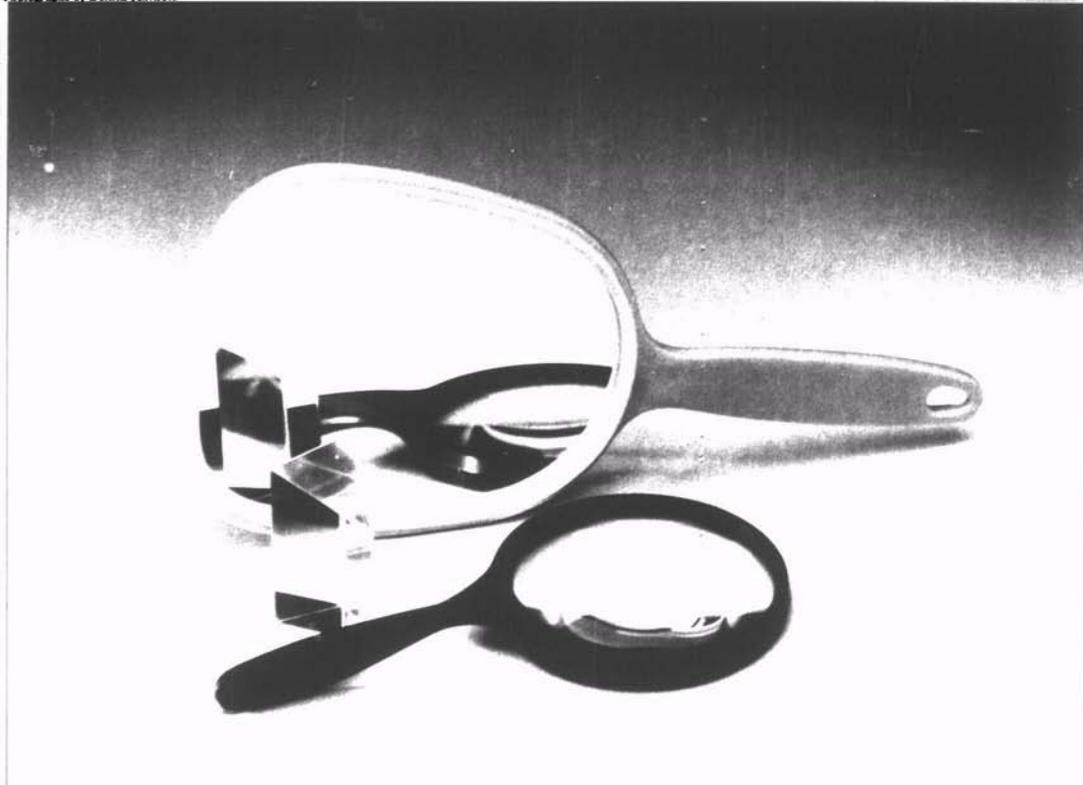


# Ethics Without Indoctrination

A reflective rather than a dogmatic approach to moral education requires critical thinking—for teachers and students—at the center of the curriculum.

Photographs by Dennis Johnson



*When students employ tools of reflection in the art of self-examination, they learn to appeal to reason and experience rather than authority alone and begin to understand the intertwining of history and morality.*

Nearly everyone recognizes that even young children have moral feelings and ideas, make moral inferences and judgments, and develop an outlook on life which has moral significance for good or ill. Nearly everyone gives lip service to a universal common core of general ethical principles; for example, that it is morally wrong to cheat, deceive, exploit, harm, or steal from others; that everyone has a moral responsibility to respect the rights of others—including their freedom and well-being—to help those most in need of help, to seek the common good, to strive in some way to make this world more just and humane. Unfortunately, verbal agreement on general moral principles will not by itself accomplish important moral ends nor change the world for the better. Moral principles mean something only when manifested in behavior. They have force only when embodied in action. Putting them into action requires analysis and insight into the real character of everyday situations.

Yet the world does not present itself to us in morally transparent terms. The moral thing to do is often a matter of disagreement even among people of good will. Furthermore, even when we are not faced with the morally conflicting claims of others, we often have our own inner conflicts as to what, morally speaking, we ought to do in a particular situation.

