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## Journal of Moral Education

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### Book reviews

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## BOOK REVIEWS

### **Ethical visions in education: philosophies in practice**

David T. Hansen (Ed.), 2007

New York, Teachers College Press

\$24.95 (pbk), \$52.00 (hbk), 224 pp.

ISBN 978-0-8077-4759-9 (hbk), ISBN 978-0-8077-4758-2 (pbk)

*Ethical visions in education* is an inspiring analysis that provides a window into philosophies of education that illuminate what education might look like if it were to fulfil its highest and noblest ideals. Each chapter briefly portrays the life, influence and educational philosophy of a prominent thinker who has revolutionised the way teaching and learning are conceived in thought and action. The contributors to this volume open up new possibilities for education and, more importantly, they successfully challenge the reader to create new ideas and visions for educational practice. What sets this book apart from the myriad texts that address various philosophers' contributions to education is its purposeful prompting of the reader's creative power and ethical perspective related to education.

In the introduction, Hansen responds to questions that provide an important foundation for the subsequent chapters. He distinguishes ideas from facts and information, examines the process of refining an educational philosophy and describes the virtues of exploring seemingly incompatible philosophies of education. The distinction between ideas and facts is particularly poignant, suggesting that the nature of ideas is rooted in the capacity of ideas to change and generate new thought, while facts remain static. This opening section not only implores the reader to develop an educational philosophy that is informed by imaginative ideas, but it also provides a compelling argument that multiple philosophies of education are both theoretically possible and necessary.

The examples and ideas presented in the subsequent chapters promise to generate rich and deliberative discussion. In the first chapter, Hansen describes John Dewey's philosophy of education, its practical application in his lab school and his enduring educational legacy. Of note, in relation to today's education environment, are Dewey's demands on the teacher to not only be knowledgeable in subject matter, but to also be especially knowledgeable of students and disposed to act in morally appropriate ways in the classroom—deriding a singular focus on teaching methods and techniques. In Chapter 2, Fishman and McCarthy elaborate Paulo Freire's extensive contribution to educational thought, describing the intersection of his politics and pedagogy and its subsequent influence throughout the world. Freire's ability to conduct meaningful work within such a conflicting intersection offers great insight to readers who hope to make a

difference under seemingly insurmountable systemic constraints. In Chapter 3, Anderson focuses on W. E. B. Du Bois's book, *The souls of Black folk*, to detail Du Bois's aesthetic educational ideal. This ideal focuses primarily on the liberal arts as a mechanism for freedom and equality in that it enables the creation of moral culture and character. Evidently, such creative capacities are not the emphasis in some contemporary classrooms, particularly those dominated by underrepresented racial groups.

Chapter 4 introduces the educational philosophy of Tsunesaburo Makiguchi. Gebert and Joffe examine Makguchi's concept of 'value creation' and his affront on the political aims of a state education. Noteworthy is Makiguchi's criticism of families and communities for relinquishing moral education to schools. Siegfried, in Chapter 5, provides a unique perspective on the life and work of Jane Addams as it relates to educational thought and practice. Siegfried describes the importance that Addams places on 'current events' to be the point of meaningful education and dialogue in communities where individuals learn from one another and together. In Chapter 6, Wang and Zhang emphasise the unparalleled impact of Tao Xingzhi on the system of education in China. His Dewey-influenced pedagogy and practice gave rise to educational organisations and institutions alike that focus on the education of the rural poor.

In Chapter 7, Cossentino and Whitcomb elucidate the revolutionary curricular ideas of Maria Montessori, who emphasises an integration of the moral, social and intellectual aspects of education. The reader is reminded of Montessori's developmental approach to education and her emphasis on community—all in the context of peace. O'Connell, in Chapter 8, details Rabindranath Tagore's philosophical contributions, including the important role that the arts play in a meaningful education that fosters individual freedom through critical thinking. Of note is Tagore's poetic attentiveness to the whole child and the importance of creative education. Chapter 9 examines Rudolf Steiner's Waldorf approach to education. Urmacher describes Steiner's spiritually-based pedagogy and provides a detailed example of the pedagogy in practice, citing rich and detailed examples from a classroom study. Finally, in Chapter 10, Rud articulates the educational vision of Albert Schweitzer, who placed pedagogical emphasis on constructing a personal moral narrative and serving as a moral model to others. Schweitzer's 'Reverence for Life' principle provides the reader with insight into the motivations of a life dedicated to service.

In conclusion, three observations seem noteworthy. First, the text holds great promise for adoption in either a graduate or undergraduate course. As a collection of philosophical ideas it is engaging, generative and coherent (not an easy accomplishment in an edited volume). Importantly, for the prospective instructor, the introductory chapter successfully establishes a worthy rationale for cultivating a philosophy of education and shows the reader how to make such a process meaningful by drawing on the examples of theorists and activists described in the book. Second, the philosophies put forward in each chapter offer great insight into the moral nature of education and schooling, illuminating the ways that a varied group of prominent educational thinkers envision the moral in practice. Their visions for education are, indeed, moral and ethical,

providing a new lens through which to contemplate education's moral dimensions. Finally, the ideas in this text are set in the important context of practice. Doing so makes the ideas easier targets for criticism—the more detailed the practical example, the easier it is to criticise from a theoretical perspective. However, the point of this book is to generate new educational ideas and give rise to imaginative practice—not merely compare and contrast educational thinkers of previous generations. As such, *Ethical visions of education* is a delightful and provocative read.

