MODELS OF VALUES EDUCATION AND MORAL EDUCATION IN THE ERA OF THE FOURTH INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION

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Today’s “just say no” approach to moral education is as simplistic as the values clarification emphasis of the 1960s and 1970s. One solution is to combine the best approaches of past decades. The Comprehensive Values Education model is progressive and all-embracing in content, methodology, and application throughout school and community.

Keywords: Values education; Moral education; Model; Comprehensive.

The history of values education and moral education over the past 40 years closely parallels American social history during the same period. To oversimplify, the Fifties were the decade of conformity, McCarthyism, and “the organization man.” Since there appeared to be a consensus among parents, religious, and society regarding values and morality, values education during this period consisted of the traditional methods of inculcating and modeling. Schools took their role in values education for granted. Children were exhorted to be prompt, neat, and polite; to work hard succeed; to respect other’s property - in short, to behave themselves. And that is as far as values education and moral education went.

Then came the turbulent Sixties and Seventies, when traditional roles and values were seriously questioned - and in many cases rejected - by the younger generation. The status of blacks, women, students, and other minorities changed dramatically, in one of the fastest social revolutions in human history. New attitudes toward and experimentation with human sexuality, religion, career options, lifestyles, and personal values were widespread. The common thread underlying all these social changes could be summarized in the popular slogan, “Power to the people.” Minority groups and individuals increasingly assumed greater decision-making power and control over their lives.

Then times changed again. The relatively permissive, hopeful, idealistic Sixties and Seventies gave way to the more politically conservative, economically fearful, and socially disintegrating Eighties. Ironically, the allegedly selfish “Me Generation” of the Seventies was supplanted by the allegedly selfish “Look-Out-for-Number-One” yuppe generation of the Eighties. Once again, the world of education followed suit and went “back to the basics.” This shift involved not only a renewed emphasis on academics, but a renewed faith in the basics, traditional morals and values of Judeo-Christian America. Enough of this let-each-child-decide-for-himself-or-herself nonsense! The answer to the problems of America’s youth was simple: Just say no! Other educators took a more sophisticated approach to the inculcation of values and morality and developed programs and curricula to help students understand, internalize, and act on...
such traditional values as respect, caring, friendship, and cooperation. 4

So, in these 1990s, a concern for values and morality is back again. This concern is spurred on by a national panic over our seeming inability to gain control over the country’s drug problem; is supported by continuing dismay over crime, the disintegration of the family, teen pregnancy, teen suicide, and other indications of social upheaval and collapse; and is further fueled by a belated and reluctant recognition that the unprecedented number of political scandals throughout the past decade were symptomatic of a virtual ethical vacuum in government. For these and other reasons, parents, educators, and community leaders are once again calling for the schools to become involved with educating our young people about values and morals. And well they should.

Yet many of us who lived through the last 20 or 30 years of educational innovation might understandably feel a certain weariness and wariness toward the current interest in dealing with values and morality in the schools. In the Sixties and Seventies the pendulum swung far to the left. In the Eighties it swung back to the right. Where will it swing in the Nineties? Does American education learn from its previous experience, or is the current focus on values and morality in the schools another passing fad that will make little or no difference in the long run? Do we seriously believe that a return to the 1950s will meet the challenges of the 1990s and beyond?

This topic has a special meaning for me. For 15 years, from the late 1960s to the mid-1980s, I was one of several national leaders in the education movement known as “values clarification.” 5 Along with Sidney Simon, Merrill Harmin, and many other colleagues, I helped develop and promote a way of working with value dilemmas and moral issues that was acknowledged as the most popular new approach to values education of the 1970s. I say “most popular new approach» because of the pioneering work of the proponents of the approach.

