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# Changing approaches to moral and character education

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# **Changing Approaches to Moral and Character Education**

Presented to the Department of  
Education, Foundations & Leadership  
George Fox University

by

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“CHANGING DEFINITIONS OF CHARACTER EDUCATION,” a Doctoral research project prepared by LISA M. KELLY in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Doctor of Education degree in the Educational Foundations and Leadership Department.

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## Acknowledgements

### A Blessing of Thanks

The Shehecheyanu blessing is something Jewish persons say as a way to offer thanks, celebrate holidays and honor special occasions and life accomplishments.

It is particularly appropriate now.

The transliterated version (phonetically spelled out):

*Baruch atah adonai eloheinu melech ha'olam shecheyanu v'kiy'manu v'higyanu lazman hazeh.*

Blessed Are You, O L-rd Our G-d, who has given us life, sustained us,  
and enabled us to reach this season.

*Amen.*

With special thanks to the faculty of George Fox University, particularly Gary Tiffin, and my dissertation committee members Scot Headley and Ken Badley.

Their encouragement and guidance has proven invaluable along this journey.

## Abstract

This study investigated the changing definitions of moral education that have been implemented in public schools from the colonial times to the present, eventually leading to the development of character education. For almost a century, education has slowly deemphasized traditional approaches that teach morality, ethics, and character.

Teaching of morals in the colonial and early national period of American history was characterized by a command morality rooted in Protestant and Puritan values. Later, industrial urbanization led to the need for universal schooling. The common school era encouraged more specific, duty-related ethical guidelines. Morals were still heavily grounded in religion, yet related to a common good. Progressive thought ushered in civic duty, functional independence and individuality as a form of moral expression. This encouraged a sense of democracy and patriotism while slowly introducing pluralism. By the late 20<sup>th</sup> Century, traditional values and religious views became increasingly becoming privatized and minimized in schools. This resulted in a need for morals or guidance not linked to religion but focused on global traits and values common to everyone. Recent decades have encouraged values formation, human development theories, and character education programs as alternative methods to urge the teaching of morals and character in education.

America has commented on a crisis of ethics and values in numerous venues; education needs to occur not just for academic excellence but also for character. Research has shown that the best results involving character education occur when clear expectations are echoed in the home, school, and community environments. When there is unity of method and clear

communication of expectations, children are encouraged to explore ethics in an encouraging and safe environment, meeting universal standards for decency and character.

Character education is a vital part of humanity and should be included in educational coursework. Currently, the United States Government has allowed each state decide how and when to implement character education. For decades, it has been left to each state, each district, then each school to decide how and when character education methods are implemented. Frequently this has resulted in vague and poorly executed plans for character education.

**Key Words:** Character education, character, ethics, morals, values, virtues.

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## Chapter 1

*Education worthy of the name is essentially education of character.* – Martin Buber

### *Introduction*

Character education is difficult to define, however Thomas Lickona (2004) describes it as that which encourages virtues such as honesty, justice, courage, and compassion. Character can be defined as conduct that conforms to an accepted standard of right and wrong; a set of qualities that make a person an individual; as having a moral excellence or firmness. Marvin Berkowitz (1998) states that character education is the intentional intervention to promote the formation of any or all aspects of morally functioning individuals. While each definition is slightly different all address traits that affect an individual's character growth and development, particularly within the educational process.

Thomas Lickona (2004) defines these particular traits or virtues linked to character development as dispositions to behave in a morally good way (p.7). Most believe that to behave in a certain manner is not innate; rather, it must be deliberately taught. Many educators believe character education helps students develop academically, ethically, and socially, and will assist them in understanding both their personal and community responsibilities (Field, 2000).

This focus on civic interest lies at the heart of character education; for in being a productive member of society, an individual needs the guidelines of cultural and social mores. This is noticeable in the early national period as the United States formed its own identity separate from England. Values were emulated within the educational process that would encourage the new

Republic and support ideas of a democratic government. During this time, common schools gave way to academies that stimulated new approaches about education serving the practical needs of the community; therefore, it was desirable to have moral and spiritual values built into the educational process (Wright, 1999).

In the early national period, states not only developed different funding and politics from the Colonial period, but within these diverse frameworks, the quality of education and curricular content varied greatly. Questions regarding the place of character education in American public schools date back to the common school movement in the 1830s, with some aspects transmitted from colonial days. During that time, character education was reorganized as central to citizenship and indispensable to the maintenance of a free and civil society. It was also an essential way to integrate values while learning (Eberly, 1995). Later examples of values integration were found in hornbooks, McGuffey readers, and other curricula designed to shape a child's character through morals, tales of courage, and honorable behavior. Prevalent from the time of early colonial documents is the overwhelming indication that schools hold a key place for children's character education (Field, 2000).

As industrial capitalism took hold, three main shifts occurred in society: the need for wage labor created more job opportunities resulting in a move from rural to urban areas; there was a large influx of immigrants from Europe and other nations contributing to a population boom in the later 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Century, subsequently causing concurrent growth in education. The larger population increased class size and identified the need for universal education with the common language of English, within a collectively graded and measured system. This desire for common education standards coupled with ever-changing educational criteria required a consensus that was not possible in a common school environment.

Seeking to meet the individual and collective needs of an emergent industrial society, the government created schools for the public which encouraged attendance from all income and social levels, urging civic involvement while including guidelines for character formation (Kaestle, 1983). The inclusion of morals and values that were universal yet able to be applied in an individual fashion, led to the inclusion of other aspects of culture believed to be collectively beneficial such as patriotism, suffrage, and participation in civic affairs. In turn, this stimulated public education to produce a well-educated, morally conscious and accomplished citizen who could become a responsible member of society.

As households declined in size, the school increased in effect. As children spent more and more time with their teachers, they also spent more time with one another and less with their families. This shifted the basis for character development and modeling of values to the classroom and away from the family unit (Cremin, 1964). The desire to create a good society while improving the working class provided foundational ideology and structure for the public school system and the shared belief that education and moral guidance were keys to social control and social stability (Spring, 1997). The inclusion of moral development in the educational process also imbued citizens with ideas of citizenship, purpose, and belonging. This in turn fed into the culture of a growing young America to support economic conditions and maintain political and social order.

This quest for knowledge was not limited to the field of education. It crossed into every field, particularly the social sciences, where queries took the form of logical positivism, a philosophy that treats morals as scientific statements rather than absolute values. These and other progressive thoughts and philosophies gave older approaches to character education the appearance of being old-fashioned and out of date. Previously established ideas of right and

wrong that were considered to be foundational truths began to be viewed as fact, rather than immovable, absolute values (Lickona, 1992).

Such prevalent philosophies continued to emphasize morals as being a matter of private choice and not for public debate or transmission through the public school system. This creates a dichotomy, for educators are hired to teach courses with particular scope and intent to meet specific educational goals, yet there is an ongoing need to instill traits that shape and guide the character of students. Lickona notes that strengths such as strong work ethic, self-discipline, and perseverance are necessary for young people to succeed in life and other character qualities such as respect and responsibility are necessary to living amicably within the community (Lickona, 2004, p. xxiv).

Character education encourages values that develop moral and ethical character which creates active citizens, decent human beings, provides solutions to moral questions, social problems and defines parameters for social behavior (McKenzie, 2004). Influenced by the context of cultural and social influences, character education requires participation from a child's family and immediate community, including the classroom, to be successful. It is when these areas are working together that individuals can become effective within their community and become decent human beings.

There is no universally agreed-upon definition or role for character education within the public education system in America today. Over time, America has moved from a monolithic approach to one that has become diverse, inclusive, and pluralistic; resulting in new and competing views of character education. This progression has changed the approach, nature, and definition of character education that will constitute the focus of this study.

### *Research Questions*

This study intends to trace the evolution and changing definitions of character education throughout the American public school system. A historical analysis and review will not only define terms such as character, values, morals, and ethics, but also clarify economic, social, political, and religious factors that influence character education.

The following questions will guide this research:

1. How has character education been implemented over time in the United States?
2. What are the changing definitions of character education over the course of K – 12 education?
3. What is the current state of character education today?

### *Definitions*

**Character** can be described as conduct that conforms to an accepted standard of right and wrong; and/ or having a moral excellence or firmness. **Character education** is that part of educating humanity that encourages traits or virtues such as decency, fairness, courage, and empathy. **Ethics** are principles that offer a rationale for why something is right or wrong. **Morals** can be explained as those views of right and wrong, ideals that structure our life for good or bad, which give reinforcement to beliefs, codes of living or life principles. **Values** are traits that are inspired through character education such as kindness, justice or compassion that encourage appropriate behavior. **Virtues** are dispositions to behave in a morally good way, and are objective human qualities that transcend time and culture.

*Delimitations* –This analysis used historical documents, and research of existent literature to approach character education using a historical and literary analysis. As such, there was no qualitative or action research.

*Limitations* – The field is limited with regard to comprehensive historical analysis of character education. There are no clear progressions from one time period to another, for moral education follows the pattern of human living. Consequently, people, historical and social events, and theories overlap one another. It can be difficult to see where one theory starts and another one begins, or which idea of moral development came first or last. Research and documents can also be vague, particularly with regard to government documents and legislative processes.

### *Methodology*

To fully explore the topic of character education within United States history, a historical research method was used. Essential for documenting changes in culture and society over time, it helped confirm that shifts in education can be documented, reconstructed and analyzed, particularly in response to cultural and social change.

This required examination of a variety of media and consisted of accessing and researching diverse existing documents including books, journal articles, and government reports. The work of key scholars and researchers was explored and evidence of changing positions in culture and society was examined. Social and cultural trends in contemporary critiques were documented to lend validity and historical accuracy.

Historical analysis helped clarify how character education was defined, funded, and implemented. Reports from the United States Department of Education and Senate Committees, particularly those addressing moral development and values clarification, further supported and explained this process.

## Chapter 2

### Literature Review

*“Character education is not the responsibility of the schools. It is the shared duty of all those who touch the lives of the young.” - Thomas Lickona*

#### *Introduction*

For years, character education has centered on moral or ethical codes believed essential for all children to learn, including conduct that conforms to an accepted standard of right and wrong. Thomas Lickona (2004) states that character education is needed to train children and young people to lead purposeful, productive and fulfilling lives; and to have strong and stable family. At the core of having a good and decent society is raising children of moral character. Furthermore, he asserts that as adults, we have two responsibilities: to model character in our own lives and to intentionally foster character in our young.

It is not enough to define character education, rather we must view it from an analytical and historical perspective to achieve a comprehensive understanding. Literature on the topic of character education reveals three main areas of focus: (1) how character education has been implemented over time in the United States (2) the changing definitions of character education over the course of K-12 education and (3) what the current state of character education is today.

### *How Character Education Has Been Implemented Over Time*

The first forms of character education were modeled by and implemented by the family unit. Bailyn (1960) notes that in colonial times, the family was what shaped attitudes towards others, established expectations for behavior; and set standards for manners and moral views. This environment slowly introduced a child to society and taught them how to interact with others, learning what was socially acceptable and what was not. The family was also where the first forms of moral and religious training took place (Cohen, 1974; Cubberly, 1962; Wright 1999). Key in guiding this education was the church, for it contributed not only to guidelines for moral living, but also reinforced family values; modeling the highest principles within the community (Baylin 1960; Cremin, 1964; Cubberly 1919, 1962; Rury, 2005; Thayer, 1968). This triad of family, society, and church infused culture and virtues across generations.

While Spring (1997) declares that education was widely considered a means of improving society, Cohen (1974) asserts that spiritual guidance is also important, for it was considered essential that each individual read the Bible for himself or herself. It was a common belief that only knowledge from the Bible allowed one to learn the word of God, for only through study and comprehension could insight be gained for living (Peterson, 2010; Rury 2005).

In the early days of the American colonies, it is important to remember that America did not have a long history. Unlike England that had feudal tradition and the structure of a monarchy, America had to cultivate its own norms and culture, starting with its schoolrooms, even though it was influenced by their own European heritage. The formation of a unique American individuality had to take place for identity as a nation to occur. Many prominent figures urged the creation of uniquely American perspectives. Thomas Jefferson encouraged the

production of American textbooks, for in doing so, a new generation would have a heightened sense of patriotism, virtue, and a common language (Botstein, 1997; Button and Provenzo 1989). Noah Webster believed that the success of the new Republic depended upon the education of its people, so he created a uniform style of language through punctuation and spelling (Spring, 1997; Warfel, 1936). For Webster, patriotism, nationalism and virtue were essential in the education process.

Founding Father Benjamin Rush is quoted as supporting public schools by stating, “Let there be free schools established in every township...in these schools, let the children be taught how to read and write...and use figures...by this plan the whole state will be tied together in one system of education” (Rudolph, 1965; p. 16,17; Runes, 1947). Further supporting the need for common schooling, Daniel Webster specified, “Every small district should be furnished with a school...and be taught the usual branches of learning, submission to superiors and to laws, the moral or social duties, the history and transactions of their own country, the principles of liberty and government” (Rudolph, 1965; Tyack, 1967; Webster, 1854, p. 41,42).

Perhaps most supporting of moral education was Founding Father Thomas Jefferson. He encouraged citizens to be strong, wise and be self-governing, for strengthening the Republic was a direct fight against the tyranny of England (Slosson, 1921). He believed that each person was born with an inborn moral sense or common sense, and this needed shaping through education. Through improving the human condition, an individual could contribute to the greater human knowledge and that of society. Responsible for various bills supporting education, Jefferson postulated that education could fight tyranny and injustice, for ignorance would render the recently earned freedom of the United States pointless (Lee, 1961).

By the time of the American Revolution, most families were educated, whether it be through an apprentice or schoolmaster. Peterson (2010) and Rury (2005) note that early schools offered a basic familiarity with general studies such as math, literature and geography, and echoed values from family and church. This shaped character and prepared individuals for taking an active part within their community and creating a common future for all citizens (Cremin, 1976, Parkerson and Parkerson, 2001; Perkinson, 1987). David Tyack (1967) identifies this as a quest for balance between order and liberty, for the proper transaction to occur between the individual and society, it was necessary to establish a pattern of thought which would cause leaders to envision a type of education that would lead to a moral and political reform of society.

It was not until the early 1800s and the establishment of the first large factories that schools as we recognize them today began to develop. Historians such as Karl Kaestle (1983) propose that the beginning of industrialization created the American working class and forged a strong parallel growth between industrial capitalism and education. While there was significant growth in capitalism with focus shifting from agricultural to commercial endeavors, the creation of moral training and discipline increased as evidenced in the schoolrooms of America (Rodgers, 1978; Rury, 2005).

With more parents leaving the home for factories or moving from the country to urban areas, moral discipline began to be associated with the school, rather than home or religion. The attitudes of early schools echoed religious views of ‘sparing the rod and spoiling the child’ and enforcing obedience through swift and sure discipline began to fade. In the antebellum period, there were new pedagogies from Lancaster and Pestalozzi that sought to internally motivate children through discipline. Monitorial systems and graded schools further structured the

learning environment and shaped individual character more so than corporeal punishment (Button and Provenzo, 1989; Cremin, 1976; Cubberly, 1962, Kaestle, 1983; Spring 1997 ).

Another supporting view of schools providing moral guidance was the population boom associated with capitalistic industry. Economic development affected schooling in different ways: through fostering commerce, communication, literacy, and other intellectual skills, it was hoped that schools could guide morality toward keeping social order. In larger cities, the prevention of crime and poverty became the leading mission of public schools (Cubberly, 1919; Rury, 2005). Larger populations also encouraged new ways of organizing the schools; graded classes, standardized curriculum, and support personnel began to be features of free public education (Kaestle, 1983).

The shift towards public school also provided a common language, common social mores, and opportunity for Americans to be educated. With the rise in jobs, immigrants with culturally diverse backgrounds began to flood into America and public schools served as centers for educational unity and cultural commonality. In an effort to resolve cultural conflict, schools began to educate students for assimilation within the American culture. Public schools could teach patriotism, encourage participation in civic affairs, and impart values that would form children's character. (Rury, 2005; Spring, 1997) Teachers were largely responsible for forming children into "social, honorable, and benevolent" members of society. (Kaestle, 1983, p. 96)

During this time, morality continued to be one of the most important goals for the education of children. For not only did it serve to encourage personal morality, reduce crime and create good work habits, it prepared them for life as future citizens. It is here where character education connected with democracy, for future citizens not only received a solid education

encompassing subjects such as history, geography, and math, but they were also to be inculcated with the moral responsibility of protecting the American way of life and freedoms. The general population realized learning brought with it not just the means for social acceptance, moral guidance, and behavioral structuring, but also it could be used as a tool for gaining independence, both financially and socially (Spring, 1997). This motivation for education was clearly observed in the development of the school system and the work of Horace Mann.

