MORAL EDUCATION AND CHARACTER

Ivor Pritchard
Office of Research

U.S. Department of Education
Lauro F. Cavazos
Secretary

Office of Educational Research and Improvement
Chester E. Finn, Jr.
Assistant Secretary

Office of Research
Milton Goldberg
Acting Director

Information Services
Ray Fields
Director

September 1988

Foreword

In September 1987, a 2-day conference was held in Washington, D.C. to discuss issues and research questions on the topic "Moral Education and Character." The conference was sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Educational Research and Improvement. Scholars from such disciplines as history, philosophy, sociology, psychology, literature and education, along with people concerned about education practice and policy, joined in examining the range of practices and problems central to moral education and the development of good character.

Participants argued strongly for diverse positions on various issues. While not all the debates led to complete agreement, the various viewpoints represented were all taken seriously. The participants expressed their appreciation for the presentation of diverse points of view, and their praise for the spirit of serious and respectful discussion that pervaded the meeting. They were united regarding the importance of the subject, and convinced that questions of moral education pose a significant challenge for all concerned.

This report describes some of the ideas and recommendations voiced by participants at that conference. It also recounts some of the stories they told. Its purpose is to inform the reader's understanding of the nature of moral education and the development of good character. It will succeed if it provokes thoughtful discussion and practical responses by the public to the challenging questions posed by this important subject. More detailed discussion of specific issues covered in the conference is contained in the papers and written reactions of the individual conference participants. The Office of Research plans to make these papers available in the future.

Ivor Pritchard
Education and Society Division
Office of Research

Table of Contents

Moral Education and Character Conference Participants

Joseph Adelson, Department of Clinical Psychology, University of Michigan
Richard Baer, Department of Natural Resources, New York State College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, Cornell University
Rebecca Canning, Vice Chair, Texas State Board of Education
David Carr, Department of Education, Moray House College at Cramond, Edinburgh
Philip Cusick, Department of Educational Administration, Michigan State University
Gerald Grant, Departments of Sociology and Cultural Foundations of Education, Syracuse University
Thomas F. Green, Department of Cultural Foundations of Education, Syracuse University
Michael Guerra, Executive Director, Secondary School Department, National Catholic Educational Association
Martin Hoffman, Department of Psychology, New York University
Philip Jackson, Department of Education, University of Chicago
Henry C. Johnson, Jr., Department of Education Policy Studies, Pennsylvania State University
James Leming, Department of Curriculum and Instruction, Southern Illinois University at Carbondale
Thomas Lickona, Department of Education, State University of New York at Cortland
Patricia Lines, Senior Research Associate, Office of Research, U.S. Department of Education
Robert Marquand, Journalist, the Christian Science Monitor
B. Edward McClellan, Department of Education Leadership and Policy Studies, Indiana University
Carol Nylen, Nathan Clifford Elementary School, Portland, Maine
William Profriedt, Department of Secondary Education, Queens College, City University of New York
Susan Resneck Parr, Dean, Henry Kendall College of Arts and Sciences, University of Tulsa
Kevin Ryan, Department of Education, Boston University
Charles Strickland, Division of Education Studies, Emory University
Kenneth Strike, Department of Education, New York State College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, Cornell University
James A. Williams, Assistant Superintendent for Intermediate and Secondary Instruction, Dayton Public Schools

The following Department of Education officials presented remarks during the conference:

Chester E. Finn, Jr., Assistant Secretary, Office of Educational Research and Improvement
Sally B. Kilgore, Director, Office of Research
William Kristol, Chief of Staff, Office of the Secretary of Education

Ivor Pritchard, from the Office of Research, served as moderator for the conference discussions.

I. What Is Moral Education About?

Moral education concerns learning about good conduct in human life. Much of that good conduct springs from character, the stable qualities of the person that are often revealed in that person's actions. Throughout the conference, participants talked about what children can learn about how they should act. Particular attention was drawn to a number of significant features of ethical or moral conduct.

People frequently adopt too simple a view of morality, ignoring important aspects of ethical conduct. Martin Hoffman's review of recent research in psychology indicated that progress has been made in understanding the development of children's thinking about moral ideas, but that little research has inquired into the development of the emotional capacities that motivate their actions, such as the ability to empathize with the plight of other people. Emotions such as empathy, sympathy, guilt, shame, anger, and love deeply affect the person's moral conduct. Morality involves thought, emotion, and action. Genuine understanding of these elements means understanding them in relation to each other.

A "hot cognition", according to Hoffman, is a thought, charged with emotional energy, that may lead to appropriate action. In the case of the child who acts to help another, the child understands that person's plight, but also empathizes with the person's distress, and so is motivated to do something altruistic. Emotional capacities mature, as do cognitive capacities. Developing a sense of anger in response to the undeserved plight of another person is a more sophisticated emotional reaction than simply feeling the other person's distress, meaning that the simpler emotional reaction must be developed first. Cognitive and motivational maturation are both integral features of moral development, Hoffman argued, and both require research attention.

Morality is sometimes equated with preserving order, or learning to obey the rules. And there is no question that preserving the social structure of society is important, since such institutions as schools cannot function successfully without there being some order. But a good school must achieve more than simple order, for the point of order in school is to make learning possible. When order takes precedence over learning, the results are unfortunate. For example, one participant recounted a story about using a strategy called "cooperative learning" in her classroom. This strategy involves grouping children together to help one another learn, and has a research record of positive results for both academic and moral aims. But the school principal objected to it, because the voices of the children talking with each other created more noise than the voice of the teacher speaking alone!

Thomas Green suggested that too often morality is thought to be largely a matter of lying, sexual misbehavior, and cheating on expense accounts. Moral judgments are expressed in what he called "the voices of conscience," which include craft, memory, membership, imagination, and sacrifice. And these voices speak to various aspects of human conduct in ways that go beyond the usual examples of morality to address broader concerns of life. The voice of craft, for example, suggests that mowing the lawn or writing a good sentence are ordinary activities involving standards of right and wrong, doing the task well or doing it poorly. It is a mark of people's character whether they take care to perform such everyday actions well. If morality or ethics is understood to include this sort of performance, then moral education and conduct become a constant concern, not one restricted to occasional momentous decisions.

Another participant called everyone's attention to the moral dimension of normal school life displayed in such things as the silent promise made by teachers and students to meet together in class each day in order to learn together. Philip Jackson pointed out that this is like the activities of scientific research, where researchers must depend on the honesty of their colleagues to report findings truthfully, because they rely on the findings of others in conducting their own investigations. So, too, educational activities pursued in common cannot take place without honesty, fairness, and responsibility. In this sense, education cannot go on without moral education being a part of it.