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### **Education, philosophy and the ethical environment**

Graham Haydon, 2006

London, Routledge

£22.99 (pbk), 158 pp.

ISBN 978-0-415-35662-6

This book provides a thoughtful exploration of values and education and not just for those concerned specifically with the area of values education. It deserves a wider readership because, in examining the idea of the 'ethical environment', Haydon raises a fundamental question about the place and contribution of the education of young people in the sustaining of liberal democracy. A key theme is the connection between the ethical environment at a societal level—at least nationally if not globally (though Haydon does moot this possibility)—and education: education's critical contribution to the quality of the societal ethical environment and the powerful influence of the ethical environment on the conduct of education within schools. With a recent history of UK educational policies and directives in which quality is founded narrowly on pupil attainment, this book is a welcome discussion helping the reader to centre on the purposes and place of the education of the next generation.

It might be argued that adding yet another term to the range already in use, such as 'climate', 'culture' and 'ethos', would be at best confusing, but Haydon ably defends the use of this term 'ethical environment'. For Haydon, the ethical environment is not 'just a set of ideas, it is a particular conjunction of ideas giving salience to some ideas rather than to others, making particular connections between some ideas and others' (p. 23). Further, whereas ideas of ethos, climate and culture are very much conceptualised in the

literature on an institutional basis, with marked differences between schools frequently being noted, Haydon's exploration focuses the reader on the importance of wider discourses and ideals in framing the espoused and enacted values of a particular school.

Not only does Haydon help to widen our understanding of the interplay between the ethos and values of a particular institution and the wider ethical environment but also helps us to appreciate more fully our purposes in placing values as the core of the educational process in liberal democratic society. His exploration of different constructions of values education is useful in suggesting a progression in the development of this dimension. In its most limited conceptualisation, values education can be seen as the inculcation of particular sets of rules to be followed. The more widely held view of values education is that of the development of the capacity for individuals to think for themselves, but even this falls short. Instead, Haydon proposes that we conceive of values education as a more subtle and profound process of developing virtues, which 'is a richer conception that can take into account reason, feeling...' (p. 63) and so is a central concern for all educationalists.

A thread throughout this book is the use of current debates around the physical/natural environment to illustrate issues related to the ethical environment. This analogy is illuminating particularly in the persuasive argument Haydon makes for diversity in the ethical environment. He argues that 'we should not see diversity within the ethical environment only as a matter of fact that education needs to take into account, though it certainly is that. We can also see it as something that we would all be worse off without' (p. 95). Diversity in the physical environment provides resources to respond to future challenges and so diversity in the ethical environment is not a problem to be somehow negotiated around but, instead, provides resources to address challenges and issues that we have yet to fully recognise.

Haydon suggests that Chapter 4, on taking responsibility for values education, might have less to say about education. However, this chapter has much to say to anyone involved in education. Even the preliminary consideration of who 'we' are in the taking of responsibility helps us to consider the place of educators, those being educated, parents and the wider processes of policy making in the sustaining of an ethical environment. Here we move beyond a consideration of determining which values because such discussions 'are likely to be no more than a trading of personal opinions' (p. 85). Instead what is needed is an exploration of 'broader second-order standards', part of which is thinking about how we decide what to do (p. 85). It is here that Haydon raises the issue of the use of education as a means of influencing the ethical environment. Here Haydon, drawing from Mills, provides a searching critique of the recent report *Personal responsibility and changing behaviours* (2004), produced in the UK by the Prime Minister's Strategy Unit, where education is seen as a key means of creating a more participative citizenry. Though Haydon allows for intervention that does not reduce education to indoctrination or manipulation, at the same time he calls for vigilance and open scrutiny of such strategies. His critical appraisal of the document is a good example of the kind of interrogation that needs to take place around policy directives.

A strength of this book is that Haydon addresses those with a specific interest in values education and also a wider audience of educational practitioners who are dealing with

the demands that increasing diversity in beliefs, values and lifestyle is placing on schools. The trajectory of the book is to look beyond the confines of a particular educational institution and even beyond the education system and consider the idea of the ethical environment being constructed in the context of liberal democratic society. Not surprising, then, when Haydon addresses the specific question of the responsibilities of values education in the final chapter, he argues that ‘the exercise of the responsibilities of values education cannot be the preserve of any one part of the curriculum or indeed any one aspect of schooling’ (p. 118). Here Haydon considers critically the contribution of different types of schooling as well as identifiable curricular components, such as values education/education for citizenship. One of the most significant challenges Haydon raises is to the current orthodoxy, found in the literature, policies and directives on school leadership and school improvement, where leadership is constructed as being about the creation of a vision and sets of values to be then ‘shared’. What Haydon sees as complementary rather than contradictory: ‘the social aim of sustaining the ethical environment and the individual aim of enabling individuals to understand and find their way through’ (p. 118) acknowledges what leaders in school grapple with daily.

