

Moral-Character Development for Teacher Education

Daniel Lapsley & Ryan Woodbury

To cite this article: Daniel Lapsley & Ryan Woodbury (2016) Moral-Character Development for Teacher Education, *Action in Teacher Education*, 38:3, 194-206, DOI: [10.1080/01626620.2016.1194785](https://doi.org/10.1080/01626620.2016.1194785)

To link to this article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/01626620.2016.1194785>



Published online: 09 Nov 2016.



Submit your article to this journal [↗](#)



View related articles [↗](#)



View Crossmark data [↗](#)

INVITED ARTICLE

Moral-Character Development for Teacher Education

Daniel Lapsley and Ryan Woodbury

University of Notre Dame

ABSTRACT

In this article the authors accept the common view that moral-character education is immanent to the life of classroom and schools and inevitable even when remanded to the hidden curriculum. Most schools claim to address the moral formation of students, and many educators enter the profession for values-laden reasons. Yet the language of values, virtues, morality, and character are notably absent from licensure and accreditation standards and so is formal training in moral-character education in schools of education. To facilitate the development of formal training in the moral work of teaching the authors organize the literature around three training objectives: Best Practice (“Good Learner”), Broad Character Education (“Fortified Good Learner”), and Intentional Moral-Character Education (“Moral Self”). Only the latter aims to move the Fortified Good Learner to the Moral Self and treats moral valuation as the explicit target of education. The authors make several suggestions for doing so and conclude with some challenges for teacher education.

ARTICLE HISTORY

Received 3 April 2016
Accepted 5 May 2016

KEYWORDS

Moral self; character; virtues;
character education; best
practice

Introduction

The study of child and adolescent development is a ubiquitous feature of preservice teacher education, and for good reason. It is rightfully assumed that knowledge of developmental and educational science is central to the professional craft of educators. How children learn, remember, reason, solve problems, interact with others; the factors that influence motivation, persistence, and adjustment; how schools are organized and interface with families and neighborhoods; these and other topics are crucial to successful instructional practice and to well-functioning schools.

It is not surprising, then, that knowledge of development and educational psychology is an important accreditation standard of teacher education programs. Indeed, learner development is the very first of the Interstate Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (InTASC) model core teaching standards. Standard 1 affirms that that “The teacher understands how learners grow and develop, recognizing that patterns of learning and development vary individually within and across the cognitive, linguistic, social, emotional and physical areas and designs and implements developmentally appropriate and challenging learning experiences” (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2011, p. 8). To meet this standard accredited teacher education programs almost universally mandate at least one course in developmental or educational psychology (Nucci, Drill, Larson, & Browne, 2005).

But one topic is strangely omitted from the usual catalogue of core teacher knowledge. In contrast to cognitive, linguistic, social, emotional, and physical areas, the language of values, character, and morality is notably absent. The moral-character formation of children is the instructional objective that dare not speak its name. One looks in vain for accreditation standards that compel teacher formation programs to prepare teachers to take up the moral work of teaching (Howard, 2005;

Sanger & Osguthorpe, 2011, 2013). InTASC Standard 9 does address “ethical practice” but narrowly, calling for reflection on personal biases (9e), advocating for ethical use of information (9f), understanding the legal basis of student rights (9j), and professional codes of ethics (9o). What standards do not address is the value-laden nature of every interaction of teaching and learning or the fact that moral aims are intrinsic to education (Lapsley, Holter, & Narvaez, 2013). Indeed, Stengel and Tom (2006) insist that the language of morality is heard in schools every time issues of “right relation” and “what is worth doing” emerge in instructional lessons or within the interactions of students, teachers, and peers.¹ A moral stance is implicated in the respect accorded to truth and the demand for excellence, good effort, and mastery. Values are intrinsic to what it means to develop, to set goals, and to aspire to achieve them (Carr, 1991).

This is worth noting because it is sometimes remarked that moral language is not, in fact, heard very often in classrooms and schools (Simon, 2001; Sockett & LePage, 2002). Nucci (2001) reports, for example, that the amount of moral discourse between students and teachers tends to diminish from third to fifth grade and is vanishingly rare by seventh grade. But there is no contradiction. The immanence and inevitability of moral character education (Lapsley & Yeager, 2013) and the pervasiveness of language about right relation and what is worth doing (Stengel & Tom, 2006) is compatible with observations about the relative absence of moral discourse in classrooms, if by *moral discourse* is meant explicit attention to the ethical dimensions of lessons or of student behavior (Howard, Berkowitz, & Schaeffer, 2004).

Morality may not be addressed explicitly, but it is never absent. In many schools the moral values that saturate the daily life of classrooms are opaque and hard to see just because they are deeply embedded in the hidden curriculum of instructional practice (Bryk, 1988; Goodlad, 1992). Whether character education is hidden or transparent, implicit or intentional, there is no escaping it. It is not “if” character education should be taught in schools but “how consciously and by what methods” (Howard et al., 2004, p. 210).²

Hence, anyone who takes up the profession of teaching is taking up the cause of moral-character education and is taking on the role of moral educator in a context rife with ethical decisions and value commitments (Campbell, 2003). Interestingly, teachers seem to know it. Indeed, preservice teachers are often idealistic and report altruistic reasons for entering the profession (Serow, Eaker, & Ciechalski, 1992). Many believe that schooling has a moral purpose and offer moral reasons for choosing teaching as a career (Osguthorpe & Sanger, 2013; Sanger & Osguthorpe, 2011). Moreover, they expect to learn about moral-character education in their preservice training, or at least are in favor of developing teaching strategies in the area of moral-character development (Revell & Arthur, 2007). Schoolchildren, too, at least in the United Kingdom, expect teachers to engage in moral-character and values education and believe that teachers can make a difference in contributing to their personal moral development (Arthur, 2011).

