life takes many years to develop. The ability to consider moral universalities comes much later, if at all.

Thus far, this synthesis has focused on mental development. However, it would be inaccurate to ignore the importance of physical well-being as a factor in all three stages of character development. It is only relatively recently in a historic and philosophic sense that mental, physical, and spiritual capacities have been seen as separate entities. Both Plato and Aristotle saw human beings as integrated wholes, their physical natures linked to their intellectual and moral capacities. Montaigne reiterates that idea when he advocates the education of the whole man, not just the body or mind. His additional insight from Plato that making the body accustomed to some hardship and discomfort so that it can better endure pain if necessary also makes sense. A bee sting is often the worst pain imaginable to a small child but is fairly insignificant to an adult who has experienced abdominal surgery, for example. What one
considers unbearable may be relative to what one has born. And it may be easier, as Montaigne points out, for the soul to be courageous if the body, too, can endure more. In any case, physical education in the sense of exercise, nutrition, health, and endurance is an important aspect of human life and development and, thus, of the complex interaction of pre-cognitive, cognitive, and reflective stages of character development.

Conclusion

Character is a partially cognitive function but not completely, since habits and insights begin to form before conscious reasoning about them occurs, and since it is appropriate feeling and resulting action which need to be developed. Since some insights about moral behavior arise from the almost subliminal crystallizing of concepts, the term "cognitive" must be defined to include both conscious and subconscious and logical and intuitive reasoning. In addition, physical development is intricately connected to character development, as gender may be.

The development of character and moral judgment occurs in stages but not necessarily in a linear progression. The development is more pyramidal in nature. Three arguable but not mutually exclusive stages are the pre-cognitive, cognitive, and reflective or metacognitive levels. Moral maturity involves the ability to reflect upon and modify one's own behavior, to universalize moral principles, and to accept
the necessity of acting in accordance with them.

Several essential factors encourage the development of moral character. During the years of heaviest physical and intellectual growth, it is vital that an individual be stimulated to develop morally as well. He or she should be raised by morally sensitive parents and schooled by adults who are worthy of emulation. He or she should read widely and be exposed to a broad spectrum of information about his culture, since there seems to be a correlation between cognitive and moral development and because cultural literacy helps foster the sense of connectedness which allows people to care for one another. Experiences in social interaction and social service should be an integral part of an individual's schooling so that he learns to care as an autonomous but empathetically connected participant in society. In addition, he must practice thinking about and critically analyzing his own beliefs and the beliefs of others so that he can more fully develop the rational faculty and moral capacity which truly makes him human.

It would be overstatement to claim that teaching for character development, even with a fully developed program that provides learning in all aspects of moral growth, will guarantee the production of caring, ethical human beings.

"Of course, moral education, like any other branch of education, may fail: a young person may leave school with very little respect for others, just as persons may leave school with virtually no skills or knowledge."15
There is no such thing as a perfect educational program taught by perfect teachers, and even if there were, it could not guarantee perfectly moral graduates. Human beings are too riddled with flaws and complexities to ever be rendered perfect. However, according to Rheta DeVries, "Moral development occurs best when children live [and are schooled] in an environment where fairness and justice is a way of life." Despite the fact that failure will occur, parents, schools, and other social institutions are obliged to do all they can to promote the ethical as well as the intellectual development of young people.
Notes

Please note: Subsequent references to any of the works listed below will be cited parenthetically in the text, e.g. (Goble, p. 23).


CHAPTER 3

WHY SHOULD CHARACTER EDUCATION BE PART OF THE PUBLIC SCHOOL CURRICULUM?

Introduction

Aristotle once said, "All who have meditated on the art of governing mankind have been convinced that the fate of empires depends upon education of youth."¹ His assertion from centuries past would not raise many American eyebrows today. A society's future, good or bad, rests in the hands of its young people. That is why qualified teachers, well-stocked chemistry labs, and the very latest personal computers are considered to be good investments. Although top-notch equipment does not necessarily lead to well-educated students, most educators would agree that schools must be well equipped to teach students the skills they will need to successfully compete in a world marketplace. While there is considerable debate over how much money must be spent to assure quality education, most Americans at least give lip service to the notion that good education for kids means a more secure future.

But look again at Aristotle's words. He calls for "the education of youth," not merely their acquisition of knowledge or technical skills. While most Americans think of education in terms of reading, writing, arithmetic, and vocational or
professional training, Aristotle was concerned with educating the whole person. As we have already seen, ancient Greek tradition focused on the development of the imagination, the body, and the soul of a child as well as the development of his mind. While the acquisition of knowledge was important, even more important was the development of character since knowledge can be well or poorly used depending on the moral character of the user. Aristotle's concept of education was broader than the one accepted by most Americans today.

Such was not always the case. Thomas Jefferson wanted high schools to help students "develop their reasoning faculties, enlarge their minds, cultivate their morals, and instill into them the precepts of virtue and order." (Goble, p. 18) At one time, American schools were regarded as the bastions of culture and wisdom, and when they attended school, students were expected to learn the virtues as well as the technical skills which would allow them to function as citizens of a community. There was an underlying assumption that real ethical standards do exist and that good moral character can be cultivated in children by adults.

Some scholars and educators today advocate a broadening of public school curricula and a return to a more traditional view of educational goals, such as the one articulated in the 1830's by scholar John Ruskin, who stated,

"The entire object of education is to make people not merely do [or know] the right things, but enjoy the right things: not merely learned but to love knowledge; not merely pure but to love purity; not
merely just, but to hunger and thirst after justice." (Goble, p. 11)

Some educators believe that the social maladjustment of today's youth is due, at least in part, to their lack of guidance toward good character, and they insist that the schools are the appropriate place for ethical education.

