# Chapter 8
# Character Development

## Introduction

The following discussion of socio-moral development is adapted from the *socioanalytic* theory of Robert Hogan (Hogan 1973, 1975; Hogan, Johnson, & Emler, 1978; Hogan & Emler, 1995) . Critical to Hogan's theory is the role of *rule systems*, which are an explicit expression of the morality or values of a social group. Hogan views all purposive social behavior as occurring within the context of rule systems. A defining characteristic of a social rule system is its *ethic*, e.g., respect or equity. Hogan thinks that both the similarities and differences between people can be explained in terms of their relationship to systems of rules. Similarities between people are a product of the rules that have been adopted by the groups within which they have common membership. Differences are a product of each individual's understanding and application of a group's rules.

Rule systems represent an adaptive response to evolutionary pressures that compel a social group to create a *value system* and related *behavioral guidelines* for its members that ensure that functional responses to the demands of a particular environment will be made. The development of such guidelines increase the probability that a group will survive over time. While the rule systems of a particular culture will differ in many respects, at a basic level, successful cultures will embrace certain common rules, e.g., rules about cheating, lying, and stealing. Most, if not all, human cultures depend heavily upon verbal information and are especially vulnerable to deceptive messages. Thus, rules related to language are common among different moralities, e.g., prohibitions against lying. Hogan thinks that establishment and maintenance of systems of rules is possible because of certain characteristics of human beings. Among these characteristics are a predisposition to comply with authority, to internalize adult behavior patterns during critical periods of development, to be sensitive to the expectations of peers, and for rule-governed behavior to become ritualized or automatic. Students who are high on either the E trait or P trait, discussed in Chapter One, and especially if high on both traits have a weaker predisposition to adapt to social rule systems than other students.

To take advantage of the human predispositions listed above, Hogan asserts that each culture must develop child rearing practices capable of transmitting the adaptive values and behaviors evolved by the group for its survival. Thus, a feedback loop is created that includes the environmental demands faced by the group, the guidelines developed for responding to these demands and the child rearing practices that develop character types best able to meet the demands of the group's environment. However, Hogan cautions that the rules and behaviors that a group evolves, in response to the demands of an environment, apply only to past conditions. There is no guarantee that values, rules and behaviors that have been successful in the past will be equally successful under the current or some future environmental conditions.

Hogan suggests that some societies and cultures become dysfunctional and fail. One important benchmark for the health of a social group or a culture is the extent to which its members

comply with its rules and standards for behavior. Cultures usually fail for one of two reasons. The first reason that failure is likely to occur is that the feedback loop just described breaks down. This happens when most, if not all, of the individuals within a culture become *insulated* from the most fundamental demands of the environment in which it must function. One way in which this may occur is through technological buffering. That is, technology isolates the members of the culture from the basic demands of the environment. For example, how many people in modern western societies would be able to meet their basic survival needs if the technology developed by industrial societies were stripped away? While this threat to the survival of modern societies is not something that appears to be likely, it could certainly arise in the case of some large-scale natural disaster or a disaster precipitated by human beings.

The second, and more likely, reason that a society may fail is the development of *factionalism*. Factionalism results from the evolution of a social structure that undermines the solidarity and common purpose that is needed to maintain a society's cultural focus or coherence. All societies have a certain degree of factionalism that results in varying degrees of both internal conflict and cooperation. Indeed, to a certain degree, this is probably necessary in order for adaptation to continue. However, when factionalism within a society results in an excess of conflict and a loss of cultural focus, the society will self-destruct. One recent example, in American society, when the level of conflict appeared to be approaching this critical level was during the late sixties and early seventies.

It is also possible to think about cultures on a smaller scale. For example, one can think of a social institution like public education as being a micro-culture. Public schools have systems of rules, including rules that provide guidelines about faculty and staff behavior and student behavior. These rule systems may vary from system-level rules to school and even classroom level rules. These rules are based upon a set of institutional values, which are derived from community values and broad cultural values. These rules, to some extent, also evolve in response to the demands made upon educators by the educational environment. Schools have procedures that are analogous to child rearing practices in that they are intended to socialize faculty and students to the school culture. As is the case with macro-cultures, the values and guidelines evolved by micro-cultures, like schools, reflect what was successful in the past. They may or may not be successful in meeting the demands of the current or some future set of demands.