I have sometimes described values clarification as containing four main ingredients. First, a value-laden topic or moral issue is selected - perhaps an issue related to politics, work, family, friends, love and sex, drugs, leisure time, or personal tastes. The issue may be selected by the teacher, the group leader, the class, or an individual student. It should be noted that, before values clarification became popular, these matters were not generally considered worthy of attention in schools and other settings in which young people receive guidance. But, as the renowned psychologist Milton Rokeach noted in 1975, “Such a broadening of educational objectives now has a universal face validity, largely because of the pioneering work of the proponents of values clarification.” 8

Second, the teacher or group leader introduces a question or activity - sometimes known as a values clarification “strategy” - to help the participants think, read, write, and talk about that topic. More than a hundred highly motivating values clarification techniques have been developed to facilitate reflection on and discussion of value-laden topics and moral issues. These practical strategies are probably the main reason for the popularity of the approach.

Third, during the course of the activity and discussion, the teacher or group leader ensures that all viewpoints are treated with respect and that an atmosphere of psychological safety pervades the classroom.

Fourth, the activity itself and the discussion leader encourage the students to employ an array of “valuing processes” or “valuing skills” while considering the topic. These skills involve...
understanding one’s feelings, examining alternative viewpoints, considering the consequences of various choices in a thoughtful manner, making a choice free from undue pressure, speaking up for one’s views, and acting on one’s beliefs.

The values clarification theory suggested that young people who used these valuing processes in making decisions would lead more personally satisfying and socially constructive lives, as well as do better in school. Initial research supported these claims, although there was disagreement over the quality of the research. 9 Certainly, tens of thousands of teachers, parents, religious leaders, and helping professionals who used the approach - many of whom still use it - spoke positively of its effects on young people and the classroom climate.

Why, then, did values clarification fall from academic grace and popular acclaim? While this is a complicated subject, I would suggest five major reasons for the decline of values clarification in the past decade: changing time, faddism, stagnation, erratic implementation, and a major flaw in the theory of values clarification itself.

I have already referred to the nation’s changing social and political climate from the 1950s through the 1980s. Regardless of the quality of educational innovation and research, major economic forces and shifts in social values are going to determine educational directions. Most of this is completely beyond the control of educators. Values clarification declined, in part, because larger social forces determined that it would do so. The times passed it by.

I also suggested earlier that American education has a problem with faddism. Behavioral objectives? Oh yes, that was big in the Sixties. Programmed learning, open education, grading reform, values clarification - we tried those in the Seventies. Back to the basics - we tried that in the Eighties. And the Nineties? Shared decision making, cooperative learning, school/business partnerships, school restructuring . . . who knows which of the latest movements, if any, will survive?

Promising new approaches and innovations can at best offer only partial solutions to education’s problems. Yet we tout them and embrace them as panaceas. And when some of them prove to be merely potential improvements that require years of further research and development, when the initial research proves ambiguous or debatable, when the innovation fails to show dramatic results in the first few years, we conclude we have been “had” once again and look around for the next popular inservice approach, speaker, or consultant. Economists have noted American industry’s obsession with short-term results, while other industrialized nations exhibit greater long-term commitment to research, development, and infrastructure. Our similar lack of long-range commitment to research, development, and training in educational innovation is a second reason for the apparent decline of values clarification.

While the previous two explanations reflect larger social and professional trends, the next three reasons must be laid at the doorstep of the values clarification movement itself. For one thing, stagnation set in. The leading proponents of values clarification simply did not stick with the approach after it reached its peak of popularity. With rare exceptions, we did not continue to deepen the theory, sponsor and encourage the research, develop the curricula, or improve the training - efforts that together would have supported a growing field of professional accomplishment. In stead, we all went on to other areas of professional endeavor and made other contributions. In part our decisions were based on the declining professional interests in values clarification. However, that declining interest must be explained, in part, by our own lack of success in continuing to develop and enrich the field. So there was a reciprocal effect. As values clarification stagnated, interest dropped; as interest dropped, the values clarification leaders’ attention went elsewhere, thereby increasing the stagnation.