Another moral message is often heard in schools, one that many conference participants vigorously objected to. Philip Cusick, reporting on his observations of life in various high schools, spoke of the individualistic, competitive, and secular emphases of school life. Children are taught to worry about only their own welfare, to see their self-interest as opposed to everyone else's, and to view the rewards of life entirely in materialistic terms. Various participants denied the legitimacy of teaching these ideals, and suggested that different elements of American society are in danger of endorsing these mistaken ideals when they call for America to use education to improve its "competitiveness," without proper regard for other important educational ideals.

David Carr offered three fundamental conceptions of moral life and education into which the various approaches may be grouped. According to the first conception, morality is understood primarily as a matter of observing social custom or convention, and moral education consists of teaching children to conform to society's views of right and wrong behavior. In the second conception, morality consists of making rational decisions when faced with moral problems or dilemmas, and moral education therefore focuses on cultivating the child's capacity for critical rational thought. The third conception views morality as the exercise of certain moral virtues or dispositions of character, and education consists in fostering the child's acquisition of those virtues. The following pages suggest that, as the conference progressed, at various times the discussions reflected the influence of each of these three conceptions of moral education.

II. Who Teaches Moral Education?

Parents are the first moral educators of the child. Some parents may not realize this, or see themselves in this role, but they do in fact provide moral lessons through what their children see and hear them do and say. Thomas Lickona identified nine dimensions of the parent's role as moral educator, based for the most part on evidence taken from research:

1. The parent as a moral educator communicates an understanding of the moral domain, a domain in which respect and responsibility are central concepts. Respect includes recognizing the worth of the self, acknowledging the equal worth of others, and taking into consideration the complex web of natural life around us. Responsibility extends the notion of respect, meaning that people should fulfill the obligations they have to help and care for others.

2. The parent is sensitive to the developmental aspects of moral education — that different kinds of moral explanation make sense to children as they mature. For example, children at an early age may believe that there is nothing wrong in stealing from someone they don't like, failing to see that respect for property has nothing to do with personal likes and dislikes. A parent explaining fairness to a 6-year-old may have to depend on the idea of reciprocity, as illustrated by the parent who gives a child a ride to a friend's house and later reminds the child of this when asking for help with the dishes. But 16-year-olds should be able to understand what is fair regardless of their own self-interests, and so parents' explanations to them of what is fair should change accordingly.

3. Parents can foster mutual respect in their children, by doing such things as giving everyone a chance to be heard in a given situation. Settling a conflict involves not just figuring out what the right resolution is, but also showing children how people treat each other fairly in the process of working it out.

4. Moral education is often taught by example, so parents provide children with a model with which they may identify. Whether they realize it or not, parents constantly display by their actions how they think life should be lived, and their children see this.

5. Parents can teach moral education by talking with their children. First, they can tell their children directly what is right and what is wrong, and say why: "Calling people names is wrong, because it hurts." Second, they can engage their children in dialogue by asking them questions about the moral features of actions and prodding them to start thinking about moral questions. And third, they can voice how seriously they feel about moral issues. Recalling Hoffman's theory of "hot cognitions," Lickona mentioned research in which children who felt obliged to follow through on their moral judgments were distinguished by having parents who felt strongly about ethical conduct and expressed their moral indignation or disappointment when their children were in the wrong.

6. Parents can give their children real responsibilities. Having the chore of feeding the family pet or setting the table may not seem so important by itself, but such responsibilities may be the beginning of an understanding of the meaning of larger responsibilities.

7. It is important to balance independence and parental control over children. Obviously, parents must exercise a positive influence over their children, but at the same time they must anticipate and try to prepare children for making choices on their own.

8. Loving children is crucial. Being aware that someone is crazy about them may contribute to developing a sense of self-worth and moral dignity to which every human is entitled.

9. Parents can expose their children to their own spiritual heritage. This heritage may acquaint the child with some of the fundamental beliefs and practices that respond to basic features of human life.

Teachers are also centrally involved in moral education, once the child begins to go to school. By word and deed, they are also models for moral education, extending the adult influence over the child that was first begun by

the parents. When Thomas Green spoke of the formation of conscience in terms of its several voices, he described the teacher's objective as attempting to stimulate the conversation among those voices. This will encourage children to develop their capacity for critical judgment of their own and other people's performances and may lead them to improve their ability to act well.

And teachers and parents can cooperate with each other in various ways, Lickona pointed out. Through direct involvement in school life, by coordinating their efforts with both school personnel and other members of the community, parents have a number of different avenues they can pursue to extend their role as moral educators beyond the circle of the family.

This is not to say that conference participants saw the moral educator role of adults as entirely harmonious or trouble-free, however. Carol Nylen told the following story to illustrate one of the teacher's dilemmas of moral education:

> **When I taught first grade, we had 'show and tell.' A student stood up, and he said "I got a new bike this week." And everybody said "Oh, wow, where did you get it?" He said, "Well, we were driving around, and my father found it on the sidewalk." And everyone said "Oh, you were so lucky." And I was appalled. My question is, do you point out to the child and to the classroom that their parents are not moral educators — that they are immoral?**

But the parent/teacher relationship is not always negative, of course. One parent participating in the conference told of his fourth grade son's excitement at the stories told by his teacher in social studies class. After a fight on the playground, this teacher had told the class about how as a child he had seen his own father stop a man from beating up a woman, and the pride he felt at his father's courage. This led to a class discussion of how boys and girls, husbands and wives ought to treat each other. From the excitement that this story created in the class discussion that followed, it was clear that stories exhibiting the virtuous character of parents and teachers can provide moral inspiration, particularly when the stories shed light on the child's own experiences.

III. What Is America's History of Moral Education?

History often provides instructive insights about the questions of the present, and moral education is no exception. Edward McClellan, whose conference paper reviewed the history of American moral education, summarized that history in terms of the legacies of moral education that prevailed at various times in the last two centuries of education in the United States.

In the 19th century, moral education was taught in the schools in direct and straightforward fashion, openly reflecting its religious origins. The religious faith that supported this morality in the public schools was said to be universal and nonsectarian, and thus supposedly ought not to have offended the members of any particular religious denomination. But many people, a substantial number of them Roman Catholics, argued that the religious viewpoint expressed in the public schools and textbooks was in fact that of a particular kind of Protestant Christianity. Consequently, some parents sent their children to public schools reluctantly, while others set up private schools that offered moral lessons based on other sets of religious beliefs. Many Catholics and a growing number of evangelical Protestants have continued this tradition of integrating moral and religious education, usually in private, church-supported schools.