Considered another way, ethical persons, however strongly motivated to do what is morally right, can do so only if they know what that is. And this they cannot do if they systematically confuse their sense of what is morally right with their self-interest, personal desires, or what is commonly believed in their peer groups or communities.

It is because of complexities such as these that ethically motivated persons must learn the art of self-critique, of moral self-examination, in order to become attuned to the pervasive everyday pitfalls of moral judgment: moral intolerance, self-deception, and uncritical conformity. These human foibles are the causes of pseudo-morality, or the systematic

misuse of moral terms and principles in the guise of moral action and righteousness.

### **The Problem of Indoctrination**

Unfortunately, few people have thought much about the complexity of everyday moral issues, have become adept at identifying their own moral contradictions, or have learned to distinguish their self-interest and egocentric desires from what is genuinely moral. Few have thought deeply about their own moral feelings and judgments, have tied these judgments together into a coherent moral perspective, or have mastered the complexities of moral reasoning. As a result, everyday moral judgments are often a subtle mixture of pseudo- and genuine morality, moral insight and moral prejudice, moral truth and moral hypocrisy.

Herein lies the danger of setting up ill-thought-out public school programs in moral education. Without scrupulous care, we do no more than pass on to students our own moral incapacities, moral distortions, and closed-mindedness. Certainly many who trumpet most loudly for ethics

**“Without scrupulous care, we do no more than pass on to students our own moral incapacities, moral distortions, and closed-mindedness.”**

and morality in the schools really want students to adopt *their* ethical beliefs and *their* ethical perspectives, blind to the fusion of insight and prejudice that those beliefs and perspectives represent. They take their perspective to be *the* Truth, exemplary of all morality rightly conceived. On the other hand, what these people fear most is someone else's moral perspective taught as truth: conservatives afraid of liberals being in charge, liberals of conservatives, theists of nontheists, nontheists of theists. . . .

Now, if truth be told, all of these fears are justified. People, except in the most rare and exceptional cases, do have a strong tendency to confuse what they believe with the truth. It is always the other guys who do evil, who are deceived, self-interested, closed-minded—never us. Given this universal blind spot in human nature, the only safe and justified basis for ethical education in the public schools is one precisely designed to rule out bias in favor of the substantive beliefs and conclusions of any particular group, whether religious or political, communal or national. Indeed, since one of our most fundamental responsibilities as educators is to *educate* rather than to indoctrinate our students, to help them cultivate skills, insights, knowledge, and traits of mind and character that transcend narrow party and religious affiliations and help them to think beyond biased representations of the world, we must put special safeguards into moral education that prevent indoctrination. What the world needs is not more closed-minded zealots eager to remake the world in their image but more morally committed rational persons with respect for and insight into the moral judgments and perspectives of others, those least likely to confuse pseudo- with genuine morality.

But how are we to cultivate morality and character in our students without indoctrinating them, without systematically rewarding them when they merely express *our* moral beliefs and espouse *our* moral perspective? The answer is to be found in putting *critical thinking* into the heart of the eth-

#### A. Moral Affective Strategies

1. Exercising independent moral thought and judgment
2. Developing insight into moral egocentrism and sociocentrism
3. Exercising moral reciprocity
4. Exploring thought underlying moral reactions
5. Suspending moral judgment

#### B. Cognitive Strategies: Moral Macro-Abilities

6. Avoiding oversimplification of moral issues
7. Developing one's moral perspective
8. Clarifying moral issues and claims
9. Clarifying moral ideas
10. Developing criteria for moral evaluation
11. Evaluating moral authorities
12. Raising and pursuing root moral questions
13. Evaluating moral arguments
14. Generating and assessing solutions to moral problems
15. Identifying and clarifying moral points of view
16. Engaging in Socratic discussion on moral issues
17. Practicing dialogical thinking on moral issues
18. Practicing dialectical thinking on moral issues

#### C. Cognitive Strategies: Moral Micro-Skills

19. Distinguishing facts from moral principles, values, and ideals
20. Using critical vocabulary in discussing moral issues
21. Distinguishing moral principles or ideas
22. Examining moral assumptions
23. Distinguishing morally relevant from morally irrelevant facts
24. Making plausible moral inferences
25. Supplying evidence for a moral conclusion
26. Recognizing moral contradictions
27. Exploring moral implications and consequences
28. Refining moral generalizations

Fig. 1. Moral Reasoning Skills

ical curriculum, critical thinking for both teachers and students. In order to bring ethics and morality into the schools in an educationally legitimate way, administrators and teachers must do a great deal of critical thinking about what to emphasize and what to avoid. Intellectually discriminating minds and morally refined sensibilities must be in charge of both initial curriculum design and its subsequent classroom implementation.