An advocate of education guiding the morality of the masses, Mann witnessed a direct correlation between education and social order. He observed chaos in society and the correlating disarray in classrooms. In the latter 19<sup>th</sup> Century, schools were controlled by local towns and dominated by area churches. There was no training for teachers or cohesiveness in pedagogy, so each school taught a range of subjects using different methods at various times throughout the calendar year. Seeking a better society through education, Mann sought to reform the process of education in the United States (Perkinson, 1987; Peterson, 2010).

As the United States Secretary of Education, he sought to make education “. . . universal, non-sectarian and free; with the aim of social efficiency, civic virtue, and character . . .” (Cubberly, 1962, p. 226). Mann felt a driving need to see for himself the state of schools in America. Consequently, during 1837-1838, he visited every school in Massachusetts. Not surprisingly, Mann saw chasmic differences between urban and rural schools. His Annual Reports from this time also reviewed the alarming general decline in the respectability of education. Using his research as foundation for legislation, many bills were voted into law changing education. Among them, were salaries for educational professionals, approved literature lists, a process and financial support for teacher training, and a common curriculum that would encourage morality among the masses (Cubberly, 1919; Perkinson, 1987; Peterson,

2010). These advances in education upheld Mann's constant argument that "... a good society is the result of good rulers and good rulers are men of intelligence and virtue, which, in turn, are the product of education. In the United States, people are rulers, so it follows that to have a good society, we must educate the people so they become intelligent and virtuous" (Cubberly, 1962; Hinsdale, 1889).

To educate each individual, Mann recommended that teachers must have authority in the classroom, and that the state was to require compulsory education for all children between ages four and sixteen for ten months a year (Peterson, 2010). In so doing, Mann not only sought to pull children away from child labor, but he sought to improve a student physically, morally, and intellectually. It is this improvement in moral development that Mann hoped would restructure and improve society (Teeter, 1983).

By the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, America had changed greatly. A war between the states had torn families apart, the president of the United States had been assassinated, and the nation was rebuilding itself. Rapid immigration and urbanization changed the social order while industry and capitalism had mechanized many jobs and transformed the economy. As a result of such tumult, progressive educators began to question the effectiveness of traditional moral education. Educators would play a pivotal role in setting the platform for creating a new perspective of morality.

Many educators contended that the simple, rigid rules of behavior were no longer appropriate and seemed arbitrary in a modern and changing world. Cremin (1964) maintains that with current changes in industrial development and urban growth, Progressivism represented an effort to respond to a rapidly changing society. Furthermore, Parkerson and Parkerson (2001)

note that Progressive views of modern life had made the currently existing moral codes obsolete; encouraging a more flexible approach to education; one that didn't make choices so absolute.

Recognizing the fact that not everyone lived by the same moral code allowed a sense of relativity to become appealing. Through the use of reason and independent thought, an individual could set their own standards and morals and include the virtues they saw as appropriate. Dewey sought to make a distinction between personal behavior and civic responsibility. He noted that traditional, virtue-centered moral education narrowly focused on moral habits such as alcohol consumption, church attendance, or promiscuity. This approach specified a set of moral codes and did not allow individuals to respond to a realistic range of moral dilemmas without absolute deference to a set of traditional virtues (Cremin, 1965). Dewey favored a more civic-oriented approach developing social intelligence, serving the social interest, while using scientific reasoning in a democratic context (Dewey, 1909). Like other aspects of Dewey's educational philosophy, moral education would not be separated from other areas of instruction. He believed it greatly benefitted the child to receive both pedagogy and moral education through a non-traditional experience-based group-learning environment.

Interestingly, Parkerson and Parkerson (2001) comment that in Dewey's classes exercising 'relative morals,' adults found parental authority was weakened and some students felt vulnerable to peer influence and contemporary fads. This was found to be particularly pronounced in troubled or unstable children. Moreover, in the absence of 'absolute morals,' some found it difficult to make 'the right decision' about personal behavior. What one person found liberating, another would find confusing and become indifferent. Yet, still for others, the encouragement of moral ambiguity took away all absolute perspectives and made virtues subjective.

In rejecting the traditional, values-centered approach for one that encouraged independent thinking, Dewey notes that students were given a greater appreciation of diversity, a better understanding of the complexities of community, and where they as an individual might fit within that group. He believed that independent thinking helped young Americans deal with the complexities of a changing world by removing boundaries and encouraging exploration of what they know to be true while acknowledging the ambiguous. Dewey's 'laboratory schools' encouraged students to think in a different way. They were viewed as being more flexible in their approach to social problems and less likely to arbitrarily submit to authority. They were also more likely to try new things but perhaps most importantly, they were able to understand the inherent and inevitable changes of a growing society (Dewey, 1909; Parkerson and Parkerson, 2001).

The progressive approach to moral education reflected growing and changing aspects of education in America. At the dawn of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, schools continued to use the traditional virtue-centered approach to moral development and adopted some parts of progressive education. This set the groundwork for a different approach to moral development: character education. The early premise of character education was that it could address the disturbing behaviors prevalent in society – violence, greed, corruption, drug abuse, immorality, and poor work ethic (among others). Supporters of character education inferred that at the core of such behavior was the lack of good character and deficiency in the impartation of virtue, including the perseverance and discipline to succeed.

Like the progressives, character educators recognized that changes in the nature of the economy and developing society would require new approaches to education, particularly with regard to the inclusion of values for daily living. Those supporting this approach established the

Character Education Association (CEA) to promote their ideas. Incorporating ideas of teamwork from traditional classrooms and the ‘civic approach’ from Dewey, they considered moral education a way to develop habits of community responsibility and patriotism (McLellan, 1992).

This innovative approach to learning set the groundwork for new trajectory in character education. It was believed that all students must be given a minimum absolute moral code with which to direct their lives. Intentionally codifying morals beyond the schoolroom, involvement in clubs and organizations such as Catholic Youth, Boy Scouts, 4-H, Boys and Girls Clubs of America, and others sprang up to encourage lessons in social cooperation and teamwork while guided by moral behavior. These social clubs quickly appeared in public schools and focused on citizenship, vocational preparation, health, a worthy use of ‘leisure time’, and the need to develop the primary elements of democracy and virtues for shaping character (National Education Association Commission on the Reorganization of Secondary Education, 1918). Variations of both progressive moral education and character education would continue to dominate public school curriculum for the next fifty years. Although neither approach would be adopted universally, each would contribute to the philosophical and pedagogical basis of further programs which focused on guiding the morals of America’s young people.

Throughout World War I, the Great Depression and World War II, America continued to stress character development within its classrooms. In 1951, a report from the National Education Association attempted to synthesize progressive and character education approaches to moral development. It recognized components of character education by recommending that schools transmit “generally recognized moral and spiritual values” to their students (Educational Policies Commission of the National Education Association and the American Association of

School Administrators, 1951, p.7). This reflected the progressive spirit by distinguishing that values could not be absolute or universal.

As a result, they recommended that members of the local community, groups of teachers and parents, work to develop an appropriate moral agenda for their schools (Educational Policies Commission of the National Education Association and the American Association of School Administrators, 1951, p. 17, 51, 84). While the report *Moral and Spiritual Values in the Public Schools* failed to satisfy everyone, it did serve as a compromise between two major directions in moral development. However, this, like other forms of educational reform, would change.

In the 1950s and 1960s, support for both the progressive and character education approaches to moral education began to collapse. McClellan (1992) cites three reasons: the first was the growing demand for more academic subjects in the curriculum, the second focused on the rise of anticommunism during the Cold War, the third was the exclusion of other moral issues from the curriculum.

In the years following World War II, American educators and politicians reorganized the scientific and technical curriculum. In light of scientific advances and the growing demand for better academic skills for students, secondary schools began to change. The addition of more academic subjects to the core curriculum removed traditional emphasis on moral development, simply because there was not enough time to teach everything. The threat of communism refocused the moral development curriculum to include an intensely political focus of anticommunism. This, coupled with other pressing social issues such as desegregation (Brown vs. BOE), caused educators to avoid character education to keep a calm classroom environment.

With the volatile undertow in the 1960s, the general mindset prevailed that it was easier not to teach something than to make waves between social groups. Growing culture wars pitted conservative reformers against liberal humanists and virtually eliminated moral education from public schools. In addition to the declines in society, two key court rulings epitomize that era: the argument of prayer in schools (*Engle vs. Vitale*) and the issue of women's reproductive rights (*Roe vs. Wade*). These volatile topics, in combination with the sexual revolution, growing use of drugs, and continued deterioration in morals of youths, outraged conservative educators who sought to renew moral education in schools.

Administrators responded to the growing counter-pressure of conservative religious groups by distancing themselves from any sort of moral education in the curriculum and by clearly differentiating public and private education. However, instead of serving as a guideline, it acted as a razor, cutting any traces of moral guidance and discussion of moral issues or character development out of the classroom (Parkerson and Parkerson, 2001). By the end of the 1970s, character education and moral education were not readily apparent in America's public schools.

### *Definitions*

To help define good character education and guide educators, the Character Education Partnership (2010) has developed curriculum to provide coordination, encouragement, and support to schools. The Eleven Principles of Effective Character Education not only guide but also build on one another in and out of the school setting. Williams and Schaps (1999) comment that they promote core ethical values that are defined to include thinking, feeling, and behaving, require an approach that promotes core values in all phases of school life, foster a caring school

community; provide opportunities for moral action; include a meaningful and challenging curriculum; strive to develop intrinsic motivation; involve all school staff; require moral leadership from staff and students; recruit parents and community leaders as partners, and the assess results.

The National Commission on Excellence in Education and the publication, *Nation at Risk* (1983) observed that over past decades, character education within the American public school system has stayed constant with regard to a broad definition of instilling values and morals into young people. Presidents Bush (2001) and Clinton (1996) have encouraged the teaching of moral education, whether in schools or at home. The need for character education is one that should be instilled in each generation, for character is the pathway to both excellence and ethics.

Howard, Berkowitz, and Schaeffer (2004) agree that character education is vital, for it deals with the conditions of a civil society, public issues (including morality), and is central to citizenship education. Though at one time synonymous with character education, moral education can now be defined as a type of character education, for universal values are integrated throughout a common curriculum. Although lessons which foster student character development can be implemented in the curriculum, they are often incorporated into disciplines such as language arts and social studies, for those subjects easily lend themselves to integration.

Damon (2005) echoes that moral standards are not arbitrary; they reflect basic human truths and must be passed from generation to generation. The process of defining what is the ethically correct action and having the integrity or character to do the right thing is part of being human. Lickona and Davidson (2005) support this by stating that moral standards demonstrate

the need to develop citizens of all ages who lead ethical and purposeful lives and contribute to a just and caring society.

In democratic America, each state chooses how to participate in national referendums, implement educational mandates, and encourage academic policies and procedures. With specific regard to character education, it filters down from the state to the districts, to each individual school, and into the classroom. Funding comes from local and state support. Howard, et al. (2004) remarks that although character education has been a Presidential mandate, some schools have been slow to implement it, for fear of taking away already pressed time for required subjects and testing. Berkowitz (1998), Leming (2000), Munson (2000) and Witherspoon (2007) have found that educators do not feel equipped to teach character education due to lack of teacher training, personal differences, lack of ability, or poor implementation of curriculum within their school.

### *Implementation*

Whatever the reason schools and teachers might have for not desiring character education, there are several organizations and initiatives available to engage in implementing character education programs and support communities. In 1994, the United States Department of Education worked with Congress to renew the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, encouraging the formation of commissions to research character education and make it available on both national and state levels.

The Department of Education has also made federal grants available to school districts willing to implement character education projects within their schools and/or curriculum. Many of these programs are supported through NEA endowments, foundations such as the John Templeton Foundation, Sanford N. McDonnell Foundation, The Institute for Excellence and

Ethics, and government funding (such as No Child Left Behind). As a result of this broad support, there is free curriculum, an unrestricted knowledge base and complimentary training to all interested schools. It has also encouraged the formation of commissions to research character education and make it readily available on national and statewide levels (Character Education Partnership, 2010).

In 2010, the Character Education Partnership stated that schools implementing character education have transformed their school environment, improved school culture, increased achievement for all learners, developed global citizens, restored civility, prevented antisocial and unhealthy behaviors and improved job satisfaction and retention among teachers. Because students spend so much time at school, it is critically important to offer an environment that ensures students get to help and support they need to reach their full potential. Schools with high quality character education programs have environments where children, teachers, and parents want to be. Children will do their best work because they feel safe, appreciated, supported, and challenged.

Smith (2006) notes that unlike traditional character education programs which had a decidedly Protestant base, widely agreed that contemporary programs should focus on teaching students specific universal values such as caring, equality, freedom, generosity, hard work, honesty, kindness, resiliency, and respect, that help them think and behave in an ethical manner. Williams and Schaps (1999) affirm The National Commission on Character Education and their definition of character education as “any deliberate approach by which school personnel, often in conjunction with parents and community members, help children become caring, principled, and responsible” (p. vi). Schaeffer (2003) further defines character education as the need to address cognitive, affective, and behavioral aspects of a child’s development. Both Berkowitz and Bier

(2005) and Schaeffer (2003) declare that the main objective is to help children learn to make decisions and take actions on an internalized set of moral values. Recently, the Character Education Partnership (2010) has revised their statement of character education, "Character education is the intentional effort to develop in young people core ethical and performance values that are widely affirmed across all cultures. To be effective, character education must include all stakeholders in a school community and must permeate the school climate and curriculum" (p. i).

### *The Current State of Education Today*

Schaeffer (2003) states that in practice, character education is often used as a part of school reform, often woven into the ethos of the school, not only creating good people but improving academic performance. A study in California elementary schools with solid education programs showed positive relationships between the extent of character education implementation and academic achievement not over one year, but two. Benninga and colleagues (2006) support this by noting that higher rankings on the SAT and other tests were significantly and positively correlated to character education curriculum. They further state that those students who develop their character not only achieve academic goals, but personal ones as well, and in the process, become more focused on the common things they share with other students rather than isolated by differences.

The report of the National Commission on Character Education (Williams and Schaps, 1999) concentrates three main points of view to integrate character education into the school ethos: direct instruction, indirect instruction, and community building. Each approach can be

used alone or in conjunction with another, but all meet a wide range of needs and foster moral development, essential for sustaining the diverse needs represented in America's classrooms.

Advocates of direct and indirect instruction (both curriculum and reinforcing activities) encourage instilling young people with virtues through training habits and virtuous behavior. Theorists such as Ryan, Berkowitz, and Lickona endorse this approach for it can be easily used in the classroom as part of curriculum. Direct instruction can also be modeled through the home, school, and community groups to encourage social, moral, behavioral, or academic development, focusing on the environment of the student, ensuring that the community is a caring, kind, and safe one. Berkowitz and Bier (2005) and Smith (2006) agree that character education programs should focus on teaching universal values, such as caring, generosity, hard work, kindness, honesty, and respect, things that help young people think and act in a moral manner. In so doing, it is the hope of participating teachers and schools that meaningful relationships and ethical deportment will result.

An example of universal values guiding character education is a taxonomy by Berkowitz (1998), in cooperation with the Character Education Partnership and the Josephson Institute (Character Counts!), including moral reasoning, moral education, living skills education, service learning, citizenship, health counseling, drug and violence prevention, conflict resolution and peer mediation, ethics and religious education. (See Appendix I.) With moral reasoning, cognitive development strategies by Lawrence Kohlberg, John Dewey, or Jean Piaget are often used to develop ethical decision-making skills among the students by being presented with a variety of moral dilemmas. The students then receive guidance and support from teachers to help them learn to make ethical decisions.

Howard (2005) and McKenzie (2004) believe that within the cognitive – developmental approaches, children grew and developed through universal stages and each stage of growth was dependent on the previous one for completion and development. In terms of education, these stages should support an individual's current stage of development and challenge current abilities to create a stimulus for growth to the next stage. Stage theories were ubiquitous in the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s, and have flagged in recent years due to interests focusing around core values and universal appeals to character development.

However, Weissbourd (2003) postulates that the moral development of students does not occur by simply being good role models, but also by what educators bring to their daily relationships with students. Success lies in the ability of educators to appreciate students' perspectives, their ability to admit and learn from error, their energy, idealism, generosity, and the teacher's ability to help students develop moral thinking without shying away from their own issues that makes being an educator a profound moral challenge. Morals are not transmitted, they are shaped through interaction over time. They are not static, they are constantly changing and growing, as is any individual committed to being a lifetime learner.

