

pretation given the facts? Sometimes it will be a matter both of the facts and of how the facts are being interpreted: *Do most people on welfare deserve the money they are getting? Should white-collar crime be punished more severely?*

As people, students have an undeniable right to develop their own moral perspectives—whether conservative, liberal, theistic, or nontheistic—but

they should also be able to analyze the perspective they do use, compare it accurately with other perspectives, and scrutinize the facts they conceptualize and judge in the moral domain with the same care required in any other domain of knowledge. They should, in other words, become as adept at using critical thinking principles in the moral domain as we expect

them to be in the scientific and social domains of learning.

To help students gain these skills, teachers need to see how to adapt the principles of critical thinking to the domain of ethical judgment and reasoning (fig. 1). Teachers also need to gain some insight into the intimate interconnection of intellectual and moral virtues. To cultivate the kind of

What I Didn't Learn

Thomas C. Greening

On my first trip to Moscow, a Soviet colleague explained the difference between Soviet and American education: "In the Soviet Union we provide our children with a wide range of fact and opinion and help them learn to think for themselves. In the United States you present your children with a narrow range of fact and opinion and shape their thinking in predetermined ways." Then, to document his views, he cited studies by American psychologists of opinion formation and communication processes.

Here was this friendly, intelligent professor who knew American research better than I did and who up until now had been a gracious, open-minded host. How was I going to break the news to him that he had gotten things entirely backward in his descriptions of Soviet and American education? I did not want to provoke a simplistic win-lose argument with this sophisticated and charming man. I decided to wait until I could prepare my edification of him more thoroughly.

Back in California I asked my daughters, ages 10 and 13, for their help. "You have been educated in American public schools, brought up in the American tradition of free speech, watched American TV. If you had been with me in Moscow, what would you have said to explain to my Soviet friend how wrong an impression of the U.S. he had?"

My daughters looked at me with a mixture of regret and amusement; and one said, "Well, Daddy, we don't know what it's like in the Soviet Union, but he sure is right about our schools." They explained that the little they learned about the Soviet Union was all negative. They said their friends were critical or puzzled as to why their father would want to go to that bad country.

I decided to explore my own biases. Reading *A People's History of the United States* (Zinn 1980), I discovered a lot of upsetting facts about U.S. history I'd never been taught in school; and I began wondering what else had been kept from me. Later I read a description based on Truman's papers of how Truman and his advisers decided to bomb Hiroshima. Again I was forced to re-evaluate my comfortable views.

I still believe, or want to believe, that our society is more open and creatively communicative than the Soviet Union; but the contrast doesn't look as neat as it once did. I've made three more trips to Moscow, told my friend this story, but still haven't figured out how to set him straight.

My oldest daughter went to Moscow last summer with the musical, "Peace Child," and loved the Soviet young people, in spite of whatever their education may be. She learned that they study and admire the great people and events of U.S. history. And now she wants to know who Lenin was. I wish I could tell her, but I didn't learn about him in school.

Zinn, Howard. *A People's History of the United States*. New York: Harper and Row, 1980.

—Thomas C. Greening is a Clinical Professor, University of California at Los Angeles, and a psychotherapist, Psychological Service Associates, 1314 Westwood Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90024.



After a Soviet colleague challenged his views, Thomas Greening—seen here in Red Square—came to reconsider the issue of bias in American education.

Copyright © 1988 by the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development. All rights reserved.