This is not an unreasonable demand, for, ethics aside, skill in the art of drawing important intellectual discriminations is crucial to education in any subject or domain; and proficiency in the art of teaching in the critical manner—so as to encourage students to question, to think for themselves, to develop rational standards of judgment—is a general responsibility of all classroom teachers. Any subject, after all, can be taught so as merely to indoctrinate the student and so inadvertently to stultify rather than to develop the student's ability to think within it. Unfortunately all of us have been subjected to a good deal of indoctrination in the name of education

and retain to this day some of the intellectual disabilities that such scholastic straightjacketing produces. To allow ethics to be taught in the public schools in this narrowing way is unconscionable. It is, in the name of ethics, to betray our ethical responsibility as educators.

#### Integrating Critical Thinking and Ethics

If we bring ethics into the curriculum—and we should—we must take pains to ensure that we do so in a morally unobjectionable manner. This requires us to distinguish clearly between espousing the universal, general principles of morality shared by people of good will everywhere and the very different matter of defending any particular application of these principles to actual life situations as conceived from a particular moral standpoint (liberal, conservative, radical, theistic, nontheistic, American, Russian, and the like). Any particular moral judgment is the result of someone's conceptualizing the facts of a situation from some moral perspective or standpoint. Every moral perspective

in turn embodies in some way the same general moral principles. It is the integration of *principles* with purported *facts* within a particular *perspective* that produces the judgment that this or that act is morally right or wrong. It is precisely because we often differ as to the facts or differ as to the proper perspective on the facts that we come to differing moral judgments.

The problem is not at the level of general moral principles. No people in the world, so far as I know, take themselves to be opposed to human rights or to stand for injustice, slavery, or exploitation. In turn, no nation or group has special ownership over any general moral principle. Students, then, need skill and practice in moral reasoning, not indoctrination into the view that one nation rather than another is special in enunciating these moral principles. Students certainly need opportunities to explicitly learn basic moral principles, but they also need opportunities to apply them to real and imagined cases and to develop insight into both genuine and pseudo-morality. They especially need to come to terms with the pitfalls of human moralizing, that is, to recognize the ease with which we mask self-interest or egocentric desires with high-sounding moral language.

In any case, for any particular instance of moral judgment or reasoning, students should learn the art of distinguishing *principles* (which tell us in a general way what we ought or ought not to do) from *perspectives* (which characterize the world in such a way as to lead us to an organized way of interpreting it) and *facts* (which provide the specific information or occasion for a particular moral judgment). In learning to discriminate these dimensions of moral reasoning, we learn how to focus our minds on the appropriate questions at issue. Sometimes what will principally be in dispute will be a matter of facts: *Did Jill actually take the watch?* But more often it will be a matter of argument based on perspective: *If you look at it this way, Jack did not take advantage of her, but if you look at it that way, he did. Which is a more plausible inter-*

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.

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

moral independence implied in being an educated moral person, we must foster in students moral humility, moral courage, moral integrity, moral perseverance, moral empathy, and moral fair-mindedness (fig. 2).

These moral traits are compatible with all moral perspectives. When students learn to think critically about moral issues and hence acquire some moral virtues, they can then develop their moral thinking within any moral tradition they choose. Critical thinking does not compel or coerce students to come to any particular substantive moral conclusions or to adopt any particular substantive moral point of view. Neither does it imply moral relativism, for it emphasizes the need for the same high intellectual standards in moral reasoning and judgment that are the foundation of any *bona fide* domain of knowledge. Furthermore, because moral judgment and reasoning presuppose, and are subject to, the same intellectual principles and standards that educated people use in all domains of learning, it is possible to integrate consideration of moral issues into diverse subject areas, certainly, in any case, into the study of literature, science, history, and civics and society. Let us consider each of these areas very briefly.