So moral character is omnipresent in every instructional encounter but absent from teaching standards. It animates the life of schools, but it moves about without a sound. It attracts the idealism of teachers and the aspirations of parents and stakeholders, but it is an agenda that also gives pause if it invites suspicions about indoctrination and the imposition of values alien to faith or family. Schools are expected to form character but are thickets of competing moral discourse, if educators are comfortable using moral language at all (Goodman & Lesnick, 2001).

It is clear that training in moral-character education could not be more urgent, but where is it found in teacher education? Few teacher education programs are intentionally and deliberately preparing teachers for their task as moral educators (Narvaez & Lapsley, 2008; Schwartz, 2008; Willemse, Lunenberg, & Korthagen, 2008). Teachers receive almost no preservice or in-service training in moral-character education (Lickona, 1993). The best one can hope for is a few lectures on moral stage or social domain theory squeezed into a course on educational or developmental psychology (Nucci et al., 2005). As a result few teachers feel up to the task of moral-character education (Millson, 2003). Whereas most deans agree that teacher formation should involve training in moral-character education, most are hard-pressed to say just where that goes on in their teacher education curriculum (Jones, Ryan, & Bohlin, 1998).

The relative neglect of moral character education in the formal preservice teacher curriculum has at least two proximal causes (Narvaez & Lapsley, 2008). The first is the large number of training objectives that already crowd the academic curriculum of teaching majors. In recent years additional training has been mandated for literacy in the content area, English as a new language and in exceptionalities, among others. But nobody is pushing for greater teacher facility in moral-character education. It does not even show up as a “cross-cutting theme” in the InTASC Standards. As a result many teacher educators find it difficult to carve out the requisite space for moral-character education given the demands of accreditation and state licensing requirements that do not explicitly require it (Jones et al., 1998). The second cause is the puzzling phenomena whereby stakeholders expect schools to address the character of students, but nobody wants to be caught teaching values. The allergic fear of educators is that one should be asked “whose values?” are being taught (Narvaez & Lapsley, 2008).

In this article we describe three possible options for teacher education. One option (“Best Practice”) treats character education as an outcome of good education generally that is grounded by empirically supported best instructional practice. The second option (“Broad Character Education”) includes a wide-range of psychosocial prevention, intervention, and health promotion programs that cover a wide range of purposes but also include character strengths and other so-called noncognitive variables. The third option (“Intentional Moral Character Education”) treats some conception of morality, virtue, or character as the explicit target of instruction or intervention, as an independent variable, as it were.

The three options are not antithetical or mutually exclusive though there are important differences among them. What they share in common is a commitment to best-practice instruction as the basis for all moral-character education; and possibly the realization that “good learning” requires something else in addition to intellectual skills, such as dispositional traits (“character strengths”), motivational mind-sets, and other indicators of “performance character.” The three approaches differ, as we will see, on how explicit is the commitment to developing moral dispositions as the “treatment” or aim of education. After discussing each of these options we conclude with several observations about the challenges of developing a teacher training agenda for moral-character education.

Three Options for Teacher Education

Best Practice

On this option character education is an outcome of best-practice instruction. Teachers attend to the moral formation of pupils when they engage in teacher practices that maximize opportunities for student learning. Character education is just good education (Berkowitz & Bier, 2004). This is the default stance of many schools, and indeed there is reason for optimism that student moral-character formation can be advanced by well-attested teacher practices. This can be illustrated in a number of ways.

For example, a generation of research has shown that effective schools have two crucial characteristics: academic press and a communitarian ethos (National Research Council, 2003; Wentzel, 2002). *Academic press* describes a school culture where teachers, students, and administrators are motivated by achievement goals. These goals come to exert a normative authority that socializes the behavior, norms, and values of a school community (Bryk, Camburn, & Louis, 1999). The school-wide press for academic excellence involves high expectations for achievement, rigorous curriculum, and teachers who offer encouragement, constructive feedback, and attention to student work.

A communitarian ethos points to a way of organizing schools that facilitate the creation of strong emotional bonds between students and teachers and relational trust among professional staff (Abbot et al., 1998). Teachers take collective responsibility for student learning and see themselves as responsible for the development of the whole child and not just for the child’s academic outcomes (Klem & Connell, 2004). Indeed, a strong sense of personal belonging strengthens students’

academic tenacity (Resnick et al., 1997), an effect that might be particularly crucial for ethno-racial minority students (Walton & Cohen, 2007). Not surprisingly, students in communally organized schools with strong academic press show a range of positive academic and behavioral outcomes (Anderman, 2002; Battistich, Solomon, Watson, & Schaps, 1997; Catalano, Haggerty, Oesterle, Fleming, & Hawkins, 2004; Loukas, Ripperger-Suhler, & Horton, 2009; Payne, Gottfredson, & Gottfredson, 2003).

But is this character education? A case can be made that it is. Certainly the learning sciences emphasize the importance of communal organization of schools, social belonging, academic press, and cognitive constructivist theories of learning and instruction, and these are targets of preservice teacher formation (or should be). If character education is just good education, then preservice teachers and school leaders who are trained in these matters are also learning how to direct students' behavioral outcomes toward desirable ends; and these ends will be deemed marks of good character.

Not surprisingly these topics also align with principles of effective character education as promulgated by the Character Education Partnership (CEP; 2010). For example, CEP Principle 6 insists that effective character education “includes a meaningful and challenging academic curriculum that respects all learners.” It calls for differentiated instruction, the development of thinking strategies, and the minimization of external rewards to sustain motivation (Beland, 2003). In other words, CEP Principle 6 affirms that character education requires academic press.

Other CEP principles cover the rest of the bases. CEP Principle 2 (“defines character comprehensively to include thinking, feeling and doing”) endorses the cognitive-mediational perspective of constructivist learning. CEP Principle 3 (“Uses a comprehensive, intentional, proactive and effective approach to character development”) encourages teachers to have high expectations, to develop a sense of community by giving students “voice-and-choice” and a chance to shape group norms. CEP Principle 4 (“Creates a caring school community”) explicitly addresses the communitarian ethos that characterizes good schools. CEP 7 (“strives to foster students’ self-motivation”) endorses fostering intrinsic motivation to do well on academic tasks by encouraging growth and learning mind-sets; and intrinsic motivation to do the right thing by building a climate of trust and respect, by encouraging autonomy, by building shared norms through class meetings and shared decision making.

