

Cooperation and Importance of School and Family on Values Education

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Abstract

Values are one of the basic identifier of personality traits and are not innate but acquired by training. Although values can be taught in all stages of life, values education gain importance in childhood because personality takes shape in it. Values education firstly begins in family, than continues at educational institutions. Basic values are acquired respectively by taking parents as role models and education at schools. For the strengthened personality traits, the values thought at whole life must be coherent. Especially consistency of school and family that is important on children personality highlights for values education. If there is no consistency between the values that students learned or witnessed in the school and in the family, then conflicts are occurred and these situations cause personality disorders. This research aims to investigate the importance of family and school consistency in values education and how it should be during fundamental/primary education level. Considering findings, proposals were developed for family and school in values education.

Keywords: Values education, family, schools, consistency, character education

"...man's first master and most influential teacher is his mother." Said Nursi

Values Education

All educational efforts try to develop three domains: Cognitive, affective and psycho-motor domains. Cognitive domain contains knowledge; affective domain holds affections, attitudes, and values; psycho-motor domain includes behaviours, acts. Effective educational systems should improve these three domains simultaneously. Ignoring affective domain cause a certain numbers of personal and social problems. As values are criteria and standards for behaviours, students should acquire some values. Values lead our lives and works in many dimensions. That's why, values must be indispensable part of educational systems.

Values education is relatively new umbrella term for a range of common curriculum experiences like spiritual, moral, social and cultural education; personal and social education; religious education; multicultural/antiracist education; cross-curricular themes, especially citizenship, environment and health; pastoral care; school ethos; extra-curricular activities; wider community links; collective worship / assembly; school life as a learning community" (Slater, 2001). The concept 'value education' refers to teaching social, political, cultural, and aesthetic values. 'Moral education' refers to a more universal notion of justice, but this justice becomes meaningful in a social and political context (Veugelers & Vedder, 2003). Lickona uses values education and moral education interchangeably and both as shorthand for "moral values education". Moral education is not a new idea. It is in fact as old as education itself. Down through history, in countries all over the world, education has two great goals; to help young people being smart and helping them to become good (2009). Character education can be defined as a comprehensive school based approach to foster the moral development of students. Effective character education supports and enhances the academic goals of school; in short, good character education also promotes learning (Berkowitz & Bier, 2007)

The conceived character has three interrelated parts: moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral behaviour (as seen in Figure. 1). Good character consists of knowing the good, desiring the good, and doing the good – habits of the mind, habits of the hart, and habits of the action (Lickona, 2009). In the same way, Berkowitz & Bier (2007) state that the character education

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effects various aspects of “head” (knowledge, thinking), “heart”(emotion, motivation), and “hand” (behaviour, skills). Values education aims to improve some traits. Lists of traits are often as numerous as definitions of character education. Several traits are frequently cited by different authors. Among these traits, there are responsibility, honesty, respect, fairness, trustworthiness, caring, justice, civic virtue, kindness, empathy, self-respect, self-discipline, and courage (Pearson & Nicholson, 2000).

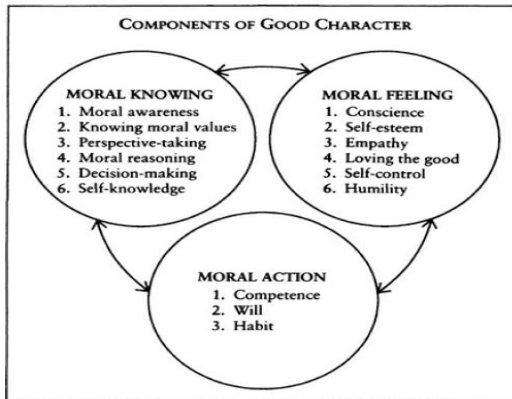


Figure. 1: Component of good character (Lickona, 2009).

Family and Values Education

Character education begins at home. Children develop much of their identities and their beliefs about right and wrong before ever formally entering school. Young children’s beliefs about what is right and wrong traditionally have been strongly influenced by their families (Brannon, 2008) that one of the main or sole transmitters of values (Rokeach, 1975). Although school has a central role in developing students’ character, the most profound impact on students’ development comes from family, notably from their parents whether in social, moral, behavioural, or academic development (Berkowitz & Bier, 2005). It can be said that family is the primary moral educator of the child. Parents are their children’s first moral teachers and the parents are also the most enduring influence (Lickona, 2009). Nursi (1995) states this situation as: “Yes, man’s first master and the most influential teacher is his mother. In connection with this, I shall explain the following to you, which I have always felt strongly in my own self: I am eighty years old and have received lessons from eighty thousand scholars. Yet I swear that the truest and most unshakeable lessons I have received are those inculcated in me by my late mother, which have always remained fresh for me. They have been planted in my nature as though they were seeds planted in my physical being. I observe that other instruction has been constructed on those seeds. That is to say, the lessons instilled in my nature and spirit by my mother when I was one year old I now see at the age of eighty to be fundamental seeds amid great truths.”

