

SCHOOL BUSING: A Moral Development Viewpoint

Ronald Harshman

Four tests of logic are suggested for determining the validity of a person's reasoning with respect to the issue of busing.

Two responsibilities are currently facing public education: (a) the responsibility for more fully integrating our society through school busing and racially balanced schools, and (b) the responsibility for the moral development of students. To discharge these responsibilities, curriculum leaders will be forced to play a more active role in the decision-making process on social issues and to become more deeply concerned about creating an atmosphere of social justice and moral integrity within the school.

Leaders in moral development and values education have provided guidelines for the inspection of moral dilemmas within the curriculum at both the elementary and secondary levels. However, curriculum leaders have been hesitant to apply these guidelines in the process of making decisions on current social and educational issues. The guidelines are here related to the discussion of one issue, school busing, to illustrate their application.

Five Attributes of Social Justice

Primary to the area of moral development is the concept of social justice. Five attributes have been identified as defining social justice (Kohlberg, 1971, pp. 192-93; Kohlberg, 1967, p. 182). The five attributes are:

1. Equality: The treatment of each person's claim, including one's own, equally, regardless of the person.
2. Reciprocity: The treatment of exchange in a contractual manner.
3. Benevolence: Consideration for the welfare of all others.
4. Liberty: The freedom of each individual to participate in the decisions governing the quality of his or her life.
5. The treatment of each of the four previous attributes as principles that are distinct from the expectations and rules of one's own group.

A moral and just resolution of the integration issue requires that the solution represent the application of the five attributes Kohlberg identifies. A just solution must treat each



Anti-busing demonstrators are held at bay by Boston police, September 12, 1974. Photo: UPI.

person's claim equally, provide for the contractual exchange of benefits and sacrifices, consider the welfare of all others, and provide each person affected an opportunity to participate in the decision-making process.

Moral-development educators have stated that the process of moral development cannot take place in an unjust atmosphere. If this claim is accepted, then violation of the principles of social justice in making decisions on school integration not only implements an unjust integration policy, but inhibits the moral development of students. Educational leaders who fail to insist on a just solution to the integration problem fail to meet both responsibilities society has assigned to them.

In the area of values education, Coombs and Meux (1971) have developed a set of tests to determine the validity of student reasoning in the discussion of value questions. These tests should be applied to public-policy and educational decisions. It is the responsibility of educational

leaders to assure that the tests have been applied to these decisions. If a decision will pass logical tests of validity, then, according to the author, it will also meet the criterion of social justice and improve the possibilities of moral development within the educational system.

Test I: New-Cases Test

The new-cases test requires that an individual state his or her criterion for making a value judgment and that the criterion be tested by considering new cases to which the same criterion can be applied. If the same judgment (conclusion) does not logically follow from applying the criterion to a new case, then the criterion is found inadequate.

Example: In a report on public attitudes on school busing (Nygren, 1976), the following reason for school busing was cited, "It is ridiculous to bus any kids five miles when they have a school next door." Restated in the form of classic logic, the criterion is: "All busing of children,



who live next door to a school, is ridiculous."

To apply the new-cases test, cases of busing children, who live next door to a school, are given and the person making the judgment is asked to state the conclusion. To be logical, the conclusion in each case must be: "Busing is ridiculous." Otherwise, the reasoning is invalid.

Example: Johnny (a child) lives next door to an elementary school and is bused five miles to a different elementary school to receive special help in speech correction. Is the busing of Johnny ridiculous?

It is common for some individuals to reason that the busing of Johnny for speech correction is not ridiculous, but that busing for integration is ridiculous. To remain logically consistent such persons must admit to using the criterion that: "All busing—for integration purposes—of children, who live next door to a school, is ridiculous."

A person using this criterion does not oppose the busing of stu-

dents who live next door to schools, but rather, the busing of such students for integration purposes. Such opposition violates the principles of social justice discussed earlier and cannot be allowed to influence policy decisions.

Test II: Role-Exchange Test

The role-exchange test asks the person making a value judgment to state the criterion for the judgment and to test the validity of his or her reasoning by exchanging roles with individuals affected by the judgment. To be logically consistent, the same value judgment must follow from the reasoning, regardless of the individual case to which the criterion is applied.

Example: In the Iowa poll cited earlier (Nygren, *op. cit.*), a laborer stated: "Busing does not achieve anything and it causes hatred." Restated in conditional logic form, the criterion is: "If an action does not achieve anything and causes hatred, then it is bad." The minor premise

Students in Prince George's County, Maryland, eagerly run to catch buses at the end of another school day. Photo: The Washington Post.



YOUR SCHOOL: DREAM AND REALITY

SCHOOL should be and can be a continuously fulfilling experience.

- Here, every child must learn to take pride in his or her own person.
- School is a place where the child ought to share with others—pupils, teachers, and staff—love and appreciation for their common work place.
- At school one learns, feels, and grows. Here, knowledge and character develop. Here, one thinks, plans, and experiments.

At school one shares and develops ideas and innovations with others.

AICE CAN HELP THE PUPIL, TEACHER, AND SCHOOL IN THIS GROWTH AND UNDERSTANDING.