In short, the Best Practice approach endorses a set of well-attested pedagogical strategies that are considered best practice for teachers and school leaders. Moreover, it has the added virtue of requiring no significant alteration of preservice teacher training (provided that training is already of high quality). Indeed, Narvaez and Lapsley (2008) suggested that the “knowledge base that supports best practice instruction is coterminous with what is known to influence the moral formation of students” (p. 158). However, the problem with the Best Practice approach is that while it foregrounds best instructional and educational practice, it backgrounds intentional values education, thereby remanding moral-character education to the hidden curriculum. And what is hidden cannot be effectively cultivated or instructed.

That said, it is difficult to see how intentional moral-character education can be effective unless it trades on the core insights of the education sciences. Moreover, many of the instructional practices that support academic achievement and a sense of a belonging also mobilize the dispositional resources of children (“character strengths”) that contribute to academic tenacity (as we will see). Hence an effective moral educator must first be an effective educator and then come to learn the pedagogical content knowledge specific to moral education (Lapsley, Holter, & Narvaez, 2014).

Broad Character Education

This second approach differs from Best Practice in three ways. First, it requires intentional implementation of a program or curriculum that is ostensibly nonacademic. There is something else to teach in addition to the academic lesson plan (though it can often be integrated with the academic lesson plan). Second, it highlights the importance of “noncognitive” variables or “performance character” for success in school, and these are often the target of instructional practice in addition

to strictly academic content. Third, it evinces more explicit interest in outcomes and behaviors of specific interest to traditional character education. We begin on this latter point.

The traditional character education movement that was ascendant in the latter decades of the 20th century was under the impression that morality, values, and character were somehow expunged from public schools; and therefore a case has to be made for its reintroduction (Wynne, 1997; Wynne & Ryan, 1997). The case was made by pointing to the general rot they found in the younger generation unschooled, apparently, in matters of values and character. A “litany of alarm” (Arthur, 2005) was rehearsed that drew attention to troubling epidemiological trends in youth disorder, such as poor academic achievement; rising drop-out rates; the incidence of premarital sex and teen pregnancy; substance use by adolescents; bullying, victimization, and violence; delinquency; suicidal behavior; even showing disrespect and using bad language (Brooks & Goble, 1997). Why do teenagers do these things, it was asked, why are they so dysfunctional? Because they lack moral character was the inevitable answer, and the reason they lack moral character is because it is no longer taught in school.

The claim, then, was that teenagers engage in risk behavior because schools abandoned their mission to form the moral character of students. Consequently any program or intervention that sought to drive down these trends by discouraging substance use or sexual activity, or by preventing violence or improving social skills or school persistence, and the like, would qualify as a moral-character education program. Similarly anything that strengthens protective mechanisms for children exposed to psychosocial hazards would also count for moral-character education if the outcome minimizes risk behavior.

Examples of Broad Character Education

The Social and Character Development (SACD) research program jointly initiated by the Institute for Educational Sciences and the Division of Violence Prevention (Centers for Disease Control) illustrates the point (Flay, Berkowitz, & Bier, 2009; Haegerich & Metz, 2009). The SACD research program is an attempt to systematically evaluate seven school-based programs that promise to reduce or prevent aggression and violence-related youth problem behavior, improve school climate, and promote positive social development and academic outcomes.

These are laudable goals, of course, but is it character education? The overall theoretical model does not invoke morality, virtues, values, or character. Instead, a public health prevention model provided the lens for understanding risk and protective factors associated with these outcomes. The seven universal school-based prevention programs had diverse objectives and for the sake of simplicity were considered “social and character development.” As Haegerich and Metz (2009) noted, however, “in reality these programs include a wide array of strategies, including but not limited to, value clarification, social skills training, behavior management and school climate promotion” (p. 9). In broad character education the nomenclature is sufficiently flexible to encompass many good causes that have little to do with ethical conceptions of virtue, morality, or values, so long as proper outcomes are the result.

In addition to public health prevention models there is also a concern in Broad Character Education with promoting positive outcomes for all children (and not just for those at-risk). For example, the motto of the positive youth development movement is “problem free is not fully prepared” (Pittman, Irby, Tolman, Yohalem, & Ferber, 2003). The motto asserts that there is more work to do after issues of risk and protection are addressed. Diverting youth from violence-related problems or using illegal substances or engaging in premarital sex is one thing, but building competencies is another goal entirely. Positive youth development programs are also claimed for moral-character programs and for the same reason as risk reduction efforts: They target outcomes of broad interest to educators, parents, and stakeholders. In the one case the targeted outcome is reduction of risk behavior. In the other, it is the cultivation and development of positive competencies.

Social-emotional learning (SEL) is an especially prominent example of Broad Character Education (Elias, Kranzler, Parker, Kash, & Weissberg, 2014). SEL is the process of acquiring a suite of skills that allow children and youth to recognize and manage emotions, accurately process social cues, set and achieve goals, manage interpersonal relationships, and make responsible decisions (Durlak et al., 2011). Five clusters of core competencies are targeted in SEL programs (CASEL, 2012). These include self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision making (see Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning, 2012 for a complete description). At least two core competencies address skills that are explicitly moral in nature. For example, social awareness includes the ability to take perspectives and empathize with others from diverse backgrounds, and to be aware of social and ethical norms for behavior. Responsible decision making includes appeal to ethical standards, as well as safety concerns, social norms, and other criteria.