The purpose of this chapter is to present a legal rationale for the introduction of character into the curriculum of the Clark County School District. First, it will explain what character education is and is not and will summarize frequently articulated objections to it. Then applicable statutes of the "Title 34 Education" section of Nevada state law and relevant Supreme Court decisions will be examined. Although they do not deal directly with moral education in public schools, these precedents do lend support to the idea.

Why Character Education?

According to The Case for Character Education, children and youth today, perhaps as offspring and mirrors of adult society, are in trouble. Authors Frank Goble and B. David Brooks state that thirty-one percent of all violent crime and fifty-four percent of property crime in the United States is committed by teenagers. More than one million teen-aged girls become pregnant each year, most of them out of wedlock. Alcoholism and marijuana use among teenagers has risen, and suicide is the third leading cause of death among fifteen to
twenty-four-year olds. (Goble, p. vii) However, statistics which document extremes of antisocial behavior today do not tell the whole story. Other, more "normal" youth also exhibit signs of social maladjustment and disconnectedness. They seem unable to cope with the misfortunes they encounter. They see the world as hostile, or, at best, indifferent and have a tendency to mistrust others. They seem to lack purpose, internal controls, and the capacity to care. Their focus is turned inward toward self rather than outward toward societal issues. (Goble, p. vii)

Michael Josephson of the Josephson Institute of Ethics has labeled the current generation of 18-30 year olds the "I-Deserve-Its" or IDI's. Josephson says these young Americans are self-centered and focused on their own needs, wants, and rights.

"The IDI world view results in a greater willingness to abandon traditional ethical restraints in the pursuit of success, comfort or personal goals. Thus, IDIs are more likely to lie, cheat and engage in irresponsible behavior when it suits their purposes. IDIs act as if they need whatever they want and deserve whatever they need, as if winning is a basic right."

While it is true that youth have historically been characterized by their elders as rebellious and irresponsible, the current situation and its social and economic costs have become too much for society to bear. Senseless, horrific violence like drive-by shootings with automatic assault weapons and "wilding" sprees by bored or sociopathic youth gangs can not be explained away as mere wild oats that must be
sown by young people as they grow. Nor can it be said that these problems are limited to youth from poorer socioeconomic environments. Drug use, suicide, and crimes against property have increased in middle and upper-middle class communities as well.

Perhaps current social weaknesses have been caused by a lack of character and ethical education. In their book *Amoral American*, Benson and Engeman state that "our astounding crime rate is largely due to lack of ethics, which, in turn, is due to lack of ethical instruction in the schools and other opinion-forming institutions." (Goble, p. 8)

Character education is indeed neglected in American schools today. As early as 1967, a survey conducted by the University of Southern California indicated that while most state departments of education give lip service to the goal of moral education, many provide no curriculum to teach values or morality. If ethical instruction occurs, it is more incidental than direct and more the result of a teacher's personal emphasis than a guided, systematic development. Such was not always the case, however. History indicates that the teaching of ethics and the cultivation of character comprised a major portion of the education of children and youth in ancient Greece, Rome, Egypt, and China. More recently, the civilizations of the Mayas, Incas, and Aztecs based the upbringing of their children on strong moral teachings. The tales of Mother Goose, the strong moral precepts of the *New*
England Primer, and the highly didactic passages of the McGuffey Reader indicate that ethical education was traditionally a part of European and early American schooling. In 1810, sixteen of every twenty-five pages in primary school books included some sort of moral instruction. In 1930, one of every twenty-five pages involved ethics or values, but in 1950, the total had dropped to a little more than one half page per twenty-five. (Goble, p. 14) Since the 1960's, basal readers as well as high school textbooks have become more culturally diverse. But in the process of presenting diversity without seeming to judge the merits of different cultures, books have lost whatever emphasis on moral reasoning they may have had.

There are several explanations for this. Allan Bloom believes the effort to add diversity and tolerance made it difficult to judge one tradition as better than another. Relativism then seemed an appropriate posture. In addition, the word "morality" suggests religious dogmatism and censorship even though it originated from the Latin words "mos" and "mores," which only meant "way of life." Sometimes parents confuse the critical analysis or examination of ethics and moral viewpoints with indoctrination in certain religious beliefs and dogma or are concerned that teachers will attempt to force their values on students. The word "ethics," from the Greek "ethos," meaning character, has come to mean a list of religious rules to live by or a personal code of behavior.
It encompasses words like values, citizenship, and responsibility which describe how to act correctly. Some parents feel that it is their job, not the school's, to teach a code of ethics to their children. Consequently, there is often a lack of parental and community support for character education programs in the schools.

In *Education, Society, and Human Nature: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Education*, Anthony O'Hear summarizes the viewpoint of some parents that moral education should only occur in the relatively safe context of and in conformity with the spirit of religion. The premises upon which the argument rests are that the world and its practices are corrupt and that the truth about God, man, and the world is revealed only through religion. If that is so, then there is a "correct" understanding of life which should dominate and guide all activities, including intellectual pursuits. Learning and thinking that go beyond what is necessary for the practice of religion are distracting or irrelevant at best and evil or dangerous at worst—especially when they are presented to impressionable children, who must be molded and shielded as they grow. According to this line of reasoning, any conflict between religious and secular learning merely proves "the evil nature of unrestrained intelligence." Independent, critical analysis is not encouraged. "The aim of education must be first and foremost to preserve and foster traditional faith and its practices and to create a divinely ordered community
on earth." (O'Hear, p. 12)

While the arguments are fairly rational based on the premises, O'Hear insists that the point of view can be rebutted. First, it is virtually impossible in a pluralistic, changing, media-dominated world to shield children from exposure to alternative viewpoints. "The uncritical teaching of religion can lead to total loss of faith at the first whiff of doubt." (O'Hear, p. 14) Rather, modern young people need practice in independent, critical thought if they are to be able to respond to challenges brought against their faith or to cope with new problems within or outside of their religions.