This process certainly describes my own experience. At one point, I was heavily involved in theory building, supporting and synthesizing the research, and developing new models for training in values clarification. I was also the executive director of an expanding non-profit education organization. Eventually my administrative responsibilities eclipsed my role as an educator. Before I knew it, seven years had passed - seven years in which I had done no substantive training, research, or writing in the field of values and moral education. I accomplished many other things, but not in my primary professional field. Then, like Rip Van Winkle, I awakened from my long sabbatical, gave up my administrative responsibilities, and returned to the field of values and moral education. I believe this break has enabled me to see more clearly some of the larger social forces affecting the field and to recognize and feel less defensive about our own responsibility for what has occurred.

A fourth explanation for the fading of values clarification is that the approach was implemented erratically. This charge, of course, could be made about almost any educational innovation, especially the more popular ones. While thousands of professionals did a fine job of integrating values clarification into their own teaching, group work, and counseling, I would say that, just as often, values clarification was implemented in a superficial manner, with teachers using an occasional, isolated
exercise and thereby accomplishing little - neither much good nor any harm. As one teacher wrote, “I’ve used all 79 strategies in your book. What do I do now?” Clearly, that teacher and many others missed the point. This problem, in itself, would not be terminal if the field were continuing to refine its theory, research, and training, so that the method was being disseminated and applied in an increasingly effective manner. But since the field was stagnating, despite all the excellent examples of implementation, many people got the impression that values clarification was superficial and ineffective - because, in fact, it often was.

The fifth reason that led the tide to turn on values clarification was a major conceptual and political flaw in the values clarification theory. We insisted that values clarification by itself was sufficient method for developing satisfying values and moral behavior in young people. Critics questioned how this approach could lead to moral behavior if it was, in fact, «value free.» 10 We acknowledged that, in its goals and methods, the values clarification approach implicitly promoted freedom, justice, rationality, equality, and other democratic and civic values. It was only on specific issues - such as politics, religion, health, personal tastes, and the like - that values clarification was value free. We suggested that young people already had enough inculcation and models related to these issues; what they needed were the skills and opportunities to reflect on all this input and come up with their own well-thought-out answers.

Even with this clarification, in effect, we relegated the inculcation and modeling of specific religious, moral, and personal values to the background and suggested that the real work of values education - whether by the values clarification, moral development, or value analysis model - took place in the foreground. In emphasizing this point, we implied that it was better to clarify than to inculcate values and that those who primarily inculcated values were perhaps even harming young people by denying them the decision-making skills for guiding their own lives in a complex world.

In the long run, that viewpoint did not play well in Peoria - or almost anywhere else. Our position was theoretically flawed and, as history showed, politically untenable. The theoretical shortcomings of the values clarification approach are the subject for another article. Suffice it to say for now that we were so passionate about the importance of giving young people the skills necessary to make their own responsible decisions that we overstated our case.

This immoderation was understandable. Louis Raths, the founder of values clarification, went through his professionally formative years in the aftermath of World War II. He saw the excesses of fascism. He witnessed the newsreels of entire cultures that so relinquished their ability to choose freely and to defend their convictions publicly that they blindly followed leaders into a moral abyss that surpassed the imagination. Then Raths and his students Harmin and Simon watched the United States go through the dark days of McCarthyism, when thinking for oneself and publicly expressing even the slightest dissent were considered by many to be un-American. To these three educators, values clarification - which emphasizes critical thinking, rational individual choice, and public affirmation - seemed a sensible and essential remedy against authoritarian leadership wherever it might appear. I believe that those who cherish civil liberties will always recognize the need for informed, independent thinkers who have the courage to speak out on behalf of their highest values.

My point, then, is that values clarification made an important contribution. It legitimized value-laden and moral issues as appropriate for schools and other educational settings. It introduced many practical techniques for motivating and enabling students to reflect on and discuss these issues. It demonstrated that students of all ability levels and backgrounds could participate equally in values clarification activities and experience a sense of success and self-esteem. And it emphasized the importance of independent thought and the right to be different. With the benefit of hindsight, we can recognize that values clarification was a good idea that was taken too far. It faded from prominence, though not from use.

Today, in the early 1990s, we have before us another good idea - the idea that we must return to inculcating traditional values in our young people. I have observed this current mandate taking two directions.