Another form of character development includes living skills, which comprises practical, daily skills taught to develop ethical decision-making, and improve social and interpersonal skills among students. Hinck and Brandell (1999) state that the most effective service programs promote the development of such universal character traits as empathy, hard work, kindness, and respect. Often implemented by school counselors, advisers, and vocational instructors, living skills also can be combined with service learning and in community projects deliberately designed to teach civic responsibility and democratic values. Hinck and Brandell (1999) further

note that although service learning was at one time voluntary, it is now being required of students in several school districts across the nation.

Citizenship training, or civics education, encourages students to become active participants within our democratic society. Although civics is primarily implemented through social studies curriculum, it can also be incorporated into co-curricular programs such as student councils, clubs, and tutoring programs. Another form of character education can take place through health counseling and drug and violence prevention. Sometimes this takes place within the coursework itself such as health curriculum or in activities such as athletics clubs or afterschool programs.

Bencivenga and Elias (2003) remark that students behave more respectfully when given opportunities for moral action and community service. With the No Child Left Behind legislation of the Bush administration, there were several programs encouraging drug free schools, advocating anti-bullying campaigns, and respect. In 2003, nearly \$3 million in grants was given to develop citizenship and character education (U.S. Department of Education Office of Safe and Drug Free Schools, 2009).

Furthering respect and anti-bullying is conflict resolution and peer mediation. Often implemented by school counselors, this allows students to learn how to peaceably resolve conflicts through ethical decision-making. This skill is vital for learning how to share the responsibility for maintaining the school ethos while learning how to compromise with each other, naturally lending support to studies of ethics and religious education.

Ethics education involves teaching certain moral philosophies with a secular overtone. Religious education involves teaching virtues in a faith-based setting. Through the Center for the Advancement of Ethics and Character, Ryan (1993) has advocated that students develop a solid moral foundation through instructional methods which provide ethical recognition and behavior. Lickona and Davidson (2005) have observed that public schools can help students realize the place for religion in society while still honoring the requirements of the Bill of Rights through religious history courses and religious clubs.

Williams (2000) stated that the key to making character education successful centers upon classroom training being echoed and reinforced through the home and community. Berkowitz and Bier (2005) identified parental involvement as a crucial characteristic of effective character education programs. Henderson and Berla (1994) indicated that the single best predictor of student success in the school is the level of parental involvement in a child's education. It is vital that parents partner with schools because a child's parents also act as their teachers. President George Bush remarked,

Family is the first place where values are learned. Our parents expect schools to be allies in the moral education of our children. That's what they expect and that's what we must give them. The lessons of the home must be reinforced by high standards in our schools.  
(June 19, 2002)

This reminds us that character education involves partnership and a solid relationship of all stakeholders in the educational process (Beninga, et al. 2006).

Finally, the community building model focuses on a child's environment and on building moral communities. Kohn (1997) affirmed that it is within this safe environment that children can be given the opportunity to make sense of using concepts such as fairness or courage, and reflect on complex issues, to freely figure out for themselves what kind of person they ought to be. Weissbourd, Noddings, Lickona, and Berkowitz also endorse the importance of giving a child a place to create caring relationships outside of the classroom. Educators provide a great gift, that of being with children and engaging them in conversation. Brief conversations can guide, direct, confirm, encourage, and support. Noddings (1994, 2002) also remarked that when children feel safe to have open questions, they can express their anger, fear, doubt, and begin to explore where they as individuals fit into their community. This exploration is key to interpersonal interactions, group dynamics, and encouraging feelings of belonging.

In 2002, First Lady Laura Bush hosted a White House Conference on Character and Community which supported the idea of school becoming a community for children through helping schools create a sense of community in the classroom and school ethos. Studies by the Child Development Project (Schaps and Battistich, 2002) were shared, stating that when widely implemented in a school, a sense of community yields a bond that is central to student development – academically, emotionally, ethically, and socially.

All of the viewpoints above explicitly or implicitly assign cognitive, affective, and behavioral dimensions to character development. Theorists declare that educators must serve as models for students and that educators must create school and classroom milieus that are caring, civil, and collaborative. Furthermore, schools and teachers need to establish an interpersonal atmosphere where mutual respect exists and is practiced. Teaching strategies need to have trust and respect at their foundation in order to nurture character development.

Scholars have approached character education from a variety of perspectives: school-based reform, embedded curriculum options as well as family collaboration, community involvement, and non-profit support. In spite of these diverse approaches, there have been a few coalitions large enough to communicate the need for character education throughout America while appealing to universal values. However, in spite of many programs available for implementation, the United States is not has not shown initiative for implementing character education programs. In spite of the benefits of character education, many schools are not willing to share precious curriculum time or invest in materials. This approach has resulted in some schools trying various approaches to enrich character and encourage community, but mandates have not yet been issued for every school district with in the United States.

Williams (2000) theorizes this is not because moral guidance is not desired, but because it cannot be quantitatively measured or assessed like other forms of learning. Smith (2006) believes character education reforms have been overlooked because of the narrow focus of legislation such as standards-based instruction, standardized testing, and school-improvement planning that has resulted in many schools focusing on academic performance at the expense of character development. Whatever the reason, it is clear that the United States has an indifferent approach to educating for values which form character. It is only when people and organizations put aside their differences for the betterment of humanity that change can be implemented and young people benefit from values not bound by culture, geography, or religion.

## Chapter 3

Colonial & Early National Period: 1700 to 1875

*“The conviction that moral standards are not arbitrary but that they reflect basic human truths and therefore must be passed from generation to generation is a necessary prerequisite of all moral education.” – Emile Durkheim*

### *Introduction*

In colonial America, character education was tightly woven with command morality, having roots in Puritan values. Early America sought to be different from England in every way, specifically with regard to religious freedom and expression. Puritan values acted as a springboard for command morality and other expressions of virtue, particularly with regard to education. As America forged its own identity, character education began to shift from homes to the schools. The growing nation’s need for an integrated approach to education increased, resulting in a presumed collective morality and common education for all. However, to completely understand how character education was shaped, we must examine the education systems of early America.

### *Colonial Schools*

In colonial America, education was the province of government and religion and was almost entirely religious (Cubberly, 1920). It was also considered essential to maintaining religious piety and social stability (Cremin, 1976; Spring, 1997). A helpful text explaining colonial life

and the place of education in the family is John Demos' *A Little Commonwealth: Family Life in Plymouth Colony*. He describes the family as being multifaceted, with the function of the family including as a daily part of life, school, vocational training, and acting as a house of worship. (Demos, 1970).

The primary responsibility of colonial parents was to raise their children to live according to God's commandments and to ensure that moral education was accomplished through whatever means available (McLellan, 1999; Spring, 1997). This was seen in an early pamphlet by Samuel Goodrich called *Fireside Education* which encouraged moral education. It declared, "Having ordained that man should receive his character from education, it was ordained that early instruction should exert a decisive influence on character, and that during this important period of existence, children should be subject to the charge of their parents" (Goodrich, 1838, p. 2).

Another excellent example of an early text is the New England Primer, which reflects a strong religious and authoritarian nature. Opening with the alphabet and used as a guide for spelling, it was full of statements, Proverbs, and rhymes exhorting a child to lead a good moral life, including the Lord's Prayer, the Apostle's Creed, and the 10 Commandments. An example of this included a shortened version of the Westminster Catechism (The New England Primer, 1883):

- Q. 1. *What is the chief end of man?*
- A. Man's chief end is to glorify God and enjoy him forever.
- Q. 2. *What rule hath God given, to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy him?*
- A. The word of God, which is contained in the Scriptures of the old and New Testament, is the only rule to direct how we may glorify and enjoy him.

Q. 3. *What do the Scriptures principally teach?*

A. The Scriptures principally teach what matters to believe concerning God, and what God requires of man.

Q. 4. *What is God?*

A. God is a spirit, infinite, eternal, unchangeable in his being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth.

This use of a Biblical foundation was to prevent children from leading a life of sin. Viewed as a sinful from birth, Puritans believed that guiding children with strict instruction would result in righteous living. It was this tightly woven command morality, reinforced by the family unit and echoed in society, that set the foundation of character education in early America. Seen in early Marm schools (ran by older women in their home to instill basic skills of reading, writing and arithmetic) and emphasized by tutors and private Academies, children were assured exposure to principles and values that would shape their character. (Button and Provenzo, 1989; Spring 1997)

However, by 1750, Puritan religious influence was dying out. While most of the colonies continued to maintain an "established church" (Cubberly, 1919) such as Anglican, new colonies were given freedom of worship, thereby allowing religious diversity. The monopoly of any particular sect in the colony was over. Furthermore, new secular interests began to replace religion as the chief topic of conversation and secular books began to dispute the earlier predominance of the Bible (Cremin, 1976). This challenged both traditional religious authority and religious views, and assisted in the gradual realization that the Bible was not the only resource or guide for living (Parkerson and Parkerson, 2001). Colonial newspapers were also

expressive of new colony interests and encouraged a wider base for education and discussion (Cremin, 1976, Cubberly, 1920).

As new freedoms were exercised in society, the technology of printing presses and the liberty of free speech proclaimed new developments in science and technology and promised to enhance the quality of life. New technology made work easier and innovative intellectual developments reset the framework for education. The drive to better oneself through education was a dominant trend, and it was encouraged to help maintain political order and stability within society. Consequently, Americans began to believe that a public and universal system of education was necessary. However, it was not until education was viewed as a government function, as opposed to a family one, that an organized system of education appeared.

By developing the idea that there was something greater and more important in the world than immediate family and church, teachers were able to instruct young children on the importance of being part of a larger community (Kaestle, 1983). Through encouraging moral education in schools, America sharpened the lines of responsibility for both institutions and families. The environment for this growth was met in the form of the common school.

### *Common Schools*

In the years between the 1780s and the early 1830s, parents sent their children to a wide variety of denominational, charity, public and private schools (Kaestle, 1983; McLellan, 1992; Teeter, 1983). By making education universally accessible, Americans hoped to spread a common culture and encourage moral behavior in children of all backgrounds, while at the same time preparing citizens to be effective members of society. While motivated by the need for

moral education, the agenda of common schooling was driven largely through politics and the needs of a growing society.

As population density increased, social problems compounded in larger cities. This paralleled a lack of parental guidance, for many parents were working and less available to their children when compared to previous generations. Recognizing that an absence of moral guidelines would cause deviant behavior, most people believed that the key to a good society lay not in government or politics, but in the morality of common citizens through individually guided values formed at an early age (Button and Provenzo, 1989; Parkerson and Parkerson, 2001). Driving this change was the realization that the older methods and approaches to education were no longer able to be fulfilled because of the changing needs of a growing urban industrial society.

Due to industrialization and westward expansion, there was a high degree of variability in early American education. Not only did teachers not all have the same training, but there was not a united curriculum, and while some schoolrooms were well equipped, others were very poor (Teeter, 1983). Without consistent standards, adequate teacher preparation, and suitable supplies, American schools would not prove adequate to the task of educating the nation's children, much less imbuing the common values and shared identity needed for a growing nation to be successful (Button and Provenzo, 1989).

Education critic James G. Carter's 1826 *Essays Upon Popular Education* declared that the American government needed to intervene in education, for the poor and ignorant in society did not voluntarily seek to better themselves. He believed that unless properly educated, the poor posed a threat to the integrity of the republic. Carter deemed the enforcement of education was

the government's job and the eradication of ignorance would only enforce education as well as its own political good.

Beginning with figures such as Carter, there was an important shift in the attitude toward schooling, particularly when compared to influential figures such as Daniel Webster or Thomas Jefferson who consistently emphasized education on an individual level so people could become contributing and productive citizens. This contrasted with the popular view of necessary government intervention affecting education, largely brought about by immigration. With increased immigration in the 1830s and 1840s, the population multiplied and schools began to be seen as an essential element to bring about assimilation within American culture.

Calvin Stowe, (in Button and Provenzo, 1989) a contributor to the common school movement, explained in 1836, "It is altogether essential to our national strength and peace, if not even to our national existence, that the foreigners who settle on our soil should cease to be Europeans and become Americans; and as our national language is English, and as our literature, our manners, and our institutions are of English origin, and the whole foundations of our society English, it is necessary that they become Anglo-American" (p. 103). To be American was to support and become part of America and her institutions. Multi-culturalism, the existence of many cultures in the same place at the same time, was seen as being un-American and a potential threat to the political stability and unity of the nation. Consequently, education was no longer for the wealthy, but the right of every citizen. Moreover, to fully participate in American life, immigrants needed to create an identity that was steeped in American ways of being and doing.

Horace Mann was also an advocate of creating American identity through education. Realizing that traditional methods of learning no longer met the needs of many individuals, Mann sought to unite the masses through acceptance of utilitarian values and the assumption that a structured educational system would bring about both growth for the individual and society as a whole. Like Thomas Jefferson, Horace Mann supported free universal education and desired to provide the general population with a strong sense of morality and the ability to critically evaluate the political and social needs of the nation. In this sense, the common school's objective was to train and educate its citizens, for Mann firmly believed that once the common schools were properly established, there would be no social issue that could not eventually be solved through educated discussion (Spring 1997).

Mann encouraged wealthy supporters to endorse public schooling. He argued that moral education was the most important element in learning, for a nonsectarian foundation would impart norms of proper behavior, teach respect for authority, introduce principles of hard work and help prevent irresponsible behavior. Fervently believing in the power of education to resolve the problems in society and improve both civilization and culture, Mann reasoned that public schools were essential to the emerging American culture and nation (Hogan, 1990; Spring 1997).

Through his work as Secretary of Education, Horace Mann set new expectations in the growing United States for what a classroom and school should be. In his travels throughout Europe, Mann noticed differences between American and European schools. In his Seventh Report dated 1843, he contrasted European models of education with American schools. He discussed how classes were taught, how students were classified by ability and age, methods of teaching, discipline, and the training of teachers (as cited in Hinsdale, 1898; Cubberly 1919).

Mann noticed how a national system of education such as he witnessed in Prussia and Germany could be very effective. These models had adopted methods from Pestalozzi which presented classes with good subject matter, and featured well-trained teachers, solid instruction, organized classes, mild disciplinary problems, and intelligent supervision (Cubberly, 1919). These were traits which Mann felt naturally led to regimented learning. When smaller communities could be consolidated within larger districts, and necessities such as playgrounds, outhouses, drinking water, clocks, and other supplies be provided, the educational needs of growing communities throughout the nation could be reached in a highly efficient manner (Parkerson and Parkerson, 2001; Teeter, 1983).

Through addressing common sense needs, Mann believed that public education could not only be efficient, but also achievable. Moreover, the guiding morals and values of a growing generation could be shaped through public education. In an untitled editorial dated 1838, Mann states that the goal of moral education was to ". . . build up a partition wall – a barrier –between the principles of right and wrong, in the minds of men, that the future citizens will not . . . break it. A truly conscientious man, whatever may be his desire, his temptation, his appetite, the moment he approaches a boundary line which separates right from wrong . . . he could sooner leap the ocean than transgress it" (p. 2).

It was strongly believed that the morality of the individual citizen held the best hope for preservation of freedom, protection of order, and the growth of prosperity. Kaestle (1983) remarks that moral education permeated classrooms in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century so thoroughly that it left little time for instruction in government or politics. The neglect regarding government and politics did not reflect a lack of interest in citizenship, for Americans believed that the key to the

good of society lay less in the structures of government or political beliefs than in the morality of common citizens.

Mann's common sense approach helped solve this dilemma, for it appealed to not only moral education but also the mastery of basic skills. By establishing a standard for learning and universal curriculum, education began to be associated with preparation for life and, in particular, work. Through the cultivation of proper habits such as industriousness, responsibility, literacy skill and math, the value of general history, geography, and other subjects was also emphasized. Mann concluded that a broad, general education was necessary for participating in society and functioning as a good citizen as well as the development of character.

Following Mann's work, Henry Barnard also sought to promote the school cause. Whereas Mann was instrumental in establishing standards for education which fit into the narrative of the common school, Barnard promoted the common school cause through print. Through the creation of national publications such as the *American Journal of Education*, he addressed social problems within education and furthered the cause of public schools (Button and Provenzo, 1989; Teeter, 1983).

Of particular interest for Barnard were his writings on the design of schoolhouses. He believed that certain architectural designs encouraged thinking and made learning pleasant. By referencing Gothic architecture and recalling Greek rationalism, Barnard encouraged the schoolhouse to become a sacred space or temple of wisdom. In elevating schools to a level of importance in society, he successfully provided critical direction and purpose to the changing face of public education within the United States. This focus on schools meeting the needs for

mass education was particularly helpful for growing municipalities that had poor methods of education prior to this model.