These and other social competencies equip students for academic achievement and the psychosocial demands of classrooms and schools, and they serve protective and health-promoting functions as well. Virtually all preschool and K-5 SEL programs involve direct instruction of skills; and skill instruction is often integrated within the regular academic curriculum (Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning, 2012). And it seems to work. There is impressive evidence that SEL programs successfully build social-emotional skills and contribute to academic achievement. In a recent meta-analysis Durlak, Weissberg, Dymnicki, Taylor, and Schellinger (2011) showed that SEL programs significantly increased prosocial behavior and academic achievement and reduced conduct and internalizing problems and were found to be successful at all educational levels and in urban and rural schools. The largest gains were reported for emotion regulation, stress management, empathy, problem solving, and decision-making skills. Moreover, the implementation of SEL programs were well within the reach of classroom teachers and other school staff, which indicates that SEL interventions can be incorporated effectively within routine educational practices of the school.

The recent interest in character strengths is another example of broad character education. Peterson and Seligman (2004) identified 24 character strengths that are assigned to one of six universal virtues (wisdom, courage, humanity, justice, temperance, transcendence). Character strengths predict a number of positive outcomes in adolescents, moderate the effects of mental and physical health problems, and enable behaviors that maintain adaptation and positive youth development (Gillham et al., 2011; Park, 2004; Proctor et al., 2011; Shoshani & Slone, 2013; Toner, Haslam, Robinson, & Williams, 2012).

Grit is a character strength that has attracted the interest of educators (Duckworth, Peterson, Matthews, & Kelly, 2007; Duckworth & Quinn, 2009; Duckworth & Yeager, 2015). It is defined as trait-level perseverance and passion for long-term goals in spite of challenges and setbacks. There is an emerging empirical profile that attests to the importance of grit for a variety of educational outcomes. In one study high school juniors with more grit in Chicago public schools were more likely to graduate on time 1 year later (Eskreis-Winkler, Duckworth, Shulman, & Beal, 2014). Grit predicts self-regulated learning and achievement in college students (Wolters & Hussain, 2014). Students with more grit report greater positive affect and purpose commitment, especially for those who have articulated a direction in life (Hill, Burrow, & Bronk, 2014). Grit predicts retention in a wide variety of settings (Eskreis-Winkler et al., 2014). Cadets at West Point with more grit were more likely to make it through the first arduous summer of boot camp than plebes with less grit (Maddie, Matthews, Kelly, Villarreal, & White, 2012); and grit plays a role in the academic success of Black male college students at predominantly White institutions (Strayhorn, 2013).

The literatures on grit and character strengths have led many educators to elevate the importance of “performance character” or “noncognitive” factors in curricular planning. The Knowledge is Power Program (KIPP) charter school network has taken the lead in developing a character report card for each student that includes the following character strengths: grit, zest, optimism, gratitude, social intelligence, and curiosity. These traits are the target of explicit socialization and instruction, which is evident upon any visit to a KIPP school. Providing opportunities for children to develop

and practice these strengths is an important instantiation of KIPP's credo "Work hard, be nice," an ethos that pervades KIPP schools (Matthews, 2009).

Summary, Concerns, Remedies

Broad Character Education refers, then, to a wide range of prevention, intervention, and health promotion programs that cover a wide range of purposes, including health education, life skills training, social-emotional learning, problem solving, and positive youth development, among others. It aims to reduce risks, prevent problems, and promote positive development. It includes the inculcation and practice of dispositional qualities like grit and other performance character strengths. These efforts are considered examples of moral-character education insofar as they are designed to bring about desirable outcomes that counteract or reverse the troubling trends so often noted in the character educator's litany of alarm. Indeed, the success of risk reduction and positive youth development interventions are often claimed for "what works" in character education because "they are all school-based endeavors designed to help foster the positive development of youth" (Berkowitz & Bier, 2004, p. 5).

Whereas Best Practice is motivated by the literatures of the learning sciences, particularly educational psychology, the interventions of Broad Character Education are motivated by public health models, positive youth development, and trait theories of personality. They invoke notions of risk and protection, resilience and adaptation. Invariably broad character education involves teacher implementation of interventions or a commitment to curricula that has a programmatic quality.

One concern with Broad Character Education concerns its expansive reach. When should a program, intervention, or curricular objective count in favor of moral-character education? If the explanatory mechanisms or independent variables in a program's theory of action or logic model fails to reference the literatures of moral psychology but invoke instead, say, developmental psychopathology or public health models, should we credit the success of such a program to moral-character education just because it yielded desirable outcomes? In fact the explanation for successful risk reduction or competency promoting interventions hardly mentions moral competence or the acquisition of virtues. Moreover, developmental science already has the theoretical tools to think through the prevention (or reduction) of delinquency, violence, sexual activity and substance use and stands in little need of the language of virtues, morality, and values (Lapsley & Narvaez, 2006). The language of developmental psychopathology, the language of risk and resilience, of health promotion, and positive youth development is all that is required to generate the outcomes of interest to character educators. When the focus is on outcomes the singularity of moral-character education as a distinctive form of programming is lost (cf. Catalano, Toumbourou, & Hawkins, 2014; Lerner, Dowling, & Anderson, 2003).

Intentional Moral-Character Education

What if character education is defined not expansively but narrowly—and not in terms of outcomes but in terms of treatment, what would that look like? In addition to commitments to constructivist best practice and academic press, in addition to teacher practices that support social belonging and character strengths, Intentional Moral-Character Education would be infused with the language of moral valuation. It would have an explicit theory of action whose objective is to influence the moral formation of children. It would amend the motto of positive youth development "problem free is not fully prepared" by adding "but fully prepared is not morally adept" (Lapsley & Narvaez, 2006, p. 162). It would acknowledge that there is still more work to do by way of moral formation after reducing risk behavior, developing competencies, and building character strengths.

We all want children and adolescents to be free of significant problems and to be learned, competent students. But we also want them to have a moral compass, to be conversant with ethical

issues, and to become a person who cares about morality and who desires to have moral considerations govern one's behavior and aspirations (Lapsley & Stey, 2014). And insofar as all learning is specific, the language of values, morality, and virtue would have to be heard in classrooms; appeals to moral principles would have to be extracted from lessons. Schools would have to stand explicitly for core values, to articulate and defend them, and to animate them in all things in the life of the school.