Like a macro-culture, a micro-culture can fail due to insulation from the environment or from factionalism. Many of the criticisms leveled at contemporary schools in American society are suggestive of concern about insulation. For example, the criticism that schools are failing to provide students with the skills that society needs. Critics argue that graduates of public schools are too often not well prepared for either the world of work or for higher education. What this criticism seems to suggest is that schools have become too insulated from the environments that they are preparing students for. Schools seem to no longer have functional responses for meeting the demands of the social environments they serve. There also appears to be a considerable degree of factionalism in the contemporary public school environment. For example, consider the impact on public education of factions representing union, religious, multi-cultural, disability, bilingual, and gender concerns.

Moral Development

The socioanalytic model for moral development in children includes four major components. The four components are *moral knowledge*, *socialization*, *empathy*, and *autonomy* (see Figure 8.1). These components are not stages and therefore are not sequentially dependent upon one another. That is, one's socialization may be weak and still develop a strong degree of empathy. Socialization, empathy and autonomy can be thought of as transitions which tend to occur at successively later points in an individual's life. However, each component is a unique developmental challenge that is independent of the others.

Hogan also suggests that there are two broad morality configurations in people and that these two configurations tend toward different rationales for morality. The first configuration is characterized by an emotional and spontaneous response style. This type of person tends toward a rationale for morality rooted in a commitment to *personal conscience*. Such individuals believe that people are naturally good, and injustice results from oppressive social institutions. The second configuration is characterized by a rational and deliberate response style. This type of person tends toward a rationale for morality rooted in a commitment to *social responsibility*. Such individuals believe that people are naturally bad and that social institutions protect people from injustice. Of course, these two types should be thought of as the end points of a continuum with most people falling between the extremes. Regardless of morality type, each individual develops and maintains an identity and reputation both of which will contribute to the definition of their character.

The underlying foundation for moral development is *knowledge of the rules*. Knowledge of the rules is evident in one's ability to state what the rules are and in the ability to discern the situations in which a rule applies and what response is indicated by the rule in that situation, i.e., *moral judgment*. Knowledge of the rules and moral judgment are both necessary for the development of *self-control.* There are three types of rules that must be learned. *General rules* which are analogous to values, e.g., trust. *Specific rules* derive from the general rules, e.g., be truthful. *Comparison rules* help one judge one's actual behavior against a specific rule. A comparison rule, in the specific rule example just used, might establish standards for truthfulness; e.g., you've been truthful if you've related necessary information even though what was revealed was not everything you know. One must be able to apply comparison rules in order to acquire an ability for *self-criticism*.

*Socialization* relates to the extent to which one considers the rules binding upon oneself. A sense of commitment to the rules of one's culture and social affiliations, e.g., family and school, is indicated by voluntary compliance with the rules. When this is observed, it is sometimes described as *internalization* of the rules. While the highly socialized who have not developed empathy tend to be overly conforming to authority and rigidly compliant with rules, the unsocialized are egocentric, impulsive and undisciplined. Socialization appears to be best accomplished through a strong attachment bond between a child and his or her parents and what Baumrind (1971) describes as *authoritative* parenting. Authoritative parents have been characterized along four dimensions. First, they have realistic expectations for their child that are developmentally appropriate. Second, they

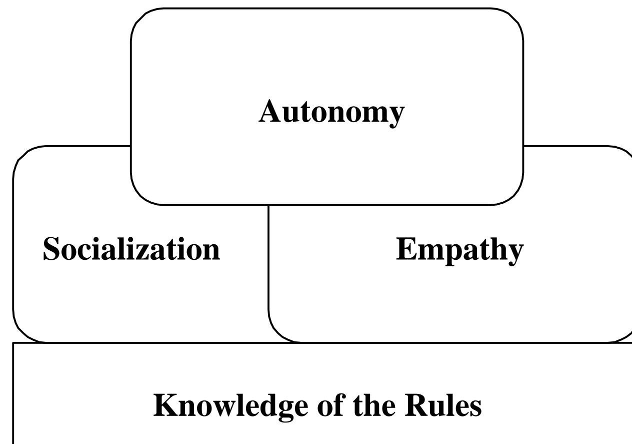


Figure 8.1. The Socio-analytic model's phases of moral development.

show an interest in and support for their child's activities. Third, they attempt to discipline their child through reason rather than through power. Discipline through reason, unlike discipline through power, attempts to provide rationales for parental decisions and actions affecting the child. Finally, authoritative parents have a communicative relationship with their child. This includes seeking their child's input on matters affecting the child, explaining the basis for their decisions and being receptive to rational argument from the child.