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### **Professional values and practice: achieving the Standards for QTS**

James Arthur, Jon Davison and Malcolm Lewis, 2005

Abingdon, Routledge Falmer

\$33.95 (pbk), 224 pp.

ISBN 0-415-31727-4

If the world of educational ideas were a stock market, the price of professionalism in the discourse relating to university-based occupational preparation would have gone through the roof. It would be easy to dismiss this trend as a bubble to which the education sector is so notoriously susceptible. But the fundamentals of the professionalism movement are strong. The rise of professionalism has coincided with a period of frenetic re-framing of professional curricular standards in terms of another hot educational commodity: ‘outcomes-based education’, a curricular strategy that spurns inventories of knowledge items in favour of ostensibly comprehensive lists of competencies that comprise skilled, effective and ethical professional practice. A sign that accreditation bodies have invested heavily in professionalism is that these new

curricular statements invariably feature a section on ‘professionalism’, which is meant to embrace the social dimensions of professional practice, including professional ethics. Furthermore, as a means of conceptualising the non-technical dimension of professional skill, ‘professionalism’ seems to have a competitive advantage in the marketplace of ideas. Prior to the advent of the professionalism movement, the default view of professional ethics tended to be that its tacit purpose and purview consisted in regulating the exercise of technical know-how in accordance with the ethical obligations proper to the profession’s fiduciary responsibility. By drawing professional ethics into a wider set of concerns of professionalism, the ethical dimensions of professional practice are not only more accurately depicted as being networked into a system of social skills, values and dispositions that are internal to professional excellence. The effect may be mostly semantics, but framing the imperative of meeting standards of ethical practice as part and parcel of what it means to work ‘professionally’ seems to cast professional ethics in a positive aspirational light rather than as a negative pietistic imposition on reluctant practitioners.

It is in this context that in 2002 the newly-formed General Teaching Council for England (GTCE) approved, in its own outcomes-based statement of the performance standards relating to the award of Qualified Teacher Status (QTS), a section titled Professional Values and Practice. There is no hiding of the fact Arthur, Davison and Lewis’s book is a textbook intended for use on initial teacher training programmes in England and Wales and for the sake of addressing the curricular demand that candidates meet QTS standards on professionalism. The authors claim, inevitably, that the book should attract a wider audience. They are right that it should. But not, one suspects, for the reasons the authors cite themselves. The influence of the outcomes-based curricular movement is undoubtedly growing in teaching as elsewhere and yet there is an astonishing paucity of books on the market on professionalism, values and ethics in education and teaching that are specifically pitched to teaching students. The classic in this micro-genre is Kenneth Strike and Jonas Soltis’s *The ethics of teaching* (1998). Their book, however, is concerned narrowly with improving analytical skills relevant to solving ethical problems that arise, in one way or another, in the interpretation of the American National Education Association’s Code of Ethics for the Education Profession. David Carr’s book, *Professionalism and ethics in teaching* (2000), manages to minimise parochialism and it succeeds marvellously at presenting the concerns of education ethics as plumbed into a set of broader assumptions and controversies over the normative aims of education and schooling, the very idea of professionalism as human service and the need to be ever cautious of the fleeting whims of policy and popular ideology. Carr’s book, however, is over the heads of most student teachers intellectually and its polemical style can be intimidating. And so a new book in this category is likely to be pounced upon by anyone involved in teaching professional ethics in education anywhere, if only out of desperation for want of material.

From the point of view of the book’s manifest intent to instruct prospective QTS candidates in the Standards of professional values, its structure is highly attractive. With the exception of the first two chapters, which are introductory, their plan dedicates a chapter to each one of the Standards. Indeed, given their manageable number (there are

eight), their brevity and the discrete dimension of teaching professionalism to which each Standard points, the GTCE's statement of Professional Values and Practice positively invites precisely the authors' instructional response.

The general presentation of the Standards on professional values and practice in Chapter 1 is very much in the spirit of Carr's (2000) *Professionalism and ethics in teaching*. The authors explain that the Standards were drafted in order to recognise, articulate and support the richly evaluative, social and ethical dimensions of teaching, which has tended to be stifled in the latter-day (mis)conception that the sum of good teaching is the mastery of subject-area knowledge plus competency in research-driven pedagogical techniques and managerial skills. An equally important aspect of becoming a teacher, the authors assert, is the value-laden process of professional socialisation. The second chapter looks at professional ethics from the perspective broadly preferred by Strike and Soltis (1998) wherein the purview of the ethics of teaching is to help student teachers better recognise and respond to the kinds of practical ethical problems that they will face in their careers. It is to the authors' credit that they do not fall prey to the wearisome reflex of so much of teaching material in practical ethics to depict ethical deliberation as essentially coming down to the straightforward practical application of one or another philosophy-derived theory of normative ethics (i.e. deontology, consequentialism or virtue theory). They point to a multiplicity of relevant, overlapping and sometimes mutually conflicting sources of ethical considerations: moral principles, consideration for others and ideals of personal moral character, of course, but also professional role obligations, aspirational ideals of professionalism, codes of professional ethics, and considerations of professional and personal identity.