Earlier we noted several principles of effective character education developed by the CEP that were seen to align with the Best Practice option. Two additional principles go to the heart of Intentional Moral Character Education. Principle 1 ("The school community promotes core ethical and performance values as the foundation of good character") asserts that schools must come to consensus about core values that "affirm human dignity, promote the development and welfare of the individual, serve the common good, define our rights and responsibilities in a democratic society and meet the classical tests of *universality* (i.e., Would you want all persons to act this way in a similar situation) and *reversibility* (i.e., Would you want to be treated this way)." The CEP nominates caring, honesty, fairness, responsibility, and respect for self and others as core ethical values—and diligence, effort, perseverance, critical thinking, and positive attitude as core performance values.

But the major point is not which values are selected but that some are, and that the selected values serve as the touchstone for everything that goes on in the school. Effective schools are those that are infused with a clear moral purpose that is out in the open, not hidden but transparent in the practice of teaching and learning, in the way relational trust, social belonging, and a sense of community is cultivated, in the disciplinary practices of the school (Watson, 2014) and the way it reaches out to families and communities (Flanagan, Pykett, & Gallay, 2014). Importantly effective schools also give students an opportunity to engage in moral action (Hart, Matsuba, & Atkins, 2014). The call-to-action is reflected in CEP Principle 5 ("The school provides students with opportunities for moral action"). The insistence that education include a commitment to moral action makes the CEP principles something more than a mere catalogue of instructional best practice, though it is certainly that as well (Lapsley & Narvaez, 2011).

Intentional moral-character education will place demands upon teacher (and principal) education insofar as they must become adept at developing moral expertise (Narvaez & Bock, 2014). Developing this expertise in schools of education will be a challenge. Carr (1991) argued that we do our student teachers in education programs "no great favours by proceeding as though education and learning to teach are matters only of the mastery of certain pedagogical skills, knacks or strategies apt for the successful transmission of value-neutral knowledge or information" (p. 11). Teachers struggle with moral-character education just because the value questions immanent to teaching are not systematically addressed in their professional formation. Carr (1991) contends that when teacher education programs do not require "sensible reflection upon the moral character of human life and experience, the nature of values and the ethical aspects of the educationalist's role" (p. 11) then the resulting intellectual vacuum leaves teachers vulnerable to faddism; it leaves them ill prepared to make transparent the immanence and inevitability of fundamental value questions that attend education, teaching, and learning.

Sensible reflection might also point to how preservice teachers are taught to frame the moral significance of daily classroom life. One study showed that teacher discourse that draws student attention to the moral significance of classroom activities, has positive effects on character, classroom climate, and academic motivation (Mullen, Turner, & Narvaez, 2005). For example, when teachers framed classroom events in terms of the needs of the community, helping others, classroom identity, and peer solidarity, students responded with greater commitment to citizenship, ethical knowledge, moral self-regulation, and moral locus of control. Indeed, framing student learning activities in terms of self-transcendent purpose (e.g., service to the community, an ethical ideal, social justice) increases academic self-regulation more than appeals to self-oriented motives (Yeager et al., 2014).

This finding is quite similar to what is found in the self-determination and motivation literatures. When teachers frame learning objectives with a rationale that refers to intrinsic goals, students are

more likely to internalize the goal and show more self-determination in pursuit of it, particularly in autonomy-supporting (vs. controlling) classrooms (Vansteenkiste, Lens, & Deci, 2006). Intrinsic goals are satisfying in their own right and include such things as contributions to the community, health, and personal growth. Framing student learning activities in terms of such goals leads to deeper conceptual learning and better persistence on academic tasks (Vansteenkiste et al., 2006). It would now appear that framing moral considerations in terms of long-term intrinsic goals might also pay off with respect to moral internalization as well (Mullen et al., 2005).

Whatever the learning domain, from lessons in the regular curriculum to lessons about the moral dimensions of experience, how it is framed by teachers will influence students' engagement with it. Encouraging students to think of their activities in terms of intrinsic goals will maximize internalization and motivated persistence than if the activities are framed by extrinsic goals. Hence self-determination theory may provide a useful framework for understanding how the moral work of classrooms can motivate students to construct a moral self with a deep commitment to moral values. For Intentional Moral-Character the moral self is the aim of education (Lapsley & Stey, 2014).

Challenges for Teaching and Learning

We have presented three possible responses to the challenge of preparing preservice teachers and aspiring school leaders for the moral work of teaching and of school leadership. Best Practice mobilizes the educational psychology literatures of constructivist learning, academic press and communal organization of schools to guide the formation of Good Learners. Broad Character Education reduces the exposure of good learners to psychosocial hazards, reduces risk behavior, builds competencies and fortifies the good learner with character strengths. Finally, Intentional Moral-Character Education transforms the Fortified Good Learner into a Moral Self.

These three responses are moments in the moral formation of students and the moral work of teaching. The challenge for the educational sciences, and for schools of education, is to connect the bolts so that these three moments are a seamless weave in the training of teachers and school leaders. The effective moral educator must first be an effective teacher who brings powerful lessons alive with pedagogical techniques that maximize student interest, engagement, and learning; and so the effective teacher will be skilled in the best practice attested by the learning sciences. But teachers skilled in the mechanics of best practice also need to count on the relational trust of colleagues and school leaders. It is the school leader who sets the tone and puts into place the school-wide structures and policies that build the communitarian ethos and sense of belonging so crucial to student success.

