



MORAL EDUCATION:

*Seven Years
Before the
Mast*

Research and experimental programs show that schools can promote moral development, but much remains to be done.

RALPH MOSHER

Frank Brown characterized the 1970s in American public education as a decade of the bland leading the bland. *Au contraire!* Moral and value education has been a particularly active field of research and development. The work in Brookline and Cambridge, Massachusetts, with which I have been associated, has produced strong echoes in many parts of the country. Echoes is too patronizing a word. Several programs, for example the Tacoma Public Schools' "Ethical Quest," have far surpassed Brookline and Cambridge in their scale. Thus, in summarizing what we have learned about moral education, I do not suggest that it is from the Massachusetts' studies alone. And in identifying, to say nothing of rank-ordering, the results of a decade, I am very conscious of the fact that beauty is in the eyes of the beholder. In so doing I speak for myself, not for the movement.

First and foremost, we have found that we can promote students' moral reasoning. Moral judgment—the ability to think critically about what is right and wrong, one's obligations and rights—is an important part, although by no means all, of morality. Which part is still an unsettled issue. There have been enough studies now to persuade me that moral reasoning

can be stimulated through classroom curriculum and teaching—in American history, social studies, English, law, psychology, special courses on the Holocaust, and so forth (Mosher, 1980). Children or adolescents who participate in school or classroom governance, who cooperate in building social community in school, also grow morally and in other equally important ways. Finally, in those rarer instances where we have been able to tell parents what we know about children's moral development and how to promote it, the children have benefited (Stanley, 1979).

I do not think this consistent evidence of moral growth in response to education is a fluke. It has been found too many times in too many different groups of children (and in too many parts of the country) to be explained as a Hawthorne effect, scorer unreliability, or teaching to the Kohlberg test. That moral reasoning can be promoted in public schooling without detriment to "academic" achievement and that we can say so with our own good conscience is no small accomplishment for one decade. Indeed, this is probably the most important thing we have achieved as a movement. What we have as a result is a body of evidence that we are *not* out

Ralph Mosher is Program Coordinator, Counseling Education, Boston University, Boston, Massachusetts.

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on a hollow limb as, for example, the values clarification movement is.

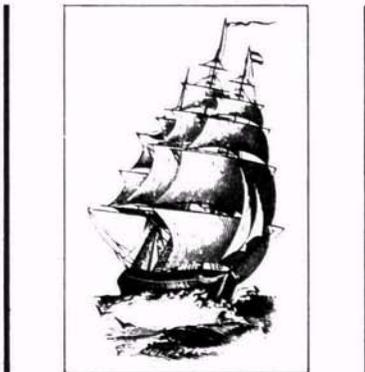
Along the way to establishing that moral development can be promoted by education we have also learned that it is possible, although difficult, to do respectable curriculum research in schools. Town and gown can cooperate and with benefit to both. Teachers can be significant partners in creating the curriculum and pedagogy of moral education. Much interesting curriculum has been developed and field tested with children in Brookline, Pittsburgh, Tacoma, and elsewhere. Most of it is indigenous and properly so; some of it has been published commercially for wider use.

A rather precise pedagogy for classroom moral discussion has emerged and a great deal has been learned about staff development for moral education. Films, filmstrips, and workshop materials are available, and a national consortium of trainers of moral educators is centered at Carnegie-Mellon University in Pittsburgh. They constitute the critical mass for a major teacher training and dissemination effort at the secondary school level in the near future.

In the process of creating elementary, high school, and college programs of moral education we have learned much about the underlying strands of human growth (morality, self) we want to promote. For example, immigrant adolescents are not behind American students in moral or ego development; ego development is much more subject to stimulation by education than was once believed possible; developmental stages are relevant to social behavior in classrooms; developmental stages very much influence how students and faculty will understand and practice school democracy or justice; theories of development are not theories of education, and so on. Similarly, the capacity of adolescents and very young children to decide the rules by which they will live together in school and generally to act accordingly has been amply illustrated in these practices. This, among other things, underscores how much developmental norms reflect the current opportunities our children are given to learn such competencies in the home and school.

Finally, by going into the arena of school and classroom, we have begun

to synthesize the concepts from education, philosophy, political science, and psychology which can inform major applied research on how schools as institutions affect the cognitive, moral, ego, and sociopolitical development of children. An equally important applied challenge is whether that effect can be enhanced by giving students greater political and social participation in their schooling. Does it contribute to children's development to hand them prepackaged rules, sanctions, social arrangements for learning, curriculum, pedagogy, and institutional



forms? Higgins (1980) says no, emphatically. To the contrary, where moral education entails thinking about and deciding upon real issues in the lives of children, classrooms, schools, or families, its effects are greatest. That seems to be the clear message of the research of Grimes, Rundle, Stanley, and Sullivan (Mosher, 1980). The data from the Cambridge Cluster School are more equivocal (Higgins, 1980), but we haven't studied enough democratic schools. And the particularity of our focus to date on gains in moral reasoning and collective moral norms has distracted us from other effects. Deeper thinking about one's education, politics, and society, and more disposition to participate actively in all three were outcomes stumbled upon at Brookline's alternative high school, School-Within-A-School (Mosher, 1980). Thus the questions, if not the answers, for a next generation of applied research become progressively clearer.

