

Background for the Study of Ethical Systems

by

Jimmilea Berryhill, DPhil, D Litt

Theodore Roosevelt believed that educating a person in mind and not in morals educated a menace to society and that all other problems derived from the lack of morals taught in public schools. (Lickona 1976).

Historical sources tell us that from Plato to Dewey, philosophers attempted to transform the way people thought, acted, interacted, and educated. Intellectual elites assumed the role of educating rulers, transmitting certain philosophical ideas, and redirecting culture.

Every historical era included a struggle for power over people's ideas; twenty-first century America was no exception (Rorty 1998, 1).

Assumptions about Ethics and Personal Character

Two prominent views about ethics and character education continued in the late twentieth and early twenty-first century (1995). One came from Plato who asked if virtue could be taught. The second came from Aristotle who supposed that man became virtuous by doing the act itself rather than by pedagogical methods.

Other authorities believed that true character showed through contact with others who served as mirrors to provide insightful glimpses of individual character. It was also believed that moral character was personal virtue and that

character education dealt with the formation and practice of certain virtues while avoiding particular vices. (1997, 13-14).

Character educators advocated ethics education directed toward the goal of establishing certain characteristics in the lives of students. Character, often described as the development of a personal ethic, became the base from which one made decisions and which reflected a person's presumptions about the world around them. These varied, and often vague, definitions made a concrete understanding of character complex.

Character was often described as knowing the good, loving the good and doing the good (Ryan and Bohlin 1999). The etymology of the word (character) evolved from the idea of engraving, impressing, or stamping to make a distinctive mark. Character became most evident when individuals faced difficulties in life.

Former Dean of the Graduate School of Education at Harvard University defined the heart of character as intellect and the act of character as getting into the habit of thinking about the consequences of things and making judgments about the importance of those consequences (Lockwood 1994, 3-4).

Historical Influences on American Educational Systems

Historically, preliterate people passed information from generation to generation through informal oral traditions, such as the Hebrews, that eventually formed the moral codes governing behavior in the community. Ancient educational forms of learning, such as those of the Egyptian empire, naturally flowed into the mix of ideas in education. However, one educational system was predominant in the new American republic learning systems.

Influence of Hebrew Thought on Western Education

Ancient Jews believed in God's revealed truth, first in their oral traditions passed from generation to generation and later in the written Hebrew Scriptures. Jewish religious leaders encouraged parents to teach their children religious beliefs, law, ethical practices, and vocational skills. Early American founders read in the Hebrew language, and until the last century, classical American universities required Hebrew study for graduation.

James Muilenburg stated that the patterns of Israel were the patterns of the new American Republic. In Hebrew thought authority rested on the belief that God spoke to mankind and mankind was required to comply. Biblical ethics involved knowing what was good and what God required and in understanding what was evil and what God forbade (Muilenburg 1961,16-20).

To the biblical ethicist, Philological study contributed to the understanding of moral associations in the Old Testament, which was rich in ethical terminology. Although popular words such as morality, experience, conscience, personality, virtue, history and nature are not evident in ancient scripture, Semitic words lost their dynamics when translated into Western equivalents. They often assumed the ideology of the interpreter (Muilenburg 1961).

The Hebrew language was dynamic, lively and full of movement. Terms used to describe, thinking, knowing, and truth carried the idea of action, as did all Hebrew root words in verb form (Muilenburg 1961).

Specifically, the idea of truth was not an idea of abstraction or objectivity. It was personal, subjective, firm, trustworthy, reliable, steadfast, and something to

be appropriated (Muilenburg 1961, P 17). Hebrew virtues did not include objectivity and detachment.

Philosophy and reason did not have a relationship to the Hebrew mind. From a biblical point of view, the ethical problem was disobedience to the will and purpose of the Creator God, not ignorance, but infidelity, and substance of the heart (Muilenburg 1961,17). Preservation of Jewish nationality was traceable to Jewish educational (Drazin 1940, 3). Biblical character education, following the Hebrew model of learning, served as the foundation for learning in early America.

Hellenistic Influence on Western Formal Education

Greek philosophy became the delight of Western intellectuals and educational elitists. The abstract intellectual speculation of Greek learning sought for happiness, privilege, and a sign of freedom through learning. Greek boys attended primary school, called the *Aludus*, and studied Latin and Greek grammar under Greek slaves known as called pedagogues.

The Sophists (around BC 400) claimed they could teach any subject or skill to anyone who wished to learn it. Specializing in grammar, logic, and rhetoric, students were groomed to argue persuasively and win arguments rather than in teaching principles of truth and morality.

Socrates, who died in BC 399, claimed that true knowledge existed in everyone and that knowledge was universally understandable in the consciousness through educational methods. Socrates' educational methods consisted of asking probing questions that forced students to think deeply about the meaning of life, truth, and justice.

Plato believed in an unchanging world of perfect ideas he called universal concepts. Plato asserted that since truth was the same in every place at every time; education, like truth, should be unchanging. Plato's Republic envisioned a model society ruled by highly intelligent philosopher-kings. Warriors made up the republic's second class of people and workers, the lowest class, provided food and other products for the people of the republic.