But increasingly the tools of effective teaching include the mobilization of character strengths and motivational orientations that sustain good effort in the face of academic challenges. The literatures on social-emotional learning, grit, and mind-sets are particularly promising ways to fortify learning, and it is imperative that the instructional strategies that devolve from these literatures are folded into teacher training. But moral education requires pedagogical content knowledge in its own right, like any other instructional objective. Effective instruction will yield good outcomes across a range of outcomes of interest to educators, and such an effect would be catalyzed when fortified best practice is yoked to intentional commitment to morality, virtues, and values (Lapsley et al., 2014). As we have seen, research on self-determination theory and the importance of framing learning objectives in terms of intrinsic goals might be the mechanism that contributes to the distinctly moral formation of fortified good learners.

Notes

1. By *right relation* Stengel and Tom (2006) mean relationships ordered by normative ethical considerations, including those that govern proper relations among teachers, administrators, parents, teachers, and peers, but also ethical considerations that arise in academic lessons about history (e.g., between Indians and settlers),

social studies (political actors, the requirements of citizenry) or literatures (characters in fictional stories or poems).

2. Moral and character education can take different forms depending on paradigmatic allegiances, ranging from dilemma discussion to advance moral reasoning to explicit instruction about virtues. We endorse an integrative approach that elides these concerns (Lapsley & Narvaez, 2006; Lapsley & Yeager, 2013).

Notes on contributors

Daniel Lapsley is the ACE Collegiate Professor of Psychology and Senior Academic Advisor for the Alliance for Catholic Education at the University of Notre Dame.

Ryan Woodbury is a doctoral student in the Developmental Psychology program at the University of Notre Dame.

References

- Abbot, R. D., O'Donnell, J., Hawkins, J. D., Hill, K. G., Kosterman, R., & Catalano, R. (1998). Changing teacher practices to promote achievement and bonding to school. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, 68, 542–552. doi:10.1037/h0080363
- Anderman, E. M. (2002). School effects on psychological outcomes during adolescence. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 94(4), 795–809. doi:10.1037/0022-0663.94.4.795
- Arthur, J. (2005). The re-emergence of character education in British education policy. *British Journal of Educational Studies*, 53(3), 239–254. doi:10.1111/j.1467-8527.2005.00293.x
- Arthur, J. (2011). Personal character and tomorrow's citizens: Student expectations of their teachers. *International Journal of Educational Research*, 50, 184–189. doi:10.1016/j.ijer.2011.07.001
- Battistich, V., Solomon, D., Watson, M., & Schaps, E. (1997). Caring school communities. *Educational Psychologist*, 32, 137–151. doi:10.1207/s15326985ep3203_1
- Beland, K. (Series Ed.). (2003). *Eleven principles sourcebook: How to achieve quality character education in K-12 schools*. Washington, DC: Character Education Partnership.
- Berkowitz, M., & Bier, M. (2004). Research-based character education. *ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 591, 72–85. doi:10.1177/0002716203260082
- Brooks, B. D., & Goble, F. G. (1997). *The case for character education: The role of the school in teaching values and virtue*. St. Louis, MO: Quick Publishing.
- Bryk, A. S. (1988). Musings on the moral life of schools. *American Journal of Education*, 96, 256–290. doi:10.1086/443896
- Bryk, A. S., Camburn, E., & Louis, K. S. (1999). Professional community in Chicago elementary schools: Facilitating factors and organizational consequences. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 35, 751–781. doi:10.1177/0013161X99355004
- Campbell, E. (2003). *The ethical teacher*. Maidenhead, England: Open University Press.
- Carr, D. (1991). *Educating the virtues: An essay on the philosophical psychology of moral development and education*. London, England: Routledge.
- Catalano, R. F., Haggerty, K. P., Oesterle, S., Fleming, C. B., & Hawkins, J. D. (2004). The importance of bonding to school for healthy development: Findings from the Social Development Research Group. *Journal of School Health*, 74(7), 252–261. doi:10.1111/j.1746-1561.2004.tb08281.x
- Catalano, R. G., Toumbourou, J. W., & Hawkins, J. D. (2014). Positive youth development in the United States: History, efficacy and links to moral and character education. In L. Nucci, D. Narvaez, & T. Krettenauer (Eds.), *Handbook of moral and character education* (2nd ed., pp. 423–440). New York, NY: Routledge/Taylor & Francis.
- Character Education Partnership. (2010). *Eleven principles of effective character education*. Washington, DC: Character.org.
- Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning. (2012). *2013 CASEL guide: Effective social and emotional learning programs—Preschool and elementary school edition*. Chicago, IL: Author.
- Council of Chief State School Officers. (2011, April). *Interstate Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (InTASC) model core teaching standards: A resource for state dialogue*. Washington, DC: Author.
- Duckworth, A., Peterson, C., Matthews, M., & Kelly, D. (2007). Grit: Perseverance and passion for long term goals. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 92, 1087–1101. doi:10.1037/0022-3514.92.6.1087
- Duckworth, A. L., & Quinn, P. D. (2009). Development and validation of the Short Grit Scale (Grit-S). *Journal of Personality Assessment*, 91, 166–174. doi:10.1080/00223890802634290
- Duckworth, A. L., & Yeager, D. S. (2015). Measurement matters assessing personal qualities other than cognitive ability for educational purposes. *Educational Researcher*, 44(4), 237–251. doi:10.3102/0013189X15584327
- Durlak, J. A., Weissberg, R. P., Dymnicki, A. B., Taylor, R. D., & Schellinger, K. B. (2011). The impact of enhancing students' social and emotional learning: A meta-analysis of school-based universal interventions. *Child Development*, 82, 405–432. doi:10.1111/cdev.2011.82.issue-1