A second counterargument centers on any religion's claim to possess the truth about God, man, and the world. "Claims to truth should be able to withstand criticism and scrutiny if they are not to lose their status as truth claims." (O'Hear, p. 14) Even if a religion is true, its full meaning and implications are better understood and clarified when challenged by opposing opinions. Stagnation of thought can occur when ideas are never questioned and when believers are never forced to articulate and defend their beliefs. Historically, "heresy and secular thought have been instrumental and vital to the development and understanding of Christian dogma itself." (O'Hear, p. 15)

There is another danger in closing out alternative points of view. If one is not open to debate, it is too easy,
whether consciously or unwittingly, to deceive oneself and others. While human beings certainly have the capacity to make reasoned judgments about an issue, people are also subject to human fallibility and adept at self-deception and circular, prejudicial thinking. An unimpassioned, empathetic examination of the beliefs of another provides a sort of system of checks and balances that can minimize a person's tendency toward egotistical reasoning.

When presented to parents and the community in a non-threatening fashion, these counterarguments could help people accept character education in the schools. However, ethical education is also neglected for other reasons. One of these is that it is often seen as an "if-there-is-time" item on the agenda. The great demand placed upon the schools to produce literate, competent, technically advanced graduates who are ready to compete in an international market economy or who are qualified to continue their education at the university level often relegated character education to a level of lesser importance. While most educators agree that they do help formulate the values of the students with whom they come in contact, they would also state that their primary task is to cover the vast amount of material prescribed in the syllabus. With that objective in mind, there is little time for character education.

Moreover, what right does a teacher have to assume that his or her ethics are the ethics that are appropriate for
everyone? At issue here is the concept of ethical relativism, the idea that ethics vary according to time and place. If that is true, then a modern individual has the freedom to choose his own standards, and youth should not be fettered and oppressed in their choices by being taught the possibly outmoded values of the educational system. In this view, character education should not only be neglected; it should possibly be avoided altogether!

An oversimplification and misunderstanding of behaviorist psychology has also contributed to the neglect of character education. The popular notion of behaviorism is that human behavior is the result of stimulus, response, and reward. If human behavior develops from conditioned responses rather than from reasoned deliberation, then it seems ineffectual to try to critically discuss and analyze morals, values, or ethics. It is more appropriate to consistently reward "good" behavior so that it occurs again.

A final and extremely emotional objection to character education involves the separation of church and state. Because this issue as it was addressed by the Supreme Court in *Abington School District vs. Schempp* in 1963 will be discussed in detail later in this chapter, it is sufficient to note here that this argument against character education is often based on a misunderstanding of the first amendment and ignorance about what character education entails. Moral education in the schools is neither religious indoctrination nor the
teaching of theological dogma. Rather, it is instruction in and practice of certain virtues which are important to the practice of citizenship such as integrity, friendship, justice, courage, and industry. While these civic virtues may have their roots in the Judeo-Christian heritage, they can also be traced to ancient Greece and to more modern non-Western societies. They are cross-cultural and fundamental to the well-being of society.

Advocates of the teaching of moral reasoning in public schools assert the necessity of a cooperative effort by family, church, and school if ethical education is to be efficacious. However, they also recognize that the family unit today is not necessarily a stable, permanent structure reliable in providing moral instruction. In fact, "a majority of children have no firm religious or moral code to guide them." The Family Court of Milwaukee County, Wisconsin, sees this as such a significant problem that it includes the right to moral upbringing as part of its "Bill of Rights of Children in Divorce Actions." Article VI of the Bill maintains

"the right to have moral and ethical values developed by precept and practices and to have limits set for behavior so that the child early in life may develop self-discipline and self-control." If parents do not provide children the opportunity to practice ethical reasoning and to develop moral character, and if a democratic society requires virtuous citizens, then other social institutions need to guide individuals in developing the ethical values citizens need. Since American public
schools are already commissioned to educate children for citizenship, the school curriculum should include instruction in ethical values.

**Relevant Nevada Statutes**

The previous discussion indicates that character education in modern public schools is both necessary and desirable. A school district, though, is not an independent entity. The Supreme Court has said that school districts are "political subdivisions" which can enter into contracts, buy and sell property, issue bonds, exercise corporate powers, and sue and be sued. But school districts still function under the authority of the state legislature. Therefore, it is relevant to investigate Nevada statutes which pertain to character education.

"Title 34--Education" of the Nevada public code neither mandates nor forbids the teaching of moral reasoning in public schools. While failing to state the terms "character education" or "moral reasoning," the statute does contain certain prescriptions for instruction which are highly moral in nature. For example, section 389.020 requires that the study of American Government include knowledge of both state and federal constitutions and "the study of and devotion to American institutions and ideals." Section 389.040 requires one hour a week of patriotic exercises, and 389.050 mandates citizenship training. This training is to include "physical soundness" and
"instruction relative to the duties of citizens in the service of their country. It shall be the aim of such instruction to inculcate a love of country and a disposition to serve the country effectively and loyally." (Nevada School Law, p. 14754)

The notion of love of country necessarily suggests moral and religious values because it requires the negation of an individual's selfish impulses and devotion to a greater good. It is not an overstatement to say that this belongs to character education.