Plato's student, Aristotle, founded the Lyceum in Athens in BC 335 with the assumption that human beings are essentially rational. Aristotle thought people could discover natural laws that governed the universe and then followed these laws in their lives. He also concluded that educated people who used reason to make decisions would lead a life of moderation in which they avoided dangerous extremes.

Isocrates developed a method of education designed to prepare students to be competent orators and to serve as government officials. Isocratic students studied rhetoric, politics, ethics, and history. They examined model orations and practiced public speaking. His methods of education directly influenced Roman educational theorist Quintilian and Roman senator, Cicero.

Greek learning involved belief in the power man's abilities to persuade with words so that the elitist class could continue to rule the workers of the nation.

Arab Influence on Western Education

In the 10th and early in the 11th centuries CE, contact with Arab scholars in North Africa and Spain, gave Western educators new ways of thinking about

mathematics, natural science, medicine, and philosophy. The Arabic number system became the foundation of Western arithmetic. Arab scholars preserved and translated the works of Aristotle, Euclid, and Ptolemy. Many of these works had disappeared from Europe by the Middle Ages but Arab scholars, such as Avicenna Averros, guarded them for future generations (Encarta 2002).

In Medieval 11th century, scholars developed Scholasticism, a philosophical and educational movement that used a mixture of human reason and biblical revelation in educational systems. Scholastics attempted to reconcile Christian theology with Greek philosophy.

Shortly after the start of the Crusades, the Arabs were conquered and scholasticism among Arab scholars was stifled. Western education began to abandon moral emphasis and absolute truth, turning to a mixture of Greek mythology and humanistic individualism evolving from the teachings of Greek philosophers.

Christian Influence on the History of Education

Despite many negative events surrounding the Christian religion, no single faith had a more profound effect on culture and society throughout the world society.

Shortly after the end of the first century Christianity left the roots of its faith, Judaism, and abandoned many of the sound Biblical truths of Scripture in order to gain Roman acceptance. Greco/Roman ideas and Hellenistic culture mixed with Christian ideas in the fledgling church. Catholic Monks and Nuns helped preserve the Scriptures and several devout personalities emerged.

This was not a glorious period for the Christian religion, however. History speaks unfavorably of the ethical nature of many of the leaders Roman Church during this early period and many a mixture of ideas, idolatries and oppressions flooded Christian theology.

During the Medieval period, roughly from the fifth to the fifteenth century CE, the Roman Catholic Church shaped Western society and education. The Church operated parish, chapel, and monastery schools at the elementary level and schools in monasteries and cathedrals offered a secondary education focused on learning Latin. A few women were educated in religious communities or convents and medieval knights received training in military tactics and the code of Chivalry.

Roman church scholasticism reached its high point in the *Summa Theologiae* of Saint Thomas Aquinas, a 13th century Dominican theologian who taught at the University of Paris. Aquinas reconciled the authority of Christian faith with the Greek reasoning of Aristotle. Aquinas described the teacher's vocation as one that combined faith, love, and learning (Encarta 2002).

Famous European universities (from the Latin word *universitas*, or associations) of Paris, Salerno, Bologna, Oxford, Cambridge, and Padua grew out of the Scholastics-led intellectual revival of the 12th and 13th centuries. Medieval universities introduced degrees in liberal arts and in professional studies such as theology, law, and medicine.

The Renaissance, or rebirth of learning, began in Europe in the 14th century and reached its height in the 15th century. Humanist educators found their models of literary style in the classics (Encarta 2002).

During the Renaissance, Dante Aleghieri Petrarch, and Giovanni Boccaccio became popular as humanist educators who designed teaching methods to prepare well-rounded, liberally educated persons. Dutch humanist Desiderius Erasmus believed that understanding and conversing about the meaning of literature was more important than memorization. He advised teachers to study archaeology, astronomy, mythology, history, and Scripture (Encarta 2002).

With books more widely available by mid-fifteenth century, literacy rates increased, but elementary schools continued to teach middle-class children while lower-class children received little, if any, formal training. Male children of the nobility and upper classes attended humanist secondary schools.

For women in the upper classes, educational opportunities improved slightly during the Renaissance. The curriculum was limited to art, music, needlework, dancing, and poetry. Working-class girls received limited training in household duties such as cooking and sewing.

Confusion and oppression plagued the masses of Catholics across Europe until the fervor of inquiry stirred the hearts of men like Martin Luther. Although Luther never left the Catholic Church, his work turned the tide of Christianity toward civility and back toward the roots of the Hebrew Bible. Christianity and education would never be the same.

Martin Luther believed the family shaped children's character and encouraged parents to teach their children reading and religion. Each family, Luther said, must pray together, read the Bible, study the catechism, and practice a useful trade. Luther's ideas as a reformer were familiar to those of Jewish educational practices. Luther believed that government should assist schools in educating literate, productive, and religious citizens. One of Luther's colleagues, German religious reformer Melanchthon, wrote the school code for the German region of Württemberg, which became a model for other regions of Germany and influenced education throughout Europe (Encarta 2002).