*Empathy* can be described as the ability to take another person's point-of-view or assume their role in a situation. It means being able to see a situation as someone else sees it, particularly when it is a perspective different from one's own. Empathetic perception is necessary before one can understand the implications of one's actions on other people. The highly empathetic who have not developed some degree of autonomy may exhibit a diffuse sense of identity and tend to place more value on human needs than on rules. Such individuals tend also to be overly conforming with the expectations of the peer group. The development of empathy is facilitated by the social competence of a child and by exposure to an authoritative style of parenting. However, simply having an empathetic ability is not sufficient. One must also be willing to act upon one's empathetic perceptions. Hogan suggests that two types of experience contribute to the development of empathetic behavior. First, one must him or herself have been the recipient of empathetic treatment by others. Second, one must have personal experience with the effects of non-empathetic treatment, e.g., injustice and ridicule.

There are several implications for different levels of socialization and empathy. First, low socialization and low empathy will lead to delinquent behavior if an individual believes in a morality of personal conscience. However, if an individual believes in a morality of social responsibility, low empathy and low socialization may still lead to conformity with the rules. Second, high socialization and low empathy lead to rigid rule compliance. Third, low socialization and high empathy lead to mildly sociopathic behavior. Finally, high socialization and high empathy lead to socially conforming behavior and sensitivity to others.

*Autonomy*, in moral behavior, is characterized by independent action based on a personal sense of duty. To be autonomous is to understand that the reasons for one's actions are never fully conscious. One recognizes that self-deception about one's motives is always a possibility. Achieving this level of moral functioning requires full *self-awareness* and recognition that moral behavior must be a *free choice*. Self-awareness requires that one be as aware of one's motives as possible. It also requires that the relativity of one's values and principles be accepted and requires the recognition that all rule systems and the values underlying them have limitations. Finally, autonomy requires that one recognize and accept that life is unpredictable, unjust and that the meaning of life will probably never be entirely clear. Self-aware individuals have a sense of inner detachment that permits them to distance themselves from their social roles. A self-aware person is one who is capable of achieving an enlightened commitment to the conventional rules and values of his or her culture.

True moral autonomy is an ideal that is seldom fully achieved but may exist to varying degrees

and at various times in the behavior of an individual. Autonomy, however, can produce moral behavior even in individuals whose level of socialization or empathy would mitigate against such behavior. However, when both socialization and empathy are low, it can lead to highly non-conforming behavior and even criminal behavior. Individuals who are high in socialization, empathy and autonomy tend toward a rationale for morality rooted in a commitment to *equity*. Autonomy can also help explain why some overly socialized individuals are not as rigid in their rule adherence as might be expected and why some overly empathetic individuals do not exhibit the degree of identity diffusion that might otherwise be expected. Autonomy can also help buffer an individual from immoral aspects of society when they are present.

People who develop some degree of moral autonomy appear to have acquired a sense of social and personal competence, i.e., a strong sense of *self-efficacy* at an early age. Parents of such individuals were models to their child of individualistic and independent behavior. Morally autonomous people were encouraged as children to order and control their own behavior, i.e., to take personal responsibility for themselves. Autonomy usually doesn't begin to develop until early adolescence and usually doesn't become evident until after an individual separates from the peer group and begins his or her adult life. The development of true self-control requires the development of some degree of autonomy.

Hogan suggests that a failure of moral development or what he refers to as *delinquency* in a person results from a poor early attachment bond with caretakers that leads to insecurity, hostility and a weak accommodation to authority, i.e., poor development of moral knowledge. This initial failure leads to further failure in the development of normal peer relations and social isolation. By adolescence such individuals are not only insecure and hostile toward authority but are insensitive to social expectations and have little or no respect for the rights of others. In short, potentially criminal behavior is a very probable outcome.

<u>Identity and Reputation</u>

According to Hogan, there are two major challenges in life. One is learning to *get along* with others, and the second is achieving some degree of *social status*. Getting along with others depends upon the development of a functional level of social competence. Social status is something that must be both earned and negotiated. In order to acquire social status one must develop and maintain both an identity and a reputation. This task requires that an individual be socially competent, i.e., have interpersonal skill.

One's *identity* is, in part, the most basic social role that one plays in society and represents an *idealized self*. It tells others who we are, how we should be treated, and how much status we have or how much respect we should get. *Reputation* is closely related to identity and summarizes the level of social acceptance and social status associated with one's identity. Reputation represents a judgment made about the character of an individual by his or her community. This judgment is closely related to how the community perceives one's compliance with the values and rules implicit

in the identity or social role that one attempts to play. In general, people either are or should be especially concerned with their reputation.