In the early part of the 20th century, another approach to moral education became popular, one that was organized around teaching certain moral virtues, but without explicit reference to the religious or philosophical worldview in which those virtues were embedded. In this way, education seemed to avoid the conflicts resulting from the implementation of the religious approach. This approach was often organized around morality codes. During the conference, McClellan passed around a 1926 revision of a morality code that won a competition in 1916, the judges having been a Yale University professor, a Supreme Court Justice, and the President of the National Council of Women. The laws of that code were as follows:

I. Good Americans Control Themselves.
II. Good Americans Try to Gain and Keep Good Health.
III. Good Americans Are Kind.
IV. Good Americans Play Fair.
V. Good Americans Are Self-Reliant.
VI. Good Americans Do Their Duty.
VII. Good Americans Are Reliable.
VIII. Good Americans Are True.
IX. Good Americans Try to Do the Right Thing in the Right Way.
X. Good Americans Work in Friendly Cooperation With Fellow-Workers.
XI. Good Americans Are Loyal.

Morality codes such as this were a popular form of presentation for this approach to moral education, stressing virtues that few would find objectionable, without danger of making direct explicit reference to the comprehensive worldview of any particular religion.

Beginning around the middle of this century, several distinct approaches to moral education that held certain features in common came into widespread use. McClellan said that while there were important differences between them, the progressive approach, values clarification, and the Kohlberg approach shared certain noteworthy characteristics.* Suspicious of traditions and textbooks, these approaches relied on the immediate experiences of children to cultivate the skills of moral reasoning and decision-making. Religion was now considered a private matter, and issues relating to liberty and equality, rather than fraternity or community, predominated.

* The progressive approach was largely derived from John Dewey's philosophy of education. The primary aim of values clarification is the identification and recognition of the student's own beliefs about moral values. Kohlberg's approach uses student discussions of moral dilemmas to develop their moral judgment, with progress being measured against a six-stage theory of moral judgment. More about these approaches may be found in Part VI.

Recent decades also witnessed the appearance of an educational philosophy that aimed for a neutral stance about what was right and wrong, or else sought to avoid the subject entirely. McClellan speculated that the social tensions of the past few decades, and the idea that the school serves to bring about cohesion in society, seems to have led to great caution about doing anything to disturb the harmony of the school. That caution has been evident in moral education in the recent past, but the hesitation may be coming to an end.

Part VI of this report includes, in James Leming's remarks, additional discussion of research on moral education during the last 20 years.

IV. Must Everyone Agree About What Is Moral?

If there is ambiguity or disagreement about the content of morality, this poses the problem of what kind of moral education should be taught in school. What is to be done if parents disagree with each other, or with teachers, about exactly what standards of right and wrong should be taught to their children?

Richard Baer argued cogently that neither the public school, the Federal Government, nor the social majority is entitled to impose a specific view of morality on the children of dissenting parents. Citing the American tradition of toleration of different religious points of view, he reasoned that because moral positions are often justified in terms of religious beliefs, and since moral disagreements are frequently a consequence of religious convictions, it follows that the schools may not presume a common content for morality. Respect for the pluralism of religious views and the moral conclusions that follow from them is essential to the preservation of an important ideal.

Gerald Grant offered a rival interpretation of how the ideal of toleration is applied to the situation of the public school. Recognizing the diversity among the people who live in this country and whose children attend public schools, he suggested that the school provides a kind of meeting place where different people can congregate to share their experiences and views, creating a common story that is enriched by the various perspectives included. To this analysis Baer objected, saying again that parents have a right to refuse to expose their children to moral perspectives they deplore, and that our Nation was founded on the principle that people should be allowed to hold their own views regardless of the convictions of others. Grant did not deny that parents have such a right, and expressed his agreement with Baer on this point by recounting a case of a troubled student whose parents had taken her out of Hamilton High and enrolled her in a private school affiliated with the Quakers, a decision that proved beneficial to the student. Grant remained more hopeful than Baer, however, that parents who choose to send their children to public schools can expect the school to play a morally positive educative role.

At one point in the conference, Kenneth Strike pointed out that some qualities of character and action are really beyond serious question. Honesty, for example, is something no one denies that we ought to encourage in ourselves and in our children. We may appeal to different sources in explaining why honesty is called for, he said, but eventually we all call for honesty. David Carr echoed this view, pointing out that no one argues in favor of dishonesty, or against compassion or justice. It is a mistake, he suggested, to think of our disagreements in moral education as being about its ultimate goals; the real problems, he suggested, have to do with figuring out *how* honesty may be achieved and exercised, not *whether* we should seek to acquire such virtues. Certain features of morality are so taken for granted when people focus on the controversial that sometimes they overlook what everyone accepts. And James Williams emphasized the importance of communicating clearly and directly to students the expectation that they must observe standards of good conduct defined by school policy.

Later in the conference, William Profriedt talked about five strategies for the resolution of conflicts over moral education. There is something to be said for and against each of these strategies, he suggested, and it was plain that some of the recommendations offered at the conference reflected various aspects of them.

The first strategy, the "consensus solution," implies general agreement regarding some set of moral values, such that these values can be taught without serious objection from any quarter of society. There is a consensus about central moral concepts and values such as respect and responsibility that can be conveyed to children without hesitation, Profriedt said, especially at the elementary school level. But how deep or superficial that agreement is, and how to address the moral controversies left outstanding, remains problematic.

The "rationality solution" claims that rational inquiry will enable us to discover — and to teach — the morally good. It is important to realize that moral views are not entirely nonrational or arbitrary, and that reasoning about moral ideas can be done either poorly or well.

The difficulty here is that views parading under the auspices of rationality sometimes reflect an unwarranted bias and exploit the label of rationality to protect themselves from criticism.

The "hands-off solution" means avoiding moral education in the schools entirely. The hands-off strategy may be practically unfeasible, but it serves to remind us of peoples' concerns about teaching morality. Even if it is impossible for education to be value-free, the appeal of this solution signals the common hesitation about addressing the issues.

The "religious/institutional solution" replaces public school moral education with religious instruction in various openly religious settings. The institutional solution allows parents who object to the moral education provided by the public school to choose an alternative form of schooling for their children. But this is only practicable when preferable alternative schooling is available, of course, and sometimes this may financially overburden the parents.