It is clear that how parents raise a child is the predominant influence on the child's character formation. Some of the operative variables are parental affection, consistency of parenting, response to children's cues and signals, modelling, expression of values, respect for the child, and open discussion with the child. All aspects of children's character are impacted by these and other child-rearing factors (Berkowitz, 2002) and in well-functioning character education (Berkowitz & Bier, 2005). “The first step in raising a right child,” says Dr. Kohlberg, “is to treat a child morally.” Treating kids with respect means treating them like persons. Treating kids like persons means trying to be fair with them. Being fair means relating to kids at their level and making some allowances for the immaturity of their developmental stage (as cited Lickona, 1983). When children don't have a close relationship with their parents and identification with family values, they are more vulnerable to peer pressure (Lickona, 2009).

School and Values Education

Personality is not simply individualistic. The personality that is constructed is always situated and in dialogue with others, social norms, and cultural metaphors. The child establishes personal borders through a process of interpersonal negotiation (Nucci, 2001). The efforts of school have important point in gaining important, core, ethical values in character education (Abourjilie, 2002). Values education begins at home, continues at school that the second institution in children's life. A climate of acceptance and warmth toward students is an essential element of moral education in every grades. Especially in the early grades of childhood, positive affect be overtly manifest within school content (Nucci, 2001). Children learn values throughout curriculum, texts, and from teachers.

School has an influence later than parenting because (1) parents are much more emotionally salient in the first years of life, and (2) many children do not experience full or even part-time schooling until they are three, four or five years of age, many aspects of character are already developing. Schools can influence a child's self-concept, social skills, values, moral reasoning maturity, prosocial inclinations and behaviour, knowledge about morality, values, and so on (Berkowitz, 2002). Working together, two formative social institutions (school and family) have real power to raise up moral human beings and elevate the moral life of the nation (Lickona, 2009).

Teachers are core component of school and they play substantial role in values education. Before all, teachers need a clear understanding that the character education is the deliberate effort to teach virtues that represent objective moral standards that transcend time, culture, and individual choice. In order to develop virtuous character in their students, teachers must help young people to know what the virtues are, to appreciate their importance and to want to possess them, and to practice them in their day-to-day conduct (Lickona, 1997).

Cooperation of Family and School

Family and school are two major, effective, and formative institutions in values education. If character education is only enforced in classroom but not at home, students confuse about what is wrong or good. When character education continues at home, values become more meaningful in students' life. For consistent and meaningful values education family and school should be cooperated. As Passy (2005) says the classroom provides a context in which all children given a chance to learn the values that the teachers believe should be learned at home.

The first step is for the school to be very clear about how it sees the complementary responsibilities of home and school regarding character development. Those responsibilities can be expressed in two simple statements: (1) The family is the first and most important influence on a child's character. (2) The school's job is to *reinforce* the positive character values (work ethic, respect, responsibility, honesty, etc.) being taught at home (Lickona, 2004).

Parents must be a partner with school because a child's parents also act as his or her teacher. Also, it is similarly true that teachers act in loco parentis while students are under their care (Berkowitz & Bier, 2005). As children enter school, teachers join in the process of shaping children's minds, attitudes, and behaviours by forming a partnership with parents (Brannon, 2008). Without parents' support and cooperation, educators' efforts and influence will be limited. Even if the schools conduct during school hours, the likelihood of lasting impact on the character of a child is less when school values are not reinforced at home (Lickona, 1988). Character education is most effective when schools and parents work in partnership (Berkowitz, 2002). The-long term success of values education depends on forces outside the school – on the extent to which families and communities join schools in a common effort to meet the needs of children and foster their healthy development (Lickona, 2009). In other words, schools and parents need to work together to continue developing students' character throughout their educational career (Brannon, 2008).

If educators view children simply as students, they are likely to see the family separated from the school. That is, the family is expected to do its job and leave the education of children to the school. If educators view students as children, they are likely to see both the family and the community as partners with the schools in the children's education and development (Epstein, 2010). The character development must be the highest educational priority for schools and this priority should be underlie else the schools do. They can challenge especially the family, to their part in teaching the young the virtues they need to make a good life and to build a good society (Lickona, 1997). Healthy character education means empowering all stakeholder groups, including students, support staff, and parents. Character education is a perfect complement to academic fervour. Parental involvement in schools is a win-win-win proposition for students, parents, and school. Society also wins (Berkowitz & Bier, 2005).

There was a growing sense that schools, families, the whole human community – all those historically responsible for passing on a morale heritage to the young- must come together in common cause to elevate the character of children (Lickona, 1997). An ideal comprehensive character education program would be a collaborative effort of administrators, teachers, counsellors, and parents (Pearson & Nicholson, 2000). It is known that, children learn what they live. So, it is important that adults demonstrate positive character traits at home, school, and in the community (Abourjilie, 2002). School and individual teachers within schools are a major influence, alongside the family on developing values of children (Halstead & Taylor, 1996).