Not only must one be perceived as compliant with the values and rules implicit in an identity, but the compliant behaviors must be relatively consistent across time and from situation to situation. Hogan suggests that there are five major contributors to the development and maintenance of a reputation: intelligence and creativity, self-confidence and resiliency, energy and friendliness, sociability, and morality. Moral reputation has a significant impact on one's level of social acceptance. Moral reputation is associated with three types of moral performance. First, moral reputation depends on complying with the rules of one's group and having the skills needed to repair any damage caused by non-compliance. Second, moral reputation depends upon the perception by others that one takes an interest in and acts consistently on the behalf of other members of the group. Finally, moral reputation depends on being consistent with one's publicly asserted principles. The things that will prevent the establishment of a good reputation or destroy one is flagrantly defying the rules, publicly endorsing breaking generally accepted rules, and being perceived as uncaring, ruthless or unfeeling.

## Curriculum and Strategies

### Knowledge of the Rules

As stated earlier, *knowledge of the rules* is the foundation for moral development and likewise for character development. What rules must one know? Clearly, there are many systems of rules that can be identified within any given culture or society. As educators, we should probably focus on the rules that govern educational environments or schools. Public schools can be thought of as a reflection of the values of the communities that support them and that they serve. Thus, the rules in schools should probably be as consistent as possible, with rules for which there is a broad consensus in the surrounding community. A specific set of rules that are universally valid for all schools may not be possible. However, an illustrative set of rules that many communities and schools could agree to are provided below:

1. Don't cheat or Be honest.
2. Don't lie or Be truthful.
3. Don't harm others or Respect others' right to personal safety.
4. Don't steal or Respect the right of possession.
5. Don't vandalize or Respect property.
6. Don't disrupt others or Respect the goals of others.
7. Don't coerce others or Accept the decisions of others.
8. Don't demean others or Accept the beliefs and motives of others.
9. Don't blame others or Accept Responsibility for yourself.

Whether one accepts the above set of rules, modifies them or develops an alternative set of

rules, the rules taught must meet certain tests. If the rules meet these tests, they will generally be perceived as just. Most students will accept and comply with rules that are perceived as just. First, the rules must not interfere with the right of students to make for themselves personal choices that do not violate the rights of others. For example, a student's decision to wear his or her hair in a certain style is a personal choice and does not violate anyone's rights. Second, the rules should be consistent with the objective of allowing individuals to peacefully share a common social environment, for example, a school. Third, the rules should engender broad support and acceptance both by the students and by the community. Thus, input into the development and subsequent modification of rules should be sought from the students and community. However, to be acted upon, suggestions should be consistent with criteria one and two above.

Initially, according to the work of Lawrence Kohlberg (1969), compliance with rules by children will be motivated by deference to adult authorities who have the power to enforce rules through censure and punishment. Another rationale for rule compliance that one sees early in the development of moral behavior is motivation based in an egocentric self-interest. That is, rule compliance will be exhibited because the child seeks adult approval and rewards for "good behavior." However, the development of moral character must rest upon more enlightened rationales than these early motives. According to Hogan's model of development, the achievement of socialization, empathy or autonomy represent a more enlightened basis for rule compliance.

Knowledge of the rules, once agreed upon, can be facilitated first by publicizing the rules in a way that maintains awareness of them by the students, faculty, staff, and parents. Second, knowledge of the rules can be facilitated, first and foremost, by adult behavior that complies with the rules, that is, by modeling compliance and secondarily by peer behavior that complies with the rules. Assessment of moral knowledge is best accomplished informally through observation and teacher judgment. The most likely problem that will arise for some students will be in the area of *moral judgment*. That is, determining which rule applies in a specific situation and what response is required is a moral judgment. Students who know the rules, i.e., can state them, but appear to have a problem with moral judgment should be engaged in discussions. Rule discussions can be structured in a manner similar to what follows. Rule discussions can be done one-on-one or in a small group. The format can be entirely conversational or it can involve discussion of situations presented through role plays. The latter approach, of course, requires that your rule discussion be with a small group. Role plays can be done in stages with discussion following one stage before the next stage is acted out.

1. Discuss the specific rule at issue.
2. Organize the discussion around everyday examples of situations in which a rule would and would not apply.
3. Allow students to decide which situations a rule applies to.
4. Ask each student to explain why he or she thinks a rule applies to the situations selected.
5. Provide corrective explanations when inappropriate situations are selected or when a student's rationale for why a rule applies is incorrect. Ask the student to restate for you the corrective explanation(s), as a check on understanding.