The "psychological solution" focuses on sensitivity to the self-esteem and well-being of the student. This strategy is especially careful about the sensitivities of students and encourages students to express unpopular viewpoints. However, in practice, it can degenerate into a relativistic endorsement of any belief whatsoever, the view that anything is right just as long as you believe it to be so.

In the discussions of educational policymaking, two points were raised by participants regarding who gets involved in making the relevant decisions. Rebecca Canning cautioned that those who are most active in policymaking do not always represent the whole population; sometimes people who, for one reason or another, believe that their opinions will not receive a fair hearing may decide not to participate at all. As a result, agreement among those actively participating may not mean agreement among all those affected by the decision. James Williams made a similar point: the established education policymakers are not always sensitive to the needs of such groups as the disadvantaged students of a poor urban school. As a result, recommendations regarding such relevant issues as school discipline may be appropriate for one kind of school but not another, even if everyone agrees that fair and consistent discipline is desirable.

On the subject of teaching controversial moral questions, Phil Cusick reported that teachers by and large avoid these topics. In addition to the schoolwide message of order and an individualistic, competitive, and secular orientation, he said, "good teachers teach themselves"; that is, they reveal their own moral perspective in the process of teaching the class. These moral perspectives are thus as varied as the individual teachers themselves. But concern about getting fired, and the fact that when controversy breaks out the school administration must devote a tremendous amount of time to dealing with the controversy, are incentives to leave such questions aside.

This tendency to avoid controversy is not always the case, of course: Cusick told the story of some nuns teaching in a Catholic school who invited some Nicaraguan Sandinistas to a class in which many of the students were from Polish or Hungarian families that had fled from communist oppression in their homelands. As one can imagine, the discussion of communism and revolution that ensued in the class was quite lively.

V. What Is the Place of Religion in Moral Education at School?

Recognizing the multiplicity of religions practiced in the United States, and the first amendment's protection of the free exercise of religion, the discussion of the proper place of religion in moral education in the schools was spirited and complex. Participants recognized that public schools and private schools face different kinds of issues. And it was generally agreed that religious convictions may have a bearing on moral convictions and are thus a natural part of discussions about moral education. They saw that religion can be present in the school in a variety of different ways, and that some sort of controversy over religion could easily become a source of concern. But they also saw that ignoring religion makes no sense.

Henry Johnson argued that students should be able to study religion in school, saying that the Constitution in no way prohibits it, and that religion is not a special case of a set of beliefs that somehow defies study and reflection. He suggested that it was in the spirit of the American tradition of protecting religious freedom that the schools encourage what he described as a kind of "experimental or radical pluralism," in which students have the opportunity to inquire about their own religions, to learn more about the substance of religious faith in an intellectually rigorous way. The diversity of students' religious views will then be reflected in the diversity of religions studied. The pluralism in the religious views encountered by the students of the public school can be positive and productive, he maintained. The public schools do not have a right to teach only a single religion, but students do have a right to learn about or use their religions.

Following this argument, Richard Baer posed a dilemma about the implications of exactly whose religious rights are being protected here. Is religious pluralism a matter of the students' right to be exposed to whatever religious viewpoint they are inclined to pursue? If so, Baer argued, then many private schools should be closed, because private schools are often religiously affiliated and offer only a single form of religious instruction that might not correspond to the students' interests. On the other hand, is religious pluralism a right exercised by groups and families to preserve diverse religious traditions? If this is so, then private schools appear to be preferable to public schools as a natural mechanism through which parents and groups may offer an education that is consonant with a particular religious tradition. Public schools now appear to present a problem in this view — assuming that schooling is an important part of a child's introduction to a religious tradition — because State-funded public schools are prohibited from espousing any single religious tradition.

Baer was pressed to identify just what he would recommend, particularly in light of the general acceptance among the conference participants that the ways people treat one another make moral education an inevitable part of schooling. He proposed a compound approach. First, public schools ought to provide for the expression of diverse points of view. Second, parents who object to public school moral education should be granted tuition vouchers, so that they might place their children in nongovernment schools of their own choosing without adding to their financial burden.

In the discussion that followed, participants identified a number of different ways in which religion might appear in the school, and discussed the appropriateness of that presence. The Supreme Court has made a distinction between "teaching religion" and "teaching about religion," ruling that teaching about religion in public schools is Constitutional, while teaching religion is not. The participants recognized this distinction, but noted that in practice it may be difficult to do the one and not the other.

The ensuing conference discussion mentioned several different ways in which religion might be present in the school. Recent studies of textbooks have concluded that the role of religion in history has been intentionally neglected, and participants generally agreed that such neglect should be stopped. No one questioned the view that religion has influenced history in many ways, and that this is a truth that students should understand. Some noted that there are literary texts, including the Bible, that students in school should have access to as means for learning about religious ideas. Robert Marquand suggested that the autobiographies of some historical figures

whose lives were shaped by their religious beliefs could provide some instructive moral lessons. A course about the religions of the world was also proposed as a way to include the study of religion in the public school. Patricia Lines expressed the view that such courses have a legitimate place in the public schools, particularly if they are elective or, where required, if the student may exercise a right to be excused.

Thomas Lickona mentioned the idea of providing a classroom situation for discussing students' religious views and the implications of their views for morality. Citing survey data, he pointed out that an overwhelming majority of students indicate that they have religious beliefs. If they do, he reasoned, this probably influences their beliefs about right and wrong, including right and wrong sexual behavior. But do sex education courses ever mention the relevance of religious beliefs to decisions about sexual behavior, he asked doubtfully?

Several difficulties in the teaching of religion emerged during the discussion. One had to do with the teaching religion/teaching about religion distinction, and showing sensitivity toward the beliefs of the people being studied. Calling it an "anthropological" approach to religion, Kenneth Strike talked about the tendency to describe someone's beliefs in such a way as to dismiss entirely the possibility of their truthfulness. Henry Johnson supplied an illustration of this tendency to deny the legitimacy of religious conviction:

> **In a secondary school textbook talking about the Middle Ages, they give a little story about a medieval monk who is riding through the forest and is convinced that an angel knocks him off his mule in order to teach him a lesson. And the teacher's manual instructs the teacher to discuss with the students what sort of psychological problems this man might have had for him to come to that conclusion.**

Michael Guerra raised a complication arising from Henry Johnson's position on the legitimacy of the intellectual exercise of studying religion in school. In the course of the conference, several participants had asserted that teachers are important role models in moral education, and consequently that teachers should be good or virtuous people. And students, it was said, should not only learn what virtue is, but should learn to act virtuously. But if a teacher's religious beliefs inform that teacher's understanding of virtue, then how do you determine who should teach in the public school? Doesn't the moral aspect of religion make it necessarily more than a simple intellectual exercise of theological scholarship? Don't people mean for their religious convictions to affect their everyday behavior? Doesn't this mean that teachers might be hired in part because of moral virtues they display as a function of their religious beliefs, and wouldn't this present a problem for the public school?