In addition to patriotism, Title 34 also mandates instruction in the virtues of thrift and conservation. Section 389.080 asserts the "importance of industry, production, earning, wise spending, and regular saving." It also advocates "thrift in time and material." (Nevada School Law, p. 14755) These statutes call for character education in traditional American values. Section 389.110 requires environmental education for the "conservation of our natural and human resources." (Nevada School Law, p. 14757)

Moreover, Nevada School Law requires that teachers be of certain moral character. Section 391.090 insists that teachers have the same knowledge of and devotion to the state and federal constitutions that students are required to have. (Nevada School Law, p. 14819) Section 391.312 outlines permissible grounds for the suspension, demotion, or dismissal of teachers. The statute requires professional growth, dedication to duty, and efficacy from teachers who wish to keep their jobs. It also lists "dishonesty, insubordination,
immorality, conviction of a felony, and moral turpitude" as sufficient reasons for dismissal. (Nevada School Law, p. 14826) The underlying assumption is that teachers have an obligation to be a model of good character for the children and youth they teach. But does it not also suggest another assumption? Does it not imply that school is at least one of the places where students learn about what is right and wrong?

Title 34 mandates certain types of character education in the public schools of Nevada. An aspect of good character is the ability to make reasoned judgments. This skill develops from practice in moral reasoning. If the state mandates the moral development of young people without permitting the schools to teach critical thinking and provide practice in reasoning about ethical issues, then it is requiring morality without providing the instruction students need to achieve it. By extension, it is fair to say that instruction in moral reasoning, which is the foundation of character development, should also be permissible.

It is important to note that character education must be more than the inculcation of an American or religious creed established by majority opinion. Moral reasoning transcends a "status quo" or "moral majority" mentality that assumes its own absolute rightness and proceeds to indoctrinate young people. Indoctrination is the opposite of character education in two important ways.

For one thing, indoctrination, which means instruction
in a body of doctrine or system of thought which is to be accepted unquestioningly, does not encourage critical thinking or the making of judgments. Indoctrination brings to mind Adolph Hitler and his near brainwashing of young Germans in the tenets of Nazism. Today, cults indoctrinate. On the other hand, a goal of character education is to develop the ability to make autonomous judgments. Indoctrination encourages blind obedience; character education is based on the critical evaluation of alternatives.

Secondly, indoctrination seeks to instill a belief in sectarian dogma. The canons are specific and narrow. Rules are important, and believers are sometimes legalistic in their approach to morality and narrow minded and judgmental in their attitude toward others. Conversely, character education emphasizes universally valued principles which are fundamental to human well being and cross-cultural in their application (e.g., the keeping of promises). Character education is global in scope and teaches that morality is based upon principled action, not obedience to rules.

Closed-mindedness is never moral. The challenge of public education is "maintaining continuity, fostering knowledge, retaining values of the past 'while accommodating change, criticism, growth, and individual autonomy.'" A goal of character education is to create morally rational citizens who can make choices based on deliberation.
Relevant Supreme Court Decisions

Because the U.S. Constitution contains no language guaranteeing the right to an education or making education the responsibility of the federal government, the establishment of schools falls under the jurisdiction of the states as preserved by the Tenth Amendment. However, a democratic government has a fundamental interest in an informed and educated citizenry. The Supreme Court suggested this possibility in *Plyer vs. Doe.* (1982) Moreover, in establishing the Northwest Territory in 1787, Congress said, "Religion, morality, and knowledge being necessary to good government and the happiness of mankind, schools and the means of education shall be forever encouraged." Thus, morality was linked to knowledge and the schools.

The federal government also becomes involved when the curriculum of a given school district seems to violate the establishment clause of the First Amendment. That was the issue in *Abington School District vs. Schempp.* (1963) In that case, unison recitations of the Lord's Prayer and daily readings from the Bible, even without additional comments, were deemed unconstitutional. In his majority opinion, Justice Clark objected to the "pervading religious character of the ceremony." Concurring, Justice Brennan mentioned "the religious nature of the exercises," (Bolmeier, p. 125) and Justice Goldberg "differentiated between the legal practice of teaching about religion as contrasted with the
illegal teaching of religion." (Bolmeier, p. 128) The same issue had surfaced a year earlier in *Engel vs. Vitale* where Justice Black had said that the daily recitation of a nondenominational official state prayer, even if students were allowed to remain silent or leave, was a "solemn avowal of divine faith and supplication for blessings of the Almighty" and, as such, breached Jefferson's "wall of separation between church and state." (Bolmeier, p. 112) The government must remain neutral in its position toward religion.

On the other hand, other dicta from the *Abington* case support the idea of moral and ethical education in the schools so long as its purpose is not religious indoctrination. Justice Clark maintained "that one's education is not complete without a study of comparative religion or the history of religion and its relationship to the advancement of civilization." He also implied that there is nothing wrong with "nonreligious moral inspiration" or using the Bible as "a reference for the teaching of secular subjects." (Bolmeier, p. 123) Justice Brennan took an even stronger stand. He wrote,

"The holding of the Court today plainly does not foreclose teaching about the Holy Scriptures or about the differences between religious sects in classes in literature or history. Indeed, whether or not the Bible is involved, it would be impossible to teach meaningfully many subjects in the social sciences or the humanities without some mention of religion." (Hudgins, p. 62)

Justice Brennan entrusted the decisions about what to teach and when to teach it to local educators who are experienced in
education and who can preserve local standards. Thus, the Court supported ethical education as something that does not violate the "wall of separation."