As middle class Europe began to emerge, Protestant religious reformers like John Calvin, Martin Luther, and Huldreich Zwingli, rejected the authority of the Catholic pope and created reformed Christian, or Protestant, churches. They established vernacular primary schools that offered a basic curriculum of reading, writing, arithmetic, and religion for children in their own language.

Framework of America's Educational Systems

In early American society, character, ethics, and moral education drew from the Bible. Children learned to revere their parents and through them, children learned to be faithful and to respect God's laws as ultimate authority (Hunter 2000).

The founding fathers, believed that moral education was essential for the success of a democratic society. Through discipline, personal example, and subject curriculum instruction schools sought to inculcate students with virtues of

patriotism, hard work, honesty, thriftiness, altruism and courage. In early America, parents assumed a teacher would teach from a Christian perspective.

The largest book in circulation in 1919, other than the Bible, was the McGuffey Reader, which used biblical examples to teach character, morals and ethics. Instruction in morals, honesty, compassion, and respect, responsibility, along with examples from elders were the earmarks of most families and in most school settings well into the twentieth century (Demmon, Rice, & Warble 1997; Yulish 1980).

Using what was called the “Children’s Morality Code”, schools, parents, and clubs employed ten important values or character traits in early American education. The ten traits included: common sense, self-control, good health, kindness, sportsmanship, duty, reliability, truth, good workmanship, and teamwork (Demmon, Rice, & Warble 1997; Yulish 1980).

The Great Awakening Revival Affects Education

Numerous authors recorded a supernatural aspect of America’s educational history. It involved men like George Whitfield, Jonathan Edwards and Samuel Blair, ministers who left eyewitness accounts of the transformation of American society during the Great Awakening. Whole towns and communities experienced transformation as people converted to Christianity, left their former lifestyles, their grudges, their business practices, and at times, their families and adopted biblical patterns of living (Symons 2000).

George Whitefield touched the lives of about 14% of the colonial population of 340,000 (Beardsley 1904). Edward’s insightful publications

forwarded the idea of revival and made emotion in religion theologically and intellectually respectable (Sweet 1944, 85). A. B. Strickland (1934) claimed that the Great Awakening took the diverse and disunited colonies and brought about a spiritual unity (Strickland 1934,13). Whitefield helped sweep aside denominational worship and intolerances of various sects. Approximately 24 new colleges opened because of the Great Awakening (Chandler 1924 90-93). Through the efforts of Rev. Gilbert Tennent, Log College emerged, an institution that later became Princeton University (Beardsley 1904, 55).

Evangelical Calvinism was the national religion in early America, (Chandler 1924, 58). Whitefield gained acceptance as the spiritual father of the American Republic (Strickland 1934, 13).

Spiritual Decline Breed Moral and Educational Decline

The revival waned at the death of George Whitefield in 1770 and at the end of the Revolutionary War in 1783; both congregations and church buildings lay in ruins. Spiritual leadership faltered and so did personal piety (Strickland 1934).

America was ripe for new religious belief systems which new thinkers in France were eager to provide. Powerful new philosophies, spread by adherents such as Benjamin Franklin, President Thomas Jefferson, General Dearborn and other politicians and scholars left American culture staggering (Candler 1924).

Thomas Paine promoted his philosophical ideas and his avowed hatred for Christianity through his writings in 1794-1795 (Strickland, 36). Voltaire and Paine excited the cultured and educated minds void of a zeal for the Bible or the

Christian faith. Strickland claims that Thomas Jefferson, one of the most influential leaders of the 18th century, brought back the same infidel poison (Strickland 1934, 14).

Jefferson's concern with Protestant ideology in sectarian schools prompted his support of a non-denominational concept. Most historians agreed that Jefferson never intended to prevent the freedom of Protestant ideology nor deny Christianity in the public arena. Nevertheless, interpretations of Jefferson's theories, found an ally in Horace Mann, the voice credited with establishing the first public school system in Massachusetts in 1837.

Although the non-sectarian theme was not immediately favored, the idea slowly moved across the nation and became the norm in public schools. Belief that mankind was inherently good replaced belief in man's sinful nature.

American colleges once recognized as spiritual institutions, fell sway to popular teachings of infidelity and skepticism and many students began declaring themselves deists or atheists. Yale became notorious for its licentious atmosphere. By 1782, Princeton had only two professors of religion (Beardsley 1904, 78-79).

Thomas Paine supported the deist philosophy and experienced his own defeat. Despite his former reputation as an American hero, Paine left his religious stability behind for the worst animal passions. In his old age, he was rarely sober, seldom washed himself, and allowed his nails to grow to resemble birds. (Strickland 1934, 39).

Kentucky harbored so many thieves, murderers and refugees that they considered an alliance with France out of their enthusiasm for the teachings of deistic Voltaire and atheistic Paine. Many Kentucky towns and settlements adopted French names in support of their intellectual heroes (Strickland 1934).

General Dearborn, President Jefferson's Secretary of War, said there was no hope for good government as long as the temples [churches] stood (Candler 1904, 165). The country seemed threatened with anarchy as hundred of wives ran away from home, dueling increased, mail arrived opened, drunkenness abounded and general contempt reigned for all things religious (Strickland 1934).