Starting with Chapter 3, the focus of the book shifts to the Standards themselves. The first of these chapters examines the role of the teacher as moral educator, which demands that teachers act both as models and as advocates of 'positive values, attitudes and behaviour' (Standard 1.3). Chapter 4 concerns the imperative of encouraging high levels of academic achievement among all students in ways that are fair and responsive to pupils' different learning needs and aptitudes, identities and personal life circumstances (Standards 1.1 and 1.2). Chapter 5 exposes the role, rights, responsibilities and interests of parents and other carers in pupils' learning and development. It explains why it is important for teachers to be able to communicate effectively to them (Standard 1.4) and provides some guidance on improving communication skills. Fostering an appreciation of the contribution of support staff and other professionals to teaching and learning (Standard 1.6) is the subject of Chapter 6. Chapters 7 and 8 treat, respectively, teachers' responsibility to invest in the broader collective life of the schools in which they work (Standard 1.5), and the problems of 'evidence-based' teaching and the duty to career-long professional self-improvement (Standard 1.7). Finally, Chapter 9 seeks to raise awareness of the fact that the work of teachers is governed by binding statutes and outlines some of the statutory frameworks that govern their work in England (Standard 1.8).

Whatever the field and whatever the level, pioneering work is difficult and provisional and *Professional values and practice* is a very fine early attempt to produce appropriate teaching materials to prepare students in teacher training in England to meet the new



QTS Standards on professionalism and values. The guidance that the authors' provide on the values, personal attributes and dispositions intrinsic to good teaching remains closely tethered to the policy and social context of England. This feature of the book is a strength, for it not only takes the opportunity to educate teacher trainees about the policy context governing their chosen profession but it also shows how education policy and broader social and ideological contexts can set boundaries around the meaning of teaching professionalism and how society, through official policy and other means, places high demands on teachers as social actors. While the book's regionalism guarantees that teaching students outside the jurisdiction of England will perceive it as having little relevance, their instructors will hopefully know better. It is rich with case analyses, critical discussions of important concepts in teaching and education (e.g. 'values', 'professionalism', '*in loco parentis*' and 'evidence-based practice'), and summaries of social scientific research on relevant topics (e.g. communication skills, classroom climate, professional characteristics and scholastic achievement and social class). This work should be a valuable resource for any teacher of professional ethics in education.

The book's overarching fault, however, is that it too often seems to indulge in the managerialism that the authors themselves castigate for being antithetical to the very idea of professionalism. The book is conservative and conformist. Nothing approaching a radical perspective graces its pages. This is all the more shocking given the prevalence of radicalism in educational research past and present. Laws and official government policies on education, cited and explained in chapter after chapter, are presented almost invariably as guidelines to which teachers have a duty to conform unquestioningly. Teachers do, of course, work under statutory obligations but in a book ostensibly on professional ethics in teaching this lack of a critical policy perspective is surprising. If there is a single pedagogical rallying point for instruction in applied and professional ethics in all fields it is the imperative to develop students' capacities for critical practical reflection. Repeated reminders to the reader that the book's purpose to coach them in 'meeting the Standards' are a distraction and give the unmistakable impression that the issues discussed are secondary to the practical business of getting through the training course and into the workplace. A book of this style may deliver exactly what many of today's teacher trainees want and expect from their courses. But it may also be that giving it to them threatens to abnegate the professional's first public promise to help people with their best interests in mind.

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**Spiritual education in a divided world: social, environmental and pedagogical perspectives on the spirituality of children and young people**

Mark Chater and Cathy Ota (Eds), 2007

London and New York, Routledge

\$120.00 (hbk), 216 pp.

ISBN 9780415391917

This is a wide-ranging and well-edited collection arising from the annual international conference on children's spirituality, the proceedings in this instance of an event at Bishop Grosseteste College, Lincoln, with the addition of two chapters submitted by absentees. The book was also published as Volume 11(1) of the *International Journal of Children's Spirituality*.

After a preface, *Spiritual education in a divided world* is divided into two main sections. The first deals with 'Diagnosis' (Chapters 2 to 8) and the second deals with 'Praxis' (Chapters 9 to 19).

In Chapter 2 Cathy Ota presents an introduction to the largely theoretical (educational, philosophical, sociological and theological and so forth) perspectives of some notable contributors. The names of Zygmunt Baumann ('Children make you happier—and poorer') and Mary Grey ('The disenchantment and the re-enchantment of childhood in age of globalization') might be known by those otherwise unfamiliar with children's spirituality. These latter chapters usefully highlight how the entire 'sphere' of childhood has become the subject of increasing academic, scholarly and, indeed, political interest beyond education.