First is the “just say no” movement. This approach to values education applies to more than the drug issue. It suggests that, if we adults would just be clear on our values, state them in unequivocal terms, and set up a comprehensive system of rewards and punishments to reinforce the “good” values and extinguish the “bad” ones, then young people would be guided toward productive and moral behavior. They would not smoke, drink, or use any illegal drugs. They would refrain from promiscuous sex. They would succeed in school according to their ability, find meaningful work, vote in elections, and not cheat on their taxes. All we need to do is take a firm stand on behalf of the values that made this country great.

A second group of educators today recognizes that we need to do more than simply identify the
“good” values, exhort young people to adopt them, and reward or punish them accordingly. These educators have students engage in discussions and activities that allow them to experience and internalize the desired values. Rather than simply urge youngsters to care for one another, they arrange cross-age tutoring projects or community service projects, such as visiting senior citizens, so that the young people can actually experience the satisfaction that comes from performing acts of caring. Rather than simply tell students not to be cruel to one another, they have students talk about how they were teased and how they felt. Rather than advise students just say no to drugs, they add, “and say yes to healthy lifestyle.”

The “just say no” approach by itself, I believe, is even more simplistic than our own values clarification viewpoint of the Sixties and Seventies. The “just say no” to drugs/say yes to a healthy lifestyle approach is better, but it does not go far enough. Human beings are not so easily programmed. We should do a much better job of inculcating certain traditional values in our young people. The new thrust in values education and moral education is very valuable in calling us back to that important task.

But, sooner or later, our young people are going to confront situations that require them to make decisions on their own. It is wonderful if our inculcation and modeling have nurtured them to be caring and respectful persons, but look around. Caring and respectful persons are both pro-life and pro-choice. Caring and respectful persons refrain from and engage in premarital sex. Caring and respectful persons anguish over religious and spiritual questions. Caring and respectful persons do not smoke marijuana. Caring and respectful persons struggle with difficult choices over failing marriages, career dilemmas, and the meaning of personal success.

I could give many more examples. Unless we are completely cloistered from the pluralistic and changing world around us, the most successful inculcation does not free us from many difficult life decisions that we, and we alone, must resolve. These choices do not begin when we leave home. Values choices and moral dilemmas over friends, family, dating, drugs, school, sports, money, and other issues confront elementary and secondary students as well. All the inculcating and modeling in the world do not make these difficult choices much easier when the time to choose arrives. So what is a parent or a values educator to do?

The solution, I believe, is not to return to the past - either to the permissive Sixties and Seventies or to the conservative Fifties and Eighties. Nor is the solution to discard our experience and search for yet another new method for tackling the old problems. As others have begun to suggest, there is much of value in both the traditional approaches and the new approaches to values education and moral education. Why not take the best elements of each, synthesize them, and improve from there? I call this approach «Comprehensive Values Education.» It is comprehensive in its content.

First, it is comprehensive in its content. It is meant to include all value-related issues - from choice of personal values to ethical questions to moral issues.

Comprehensive Values Education is also comprehensive in its methodology. It includes inculcating and modeling values, as well as preparing young people for independence by stressing responsible decision making and other life skills. All these approaches are necessary. Young people deserve to be exposed to the inculcation of values by adults who care: family members, teachers, and the community. They deserve to see models of adults with integrity and a joy for living. And they deserve to have opportunities that encourage them to think for themselves and to learn the skills for guiding their own lives.

Third, Comprehensive Values Education is comprehensive insofar as it takes place throughout the school - in the classroom, in extracurricular activities, in career education and counseling, in awards ceremonies, in all aspects of school life. The elementary principal who, during morning announcements, thanks the students who turned in a lost wallet; the 10th-grade teacher who uses cooperative groups in class; the second-grade teachers who spend a whole month centering their students’ reading, writing, and other activities around the value of «kindness»; the school counselor who uses values clarification activities in career counseling; the social studies teacher who discusses moral dilemmas in conjunction with a unit on the Civil War; the teachers who are seen smoking or not smoking; the principal who has the courage to cancel the rest of the football season because his school started a serious fight at the last football game - collectively, these examples begin to suggest the meaning of comprehensive values education in schools.

