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Why does moral development matter now? What resources are available for campus professionals committed to facilitating moral growth in college?

Moral Development in Higher Education

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Student affairs, from its formation as a profession, has always included some attention to the development of the whole student, including moral and religious values (American Council on Education, 1937). In the 1960s and 1970s, higher education put less emphasis on these areas in part due to the outcomes of legal cases that gave students more rights and freedoms within the academy. However, recent events and public debate have renewed the focus of higher education toward a consideration of moral development as an anticipated outcome of college attendance. Colby (2002) noted:

> We see a groundswell of interest in higher education's capacity to contribute to stronger communities, a more responsive democratic system, and more engaged citizens. Critics from outside and within the academy are joining a chorus of calls to revitalize the public purposes of higher education, including educating for students' moral and civic development, as well as technical and more narrowly intellectual learning [p. 1].

As we examine the expansion of the field of student affairs and how professionals work with students, we can clearly see the evolution of our approach to students' moral development. Early in our history, we operated out of a student services framework where students were offered programs or provided offices that provided moral or ethical support in a manner accepted as normative for the time. With the shift from service to student development, professionals began creating opportunities to challenge and support students as they mature. Recently our focus has been on student learning, where we help students author their own story, by not only providing opportunities for growth but also by helping students make meaning of their experiences. College life both inside and outside the classroom is

ripe with powerful learning opportunities, yet we still must ensure that experiences are purposefully designed to promote this type of learning. In fact, Whiteley (2002) noted that "one of the fundamental obligations of the modern college and university is to influence intentionally the moral thinking and action of the next generation of society's leaders and citizens" (p. 5).

Chickering (2010) refers to higher education as the most compelling institutional source for upholding our democracy, although he warns that we have fallen far short of creating college graduates "who can function at the levels of cognitive, moral, intellectual, and ethical development that our complex national and global problems require" (p. 3).

Over the past decade, academic units on most campuses have explored ways to include service-learning as part of classroom learning outcomes. Other programs reflect an increased emphasis on citizenship or personal and social responsibility. At their core, all of these programs and activities may seek to facilitate moral development. Swaner (2004) concluded: "[T]here is ample evidence that cognitive aspects of personal and social responsibility—namely moral reasoning—continue to develop during the college years. This evidence would suggest that educating for personal and social responsibility is indeed a legitimate consideration for higher education" (p. 44).

The Moral Crisis in Higher Education

Activism related to moral issues is not new on college campuses. Student protests against sweatshop production of collegiate wear in the 1990s brought about fair trade policies on campuses across the United States. And students protesting colleges' and universities' financial investments in South Africa in the 1980s increased pressure to end the apartheid regime there. The crisis of character in American society is certainly a pressing issue, as evidenced by recent headlines.

For instance, the Occupy Wall Street protests during the summer of 2011 called attention to widespread social and economic problems in the nation. The Occupy movement expanded to other communities and campuses that fall, and campus response to the protestors varied greatly. For instance, at the University of California at Davis, demands for Chancellor Linda Katehi's resignation increased over her failure to prevent what some have called a shameful attack on the First Amendment (Blumenstyk, 2011). It was on this campus, following weeks of Occupy protests, that peaceful protestors endured the sustained assault by campus police of pepper spray in their faces and mouths. The widely viewed video showed two campus police officers patrolling a seated row of a few dozen students, spraying their faces at close range. The police officers in question were placed on paid leave, raising questions about the role played by Katehi, who reportedly called out the police in riot gear to confront the peaceful protestors. By

pitting campus police against its students, the UC-Davis administration abdicated its responsibility to engage students in serious and thoughtful dialogue about social injustice and change agency.

At the time this volume goes to press, Penn State University is still reeling from the conviction of former longtime assistant football coach Jerry Sandusky for the sexual abuse of several young boys. At issue is not only what Coach Sandusky is reported to have committed but also the lack of response on the part of the then head coach, Joe Paterno; a graduate assistant employed by the football program; several senior administrators; and the local district attorneys—all of whom admit being informed of at least one incident of abuse. At the date of this writing, the situation has ended the careers of Penn State's president, the athletic director, and the head football coach.