### Ethics and Literature

Good literature represents and reveals, to the reflective critical reader, the deeper meanings and universal problems of everyday life. Most of these problems have an important moral dimension. They are the kinds of problems all of us must think about and solve for ourselves; no one can tell us the "right" answers: Who am I? What should I believe in? How can I decide what is fair and what is unfair? Do I have to be fair to my enemies? What rights do I have? What responsibilities?

Stimulating students to reflect upon questions like these in relationship to story episodes and their own experiences enables them to draw upon their own developing moral feelings and ideas, to reason about them in a systematic way, to tie them together

and see where they lead. Careful reflection on episodes in literature—characters making sound or unsound moral judgments, sometimes ignoring basic moral principles or twisting them to serve their vested interests, sometimes displaying moral courage or cowardice, often caught in the throes of a moral dilemma—helps students to develop a basic moral outlook on life. Furthermore, because moral issues are deeply embedded in everyday life, they are easily found in liter-

ature. However, it is important to realize that moral issues in literature, like the moral issues of everyday life, are rarely simplistic, and students will typically generate opposing viewpoints about how to respond to them.

As teachers of literature we should not impose authoritative interpretations upon students. We should facilitate the development by students of reasoned, reflective, and coherent approaches of their own. Some, as a result of their parental and religious

### You Can Combat Censorship

Roz Udow

If threatened with censorship controversies, you can speak out to inform people about the dangers of censorship to a free society. You can talk to friends, neighbors, and colleagues; inform the press; contact organizations; and organize citizens' groups to speak up at school board meetings to support board action in affirming teachers' academic freedom rights and students' rights to know.

For help in these efforts, you can also call upon the National Coalition Against Censorship (NCAC). A nonpartisan, nonprofit organization, NCAC unites a broad range of professional, educational, artistic, labor, civil rights, and religious groups—including ASCD—in their common conviction that freedom of thought, inquiry, and expression must be defended.

Founded in 1974, NCAC engages in public awareness and advocacy at both the national and local levels. The Coalition's purpose is: "to promote and defend First Amendment values of freedom of thought, inquiry, and expression; to encourage, support, and coordinate activities of national organizations in opposition to censorship; to oppose restraints on open communication and to support access to information; to encourage understanding that restrictions on the free interchange of ideas threaten religious, moral, political, artistic, and intellectual freedom."

Among its many functions, NCAC:

- assists community groups and individuals with strategies and resources for resisting censorship and creating a climate hospitable to free expression;
  - operates a national clearinghouse on school censorship litigation, which issues reports and collects and disseminates up-to-date information to writers, scholars, lawyers, and the public at large;
  - monitors legislation with First Amendment implications at the national and state levels and compiles and disseminates materials on First Amendment-related issues.
- NCAC sponsors a special program, *Countering Censorship in the Schools*, to:
- advise and give direct assistance to schools and citizens in local communities when censorship controversies erupt;
  - work through its 41 participating organizations to assist them in anticensorship activities;
  - research and publish *Books on Trial*, a report on school book-banning court cases, through its national clearinghouse on Book-Banning Litigation.

To become a "Friend" of NCAC, send your name, address, and zip code with a tax-deductible contribution of \$25 or more to the National Coalition Against Censorship, 132 W. 43rd St., New York, NY 10036. "Friends" receive our newsletter, *Censorship News*, and special reports such as *Books on Trial*.

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—Roz Udow is Director for Education and Public Affairs, National Coalition Against Censorship, 132 W. 43rd St., New York, NY 10036.

influences, will be inclined toward a particular perspective on the issues. Each perspective of course is to be respected; however, to enter the discussion as a viewpoint to be considered, each perspective must be *reasoned out* and not simply dogmatically asserted. In discussion, each student must learn the art of appealing to experience and reason, not just to authority. Each student must learn therefore to reflect upon the grounds of his or her beliefs, to clarify his or her ideas, support them with reasons and evidence, become sensitive to their implications, and so forth. Each student must also learn how to enter sympathetically into the moral perspectives of the other students, not with the view that all moral perspectives are equally sound, but rather with the sense that we cannot judge another person's perspective until we genuinely understand it.