In the remaining chapters of 'Diagnosis', Joyce Ann Mercer similarly takes a wide brief, examining parental anxiety and children as consumers and, moreover, the notion of spirituality itself being *marketed*. Raven le Fay's ecological critique was highly intriguing and could be the focus for an entire area of further research, taking it beyond the speculative exegesis where it presently stands. Mark Chater's consideration of 'education as violence to the spirit' provides a potentially damning indictment of educational systems in general, using Pink Floyd's lyrics of 'another brick in the wall' to advance a powerful argument with great metaphorical resonance (though I confess to being a Pink Floyd fan). Helen Johnson's distinctive closure to this section illustrates Hay and Nye's conceptualisation of spirituality applied to 'relational consciousness'. All of these contributions were engaging, well-written and well-informed.

There remains, however, a real and serious issue of the need for conceptual and methodological rigour within the field if it is to advance significantly beyond polemic. Another, and perhaps related, issue is that, in common parlance at least, spirituality has traditional associations with transcendent, even other-worldly, human experience (there are complex philosophical debates about what this might mean of course.) As a whole, the volume might be seen to be giving the impression that spirituality should be rooted more firmly in the concerns of the world rather than fleeing from it. While one might sympathise with the notion of social critique leading to a praxis of change, one might also be wary of the dangers of politicisation of spirituality. The dangers are as

great here, if not more so, than they are within the strictures of more organised forms of religion.

The section on 'Praxis' does indeed follow such leads provided by the preceding section, though I am not sure if the highly creditable chapters by Ping Ho Wong and by Daniel G. Scott might have been better placed as diagnostic chapters, and perhaps also Jacqueline Watson's excellently argued 'critical democratic approach'. Clive Erricker's call 'to take difference seriously' is similarly of a theoretical nature, as also is Marian de Souza's chapter on an education 'for hope, compassion and meaning in a divisive and intolerant world'. In her chapter, Joyce Bellous provides a real engagement with practical classroom pedagogy, as does Cathy Ota. Of all the contributors, those by Cornelia Roux (from South Africa) and Karen-Marie Yust (USA) provide the most notable blend of passionate polemic combined with a systematic and rigorous research methodology.

The volume does make an important contribution to the debate around spirituality, especially in drawing the questions of meaning beyond formal religious and educational contexts. However, the entire enterprise will require continued attention to its conceptual and methodological assumptions and underpinnings, particularly within and across interdisciplinary contexts, lest we open the doors not of perception but epistemological confusion, or worse.

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### **New Educational Values**

Moscow, Narodnoje Obrazovanije

Roubles 67.62

ISSN 1726-5304

### **The Democratic School**

Moscow, Narodnoje Obrazovanije

Roubles 67.62

ISSN 1726-2410

There are two Russian journals dedicated to moral educational theory and practice: *New Educational Values* and *The Democratic School*. Both are non-state and non-profit publications.

*New Educational Values* could easily be called a series of thematic essays on different topics of a methodological and analytical nature. It's original and current Editor-in-Chief, Dr. Nata Krylova, a research fellow of the Russian Academy of Education, began the publication shortly after Russian scholars were formally allowed to write and publish independently. Since then, thirty issues have been published with contributions from numerous authors, theorists and practitioners. Their articles have contributed greatly to the development of new educational theories and practices across the world.

When *New Educational Values* started in 1995, many educators and researchers were full of enthusiasm and hoped for rapid changes in the educational system. There were heated discussions in the media; the Pedagogy of Cooperation was initiated and new priorities of humanistic and personality-oriented (child-centred) education became firmly established. A community of free-thinking and famous figures in education, such as Edward Dneprov, Simon Soloveichik, Oleg Gazman, Alexander Tubelsky reacted energetically to these new methods and ideas. They all united around the Russian research project known as 'School'.

As teachers began to incorporate new educational concepts and methods into their schools, they also began to develop new and progressive instructional materials. This required not only a rethinking of the role of the 'teacher', a restructuring of the educational system and establishment of new models for school life, but also a solid foundation of new theoretical approaches and methodologies towards teaching itself. Thus, the idea of developing new educational values was born. At the Institute of Pedagogic Innovations, Dr. Nata Krylova organised a seminar for postgraduate students. The central question discussed at the seminar was, 'Why are educational values considered *new* if each generation of parents and educators has the same eternal goal: helping the children of tomorrow to become decent people?' The goal had remained the same but now the meanings were different. Did it mean that our seemingly new ideas were, instead, those which we had simply forgotten long ago and now seemed new again?

The topics covered in the journal are, of course, manifold. Three, however, have been very challenging and deserve to be mentioned. The first is the analysis of problems related to culture, such as cultural models of schools, cultural and multicultural school environments, culturology of education and culture-centred schools. The second introduces the activity of the International Network of Productive Schools (INEPS). This school developmental trend has a bright future in education as it connects organically each student's personal and productive learning to real working situations in workplaces. The third reflects a humanistic educational experience of a free and open education.

The second journal—*The Democratic School*—first appeared in 2002 and is now published twice a year as a supplement to *New Educational Values*. Its content reflects the practice and problems of educational liberalisation in Russia and the experience at the Democratic Schools Association. Roughly thirty schools from a number of different regions participate in this programme, including the famous Tubelsky's School of Self-Determination in Moscow.