Even the moderately attentive or discerning reader will have recognized the miles we have to go before we sleep. Therefore, I want to suggest some of the things we most need

to learn in a next generation of research and development of school programs in moral education.

Let me begin with three conundrums in our studies to date. First, the average moral growth effected by "one-shot" (that is, semester long) courses in moral education is one fourth to one third of a Kohlberg stage in approximately one half the children who participate. Why are we affecting only half the students is puzzling. Perhaps it results from our present largely intuitive (and, therefore, for many pupils random) match of educational material and developmental stage. Is it simply easier to promote growth in those students already in transition? Do some students, by reason of intelligence, verbal ability, or class participation simply learn more, as they typically do in other "subjects"? The questions aren't hard to come by. The answers will take a little longer.

There are related problems. A relatively small proportion of the children in any school or school system have been included in such experimental programs. Also, we have more cumulative evidence of gains in moral reasoning in adolescents than we do in elementary school children. Yet there are indications that the effect of systematic moral education may be greatest on younger children and those at a "natural" point of transition (for example, adolescents moving from Kohlberg's Stage 2 to 3) (Stuhr and Rundle, 1980). The evidence of longitudinal studies is skimpy but encouraging (Dowd, 1978; Stanley, 1979). It suggests that a little bit of moral education can go a long way. Once triggered, growth in moral reasoning may have considerable momentum. But these are educated guesses in need of much careful study.

Second, our present evidence is that the best classroom curriculum and teaching seems as effective as the best "just community" school in promoting growth in moral reasoning. Students in the Cambridge Cluster School averaged a gain of one fourth of a moral stage (22.5 points) per year over two years. Some 40 percent of the students, however, did not grow, or regressed; the principal movement was from moral Stage 2 to 3. No control data are available as to how much of this growth is natural and how much is the result of the

school's programs (Higgins, 1980). But the average development of Cluster School students was essentially equivalent to that found in the best Stone Foundation moral discussion classes in Boston and Pittsburgh (Kohlberg, 1980). "Best" classroom moral education means the following: well-articulated moral dilemmas are discussed within existing or innovative subject matter; approximately 20 class periods are devoted to such discussions; the teacher is

ego development are related to how he/she will behave toward classmates and the teacher and who influences whom in classrooms. Fenton has found that school grades improve in civic education programs. Admittedly, these are all straws in the wind. Of one thing I'm sure, however. As we accumulate such evidence concerning the practical consequences of children's moral growth for them, the school, or the home, our constituency will enlarge.

Ohio State) have always claimed to build character.

Similarly, a major effort to involve elementary school teachers in moral education is required. My experience is that they are very much attuned to children's development and the education to promote it. Morality obviously can't wait until high school. Furthering teachers' own development as the aim of their professional education is a promising innovation of Sprinthall (1978) at Minnesota and Parsons at Utah. However, no teacher training effort commensurate with that planned by Fenton for high school teachers is underway, or even talked about, for elementary schools. Years ago, Gross said the principal was the key to change in the school. A few pioneering studies on how to promote administrators' moral thinking have been done. More need to be.

Making children's moral development the responsibility of the school as a whole (along with the home and the church) is essential for several reasons. Primary among them is the evidence that moral growth seems to occur in small but progressive increments. No more can children's mental health be left to school psychologists than can morality be left to any one group of teachers (or, for that matter, to the schools alone). And teachers haven't stayed with moral education programs. Kohlberg (1980) says that only one of 20 teachers in the Stone Foundation study in the Boston area was still teaching moral dilemmas a year after the project ended. He cites this as an example of a successful operation in which the patient died. In Brookline, which I know best, the attrition of active project teachers and counselors since 1973 has been heavy. More than half of the original participating faculty are gone, many to major leadership roles elsewhere. If drop-out is one teacher malaise, "burn out" is another. Cumulative fatigue because of the unusual demands made on faculty time and energy in alternative democratic schools unquestionably was a very real problem for teachers and the institutional stability of the Cambridge Cluster School and Brookline's School-Within-A-School.

"Administrative support" (tangible financial and educational backing by the superintendent, school board, and principal); the opportunity for project teachers to disseminate their

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able to recognize moral stages in the students' talk and is effective in probing their thinking; a cross section of moral stages exists among the students.

Educating teachers to provide such conditions for moral growth, while anything but simple, probably is more immediately practical and will require less absolute effort than to democratize classrooms and schools. Both kinds of experience, however, are necessary to any comprehensive moral education program.