In cities such as New York, Philadelphia and Boston, this allowed large numbers of children to be instructed and promoted according to system-wide rules. There was great appeal to efficiency of the educational process which encouraged cultural conformity, uniformity of curriculum and classroom instruction while using a universal language. Protestant morality gave both justification and foundational guidelines for morality within the school system, as well as guiding democratic principles. Moral education was part of democracy, for future citizens not only needed to know basic studies such as mathematics, geography, and history, but also needed to be impressed with the moral responsibility of protecting American ways of being and doing (Cremin, 1976; Kaestle 1983).

As schools became classified and graded, Kaestle (1983) reminds us that the “informal, chaotic, and individualized” (p. 69) instruction of early 19<sup>th</sup> Century classrooms gave way to a well-defined curriculum. As both the workplace and schools sought efficiency and order, common schools provided a shared political and educational background for America’s youngest citizens, offering primary education in even the most remote areas as well as developing cities. Also, necessary values and skills (grounded in largely Protestant values) were introduced in the curriculum so an individual could be successful in a competitive and changing world. While this “education for assimilation” approach (Kaestle, 1983, p. 72) appealed to a majority of Americans, it failed to effectively embrace nuances of America's new citizens from Europe, Africa and other parts of the world. It also failed to accept dissenting religious views such as Catholicism and Judaism.

The move toward embracing a changing world was also seen in the urbanization of America. In the late 1700s, most Americans lived on a farm or in a small community. In antebellum America, this began to radically change. As cities witnessed population booms, trade and commerce began to dominate larger cities, and the creation of manufacturing and industry led to new types of factory work. Work in factories meant a restructuring of home and village industries and an eventual abandonment of the apprentice system (Cubberly, 1919; Kaestle 1983).

New settlements expanded inland and away from coastal towns. This urban trend started a movement towards cities and resulted in the subsequent concentration of manufacturing in large areas (Parkerson and Parkerson, 2001). Industries needed many workers to perform specific tasks, calling for a skilled labor force. The rise of the factory system created large-scale businesses and the need for cheap and rapid transportation, resulting in population growth and diminishing the importance of agriculture as a common practice.

As manufacturing and industry swept America, there was a need to educate the public with skills and values that could compete in the new and growing economy of the United States. Burgeoned by Westward expansion, economic growth, the development of commercial, flourishing cities and the process of democratization, social groups and classes grew in a way that had never before existed. Button and Provenzo (1987) and Kaestle (1983) theorize that the creation of industrial jobs created wage earners which caused an increase in the standard of living and forged a direct link between capitalism and common schooling.

Using the factory environment as an example, new educational platforms such as a monitorial system and graded schools could emphasize more regimented procedures that would shape character. Particularly in the antebellum period, a platform for intellectual skills; literacy, moral development, and discipline was created, which encouraged the purposes and methods of the common school. This directly contributed to transforming the nature of public education to meet the needs of a growing society.

Furthermore, Cubberly (1919) and Button and Provenzo (1987) cite social problems as pivotal reasons for educating the public. Industrialization tended to concentrate wealth and power. Workers were exploited with long hours and low pay. Plentiful labor from immigrants encouraged high productivity. However, when productivity increased, so did social problems. When cities were smaller, the church, community, and family echoed common values. In large cities with diverse cultures, corruption and abuse were rampant and moral guidance was not as apparent.

Lack of guidance and morals further weakened attachments within the family, for industry and urbanization could no longer justify the need to stay in a small community. As young Americans pursued opportunities away from home, communities realized that if values were to be taught and children shaped according to set standards, the task had to be accomplished before the child was old enough to move away and work; consequently, very strict morals and codes for living were adopted. The drive to educate students for democracy and civic duty began, creating the need for a new form of education, the common school movement, which reached its height in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century.

*Moral Education: The Analogue to Character Education*

The 19<sup>th</sup> Century tendency to place moral conduct at the core of society's hopes for social stability and political liberty gave the common school new significance. Parents began to send their children to school in record numbers. At the heart of public education in early America was the need not to forbid religion, but to teach a nonsectarian, largely Protestant form, leaving the finer points of theological doctrine to churches and families.

These efforts to find common ground in moral education was hoped to not only protect rights of particular denominations, but also to encourage cohesion among an increasingly diverse nation. The early 1800s had a very effective approach, encouraged by interdenominational efforts. When doctrinal differences were dismissed, those holding non-sectarian views found it easier to discuss common views, achieve reform, and promote social harmony (Kaestle, 1983).

McClellan (1999) defines this as an early form of American pluralism, for Americans were encouraged to sustain a level of cohesion regarding character education even as religious diversity flourished. Individuals were careful to quiet public expression of differences and focus on commonalities of faith such as the Golden Rule and 10 Commandments. It was out of this nonsectarian culture that 19<sup>th</sup> Century Americans shaped a consensus to character education that was meant to create a strong consent of Protestant values and preserve the rights of individual expressions of doctrine.

In spite of a compelling nonsectarian approach, dissenters within particular religions such as Catholicism and Judaism were encouraged to create their own schools for piety and devotion, leaving public education largely Protestant. Americans who were Jewish encouraged public education and reinforced their own cultural and spiritual beliefs and practices with afterschool

classes and Sabbath school sessions on the weekend. The reaction of Catholics was to eschew public education completely and form their own parochial schools answering to the American archdiocese, rather than individual states or the United States government (Spring, 1997; Teeter, 1983). During the early half of the 1800s, there were also a few dissenting Christian denominations such as Lutherans, who, through the creation of parochial schools, sought to merge religion, morality, and education.

Regardless of the efforts to create harmony among contrasting religious groups, moral education within the public school system in the 1800s achieved ironic results. Conceived initially as a system that would create harmony among various religious groups, nonsectarian moral education resulted in conflict. From the beginning, those wanting common values underestimated strong religious differences in society, and participants failed to agree on particular values that would unite all views. While clinging to Protestant ideology did much to spread their own faith, McClellan (1999) believes this attempt at trying to turn a worldview into religion intensified social divisions drove differing religious groups deeper into dissent and resulted in a permanent schism that thwarted the possibility of a single united system of public education.

Equally paradoxical is that the early Protestant supporters of public schools were insistent on the connection between morality and religion. They largely viewed the public school as a way to spread the principles of Christianity. Yet, by preventing state aid to Catholic and other religious schools, they were compelled to expand the religious neutrality of public school (Spring 1997). With outcries from dissenting groups, public school administrators found it necessary to weaken the theological content of moral education. This effort to protect nonsectarian education was not

the primary force involved in secularizing schools, but it directed the trend in responsibility for moral education from family to the school.

It is worth noting here that by the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, the religious content of public education began to diminish. In fact, religion within public education became so controversial that the Protestants, who were the strongest defenders of non-sectarianism, now turned against it and encouraged the privatization of religion and morality, desiring to remove it from public education entirely. However, it was, in fact, this drive to conform that caused upheaval and opposition to public education. There were groups of dissenters who did not share the beliefs, values, and loyalties that the common school was designed to encourage. Glenn (2002) reminds us that there were those who did not want cultural homogenization at the expense of identity or spiritual belief.

Many disagreed about the role of the common school. They perceived their beliefs and loyalties, particularly those influencing the moral guidance of their children, divergent from public opinion and beyond that which was publicly agreed-upon or sanctioned by the state. Berger (1969) proposes that society should act as a guardian of order and meaning, not just with institutional structures but also subjectively in the structure of individual consciousness. It is this sense of a threat that triggered conflict between the public school system and citizens. Many believed those running schools were seeking to impose a uniformity that did not exist. It raised the question of how public education could transmit neutral and nonsectarian values which did not claim to hold any particular pedagogy or purpose. This was answered by the movement toward progressively neutral, nonsectarian, and pluralistic forms of education over the next few decades.

Regardless of definition and opposition, morality is more than a list of rules for conduct supported by the reasoning that civilized society demands order and justice. Morality must also arise from a substantive tradition. For most Americans in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, this convention was Protestant Christianity. If the chief purpose of common schools was moral education, and if morality had to be grounded in religion, there needed to be a way to integrate religion in schools. With the predominant view of Protestant belief and the large influx of Roman Catholics as immigrants, moral education became a huge issue for those who argued that all children, everywhere, should attend public schools.

### *Conclusion*

As a result of a growing nation, manufacturing and industry encouraged population growth and urban development. Schools were united under a common education system, yet managed at a local level. Slowly, the smaller community schools no longer seemed to make sense. School buildings became larger and featured classrooms which separated students by age and had multiple teachers for various subjects. In the latter part of the 1800s, after the Civil War, graded schools were prevalent throughout the nation.

With expanded curriculum and a very diverse student base, it began to be more difficult for one teacher to teach all subjects as in a one-room schoolhouse. Moreover, the new research of developmental psychology claimed that as children progressed through different stages of growth, they needed particular types of curriculum appropriate for their development. Morals and values were reinforced through family and community involvement, yet it was the beginning of the drive to educate the public to take part in democracy with a high emphasis on civic duty that heralded Progressive Education.

## Chapter 4

Progressive Education: An Analogue to Character Education, 1875 to 1950

*“To educate a person in the mind but not in morals is to educate a menace to society.”*

Theodore Roosevelt.

### *Introduction*

Dramatic changes in the economic and social organization of America in the late 1800s and early 1900s led to a powerful shift in moral education. What once had been religiously based was now becoming functionally pragmatic. As graded classrooms became more commonplace, immigration increased and classrooms were faced with the challenge of interfacing with diverse customs, languages and mannerisms. This was problematic, for it threatened the prevailing Protestant view which guided morals and structured values, particularly in schools. Moral education was still taught in classrooms, though largely Bible-based, with choices being made for the common good, rather than being grounded in individual values.

Parochial schools were formed for those who sought to keep religion integrated within daily learning. In an effort to separate religious values from school curriculum, community groups reinforced values, driving participation from a sense of civic duty and patriotism. Academic disciplines were emerging, particularly the social sciences, which expanded to include history, psychology, and sociology. These sciences guided not only public education but also shaped views on moral development, particularly within public education.

With population booms from World Wars, more secular learning and specialized classes sought to expand education through practical knowledge and hands-on classes while clinging to moral guidelines which focused on the common good. Variations of Progressive thought would dominate public school curriculum for decades, setting the foundation for philosophical and pedagogical work that would define and shape American education, particularly with regard to moral development.

### *Education Overview*

The late 1800s through World War II was an era of significant change in American history, including reforms in education and politics. Education reforms were built on a common school platform; they established different ideas and innovations for education. The abolishment of child labor with the Keating-Owen Act of 1916, and the Smith-Hughes Act of 1917 (which provided federal aid for vocational secondary education, and created mandatory education laws in each state) are two such examples. Graded classrooms were modeled after the regimented style of industry and business, serving to increase class size and foster the need for standardized curriculum. Modern education methods sought to break children into grades which focused on their developmental skills. This not only created a more structured school day, but also, gradually grew to include a wide variety of classes.

In short, Progressivism represented an effort to respond to dramatic industrial development and urban growth. Lawrence Cremin (1964) reminds us what was distinctive of this era: there was a remarkable awakening of social conscience and a growing belief that the suffering of individuals could be alleviated through education. Cremin (1964) calls it, “. . . a vast humanitarian effort to apply the promise of American life . . . the puzzling new urban – industrial

civilization that came into being during the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century" (p. 60). Consequently, society grew and the education system became more complex as a direct response to the growing diversity of cultures and communities.

The production system of modern industrialism placed a premium on specialization, technical expertise, and the ability to interact smoothly in an increasingly impersonal and highly structured environment. Success depended less on character than on aptitude, efficiency, and social skills. In the 1800s, public schools ensured that values of the home were reinforced in the classroom and that all children, in particular those of immigrants, learn and practice them. Teachers were to be people of good character and role models for students.

Schools became complex institutions that encouraged academic achievement and social competence more than in previous decades. During the Progressive Era, schools needed to expand their functions in response to the demands of a growing, modern society. Many believed that modern living required new approaches to moral education. With the growing curriculum focus, moral education not only had to compete for a place in a constantly changing continuum, but educators also began to examine whether or not traditional morals were adequate.

McLellan (1999) cites three competing views of moral education that developed during this period. One view sought to develop new mechanisms of education to preserve traditional values by favoring moral education in classrooms and encouraging virtues within the curriculum. Specifically, this encouraged cultivation of good character, in essence continuing what had been done in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century and echoed what was currently being done in most classrooms.

The second approach was a product of the Progressive movement, denigrating both the teaching of specific moral tenets and cultivation of particular values to emphasize a flexible and critically subjective approach to moral education. Specifically, it emphasized that modern society required a new view of morality, something able to expand given changing and growing needs. Finally, religious educators followed a third path. Noticing the secularization of public education, they argued the necessity of grounding moral education in tenets of faith. They refused to compromise or consider the secularizing trend of modern education.

These three divergent views set the stage for what was to be an ongoing conflict through not just the mid-20<sup>th</sup> Century, but also into the new millennium. The discussion over whose values to teach and how to teach them, began in this period. Progressive thought focused on traditional approaches to moral education and sought to instill values and virtues with an emphasis on doing good deeds. The humanitarian disposition addressed the social environment by making education more responsive to the needs of children and guiding their behavior within the classroom environment.

This period marked a new era in urban schooling: one that emphasized separation between local political organizations and supervision of schools. With the rapid growth of schools, there was a constant need to erect new buildings, train teachers, purchase textbooks and other supplies, and devise new curriculum. The constant strain on resources led to administrators advocating for highly efficient school systems to be built across the country, and was aligned with the sweeping municipal reform that fought corruption within politics. Local directors of education that had been selected by politicians were being replaced by leadership boards selected from different participants in the community. Superintendents, chosen for their experience and professional competency, emphasized separation between local political organizations and

supervision of schools. Creating terms such as ‘efficiency’ and ‘management’ within the educational process, progressives gave significant meaning to vocation and specialty classes that focused on an individual’s productive place in society (Cremin, 1964, Tyack, 1974).

A strict curriculum including a system of exams at the end of every academic year encouraged promotion and assured academic progress. Eventually, assessments beyond academic testing such as IQ testing and psychological evaluations encouraged grouping of students into classes by ability. By the 1930s and 40s, districts began to practice social promotion or advancement by age and not by ability, and moral growth was structured more in terms of decision-making with results emphasizing critical thinking skills (Tyack, 1974).

Challenging the current theory, which contended that memorization and recitation helped build mental capacity in children; progressive theorists suggested that children learn best by following their interests, exercising self-expression and actively investigating the world around them. Through democratic participation in social groups, social and political issues could be explored in a safe environment. Skills of democratic citizenship such as problem solving, deliberation of current issues, and the ability to operate as intelligent and productive citizens could also be encouraged, echoing historical educators such as Horace Mann, Pestalozzi, and others that formed the common school movement.

Modern contributors such as John Dewey, William Kilpatrick, Edward Thorndike, Jean Piaget, and Lawrence Kohlberg reinforced traditional views. They also expanded them for a growing society by focusing on children's individual needs and interests, creating environments that encouraged learning. These individuals were pivotal to making psychological development part of the educational process and viewing education, particularly moral education, as a key part

of human growth, rather than an echo of the industrial revolution. By focusing on the whole child rather than a result of assessments, progressive thought served to influence not only distinctive processes of classroom pedagogy, but also shape the changing view of morality and character development within the educational process.

### *John Dewey*

In many ways, John Dewey embodied the progressive ideology. Actively involved in political movements and organizations promoting justice, he was a strong advocate for democratic citizenship. He argued that the best way to prepare individuals to become active members of society was to engage in the educational process through interaction with curriculum. Reflecting upon ethical conduct and how an individual can operate within the larger community of society, Dewey believed that school lessons should be taught using the larger world as a background study, and encouraged linking practical experience to subjects such as history, biology and geography.

In his books *Democracy and Education* (1916), *The School and Society* (1900), *The Child and the Curriculum* (1900), Dewey identified both the content and form of school curriculum. Based upon the premise that all subjects are to be taught with a view of an individual contributing to social life, he advocated the daily connection between actual life experience and learning to choose good habits that lead to good behavior. By this connection, a child could realize the context of an appropriate interaction and assign value and meaning to it within the realities of social and community experience.

Dewey went on to advocate that by using schools as social centers, less desirable establishments such as brothels, dance halls, or saloons would hopefully become less significant in the eyes of the community. The social environment of the school would be responsible for creating not only intellectual content, but also social meaning and providing moral guidance in a world that was becoming increasingly dominated by large corporations and urban living (Dewey, 1902).

Dewey sought to replenish what had been displaced by industrialization – the education of the child and their place within a community. Dewey notes that education was a means of social continuity, believing society exists by (1909, p. 3) “. . . transmitting habits of doing, thinking, and feeling from the older to the younger. Without this communication of ideals, hopes, expectations, standards, opinions from those members of society who are passing out of the group life to those who are coming into it, social life could not survive.” This encouraged morality and growth to be structured by a child’s immediate community, thereby making morality more relative than before.