In 2005 the following issues were published, describing in detail the process of creating and providing a democratic lifestyle at school: Democratic Schools: Life and Norms; Democratic School: Lifestyle and Expert Opinion; Democratic School:

Democratisation of Learning Processes. One of the issues is J. Korczak's *Ideas today*. Russian and foreign authors have expressed a growing interest in the educational ideas of the educator, paediatrician and writer Janusz Korczak, who sacrificed his own life to be with Jewish children—his pupils—who were sent to an extermination camp in 1942.

I believe Theo Cappon, Gert Biesta and Joop Berding (all in the second issue of the 2006 volume of *The Democratic School*) expressed the reasoning behind this when they wrote that Korczak was a practitioner, an experimentalist, always exploring new ways of living with children. However, as Berding emphasises, it would be very misleading to simply imitate his methods. 'A wiser choice would be to ask ourselves the following questions: What was the original idea behind his practices? How just are our schools and after-school groups? How arbitrary are our actions as teachers and group leaders? To what extent are democratic principles institutionalised and practised?' (*The Democratic School*, 5(2), p. 22).

A peculiarity of both these journals is the publication of original articles written by colleagues outside Russia. Some articles have been presentations given at international conferences and seminars, others are prepared exclusively for the journals. Each journal is proud of the many famous educators from around the world who have contributed. Authors in *New Educational Values* include James Banks, Linda Stone, Ruth Lucier, Nel Noddings, Jacques Carpay, Jens Schneider and Angelika Kruger. Bringing together public figures in education from many countries in one thematic collection of articles not only assists in mutual understanding, but it also helps Russian readers to imagine educational development as a single indivisible international process applied similarly in different educational systems.

Of course, these journals, with their small circulation, cannot compete with the larger and more famous publishing houses, but competition is not what they seek. They seek to increase the quality of modern education across Russia by constantly improving theories, democratic methods and models.

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### **Moral matters: five ways to develop the moral life of schools**

Barbara S. Stengel and Alan R. Tom, 2006

New York, Teachers College Press

\$56.00 (hbk), \$24.95 (pbk), 192 pp.

ISBN 978-0-8077-4721-6 (hbk)

ISBN 978-0-8077-4720-9 (pbk)

The title of this book suggests another 'how-to' for teachers and administrators, but while there is a practical pay-off, readers will not find a set of instructions for educational

practice here. Instead, *Moral matters* provides readers with both a survey and an insightful, original analysis of a range of ways that teachers and schools might attend to what the authors refer to throughout as 'the moral'. The originality of this work comes from the lens applied, which examines the moral vis-à-vis 'the academic'. One might be tempted to resist this claim of originality, citing programs that extensively integrate the moral and academic in schools, or by pointing to empirical studies relating these two aspects of student learning and development. But this book does not claim to be the first to make a connection here (that idea is literally, quite ancient). Rather, it ventures an original *analysis* of the ways in which these two dimensions of educational practice can and do relate to each other and, in the process, change the way we think about and, ultimately, respond to, those dimensions. The distinction may seem overly subtle, but the resulting product is not. Taking on the author's framework of five categories of ways of attending to the moral as it relates to the academic, throws open and sheds new light on a question that has been sitting in plain sight for so long that we might otherwise look right past it.

The authors argue that there are five general categories (with a number of subcategories) of relationships that the moral and the academic can take in education: separate, sequential, dominant, transformative and integrated (unfortunately, space limitations do not allow me to explain them here). After a careful definition of terms and an explanation of the categories of their framework and how they were developed, the book is taken up by the presentation and analysis of examples from each of these five categories. In doing so, the authors cast a wide net, often challenging the reader to reconceptualise the nature and boundaries of these two domains and how they might be related. The examples they explore range from the writings of educational commentators and critics (e.g. Jonathan Kozol and William Bennett), to academic educational scholars (e.g. Lisa Delpit, David Hansen, Nel Noddings and Kenneth Strike), to a whole variety of programmes and schools (from Deborah Meier's Central Park East Secondary School, to the work of James Comer, Marva Collins, Christian homeschoolers and a variety of others). The descriptions and analyses of each example vary in their length and depth and, taken as a whole, provide an extensive survey of educational work that attends to the moral in some way.

But, again, this is not simply an analytic survey, for the point of the analysis, and the framework guiding it, is to create a space in which partisanship, religious and cultural conflict can be (at least partially and temporarily) bracketed. In that space, this work provides educators with critical tools for understanding, discussion, analysis and, ultimately, action in the interest of responding to the moral, the academic and the relationship between the two, in a productive and responsible way. These objectives are ambitious, given what the authors acknowledge as a now burgeoning literature on the moral dimensions of teaching and schooling that has given us numerous metaphors and analytic frameworks for thinking and acting productively with regard to the moral in educational settings.

In my view, the book is quite successful in delivering on its promises, challenging readers to think in genuinely new ways about and within this domain. I caught myself (or perhaps the authors caught me) reading about works I considered myself to be familiar with, which I was forced to reconsider. To take just one brief example, while the moral

thread of Kozol's work is clear in his dogged pursuit of social justice, I had never fully considered what the relationship between the moral and the academic is in his vision of a just schooling system. Careful consideration of that question changed the quality of my understanding of his position, and its relationship to other possibilities. It is not that I gained new information about Kozol's work, but the way in which I understand and think about it has been enriched.