Everyone is due the respect of being at least *understood*. And just as each student will typically feel that he or she has something worth saying about the moral issues facing characters in stories and naturally wants his or her viewpoint to be understood, so he or she must learn to give that same respect to other students. Students, then, need to learn the art of reasoned dialogue, learn to use moral reasoning skills as a natural process in articulating their concerns about rights, justice, and the common good, from whatever moral viewpoint their experience and background predisposes them.

I should add that essay writing is an excellent means of helping students organize their thinking on moral issues in literature. It provides the impetus to formulate moral principles explicitly, to carefully conceptualize and interpret facts, and to give and consider reasons in support of their own and contending moral conclusions. Needless to say, we must grade students' moral writing not on the basis of their substantive perspectives or conclusions, but rather on grounds of clarity, coherence, and sound reasoning. Such writing can begin in the early years with one-sentence "essays" such as "I think Jack [in *Jack and the*

**Moral Humility:** Awareness of the limits of one's moral knowledge, including sensitivity to circumstances in which one's native egocentrism is likely to function self-deceptively; sensitivity to bias and prejudice in, and limitations of, one's viewpoint. Moral humility is based on the recognition that one should not claim more than one actually knows. It does not imply spinelessness or submissiveness. It implies the lack of moral pretentiousness, boastfulness, or conceit, combined with insight into the strengths and weaknesses of the logical foundations of one's beliefs.

**Moral Courage:** The willingness to face and assess fairly moral ideas, beliefs, or viewpoints to which we have not given serious hearing, regardless of our strong negative reaction to them. This courage arises from the recognition that ideas considered dangerous or absurd are sometimes rationally justified (in whole or in part), and that moral conclusions or beliefs espoused by those around us or inculcated in us are sometimes false or misleading.

**Moral Empathy:** Having a consciousness of the need to imaginatively put oneself in the place of others in order to genuinely understand them. We must recognize our egocentric tendency to identify truth with our immediate perceptions or long-standing beliefs. This trait correlates with the ability to reconstruct accurately the moral viewpoints and reasoning of others and to reason from moral premises, assumptions, and ideas other than our own. This trait also requires that we remember occasions when we were morally wrong, despite an intense conviction that we were right, as well as consider whether we might be similarly deceived in a case at hand.

**Moral Integrity:** Recognition of the need to be true to one's own moral thinking, to be consistent in the moral standards one applies, to hold one's self to the same rigorous standards of evidence and proof to which one holds one's antagonists, to practice what one morally advocates for others, and to honestly admit discrepancies and moral inconsistencies in one's own thought and action.

**Moral Perseverance:** Willingness and consciousness of the need to pursue moral insights and truths despite difficulties, obstacles, and frustrations; firm adherence to moral principles despite irrational opposition of others; a sense of the need to struggle with confusion and unsettled questions over an extended period of time, to achieve deeper moral understanding or insight.

**Moral Fair-Mindedness:** Willingness and consciousness of the need to entertain all moral viewpoints sympathetically and to assess them with the same intellectual standards, without reference to one's own feelings or vested interests, or the feelings or vested interests of one's friends, community, or nation; implies adherence to moral standards without reference to one's own advantage or the advantage of one's group.

Fig. 2. Essential Moral Virtues

*Beanstalk*] was greedy because he didn't need to take all the golden eggs and the golden harp too."

### Ethics and Science

Science and technology are playing a greater and greater role in our lives, often generating significant moral issues in the process. Scientific information is not simply *used*; it is used, and sometimes misused, for a variety of purposes, to advance the interests of a variety of groups, as those interests are conceived from a variety of perspectives. Its use must always be *assessed*.

In their daily lives, students, like the rest of us, are bombarded with scientific information of every kind and type, typically in relation to some kind of advocacy. And they, too, need to make decisions about the implications of that information: What are the im-

lications of developing nuclear rather than solar power? Do animals have moral rights? To what extent should scientists be allowed to experiment with new viruses that might generate new diseases? Under what conditions should people be kept artificially alive?

These are but a few of the many weighty moral and scientific issues about which all of us are expected to develop a view. Whether we do develop an informed viewpoint or not, we make practical decisions every day in these areas, and the public good is served or abused as a result of the rationality or irrationality of those decisions. Here are two good reasons not only to include but also to emphasize issues such as these in science instruction: (1) they are of greater interest to most students and of



greater practical use to them than the more traditional "pure-science" emphasis; and (2) they help students develop a more unified perspective on their values and personal beliefs and on the moral issues that science inevitably generates when applied to the real world.