Finally, hazing, long a concern in collegiate organizations and most often associated with Greek organizations, garnered the headlines recently with the death of a band member at Florida A&M University. Robert Champion, a university drum major, had hazing-related injuries that resulted in his death, which was ruled a homicide. As CNN's Roland Martin (2011) notes, "Here was a young man who went off to college, planning to earn a college degree while leading one of the nation's most colorful and exciting bands, only to be returned home to his parents in Georgia in a coffin" (p. 1). The university president and the band's director (who has been put on temporary leave) have been criticized for being aware of the tradition and culture of hazing with the band and not appropriately responding. Yet students seem to be siding with these two leaders against their critics, including Florida governor Rick Scott. At the time of this writing, 13 people had been charged with criminal hazing—11 of those were felonious charges.

What these incidents have in common is that they call into question the moral credibility of higher education leadership, particularly at a time when the public is alienated by other American institutions—banks, corporations, media, and government. They also create powerful teachable moments on college campuses—opportunities we will explore in this volume.

Higher Education Initiatives on Moral Development

It could be argued that the recent attention to morally loaded events on college campuses has intensified by the corporate and political scandals of the past twenty years. We are left to wonder how we are preparing future leaders and active citizens. Although the stakes are high, there are a growing number of provocative initiatives designed to cultivate moral and ethical development in college students. Some of these initiatives are described in this chapter.

The Association of American Colleges and Universities (AACU) has supported a number of institutes, publications, and research activities

exploring how higher education institutions can foster personal and social responsibility on campus (Hersh and Schneider, 2005). The result of this work is AACU's five Core Commitments, which are at the heart of developmental goals for students:

1. Striving for excellence: developing a strong work ethic and consciously doing one's very best in all aspects of college
2. Cultivating personal and academic integrity: recognizing and acting on a sense of honor, ranging from honesty in relationships to principled engagement with a formal academic honor code
3. Contributing to a larger community: recognizing and acting on one's responsibility to the educational community and the wider society, locally, nationally, and globally
4. Taking seriously the perspectives of others: recognizing and acting on the obligation to inform one's own judgment; engaging diverse and competing perspectives as a resource for learning, citizenship, and work
5. Developing moral competence in thought and deed: developing ethical and moral reasoning in ways that incorporate the other four responsibilities; using such reasoning in learning and in life [Dey, E. L. and Associates, 2010, p. 1].

The International Center for Academic Integrity (ICAI; 2011), housed at Clemson University (www.academicintegrity.org), is an international initiative to cultivate values related to academic work. The ICAI Web site includes information about academic integrity assessment, links to a searchable database of related research, as well as several downloadable papers that could ignite campuswide discussions on honesty, integrity, and moral development of students.

Sports and moral development go hand in hand in American society. The Center for Ethics at the University of Idaho (www.educ.uidaho.edu/center_for_ethics) provides outreach and conducts research on moral education and athletic competition. The staff is particularly involved in working with collegiate sport teams.

Also of note is the Templeton Foundation, which has funded major research and demonstration projects that explore character development (www.templeton.org).

The increased emphasis on aspects of moral development is also evident in the growth of the Jon C. Dalton Institute on College Student Values as well as the creation of the *Journal of College and Character*. Begun in 1991, the Dalton Institute provides a forum for both faculty and student affairs educators seeking more effective ways to enhance ethical development of college students (http://studentvalues.fsu.edu). The journal's focus is on the development of character in college, and the influences of colleges

and universities on moral and civic learning. The journal has been published since 2000 (http://journals.naspa.org/jcc).

On a broader scope, the Association for Moral Education (AME) is an interdisciplinary organization that has been in existence for almost forty years (www.amenetwork.org). The focus of AME's work is also on moral education and development beyond just higher education, including the creation of new theories and models and the dissemination of related research.