Ethical education is an important part of both a teacher's responsibility and his or her academic freedom in the classroom. The right of both students and teachers to freely pursue knowledge has been supported by the Supreme Court in two important decisions. In *Keyishian vs. Board of Regents* (1967), the Court defended academic freedom as a "transcendent value" that prevents a "pall of orthodoxy from descending over the classroom." In his opinion on the case, Justice Learned Hand said, "The classroom is peculiarly the 'market place of ideas.' The Nation's future depends upon leaders trained through wide exposure to the robust exchange of ideas which discovers truth 'out of a multitude of tongues' (rather) than through any kind of authoritative selection." (Gatti, p. 36) Although the *Keyishian* decision involved a university setting, *Albaum vs. Carey* (U.S. Dist. CT., NY, 1968) extended academic freedom to other public schools. The Court said,

"An environment of free inquiry is necessary for the majority of students who do not go on to college... The conditions which militate in favor of academic freedom--our historical commitment to free speech for all, the peculiar importance of academic inquiry to the progress of society, an atmosphere of open inquiry, feeling always free to challenge and improve established ideas--are relevant to elementary and secondary schools as well as to institutions of higher education." (Gatti, p. 37)
"Open inquiry" is crucial and permissible in mathematical and scientific studies, but science and mathematics cannot provide all the answers to questions about what is best for mankind. Are not moral and ethical inquiries just as important? Critical evaluation and reasoned judgment are also essential for answering serious moral questions. These intangible areas of intellectual pursuit are just as vital to our national (even planetary) well-being and should, in the name of academic freedom, be taught in public schools.

Several other cases apply to the issue of character education in public schools. The opinion written for Stephens vs. Bongart (N.J. Dist. Ct.) said "it is within the police power of the state to compel every resident of New Jersey so to educate his children that the light of American ideals will permeate the life of our future citizens." (van Geel, p. 19) Although the dicta could be narrowly interpreted to apply only to compulsory education, a broader interpretation could include character education as part of what children need if "the light of American ideals" will continue to shine on future generations. Similarly, Pierce vs. Society of Sisters (1925) implied moral education when it allowed schools to teach "studies plainly essential to good citizenship." (van Geel, p. 187)

Ultimately, what schools will be permitted to teach rests on how narrowly or broadly religion is defined. If the definition is narrow, then the schools will be able to teach
more, but the issue is still an ambiguous one. The question may also hinge on a state's expressed educational goals. In the case of Mozert vs. Hawkins City Public Schools (6th Cir. Ct., T.N., 1985), basal readers published by Holt, Rinehart, and Winston offended some parents because the stories they contained were purposely universal, world oriented, and non-Judeo-Christian. Although nothing in the books was deemed unconstitutional, the judgment allowed students to be exempted from using the books as long as they learned to read some other way. The decision was based on the expressed goals of the state, which included literacy and citizenship but not respect for alternate cultures. Had the last goal been stated and had the reading series been shown to be exemplary for teaching tolerance for cultural diversity, then the decision might have been different. Or perhaps, respect for alternate cultures will one day be considered a requisite of citizenship or a compelling interest of the state.

Conclusion

"Schools are for the education of the whole person, and it is the responsibility of the schools to inculcate character." (Coles, p. 41) American youth today need practice in making rational moral choices. Developing ethical habits and discussing the moral thinking of great philosophers of the past and the present can encourage students to examine the behavior of others so that they can also attempt to evaluate their own.
"It remains true that a society in which people are to be regarded as autonomous is also a society in which individuals will have to make moral decisions, and the basis for making those decisions should therefore be included as a part of education."
(O'Hear, p. 54)

American citizens cannot afford to neglect the moral development of their young people. And, according to the information presented here, residents of Clark County do not have to. Legally they can allow the Clark County School District to resume the leadership position in character education which American schools once held.
Notes

Please note: Subsequent references to any of the works listed below will be cited parenthetically in the text, e.g. (Goble, p. 23).


CHAPTER 4
WHAT IS CURRENTLY BEING DONE IN
THE CLARK COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT
TO ENCOURAGE CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT?

Thus far, this thesis has presented a synthesis of the thinking of certain influential philosophers and learning theorists on the nature of moral character and its development. It has also summarized relevant Nevada statutes and U.S. Supreme Court decisions which indicate the permissibility of teaching for character development in the public school setting. The thesis will now summarize what is being done in the Clark County School District (CCSD) to encourage the development of good character.

An approach to character development in CCSD began to evolve as part of a nationwide concern over an apparent lack of ethics which became obvious on a national scale by the Watergate scandal and the Vietnam War. While character education originated in the district as an assumed but unstated part of the "hidden" curriculum in literature and other secondary school classes, the CCSD curriculum now includes a code of ethics for both students and staff (see p. 84) and recommendations that objectives for character development be injected into course syllabi.

While it is understood that actual teaching practices do
not always coincide with official statements of policies and objectives, it is also assumed that administrative support for certain priorities does promote some degree of action toward teaching for prioritized goals. Thus, the information presented in this chapter is not based upon teacher observation in actual classroom settings but rather upon a survey of five course syllabi currently in use in CCSD secondary school literature classes.

The survey indicates that, at least as far back as 1981, stated course goals for literature classes included the development of what is generally considered to be the higher level thinking skills of application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. These skills require students to think beyond the surface level of the material presented to them and to glean a more complex understanding which can then be applied to situations beyond the context of the classroom. The underlying assumption is that a well developed understanding of literature can be useful as students learn to make choices and take action in real life. If it is a goal in the study of literature to affect and influence choices, then character education is also an assumed though unstated goal.

"Section 2--Literature" of CCSD's Distinguished Scholar Syllabus for English I contains several examples of objectives for the study of literature which are based on the implicit goal of character development. Objective 2.7 states that students will learn to analyze character motivation. This
analysis focuses on why a character in a literary selection behaves a certain way, and class discussion will assess the rightness or wrongness of the character's motives and behaviors and why his or her character developed as it did. Students judgments about morality will inevitably be involved. Similarly, when students evaluate themes (Objective 2.10) and determine conflict (Objective 2.9), they will make judgments about whether they agree or disagree with the author's theme and about whether characters involved in the conflict behaved appropriately. These judgments are the result of deliberation and moral reasoning, which has been shown in previous chapters to be part of the student's own character development. Objective 2.15 states that students will learn to evaluate literature "as it depicts life," and 2.19.1 calls for "personal decision," "judgment," and "weighed alternatives" in the evaluation of literature. Again, character education, whether directly stated as a goal or not, has been happening indirectly through the discussion of literature.