In so doing, Dewey (1916) affirmed that growth was a constant expansion of horizons and consequent formation of new purposes and responses. Through laboratory schools, he encouraged student interests, student activity, group work and cooperation – methods based on the idea that the school had to serve a new social function – that of seeing the value of knowledge and the interdependence of society.

It was the development of knowledge based upon deliberate action that Dewey (1909) claimed would uphold individual moral development. He stated that it was not enough to merely think of virtues, ethics, and duties to others as part of learning or the knowledge process, but they

should be recognized as an essential part of the process of becoming a whole human being, originating in the circumstances of human life. Dewey (1916) steadfastly believed that these ideals, morals, and values were dependent upon social action and should change as the needs in society change; denoting that individuals should adopt whatever values, ideas, or thoughts that work best in a given situation. In so doing, an individual's values became relative to whatever situation was convenient.

This pragmatic and relativistic ideology was contradictory and antithetical to prevalent Christian thought of the day. Christians believed that all things were guided by the hand of God, that ethics and values were structured on the Bible. Dewey's philosophy relied on the ability of individuals to interpret their own experience rather than solely relying on Scripture; morality and character became interchangeable. It was Dewey's conviction that the schools provide the environment and opportunity for children to test social relationships within the structure of the school community, for learning within a community would allow a child to test moral and social judgments and experiment with ethics in a safe and supportive environment (Dewey, 1897, cited in Spring, 1997).

Dewey believed that moral lessons alone had nothing to do with character. Rather, character was centered in community interaction where pupils learned to regard the sentiments and reactions of others, that character was built. Harkening to Plato's 'knowledge of the good', and intellectually pursuing that which is moral and socially acceptable, Dewey adamantly stated that education was the only effective way for a child to realize both conviction and affect character. When combined with sound judgment and applying it intelligently to the world around them, a child could apply what was learned in a useful way, reflecting experience. He was not so much

concerned with the acquisition of information, but the intelligent application of what was learned (Dewey, 1902, 1909, 1916).

Dewey firmly believed that students were to be involved completely in all parts of their education; including the construction of goals, making choices, evaluating the results and generalizing future learning experiences. He gradually came to believe that the school was the central institution in a modern democratic society, for it was the school that provided individuals with the skills and knowledge necessary for active citizenship. It was this capacity to engage in continuous activities or even occupations which had a social aim, and utilize the experiences provided by interaction with others within a community, that would form character and become essential to individual growth (Dewey, 1916).

For Dewey, the concept of democracy embraced more than political policy, it was a way of life that allowed for the fullest possible development of every member. Through embracing ideas such as tolerance, fairness, open discussion of critical issues, and respect for the rights of others, he felt that the school's role was to help cultivate these values and form morals which would structure a child's character. The key to making the children's experience of education more memorable was introducing the course material through active experience in a way that children would not quickly forget. He firmly believed that the role of the school was to impart tenets of democratic life and exercise principles of scientific reasoning so that democracy and American values could be preserved and flourish in spite of constant social change. Dewey's conviction is what shifted the absolute stance of traditional moral education into the functional reality of Progressive thought. This concept is still prevalent today in character education.

*William Heard Kilpatrick*

Building on Dewey's model of active learning, William Heard Kilpatrick continued progressive education with what he called the project method. Through this form of education, Kilpatrick encouraged what he called the "socially purposeful act," and included any activity that had a socially useful end (Kilpatrick, 1918, p. 6). He believed that formation of moral character occurred when these activities were performed within the active context of learning. By making projects socially useful within the community, particularly when an individual would consider and respond to the desires of the group, civic morality and social worthiness were encouraged. As an individual advanced in advancing social conformity, Kilpatrick regarded development of moral character to be one of the most important results of the project method.

Kilpatrick's emphasis on group education, social learning, child-centered education and the education of social imagination appeared ideal for preparing students to live within industrial areas and cities. He further maintained that children should direct their own learning according to their interests. They should be allowed to explore their environment and experience learning through their natural senses and given the opportunity to reject traditional forms of schooling which focused on memorization, rote learning, and strictly organized classrooms and emphasized social conformity. As with most pedagogy, the effectiveness of the method depended upon the teacher, district, class size, and classroom environment.

Implementation of group social efforts to guide moral development continued to become quite popular throughout the 1920s, 1930s and the 1940s. Although psychology was not immensely popular in America, it was becoming accepted in Europe where it set benchmark theories proposing human growth and development. Of particular interest at this time was Jean

Piaget, a Swiss psychologist who was the first to propose human growth as progressing in stages of cognitive development. As an individual grows and progresses through four stages (sensori-motor, pre-operational, concrete operational, and formal operational), they gather information from their environment and assimilate it into schemas (or constructs) to make sense of it. Over time, with growth, this ability becomes refined and more complex and allows them to mature. Piaget was an innovator in his field, for no one had proposed human growth and development in this way before. He set the stage for other psychologists and educators to propose their own theories, particularly with regard to moral development, such as Lawrence Kohlberg, whose theories about moral development became prominent in the 1960s and continue to this day.

In reviewing highlights of progressive education, it is important to remember that education reformists were groups of like-minded individuals with similar interests and values who were deeply impacted by the common school system. They believed that educational progress was derived from education which could direct social growth and evolution. Tyack and Cuban (1995) assert that Progressives proclaimed education to have a scientific basis, and that the curriculum could be differentiated to fit both the backgrounds and future destinies of students. They also believed that schools should be standardized with respect to buildings, equipment, staff qualifications, administrative procedures and other practices. Approaching education as a discipline requiring study, not a general cacophony of pedagogy, progressive reformers encouraged children to explore their world and learn from it, treating them as individuals, regardless of ability.

Furthermore, Progressives believed that progress is derived from a shared conviction that education is the prime means of directing the course of social growth and evolution seeking to expand access to education so that young people could attend for longer periods of time. They

thought the curriculum should be differentiated and standardized to fit both the backgrounds and future destinies of students and standardized with respect to buildings, equipment, staff qualifications, administrative procedures and other practices (Tyack and Cuban, 1995). The inclusion of alternative and vocational schools increased the opportunity of education for everyone, regardless of ability or economic status.

### *Moving Toward Character Education*

The 19<sup>th</sup> Century was characterized by conflict regarding the nature and role of moral education within the school system. Dominated by Protestants and Catholics, the discussion of whether morals could be separated from a religious perspective carried on for decades during this time. As schools began to teach students according to new standards and changing social mores, moral education (albeit from a largely Protestant base) was forced to compete for physical and conceptual place in an increasingly complex and crowded curriculum. Concurrently, educators began to rate the inadequacy of traditional forms of moral training and explore the possibility that the modern society required new approaches for educating children.

It was this call for innovative methodology (McClellan, 1992) that formed the background for three distinct approaches to moral education: a trend to continue historical approaches, embrace progressive attitudes, and to eschew Progressive ideology for religious tradition. The struggle between these transformed the framework of Progressive thought and character education. Recognition that the effort to promote character education programs within Progressive education was less a well-organized movement with a clear mission than a general attempt to validate traditional values with pragmatic teaching and ensure a place for character education within the public school. Although moral education had the support of many

educators, its strongest leadership came from outside of academics and from within the social community. Pivoting from moral development to character education was more pragmatic than grounding it on tradition and Christian doctrine.

The early character education movement was built not so much on thorough analysis of social change, but on the vague sense that modern society presented challenges to current values. This required a strong effort to preserve codes of morality and common values throughout the social growth process. Supporters of this view believed that as young people prepared for their place in society, they could lose their moral bearings and possibly even their physical or mental well-being. It was a very valid concern that while a student could fit into a highly specialized job, neglect of their body or character was likely.

Equally threatening to character education were the new freedoms brought about by technology. While social vices may not have been any worse than previous decades, technologies such as motorcars and trains took social events away from the direct scrutiny of parents and community. With the spread of modernism tainting religion and a continued secularization of society, the puritanical fear of spiritual condemnation lost its power to divert individuals from temptation and encouraged independence, making the consequences of impulsive choices more immediate and tangible.

Most supporters of character education did not seek to return to a strong puritanical emphasis, but they sought to create a program of moral education that would prepare individuals under current circumstances to operate in society without losing their integrity or succumbing to the temptations of the day. This style of adaptation led some social groups to favor specific courses in manners and morals. The most successful were those that developed outside the

formal classroom such as youth organizations like the Boy Scouts, 4-H Clubs, and Campfire Girls. They offered a prescribed notion of what was good and bad and emphasized codes of conduct to meet social expectations for right and wrong. Careful cultivation of group activities were designed to encourage good behavior and moral growth. The hope was to turn traditional values into a modern creed for living and to use the powers of socialization to increase both social and vocational skills.

It was the use of character codes within carefully structured social activities that emphasized belonging and accountability within these organizations that most clearly set reformers apart from progressives. These codes were essentially lists of virtues sometimes presented in the forms of rules or pledges designed to provide focus for behavior within the classroom and society. One of the earliest codes was written in response to a competition sponsored by the Character Education Association, a private organization created in 1911. Authored by William Hutchins and published in 1917, the *Children's Morality Code* encouraged virtues such as self-control, good health, kindness, sportsmanship, self-reliance, duty, reliability, truth, good workmanship, and teamwork. Directed at physical and mental hygiene as well as moral development, the law provided codes of behavior in each area. For example, guidelines for 'reliability' were found on page two of a widely publicized pamphlet:

### **The Good American is Reliable**

Our country grows great and good as her citizens are able more fully to trust each other. Therefore:

1. I will be honest, in word and in act. I will not lie, sneak, or pretend, nor will I keep the truth from those who have a right to it.
2. I will not do wrong in the hope of not being found out. I cannot hide the truth from myself and cannot often hide it from others.

3. I will not take without permission what does not belong to me.
4. I will do promptly what I have promised to do. If I have made a foolish promise, I will at once confess my mistake, and I will try to make good any harm which the mistake may have caused. I will so speak and act that people will find it easier to trust each other.

Many schools across the country quickly adopted moral codes such as these and then focused upon other virtues that would shape morals and guide character. However, educators expected teachers to set moral guidelines which would structure the development of character and provide guidelines for instruction within the classroom such as encouraging teachers to emphasize one trait every month (McLellan, 1992, 1999). These codes for living extolled traditional virtues and differed only in the slightest details, providing a focus for more formal instruction. Encouraged in extracurricular activities and supported through themes in posters on school grounds, a trait such as 'thrift' might be emphasized with metal drives, paper drives, book exchanges, and encouraging students to open savings accounts. The aim was to infuse every facet of school life with moral education (Birmingham Board of Education, 1936).

Unlike 19<sup>th</sup> Century educators who frequently viewed the classroom as a collection of individuals, each of whom learned values through textbooks and interaction with students and a teacher, 20<sup>th</sup> Century reformers emphasized the importance of teamwork and socialization throughout the educational process. In emphasizing group activities, educators sought to use peer influence without eliminating adult authority. Teachers were expected to supervise and even participate in clubs and group activities.

The tendency of early 20<sup>th</sup> Century progressive reformers to use innovative pedagogical techniques to cultivate traditional values reflected their belief that in modern life, teaching morals could be managed within the framework of the classroom. Like their predecessors,

reformers viewed moral education fundamentally as a problem of motivation, not ethical reasoning. For them, character was less a matter of making ethical decisions than developing the inner resolve to do the right thing.

Echoed within the publication printed by the Educational Policies Commission in 1951 entitled *Moral and Spiritual Values in the Public Schools*:

Moral and spiritual values are a matter of universal concern. It is worthwhile to create a capacity for moral judgments and a sense of moral responsibility. It implies that each [individual] should have every possible opportunity to achieve . . . feelings of security and competence . . . it also implies that self-realization cannot be fully achieved without social relationships based on moral and spiritual values. By exploring and acknowledging the capacities of each child, education seeks to develop all his creative powers, to encourage him to . . . a definite moral responsibility and arouse a profound sense of self-respect and personal integrity . . . everyone should feel responsibility for the consequences of his own conduct . . . moral responsibility and self-discipline are marks of maturity (p. 18, 19, 99).

The Educational Policies Commission (1951) encouraged this process by further stating that because morals and values are universal, every part of society needed to contribute, with the greatest factor citing the home as the most formative factor. They further stated, “Parental standards of honesty and civic responsibility are the standards most likely to be adopted by the children...the family provides the child’s first experiences in human relations” (p. 85). Further emphasizing community involvement, “Churches and other organizations play a major role in the development of moral and spiritual values” (p. 87). The Commission even called for the media (newspapers, magazines, books), radio and television to promote and provide good cultural opportunities to help shape young people.

This sort of mutual interest was at the heart of progressive education. By echoing values in the home, schools and community, a child could be assured of consistent standards wherever they happened to be. They understood that the world had changed and they were willing to make

accommodations to modern life. Most were willing to accept an entirely secular approach to moral education within the schools. By promoting tradition within codes of conduct and urging the formation of social clubs, 20th Century reformers offered an effective way to keep moral questions on the agenda of schools while maintaining unity in a curriculum that was undergoing constant change.

Progressives believed that the application of science and reason to democratic society offered hope for social and moral progress and that a change to learning would encourage resolution to complex problems within society. However, for those who endorsed Progressive thought and process, there were those also who criticized it, arguing that knowledge of proverbs did not necessarily make a good individual. Progressive educator Hugh Hartshorne (1932) criticized, "If, for example, honesty is a unified character trait, and if all children either have it or do not have it, then we would expect to find children who are honest in one situation to be honest in all situations and, to find dishonest children to be deceptive in all situations. But we actually observe is that the honesty or dishonesty of a child in one situation is related to the degree of commonality among his experiences" (p. 208).

Further disapproving moral education and moral clubs, Hartshorne (1932) continued to elaborate that the problem was not simply an ineffective pedagogy, but the tendency to hyper-focus on particular virtues. He believed this provided a poor guide to ethical living, for simple codes of conduct were crude, rigid, and not fluid enough to exist in modern society. Hartshorne implied that codes of conduct were not the same as moral codes. Dewey (1909) supported this by affirming that the term moral does not designate a special region or portion of life.

What Progressives wanted was ethical flexibility and a sure sense of the relativity of values. This was strongly proclaimed in the 10<sup>th</sup> Yearbook and 1932 report of the *Character Education Committee of the National Education Association's Department of Superintendence*. This text called for moral education that taught students to apply values as particular situations dictated: "Relativity must replace absolutism in the realm of morals as well as in the spears of physics and biology . . . no such system of values is permanent, it will have to change and grow in response to human experience" (p. 14). This seemingly early version of situational ethics embraced the rapid changes society was experiencing while still being tangible and accepting of modern life.

This shift from set moral standards to a more pragmatic relativity was seen in the rejection of the notion that schools should teach specific moral precepts and encourage particular traits instead. Progressive educators helped to cultivate in students both a quality of open-mindedness and a general ability to make moral judgments. Their model for ethical behavior was a professional one that brought both a sense of inquiry and competence to problem solving. It was strongly believed that what worked well in the world of science and technology would work equally as well solving humanitarian problems if students could visualize the consequences of their actions to themselves and others.

In viewing moral education as the ability to act efficiently and thoughtfully with regard to social improvement, Progressives gave new significance to the role of intellect within moral education. A good citizen was not one with merely the right intentions and a strong will, but one who could understand the social world and carefully weigh the consequences of their actions (Cremin, 1964; McLellan 1992, 1999). Progressives turned to scientific inquiry and democratic methods of decision making to equip students with intellectual skills they thought would allow

them to deal with social problems. Emphasizing problem-solving and social learning, they sought to build on the experiences of children. (Educational Policies Commission, 1951).

Because character was viewed as a way of thinking and guiding values rather than a type of knowledge or practice of particular virtues, many progressives such as Dewey believed that all school subjects had potential for providing reflection upon moral experiences. In this respect, they joined other American educators in utilizing a wide range of opportunities to shape morals, encouraging social interaction and using personal experience as building blocks for the process of moral education. Critical thinking gave students the basis for questioning everything, particularly authority. Traditions were questioned and often abandoned in the hope of embracing a changing world. By emphasizing ethical flexibility and situational ethics, students could deal with a wide variety of moral responses, anticipate social reactions, and create a standard by which to make moral decisions.

Yet, it was the weakening of adult authority and the legitimization and elevation of peer influence, that left progressive students vulnerable. The child-centered philosophy left students without the protection of absolute values with which to structure behavior or decision-making. Instead, Progressive educators made the immediate experience of the child the starting point for learning process and ended up devaluing both the text and tradition of education, leaving children with no framework for which to shape their moral decisions.

