Abstract

This paper presents an argument for moral education as a crucial component of lifelong education. Lifelong education is by definition comprehensive normative education committed to the "grand ideal" of universal human betterment. Moral education is most likely to be effective when viewed as lifelong education because it requires three attributes of lifelong education for its success: a long-term effort, an educational setting, and a commitment to the advancement of universal goals. Society should seek to educate a core of moral teachers sufficient to generate a "critical mass" capable of ensuring that lifelong moral education will become self-sustaining. The approach to moral education developed by the Association for Values Education and Research (AVER) is outlined and it is suggested that this programme (or something like it) should be central to all programmes of lifelong education.

L. B. Daniels*

Moral Education In the Context Of Lifelong Education

I have been struck by the fact that those who write about lifelong learning use that expression interchangeably with "lifelong education". But, on logical grounds, there is an enormous difference between learning and education; the former is essentially a "success" or "upshot" concept, while the latter is a concept of trying or of intending. To see the difference, consider the two pairs of concepts — racing and winning, and looking and seeing. Racing and looking are things we do *in order* to win or to see. They are concepts of intention — they express fundamentally that we have some goal in mind and are trying to achieve it. The other two, however, are used to say that we have succeeded — and they have their counterpart terms to tell that we failed — losing and missing. Learning is like winning and seeing; educating is like looking and racing. In this respect "teaching" is also a concept of intention — a task concept, telling of what we are *trying* to do. In the case of teaching, what the teacher is trying to do is to get someone else to learn something. Thus teach and learn are related in a way analogous to the way that "look" and "see" or "race" and "win" are related. (1) Often what we seek to accomplish is difficult; then the intention term is aptly labelled a "task" word. The word "educating" is such a word. On the other hand, "educated" is an upshot word — used to make the claim that certain upshots, in this case successful ones, have been brought about. Thus the concept of education, including all its cognates, encompasses a range of activities which have in common that they are directed toward the accomplishment of a particular range of goals. And we can see that these goals are regarded by most people as desirable. We can see this because to say that something is "educative" or "educational" is to praise it. Among philosophers it is now generally accepted that "education" and its cognates typically are used as normative or value terms. To say that someone has become an educated person is to say that she has changed for the better in certain respects. Indeed, the concept is quite specific about what changes have occurred:

1. The person has acquired knowledge and, more importantly, *understanding,* of the world.

2. As a result of this change the person has developed a perspective on the world which deeply affects her perceptions of and dealings with the rest of the world. [2]

Thus, "education" is a normative word. It is intimately related with the concept of

*Faculty of Education, University of British Columbia

teaching because both can be used to express an intention to get someone to learn something. When teachers characterize what they do as "education", they claim that what they teach is worthwhile, and that they want their students to perceive the world in a different and *better* way than they otherwise might. In brief, they seek to increase the student's understanding of the world.

We can perhaps now see why there is something odd about advocating lifelong "learning" and see that the advocacy is more aptly labelled lifelong "education". The peculiarity is this. Those who advocate lifelong learning typically also hold that people already keep on learning throughout most of their lives anyway. Well, if people already do this, why do we need to advocate it? Clearly because not just any kind of learning will do. If people learned before, along with, outside of, and after their period of formal schooling better and better ways to torture others (a not uncommon phenomenon), that would certainly be learning and be lifelong — but it would not count as lifelong learning in the sense intended by its advocates. Lifelong learning is a *normative* concept. Its advocates believe that certain *kinds* of learning ought to be promoted, and that people ought to be encouraged to keep on learning these kinds of things throughout life. In fact, it seems to me, what its advocates want to promote is best expressed, in English, by the phrase "lifelong education". (Hereafter referred to as 'LLE').

LLE is not, like the oft-proposed "problem-solving" curriculum, mastery learning or programmed instruction, simply a proposed teaching innovation; it is a grand ideal on a par with the notion of a liberal education, or of some of the ideas of Makarenko, Plato, Komensky or other educational utopians. The central arguments for LLE have a large vision. They hold that our present views of education and of the modes of education are too circumscribed. If we are to give everyone an equitable chance to become educated, we must realize that schooling does not equal education; that education can occur virtually anywhere, and at any period of life. The call is for new modes and for delivery at any location — for a learning society. A learning society is one in which most people at all ages seek to become further educated. LLE advocates a way of life — one which can be contrasted, for example, with a life of ease or one of endless mindless toil.