Two course goals found in CCSD's Short Story and Novel Syllabus make the implicit connection between character development and the study of literature more clear. Goal 11 is "to achieve a better understanding of self through identification with fictional characters," and Goal 18 is "to recognize universals of human experience." While recognizing "universals" and achieving a "better understanding of self" are valid ends in themselves, they are also the means through
which students can deepen their understanding of the human condition and of their connectedness to all mankind. If moral behavior often results from feelings of caring and empathy (see Chapter 2), then enabling students to develop those feelings is part of character education.

The survey of CCSD syllabi for secondary literature classes indicated that, while the type of selection studied varied from one class to another (e.g., from American Literature, which focuses on the works of traditional authors, to Modern Literature, which focuses on more contemporary selections), the goals and objectives in the study of all literature were essentially the same. All the syllabi called for application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation, and all assumed a connection between literature and real life decisions and action. It is fair to conclude that teaching to encourage character development has been part of the "hidden" curriculum in CCSD literature classes for a number of years.

In September, 1987, character education in the Clark County School District moved from the realm of the "hidden" curriculum and became part of the district's expressed goals and philosophy. Strategic Plan #8 resulted from the work of a community task force and includes the following Belief Statement:

"The mission of the Clark County School District, as a national education model, is to utilize all available resources to ensure full intellectual and character development of each individual as a responsible citizen who has the courage and ability to manage change effectively."
The committee highlighted five qualities which are fundamental to human conduct and upon which other traits of good character build. These qualities include integrity, respect, justice, responsibility, and courage. The Belief Statement briefly defines each quality and urges that they be "studied, exemplified, praised, and developed, not only in students, but also among staff, in school and out." As a culminating activity, the task force recommended specific strategies for teaching the five qualities at various grade levels.

As a result of Strategic Plan #8, CCSD has broadened its emphasis on ethical conduct and character development. The Teachers' Handbook urges teachers both to develop curriculum concerning character development and to personally exemplify the five fundamental qualities of human conduct. According to Assistant Superintendent Ray Morgan, a student code of ethics is now included in student handbooks and published in the August edition of the Reporter, a parent newsletter which is published several times each year by the district. Morgan stated that it is the students' responsibility to demonstrate the qualities of good character and that these virtues are considered as part of the criteria for earning citizenship grades at the secondary level. Moreover, character awards and specific character development programs are now being used at some elementary and secondary schools. For example, Garrett Junior High School in Boulder City has added a new elective
course entitled "Self and Society" which encourages students to respect themselves and others and to deliberate about what appropriate ethical behavior entails.

It is an objective of the district's Curriculum and Instruction Department that, as course syllabi are revised, they will come to include objectives directly relating to the development of good character. While the district originally targeted the social studies curriculum as the logical starting point for the infusion of objectives for character education, Morgan stated that the English curriculum and other areas of study will also be modified to include stated goals and objectives for character development.
Notes


CHAPTER 5
RECOMMENDATIONS

The Clark County School District has already taken the largest step toward providing character education for its students by making ethics a priority. It has mandated that all students and staff members will strive to incorporate the moral virtues integrity, respect, courage, justice, and responsibility into their instruction and behavior. These virtues are fundamental to human conduct and to the well being of societies. Thus, it is both admirable and essential that the school district recognizes them as necessary universal values.

However, there is more that can be done to encourage moral development. This chapter will suggest eleven recommendations for enhancing CCSD's curriculum for character development, together with suggestions for their implementation.

1. It is recommended that character education in the Clark County School District continue on the level of universal principles. As stated in Chapter 3, principles are the foundation of character education in the public school setting. The classroom is not the place for preaching or proselytizing. Neither religious nor political ideologies are to be presented as truth because they are personal or
sectarian, contextual rather than more broadly human. The virtues of integrity, respect, courage, justice, and responsibility are not sectarian; they are cross-cultural and valuable for the well being of mankind. Specific dogmas or sectarian rules of conduct lack this quality. Because of the ethnic and cultural diversity which characterizes the United States and which is also apparent on an international level, character education should focus on broad, universally accepted virtues and principles.

For example, integrity is regarded as a fundamental human virtue. While the term means being true to oneself and standing firm against pressure to compromise personal beliefs, it also suggests honesty in communication with others. Without honesty, true communication, even at its most basic levels, is impossible. If a speaker has no moral obligation to tell the truth and to refrain from lying, then the listener can have no confidence in the message he hears. Rather than accepting the words at face value, the listener is forced into the position of having to weigh the words and search them for double meanings and deceit, making it impossible to concentrate on the information, the argument, or the feeling being communicated. Teachers must not lie to students and must not tolerate lying.

One strategy to help students discover the value of honesty and integrity is to introduce a relevant hypothetical situation for class discussion. For example, the teacher
could describe a transaction between two friends in which one boy buys a walkman tape player from another boy who insists that the walkman works perfectly but needs new batteries. Taking his friend's word at face value, the first boy hands over his entire allowance for a month and takes the walkman home, puts in new batteries, and tries to listen to his favorite tape. He then discovers that the tape player is broken and that he has been lied to. At this point, the teacher opens discussion on how students would feel and react in this situation. Students can also be encouraged to relate similar experiences in which they lied or were lied to. The goal of the discussion would be to have students arrive at the conclusion that honesty is a basic necessity in human interaction. Other virtues or principles could be similarly illustrated and discussed.