Progressive approaches to moral education were problematic because they implied vagueness. It was during this time that many schools began to offer a random selection of moral education programs focusing on various aspects of social growth. Rarely did Progressive moral education completely eliminate virtue-centered programs. Rather, they functioned as an

alternative that did not adhere to strict religious values or absolute moral consequences (McLellan, 1992, 1999).

By the 1950s, educators were encouraged to teach a process of thinking and logic that did not follow a particular pattern or pedagogical content. Students were offered a concrete means to understand the connections between individual conduct and the public good. In spite of this connection, reformers failed to ground codes of conduct in any ethical system or to provide a way in which their beliefs could be validated through moral reasoning. No clear theory of moral development or character education was ever offered.

As critics were quick to point out, sometimes codes of conduct and social clubs did little more than reinforce standards of middle-class respectability while encouraging patriotism. This criticism was not addressed completely until the 1960's which brought a wider acceptance of the practice of psychology as well as the innovative research of Lawrence Kohlberg who proposed a process of moral differentiation within human development.

In summary, throughout the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century, America's educators continued to search for curriculum which would guide moral education within public schools. Reports from the Character Education Committee of the National Education Association's Department of Superintendence, and National Education Association summaries such as reports on Character Education (1932) sought to encourage values in education. A later, 1951 report entitled, *Moral and Spiritual Values in the Public Schools* attempted to synthesize progressive approaches with traditional views. These reports encouraged educators for, ". . . moral and spiritual values were a matter of universal concern . . . education uninspired by moral and spiritual values is directionless . . . the need for moral and spiritual values is clear and can furnish a yardstick, a

transmission of a general body of values [for students]” (p. 7). Though encouraging virtues, these reports state that while moral values were necessary, there was no clear communication of what behaviors or outcomes were expected from education. While one would think such statements would clarify moral education, they did the opposite. By the 1960s, some educators would rather not teach any moral guidelines rather than become enmeshed within debates that could become volatile.

### *Conclusion*

With the creation of graded schools and the integration of different types of learning theory, educational reformers sought standardized curriculum and set standards of achievement using various forms of assessment and testing. Moral education was still taught in classrooms although it was largely pragmatic and inconsequential. Choices were made for the common good rather than being grounded in individual values and were often tied to patriotism and civic duty. Community groups still reinforced values at home in school and community. With the population booms from World Wars, the need for schools and teachers rose with the demand for more secular learning and specialized classes. It was not until the 1950s, 1960s, the Cold War and the threat of Communism, that America would see another shift, this time so far to the middle that moral education largely ceased to be taught. This move toward a focus on character formation rather than absolute morals would shape character education into the next millennium.

## Chapter 5

### Current Character Education: 1950's to Present Day

*“It is our character that supports the promise of our future – far more than the particular government programs or policies.”* William J. Bennett, writer, former Secretary of Education

#### *Introduction*

After World War II, America experienced increased prosperity in the form of jobs, educational opportunities and urban growth. Citizens were united by common standards and worked together to achieve common values. Also, a new global awareness permeated American culture, leading to the realization that America was a diverse place and unlike earlier times; there were now multiple perspectives on most issues. Slowly, common values and religious principles that once had embraced and united human nature were increasingly relegated to private opinion and minimized in schools.

The dynamic force of moral education, however, was change. This is partly driven by relativism that challenged traditional Protestant values. Rather than uniting society through schooling, the trend toward pragmatic moral education had weakened social bonds creating ambiguity and bewildering many people. McCarthyism, the Korean War, and the Cold War added new factors to the political environment. They contributed to the complexity of teaching moral education by examining the nature of morals and character and by exploring the context of how morals and character were considered. Rather than take a general view of moral education,

many school administrators shifted from a traditional approach to one that encouraged acceptance and individuality.

With new and emerging theories regarding moral and character development, the latter part of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century witnessed an assortment of approaches which shaped the character of children. There was a struggle between traditional values and a carefree individuality as well as the privatization of religion and values. This resulted in new forms of moral education within public education: values clarification, cognitive moral development, and eventually character education.

Reacting to these approaches, alternative schools such as private schools, homeschooling endeavors, and charter schools sought to return moral education and values to the classroom. In addition, there has been a struggle to find values that are universal to humanity. However, it has still remained unclear whose values to teach and how to do it, particularly within the public school setting.

#### *Education Overview:*

By the 1950s, a number of factors increased demands on schools; including resources and buildings. There was a need for intellectual competence and academic excellence, while civic activities such as metal and paper drives gave students “. . . a sense of connection between their personal efforts and national destiny” (McLellan 1992, p. 79). Documents from educational associations such as the National Education Association (1932) and the Educational Policies Commission (1951) encouraged the teaching of specific values to shape character while also introducing ethical flexibility; offering, as McClellan (1992) notes, “. . . Just enough values and

ethics . . . and [views] from each side to promote a comfortable sense of accommodation . . . on the place of moral education in the school” (p. 79).

The 1951 NEA report continued to encourage moral education by stating: “moral and spiritual values . . . are a matter of universal concern” (p. 99). Encouraging cooperation between the public school, churches, community and family, the NEA stated, “The schools will continue to be indispensable in the total process of developing moral and spiritual value” (p. 100). Others signaled that moral development and shaping of character did not rest in the school alone, but were the community’s responsibility, with the school’s support.

The emphasis of moral and civic involvement did not go unchallenged. From 1950 onward, traditional moral education in public schools was encouraged to blend with competing approaches. This clashed with public demonstrations that encouraged equality, individualism and tolerance, which were now emerging as common values, replacing more traditional ones. By the end of the millennium, a reevaluation of how to teach morals within the form of character education had taken place in the public school.

### *Challenging Moral Development*

The slow drift from absolute morals and definite values was structured by three main events: a growing need for technical and scientific skills as evidenced in more rigorous academic curriculum, the emergence of anticommunism during the Cold War, and a growing distinction between religious and humanist educators (McLellan, 1999). In addition, new theories in psychology proposed theories of human development focusing on cognitive development and individual needs, not universal values or moral absolutes.

In the years following World War II, America lead the world in several areas, including strides in electronics, physics and medicine. Educators and political reformers recognized the need to expand America's science and technology curriculum causing greater emphasis to be placed on intellectual achievement than basic academics. The addition of more subjects to an already crowded curriculum changed for elementary and secondary levels. Non-academic subjects such as those focusing on civics or moral development were slowly being eclipsed, given competition for teaching time.

This action is puzzling and signaled a turning point in American education and society. In the past, when political events such as the Depression or world war threatened American values, the administrators of public schools encouraged activities that would bolster commitment to American ideals. Schools included civic groups, community service clubs and other activities that encouraged ethical codes and morals to guide living. However, the anticommunist movement in the 1950s led to an apparent disregard of traditional values, a perplexing reaction when the political environment appeared to threaten American democracy.

To understand the effect anticommunism had on moral education, we must examine the political climate in America. Parkerson and Parkerson (2001) remind us that the Cold War began in 1949 as America reacted to the loss of China to the Communists. Shortly after, in 1950, the Soviet Union detonated their first nuclear device. Later that year, civil conflict broke out between North and South Korea in which the United States became involved by supporting South Korean efforts in an effort to stem the spread of communism to America.

These events represented a unique time in America's history where the battle was not retaliatory, but ideological. The enemy was not definite and had not literally attacked America like the Japanese had at Pearl Harbor in 1941, but the *potential* was there for warfare to threaten the United States' democratic way of life. By fighting against the perceived threat of nuclear war and communism, the United States embarked upon what was called a 'cold war', so named because no retaliatory action was taken on either side, but the threat of war was eminent.

Whether ideological or literal, the United States began to perceive Communist countries such as North Korea, China and Russia, as a threat to the American way of life. Politicians such as Senator Joseph McCarthy fed these insecurities causing hysteria and paranoia to permeate American ideology and the education system. Under the threat of possible thermonuclear war and Communist expansion, schools revised moral education curriculum to remove civic education, ties to personal morality, and citizenship education almost completely. Some teachers encouraged such action, for they feared that personal views or associations from years before could somehow be connected with Communism. By actively choosing neutrality, it removed the school as a bastion that encouraged moral grounding, and urged privatization of morals.

Political historian Andrew Hartman (2008) states that which was seen as a withdrawal from moral education actually had been going on for decades. The world as most knew it was changing radically; there had been world wars, a depression, and rising Communist interest upset traditional ways of thinking. Hartman reminds us of two dominant perspectives of the time: naturalists and rationalists. Scientific naturalists such as John Dewey and other pragmatists encouraged experimentation and empirical study. Philosophic rationalists, such as University of Chicago President Robert Hutchins, prioritized models of absolute truth.

According to historian Edward Purcell Jr. (1973), progressive social thinkers contributed to a movement of rational philosophers who believed that human reason could discover certain principles to explain the true nature of reality. In opposition, scientific naturalists rejected these realities, calling metaphysics a “cover for human ignorance and superstition” (p. 3). Naturalists argued that a rigid rationalist framework was consistent with absolutism in politics, more commonly known as totalitarianism or dictatorship, and exhibited hostility to intellectual change, flexibility and philosophical relativity. Rationalists contended that naturalists refused to prioritize certain principles as “universally true or intrinsically superior” and helped breed cultural relativism that was believed to pave the way for fascism (Hartman, 2008 p. 4). While conflicting, these views led to the belief that moral education was better taught at home, away from the scrutiny of politics.

By the 1950s and the beginning of the Cold War, Purcell (1973) proposes that the “relativist theory of democracy” (p. 235) was a stripped down form of Dewey’s pragmatism in which cultural relativism was made normative to America and became philosophical rationale for Cold War liberalism. When blended with naturalism and a faith in the social sciences, an assumption was created that American society was the democratic ideal. Purcell further suggests it was this political culture that encouraged citizens to embrace the status quo and focus energies on maintaining political stability rather than cling to outdated tradition.

As political tensions grew and the probability increased for the United States and Soviet Union to confront one another, the realization of true success was to win the hearts and minds of people for their cause. Andrew Hartman (2008) believes that the most important key to the Cold War success was education. Transforming the nation, the Cold War shifted the collective consciousness surrounding education from one of definite values and Deweyan pragmatism to

one which emphasized human reason and individual relativism. Whereas World War II was fought on the basis of military and industrial technology, the race to space and beating the Russians in technology had at its core, an emphasis for individual excellence within education. Specifically, it was the ability to use technology in innovative ways that encouraged pragmatic thought and contributed to the compromise and slow abandonment of traditional values.

The risk in teaching moral education was strong enough to result in the decline of organizations that emphasized moral codes and traditional values (Boys and Girls Clubs, 4-H, Campfire Girls, Boy Scouts). Marsden (1996) notes that there was a shift already experienced in the secularization of American higher education beginning in the late 19th Century. The shift was likely due, among other reasons, to increased pluralism and immigration from other cultures. Whatever the reason, many individuals urged responsibility for cultivation of personal morals and values to take place at home and church rather than at school, or in publically supported higher education, for they could no longer be taught collectively.

As American society slowly turned from international and national public concerns, there was also concurrent progress toward privatization (Button and Provenzo, 1989). Encouraging this were psychologists such as Piaget who reinforced the importance of shaping character in the first six years of life, before school. His theories emphasized the importance of family and relieved the school of the direct responsibility for moral guidance. In larger communities, educators were hesitant to air opinion or values. Reasons for this are vague, but could be attributed to non-acceptance of a traditional moral structure and it was risky sharing a common public morality. If personal views were aired that were different or inflammatory, the probability of being labeled a Communist sympathizer was high. Many chose to draw distinct lines between private and public realms (McLellan, 1992, 1999; Parkerson and Parkerson, 2001). Schools

began to avoid moral questions, curriculum and pedagogy that might be considered personally invasive, for fear of being viewed as a threat to American democracy.

Part of the shift away from definite morals to pragmatism and privatization was due to the flourishing economy which allowed for indulgences that had never occurred before; such as a separation of professional and personal lives, immediate gratification from good profit margins, greater earnings, and emphasis on personal gain (Button and Provenzo, 1989). This change gradually replaced civic interest and emphasis on the common good with a utilitarian focus on individual benefit.

By the late 1970s and early 1980s, Americans had begun to closely examine schools, student learning, and teachers, and found them to be deficient. Some believe this was due to implementation of new curriculum such as new methods of teaching math, open classroom styles, and new forms of class discipline. Others blamed poor quality education and declining test scores on poor teacher training, school violence, lack of moral grounding, and the focus of individualism over group morals (Parkerson and Parkerson, 2001). But it was the 1973 Report of the Panel on Youth of the President's Science Advisory Committee that was instrumental in addressing the effectiveness of American schools with regard to moral guidance.

Laying the groundwork for future Presidential reports on education, the 1973 Report reflected on the school's process of preparing young people for adulthood. It noted that over the past decade, schooling had come to be seen as having an incomplete framework.

Schooling as we know it, is not a complete environment giving all the necessary opportunities for becoming an adult. School is a certain kind of environment: individualistic, oriented toward cognitive achievement, imposing dependency on and withholding authority and responsibility from the role of students. School has expanded to fill the time other activities once occupied without replacing them . . . (p. 12).

The report continued to state that what America needed was not more school time or curriculum that addressed technology or a person's individuality, but “. . . it is the task, no more, no less, of creating the opportunities for youth to become adults in all ways, not merely intellectual ones” (p. 12). The data tables encouraged internships, age-grouping, and other activities to persuade youths to participate in society. Sadly, the report was not transformative, for like so many government commentaries, it presented data without tangible steps for implementation or reflection upon classroom use or ease of community involvement. The failure to galvanize society to meaningful action instead encouraged individualism, pluralism, and privatization of morals.

However, the final assault on those who strongly believed that moral education was anchored in education were two court cases in the 1960s. These examples were crucial factors which set the boundaries between traditional education and modern thought. Embracing individualization and pluralism, they were a continuation of a continued effort to remove religion from the classroom. The Supreme Court case of *Engel v. Vitale* (1962) ruled that a New York educational program allowing teachers to begin classes with a nondenominational prayer was unconstitutional. Further distancing education from tradition was the 1963 *Schemp* case in which the Supreme Court ruled against devotional Bible reading in schools. Both of these

situations were fueled by a need to distance individual moral and spiritual beliefs from education.

The erosion of public morality and the traditional values of the old system were a clear response to the growing personalism and pluralism in society (Lickona, 1992). These actions challenged existing ideas of civic virtue and the traditional Protestant base of common public morality, ideologies that were at the symbolic core of America. Numerous appeals to defend these public rights failed, and to this day, there is still much fervor over open personal and spiritual expression.

### *Moral Education*

As stated earlier, throughout most of the 1950s, moral education was encouraged and civic involvement was expected. As pluralism permeated the country and schools, a departure from civic involvement and teaching values was apparent. The move toward equality and freedom was seen in the 1960s when moral education was deliberately avoided. McLellan (1992, 1999) notes that many educators not only realized teaching morals to be problematic, but also in the environment of great criticism of the anticommunist ideology, found it difficult to provide a pragmatic approach. He further contributes several events which made teaching morals problematic: the struggle to achieve racial equality, disputes over the Vietnam War, the effort to end racial discrimination, a deepening cultural pluralism, and a willingness to expand the range of personal conduct (McClellan, 1992, 1999).

Many Americans sensed as if society was falling apart, for many lost faith in the ability to find common ground. There did not appear to be any form of absolute morals, particularly considering Woodstock and other social situations that encouraged free love, open sexuality,

and widespread drug use. What was lost during this time was not the ability of the teacher to discuss moral issues, but a loss of the atmosphere which encouraged and supported moral education as the primary goal of the school.

What cemented this were the two Supreme Court rulings to ban prayer and Bible reading in classrooms. After these events, if a teacher wanted to cultivate morals or a character trait, it was readily apparent their work environment did not support the idea. No longer was there encouragement from a student code of conduct, endorsement of parents, school administration or the general ethos of the school. What had once been a way to teach honesty and a host of other values now became a mechanism to enforce a minimum of expected behavior.

By the end of the 1970s, McLellan (1999) notes that moral education had reached a historic low point. What had been in existence since common schools was now peripheral and problematic. There were two perspectives, however, that while eschewing particular religious approaches, encouraged moral decision-making and the importance of individual autonomy. One proposed moral education through helping students clarify their values, and the other favored a program that would encourage moral reasoning.

Values Clarification, an approach created by Louis E. Raths, Merrill Harmin, and Sydney B. Simon (1966), offered a clear and simple program which featured not only learning materials but also pedagogical advice, and was easily applied to the classroom. Similar to Progressive education, this program encouraged moral decision-making and encouraged transient values – a process of “valuing” (Raths, Merrill and Simon, 1966, p. 10) which replaced the need to learn a concrete set of values. This encouraged a child to relate to their environment in the best way

possible and find a sense of direction that was “positive, purposeful, enthusiastic, and proud” (Raths, Merrill and Simon, 1966, p. 5).