Because this ideal is at the heart of LLE, its enthusiasts are inclined to give hortatory "analyses" of the concept. Thus much of the literature explaining what LLE is does not, in fact, set out what is, but what ought, from the perspective of LLE, to be. It is no surprise that such accounts of LLE are written in *upshot or success terms*—in the language of accomplishments. One example will have to serve. A favourite term in the LLE literature is "educability". [3] The notion of educability is a success term. One who is educable has developed a capacity for further success. There are, however, sometimes proposals made in *task* or intention terms. These purport to tell us what *to do* to reach the ideal. For example, we are told to plan with the whole of life in mind, or to provide open access to education, or to involve people from the community in the formal schools. [4] As usual, in education, the mundane reality of concrete proposals does not seem as exciting as the ideals. The movement toward the ideal of LLE will be long, complex and — perhaps above all else — rather mundane.

Let us now turn to a few words about the concept of morality. Our uses of language can be roughly organized into several large sub-sets, each of which is relatively autonomous, by reason of its own "logic," of the other large sub-sets. One of these sub-sets, to be found as far as I know in every "natural" language, is *normative* discourse. As Paul Taylor puts it:

> normative discourse is to be distinguished from scientific, mathematical, and historical discourse, and from any other "universe" of discourse in which language is used for purposes other than the making and justifying of evaluations and prescriptions. [5]

Apart from its evaluative and prescriptive uses, what is distinctive about normative

discourse is caught by the word "justifying." Roughly-speaking, normative discourse differs from other forms of discourse by virtue of the the rules of reasoning which govern it. In normative discussion we implicitly (sometimes explicitly) adhere to rules of reasoning when we try to justify claims that an act is right, or that something is good, or that someone ought to do such and such. The rules are of two kinds: (a) Rules of relevance which enable us to tell whether or not a particular purported reason is relevant to our particular problem. (b) Rules of valid inference which enable us to assess the quality of the steps taken in the argument. I will not here go into any detail about these rules of reasoning, other than to say that a study of these is one of the two major aspects of any defensible form of moral education.

The universe of normative discourse may itself be divided into distinguishable subordinate "realms of value". Among these are the moral and the aesthetic. Although in all types of *normative* discourse we follow the same rules of valid inference, each is distinguishable from the others by virtue of the *rules of relevance* which govern the justification of evaluations and prescriptions within it. [6] Thus, for example, while the *appearance* of certain things is relevant when we are assessing from the aesthetic point of view, it is usually irrelevant when we make assessments from the moral point of view. Whenever we *evaluate* something or claim that someone *ought* to do something, we assess that thing or action with standards or principles to which we are committed. Thus, when we say that a person is beautiful, we assess her using aesthetic standards; when we say that someone is evil, we use *moral* principles. It is the rules of relevance which enable us to tell which standards or principles are applicable. It is sets of these rules of relevance which comprise a normative "Point of View". The aesthetic and the moral are two instances of normative points of view.

To have some basic understanding of morality, we must have some notion of the kinds of things with which moral principles essentially deal. This is, of course, a hotly-debated question. I have been a member of a group at the University of British Columbia, AVER (the Association for Values Education and Research) which has, for approximately ten years now, been involved in research into moral education. Most of us have concluded, I think, that while people interested in the question of what is to count as the moral have many different opinions on many things, they all agree (sometimes only implicitly) on a common core of issues with which morality is concerned. One argument for this claim is what I prefer to call "the argument from common assumptions". [7] The argument goes as follows. Ask someone what he would count as a moral question. Such a question inevitably involves discussion of *examples*. Pay careful attention to what people use as examples in discussing this sort of question. Many of the examples are pretty clearly culture-specific: in North America questions about sexual relationships are often seen as being moral questions. But some topics inevitably recur — regardless, as far as I can see, of the culture from which the person comes. These topics are what I have called the "common assumptions". In the main, these topics concern things which people want to *avoid*. They form a complex set of *fears* - fear, for example, of pain, injury, death, interference with our purposes. And these are fears possible for any person — whatever their culture or background. We regard these as evils to be avoided unless we have some very good reason to the contrary. And usually what we will regard as a sufficient reason is that, by suffering one of these evils, we will avoid one or more of the others. Briefly stated, while fair distribution of *benefits* does involve moral questions, morality has more centrally to do with the prevention of evils.