All of these initiatives have been helpful in supporting our work with students in their search for purpose and meaning, but there is urgency about this work now. We in higher education are now situated to have discussions and design purposeful interventions, have difficult conversations with students as they make meaning of their lives, and modify our programs and services (with special attention to social justice and pluralism) to consider the moral implications of our work. All of this helps us confront a moral anemia that has become commonplace in our country. The chapters that follow provide a platform for considering where we can take our practice (for example, student conduct, sustainability, civic engagement, service-learning) to facilitate the moral growth of our students. What follows is a brief review of the theoretical frameworks that provide the foundation for this volume.

Theoretical Frameworks

Most of what we know and teach about moral development is grounded in the work of cognitive-structural theorists, such as Jean Piaget and William Perry. Cognitive-structural theories are more concerned with *how* learning happens, not *what* is learned. Cognitive-structural theories assume that development happens in stage sequencing that is invariant, hierarchical, and qualitatively unique from other stages (as opposed to additive). Using cognitive structures help us to organize and adapt to our environments. Additionally, understanding moral growth from a cognitive-structural developmental framework leads us to expect that learners (in our case, college students) are using cognitive structures to make meaning and reason through problems as they become more intellectually complex and competent (McEwen, 2003). In this section we briefly describe the most frequently cited theory of moral development—Lawrence Kohlberg's—and the subsequent theories of Carol Gilligan, Nel Noddings, and James Rest.

Lawrence Kohlberg's Theory of Moral Reasoning. Grounded in a cognitive-structural approach (and the assumption that reasoning precedes action), Kohlberg's core concepts state that the moral learner moves through three levels and six stages of development. The first, the Pre-Conventional Level, is most evident in children. With its focus on self-centered morality, the learner makes judgments based on the direct consequences to themselves. Actions, therefore, are motivated by a fear of

punishment or by self-interest ("What's in it for me?"). This first level of moral reasoning is characterized by a lack of concern for the effect on others. More typically seen in adolescents and adults, the Conventional Level of moral reasoning is characterized by conforming to the larger society's "conventional" expectations. In other words, I am expected to be a "good person," so my actions are motivated by that goal. In this level, the learner rarely questions the validity of society's rules, laws, and norms about what is right and wrong. Finally, the Post-Conventional Level reflects a "principled" realization that individuals are separate from the greater society and that it is possible to disobey rules and laws that conflict with our principles. Kohlbergian educators believe in the universality of certain principles, such as justice.

Carol Gilligan's Ethic of Care. Inspired by psychologists Erik Erikson and her Harvard colleague Lawrence Kohlberg, Carol Gilligan took issue with what she called Kohlberg's adherence to "justice" as a universal moral mandate. Of Kohlberg, she said: "Psychology was a moral science and it was impossible to talk about development without addressing in one way or another the questions of how to live and what to do" (Gilligan, 1997, p. 2).

These questions—about how to live and what to do—gripped Gilligan in 1970 as she taught a section of Kohlberg's undergraduate course on moral and political choice. The discussion turned to the contemporary events at Kent State University and the killing by the U.S. National Guard of four college students who protested the escalation of the Vietnam War. Gilligan later recounted that:

> In my section, the young men refused to talk about the draft, aware that there was no room in Larry's theory for them to talk about what they were feeling without sounding morally undeveloped, like women, in their concern about relationships and other people's feelings. Uneasy about taking a stand in public that was at odds with what they were feeling in private, finding no room for uncertainty and indecision, they chose silence over hypocrisy [Gilligan, 1997, p. 3].

For these young men, this was a real and personal dilemma—not a hypothetical dilemma posed by Kohlberg—and the consequences of acting on their aversion for the war affected not only the men but also their loved ones. This experience created the stage on which Gilligan would develop her own research questions about moral choice: exploring the possibility that there is a difference between what one *wants* to do and what one feels they *should* do.