Educational systems of America became familiar arenas of conflict over ethics, character and morality. The political climate of 18th century America invited heated controversies concerning a tax-supported public education system. Supporters of religious educators met strong opposition from secularists (Goetz 1998).

A New Spiritual Awakening Revived Character Education

Near the end of the 18th century, 23 ministers from New England wrote a letter asking people to unite in their churches the first Tuesday of each quarter. Churches in Pennsylvania, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, and New York responded to the call (Strickland 1934). Revival began in the East and moved westward as the cyclical evidence of history emerged.

In American colleges, transformed students spoke out with their testimonies. Yale experienced a revival in 1807-1808 and one young student, Asabel Nettleton, converted many of his fellow students. He became a pastor

and witnessed the conversion of nearly 250,000 people (Beardsley 1904; Candler 1924). The President of Yale, Timothy Dwight, influenced the student body for thirteen years, from 1812 to 1835 (Candler 1924).

James McGready gave claimed that 100,000 people attended a week long Cane Ridge Revival in southern Kentucky in July of 1801 (Conkin 1990). The affect was notable in Kentucky, where the change in character of the general population was so powerful that congregations increased by over 50,000 members. Even the most profane persons experienced a profound change of lifestyle (Beardsley 1904, 102).

The Sunday school movement began during this time in an effort to deal improve the social life in America's industrialized cities. Sunday school instruction involved memorization of Biblical texts, and recitation of Scripture. Children learned up to 300 or more verses per week (Hunter 2000, 39).

Children and youth became a vital part of the spiritual community, and again denominationalism faded. Missionary societies materialized and evangelists sought to reach much of America. Samuel John Mills organized the American Bible Society, the United Foreign Missionary Society and the American Board of Commissions for Foreign Missions organized to reach into other nations (Candler 1924).

Women organized Bible and missionary societies and affect social change. Citizens influenced both congregation and community and to promote changes in their world.

Soon, the messages shifted from addressing social reform to that of political reform (Beardsley 1904). Conviction and repentance revived Christian education and touched America's national culture. Spiritual revival manifested in a reversal of moral impoverishment and indifference to values and brought a sense of order to people's lives (Symons 2000, 44).

Samples of Contemporary Ethical Theories Affecting Education

Cultural Relativism

Cultural relativism concluded that culture was the dictator of right and wrong, that whatever culture determined to be right, relative to the moment, was acceptable. Relativism considered moral standards a result of group history, customs, mores and folkways. Cultural relativism accepted that as customs changed, the ethics changed and no group had the authority to dictate what was right or wrong. Conscience, relativists argued, formed in childhood training but no fixed principles or absolute principles prevailed to guide the individual toward a specific set of rules. Biblical absolutes disappeared from the rhetoric of educational theorists.

Relativistic cultural philosophy labored to coexist with groups who held to absolute values and truth. Absolute ideology struggled to have authority in a climate of non-authority. Lutzer noted that most heroes in history were individuals who went against culture by appealing to a higher power and biblical mandates (Lutzer 2002).

Behaviorism and Naturalism

Theories of behaviorism and naturalism arose out of dualism, the ancient idea of 2 principle substances in the universe locked in a struggle for power. After Newton's finding that all bodies are subject to seemingly the same unbreakable laws, dualism lost its appeal and naturalism took its place with the idea that humans were parts of a mighty machine.

Ethical theorists expanded this idea to mean that people were merely a product of biological genes and that behavior involved preservation or advancement in genetics. The implications and probabilities of these theories were worrisome to those who believed one Supreme Being controlled life, and that mankind received divine command to act according to God's commandments.

Emotivism

Modern ethical thought promoted personal irresponsibility with the theory of emotivism, an ideology denying right and wrong. Philosopher, David Hume argued that knowledge concerned only sense impressions. This theory rendered intelligent talk about God, the soul, or morality impossible, because true knowledge was limited to what is observable (Lutzer 2002).

Hume claimed we only knew matters of fact therefore, to say stealing is wrong, was irrelevant. One could only claim he did not like stealing. These ideas infiltrated western intellectual thought and expanded the idea that only the tangible was real, what could be seen, felt, heard, or touched. Hume also claimed emotion alone motivated people to action and that reason was a slave to human passions (Lutzer 2002).

Nihilism

Nihilism was an extreme approach to understand the ethic of life. In the middle of the 1880's, the writings of Friedrich Nietzsche preached this message. The final form of a valueless ethic held that absolutes were baseless, uncertain, and incommunicable. The nihilist idea that life was meaningless, lead to extreme pessimism, radical skepticism, disgust, and often suicide. This ideology filled the lyrics of contemporary music groups. Extreme nihilism culminates in anarchism.

Relativism and antinomianism were also resistant to an absolute value system in American education and American society.