Two other factors are very significant for anyone interested in moral education: the role of reason in morality and the *social occasion* for morality. The occasion for morality is that people live in groups and that, as a result, conflict of interest seems unavoidable. The point of morality is to "ameliorate the human condition" [8] through the use of reason rather than by use of punishment, force, coercion, or the like. When human interests conflict, it is possible

to elicit, by the use of reason and reflection, certain fundamental principles which must be recognized as necessary if the point of morality is to be achieved and if moral discourse is to be possible. The range of these principles is *human actions* and, derivatively, human character. Moral praise and blame can be applied, and moral advice given, only to autonomous agents. The point of moral education is to create such agents.

An additional crucial factor is introduced into morality by the demands of basic reason. Roughly-speaking, if R is a *reason* in situation S, it must also be a reason whenever situation S occurs again. This is simply the requirement that we be consistent in our reasons and actions. This places very heavy demands upon us. As one of my colleagues puts it, a moral principle must meet the following standards if it is to be defensible:

1. The person making the moral judgment must be able to accept any moral decisions which follow logically from the principle.

To accept a principle is to regard it as an acceptable guide for *anyone* and *everyone* to use. Consequently, its use by everyone must not lead to unacceptable consequences.

2. It must be the case that the principle can be publicly advocated without defeating the point of adopting the principle.[9]

If education is as I have outlined it, and if morality is fundamentally concerned with the avoidance of evil, what represents an acceptable account of moral education? In Appendix A I have outlined four commonly assumed and practised approaches. Here, I will give a brief account of the basic features of the program proposed by AVER. On the basis of half a dozen empirical studies carried out chiefly in formal school systems, extensive efforts to teach our ideas to prospective teachers, many workshops with a great variety of people of various ages (ranging from 6 years of age upward), and a very great deal of thought and argument, we have produced materials which we believe address several of the major aspects of a practicable and defensible program of moral education.[10] I believe that these not only could, but that something like them *should* be included, indeed be central to , any problem of lifelong education.

We have produced six sets of teaching materials,[11] each of which uses a topic to introduce people to the basic features of normative discourse, to the basic content of the moral point of view, to procedures one can use to test proposed answers to moral questions, to the immense complexity of some moral questions — but, above all, to the idea that it is, in fact, possible to approach moral questions on a rational basis. Our ultimate hope is to be able to produce materials and approaches which will enable a person to become morally *educated.* Needless to say, this is a very ambitious program. To give some idea just how ambitious, let me summarize the achievements (or upshots or successes) which this would involve.[12] There are at least five sets of high-order attainments which must be achieved before it would be appropriate to label someone as "morally educated".

1. The person must come to understand the requirements of reason outlined earlier.
2. The person must be sensitive to "morally hazardous" actions, i.e., actions which raise moral questions, be able and inclined to seek relevant factural information and to realize the consequences of engaging in morally hazardous actions.
3. The person must be inclined to seek moral advice and to evaluate justifications proffered.
4. The person must have the will to do what she recognizes as the right thing to do. This is actually, as are the others, far more complicated than any bald statement of it suggests.
5. The person must have a sense of self-worth. Lacking this, the person is unlikely to possess the required understanding of what it is to be a person, and thus of how one ought to treat creatures who are persons.

We are convinced that this list sets out, admittedly only in rough outline, the attainments which a morally educated person would possess. Clearly, any program of moral education

has its work cut out for it.

I would like now to argue that moral education is, in many respects, more suited to the concept of lifelong education than any other part of education. In brief this is because:

1. It appears empirically to be the case that moral education *is* virtually a lifelong undertaking.
2. Success in it does not occur by accident or "natural" inclination — it requires active educative effort.
3. Moral questions are at least as universal as would be LLE.

Success in moral education is essential if any of the ideals of LLE are to be accomplished. However one looks at it, moral education is at least as pervasive and important as the ideal of lifelong education itself. Indeed, it must be the heart of any defensible program of lifelong education.