And then there is the matter of controversy, and how far schools should go to avoid it. Henry Johnson had suggested that perhaps teachers were overly timid in their reluctance to talk about religion. But Carol Nylen, a teacher, replied:

> **I'm going to ... say I'm chicken. I remember early in my teaching career I came home [from school]. I talked to my husband, and I was telling him about a discussion we had on Jesus Christ, and he said "Jesus Christ! You're going to be fired!"**

Part of the reason she offered to explain why she stayed away from such discussions of religious topics after that, she said, was that she did not feel well-qualified to teach them.

Several participants expressed doubts about teacher competence to teach this subject. Seconding this concern, Robert Marquand envisioned the following possible sequence of events:

> **I can picture some parents complaining to the principal about how religion is being introduced in the classroom, the parents not getting any response from the principal,**

who has been asked by the school board to do that, the parents going to the local press, and someone like me [a journalist] going to the school and asking to listen in on some of these classes, and perhaps doing it even without a lot of clearance beforehand, and perhaps even going ostensibly as a parent, and seeing some bad teaching going on and writing about it and it becomes a big scandal.

At the same time, however, few if any of the participants were prepared to recommend resolving the problem by trying to avoid the problem entirely. Surely, one participant said, the intention of the Nation's founders was to preserve people's ability to express and live by their religious beliefs, not to allow only those who dismiss religion to speak their minds in public and in the schools. And Thomas Green warned against reasoning according to what he called the "if ever, then never" inference — in other words, if someone ever does a poor job of teaching the subject of religion, then it should never be taught at all. Echoing a theme heard repeatedly during the conference, Henry Johnson suggested that no position really manages to avoid this issue, and therefore that no position is without controversy. He reported a newspaper story in which a school administrator was concerned about whether the school's library collection might provoke trouble because of objections that could be raised about the nature of the religious contents of any of the books. The administrator went to the school library to check, and when he found not a single book that mentioned God, he didn't see why anybody thought this could be controversial!

Later on during the conference, William Profriedt told a story that brought out the lighter side of this issue:

Before my children started in public school, we sent my oldest son to a Montessori school, and those of you who know something about Montessori know there is a kind of Catholic background that goes back to Maria Montessori's thinking. This school rented a basement in a Jewish temple, and the teachers were from India, because you know Maria Montessori went to India for a while and there were a lot of Indian women — Hindus — who had come to this country and were teaching.

These particular teachers were recent arrivals here, and around Christmas time they wanted to be responsive to what they thought was American religion, and they put up some Christmas wreaths and things on the side door of the temple.

They did this on the night of a parent meeting. I was up there, and this chaos broke out. The rabbi came in, and the women didn't understand what was going on. They were trying to be nice, and people were screaming at one another: "Church and State!" and "The rights of the individual!" and "This is our temple!" and "This is America!"

And the thing was worked out. There was no logic to it, and everybody just kind of calmed down, you know, and they went on with the job.

VI. Does a Specific Curriculum Exist for Moral Education?

One way to present moral education is through a distinct course or classroom activity. Addressing moral questions in direct and straightforward fashion is perhaps the most obvious way in which to do moral education. Alternatively, moral questions can be introduced in the course of teaching subjects in the standard curriculum, such as history or literature. Several of the conference participants were prepared to present their views on the various ways in which course content might serve as a vehicle for moral education, and what purposes such teaching might accomplish.

Susan Parr talked about the ways in which moral questions can be introduced to a class studying a literary work. She described the purposes of that introduction in terms of teaching individual and social responsibility; learning to think critically about complex moral questions; acknowledging the importance of moral consciousness, moral choice, and moral action; and maintaining that individuals can and do make a genuine difference through responsible choice and action.

Literature is especially well-suited to conveying the complexity of moral questions, she argued, because of the richness and subtlety of presentation that is typical of the moral issues contained in great literary works. Literature also provides students with an opportunity to think about questions that their own lives have not occasioned, giving a sense of life beyond themselves. Literature also gives them a chance to confront very difficult and highly charged moral questions that have important social implications in a way that is often preferable to discussing the same question in the context of current events or of their own lives.

Sometimes what is needed in this teaching is nothing other than to push students beyond their initial reactions, a point that Parr illustrated with the following anecdote about teaching Tennessee Williams' *A Streetcar Named Desire:*

> **I said to the students, "Stella and Stanley have Blanche institutionalized because she has accused Stanley of raping her while Stella is in the hospital giving birth to their baby. Is that right, or not? How do you feel about Stella sending her sister off to a mental hospital?" (Blanche, if you don't remember the play, has indeed been raped. She is telling the truth about the story. And Stella says, "I can't believe my sister's story; I can't believe that Blanche is telling the truth and staining my marriage." She is making a very pragmatic decision.)**
>
> **And the students said, "Oh, it's a good thing to send her off to the mental hospital."**
>
> **I said "Why?"**
>
> **They said, "She [Blanche] is eccentric, she's poor, she doesn't have any way to support herself. And besides, she's interfering with Stanley and Stella's sex life: she's sleeping on the couch in the living room, and they're having a hard time."**
>
> **When I came back to these issues in class, I said, "Is it really appropriate to institutionalize someone who is poor, eccentric, or inconvenient, or who doesn't have good self-perception?" The students all agreed, of course, that it was not.**

At the same time, Parr voiced reservations about the way in which raising moral questions through the medium of good literature is understood. Teaching is an act of faith, she suggested, and while the teacher may hope that students will acquire knowledge, understanding, and self-discipline in the process of their studies, there is no guarantee of producing any predictable result. She pointed out that famous authors and interpreters of texts who display a sophisticated sensitivity to moral questions have also displayed their share of immoral conduct in their own personal lives. She also voiced her wariness of the possibility that research investigating the effects of the kind of teaching she described would use a simplistic model of moral education and of the moral issues presented in the texts, ignoring the subtleties of the subject in the interest of reaching general conclusions.