Samples of Approaches to Ethics Education

Educational theorists often considered the Ten Commandments inappropriate as a moral creed for the modern classroom. Supporters of utilitarianism and relativism promoted a different creed for student behavior. Modesty, reserve, and quiet reflection gave way to studies in self-esteem, self-expressiveness, assertiveness, exhibitionism, and rebelliousness toward authorities and parents. Character education and religious study lived as separate entities in America's public schools. Six ideologies are included in this review: (1) moral absolutes, (2) neoclassicist, (3) communitarian, (4) liberationist, (5) cognitive developmentalism, (6) post-modern Ideologies (Kortum 2000).

Moral Absolutists

Moral absolutes were be derived from Christian, Jewish or Muslim sources, to name a few. The theory aroused the most opposition form diverse viewpoints. Those who believed they had a responsibility and a right to believe in

absolute values and that rejection brought with consequences absolutes faced stiff resistance in a pluralistic society. It became unpopular to believe in God's commandments for moral, spiritual and physical well-being.

Neo-classicists

The Neo-classicists were traditionalists, or declinists who believed American society was failing. They taught personal virtues as a possible aid to the moral decline in schools. Proponents William Bennett, William Kilpatrick, William Honig, Edward Wynn, Kevin Ryan, Marva Collins, Thomas Lickona and others addressed concerns that alarmed parents and school officials. Declining test scores and disinterest in community involvement were two of the problems affecting American society (Kortum 1999, 29).

Conservative thinkers supported the use of stories, myths, books, biographies, and drama, of classical western literature to impart traditional moral values.

Communitarians

Communitarians talked less about moral decline and more about civic issues, duties of citizenship, and pursuit of the public good. Family, government, and churches were a medium for character instruction, insisted the communitarian.

Rather than relying on great books for moral instruction, communitarian activist John Gardner (1991) preferred community association and identity as a means of strengthening America. Shared values were generated, Gardner

claims, chiefly in family, schools, church and other intimate settings with face to face encounters (1991, 24).

According to communitarians, most Americans were alienated from the community in which they shared common values. Isolated Americans relied on talk shows, Internet sites, and television to fill voids of community and communication (Elshtain 1995). Schools with strong community values and a clear focus became better schools, according to anthropologist Gerald Grant (1985).

The main essentials that made up the communitarian view were: Sectarian Communitarians, Post-liberal Communitarians, and Civic-liberal Communitarians (Grant 1985).

Sectarian Communitarians

Sectarian communitarians were generally conservative Christians who believed classrooms should teach humility, faith, self-sacrifice and charity. Role models held an important place to this ideology, the core of which was the development of existential ideas. Sectarian Communitarians believed the issues about the origins of life; questions about media culture, and character development required a world-view consistent with Judeo-Christian values. Without a vision for such a communities, the quest for character remained rudderless, noted Wright (1996, 27). Opposition voices said that sectarian education promoted bigotry, divisiveness, and intolerance (Nash 1997, 83).

Post-liberal Communitarians

The post-liberal communitarian's position was that individual rights interfered with shared history and communal ties (Nash, 57). Educational philosopher Andrew Oldenquist contended that communities served the same role as tribes and partnerships, and that in teachers and students learned to respect social morality in this environment. Honesty and fairness, respect for people's bodies, respect for the ideas of others, and respect for property were the primary elements in this philosophy (1986).

C. A. Bower's approach included teaching self-sufficiency, modernization ideology, liberalism, and ecological balance through team-teaching, seminars, lectures and discussions (1995, 38).

Civic-liberal Communitarians

Civic-liberal communitarians were a moderate voice between radical liberalism and radical conservatism. Common aspects included the importance of families, communities, volunteerism, networks, and workplace ties. Some communitarians advocated national service for a full year as a character-building tool for students. They also supported classroom environments that exemplified the virtues of the communitarian spirit (Kortum 1997, 39).

Activities suggested for such programs included cleaning up the environment, tutoring other students, and reading to the elderly. Five core values made up the civic-liberal communitarian agenda including caring, responsibility, respect, trust, and family. Historic personal experiences of older adults related to

the younger individuals in and out of the classroom and were particularly important to proponents of the civic-liberal communitarian idea (Smith, 1999, 55).

Liberationists

The liberationists were the extreme left in the field of ideologies in character education. Their ideas were also the most controversial. A strong rhetoric clouded the true message of the liberationist ideology, in which morality, virtue, or personal character was of little importance (Nash 1997, 132).

The objective of liberationists was to equip students with the resources and power to analyze and change the social order of America's capitalistic state. Political change, rather than moral change held the most prominence. Paulo Freire's Latin American experience was the heart of this theory where morality centered on the suffering of the disadvantaged and oppressed and where struggle, conflict, resistance, and counter imperialism was a virtue. This ideology advocated open resistance and challenge to the moral values of capitalism (Nash 1997).

Kohlberg's Cognitive Developmentalism

Harvard psychologist Lawrence Kohlberg developed the theory called cognitive developmentalism. This philosophy offered individuals ethical dilemmas as a way of learning the process of moral thinking.

Kohlberg excluded character education in his process and dismissed traditional moral education as an attempt by adults to pawn off someone else's bag of virtues on children (McClellan 1999, 84).