6. Pose alternative choices for a student to make about how to respond in those situations where a rule applies.
7. Ask a student to explain why he or she thinks the response selected is the correct response for the situation under discussion.
8. Provide corrective explanations when inappropriate responses are selected or when a student's rationale for the response is incorrect. Ask the student to restate for you the corrective explanation(s), as a check on understanding.
9. If complex responses, e.g., negotiation are discussed, ask a student to describe how he or she would actually perform the response in the situation under discussion.
10. If it appears a student doesn't know how to adequately perform the response, teach it. In many cases, complex skills will be what are discussed as social skills in Chapter Seven of this text. You can follow the teaching methods discussed in that chapter for this instruction.

Socialization

*Socialization* is defined as a personal commitment to the rules as evidenced by voluntary compliance. Voluntary compliance requires internalization of the rules. That is, the child has accepted the rules as just and believes compliance with the rules is in the best interest of both oneself and the social groups to which the child belongs. Initially, the social groups that will serve as the principal reference groups will be those a child has the most intimate contact with and include the family, the school and peers. Later, the social reference groups will be less personal and more abstract and include the community and society of which the community is a part. Socialization, of course, can be assessed informally but can also be assessed formally. One informal indicator of socialization is the emotional response, if any, to rule violation. A person who has internalized social rules will evidence genuine guilt, shame or sorrow when he or she has violated a social rule.

More formally, Hogan (1978), reports that he uses the socialization subscale of the California Personality Inventory (Gough, 1975) to assess socialization. The subscale of another personality instrument also may be useful in formally assessing socialization. This is the Lie scale on a personality questionnaire developed by Eysenck and Eysenck (1975, 1993) and discussed in Chapter One. This scale was originally developed to help evaluate the validity of responses to the other subscales on the Eysenck Personality Questionnaire (EPQ & EPQ-Revised). This subscale has come to be regarded as measure of social conformity or socialization. The EPQ is available in both a child or junior and an adult version. The Junior EPQ is used with children from ages seven through fifteen and the EPQ-R can be used with individuals sixteen years of age and older.

Hogan has suggested that the authoritative style of parenting identified by Baumrind (1971) is the approach that best accomplishes socialization. An educational approach to socialization for moral development that is somewhat analogous to an authoritative style of parenting is the program developed by Tom Lickona (1991) for use in schools.

Morality of Respect: Lickona's approach is to define morality for classroom purposes as the

*morality of respect*. Critical to this approach is for a teacher to set a good example of what respect for self and others looks like in practice. The set of rules that were developed earlier in this chapter, or a similar set, can serve as a behavioral guide for the morality of respect. Second, a teacher should not only practice the morality of respect, but be an advocate for what she or he practices. Being an advocate means that a teacher should make explicit why she or he values the rules and how these rules relate to any discipline procedures used in the classroom. Whenever a teacher makes a decision about what is or is not permissible in the classroom or applies a discipline procedure to a student, the teacher needs to explain his or her rationale. The rationale should be based on the circumstances requiring the decision or the values underlying the class rules that apply to the decision or procedure. In short, discipline through reason, not power.

Fairness Discussions: To resolve conflicts between teacher and student, between student and student, or between groups of students, where a class rule is not at issue, Lickona employs what he calls *Fairness Discussions*. Many educators are already familiar with the idea of fairness discussions, which is a process very similar to *conflict resolution* procedures. Conflict resolution (CR) is an approach to dealing with interpersonal conflict that relies largely on the process of negotiation. This approach has a number of advocates including Thomas Gordon (1974) in his Teacher Effectiveness Training (T.E.T.) program and David Johnson (1993) in his book Reaching Out.

Johnson makes several useful points in his discussion of CR. First, not every conflict is negotiable. Students need to understand that some issues are not appropriate for negotiation. For example, a conflict with someone over participating in or contributing to an activity that is in violation of the established rules should not be negotiated. Students need to be able to say "no" as well as negotiate. Second, it is helpful for students to learn to recognize different approaches taken by people in conflict situations. Johnson discusses five basic approaches.

1. The Turtle or Withdrawing. Giving up both your goal and the relationship with the other person. This is a useful strategy when dealing with someone who may be dangerous. It is often used when the other party is very angry. It is frequently a temporary strategy used so the other party has a chance to calm down.

2. The Shark or Forcing. Pressing your goals without regard to the relationship with the other person. This is a useful strategy when your goal is very important and the relationship with the other person is not. For example, it is useful when you are trying to get the best price on something you are buying.

3. The Teddy Bear or Smoothing. Giving up your goal to protect the relationship with the other person. This is useful when your goal is of little importance and the relationship is very important. For example, it is useful when a friend wants to see a particular movie or play a specific game and you don't have a strong preference.