### **Ethics and History**

There is no more important subject, rightly conceived, than history. Human life in all of its dimensions is deeply historical. Whatever experiences we have, the accounts that we give of things, our memories, our records, our sense of who we are, the "news" we construct, the plans we form, even the daily gossip we hear—is historical in nature.

Furthermore, because all humans have a deep-seated drive to think well of themselves and virtually unlimited powers of mind to twist reality to serve the end of self-justification, the way we construct history has far-reaching ethical consequences. Not only do virtually all ethical issues have a historical component—in every moral judgment we create an account of what actually happened—but also virtually all historical issues have important ethical implications.

Issues arise among historians when conflicting accounts of events are de-

bated. Each major moral perspective tends to *read* history differently and comes to important different moral conclusions as a result. The moral and the historical come together again and again in questions such as these: To what extent have we as a nation (and I as an individual) lived in accordance with the moral ideals we have set for ourselves? Morally speaking, how were our founding fathers able to justify slavery? Or are there historical reasons why our criticism should be tempered with "understanding"? If our founding fathers who eloquently formulated universal moral principles were capable of violating them, are we now different from them, are we morally *better*, or are we also, without recognizing it, violating basic moral values we verbally espouse?

Once we grasp the moral significance of history as well as the historical significance of morality and recognize that historical judgment, like ethical judgment, is necessarily a selective process in which *facts* are conceptualized from some point of view or perspective, we are then well on our way toward constructing an unlimited variety of assignments in which history is no longer an abstraction from present and immediate concerns but rather an exciting, living, thought-provoking subject.

Once students truly see themselves constructing history on a daily basis and in doing so coming to conclusions that directly affect the well-being of themselves and others, they will have taken a giant step toward becoming historically sensitive ethical persons. As Carl Becker said in his presidential address to the American Historical Association over 50 years ago, every person, like it or not, "is his own historian." We must make sure that our students grasp the *moral* significance of that fact.

### **Ethics, Civics, and the Study of Society**

Just as all of us to be ethical must be our own historians, so too, to ethically fulfill our civic responsibilities, we must be our own sociologists.

We have to recognize, as every sociologist since William Graham Sumner has pointed out, that most human behavior is typically a result of unanalyzed habit and routine based on standards and values unconsciously held. These embedded standards and values often differ from, even oppose, the ideals we express as ours, and yet the conformist thinking which socialization tends to produce resists critical analysis. This resistance was recognized even from the early days of sociology as a discipline.

Even patriotism, Sumner (1906) points out "may degenerate into a vice ... chauvinism":

**"Many who trumpet most loudly for ethics and morality in the schools really want students to adopt *their* ethical beliefs . . ."**

It is a name for boastful and truculent group self-assertion. . . . It produces the dominance of watchwords and phrases which take the place of reason and conscience in determining conduct. The patriotic bias is a recognized perversion of thought and judgment against which our education should guard us.

Ironically, true patriots in a democratic society serve their country by using their critical powers to ensure governmental honesty. Intelligent distrust rather than uncritical trust is the foundation necessary to keep officials acting ethically and in the public good. Let us not forget it was Jefferson who said:

It would be a dangerous delusion were a confidence in the men of our choice to silence our fears for the safety of our rights. Confidence is everywhere the parent of despotism—free government is founded in jealousy, and not in confidence.

And Madison enthusiastically agreed:

The truth is, all men having power ought to be mistrusted.

What students need in civic education, then, is precisely what they need in moral education: not indoctrination into abstracted ideals, not slogans and empty moralizing, but assignments that challenge their ability to use civic ideals to assess actual political behavior. Such assignments will of course produce divergent conclusions by students, in accordance with the state of their present political leanings. But, again, their thinking, speaking, and writing should be graded not on some authoritative set of substantive answers, but rather on the clarity, cogency, and intellectual rigor of what they produce. All students should be expected to learn the art of political analysis, the art of subjecting political behavior to critical assessment based on civic and moral ideals, on an analysis of important relevant facts, and on consideration of alternative political viewpoints. Virtually no students graduate today with this art in hand.