The question, as I see it, is not so much how to *justify* the need for moral education; it is to figure out how it can be brought about in a world so clearly lacking in it. It is clearly a case of asking how we can raise ourselves by our own bootstraps. We cannot produce a society in which moral questions are dealt with in a sophisticated manner until and unless we have a significant portion of the population able to deal in a defensible way with such matters — and this will not happen by accident — or, at least, it has not happened by accident thus far. We cannot achieve it without a substantial "critical mass" of teachers. I am not here using 'teacher' necessarily in its *institutional* sense; not all teachers are teachers by profession — and not all those who are teachers by profession are good at it, but neither do I *exclude* professional teachers.

A critical mass is a mass powerful enough to be self-generating. The problem is that we do not have such a self-generating mass in any society. Moral issues *are* discussed and moral decisions *are* made, but they are not usually clearly recognized *as* moral issues. Either moral issues are overlooked or they are confounded with other kinds of issues, often with political or economic issues (consider, for example, environmental questions) or with questions about local custom, for example, dress codes. What is needed is a widespread (universal?) explicit awareness of moral issues — of those kinds of moral issue for which we have clear answers, of issues about which we are in doubt, of the virtual certainty that new moral issues will arise, and to which we should commit explicit and extensive resources and widespread debate. Discussion of and research into moral questions should be as routine and deliberate as is research into questions of physics, and far more pervasive.[13] Every learning society should include learning about morality, and seek to promote moral education. But, if I am correct, we lack sufficient numbers of morally-educated people to make the enterprise of rational moral deliberation self-sustaining. The general procedures typically recommended for LLE seem to me to offer helpful guidelines for efforts to improve the situation.

Formal schooling must include systematic and recurrent efforts to introduce students to the basic concepts, rules of relevance and rules of inference of normative discourse, and to the basic principles of morality. These are all essential prerequisites to rational understanding of and participation in either moral discussion or decision. Without these, learning to learn about moral issues is not possible. They are as necessary to moral education as arithmetic is to mathematics. So, too, is a well-developed understanding of principle-testing. Of course, none of these need to be "restricted" to basic formal schooling. They should be part of the preparation of every professional and tradesman, particularly those involved in professions, such as medicine, where morally hazardous situations are likely to occur.

Opportunities for less formal moral education abound. What is needed is easy access to

educative materials and to resources to obtain empirical information relevant to morally hazardous decisions. Perhaps such resources should be lines in various institutional budgets. But, more important, I believe, is the creation of appropriate atmospheres for rational discussion of moral issues. Often such issues involve high emotion and hot debate. Governments may feel threatened by such debate — as will others. But without open discussion moral education is not possible; indeed, without it moral education is a contradiction in terms. It may be that we will require places, times, opportunities in which participants have "privileged" status — much in the same way that judges, university professors, parliamentarians and others have special protections to their right to say what they think.

In any serious effort at moral education, modelling seems likely to play a major role. The modelling has at least two aspects to it. On the one hand, people can learn to emulate the particular lifestyle and/or way of reasoning of those who are "models" for them. Thus, perhaps, specific "skills" and traits can be acquired which are essential to increased understanding of moral issues. But behind these lies the more fundamental model — the one which shows that moral issues *can be reasoned about.* And not only that they can be, but that they *should* be.

Résumé

Cet article défend l'idée que l'enseignement de la morale est un composant essentiel de l'éducation permanente, celle-ci étant par définition une éducation normative et complète, reliée au grand idéal du progrès humain universel. Considéré comme un enseignement permanent, l'enseignement de la morale aura toutes les chances d'être affectif car son succès requiert trois qualités de l'enseignement permanent: - un effort prolongé - une disposition à l'étude et un désire d'atteindre des buts universels. La société devrait s'efforcer de former une quantité de professeurs de morale suffisante pour produire une "masse critique" capable d'assurer la continuité de l'enseignement permanent de la morale.

Nous présentons la conception de l'éducation morale présentée par l'"Association for Values Education Research (AVER)" et nous proposons que ce programme (ou un autre semblable) constitute le centre de tout programme d'éducation permente.