4. The Fox or Compromising. Giving up part of your goal but insisting on achieving part of it even

if it diminishes the relationship with the other person. This is useful when there is a middle ground that partially meets the moderately strong goals of both parties. For example, it is useful when you and a sibling must share something such as a TV or car. Both parties may end up with less access than they would like, but both retain an equitable amount of access.

5. The Owl or Negotiating. Fully meeting your goal and maintaining the maximum possible relationship with the other person. This is useful when an agreement is needed that fully satisfies everyone's needs in a situation. For example, your sibling wants to use the family room for his band to practice and you want to use it for a billiard party. You work out a deal whereby the band provides music for the party and you both use the room at the same time.

Third, students need a few general purpose rules to aid them in selecting a strategy for dealing with a problem. Here are several guidelines to consider when in a conflict:

1. Don't ignore conflict.
2. Use humor, when possible, to reduce conflict.
3. Don't engage in win-lose solutions when relationship is important.
4. Compromise when time is short and relationship is important.
5. Initiate negotiation when there is time and the relationship is important.

The use of conflict resolution or fairness discussions are most suitable for situations that fit into categories four and five above. In the other three categories, a mutual resolution of the conflict is either not worth the cost or not likely. The following process is based on procedures suggested by both Gordon and Lickona. The goal is to achieve a solution to a conflict that will be considered as fair by the parties involved.

1. Define the problem (conflict): Involve only the parties to the conflict in the process. All parties must be willing participants. Each session should last long enough to complete at least one step in the process. Have each party clearly and accurately state what they want in the conflict situation, why, and how the conflict makes him or her feel. The parties should express themselves with "I want...because" messages, NOT "You should..." messages. For example: "I want quiet because I can't concentrate when there is a lot of noise, and it makes me feel frustrated," NOT "You should shut up." That is, the statements should reflect what each party wants and why, not the solution they desire. Write down or record the different wants expressed. **In short, the definition of the problem is a statement of the conflicting wants, not the conflicting solutions**.

2. Restatement: Each party in the process should restate or paraphrase the other party's position. That is, the restatement should reflect what the other party wants and why they want it to show that they were listened to and understood. If the restatement suggests that there may not be a complete understanding of one the parties' position, return to the previous step and clarify the position.

3. Generate potential solutions: Generate as many solutions as possible. Don't require justification

or documentation. Don't editorialize or criticize. If necessary, use open-ended questions to facilitate participation. Record the suggested solutions.

4. Evaluate the solutions: Ask the participants to indicate which solutions they don't like. Cross off any solution that anyone objects to for any reason. If all of the solutions are eliminated, return to step three. Have the person who suggested each of the remaining solutions (at least two, if possible) argue his or her case for the solution. Make sure everyone has an opportunity to express their feelings about the solutions being considered.

5. Make a decision: Test each remaining solution by having all participants imagine how each solution would work in practice. Discuss possible flaws in each solution. Work to achieve a consensus to at least try one of the solutions. Don't permit anyone to be pressured into trying a particular solution. Make sure everyone understands that this will be a trial only, and that if it doesn't satisfy everyone, an alternate solution will be sought.

6. Determine how to implement the solution: Have the participants determine WHAT has to be done to put the solution into practice, WHO will be responsible for what, WHEN the solution will be implemented and HOW to judge if it is being properly carried out. Write down a record of the implementation agreement if the implementation will not be immediate or if it is a re-occurring problem. This is called a *Fairness Agreement*.

7. Evaluate the solution: Assess the solution after it has been implemented by determining if the problem has reoccurred and if not, if everyone is satisfied with the solution. If the solution fails, repeat the process beginning with whichever step the participants all think appropriate.

Initially, the process of conflict resolution can be taught to students by using hypothetical conflicts in which students role play the characters in the conflict. The process can be taught to all of your students or to a few students who will serve as peer mediators. After you have trained your students or selected mediators to implement the process, you should look for opportunities to employ the process to resolve real conflicts that arise. In the beginning you will probably have to serve as a facilitator to get your students to use the process. Reinforce any instances where you observe the process being voluntarily used without you having facilitated or prompted its use. Don't forget to employ the process, when appropriate, to handle conflict between yourself and a student. In short, be a good model for what you are promoting.

## Illustration

Situation: Bill and Sue are at the back of the classroom, at a computer station, engaged in a conflict. Ms. Tranquillity goes back to see if she can help them settle their argument.