- Elias, M. J., Kranzler, A., Parker, S. J., Kash, V. M., & Weissberg, R. P. (2014). The complementary perspectives of social and emotional learning, moral education and character education. In L. Nucci, D. Narvaez, & T. Krettenauer (Eds.), *Handbook of moral and character education* (2nd ed., pp. 272–289). New York, NY: Routledge/Taylor & Francis.
- Eskreis-Winkler, L., Shulman, E. P., Beal, S. A., & Duckworth, A. L. (2014). The grit effect: predicting retention in the military, the workplace, school and marriage. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 5, 36. doi:10.3389/fpsyg.2014.00036
- Flanagan, C., Pykett, A., & Gally, E. (2014). Community contribution to moral and character development. In L. Nucci, D. Narvaez, & T. Krettenauer (Eds.), *Handbook of moral and character education* (2nd ed., pp. 441–455). New York, NY: Routledge/Taylor & Francis.
- Flay, B., Berkowitz, M. W., & Bier, M. C. (2009). Elementary school-based programs theorized to support social development, prevent violence, and promote positive school climate: Description and hypothesized mechanisms of change. *Journal of Research in Character Education*, 7(2), 21–49.
- Gillham, J., Adams-Deutsch, Z., Werner, J., Reivich, K., Coulter-Heindl, V., Linkins, M., ... Seligman, M. E. (2011). Character strengths predict subjective well-being during adolescence. *The Journal of Positive Psychology*, 6(1), 31–44. doi:10.1080/17439760.2010.536773
- Goodlad, J. I. (1992). The moral dimensions of schooling and teacher education. *Journal of Moral Education*, 21(2), 87–97. doi:10.1080/0305724920210201
- Goodman, J., & Lesnick, H. (2001). *The moral stake in education*. New York, NY: Longman.
- Haegerich, T. M., & Metz, E. (2009). The Social and Character Development Research Program: Development, goals and opportunities. *Journal of Research in Character Education*, 7(2), 1–20.
- Hart, D., Matsuba, K. M., & Atkins, R. (2014). The moral and civic effects of learning to serve. In L. Nucci, D. Narvaez, & T. Krettenauer (Eds.), *Handbook of moral and character education* (2nd ed., pp. 456–470). New York, NY: Routledge/Taylor & Francis.
- Hill, P. L., Burrow, A. L., & Bronk, K. C. (2014). Persevering with positivity and purpose: An examination of purpose commitment and positive affect as predictors of grit. *Journal of Happiness Studies*, 17, 257–269.
- Howard, R. W. (2005). Preparing moral educators in an era of standards-based reform. *Teacher Education Quarterly*, 32, 43–58.
- Howard, R. W., Berkowitz, M. W., & Schaeffer, E. F. (2004). Politics of character education. *Educational Policy*, 18(1), 188–215. doi:10.1177/0895904803260031
- Jones, E. M., Ryan, K., & Bohlin, K. (1998). Character education and teacher education: How are prospective teachers being prepared to foster good character in students? *Action in Teacher Education*, 20, 11–28. doi:10.1080/01626620.1999.10462931
- Klem, A. M., & Connell, J. P. (2004). Relationships matter: Linking teacher support to student engagement and achievement. *Journal of School Health*, 74, 262–273. doi:10.1111/josh.2004.74.issue-7
- Lapsley, D., Holter, A. C., & Narvaez, D. (2013). Teaching for character: Three alternatives for teacher education. In M. N. Sanger & R. D. Osguthorpe (Eds.), *The moral work of teaching: Preparing and supporting practitioners* (pp. 115–128). New York, NY: Teachers College Press.
- Lapsley, D., & Narvaez, D. (2011). Moral criteria and character education: A reply to Welch. *Journal of Moral Education*, 40, 527–531. doi:10.1080/03057240.2011.618780
- Lapsley, D., & Stey, P. C. (2014). The moral self as the aim of education. In L. Nucci, D. Narvaez, & T. Krettenauer (Eds.), *Handbook of moral and character education* (2nd ed., pp. 84–100). New York, NY: Routledge/Taylor & Francis.
- Lapsley, D., & Yeager, D. S. (2013). Moral-character education. In I. Weiner (Ed.) and W. Reynolds & G. Miller (Vol. Eds.), *Handbook of psychology. Vol. 7. Educational psychology*. (pp. 147–177). New York, NY: Wiley.
- Lapsley, D. K., & Narvaez, D. (2006). Character education. In W. Damon, R. Lerner, A. Renninger, & I. Siegel (Eds.), *Handbook of child psychology. Vol. 4. Child psychology in practice* (6th ed., pp. 248–296). New York, NY: Wiley.
- Lerner, R. M., Dowling, E. M., & Anderson, P. M. (2003). Positive youth development: Thriving as the basis of personhood and civil society. *Applied Developmental Science*, 7(3), 172–180. doi:10.1207/S1532480XADS0703_8
- Lickona, T. (1993). The return of character education. *Educational Leadership*, 51, 6–11.
- Loukas, A., Ripperger-Suhler, K. G., & Horton, K. D. (2009). Examining temporal associations between school connectedness and early adolescent adjustment. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 38(6), 804–812. doi:10.1007/s10964-008-9312-9
- Maddie, S. R., Matthews, M. D., Kelly, D. R., Villarreal, B., & White, M. (2012). The role of hardiness and grit in predicting performance and retention of USMA cadets. *Military Psychology*, 24, 19–28. doi:10.1080/08995605.2012.639672
- Matthews, J. (2009). *Work hard. Be nice: Two inspired teachers created the most promising schools in America*. Chapel Hill, NC: Algonquin Books of Chapel Hill.
- Millson, A. J. (2003). Teachers' sense of efficacy for the formation of students' character. *Journal of Research on Character Education*, 1, 89–106.
- Mullen, G., Turner, J., & Narvaez, D. (2005). *Student perceptions of climate influence character and motivation*, Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Education Research Association, Montreal, Canada.
- National Research Council. (2003). *Engaging schools: Fostering high school students' motivation to learn*. Washington, DC: National Academies Press.