Charles Strickland talked about teaching history and its role in moral education, and told a story illustrating the point that the success of someone's teaching may depend on how they approach teaching history. He described a turn-of-the-century conflict between the followers of John Dewey and the followers of Johann Herbart over the proper way to teach history. Herbart's followers had argued that children should begin by reading fables and fairy tales, and then proceed to biography and stories about the heroes of American history. John Dewey rejected this approach, arguing that it reduced moral instruction to drawing lessons from the lives of particular individuals, and failed to widen the child's appreciation of the relations, institutions, and forces that operate throughout society.

Dewey's viewpoint prevailed, but its use in the classroom ran into a serious snag: the children were bored. Unfortunately, according to Strickland, this did not mean that the Deweyan approach lost all influence. In fact, he suggested that the "expanding horizons" approach to the organization of the curriculum, which moves from the study of what the child is most familiar with outward to larger and more distant parts of society, is still influenced by Dewey's type of approach.

Strickland talked about a theory developed by Kieran Egan as a promising alternative to the expanding horizons curriculum, a theory that follows the tradition of Herbart's perspective. A series of stages, from the mythic stage, through the romantic, followed by the philosophical, and finally to the ironic stage, provide a framework for the presentation of history that is more sensitive to the development of a child, and also draws the student's attention to the virtuous qualities ingrained in the characters of the great men and women they read about. Before being asked to consider general and abstract explanations of historical events, children should have a chance to become engaged by narratives that represent the structure of history. They can do this first by being exposed to the fantastic and exotic stories of fables, fairy tales and myths, and then to the biographies of people who displayed great character in trying circumstances, such as Booker T. Washington, Louisa May Alcott, and Anne Frank. Strickland acknowledged that talking about historical heroes might disturb teachers who wish to preserve their scholarly impartiality toward the persons being studied. But he pointed out that students will inevitably find their heroes somewhere, and that the great figures of the past might well serve as better role models than the ones children draw from other available sources.

Recent popular curricular approaches to moral education have not been overwhelmingly successful. Reporting on research evidence concerning values clarification, the moral dilemma approach created by Lawrence Kohlberg, and the standard social studies course, James Leming concluded that the research studies on the effects of these approaches found none of them to be fully satisfactory.

Values clarification is an approach that aims to reveal and identify the subject's values without ever evaluating or judging those values to be right or wrong. Much research has been done in the last 20 years or so to measure the effects of this approach. The various studies consistently conclude that, according to all the measures considered, values clarification does not appear to have any effect at all.

The "moral dilemma" approach presents students with moral dilemmas to discuss and resolve, with students giving an explanation as to why each considers his or her judgment of the solution to the dilemma to be right. These explanations are then viewed according to a theory of progressively higher stages of moral development, matching the kind of explanation given with the appropriate stage of development. At the judgment or reasoning level, this approach has demonstrated some significant effects: the approach appears to at least hasten the subjects' progress to a higher stage of moral judgment. Unfortunately, however, no research shows that this progress carries over to the level of the subjects' behavior and leads them to act in ways morally better according to the standards of the stage theory of moral development. Leming observed that a potential problem for any approach to moral education that concerns itself exclusively with reasoning is that subjects learn how to produce more sophisticated justifications for what they believed all along, but that they do not necessarily adopt higher moral aims. He quoted Benjamin Franklin to illustrate this point: "So convenient a thing it is to be a reasonable creature, since it enables one to find or make a reason for everything one has a mind to do."

Nor are the results of the contemporary efforts to use a character education curriculum especially promising, according to Leming. The most popular of these curricula is supported only by favorable opinions expressed by those involved, which is very shaky evidence. As Leming put it, "testimonials are probably one of the most unreliable, biased forms of social science knowledge that we have available." And since this approach is quite similar to the highly didactic approaches inspired by the morality codes in the early 20th century, research on the effects of these earlier approaches may be relevant: in *Studies in the Organization of Character* (1928-1930, 3 vols.), one of the most influential studies of moral education ever conducted, Hartshorne and May found no evidence of a positive effect from these programs.

The various studies of moral education strategies have also provided the basis for evaluating the effects of the standard social studies curriculum, since students taking this curriculum often serve as the experimental "control group" against which the progress of students who try a new approach are measured. Again the results are not encouraging. The standard social studies course does not produce demonstrable changes in attitude or behavior.

The evidence drawn from the research studies of these various moral education programs suggested that it is difficult to achieve substantial and worthwhile positive results by introducing a single curricular program or educational strategy in the classroom. Unfortunately, this is also the most readily practicable reform effort that can be tried. Kenneth Strike expressed it as a paradox: "Anything that you can successfully implement in public schools about moral education will probably have to be learnable in a weekend seminar; on the other hand, anything you can learn in a weekend seminar is probably not worth doing."

Leming's report of what works in moral education was not entirely negative, however. More effective educational strategies of various sorts have been developed that do have a bearing on moral education, and Leming mentioned several of these. Cooperative learning, which groups different students into teams for the purpose of accomplishing identified academic tasks, also leads to better social relationships and attitudes between students. Lawrence Kohlberg created a second approach following the development of the "moral dilemma" approach, called the "just community" approach, in which students and teachers alike articulate norms, expect compliance with those norms, and finally enforce those norms. While not without its problems, this approach has achieved positive results in terms of some of the norms articulated by the school community. And Michael Rutter did a study of school climate, in which he and his colleagues found that student behavior is better in schools where they perceive the classrooms to be well-disciplined, the instruction relevant, where students feel they have some control over their lives in school, and where school authority is considered legitimate and is shared to some extent by the students. Leming emphasized, however, that these positive results are derived from the effects of the shaping of school life and interaction, not from alterations in the curriculum of the school.

VII. How Does the Moral Climate of the School Contribute to Moral Education?

Philip Cusick and Gerald Grant both talked about their experiences observing and participating in the daily life of American schools. What happens in school is not just a matter of what is read in the textbook or the library and what is said in the classroom. A lot happens in the interactions among the people who spend their days together at school and, since moral education concerns people's conduct and how they treat one another, some of that education comes through lessons conveyed by the ordinary activities of the school.

Cusick stated his thesis that the school's first priority is to take in all students and treat them equally, assuring them some access to adult membership in society. To accomplish this, the school utilizes its organizational structure to produce order in everyone's activity. In the last school he had observed, the school day lasted from 7:30 a.m. until 2:30 p.m., changed activities every 45 minutes, and involved the participation of 1,735 children, 105 teachers, 63 support staff, 8 guidance counselors and 4 administrators. Guided by a statement made by the French sociologist Emile Durkheim to the effect that morality consists of regular and disciplined activity in the pursuit of some collective good, Cusick observed that the organizational needs of the school dictate its moral objective as teaching conformity to the rules. Schools such as the one Cusick studied require everyone's compliance with the directions given by school authorities, so that the school as an organization can continue to function. The students are taught individualism, in the sense that they are each made responsible for themselves. They are taught competitiveness, through the way that school encourages them to compete for preferred places in school and in society. And they are presented with a secular orientation, in that the rewards for good performance are usually portrayed in terms of material affluence.