Cooperative values education need joint responsibility of stakeholders and strategies that involve family and school to values education. Berkowitz & Bier (2007) -see family commitment to character education as effective strategy- in their research examined 33 character education programs across USA and found out scientific effectiveness. Family/community participation was one of the pedagogical strategy from successful programs. There are some strategies for cooperative values education:

Role Modelling: Children need to see role models of good character in a variety of situations within the family and community and to receive consistent messages about the value of good character. (Brannon, 2008). LeGette assume modelling good character in the home for effective values education, modelling and teaching children good manners, keeping children busy in positive activities and not reducing character education to words alone (cited as Abourjilie, 2002). One of the surest ways to help our children turn their moral reasoning into positive moral behaviour is to teach by example. Teaching respect to kids by respecting them is certainly a way of teaching by example. When we respect our children, we're letting our actions say what we think is the right way to treat other people (Lickona, 1983). The behaviours and practices of adults in the student's life should align with the moral mission of the school. To promote respect in students, adults must treat young people respectfully, and to foster responsibility, they must give students responsibility (Berkowitz & Bier, 2005). Good character needs to be taught from a "do as I do" not a "do as I say" perspective. In addition to serving as role models, administrators, teachers, and counsellors each have specific roles to play. An administrator's role is to focus primarily on the school community and environment. Teachers focus their efforts on how classmates relate to one another. School counsellors serve as a consultant to other school personnel as they focus on helping children develop character traits that will enhance their understanding of self and their relationships with others (Pearson & Nicholson, 2000). In teacher and students or students-student relationships, children beware of each other's values, attitudes and behaviours in much the same way as within the family (Passy, 2005).

Involving parents to values education: Teacher should create a written code of behaviours for the classroom and the school and asking parents to read and sign the code. They should consider parents as representative present while developing such codes and notify parents of student misbehaviour, via notes, phone calls, and personal visits. They can develop a list of suggested readings and resources in character education and sharing it with parents. And finally teachers should send monthly newsletter on teacher character education efforts (Abourjilie, 2002).

Similarly, Brannon (2008) propose to teacher identify five most successful ways they found to include parents in their character education programs. (1) Include a component of what teacher teach about character education as homework including a family discussion or activity. With these activities, students should be asked to share what they are learning each week with their families to help build the partnership between home and school. (2) Sharing what the teachers are doing in class with parents through teachers' newsletter or Web site. This provides parents to see and follow character education activities clearly. (3) Parent's knowing about class rules, consequences and ways they can help. (4) Inviting parents to serve as volunteers, so they continuously exposed to terminology and expectations for behaviour in classroom or school. (5) Planning events related to character education. In these events, parents and children can attend together to practice and discuss what they learned.

"The Scotia-Glenville Experience" can be given an example for parallel curriculums in home and classroom. "The Scotia-Glenville Experience" states that the families are the first teachers for moral education. The character development curriculum was written by a team of parents, teachers and administrators. At each grade level, parents receive a "family guide" with all the classroom, lessons for their child's grade level. For every classroom lesson, there is suggestion for how to follow through on the lesson at home. An example from this project, the first lesson deals with family responsibilities. The teacher asks "What job can you do that will help your family?" Children respond their ideas. Then the teacher gives each child a personal learning activity worksheet, which is a part of every lesson and which the children takes home at the end

of day. The teacher says "At the top of your worksheet, draw a picture of something you can do each day to help your family." Under the pictures there are the days of week with spaces children can check to show that they carried out their responsibility for a given day. Finally, at the end of classroom of the classroom lesson, the teacher reads the "Family Note" printed at the bottom of the parallel learning activities. The same responsibility, or a new one, may be chosen each day. (Lickona, 1988).

In another work, Lickona (2004) recommend teachers some techniques for cooperative involving parents to character education: Affirm the Family as the Primary Character Educator, Expect Parents to Participate, Provide Incentives for Parent Participation, Provide Programs on Parenting—and Work to Increase the Turnout, Get the Program to the Parents, Assign "Family Homework", Form Parent Peer Support Groups, Involve Parents in Planning the Character Education Program, Establish an Ongoing Forum for Parents, Form a Parents' Character Education Committee, Make a Moral Compact with Parents, Renew the Compact, Extend the Compact to Discipline, Extend the Compact to Sports and Other Co-curricular Activities, Extend the Compact to Combating the Effects of the Media, Be Responsive to Parental Complaints, Increase the Flow of All Positive Communication between School and Home, Let Parents Know What Work Is Expected and Send Home Regular Reports.

Conclusion

Importance of family, school and cooperation of these two major institutions in values education were discussed in this paper. Values education is an essential part of education and its presence as old as general education. Children firstly acquire values, good traits at home, that is character education begins at home and the parents are their first teachers. As "Children see, children do!" role modelling and living values play important role in values education at home. Character education begins at home and continues at school. Children learn values throughout educational activities at school with leadership of teachers. Teacher is also a respectable figure in child's character development. Teachers should endeavour to teach moral values and must help young people to know what is right and what is wrong. Schools have real power for values education.

Family must be a partner of school because without parents' support, educators' efforts are bounded. Character education is more effective when school and family work in partnership. Cooperative character education requires combined responsibility of stakeholders in character education. This partnership is also an approach for family-school cooperation. Role modelling, involving parents to values education, parallel curriculums are some techniques for collaboration.

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