Although Cognitive moral development was primarily a product of Kohlberg's ideology, the approach was similar to the ideas of John Dewey's writings. Guided by principles rather than by rules, the technique promoted moral education that stimulated the active thinking about moral issues and decisions.

The aim of Kohlberg's moral training was to move the individual through stages of moral development. Socratic dialogue was the basis of the moral reasoning exercises presenting moral dilemmas as the catalyst for the argument. Piaget (1965) also presented a moral development theory of children and their reasoning processes, without the inclusion of a moral philosophy of right or wrong.

Kohlberg's moral reasoning principles neglected ideas about culture, family, faith or gender. Mere rationality offered a fragile system in which to arrive at moral decisions, said critic Carol Gilligan (1988). Kohlberg's ideas, according to Early and Gibbs stressed the process rather than the decisions themselves. Even Plato preferred that children wait until they were more mature to engage in ethical arguments. They needed to learn to love virtue rather than to argue it, says Gilligan (1988).

Educational goals shifted to technology and science and the divisive nature of America expanded during various political debates late in the 20th

century. Skepticism became paramount as many lost faith in America's traditional value system (Early and Gibbs 1993, 13).

Postmodernist Theory

A Post-modernist view avoided the idea of reading texts or books on virtue in character education. Instead, this philosophy advocated discussion, interpretation and translation of the texts into meaning systems. In this setting, moral conversations theoretically helped students appreciate all the arguments and opinions to determine their definitions (Nash 1997, 50). Although this format sounded interesting, it took great skill to argue favorably and critics pointed out that the rules of tolerance, listening skills, patience, and temperance required training for this format to become effective. Therefore, this was a flawed theory for teaching values, ethics, character and morality to students.

Progressive Educationist Models of Learning

John Dewey (1909) believed the school's responsibility was to let the child come to his own way of thinking with no set of ethical principles for school or life in general. Kortum (2001) concluded that children must learn to live in a society of diverse opinions and build relationships of care and trust in interpersonal associations by caring for animals, plants, technical, natural and cultural worlds.

Noddings (1995) believed that the inquiring minds of children naturally asked existential questions and should be encouraged to discuss them openly and that cooperation between older and younger children are a mentorship design in character education as easily as other educational learning systems.

This somewhat delicate theory suggested intimate relationships developed by younger children learning from older students (Kortum 2001, 51).

Another theory that gained support was the theme of transcendence, or rising above oneself. The first virtue to inculcate was selflessness, a trait grounded in personal morality. Students heard that seeing the needs of others was required for success in a pluralistic society, students learned (Kortum 2001, 53).

The new ethic encouraged students to assess moral issues, but did not offer a set of moral truths. The courses implied no right answers, but encouraged perception in detecting ethical problems and in acquainting students with the best moral thought accumulated through the ages (Kortum 2001,2).

Three major streams of educational thought developed in society, romanticism, cultural transmission (traditional education), and progressivism. The ideology of romanticism sought to allow the inner person to develop, allowing the environment to promote good behavior and control negative aspects of the individual. Rousseau was the most common name associated with this theory, followed by Freud, Gesell, and Summerhill (Ohman 2001).

The romanticist saw rote memorization as a detriment to the development of the person. Cultural transmission, the approach of traditional educators included learning facts and information, followed the moral and ethical rules of society as well as development of social skills (Ohman 2001).

The ideology of progressivism stated that a person developed in stages, a cognitive process. Piaget and other theorists also promoted this ideology.

Progressivism acknowledged moral and intellectual growth as primary goals of education. Schools, although not necessarily institutions promoting morality, were the primary source for progressive morality, character education and ethics (Ohman 2001).

To rectify the problems that have evolved out of neutral education and declining social morality, two schools of thought emerged to try to rectify the problem. One was that of character education, the second was moral development. Character education operated on the premise of accepting the norms of the society, which were the result of family, school and community environments. What the individual learned established his or her character (Ohman 2001).

Moral developmentalists considered the individual the designer of his or her moral reasoning out of past information and current application of that perspective. Moral developmentalists considered all sides of an issue to resolve conflicts. Development occurred in sequential stages, from infancy to adulthood, according to this theory (Ohman 2001).

Conflict and Change in Ethics Learning in American Schools

Public schools dropped moral education from its curriculum, and by the 1960's individual rights, the civil rights movement, relative moral reasoning, and value clarification became dominant in the goals of public education systems.

Before values clarification fell out of favor in the 1980's, there had been considerable change. The myth that morality was a natural happening or occurred with the help of reasoning changed the philosophical climate of the nation. Kirschenbaum believed educators needed to return to inculcating traditional values in young people while teaching decision-making skills for judgments in life (1992, 775).

Vietnam and Watergate further prompted a shift away from moral and ethical teaching. Scandals added to the moral shift of the 1980's, public confidence in government eroded, and confidence in the constitution became dampened. Working for the government was no longer an attractive career for young people. Gay rights, abortion rights, and right to die groups all further divided people in their moral positions (Menzel 1987).