This method, echoing Dewey, neither established traditional values to be taught nor insisted on the teaching of specific preferences. Rather, the teacher was to stimulate thought and encourage the “valuing process,” a method which classified and defined a trait as a value only if it was obtainable by their standard of rating choices and consideration (Raths, et al., pg. 28, 29). It was through this lack of values that relativism began to permeate moral education and the processes whereby choices are made. (See Appendix II.)

In review, according to the Values Clarification method, moral decision-making was based on three processes: choosing, prizing and acting. In the process of choosing, the choice must be made freely, presented from alternatives, and made after thoughtful consideration of the consequences. To gain further place, that choice must be prized with the individual being happy with the choice and cherishing it, and be willing to affirm that choice publicly. The final process of valuing would be to act upon that choice and repeated in some pattern of living (Raths, et al., 1966).

Within this approach, active personal choice was likened to ethical relativism. Philosopher Kenneth A. Strike (in *The Moral Dimensions of Teaching*, 1990) stated, “Values clarification makes all moral principles into values and values into matters of personal preference. Its having done so, the enforcement of any value can only be an act of arbitrary will” (p. 211). Furthermore, he believed that children were in danger of emerging with no sense of how to deal with moral conflict or moral priorities. Howard, et al. (2004) calls this “. . . an attempt to address the increasing cultural pluralism, engaging students in a range of exercises designed to increase

personal awareness of and/or make critical decisions about the values they held” (p. 194). It was not enough that a sense of authenticity or moral commitment occurred, the students’ action was no substitute for the ability to make a difficult moral decision. As with most add-ons to curriculum, this approach was only as good as those teachers who implemented it. Due to this reason, values clarification waned in the late 1970s.

### *Cognitive Developmental Approaches to Moral Education*

Running parallel to values clarification were cognitive developmental approaches to encourage moral reasoning or judgment. These methodologies sought to find ways to refine moral judgment without teaching a specific set of values. Of psychologists and educators exploring this approach, Lawrence Kohlberg’s theories of moral development have held a significant place in moral education for two reasons: one, the theories have changed in significant ways over decades, and they are easily applied to academics and the social sciences.

Kohlberg was fascinated by the notion that moral reasoning was a process and as such, he proposed that an individual progressed through identifiable stages of cognitive development. In later work, he recommended classroom activities to encourage children to advance reasoning skills. By the 1960s Kohlberg had developed a comprehensive conception of cognitive moral development. His theories began to attract a broad range of educators from elementary education to psychology.

Key to understanding Kohlberg’s theories was the premise that children moved in orderly ways through stages of moral reasoning. He postulated the existence of six stages in three general levels: Premoral, Conventional Role Conformity, and Self-Accepted Moral Principles (Kohlberg, 1966, p. 7; Power et al. 1989, p. 8, 9). (See Appendix III for more detail.) At the core

of Kohlberg's method was the belief students grew through cognitive conflict, especially through argument with other students, to gain the next higher stage of development. The role of the teacher was to provoke the appropriate discussion and gauge the response of the students, encouraging consideration and discussion of hard ethical dilemmas. This, in turn, was to avoid teaching specific virtues or codes of ethics and avoid indoctrination. Kohlberg felt his approach ensured this by not transmitting specific value content but by stimulating a new way of thinking and judging. Furthermore, he perceives movement through the stages as a natural and consequential action (Kohlberg, 1973). It was the particular emphasis that growth had to occur by moving through stages of development, not making choices or gaining understanding of the consequence of personal action, which limited critiques of his theory.

Kohlberg's commitment to individual action also revealed a commitment to the principle of justice. It was his belief that an individual's sense of justice informed their highest stages of reasoning. Kohlberg defines morality as that which is:

. . . Adequate, principled, it makes judgments in terms of universal principles applicable to all people . . . principles are distinguished from rules. Conventional morality is grounded on rules such as the 10 Commandments. Rules are kinds of actions; principles are universal guides to making a decision (Kohlberg, 1975, p. 50).

While Kohlberg never quite addressed the connection between individual moral reason and moral action, he was firmly convinced that moral judgment was essential mature moral action. "Moral judgment, while only one factor in moral behavior, is the single most important or influential factor yet discovered in moral behavior" (Kohlberg, 1975, p. 50). By stimulating

higher levels of thinking and reasoning, Kohlberg was convinced that schools could contribute to moral education.

As well received as Kohlberg's theories were, there were critics, notably those colleagues who were convinced that his model failed to take into account different aspects of the human condition, particularly sexuality. Colleague to Lawrence Kohlberg was Carol Gilligan who suggested that women went about the process of moral reasoning different from men. Believing that women differed from men not only in physical and sexual ways, but also in reasoning and how they made moral decisions, she proposed that moral development of women could best be understood as a form of caring.

Gilligan (1982) proposed a three-stage growth of caring, one in which:

. . . An initial focus on carrying for the self in order to ensure survival is followed by a transitional phase in which this judgment is criticized as selfish. The criticism signals a new understanding of the connection between self and others which is articulated by the concept of responsibility. The elaboration of this concept of responsibility and its fusion with the maternal morality that seeks to ensure care for the dependent and unequal characterizes the second perspective . . . The third perspective focuses on the dynamics of relationships and dissipates the tension between selfishness and responsibility through a new understanding of the interconnection between other and self. Care becomes the self-chosen principle of a judgment that remains psychological in its concern with relationships in response but becomes universal in its condemnation of exploitation and hurt (p. 74).

Gilligan's perspective encouraged what naturally was a part of humanity and particularly women, a caring approach, to become a realistic part of moral education. Through encouraging behaviors that model concern, other scholars decades later, such as Nel Noddings, expanded Gilligan's approach of cognitive development beyond sexual differences and levels of caring to include principles which address humanity, their moral needs and virtues necessary to encourage ethical living through caring for others.

The novelty of Kohlberg's cognitive approach and Gilligan's perspective of caring gave unique place to psychology within education and particularly moral education. Helpful in their own right to describe the process of human growth, cognitive development theories and models of caring did fit a need. However, society needed something more universal and applicable to humanity. This need was met with the character education movement at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century.

### *Character Education: Defending Virtues*

With transforming legislation in the 1960s and the presidential report in 1973 stating that public education was an insufficient transition for young people into adulthood, American society was in need of educational reforms that would address the moral state of humanity and do something about it. It was fairly obvious that attempts at guiding American moral education and character formation were needed.

One individual that sought to answer this dilemma was developmental psychologist Thomas Lickona. Proposing that morals were linked to behavior in children, without guiding principles to influence and guide character, children would not grow into good human beings. He responded to the declines moral society by stating that character education embraces adults

sustaining values and passing them on to children. In a 2000 interview, Lickona explains his reasoning: “Character education is the deliberate cultivation of virtue . . . objectively good human qualities that are good for the individual and society . . . this happens with a great deal of effort. Children are most likely to become persons of good character when they grow up in communities which model and teach character qualities” (Early Childhood Today, p. 2).

Lickona’s work gained popularity after President Reagan’s 1983 report, *A Nation at Risk*, detailed flaws in the educational system in America while encouraging accountability and reform for schools and students. Lickona (1992) proposed that character education “. . . is needed for strong and healthy families . . . to have safe, caring and effective schools . . . and to build a decent and just society” and addressed the “unraveling of the moral fabric of society” (Lickona p. xxii). He championed society to raise children with a strong moral character, a task that can be accomplished by modeling good character and by fostering it in children.

By defining character and labeling its virtues, Lickona aspired to traits found in humanity; not just in America, but also around the globe. He stated, “Virtues . . . define what it means to be human, promote the happiness and well-being of the individual, serve the common good, and meet classical tests of reversibility and universality [the ability to make choices and see consequences]” (Lickona, 2004, p. 7). Differing from values clarification methods that encouraged young people to make their own decision without guidelines for expected behavior, Lickona believed that by cultivating virtues, children would be grounded and well equipped to become effective and responsible adults.

Noting a decline in morality over the past three decades, Lickona encourages common things like civility, manners, courtesy, and politeness as a way to model virtues. He encourages values to be embraced not just at home but also at school and in the community, in literally every phase of life so that a child is ensured a comprehensive education of their character (Early Childhood Today, 2000). Commitment is encouraged from the family, school, and communities, for the most profound impact on a student comes from their families and parental support (Berkowitz and Bier, 2005; Henderson and Berla, 1994; Lickona, 1992, 2004; Schaeffer, 2003). Reminding us that historically, the family was the seat of moral infusion, Lickona is convinced that it is the partnership between the home, religion, and school that contributes to the best success (Early Childhood Today, 2000; Lickona, 1992, 2004). Listing ten virtues as necessary for character (see Appendix IV), Lickona defines human tendencies that encourage ethical behavior and build positive traits in children and adults.

Another proponent of character, virtue, and ethics is the Josephson Institute. Founded in 1992, the Character Counts! Coalition introduced of Six Pillars of Character: trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring and citizenship (see Appendix I). By encouraging these values, Josephson, like Lickona and the Character Education Partnership, encourages character education both inside and outside of the classroom.

Further strengthening the Character Education movement, the US government, through an act of Congress agreed with the need for character education and in 1994, authorized the Partnerships in Character Education Program in 1994. The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 renewed and re-emphasized this tradition—and substantially expanded support for it. One of the six goals of the Department of Education is to "promote strong character and citizenship among our nation's youth" (US Department of Education 2002, NCLB Strategic Plan 2002-2007, p. 42).

To reach this goal, the Department of Education joined with state education agencies and school districts across the nation to provide leadership and support to implement character education.

Recently, the Obama Administration, in addressing education, amended the Elementary and Secondary Education Act in March of 2010 and has proposed a “*Blueprint for Reform*”, radically re-routing funding, including monies for Character Education Programs (United States Department of Education, 2010). The re-design of the program has money that was going to character education now being routed to the umbrella of Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities (SDFSC) national programs. These programs are getting a total of \$111 million from the Obama administration, not including grant money (O’Keefe, 2009). Character Education programs do have a small place in this program, for within the United States Department of Education, the Office of Character and Civic Education has been formed.

Their mission is vaguely stated:

Character education is the shared responsibility of parents, teachers, and members of the community who come together to support positive character development. In school, character education is a learning process that enables students and adults to understand, care about, and act on core ethical values such as respect, justice, civic virtue and citizenship, and responsibility for self and others. ([www.2.ed.gov/programs/charactered/index.html](http://www.2.ed.gov/programs/charactered/index.html) )

Current legislation does support grants for design and implementation of character education programs for integration within classroom instruction. It also calls for an alignment with state academic content standards and to be carried out with other education reform efforts. Although President Obama has suggested monthly themes to encourage character on the classroom level, there is currently no place in current curriculum with an emphasis on character education or

virtues that can guide human development and encourage family, school, and community involvement. Consequently, there is still a fundamental need to address character education in America.

It is not enough to want to implement a program of character education, educators must also have an idea why it is needed. Character education has been noted to affect student learning and outcomes. Berkowitz and Bier (2005) found significant positive effects for thirteen behaviors, including socio-moral cognition, pro-social behaviors and attitudes, problem-solving skills, drug use, violence and aggression, and other factors influencing school behavior. Furthermore, character education has been found to address at-risk behavior, have school-based outcomes, impact pro-social competencies, and influence social-emotional functioning.

In their expansive 2005 report exploring effective character education programs, Marvin Berkowitz and Melinda Bier detail what makes a program successful. They encourage educators to use their own ideas as well as parts of established programs. In spite of identifying effective agendas, they note that implementation was difficult for two reasons: many reports did not elaborate on content and pedagogical strategies of the program methods and since most of the programs have not been tested independently, it was hard to gauge which strategies are the most effective.

Twenty-seven of the thirty-three programs evaluated included some form of social-emotional curriculum. These curricula most often included lessons in these top three content areas: social skills and awareness, personal improvement/ self-management and awareness, and problem solving/ decision-making (Berkowitz and Bier, 2005, p. 5). The most prevalent pedagogical strategies included professional development for implementation, interactive teaching strategies,

direct teaching strategies, family/ community participation, and modeling/ mentoring. Other common strategies included classroom or behavior management strategies, school-wide strategies, and community or service learning (Berkowitz and Bier, 2005, p. 7). In addition to interactive learning, the most effective schools were found to have a significant amount of direct teaching as well as family and community participation, including modeling and mentoring.

One of the main issues found in reviewing academic research on Character Education is that many studies focus on definitions of character education rather than what character formation should actually do or how it should shape a child's character. In spite of being implemented for over twenty years, there is still no universal definition to define what might be good or bad, or what should encourage good character, moreover whose values to use. While it is clear that character education programs address cognitive, affective and behavioral aspects of a child's development (Schaeffer, 2003), not all programs have the same objective or implement character education in the same way.

The 1990s and early decades in the new millennium have seen additional educators such as William Damon and Kevin Ryan recommend character education as a tangible method to include morals within public education. William Damon's 2002 work, *Bringing In a New Era in Character Education*, focuses on children understanding the ethics behind codes of honor. This is done not just through the transmission of values, but also using and reinforcing maxims that transmit values such as honesty, trust, and integrity. Schools should also be responsible for instilling character, but it is the integration of family, school, and community where character and ethics should be formed (Ryan, 1993; Ryan and Bohlin, 1999).

The creation of institutes such as the Josephson Institute Center for Youth Ethics and the Character Education Partnership focusing on character education also embrace character development as a way to successfully adapt to social change while introducing universal morals and values into public education. While character education is popular at the corporate level, it is still up to individual states, districts and schools to implement such guidelines.

### *Private Alternatives*

The dissatisfaction with education that was prevalent in the 1960s and 1970s resulted in education that sought alternative environments, curriculum, and support. Three main types of schools took root and became common. Today they have become major contributors to alternative forms of education: charter schools, homeschooling, and private schools.

Charter schools are alternative public schools that receive funding from government sources but have a particular focus such as the arts, math, or science. Part of the public education system, they are not allowed to charge tuition and are governed by a system of rules set forth in a charter. Admission is usually by lottery, but the lottery is open to anyone who applies. The California Charter Schools Association explains it this way ([www.calcharters.org](http://www.calcharters.org)):

Charter schools are independent public schools with rigorous curriculum programs and unique educational approaches. In exchange for operational freedom and flexibility, charter schools are subject to higher levels of accountability than traditional public schools. Charter schools, which are tuition-free and open to all students, offer quality and choice in the public education system.

The "charter" establishing each such school is a contract detailing the school's mission, program, goals, students served, methods of assessment, and ways to measure success. In California, charters are granted for five years. At the end of the term, the entity granting the charter ("authorizer") may renew the school's contract. Charter schools are accountable to their authorizer, and to the students and families they serve, to produce positive academic results and adhere to the charter contract.

Like traditional public schools, charters receive state funding based on a formula for each child enrolled in the school. Many charters also do additional fundraising to obtain grants and donations to pay for programs that are not fully funded by state or school district formulas.

Charter schools have provided a viable option to public and private schools that has met the needs of many parents and children. The National Education Association ([www.nea.org/home/16332.htm](http://www.nea.org/home/16332.htm)) notes that in 2004, charter schools were operating in 37 states, including the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico. Criticisms of charter schools have been the regulation of funding, accountability for oversight of programs, and curriculum differences when compared to standardized public schools. It is unknown whether or not charter schools have the same challenges implementing character education programs as other public schools do, but many are open to new pedagogies such as the 10 Virtues or 11 Principles from the Character Education Partnership.

Another form of alternative schools has been homeschooling. After the 1972 ruling of *Wisconsin v. Yoder*, the United States Supreme Court upheld parental rights to keep their children out of public school for religious reasons. More widely accepted today than in the

1970s, educating children in an alternative school setting at home, is gaining popularity. Data from the US Department of Education National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) state that an estimated 1.5 million students were homeschooled in the spring of 2007. This is up from 1.2 million in 2003 and 990,000 in 1999, compiling approximately 1.7% of the United States' school age population for 2007 (US Department of Education, 2008, p. 1).

Reasons for homeschooling exist beyond obvious attempts to preserve the traditional Protestant base of education, including moral guidance and character education. The NCES (2008) notes three primary reasons selected by more than two-thirds of parents for homeschooling: concern about the school environment, the ability (or inability) to provide moral or religious instruction, and dissatisfaction with academic instruction available at other schools (p. 2). Most notably, the highest-ranking reason was religious preference, showing an increase from 72% in 2003 to 83% in 2007 (NCES, 2008, p. 2,3). One can anticipate this religious preference would also extend to an awareness of morals, religious principles, and values.