Beyond these lessons, Cusick noted that the school as an organization often teaches little more. So long as they comply with the rules and directives that keep the school operating in a smooth and orderly fashion, students often find themselves with plenty of time and opportunity for informal interactions with their friends. They are seldom required to be involved in the intellectual endeavors commonly considered central to real education. The students who come to school already motivated to learn and excel, who are often children from the more affluent families where they have seen the external rewards of academic achievement, are usually more successful. The students who come from lower class families tend to become engaged in other kinds of non-academic activity and do not do as well academically.

Cusick rejected the Marxist explanation for this state of affairs, that is, that this is the way in which the school purposefully perpetuates a class-divided society. Instead, he suggested that this is attributable to the inherent limitations of schools as organizations that must accomplish an overwhelmingly complicated task of day-to-day operation.

Going beyond Durkheim's idea of morality, Cusick also talked about moral lessons in the school at another level: As individuals, teachers are constantly "teaching themselves", as he put it. Teachers transmit their own moral vision of the world, and the lessons they offer are as varied as those visions.

In the ensuing discussion, participants clearly found this to be a disturbing portrait of the school in a number of ways. Philip Jackson suggested that it described high schools fairly accurately, but not elementary schools. James Williams warned that responding to student disengagement from the educational objectives of the school by lowering standards for lower class students and offering them easier coursework would be a mistake. And another participant pointed out the possible positive aspects to the moral message Cusick had described, that is, that the individualistic message could include a respect for individual dignity, and competitiveness could refer to offering everyone equal opportunities to attain academic excellence or achievement. When asked directly if his observations led him to conclude that the schools were less well off than they were a couple of decades previously,

Cusick said he did not reach that conclusion. He reminded the participants that in this period of time, the schools had expanded rapidly to include millions of people who would not have gone to high school at all in previous times.

Gerald Grant followed this discussion with a talk about his own work. As distinguished from Cusick's research, he attempted to focus on differences among schools and on schools in which poor students succeed and the teachers are given more credit for their role. He told a more encouraging story about his involvement in the life of a school and how the moral climate of the whole school can be shaped and improved by the people in it. Drawing from the research activities he used to write *The World We Created at Hamilton High*, Grant talked about problems encountered in identifying and doing something about a school's moral climate, or "ethos." His involvement in the school he pseudonymously called Hamilton High was motivated by his decision that "it was very important to try to tell the story of what happened in one school that represents the kind of future we are trying to create in this society, a racially integrated, mainstream and economically integrated school, and to tell the story of a school that was actually built in 1953, and to tell the story of what happened in this kind of American high school from the inside."

Grant began by emphasizing the importance of historical context for a thorough understanding of the nature of a school, a context that research too often neglects. "A series of social revolutions washed over that school," he said, and understanding Hamilton High today requires an appreciation of the history of what had happened to it. Desegregation, mainstreaming, attempts to achieve greater sexual equality, children's rights, and greater judicial intervention all played a role in that history. The influences of the whole culture, of the family backgrounds of the school's students, of Federal, State and local policies, and of organizations such as textbook companies, must all be taken into account. At the core of the school is the staff's understanding of their intellectual and moral authority and the way in which that authority should be exercised in the school.

In the course of the past three decades, according to Grant, "The old authority relationships were ripped apart, exploded and in some places abolished, and the teachers in schools were thrown into great confusion about the nature of their intellectual and moral authority." The task that faces the schools, as he envisions it, is to rebuild that authority without losing the progress toward greater fairness that has been achieved in that time. Teachers must identify the virtues necessary to making and sustaining an educational community and create a school ethos that fosters the development of those virtues.

Grant's involvement with Hamilton High, which began with a research project to identify the features of good schools, was transformed in response to a school superintendent's question put to him about what he himself would do if he were the principal of a school where the 'ethos' was too individualistic, too adversarial, and lacked moral direction and intellectual challenge.

Grant taught in Hamilton High for 2 years and participated in the life of the school even longer. He trained the students to exercise a kind of anthropological method, in which they studied the patterns of their own behavior in the school and tried to understand it. And he involved the teachers in discussions about their conception of what the school should be and how they could recreate a good school.

Students wrote papers about various aspects of the school and then videotaped the presentation and discussion of those papers. Grant offered the following illustration:

> **One of the most interesting videotapes that I shared with the teachers was on this paper, "Norms of Altruism and Honesty and Respect." The student said there is widespread cheating in the school. And moreover it's the brightest kids that cheat the most because the grades mean more to them. And they are in a world in which it's rational to cheat because you pay no penalty for cheating, and you are in many classes where the teacher knows that cheating goes on but turns a blind eye to it.**
>
> **So then I asked the class, "How many of**

you agree with this report that cheating is widespread?" And all the hands go up in the videotape — virtually the whole class.

"How many of you agree that there are teachers in the school who know cheating is going on and turn a blind eye to it?" And about a quarter to a third of the kids in the class raised their hands."

So we showed that tape to the teachers in this past year, and we had a lively discussion about it.

The teachers, too, played an active role in this process of self-examination, from criticising their own use of a double standard for assembly attendance by teachers and students, to confronting their dissatisfaction over the relationship between themselves and the principal. Examining the school's history in society allows teachers to come to terms with their responsibility for the world they are creating in that school. Reforming the school in a way that encourages the faculty to discuss their roles in shaping the school's history is an important means of cultivating the school's positive ethos.

Taken along with the earlier discussion of Cusick's work, Grant's narrative precipitated a lively discussion of school climates and the ways they are created. Citing Cusick's observation about teachers teaching themselves, James Leming wondered about the extent to which teachers are prepared to subordinate their own individual views to a school-wide vision about school aims shared by the whole staff. Martin Hoffman pointed out the way in which the moral lesson of a school as portrayed by Cusick helped to explain the violations of moral principles recounted by Grant, insofar as the competitive atmosphere of a school can encourage cheating and produce victims of competitive failure.