Ms. T: "What's the problem here. You're disturbing everyone."
Bill: "Sue is hogging the computer and won't let me have a turn."

Sue: "I was here first. He should go find something else to do."
Ms. T: "Well, let's see if we can settle this with a Fairness Discussion like we've been practicing in group. Bill why don't you start by telling us what you want."
Bill: "I want to use the computer to type a paper."
Ms. T: "And why is that so urgent?"
Bill: "Because the paper is due tomorrow, and this is the only chance I'll have to type it and it has to be typed."
Ms. T: "How does this make you feel?"
Bill: "I'm really scared that if I don't get a good grade on this paper I'll fail the class, and my parents will be very upset with me."
Ms. T: "Sue, what do you want?"
Sue: "I want to practice my keyboarding skills."
Ms. T: "And why is that so urgent?"
Sue: "Because we are going to have a test tomorrow and I need to practice."
Ms. T: "How do you feel about this?"
Sue: "I feel like Bill is trying to bully me out of my chance to use the computer."
Ms. T: "Bill, restate Sue's position in this conflict, please."
Bill: "Well, Sue says she needs to practice for her keyboarding test tomorrow and thinks I'm trying to bully her."
Ms. T: "Sue, please restate Bill's position in this conflict."
Sue: "Bill needs to get his paper typed for his class and is afraid that if he doesn't he'll fail the class and upset his parents."
Ms. T: "Well, can either of you come up with a possible solution."
Bill: "I could type my paper and then Sue could practice."
Sue: "Bill could type his paper at home tonight."
Ms. T: "Are there any other solutions?"
Sue: "I could practice and then Bill could type his paper."
Bill: "Sue could type my paper for me."
Ms. T: "Does anything else come to mind?"
Sue: "No."
Bill: "No."
Ms. T: "Sue, what do you think about Bill's first suggestion?"
Sue: "That won't work. By the time he gets finished I won't have enough practice time."
Ms. T: "Bill, what do you think about Sue's first suggestion?"
Bill: "I don't have a computer at home, nor a typewriter."
Ms. T: "Bill, what do you think about Sue's second suggestion?"
Bill: "By the time she finishes typing, there won't be enough time to type my paper."
Ms. T: "Sue, what do you think about Bill's second suggestion?"
Sue: "Well, I don't think I should do his work for him. Getting a paper ready to turn in is a lot of work."
Ms. T: "Sue, do you have anything in particular that you've got to practice typing?"
Sue: "No. I'm just using some old notes."

Ms. T: "Then, you could just as easily type Bill's paper as the notes?"
Sue: "Yeah, I guess so."
Bill: "I've got an idea."
Ms. T: "What's that Bill?"
Bill: "Sue could use my paper for practice and just not worry about the errors. When she has it all typed in, she should have enough practice and she can turn the computer over to me so I can edit the paper and print it."
Ms.T: "It looks like we only have one solution that might work for both of you. Sue, would Bill's last suggestion satisfy you?"
Sue: "Yeah, I could do that, if it's OK with Bill."
Bill: "It sounds like a good deal to me."
Ms T: "OK, we have about 50 minutes left in the period. It's about 2:10 right now. Sue, look at Bill's paper and tell me if you can have it typed by 2:40."
Sue: "Yes, it looks like I could be finished with it by 2:40."
Ms. T: "Will that be enough practice for you?"
Sue: "Yes, that would be about the same amount I planned to do."
Ms.T: "Bill, do you think the remaining 20 minutes will be enough time for you to edit and print the paper?"
Bill: "Yes, if Sue is any good."
Sue: "I'm real good. I bet I'm better and faster than you are."
Ms.T: "OK, let's not start another argument. Let's just get going and get this done."
Sue: "All right."
Bill: "Fine. Just be sure I get my 20 minutes."
Sue: "You'll get it."
Ms. T: "We're agreed then. Sue, you get to work on the computer. Bill, you need to find something else to work on until Sue finishes. I'll keep an eye on the time and see how things are coming.

In this illustration the teacher is in the role of mediator. The teacher helps Bill and Sue negotiate and arrive at a solution to the problems that is satisfactory to both. If Bill and Sue were trained in conflict resolution, they could have negotiated this conflict for themselves without the teacher's assistance. Likewise, if there were trained peer mediators in the class, Bill and Sue could have requested negotiation assistance from one of them. Since this agreement is short-term and not a re-occurring problem, a written Fairness Agreement is probably not necessary. Figure 8.2 is a summary guide to Fairness Discussions.