The third form of alternative education, private religious schools, has consistently and freely exercised religious principles and values. As noted in Chapter 4, private religious schools were created as an alternative to public schools and became increasingly popular in the latter part of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. While the Catholics had been encouraging private religious schooling since the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century, newer private schools were often sponsored by Christian denominations such as Assemblies of God, Baptists, Lutherans, or Seventh Day Adventists. Seeking to integrate the principles of Christian living with education, they embrace prayer, Bible reading, and other practices alongside academic education and firmly believe that since morals could not be satisfactorily embraced in public schools, they would provide an environment which encouraged growth in this area.

Alternative schools, still a popular alternative to conventional public education, did provide a viable option for education towards the latter part of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century and into the new millennium. Though by no means exhaustive, the three different forms of education explored here do investigate diverse reasons for stepping outside of the government education system, particularly with regard to character education.

### *Conclusion*

In summary, prevalent views claim character education is the responsibility of adults (Beninga, et al., 2006). Lickona (1992) takes this a step further by stating that character education is the shared duty of all who touch the values and lives of the young, and is most effective when addressed through shared efforts of the community, family, and school. The Character Education Partnership (Schaeffer, 2003) supports these views and believes that character education needs to address the cognitive, affective and behavioral aspects of a child's development so that children can be empowered to make decisions and take actions based on an internalized set of universal values. It is when educators address the universal virtues found within humanity and apply them via character education in family units, schools, and the community that children can be educated and raised as good and decent human beings.

## Chapter 6

### Conclusion

*“What is hateful to you, do not do to your fellow man. This is the law: all the rest is commentary.”* Talmud, Shabbat 31a

It was the intent of this work to explore the changing definitions of character education throughout the public school system. This was done through addressing three research questions that address the implementation of character in the United States:

1. How has character education been implemented over time in the United States?
2. What are the changing definitions of character education over the course of K-12 education?
3. What is the current state of character education today?

These questions were addressed by dividing research into pivotal time periods of Colonial and Early National, Progressive Thought, and Present Day. Moral education was examined within each of these guiding frameworks. This was necessary, for the field of education is vast and this topic needed a specific guiding context.

Chapter Three examined moral education in the light of colonial and early America and command morality grounded in Puritan values. In the early national period, Horace Mann and others encouraged common schools to not only equalize education but also form American identity within education, which resulted in moral education expanding to schools.

Chapter Four highlighted the impact of Progressive thought upon education. Curriculum expanded to include civic activities that guided morals and shaped values of children. Though traditional values were dominant, other approaches to moral education emerged. As the world faced global war and financial depression, there was a clear split of educational thought into three sectors: traditionalists, progressive thought and religious privatization.

The Progressive view became dominant and was shaped by pluralism and increasing individualism. This resulted in a redefinition of morality that would shift in response to continuing cultural changes in society. This era witnessed the discussion over whose values to teach and how to teach them begin to shape the values of young people, and an emphasis on doing good through civic interest groups has carried over into modern times.

Chapter Five analyzed the development of character education in response to the conflicting approaches to moral education in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. A number of studies and theories were reviewed regarding the need for character education. Theories from Lickona, Ryan, values clarification approaches, and developmental theorists such as Kohlberg were examined for where and how character education could or should be implemented. Very few of these were comprehensive or easily integrated into existing curriculum. Organizations such as The Josephson Institute and Character Education Partnership were formed to address this concern and bridge the gap between common core standards and integrating values within schools that have interest in shaping the character of young people.

Throughout this project, research revealed that there were no clean shifts from one time period to another. Changing definitions of character education were gradual and overlapped the time periods of over four centuries in American education history. Not surprisingly, the

examination of historical documents, government publications and academic work indicated that there is no unified theory for character education in the United States.

Currently, the United States Government has allowed each state to decide how and when to implement character education. Often, each district, school and even classroom, decides what methods are applied and how values and virtues should fit within existing curriculum and daily routine. Frequently, this has resulted in vague and poorly executed plans for character education. Even though there are institutes and coalitions that encourage a school-wide ethos, there is not one recommended approach or theory.

Of the eighty organizations recently identified to encourage character education, over thirty emphasize approaches specifically for character education while others concentrate on ethics, citizenship, values, civic involvement or moral development. There are many accessible, easy to implement pedagogies for encouraging character education within all disciplines, including coalitions, institutes and schools ([www.emtech.net/character\\_education.html](http://www.emtech.net/character_education.html)). These approaches not only build character and strengthen virtues but also shape citizenship, ethics, morals, and offer free tools to do so.

I do not believe the answer to America's character education dilemma is to fund yet another program on character education, ethics or virtues. There are over eighty accessible programs available, none of which have been implemented consistently within America's schools. I am frustrated by the lack of willingness to commit to a discipline or process focused on common virtues.

Furthermore, I do not believe the answer lies in legislation governing education. This only perpetuates the dilemma of whose values to use and how to use them without actually ever

implementing a program to affect change in schools and communities. With some simple and direction action, I believe America can solve the crisis in character education. I recommend the following:

First, educators and leaders must realize that virtues are global. Virtues are not subject to culture, geography, race, religion or time. They stand as timeless as embodiments of the human condition and speak across boundaries. Traits such as honesty, integrity, kindness and love, need to be embodied and modeled as well as practiced. While spirituality is not necessary to give meaning to these virtues, they can be deepened with a spiritual or religious foundation.

Next, a character education program must be chosen. It needs to be one which is already established and successful such as the Josephson Institute's 6 Pillars, Lickona's 10 Virtues, or CEP's 11 Principles. All three of these programs are currently available and include materials for families and communities.

To assist in this endeavor, available resources and monies to support new character education programs could be routed into distribution and training for states, districts, and individual schools. Schools that are already successful Schools of Character can mentor neighboring districts and communities, sharing their wisdom and insight, but particularly their mistakes. Funding should also be extended to community projects encouraging family involvement.

Finally, vision needs commitment! Individuals must commit themselves to implementing a new way of thinking. Those in leadership will need to plan the sustainment of programs over time. Families must connect with the school and community. This requires people who care about what they do - from the legislative process to the classroom level. When people dedicate themselves to change, particularly an already successful program, apathy is eliminated and

community is built. Pedagogy is transformed beyond words on a page to become an ethos bringing hope and encouragement for the future.

Character education is vital to society for it is what shapes values, virtues and morals. It is necessary to cultivate character to become decent human beings, individuals of compassion, caring, and kindness. It is at the core of our humanity and identity as individuals and needs to be cultivated and guided in young people. Character is necessary to create decent schools, strong, stable families, and a civil society. Without grounding children in virtues, the moral framework of society falters.

As a student who has participated in alternative education through deliberate choice of my parents, I experienced being raised with traditional Christian morals and values and having them echoed in my church and school community. Never attending public schools, I have always been curious why public schools could not teach general humanitarian values without controversy. This work has let me understand public education, in addition to appreciating moral guidance and character education from a new perspective. It has affirmed my initial belief that there is a great need for character education, particularly in today's modern world.

Through the integration of home, school, and community, and commitment to character education programs that address universal values, I believe that America can educate for character and raise decent children. However, it is only when people cease to argue over the minutia of whose values to use and how to do it that progress can be made.

The battle for virtues does not lie within the classroom; it lies within those who seek to do good and to change the world as they can – whether it is through a large coalition or one student at a time.

## Appendix I

The Josephson Institute, Character Counts! Coalition

### Six Pillars of Character

#### **Trustworthiness**

Be honest • Don't deceive, cheat, or steal • Be reliable — do what you say you'll do • Have the courage to do the right thing • Build a good reputation • Be loyal — stand by your family, friends, and country

#### **Respect**

Treat others with respect; follow the Golden Rule • Be tolerant and accepting of differences • Use good manners, not bad language • Be considerate of the feelings of others • Don't threaten, hit or hurt anyone • Deal peacefully with anger, insults, and disagreements

#### **Responsibility**

Do what you are supposed to do • Plan ahead • Persevere: keep. on trying! • Always do your best • Use self-control • Be self-disciplined • Think before you act — consider the consequences • Be accountable for your words, actions, and attitudes • Set a good example for others

#### **Fairness**

Play by the rules • Take turns and share • Be open-minded; listen to others • Don't take advantage of others • Don't blame others carelessly • Treat all people fairly

#### **Caring**

Be kind • Be compassionate and show you care • Express gratitude • Forgive others • Help people in need

#### **Citizenship**

Do your share to make your school and community better • Cooperate • Get involved in community affairs • Stay informed; vote • Be a good neighbor • Obey laws and rules • Respect authority • Protect the environment • Volunteer

## Appendix II

### The Valuing Process; Part of Values Clarification

Values Clarification, by Louis E. Raths, Merrill Harmin, and Sydney B. Simon 1966 (p. 28, 29)

1. *Choosing freely*: If something is in fact to guide one's life whether or not authority is watching, it must be a result of free choice . . . Values must be freely selected if they are to be really valued by the individual.
2. *Choosing from among alternatives*: This definition of values is concerned with things that are chosen by the individual and, obviously, there can be no choice if there are no alternatives from which to choose. Only when a choice as possible, when there is more than one alternative from which to choose, can values result.
3. *Choosing after thoughtful consideration of the consequences of each alternative*: Impulsive or thoughtless choices do not lead to values as we define them. For something intelligently and meaningfully to guide one's life, it must emerge from a weighing and an understanding. Only when the consequences of each of the alternatives are clearly understood can one make intelligent choices. There is an important cognitive factor here; a value can emerge only with thoughtful consideration of the range of the alternatives and consequences in a choice.
4. *Prizing and cherishing*: When the value something, it has a positive tone. We prize it, cherish it, esteem it, respected, hold it dear. We are happy with our values . . . In our definition, values flow from choices that we are glad to make. We prize and cherish the guides to life that we call values.

5. *Affirming*: When we have chosen something freely, after consideration of the alternatives, and when we are proud of our choice, led to be associated with it, we are likely to affirm that choice when asked about it. We are willing to publicly affirm our values.
  
6. *Acting upon choices*: Where we have a value, it shows up in aspects of our living. We may do some reading about things we value. We are likely to form friendships are being organizations in ways that nourish our lives. We may spend money on a choice we value. We budget time or energy for our values. In short, for a value to be present, life itself must be affected. Nothing can be a value that does not, in fact, give direction to actual living.
  
7. *Repeating*: When something reaches the stage of the value, it is very likely to reappear on a number of occasions in the life of the person who holds it. It shows up in different situations at different times. We would not think of something that appeared once the life and never again is a value. Values tend to have persistency and make a pattern in life.

## Appendix III

### Lawrence Kohlberg's Stages of Cognitive Moral Development

(Kohlberg, 1966, pg. 7; Power et al., 1989, p. 8, 9).

#### LEVEL I: PREMORAL

**Stage 1:** Obedience and punishment orientation. A Eurocentric deference to superior power or prestige, or a trouble – avoiding set. Objective responsibility.

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

#### LEVEL II: CONVENTIONAL ROLE CONFORMITY

**Stage 3:** Good-boy orientation. Orientation to approval into pleasing 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 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 or the will or rights of others, and majority will and welfare.

**Stage 6:** Conscience or principal orientation. Orientation not only to actually ordained social rules but also to principles of choice involving appeal to logical universality and consistency. Orientation to conscience is a directing agent into mutual respect and trust.

## Appendix IV

Thomas Lickona's 10 Virtues (2004; p. 9-11)

1. **Wisdom** – Helps us to make reasoned decisions that are both good for others and us. Wisdom tells us how to put other virtues into practice; how to act, when to act, how to balance conflict, discern correctly, to see what is truly important and set priorities.
2. **Justice** – Respects the rights of all persons; includes interpersonal virtues such as civility, honesty, respect, responsibility and tolerance. A concern for justice inspires us to work as citizens to build a more just society and world.
3. **Fortitude** – Enables us to do what is right in the face of difficulty; an inner toughness that enables us to withstand hardship, defeats, inconvenience and pain. Aspects of fortitude include courage, resilience, patience, perseverance, endurance, and a healthy self-confidence.
4. **Self-Control** – The ability to govern ourselves; enables us to control our temper, regulate our sensual appetites and passions, and pursue legitimate pleasures in moderation; the power to resist temptation; it enables us to wait and delay gratification.
5. **Love** – The willingness to sacrifice for the sake of another; encourages empathy, compassion, kindness, generosity, service, loyalty, patriotism, and forgiveness.
6. **Positive Attitude** – Becoming an asset to yourself and others; includes character strengths of hope, enthusiasm, flexibility, and a sense of humor.
7. **Hard Work** – Includes initiative, diligence, goal setting and resourcefulness.
8. **Integrity** – Adhering to moral principle, being faithful to conscience, keeping our word and standing up for what we believe; telling the truth to oneself.
9. **Gratitude** – An act of the will, a choice, moves us to count daily blessings.
10. **Humility** – The foundation for moral living, for it makes us aware of our imperfections and leads us to try to become better people; allows us to take responsibility for our faults and failings, apologize and make amends.

## Appendix V

### Character Education Partnership's 11 Principles of Effective Character Education

By Tom Lickona, Eric Shapps, and Catherine Lewis

1. **Promotes core ethical values and supportive performance values which are the foundation of good character.** Values such as caring, honesty, fairness, responsibility, respect for self and others, along with supportive performance values such as diligence, strong work ethic and perseverance, form the basis for character.
2. **Defines "character" comprehensively to include thinking, feeling and behavior.** Good character involves understanding, caring about and acting upon core ethical values. A good approach to character development seeks to develop the cognitive, emotional and behavioral aspects of moral life. Students learn to care about core values by developing empathy skills, forming caring relationships, helping to create community, hearing illustrative and inspirational stories and reflecting upon life's experiences.
3. **It uses a comprehensive intentional and proactive approach to character development.** Schools committed to character development view themselves through a moral lens to assess how school events affect the lives of students. Every aspect of education can be useful in developing character.
4. **Creates a caring school community.** A school committed to character strives to become a civil caring and just society by helping all of its members form caring attachments to one another. These relationships foster the desire to learn and to be a good person.
5. **Provide students with opportunities for moral action.** You develop good character; students need many and varied opportunities to apply values such as compassion, responsibility, and fairness in daily interactions and discussions as well as through community service. By grappling with real-life challenges and reflecting upon these experiences, students develop practical understanding of the requirements of cooperating

with others and giving of oneself. These repeated experiences practice skills and build habits that create character.

6. **Include a meaningful and challenging academic curriculum that respects all learners, develops their character and helps them to succeed.** When students succeed in school, they are more likely to feel a sense of competence and autonomy as well as feeling valued and cared about. It is important to engage all learners and include a curriculum that is inherently interesting and meaningful. This includes active teaching and learning methods as well as experience-based projects. By linking natural intersections between academic content and character qualities, these "character actions" allow students to address ethical issues within subjects, discuss character traits, and explore ethical dilemmas. With the guidance of teachers, performance values such as intellectual curiosity, critical thinking and diligence can encourage children to better their work.
  
7. **Strives to foster student self-motivation.** We want students to be kind others because of inner belief that kindness is good and a desire to be a good person. Encouraging self-motivation is developing a process that can be undermined by emphasis on extrinsic incentives. Schools of character work with students to develop their understanding of rules, how their behavior affects others, and the character strengths – such as self-control, perspective talking, and conflict resolution skills – needed to act responsibly in the future. Rather than settle for mere compliance, schools of character seek to help students benefit from their mistakes by providing meaningful opportunities for reflection, problem solving, and restitution.
  
8. **Engages the school staff as a learning and moral community that shares responsibility for character education and attempts to adhere to the same core values that guide the education of students.** All school staff need to be involved in learning about, discussing, and taking ownership of the character education effort. First and foremost, staff members assume this responsibility by modeling the core values and their own behavior and taking advantage of other opportunities to influence the students. The same values and norms that govern the life of students served to govern the

collective life of adult members within the school community. Like students, adults growing character by working collaboratively with each other and participating in decision-making that improves the community of the school. They will also benefit from staff development opportunities to observe colleagues and apply strategies in their own work with students. Finally, a school devoted staff reflection on moral matters helps to ensure that operates with integrity.

9. **Fosters shared moral leadership and long-range support of the character education initiative.** Schools that are engaged effective character education have leaders who champion the effort. The leadership also takes steps to provide for the long-range support of the character education initiative, including at the district and state levels.
10. **Engages families and community members as partners in the character building effort.** Schools the return the families include them in character building efforts greatly enhance their chances for success with the students.
11. **Assess the character of the school, the school staffs functioning as character educators, and the extent to which students manifested character.** Effective character education must include an effort to assess progress using both qualitative and quantitative methods three broad kinds of outcomes merit the character of the school, the staffs' growth as character educators, and student character.

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