2. A second recommendation is that CCSD increase its efforts to assure that teachers in the district model the ethical qualities which students are expected to develop. While it goes without saying that teachers should be well versed in their subject areas, it is also important for teachers to be worthy of the emulation of their students. "We must realize that, ultimately, it is the teacher who is the pivot of the whole educational system." Therefore,

"schools should employ teachers and administrators who exemplify the good, strong character, the courage, and the compassionate intellectuality that serve to inspire students and [other] teachers alike."
If adults in general and especially teachers adopt a "Do as I say, not as I do" approach to ethics, then students will see ethical values either as hypocritical or as irrelevant to adult, outside-of-school behavior. The goal of character education is to prepare students to function as concerned, responsible citizens capable of and willing to make reasoned moral judgments. Schools should function as mini-cultures that value, encourage, and practice thoughtful, ethical behavior in both students and staff. Perhaps teachers in the district could be honored with a letter of commendation or award of some sort for exhibiting exemplary character.

3. It is further recommended that CCSD's emphasis on the five virtues essential to human well-being be expanded to include a statement about the importance of caring for others. While caring in the manner explained by Nel Noddings is implicit in the virtues of responsibility and respect, it is important enough to be stated directly and to be practiced by students as part of their formal education at school. The quality of respect for persons involves more than refraining from treating people as objects and obstacles. Respect should also entail the recognition of individual needs. If a person has value, then his or her need for care must be acknowledged. Teachers cannot merely supply information or demonstrate skills; they must also model caring behavior and provide opportunities for students to practice caring within the school setting.
Appropriate practice can happen in many ways during the school day. A class can be organized into subgroups or pairs within which students assume care giving responsibilities for each other. Older students can act as mentors to younger students. A class or a school as a whole, including teachers and other staff members, can provide outreach activities into the community. Points or academic credit of some sort could be earned through participation in community welfare projects. These activities should be required and should happen during the school day because then they will be seen by the students as equal in importance to their academic subjects. The activities will give students practice in being care givers and will help promote the feeling of interconnectedness which Bellah, Hirsch, and Bloom say is necessary for the survival of American culture. It is recommended that the ethics of caring be included as a stated priority in CCSD's program for character education.

4. A fourth recommendation is that CCSD revise its emphasis on character education at the secondary level so that developing objectives for character growth in literature classes becomes as important as emphasizing character development in history and other social studies classes. While character education is an appropriate goal in all subject areas, the potential for it in literature classes has remained largely underdeveloped. There are several reasons for focusing on literature classes.
For one thing, literature provides an array of characters who can be "taken as representative of the ideal, the exemplars." While students do imitate and emulate real adults around them or historical figures who exemplify heroism and selfless behavior, they also can identify with and try to be like the characters they find in literature. Whether these characters are heroic and larger than life like Ulysses in *The Odyssey* or flawed but admirable like George in *Of Mice and Men*, they are memorable and can serve as role models, especially when their motives and attributes are examined in a class discussion led by a capable, open-minded teacher. Many of the authors mentioned on E. D. Hirsch's list of what literate Americans know (e.g. Shakespeare, Twain, Steinbeck, and Hemingway) have created such memorable characters and are recommended for continued use in CCSD literature classes.

Another reason literature classes should be more heavily relied upon to help develop ethical reasoning skills is that literature is a "contributor to reflective awareness." In other words, literature encourages deliberation. It allows individuals to imaginatively and empathetically consider a variety of perspectives and viewpoints. The basis of literature is conflict, and where there is a protagonist, there is an antagonist, be it another human being, the natural elements, society, progress, or an opposing motive or desire within the protagonist himself. There are at least two sides to consider, two "arguments" to weigh and evaluate and judge.
There are perhaps considerations of extenuating circumstances, benefits, or harm resulting from an action. According to Richard Paul, facts, principles, and perspectives all come into play in making a moral judgment. Literature can help students sort out their own beliefs and can guide students past the "universal blind spot," or tendency toward personal subjectivity, in their natures as they try to decide what is right and true and moral. Literature is "the search for truth through impressions, observations, word sketches, and illustrations." (Noddings, p. 87) As such, it is an important companion to the search for truth through the study of history or the pursuit of scientific knowledge.

According to Anthony O'Hear, it is in the study of literature and art "that school has its greatest contribution to make to the moral education of its pupils." This is true because literature and art train the perceptions and elicit feelings of compassion. According to Vivian Rosenberg, "Literature evokes pain that philosophy and critical thinking cannot." The reader has vicarious experiences that enable him to better understand human situations and develop "intelligent sensitivity." (O'Hear, p. 126) The reader learns to do what is good vicariously because moral questions inevitably arise in literature. Although O'Hear believes that the rational assessment of principles is important, he says that literature helps provide a missing and necessary component to moral education, that is, a way of "perceiving
situations and of having feelings in them." (O'Hear, p. 128)

The moral sensibility and shared sense of humanity which
develop from literature provide the impetus to apply ethical
principles in one's own behavior. It is through art and
literature "that people's hopes, desires, and ambitions can be
transformed and widened." (O'Hear, p. 53) For example, the
poem "If" by Rudyard Kipling might inspire a young reader to
strive to develop the qualities which Kipling attributes to a
good man. The reader's ambitions may become wider after his
exposure to Kipling's words.

Allan Bloom pushes the point even further. According to
Bloom,

"The refinement of the mind's eye that permits it to
see the delicate distinctions among men, among their
deeds and their motives, and constitutes real taste,
is impossible without the assistance of literature
in the grand style."3

By "literature in the grand style," Bloom means classical
literature in the Western European sense, but quality
literature from other cultural traditions also allows readers
to develop taste. The word "taste" as Bloom uses it does not
mean mere personal preference, as in the taste for chocolate
over strawberry ice cream. Rather, it suggests moral judgment
and discrimination. Literature helps students develop the
ability to discriminate.