Supplementing these accounts of high schools, Kevin Ryan briefly described a study that identified different types of school climates among elementary schools in the Chicago area. Some schools focused on teaching the basics; some were concerned about taking advantage of innovative education programs; some emphasized discipline; and some were primarily concerned about ensuring safety. The researcher associated these differences with differences in the social backgrounds of the parents of the children in the schools. Ryan's comment, with which Grant agreed, was that while some of what Cusick and Grant reported described high schools accurately as distinct from elementary schools, the ethos of the elementary school is also both important and variable.

Patricia Lines suggested that where schools failed to establish a satisfactory ethos, alternatives were necessary. Smaller high schools might make very good sense, she noted. Private schools, home instruction, and one-to-one learning with adults in various types of internships were also options she put forward.

Philip Jackson posed a question derived from a tension he perceived in the presentation of how a positive ethos was created at Hamilton High. On the one hand, Grant based some of his remarks on research studies of schools, and indicated the importance of trying to identify the causes of school climate and student behavior and the effects of their interaction. This suggests that the crucial strategy is to identify and put into place the conditions under which a positive ethos and good behavior are produced. On the other hand, Grant told a story in which people took it upon themselves to engage in the collective project of reconstituting the moral authority of the school. This implies that the key actions were not caused in any deterministic sense, but rather were the result of their own freely chosen initiatives. These two types of explanation appear to exclude each other, Jackson suggested, and Grant seemed to go back and forth between them without ever resolving that tension. Grant acknowledged the tension, and implied that perhaps there was a role for both explanations that did not lead to inconsistency.

VIII. What Can Research Contribute to Moral Education?

The conference was originally convened to discuss research designed to understand and improve moral education and character. Throughout, participants speculated about the nature of such research and what education might hope to obtain from it. They explored the various problems and difficulties in the research that had already been done and wondered about the limits of research in general. At the same time, they asked some questions for which they expected that research might find answers.

Kevin Ryan suggested that it would be worthwhile to find out more about the extent and depth of consensus among Americans about the values taught by moral education. What everyone holds in common, and what differences among moral viewpoints exist, was a question that had surfaced repeatedly, without a detailed answer to the question being available. Kenneth Strike and David Carr pointed out that the rightness of a particular moral viewpoint is not simply a matter of how many people believe in it, and ought to be based on an argument about the public good or what is right. Still, the practical issue of what people's views are at present was thought to be significant.

Sparked by Cusick's report about teachers teaching themselves, several participants voiced an interest in knowing more about what kinds of moral education the individual teachers are practicing in the schools today. One participant reported that surprisingly few of the teachers he surveyed in his graduate course recognized what values clarification was, while another mentioned a study in which a substantial proportion of teachers reported using that approach. The question was further complicated by the point that even though teachers may not be familiar with the term, the basic tactic of never criticizing anyone's moral convictions may be used by many people both inside and outside of the classroom. How teachers actually respond to moral issues and questions in the classroom appears to be an unsolved mystery.

This question was also raised about college faculty, along with questions about the moral condition of present-day students. Commenting on the bleak picture painted by Allan Bloom in his widely read *The Closing of the American Mind,* Susan Parr expressed skepticism about whether today's students are as morally unconcerned as Bloom presents them, and whether college professors are as unwilling to raise difficult moral questions. At the same time, both she and Joseph Adelson referred to statistics about the difficult circumstances children live in at present. They also noted the increases in adolescent pathological behavior according to several indices that have measured such behavior for the past several decades. Such behavior is often linked to failures in a person's character, and the trying circumstances of the current time seem to present more opportunities for immoral behavior.

Participants also wanted to know more about the effects of religious heritage upon moral education, that is, how the religious convictions of parents, of teachers, and of students themselves influence their moral beliefs and actions.

Gerald Grant's story of Hamilton High provoked as many questions as it answered. It left many participants wondering about how the ethos of a school can be created and how that ethos is related to the conduct of individual teachers and students. At the same time as the participants recognized the powerful potential of school ethos and the way it affects moral education, Grant's presentation had also revived their awareness of the difficulties involved in both assessing and shaping that ethos.

Along with the discussion of what research might provide to improve moral education, there was a discussion of the limits and pitfalls of education research and policy. Susan Parr expressed misgivings about the role of the Federal Government in research in this area. She also warned of the likelihood that moral education research could reduce morality to an overly simple model, distorting the understanding of ethical conduct in the process. Rebecca Canning voiced a concern about the use of measurement research in this area, particularly at the national level; would researchers start providing evidence that policymakers might use to claim that Texas students

score higher than Massachusetts students on the moral scale, she asked?

Martin Hoffman suggested that the primary problem was not one of measurement, but rather of conceptualization. Mistaken conclusions and simplistic characterizations of moral behavior and what produces it are not so much a matter of observation error as of the failure to construct an adequate scientific understanding of exactly what is being observed. And improving the conceptualization of the object under investigation, he implied, is something research should be able to accomplish.

Joseph Adelson held the view that the problems of social science research were not inherent in the nature of empirical inquiry, but rather resulted from pursuing the wrong kinds of problems. He maintained that a substantial part of social science research has failed to pay attention to the stable patterns of personality or character and behavior that people exhibit over long periods of time, preferring to investigate responses to the immediately present environment. This failure has contributed to a lack of substantial progress in social science research, he suggested, although he still maintained that the pursuit of research in this field is worth continuing.

The conference discussion also compared the worth of knowledge derived from research with knowledge that relies on other sources, such as intuition or common sense. Henry Johnson argued against a bias in favor of any one source of knowledge, research or otherwise, saying that multiple ways of knowing possess merits no single one of them can match. And Philip Jackson cautioned against the tendency to find other people's knowledge claims concerning educational policy issues wanting when applied to specified standards of evaluation, while they overlook the fact that their own knowledge claims will not stand up against the same standards.

David Carr identified a crucial research problem for the investigation of moral education and conduct that had been alluded to earlier by Susan Parr and Philip Jackson. The idea of moral responsibility was involved in Susan Parr's remarks about teaching students the importance of responsible moral choice, and in Philip Jackson's comments on Gerald Grant's account of how people create a positive school ethos. The idea of moral responsibility depends on the notion of freedom, in the sense that people are praised or blamed for their actions because they did not have to do what they did —they could have done otherwise. Much of scientific research, on the other hand, looks at the relationship between cause and effect, assuming that when a given cause is present, then the effect must follow. So when research examines moral responsibility, it faces a puzzle, for it now must explain what causes the exercise of moral responsibility when the idea of responsibility implies that it cannot be caused by anything. By its very nature, Carr suggested, moral action presents a uniquely challenging problem for education research.