Third, the practical consequences, in school or out of it, of the growth in children's moral reasoning induced by moral education are largely unknown. One reason is that we have concentrated on measuring increases in moral thought as a be-all and end-all. Increments, even small ones, in human thinking unquestionably are important per se. Schooling has always argued that teaching thinking is its basic purpose. But we badly need to know what, if anything, goes with an average gain of one-quarter stage in moral reasoning. From Travers' (1980) unrelated research, I learned that Brookline's School-Within-A-School students think more critically about their education and want to participate in formulating its conditions; are more concerned about local, state, and federal government; and participate far more extensively in political and social action in the community than do other students at Brookline High School (Mosher, 1980). Masterson's (1980) data say that a student's stages of moral and

How to create a *coherent, progressive program of moral education* for children, adolescents, and young adults will be the central curriculum challenge of the years ahead. Class meetings to decide upon rules and discipline in grade five, discussion of the Holocaust in grade eight, role playing the constitutional debates in American history in grade 11, and political action on behalf of local candidates for office in grade 12 are not a coherent, systematic education for the moral choices facing young people. They are essentially ad hoc and determined more by what teachers volunteer to participate than by any overall conception of moral growth or an education for it. Yet even these patchwork experiences are more than we offer young people currently. The point is that we need to coordinate curriculum, teaching, and student participation in school governance with parent, family, and religious education if we are to promote moral growth comprehensively.

The need to draw other secondary school curriculum areas (for example, the sciences, mathematics, health, physical education, athletics) into moral education is apparent. Or is it vice versa? Morality is too important to be left to social studies teachers. I don't doubt that other teachers feel the same way. Many of the moral issues (such as nuclear power, endangered species, abortion) which preoccupy young people are the "subject matter" of science; the playing fields of America (if not

materials and train other teachers; larger scale teacher training such as that being organized by Fenton at Carnegie-Mellon may all contribute to the staying power of second generation programs in moral education. Having them wholly owned by the school system and its teachers seems to me to be of the essence. Nonetheless, the attrition facing such programs and their key personnel, especially when the soft money runs out, is apparent. Widening the membership may be part of the solution.

My final general point is that we need to "mainstream" moral education in the years ahead. A number of us now are saying that we must look for the effects of what we are doing on more aspects of students' development than gains in moral reasoning. Do students behave differently—either in the classroom or outside it? How? Masterson (1980) has found that students' stages of development affect how they behave toward classmates and teachers. Do students change their social behavior? Travers finds that they do. These findings are as important a validation of the impact of the School-Within-A-School as are the gains in moral reasoning reported for these students by DiStefano (1980). Does ego development of adolescents, a broader strand of growth than any other, move in tandem with moral growth? The tentative answer seems to be yes, and more so. Does the student's sense of competence grow in any way because of moral education or participation in school democracy? I have observed greater student self assurance in chairing meetings, in speaking publicly, in serving on committees to hire new faculty, in assuming leadership, and in confronting faculty and peers on the part of many adolescents in the School-Within-A-School. But our singular pursuit of gains in moral reasoning at the .01 level, or "the moral atmosphere" of the school, has distracted us from many of the other effects we may, or may not, be having. It is time to open the lens through which we view and measure our world.

There is a converse. A decade ago, I first bumped into moral development as a by-product of teaching counseling to high school students. It was serendipitous. Only later did I

understand how teaching empathy was related to morality. Gains in moral reasoning or development similarly may come where we least expect, or aren't trying for, them. Social education, aesthetic education, drama, women's studies, and so on, may all be carriers of unacknowledged effects on morality. Part of casting a wider net is to search out such effects. Taking an even wider view, I believe we ought to be as concerned to understand and educate for all-around child development as for morality. To do so is a moral imperative for me as an educator. But in so doing we probably will promote character development too. Growth seems as holistic as particularistic. Stimulation of one strand of children's development (the self or ego) spills over onto another (morality) through interconnections we only partly understand.

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AIT to Develop New Television/Film Materials for Citizenship Education

The Agency for Instructional Television (AIT) began two years ago to explore the need for new materials to assist citizenship education in the schools of the United States and Canada. AIT visited organizations active in citizenship education, curriculum development, and research. Concurrently, states and provinces were surveyed to determine the kind and extent of citizenship education being provided. In addition, AIT hosted symposiums for leaders in social studies research, school administration, teacher preparation, and curriculum development. It also commissioned several papers on approaches to citizenship education and conducted a literature review.

This research resulted in a concept paper presenting a rationale for and description of an approach to developing new television/film materials for citizenship education for 12- to 14-year-old students.

The concept paper describes dysfunctional patterns of citizenship behavior in society and identifies citizenship education activities, which go beyond what schools normally do, to counter that pattern. The paper discusses a future-focused instructional approach for developing specific, desired traits in students. The rationale covers the effects of the future-focused approach on students, a description of the target audience, and instructional content and materials. It also summarizes the content and use of an accompanying teachers manual, a course syllabus, and a guide for other school personnel.

AIT invites interested readers to obtain a free copy of the concept paper, or its fall 1980 revision, by writing to:

Paul Schneller
AIT Citizenship Education Project
Box A
Bloomington, Indiana 47402.

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