National statistics for the previous 30 years indicated an increase of 441% in male adolescent death by homicide and a 479% increase in male suicide. From 1980 to 1990, education spending increased 225% while SAT scores declined by 76 points (Ryan and Greer 1990). Researchers determined that the arrest rates of children less than 18 years old increased eightfold from 1950 to 1990, and births to teenage girls increased by 621% during the same period. The nation's youth experienced violence in their schools, through the media, and even in their homes (Harrison and Anderson 1998).

In previous generations the family, the church, and the synagogue accepted the responsibility for instilling moral, ethical, character training for the country's youth. However, the influence of these institutions declined dramatically in response to increased urban society that was technologically based and impersonally transient. The content of children's books and materials became irreligious. Even in mathematics, questions about the nature and origin of mathematics vanished from public school curriculum. A secular bias prevailed in the curriculum of all subjects (Nickel 1990). Teens had little or non-existent

relationships with grandparents or other extended family members, a strong and stabilizing force in former generations (Krajewski & Bailey 1999).

Ethicists, such as Dr. Robin Montgomery, agreed that the global humanist agenda included global education through learning programs like Goals 2000, which incorporated a form of socialism attempting to create a holistically integrated human resources community (Montgomery 2000).

Educators gave considerable attention to building self-esteem in students but failed to bring students together to build respect for others. Conservative Christians expressed alarm for programs that deal primarily on building one's self-image rather than teaching the individual the critical importance of personal responsibility and respect for others. A national educational emphasis on self-esteem failed to bring young people to adulthood. The philosophy of individualism and self-centeredness expanded the confusion for young adults and made important life choices more difficult.

Environmental factors, such as community, media, religious institutions, and family and peer groups were also important influences needed for authority in the formation of adolescent relationships and self-identity. Dr. Montgomery and other conservative educators denied that there was a basis for character education or ethical programs without a biblical foundation. Montgomery defined intellectual and social world religion as a "transreligious ethic of justice emerging out of common human experience as it developed in the interactions of multiple cultures and traditions". The new world order promoted a common ethic intended to create a world culture of peace, multiculturalism, and global

education (Montgomery 2000). Additionally, the Earth Charter, supported by Steven Rockefeller, had the primary component of the earth as a god (or as goddess mother earth). Supporters of this idea called earth their god and trees as their cathedral. Writers like Maurice and Hannah Strong, and David Hume attempted to pull mankind away from the idea of one creator, God, who ruled the universe (Montgomery 2000).

The foundation of this emerging ideology consisted of anthropic cosmological principles that depicted a man-centered universe of self-transcendence. This elitist philosophy determined that the world required the control of the wise. This philosophical setting was a perfect environment for new age ideologies. In America, the politically active Green Party was one of the primary public forums for this social ideology, one more akin to religion, declared Montgomery (2000). Attempts to neutralize ethics to a system acceptable by all ideological and philosophical formats diminished the Judeo-Christian ethic, even among some Christians or Jews (Montgomery 2000).

Montgomery stated that students were increasingly a resource for the world community and that the term tolerance, a common term on today's campuses, contained the idea of emptying self of all and seeking to find self. Intellectual consensus claimed that values were only what self-actualized or evolved from individual decision. Another term for this way of thinking was The Third Way (Montgomery 2000).

Author Mary Frances Balc (1993) illustrated the history of moral education in American schools. She described the philosophies of the Puritans, Thomas

Mann, Noah Webster and John Dewey along with the controversial idea of the values clarification philosophy of the 60's and 70's, replaced by more traditional formats in the last decade along with Kohlberg's theory of cognitive development ethical reasoning method, which all focused on process rather than product.

Balc stated that American public education was returning to teaching values, character, personal responsibility, and social responsibility. However, unlike previous attempts at education for character, trends were void of religion as the basis for these values. The position in the educational community was that although moral education and religious faith need not conflict, they must reflect separation in the classroom (1993).

A state of conflict characterized public schools. Judeo-Christian values aligned against liberalist perspectives (Marrazao 1994). Protestors claimed that values established by the government programs intruded on a parent's rightful role to establish the family's values and Outcome Based Education found harsh criticism for diverting scarce resources away from academics (Jones 1993).

Gatto pointed out that American Protestant spirituality considered the individual important, spelled out the requisites for a good life, considered work a part of salvation, and pain as a path to self-knowledge (Gatto 1997). Other important fundamentals of Christianity evident in American education until the twentieth century were a sense of duty, compassion, acceptance of loss, and preparation for death (Gatto 1997).

Rising Concerns Spawn Fundamentalist Resolutions

In the 1980's fundamentalism began to emerge from the ashes of decades of amoral education. Formal character education, citizenship, service learning, and conflict resolution began to reappear in the educational climate of American schooling (Krajewski & Baily 1999, 34). New momentum propelled character education into the forefront by the mid 1990's, but the dividing lines of moral philosophy sharpened. Progressive theorists and conservative sectarians evidenced considerable tensions, but agreed on the need for ethical, moral, and character education for students. Several states mandated programs for distributing various theories of character education and statistics in recent studies have ignited the desire for intense character training in public institutions (McClellan, 1999).