From the perspective of a philosophical critic, I found myself taking issue with the categories in which the authors placed a number of the works they examined. However, in each of these cases, they went on to consistently provide clear, reasonable and often quite insightful and thought-provoking explanations for their categorisations. Further, and what is most important to note, is that the categories are presented as analytic tools for thinking about and discussing the moral and the academic. They are offered as 'ideal types' that may not be perfectly represented, even in the works they analyse. The framework is certainly not a set of distinct categories that we can use to slice the domain of analysis into determinate ontological pieces. Taken in this way, the authors might welcome counter arguments about what practice or policy can be accurately placed in which category—furthering their aim of thoughtful discussion and enriched understanding.

The fact that this text provides an extensive survey of ways of responding to the moral in relation to the academic, along with an original and helpful analytic framework for examining any relevant educational philosophy, policy or practice, makes it ideally suited for use in courses introducing advanced undergraduates and graduate students to the moral dimensions of teaching. The writing is clear and engaging and the definitional work done in developing the framework is largely non-technical, drawing upon the (primarily philosophical) literature within education addressing the moral dimensions of teaching over the last few decades. Readers looking for more substantive and advanced analysis of either the moral philosophy or the psychology behind the definitions, categories and particular approaches examined, should look elsewhere, as these literatures are neither addressed, nor substantively drawn upon. In addition to college and university students, educators at all levels interested in attending to the moral in education will gain an insightful survey of the field, tools for critically examining policy and practice that limn ways of addressing the moral (each with articulated promises and potential dangers). Finally, while the authors have their political and educational biases, which they both elaborate and interject, their analysis shows their dedication to understanding via the application of their framework, rather than advancing a position regarding what educators should think or do.

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**Character education: transforming values into virtues**

Holly Shepard Salls, 2006

Lanham, MD, University Press of America

\$27 (pbk), 170 pp.

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When I was a middle school maths teacher, the school principal often reminded me that I was also a reading teacher, since in his view every grammar school teacher is a reading teacher. A primary thesis of Holly Shepard Salls's new book, *Character education*, is that every teacher is a teacher of character. Salls argues, moreover, that teaching students to acquire lasting moral virtues goes beyond instructional content and encompasses the whole of a school's environment. While many educators express a desire or intention to improve the moral development of school children, Salls explores how such a thing would actually be possible by proposing a theoretical basis for a model of character education. Her book should be welcome reading for anyone concerned with cultivating virtuous students.

Salls primarily addresses administrators and teachers in grade school education. She has twenty-five years of experience working in both roles, but her practical expertise is not the basis of her study. Salls's reflection on foundational theories that underlie programmes for character education distinguishes her book from other works in the same field. She rightly acknowledges that all models of character education, and for that matter all models of education, knowingly or unknowingly rely on background philosophical assumptions, including what a human being is and is for, what the purpose of education is and what its role should be in society. Rather than hiding these theoretical questions or glossing over them, Salls brings them to the foreground. She recommends that schools carefully articulate a philosophy and mission statement so that educators can have not only an opportunity to reflect on the school's aims but also a basis for evaluating school procedures.

Salls begins by giving a brief history of character education in the US, from Colonial America to today. She perceptively explains some of the causes behind the responsibility laid upon schools to provide moral education, paying special attention to the trends in character education that developed over the last fifty years. Judging from the rapid pace at which character education models were adopted and then discarded, Salls concludes that these modern trends have been failures; schools are simply waiting for a new proposal that will finally produce virtuous citizens. Salls herself will supply that model in the last part of the book—but only once she has laid the appropriate philosophical foundation. To do this, she gives two accounts of moral and educational theory developed by two different philosophers: John Dewey and Alasdair MacIntyre. Dewey argues that because the self can only be understood in its socially-extended environment, character education should emphasise the debt to society that each individual owes. MacIntyre likewise sees human beings as primarily social beings. But while Dewey envisions the liberal democratic community as the proper focus of moral life, MacIntyre turns toward smaller, local communities. Salls ably summarises the two central chapters in MacIntyre's *After virtue* where he develops his well-known account of the virtues as



they emerge within practices, traditions and the narrative unity of human life. Some of the best moments in Salls's book come when she explains difficult philosophical work, from Aristotle to Dewey and MacIntyre, to the non-philosopher.

In the last part of her book, Salls gives her own account of character education rooted in the virtues. Drawing from both Dewey and MacIntyre, Salls argues that a school will only be effective in its character education if every aspect of the school, combined with parents' cooperation, works together to enrich a child's character. She suggests many worthwhile practical ideas in this regard, including the importance of educators' personal relationships with students and the opportunity for community service. Everything, down to the building's cleanliness, makes a subtle impact on students' moral education. Such is the school's 'hidden' curriculum, since it is less about the content of the classroom than about the pervading influence of the school's environment.

Unfortunately, these theses are often hindered by Salls's somewhat careless writing. There are more than a few instances of misquotations and incorrect citations. When summarising Dewey, she often switches between past and present tenses, even within the same paragraph. These faults, although not too significant in themselves, distract from her claim that every detail should be held to the highest standard of excellence.