She went on to develop a theory around a morality of care—rooted in a compass toward connectedness and relational interactions with others (Gilligan, 1982). Her theory centered on the saliency of relationships and connectedness and the interpersonal ideas (as opposed to societal ideas)

about what it means to be a good person (for example, what do others want me to do?). Central to this theory are the early childhood experiences that allow children to feel attached to those who care for them. This morality of care has three levels: survival, goodness, and truth, with transitions between the three levels that allow the reparation of relationships. There is a growing consensus among many researchers that care, like justice, is a universal principle that deserves study. More about Kohlberg's and Gilligan's research on moral development, particularly the measurement of their theories, is explored in Chapter Nine.

Nel Noddings's Caring Ethics. Nel Noddings's work frequently is associated with Gilligan's, as both were interested in exploring the ethics of care as the rational foundation for moral decision making. Originally framed as a feminine approach to ethics, Noddings's work stemmed from her assumption that care is a primal need and a viable way to be guided in our attitudes, decisions, and choices. She posited that care is basic in all of human life, that care is a moral attitude that can lead us to action, and that care should be cultivated in schools (Noddings, 1984, 1992). Further, Noddings suggested that home should be the primary educator of young people and the place where care is first developed.

Noddings's model of development from the care perspective has four factors: (1) social modeling by others, (2) dialogue about caring, (3) practicing and developing good habits of caring and reflection, and (4) affirmation that requires trust in others (1992).

Moral Development or Moral Maturity

Both James Rest and Kieran Mathieson expanded on Kolhberg's previous work to look beyond the constructs of reasoning and judgment. Mathieson (2003) identified seven factors of moral maturity:

1. Moral agency and a sense of the self as moral being
2. The ability to harness cognitive ability to make decisions
3. The ability to harness emotional resources and sensitivity toward others
4. Using social skill to persuade others
5. Identifying and using higher-order principles as guidance for our choices
6. Valuing and respecting others
7. Developing a sense of one's life purpose

All of these elements can contribute to a moral curriculum on our college campuses.

James Rest's Components of Moral Maturity. In an approach referred to as neo-Kohlbergian, James Rest and his colleagues (Rest, Narvaez, Bebeau, and Thoma, 1999) asserted that moral reasoning was only

one of four necessary components of moral maturity: moral sensitivity (awareness), moral judgment (reasoning), moral motivation, and moral action. Bolstered by research using the Defining Issues Test (DIT), Rest and his colleagues from the Center for the Study of Ethical Development refined the DIT (and revised it to address shortcomings in the DIT-2). The center began at the University of Minnesota in the 1970s and was moved to the University of Alabama following Rest's death in 1999 (Thoma, 2002). The center's focus is on empirical research and publication. The DIT-2 is discussed more thoroughly in Chapter Nine. Rest's work provides a useful map in our work with students. As such, we have used it to help frame this volume.

Moral Sensitivity. The first component in Rest's framework for moral maturity is moral sensitivity, which refers to one's alertness to the need for a particular action and an ability to quickly interpret a situation as having more than one course of action. Moral sensitivity requires a near-instinctual response to situations. It requires one to respond to cues in the environment, either with one's gut or to think through who and what would be affected by various possible actions, including the potential feelings of others. Therefore, a primary cognitive-affective aspect of this sensitivity is to *feel something* for other people—whether empathy, fear, or disgust.

Much has been written on the importance of empathy and sensitivity to others as a prerequisite condition for moral development. This concept is explored in more detail in Chapter Two.

Moral Judgment. The second component of moral maturity identified by Rest is that of moral judgment or reasoning. This process involves more of the cognitive dimensions of morality and is helpful to understanding, though it is short on emotion and affect. Moral judgment involves deciding which course of action is right, just, or fair in a particular situation—a process that requires weighing choices and possible consequences of each to determine which course of action is the morally best one. Only then can one commit to an action based on an understanding of the principles involved.