Finally, Comprehensive Values Education takes place throughout the community. Parents, religious institutions, civic leaders, police, youth workers, and community agencies participate. To the extent that all these sources are consistent in their expectations, their modeling, their norms, and their rules, a comprehensive approach has a greater likelihood of succeeding in influencing community values and morals in youth and adults.

Comprehensive Values Education, in a sense, goes “back to the future.” It is both conservative
and progressive. It is conservative in that no new methods and techniques are proposed that have not been around for many years, some for many centuries. It is conservative in that the traditional approaches of inculcating and modeling values and morality are given validity and prominence within the overall model. It is conservative in its claims: no quick fixes for youth’s alienation or for winning the war on drugs are promised.

At the same time, Comprehensive Values Education is quite progressive. For one thing, a great deal of energy has been wasted in the past 20 years, as educators, parents, and community groups have attacked one another and defended themselves over values education programs. I have worked with many school districts, particularly in the late Seventies and early Eighties, whose programs were being attacked as undermining traditional values. Today, many programs are being criticized as oversimplified, unrealistic, head-in-the-sand approaches to complex problems. A comprehensive approach offers the possibility of reducing misunderstanding and improving communication, of recognizing common goals and, yes, common values. A spirit of cooperation frees up time and energy to devote to the more important task of implementing effective programs in schools and communities.

A second reason Comprehensive Values Education is progressive is that it forces us to make progress in an area that I believe has been almost totally neglected in the history of values education. We have spent so much time arguing whether it is better to try to instill the right values in young people or to teach them to think for themselves that we have avoided the more difficult question of when each approach is appropriate. I believe that there is a time to moralize to our children and a time to listen to their wisdom. A time to model and a time to ask clarifying questions. A time to reward and a time to be neutral. A time to intervene and a time to overlook. A time to say no and a time to let go.

When is the time and place for each, and how can one choose effectively? How should values education be different with different ages and developmental stages? Must all parents and educators be inculcators, models, and facilitators of values development, or can we specialize, with some being better inculcators and others more effective facilitators? These are but a few of the questions we might explore and, in the process, we might see the field of values education progress in new and more sophisticated directions.

Finally, I believe that Comprehensive Values Education is a progressive model in the it actually offers hope for success. A number of studies on the effectiveness of drug education and character education programs suggest that a comprehensive approach offers the best prospects for the war on drugs. 13 We have already seen positive results in the area of smoking, where the combination of educational efforts and changing social norms and laws have interacted reciprocally to reduce smoking in many segments of the population, although we still have a long way to go. What alternative is there? Piecemeal approaches and superficial applications can be expected to produce only limited results.

I look forward to the next decade of American education as a period when we begin to implement a truly comprehensive approach to values education and moral education in the schools, a period when we are concerned less with the labels of the past than with the challenges of the present and future, a decade of building on three decades of experience in values and moral education. No doubt there will still be controversy. Principals and superintendents can still expect to hear periodically from concerned parents who will ask, “Why are you teaching my child morals when he should be learning reading?” “Are you using values clarification?” “Whose values are you teaching, anyway?” But this is the Nineties, the decade when the principal and the superintendent will have the confidence and historical perspective to respond: “Of course we still emphasize academics. At the same time, we believe it is essential for us to support the family in teaching our students a number of traditional civic and moral values that most parents, educators, and community members agree are essential for a democracy. Just as important, we teach our young people the skills to think for themselves and to make their own responsible decisions. Anything less would not be worthy of an education system in a democracy and in a changing world.”

References

See, for example, the “Responsibility Skills” programs disseminated by the Thomas Jefferson Research Center, Pasadena, Calif., or the programs developed by the Baltimore County, Md., and Pittsford, N. Y., public schools.
Những mô hình giáo dục giá trị và giáo dục đạo đức trong kỷ nguyên cách mạng công nghiệp lần thứ tư

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Từ khóa: Giáo dục giá trị; Giáo dục đạo đức; Mô hình; Toàn diện.