Footnotes

[1]L. B. Daniels, "What is the Language of the Practical?", *Curriculum Theory Network,* 4 No. 4 (January, 1975) p. 250 et passim.

[2]R. S. Peters, *Ethics and Education* (Longdon: Allen & Unwin, 1971)

[3]R. H. Dave & N. Stiemerling, *Lifelong Education and The School: Abstracts and Bibliography* (Hamburg: UNESCO Institute for Education, 1973), p. 23 et passim.

[4]Ibid., p. 28

Sometimes, of course, people do advocate LLE for mundane economic reasons. For example, in North America, arguments are made to support LLE in order to keep colleges with low enrolment alive. Secondly, given our present acceptance of the sanctity of the nation-state, we are bound, it seems to me, to create educational ghettos, whole nations too poor to offer extensive formal schooling. LLE is seen as a partial answer to this sort of problem - because it seeks to develop new ways to enable people to become educated and because it challenges the notion that only the young can become educated.

[5]Paul W. Taylor, *Normative Discourse* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1961,) Introduction.

[6]Ibid., Ch. 4

[7]C. Hamm and L. B. Daniels, "Moral Education in Relation to Values Education", in *The Domain of Moral Education,* Edited by D. B. Cochrane et al (Toronto: OISE, 1979) p.21

A further argument to support the argument from common assumptions is the recognized imbalance between pleasure and pain. While *I* may choose to suffer pain to produce my own pleasure, I need a very powerful reason to suffer pain involuntarily in order that someone else may enjoy pleasure. This, in fact, seems to be what lies behind the principle of equality.

[8]The phrase is Ernst Cassirer's: E. Cassirer, *An Essay on Man* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1962).

[9]J. Coombs, "Attainments of the Morally Education Person," to be published in *Practical Dimensions of Moral Education,* edited by D. Cochrane and M. Manley-Casimer.

[10]AVER reports. (Association for Values Education and Research, Faculty of Education, University of British Columbia, 2125 Main Mall, Vancouver, B.C., Canada, V6T 1W5).

[11]AVER reports *Prejudice,* Student's and Teachers' Manuals, (Toronto: OISE, 1979).

[12]J. Coombs, Op. cit.

[13]Support for these claims derives essentially from application of the principle of Respect for Persons. For an account of what being a person means, see D. Dennett, "Conditions of Personhood", in The Identities of Persons, edited by A. O. Rorty (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1976). For some implications of Respect for Persons in moral education, see Cochrane op. cit.

Appendix A

(Common Approaches to Moral "Education")

Self Discovery

This approach, widely followed in North America under the label of "Values Clarification," seeks — to say the kindest thing I can about it — to develop awareness in the individual of his own values. Participants engage in a set of game-like activities to encourage them to avow publicly what they prefer and, sometimes, to make genuine value judgments. It rarely involves education of any sort — the participant's understanding of normative reasoning or of the moral point of view is only accidentally enhanced.

Inculcating Community Norms

Some people seek to inculcate students with a particular set of "acceptable" and "moral" rules or principles. I personally believe that this is the most widely accepted and practised view of moral education the world over. It involves several dangers: (1) it readily becomes indoctrination. (2) it is *anti-educational* unless organized to seek understanding. (3) what is regarded merely locally as "moral" becomes confounded with the basic moral issues discussed earlier.

Developmentalism

Both Piaget and Kohlberg have carried out studies of the moral "development" of people. On the basis of these, Kohlberg has decided that people can go through a finite series of "stages" of moral development. (See Kohlberg 1968, 1971 and other publications by Kohlberg.) This theory and this kind of theory are beginning to come under heavy attack. I will note only one of the criticisms: the theory seems to assume that rather direct pedagogical effort has only a very small role to play in moral education. But, given my perception of the complexity of moral issues, I cannot accept this as correct.

Decision Procedures

Advocates of this approach typically believe that moral education should be as content-free as possible. However, they recognize that Values Clarification is not enough because people face moral problems which demand decisions. They therefore advocate that people be taught problem-solving procedures. The basic model comes from the works of John Dewey and a long line of believers. Although Dewey's ideas about problem-solving have turned out to be rather naive, and although his account of moral issues now seems too loose, the general thrust would no doubt have some merit, in strictly pedagogical terms, for someone designing moral education programs.