Some educators believed that schools were the natural environment for character education and communication of positive values because attendance was mandatory and students spent extended hours in the school environment (Early and Gibbs 1995, 12). School boards gave attention to this dilemma and implementing character education programs was perhaps the highest calling of an educator according to Huffman (1994, xi). The pressures of a pluralistic society and postmodern thinking added to the problem. However, some schools cultivated moral values and successfully achieved morally sound environments for learning. Tomlison asserted that success was evident under the hand of professional educators (1997).

Not all character education had the same ideological, philosophical or educational components and agreement was difficult, as administrators

attempted to choose character education formats that would not abuse a specific ideology. However, Wynne (1995) suggested that schools that move in the direction of character instruction were moving toward a goal of school community, a goal widely praised by education reformers.

Although many nationally prominent character education programs were available, some administrators and teachers were unfamiliar with those programs. The time required to choose programs for the classroom and the uncertainty about the appropriateness of material caused many principals and teachers to abandon ethics and character programs entirely (McQuaide 1996).

George Goens suggested educators consider the relationship of schools and children instead of seeking quick fixes for troubled educational environments. Schools needed a deeper purpose than a profit margin. They should be caring, idealistic, imaginative child sanctuaries (Goens 1996). Observations in 18 public, private and parochial classrooms, over a period of 3 years concluded that no school operated as a morally free environment. Other studies also concluded that teachers had a strong sense of personal fulfillment in having an impacted students' moral development (Jackson, Boostrom, and Hansen 1993, 237).

Ethics education occurred in every classroom. Teachers had a strong influence on student's value systems. What teachers said, how they said it, and what they did in and out of the classroom influenced the moral thinking of their students (Jackson, Boostrom, and Hansen 1993, 237). Schaeffer noted a difference in students who received an education targeted at building values.

Characteristics such as personal responsibility, respect, and caring for others were particularly susceptible to teacher influence (Schaeffer 1999).

DeVries and Zan supported inculcating children with all opinions and positions on ethical and moral behavior. However, teachers were not to give the idea that there was a right answer or that he or she knew the answer (DeVries & Zan 1994, 173).

The connection between market and education clouded the eyes of those entrepreneurs who saw education as ripe for transformation. Their goal was to transform large portions of publicly controlled non-profit educational institutions into consolidated, professionally managed, moneymaking businesses in all levels of education (Wyatt 1999, A-1).

Apple contended that conservatives wanted radical transformation in public education, in cultural institutions, and in the media. Apple believed that liberals should interrupt powerful conservative social movements. Apple affirmed that the discussion was all about philosophical dominance and the liberal's fear of conservative educators who attempt to reintroduce traditional values into the educational system (Apple 2001).

Educators continued to debate such items as ethics-education curricula, pedagogical strategies, campus learning and ethics training in the field. Other issues included program management, faculty-student relations, research and consulting (Bowman 1997). Likona supported educators who used literature as a teaching instrument in conservative ethics programs. Stories taught by attraction rather than by compulsion captured the imagination, touched the heart, and

stirred strong feelings in the reader and listener. The art of storytelling developed the emotional side of a child's character (Lickona 1991, 79).

A Mandate for Change

From 1996 to 2001, the United States Department of Education has awarded more than \$25 million dollars for character education in 36 states and the District of Columbia. The Texas education initiative was one of those programs. The Texas Education Agency provided a resource guide to assist teachers in planning a successful character education program in state classrooms. The guide offered material for the development of study skills, critical thinking, decision-making and citizenship each month. Honesty, responsibility, compassion, perseverance, loyalty, justice, self-reliance, self-discipline and integrity were suggested monthly themes in classrooms and school-wide activities (ERIC 2000).

The Georgia Department of Education, with the help of a grant from Character Education Partnerships, distributed monies to 25 Georgia schools. A paper delivered to the Annual Conference of the Character Education Partnership (Bulach 2000) reviewed the program. A Georgia study showed that local administrative leadership was the key to successful implementation of character education programs and was equally important for the culture/climate of the local school.

Elementary schools in Georgia had more positive influence from character education programs than middle schools and high schools but no difference was evident between rural and suburban settings (Bulach 2000). States implemented

character education in different ways, learning what did not work in character education before identifying what was truly effective. According to McDonnell, lecturing, authoritative teaching styles, external codes of ethics were useless in promoting good character. McDonnell suggested community involvement, peer education, cooperative learning and responsibility development were ways to effectively introduce character education (1997).

Ryan stated that other failed tactics were slogans, posters, gimmicks and mandated principles. Individual teachers may have been a greater factor in teaching character than curriculum or methodology (1998). Huffman suggested that school board members, administrators, faculty, classified staff, parents, and students were equally important in developing a district wide ethos of core ethical values (1994).

The lack of underlying theoretical rationale weakened the power of character-based programs, according to Leming (1997, 28). Most character education ideas relied on the teacher's experienced-based knowledge. For success, character education required implementation in the classroom and required emulation in the whole environment of the school, community, and the home (Kortum 2001, 55). Most schools implementing a character education program required valid teacher preparation before beginning the program with students. Compassion, forgiveness, integrity, respect, responsibility, initiative, cooperation, and perseverance prevailed in character education endeavors (Whitmer and Forbes 1997).