Proof: Numerous testimonials, including this one from Dr. Ivan Fitzwater, Superintendent of North East ISD, San Antonio, Texas; Chairman of the Board, National Academy for School Executives; and Chairman of the National Conference of Suburban Schools:

We are delighted with the results. Independent research and the overwhelming thrust of teacher opinion convinces us that the program is effective in building positive character traits in children. The materials are of the highest professional calibre, lively and exciting.

See also commendatory editorial in the June 14, 1976 issue of *U.S. News & World Report*, as well as the August 1976 *Thomas Jefferson Research Center Letter*.

AICE character education curriculum kits are available for kindergarten through grade five. Instructional materials for each grade provide lessons for the entire school year. The kindergarten kit includes filmstrips, teacher's guides, flip cards, story wheel, and teacher's handbook, and is bilingual. Level A-E kits include teacher's guide, posters, activity sheets, evaluation instruments, and teacher's handbook.

Cost for kindergarten kit is \$59.95 each; Levels A-E \$39.95 each, less 10% on orders of 10 or more. For Texas delivery, add 5% sales tax. Prices include postage and handling. Sample materials for each level are available free.

AICE materials are annotated by the Texas Area Learning Resource Center and are also on the base retrieval system of the National Instructional Materials Information System (NIMIS). In some instances it may be possible to purchase these materials with special funding for the mentally, emotionally, or physically handicapped.

AMERICAN INSTITUTE FOR CHARACTER EDUCATION
P. O. Box 12617, San Antonio, TX 78212
Phone (512) 734-5091

is: "Busing does not achieve anything and causes hatred." The conclusion must be: "Busing is bad."

The role-reversal test asks: "If you were a black child and were to receive a better education in an integrated school, would busing be bad?" To be logically consistent with the criterion used, the conclusion must be that busing is good if a better education results (busing achieves something or it is not the case that busing achieves nothing). The evaluation of busing can now be conducted on the basis of improved education, an item on which data can be gathered and a more objective decision can be achieved.

Test III: Universal-Consequences Test

The universal-consequences test asks the question: "What if everyone acted by a given value?" The concern is to state the criterion for value judgments in the form of a principle that applies to all cases equally. An example of a universal-consequences test follows:

Example: One of the reasons for supporting school busing given in the Iowa poll is: "Attending an integrated school is good experience for children." The criterion stated in conditional logic form is: "If an action provides good experience for children, then the action should be continued." The minor premise is: "School busing for integration provides good experience for children." The logical conclusion must be: "School busing should be continued."

The universal-consequences test asks: "What if everyone believed that actions that provided good experience for children should be continued?" To be consistent, the person in the example given must agree that it would be good for

everyone to believe in continuing good experience for children.

A result of this application of the universal-consequences test is to focus attention on the statement: "School busing for integration provides good experience for children." To further test the reasoning of the judgment, a definition of "good experience" may be requested. Given a definition of "good experience" and data on the results of school busing, the statement can be tested for accuracy. If the data provide evidence that school busing does provide good experience for children, then the logical conclusion must be, "School busing should be continued."

Test IV: Subsumption

The subsumption test asks for the criterion of a value judgment to be subsumed, or placed as a minor premise or conclusion, under a more general principle. For the criterion to be valid, the syllogism produced must be logically valid.

Example: A woman reported in the Iowa poll that school busing was good because, "All races should have a right to equal schools." If asked for a more general principle, the woman might state the attribute of social justice: "The claims of all people should be treated equally, regardless of the person." The syllogism produced is:

- *Major Premise:* The claims of all people should be treated equally, regardless of the person.
- *Minor Premise:* Education is a claim of all people.
- *Conclusion:* Therefore, the education of each person should be treated equally, regardless of the person.

The four tests reviewed are tests for logical validity in reasoning on value issues. Testing value judg-

ments for logical validity assures that the judgments are based on principles—that they are statements of criteria that apply equally to all cases. Judgments of social and educational issues on the basis of principles are necessary if we are to maintain an atmosphere of social justice and provide for moral development within our schools.

As educational leaders, we must be concerned that we apply these tests to our own reasoning and the reasoning of others as we develop solutions to the school busing and integration problem. If we fail to apply these tests, then we fail the responsibilities to more fully integrate our society and to provide for the moral development of students.

References

Jerald R. Coombs and Milton Meux. "Procedures for Value Analysis." In: Lawrence E. Metcalf, editor. *Values Education: Rationale, Strategies, and Procedures*. 42nd Yearbook of the National Council for the Social Studies. Washington, D.C.: the Council, 1971.

Lawrence Kohlberg. "From Is to Ought: How To Commit the Naturalistic Fallacy and Get Away with It in the Study of Moral Development." In: Theodore Mischel, editor. *Cognitive Development and Epistemology*. New York: Academic Press, Inc., 1971.

Lawrence Kohlberg. "Moral and Religious Education and the Public Schools: A Development View." In: Theodore R. Sizer, editor. *Religion and Public Education*. Boston, Massachusetts: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1967.

Bruce Nygren. "Opposition to Busing Strong, Iowa Poll Finds." *Des Moines Sunday Register*, April 25, 1976, p. 20A.



Ronald Harshman is Coordinator of Project SCATE (Students Concerned About Tomorrow's Environment), Iowa Department of Public Instruction, Des Moines.

Copyright © 1977 by the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development. All rights reserved.