5. While fiction and biography often come to mind as
appropriate reading in literature classes, essays and other
types of nonfiction can also be included. Therefore, another
recommendation is that the curriculum for moral education in CCSD secondary literature classes be expanded to include selections from Aristotle, Plato, Montaigne, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Gandhi, E. M. Forster, and others who have written about the nature of man and morality. If passages are selected carefully to accommodate students' reading abilities, and if reading is guided by pre-reading and post-reading activities, then the selections will be comprehensible even to high school students of average ability. The moral principles presented by philosophers can then be discussed in reference to the fictional dilemmas penned by famous authors.

6. It is further recommended that literature teachers and others be in-serviced in the methods of Socratic questioning and learn to engage in genuine dialogue. This is important because the way class discussions are facilitated has a direct bearing on how effective discussions will be in stimulating reflection and deliberation on moral and ethical principles. Thomas Jackson of the University of Hawaii advocates a nonthreatening sort of "maieutic" reasoning represented by the acronym "WRAITEC":

What is the problem or issue to be discussed?
Reasons why it should be discussed
Assumptions made, if any
Inferences and implications
Truth discovered, if any
Examples
Counter-examples;

Jackson asserts that the best questions for Socratic discussions are those which have no easy answers. For
example, a Socratic discussion for adults might focus on finding the best solution to the problem of how and where to store nuclear waste. The teacher does not guide the discussion toward a predetermined end but is a participant and facilitator who is as unaware of the outcome the discussion will create as the students are. However, the teacher insists upon and models courteous, open-minded listening and praises and encourages deliberation and the willingness to examine a variety of viewpoints.

7. A seventh recommendation is that teachers provide students with some sort of strategy and criteria for making ethical judgments. For example, Vincent Ruggiero has developed the following five-step strategy for meaningful discourse on ethical issues:

1. Decide what obligations are present.
2. Identify relevant ideals or principles.
3. Assign priorities if obligations conflict with one another or with ideals.
4. Determine many possible actions and their immediate and long-range consequences.
5. Use critical thinking to decide upon the appropriate action.

The strategy is valuable because it attempts to objectify a process which too often results in students trying to support their opinions by simply arguing that they have a right to their own opinions. Step 2 of the strategy focuses on universal moral principles, and Step 5 enables students to consider examples and counter-examples as they evaluate alternative solutions or actions based on reasoned deliberation. These steps help raise the discussion above the
level of ethical relativism because, as students evaluate and rank the solutions generated in Step 4, they make judgments that some actions are more morally acceptable than others. Although Ruggiero's strategy seems to emphasize action while Jackson's "WRAITEC" focuses on open-minded deliberation, the two approaches compliment each other and could be used to examine similar issues depending upon the purpose of the class activity.

8. The fact that Step 5 of Ruggiero's strategy calls for critical thinking on the part of students brings to mind an eighth recommendation. Although behavior is affected by emotions, and although empathy for the needs of others seems to provide the impetus to act according to ethical principles, it is still true that man is a potentially rational creature who can use reason to deliberate about and evaluate moral issues. The skills developed in the critical thinking programs already in place in CCSD classrooms can be applied to and expanded within a curriculum for character development. Ethical instruction helps students learn to clarify and define issues and to defer judgment until more information is available and weighed for relevance. The instruction encourages divergent thinking, imaginativeness, and fair mindedness. Students are urged to ask relevant questions, apply a criteria, identify assumptions, recognize logical fallacies and insufficient evidence, and evaluate arguments. Therefore, it is recommended that the curriculum for character
education be further developed in conjunction and harmony with the existing curriculum for critical thinking.

9. It is further recommended that students be taught the skill of metacognition, that is, thinking about one's own thinking, as an integral part of the character education and critical thinking curricula. If students can learn about how they think as well as about what they think, then perhaps they can learn to think better. Metacognition helps students recognize the ways thinking goes awry. Students can learn to identify faulty logic, instinctive responses, and self-deception in the thinking and behavior of literary characters and their peers in the classroom. Students can then be encouraged to turn the magnifying glass of metacognition upon their own thinking patterns. They can learn to be tentative about ideas, to play with thoughts the way a baby plays with a new toy.

10. Additionally, it is recommended that objectives for character development be formulated and included in secondary school literature class syllabi. A preliminary list of objectives is as follows:

Students will learn to subject their own ideas to scrutiny. (metacognition)

Students will develop an interest in the views of others.

Students will recognize the tentative nature of ideas.

Students will become more comfortable with the reconceptualization of ideas.
Students will learn to defend their already scrutinized viewpoints and to refute arguments.

The curriculum will strive to create in students a passion for the search for truth.

Students will develop a sensitivity to moral issues.

Students will develop a sense of personal integrity within a framework of cultural connectedness.

11. The final recommendation reiterates the importance of the teacher to the development of student character. This is not to say that teachers are more important to the ethical development of young people than parents are. On the contrary, character education will be most effective if schools solicit and encourage the support and participation of parents and other family members. However, teachers and students spend enough hours together during the day that the teacher is bound to have some sort of effect on the student. Eminently qualified professionals who have a true calling to teach and who can also serve as caring, ethical role models for students must be sought, trained, and maintained in all areas of the curriculum. An ongoing staff development program in literature-based ethical instruction and moral deliberation is recommended, especially for literature teachers, if the Clark County School District wishes to develop the potential for character education which is possible in secondary literature classes. It is the position of this author that to do so is the next logical step in helping students internalize a code of ethics based on the qualities of integrity, respect, courage, justice, and responsibility.
Notes

Please note: Subsequent references to any of the sources listed below will be noted parenthetically in the text, e.g. (Narayan, p. 24).


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