Despite drawing on them both, MacIntyre, more than Dewey, is Salls's philosophical hero. Salls creatively applies MacIntyre's notions of practices and traditions to the context of grade school education. Virtues are at the heart of character education for Salls and she most encourages schools to promote the virtues of respect (for others) and love of learning. One might initially worry that her conclusions about virtuous character apply only to schools that are private, religious, academically rigorous and single sex—like the school where she works. But this worry is surpassed by a more fundamental one: because she does *not* limit herself to this specific kind of school, her account of virtue may ultimately be too thin. Her understanding of 'virtue' sometimes seems so generic that everyone can get on board. Of course schools should encourage 'love of learning', but what makes this a virtue rather than just one goal among many? And bizarrely, despite the book's subtitle, there is no effort at all to distinguish 'virtue' from 'value'. As MacIntyre warns in an essay that Salls cites, a coherent account of the virtues requires giving determinate and consistent answers to relevant questions about the virtues, including what motivations and associated pleasures and pains are appropriate upon acting, issues which Salls fails to take a stand on.

However, even though she writes about philosophers, she does not write for them, so these complaints should not overshadow Salls's otherwise commendable efforts. *Character education* makes a step in the right direction, as it points teachers, administrators and parents to reflect on what they are trying to do when they attempt to lead students to become good people.

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**Early years stories for the foundation stage: ideas and inspiration for active learning**

Mal Leicester, 2006

London, Routledge

£22.99 (pbk), 106 pp.

ISBN 0-415-37603-3

This very practical and imaginative book is based around the use of eight original, themed stories and associated learning activities that can be used to promote young children's cognitive and emotional development in early years settings. The introductory chapter highlights the educational advantages of using story with young children as a vehicle for stimulating a love of reading later on. Certainly, the ideas for early-years activities contained within the book help to bring the stories to life and provide ample opportunities for active, enjoyable learning.

Each of the eight main chapters of the book is devoted to one story, with discussion starters and activities which relate to wider early years topics and which are tied closely to the six learning domains of Personal and Social Development, Communication, Language and Literacy, Mathematical Development, Knowledge and Understanding of the World, Physical Development and Creative Development. The stories themselves are imaginative and are based around a wide variety of themes, all of which encourage the discussion of values, emotions and relationships. There is clear differentiation for 2/3-year-olds and 4/5-year-olds, through the provision of two versions of each story—one basic and one more advanced. Each of the chapters is highly structured, providing the reader with a clear overview of the key themes being explored, the associated values and emotions and the way in which the story and related activities could fit in with wider topics in the pre-school setting. Session plans provide useful discussion starters and a wide range of associated poems, songs and nursery rhymes related to the key themes being explored. The highlight of each chapter is undoubtedly the long list of learning activities and games that relate to the story and the themes being explored, grouped under each of the six learning domains.

The best chapters in the book are the ones that deal with particularly challenging themes and it is a pleasure to see how the author provides such a wide array of stimulating ideas for tackling these themes with young children, all of which are easy to implement. For example, the story in Chapter 2 revolves around a young girl who has to go into hospital to get her tonsils removed and explores the related issues of fear and bravery. There are ideas for Circle Time discussions on dealing with fear and suggestions for relating the story to a wider topic on People Who Help Us. Chapter 3 explores the issue of anger and infant tantrums and provides ideas for creating 'anger' pictures and poems. And Chapter 7 explores the way in which young children can become jealous of a new baby and how we can encourage them to care for the baby and promote family relationships. Again, activities are imaginative, including the opportunity to make a co-operative poster containing pictures of the children as babies and toddlers. Other chapters are devoted to less challenging, but still highly pertinent, themes, such as

kindness and respect, friendship and imagination and creativity. The way in which the games and activities in each chapter are structured around the six learning domains results in eight self-contained units that are highly integrated and easily transferable to the nursery or playgroup. The book also contains photocopyable resources, which will be useful for making games and activity sheets for children.

Reading this book, I could see that it could be an excellent resource for practitioners in early-years settings and could be used as a resource for assisting nursery teachers and play leaders with responsive planning. The ideas for Circle Time discussions, in particular, are highly imaginative and many of the themes lend themselves to promoting social and moral responsibility and citizenship. The one criticism would be that the illustrations in the book are a little dated, although the stories themselves are full of opportunities for stimulating children's imagination. The story in Chapter 8, *Seeing The Sea*, is a case in point, as the following extract illustrates:

Sophie played with Daddy's pack of magic cards. She got bored but to her surprise, the Jack of Hearts winked at her. The next moment she was flying with him on his magic carpet. It was sunny! She looked down and saw the bright blue sea. There was a little red boat and children playing on the beach. The wind streamed through Sophie's hair. She felt great...

What fun the children could have just listening to this story, let alone tackling the suggested follow-up activities. On the back of Mal Leicester's book it clearly states that 'all early years practitioners will find this book an essential addition to their bookshelves'. I would endorse that—and I am very pleased that I now have it on mine.

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