This means that words like "conservatism" and "liberalism," the "right" and the "left," must become more than vague jargon; they must be recognized as names of different ways of

thinking about human behavior in the world. Students need experience actually thinking within diverse political perspectives. No perspective, not even one called "moderate," should be presented as *the* correct one. By the same token, we should be careful not to lead students to believe that all perspectives are equally justified or that important insights are equally found in all points of view. We should continually encourage and stimulate our students to think and never do their thinking for them. We should, above all, be teachers and not preachers.

### Philosophy of Implementation

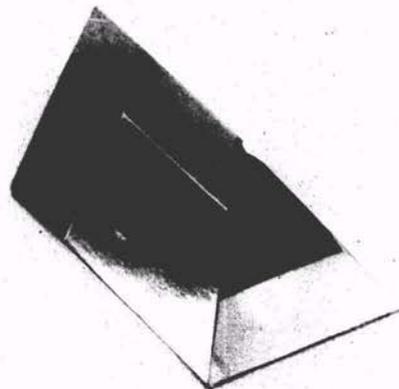
Bringing ethics into the curriculum is essential but difficult. Many teachers are deeply committed to didactic lectorial modes of teaching. If ethics is taught in this way, indoctrination results, and we have lost rather than gained ground. Better no ethics than dogmatic moralizing.

If we are to be successful, then, in establishing a solid framework of ethical reasoning throughout the curricu-

lum, we need excellent supplemental resources and well-designed inservice. Whenever possible, teachers should be given access to books and materials that demonstrate how ethical and critical thinking principles can be integrated into subject matter instruction. They need also to have opportunities to clear the air concerning whatever misgivings they might have in the paradigm shift that this model will represent for many of them. Above all, one should conceive of a move such as this as part of a long-term strategy in which implementation is achieved progressively over an extended period of time.

Just as educators should respect the autonomy of students, so inservice design should respect the autonomy of teachers. Teachers can and should be helped to integrate a critical approach to ethics into their everyday teaching. But they must actively think their way to this integration. It should not simply be imposed on them.

The model that I suggest for doing this is one that I have used successfully in inservice for both elementary and



secondary teachers on numerous occasions. I call it the "Lesson Plan Remodelling Strategy" and have written two handbooks and an article explaining it in depth.

The basic idea is simple. Every practicing teacher works daily with lesson plans of one kind or another. To remodel lesson plans is to critique one or more of them and to formulate one or more new plans based on that critical process. Thus, a group of teachers or staff development leaders who have a reasonable number of exemplary "remodels" with accompanying explanatory principles can design practice sessions that enable teachers to begin to develop new teaching skills as a result of experience in lesson remodelling.

Lesson plan remodelling can become a powerful tool in staff development for several reasons. It is action oriented and puts an immediate emphasis on close examination and critical assessment of what is taught on a

day-to-day basis. It makes the problem of infusion more manageable by paring it down to the critique of particular lesson plans and the progressive infusion of particular principles. It is developmental in that, over time, more and more lesson plans are remodelled, and what has been remodelled can be remodelled again.

### Inservice Design

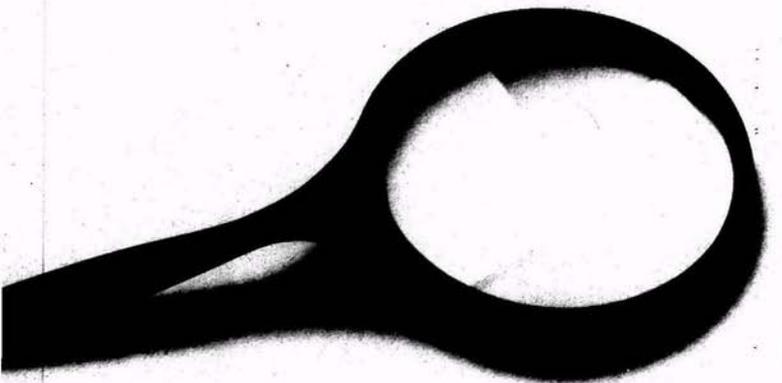
The idea behind inservice on this model is to take teachers step by step through specific stages of implementation. First of all, teachers must become familiar with the basic concepts of critical thinking and ethical reasoning. They should first have an opportunity to formulate and discuss various general principles of morality and then to discuss how people with differing moral perspectives sometimes come to different moral conclusions when they apply these principles to actual events in the world. Questions like "Is abortion morally

justified?" or "Under what conditions do people have a right to welfare support?" can be used as examples to demonstrate this point.