- Narvaez, D., & Bock, T. (2014). Developing moral expertise and moral personalities. In L. Nucci, D. Narvaez, & T. Krettenauer (Eds.), *Handbook of moral and character education* (2nd ed., pp. 140–158). New York, NY: Routledge/Taylor & Francis.
- Narvaez, D., & Lapsley, D. K. (2008). Teaching moral character: Two alternatives for teacher education. *Teacher Educator*, 43(2), 156–172. doi:10.1080/08878730701838983
- Nucci, L., Drill, K., Larson, C., & Browne, C. (2005). Preparing preservice teachers for character education. *Journal of Research on Character Education*, 3, 81–96.
- Nucci, L. P. (2001). *Education in the moral domain*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Osguthorpe, R. D., & Sanger, M. (2013). The moral nature of teacher candidate beliefs about the purpose of schooling and their reasons for choosing teaching as a career. *Peabody Journal of Education*, 88, 180–197. doi:10.1080/0161956X.2013.775871
- Park, N. (2004). The role of subjective well-being in positive youth development. *ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 591(1), 25–39. doi:10.1177/0002716203260078
- Payne, A. A., Gottfredson, D. C., & Gottfredson, G. D. (2003). Schools as communities: The relationships among communal school organization, student bonding, and school disorder. *Criminology*, 41(3), 749–778. doi:10.1111/crim.2003.41.issue-3
- Peterson, C., & Seligman, M. E. P. (2004). *Character strengths and virtues: A handbook and classification*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.
- Pittman, K., Irby, M., Tolman, J., Yohalem, N., & Ferber, T. (2003). Preventing Problems, Promoting Development, Encouraging Engagement: Competing Priorities or Inseparable Goals?. Based upon Pittman, K. & Irby, M. (1996). Preventing Problems or Promoting Development? Washington, DC: The Forum for Youth Investment, Impact Strategies, Inc. Available online at www.forumfyi.org
- Proctor, C., Tsukayama, E., Wood, A. M., Maltby, J., Eades, J. F., & Linley, P. A. (2011). Strengths gym: The impact of a character strengths-based intervention on the life satisfaction and well-being of adolescents. *Journal of Positive Psychology*, 6(5), 377–388. doi:10.1080/17439760.2011.594079
- Resnick, M. D., Bearman, P. S., Blum, R. W., Bauman, K. E., Harris, K. M., Jones, J., ... Udry, J. R. (1997). Protecting adolescents from harm: Findings from the National Longitudinal Study on Adolescent Health. *Journal of the American Medical Association*, 278, 823–832. doi:10.1001/jama.1997.03550100049038
- Revell, L., & Arthur, J. (2007). Character education in schools and the education of teachers. *Journal of Moral Education*, 36, 79–92. doi:10.1080/03057240701194738
- Sanger, M. N., & Osguthorpe, R. D. (2011). Teacher education, preservice teacher beliefs and the moral work of teaching. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 27, 569–578. doi:10.1016/j.tate.2010.10.011
- Sanger, M. N., & Osguthorpe, R. D. (Eds.). (2013). *The moral work of teaching: Preparing and supporting practitioners*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.
- Schwartz, M. (2008). Teacher education for moral and character education. In L. Nucci & D. Narvaez (Eds.), *Handbook of moral and character education* (pp. 583–600). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Serow, R. C., Eaker, D., & Ciechalski, J. (1992). Calling, service, and legitimacy: Professional orientations and career commitment among prospective teachers. *Journal of Research & Development in Education*, 25, 136–141.
- Shoshani, A., & Slone, M. (2013). Middle school transition from the strengths perspective: Young adolescents' character strengths, subjective well-being, and school adjustment. *Journal of Happiness Studies*, 14(4), 1163–1181. doi:10.1007/s10902-012-9374-y
- Simon, K. (2001). *Moral questions in the classroom: How to get kids to think deeply about real life and their schoolwork*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Sockett, H., & LePage, P. (2002). The missing language of the classroom. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 18, 159–171. doi:10.1016/S0742-051X(01)00061-0
- Stengel, B. S., & Tom, A. R. (2006). *Moral matters: Five ways to develop the moral life of schools*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.
- Strayhorn, T. L. (2013). What role does grit play in the academic success of Black male collegians at predominantly White institutions. *Journal of African American Studies*, 18, 1–10. doi:10.1007/s12111-012-9243-0
- Toner, E., Haslam, N., Robinson, J., & Williams, P. (2012). Character strengths and wellbeing in adolescence: Structure and correlates of the Values in Action Inventory of Strengths for Children. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 52(5), 637–642. doi:10.1016/j.paid.2011.12.014
- Vansteenkiste, M., Lens, W., & Deci, E. L. (2006). Intrinsic versus extrinsic goal contents in self-determination theory: Another look at the quality of academic motivation. *Educational Psychologist*, 41, 19–31. doi:10.1207/s15326985ep4101_4
- Walton, G. M., & Cohen, G. L. (2007). A question of belonging: Race, social fit, and achievement. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 92, 82–96. doi:10.1037/0022-3514.92.1.82
- Watson, C. (2014). *Best practices from America's middle schools*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Wentzel, K. R. (2002). Are effective teachers like good parents? Teaching styles and student adjustment in early adolescence. *Child Development*, 73, 287–301. doi:10.1111/cdev.2002.73.issue-1
- Willemse, M., Lunenberg, M., & Korthagen, F. (2008). The moral aspects of teacher educators' practice. *Journal of Moral Education*, 37, 445–466. doi:10.1080/03057240802399269

- Wolters, C. A., & Hussain, M. (2014). Investigating grit and its relation with college students' self-regulated learning and academic achievement. *Metacognition and Learning, 10*, 293–311.
- Wynne, E. (1997). For-character education. In A. Molnar (Ed.), *The construction of children's character* (pp. 63–76). Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Wynne, E., & Ryan, K. (1997). *Reclaiming our schools: Teaching character, academics and discipline* (2nd ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Merrill.
- Yeager, D. S., Henderson, M. D., Paunesku, D., Walton, G. M., D'Mello, S., Spitzer, B. J., & Duckworth, A. L. (2014). Boring but important: A self-transcendent purpose for learning fosters academic self-regulation. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 107*, 559–580. doi:[10.1037/a0037637](https://doi.org/10.1037/a0037637)