Moral Motivation. A third component necessary for moral maturity is moral motivation, involving the commitment that one makes toward the moral course of action. This commitment typically is rooted in strong emotion. It's the gut-check aspect of moral action—the compass, the conscience, and the will to put aside personal interests in favor of moral values. This moral motivation calls to mind the development of personal credo that serves as a moral anchor when facing choices, when one prioritizes moral values over personal values. If a business owner chooses to distribute profits to factory workers at the expense of deep personal gain, we conclude this owner is motivated to put moral values ahead of personal ones—as characterized as a conflict in values. Because we are driven to maintain a consistent self-image, our beliefs about ourselves are in play here. This idea is explored in more detail in Chapter Two.

Moral Action. Moral action is the culminating and definitive component, wherein one's sensitivity, judgment, and motivation integrate into execution. Sometimes referred to as moral character, this component entails having the courage and integrity to act on that personal credo or the determined moral action (Narvaez and Rest, 1995). This is life as we know it: moving beyond hypothetical dilemmas about whether Heinz should steal the drug, or who in our community should be allowed to enter the lifeboat. Moral action requires resolving real-life conflicts that may be high stakes for the learner.

How do these four components work together? Narvaez and Rest (1995) maintain that moral action requires self-confidence, perseverance, and steadfastness toward the final goal, and a belief in one's success in the task. It is the component frequently referred to as "character."

Moral Development or Character Education?

So, why not just teach the traits associated with character? The character education movement in K–12 typically is regarded as one expedient way to direct younger students toward a common moral goal. The appropriateness of teaching toward specified pillars or core values, however, has been criticized by some who think this kind of educational directive undermines independent critical thought. There may, however, be inherent value in engaging students in explicit teaching and direction about institutional values that benefit individuals *and* community, such as freedom, autonomy, respect for others, justice, or truth.

Should not character education transcend the personal development of individuals and move students toward public action to benefit others? If it does, then our task is clear. We should not only help students negotiate their interpersonal relations as they move through their worlds but also help them with the cognitive components to negotiate those complex worlds. For example, when we ask students to work at a Free Lunch Program that serves meals for low-income and homeless families, we should arm them with the knowledge and skills to talk to the clients there, to investigate the causes of hunger and poverty, and to discuss the socioeconomic and political means of meeting these challenges. Doing the right thing is more than about showing up and serving lunch. Narvaez and Rest (1995) wrote: "It would be a mistake to portray the whole of morality as simply empathy, or simply concepts of justice, or merely genetic predisposition to be altruistic, or solely mimicking a model. . . . If moral behavior is the end goal of moral education, then moral education ought to be addressing all four components" (p. 398).

We concur wholeheartedly with this sentiment and therefore assume the four-component approach to morality as a framework throughout this volume.

Definitions Used in This Volume

The term "moral development" often is used as an interchangeable term for "ethical development," yet these are somewhat distinct constructs. In this sourcebook, we are focusing on moral development, which is an aspect of cognitive development. As a person is able to make sense of the world in more complex ways, the ability to weigh moral actions also moves to more sophisticated decision-making approaches.

"Ethics" refers to a set of moral principles used by an individual or group that provides a framework for behavior. For instance, professional associations expect ethical behavior of their members and set the parameters for that behavior in their ethical guidelines. These guidelines are determined by the mores of the field and the gatekeeping functions related to the public. For example, the ethical expectations of a counseling psychologist will be markedly different from those of a student affairs professional because of the professional and in some cases legally defined nature of the relationship between the clinician and the client.

The concept of "character" refers to the "habits of mind, heart, and conduct that help students know and do what is ethical" (Dalton, 1999, p. 47). Because good moral health includes cognitions, values, emotions, and the will to act, we think of morality holistically—it simply must be addressed in a multifaceted way that includes support for students on all domains.

Summary

In this chapter, we have laid out the basic foundational concepts and assumptions that will guide the reader through the chapters to come as the authors explore *how* moral growth can be facilitated through various initiatives on the college campus.

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