The teachers should then, working together at tables, construct examples of how they might encourage their students to apply one or more of the moral reasoning skills listed in Figure 1. One group might focus on devising ways to aid students in clarifying moral issues and claims (#8, fig. 1). Another group may discuss assignments that would help students develop their moral perspective (#7, fig. 1). A third might generate ways to encourage one of the essential moral virtues, say, *moral integrity*. Of course it is essential that teachers be given model examples for each of the moral reasoning skills as well as the model classroom activities that foster them. Teachers should not be expected to work with nothing more than a list of abstract labels. The subsequent examples developed by the teachers working together should be written up and shared with all participants. Ample opportunity should be provided for constructive feedback.

Once teachers gain some confidence in devising examples of activities to help students develop various individual moral reasoning skills, they should try their hands at developing a full remodel. In this case we provide each group with an actual lesson plan and ask them to develop collectively both a critique of it and a remodelled plan, one that embodies moral reasoning skills explicitly set out as objectives of the lesson. As before, exemplary remodels should be available for teachers to compare their remodels with. The following components should be spelled out explicitly:

1. the original lesson plan (or an abstract of it);
2. a statement of the objectives of the plan;
3. a critique of the original (Why does it need to be revised? What does it fail to do that it might do?);
4. a listing of the moral reasoning skills to be infused;
5. the remodelled lesson plan (containing references to where in the



remodel the various moral reasoning skills are infused).

Eventually, schoolwide or district-wide handbooks of remodelled lessons should be put together and disseminated. These can be updated yearly. At least one consultant with unquestionable credentials in critical thinking should provide outside feedback on the process and its products.<sup>1</sup>

We should aim at teacher practice in critiquing and revising standard lesson plans, based on a knowledgeable commitment to critical thinking and moral reasoning. We should not expect that teachers will begin with the knowledge base or even the commitment but only that with exposure, practice, and encouragement within a well planned, long-term inservice implementation, proficiency and commitment will eventually emerge.

In my own experience in conducting inservices, I have found it easy to begin this process working with teachers. The difficulty is not in getting the process started; it is in keeping it going. One new lesson plan does not by itself change an established style of teaching. A real ongoing effort is essential if lesson plan remodelling is to become a way of life and not just an interesting inservice activity.

### The Need for Leadership

I cannot overemphasize therefore the significance of leadership in this area. Teachers need to know that the administration is solidly behind them in this process, that the time and effort they put in will not only be appreciated but also built upon in a visible way. The schoolwide or districtwide handbooks mentioned above are one kind of visible by-product that teachers should see. An excellent place to begin is to have key administrators actively participate in the inservice along with the teachers. But the support should not end there. Administrators should take steps to facilitate the usual structures and activities to support this process.

Administrators should also be articulate defenders of an educational rather than a doctrinaire approach to morality. They should be ready, will-

**“[Students should] 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.”**

ing, and able to explain how and why it is that critical thinking and ethics are integrated throughout the curriculum. They should make the approach intelligible to the school board and community. They should engender enthusiasm for it and fight to preserve it if it is attacked by those good-hearted but closed-minded people who see morality personified in their particular moral perspective and beliefs. Above all, they should make a critical and moral commitment to a moral and critical education for all students—and in a way that demonstrates to teachers and parents alike moral courage, perseverance, and integrity. □

1. For a fuller explanation of this inservice process and a wide selection of examples, see either *Critical Thinking Handbook: K-3* (Paul 1987a), or *Critical Thinking Handbook: 4th-6th Grades* (Paul 1987b). Both integrate an emphasis on ethical reasoning into critical thinking infusion, though they do not explicitly express the component critical thinking skills with a moral reasoning emphasis (as I have in Figure 1). The handbook examples are easily adaptable as illustrations for the upper grade levels.

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