<u>Class Meetings</u>: Lickona also suggests that the classroom program include regularly scheduled *Class Meetings*. Class meetings are opportunities for students to discuss a variety of issues. These meeting can present an opportunity to talk about class rules, the values behind the rules, how the rules apply to different situations and what kind of behavior shows compliance with the rules. The class meetings can also present an opportunity for discussing changes in the rules and the reasons why such changes might be a good idea. A second focus that class meetings can have is a general discussion of the meaning of various values, e.g., justice, responsibility, equity, trust, and

**A Summary Guide to Fairness Discussions**

A student must determine:

1. If the conflict is over an absolute or relative issue.
   a. If absolute, stand fast.
   b. If relative, seek a solution.

In seeking a solution, a student must decide:

2. How important is one's goal in the situation?
3. How important is one’s relationship to the other party in the conflict?

After deciding about the importance of the goal and the relationship, choose a strategy to resolve the conflict:

1. Withdraw from the situation.
2. Force your goal.
3. Smooth over the conflict.
4. Compromise your goal.
5. Negotiate your goal.
   a. Define the problem.
   b. Restate the other party’s position.
   c. Generate possible solutions.
   d. Evaluate the solutions.
   e. Decide on a solution.
   f. Determine how to implement the solution.
   g. Follow-up assessment of the solution.

Figure 8.2. A summary guide to issues that need to be decided before beginning a Fairness Discussion and an outline of the negotiation process.

so forth. A third focus that class meetings can have is a discussion of the concepts of *identity* and *reputation* that were introduced at the end of the introductory section to this chapter. A fourth focus that class meetings can have is a discussion of important issues that have arisen in the community, school or class, e.g., a local curfew, smoking, or theft. Finally, class meetings can focus on discussions of moral dilemmas, which will be covered in the section on empathy that follows this topic.

Lickona (1991) suggests five outcomes that are facilitated by class discussions:

1. The discussions will help students develop listening and speaking skills.
2. The discussions help students learn to take the perspective of others.
3. The discussions help students to think for themselves and to develop their reasoning skills.
4. The discussions help students develop a sense of group solidarity and self-discipline.
5. The discussions help students develop attitudes and skills needed to participate in a democratic society.

Empathy

*Empathy* is related to the ability to look at a situation from another person's point-of-view. At the root of this ability is what is sometimes referred to as *role-taking*. Empathy is necessary in order to take into account the effects of one's actions on others. An authoritative style of interaction, as discussed in a previous section, is one prerequisite for the development of empathy. Another prerequisite for empathy is social competence. One must have an adequate level of interpersonal skill in order to be included in the types of interactions that provide an opportunity for learning role-taking. Programming to facilitate the development of interpersonal skills is discussed in Chapter Seven in this text. Empathy, like socialization, can be assessed informally but can also be assessed formally. Informally, empathy can be assessed by looking for perspective taking ability in a student, i.e., being able to see a situation from someone else's point-of-view. This ability is first exhibited in relation to another individual in interpersonal situations. A more advanced form of perspective taking is the ability to look at an interpersonal situation from the more abstract perspective of an independent third party. In other words, how an individual from outside of a situation would view it. An indication of an individual's ability to employ either of these levels of perspective taking can often be gained simply from observation and questioning. More formally, Hogan (1969) and Grief and Hogan (1973), in their research, have used a subscale of the California Personality Inventory (Gough, 1969) to assess empathy. There are also other instruments that can be used to assess empathy. One instrument that can be used is The Empathy Scale for Children and Adolescents (Bryant, 1982). Another instrument that can be used with adolescents who are good readers is the Visions of Morality scale (Shelton, & McAdams, 1990), which has a subscale for empathy. Low scores on the P trait in Eysenck's JEPQ and EPQ-R is also associated with empathy. One approach that can be used to facilitate perspective-taking ability and social reasoning skills is the discussion of moral dilemmas mentioned in the previous section. Most of the work on moral dilemmas has been done by Kohlberg, who was referenced earlier.

Moral Dilemmas: According to Kohlberg, moral development is related to the development of social perception and the ability to organize and integrate social experience in a consistent manner. To accomplish this, each child needs to have a variety of social experiences and to become familiar with many social roles and perspectives. There are three basic types of *moral dilemmas*: hypothetical, curriculum based, and real dilemmas. A good dilemma for a discussion group should meet, at least, two criteria. First, a good dilemma should contain conflicting choices, both of which appear reasonable. Second, it should be written so that dispute about factual issues is not likely. When you write a dilemma, you should try to relate it to the lives of your students, have a character on whom the issue is focused, and require a choice between competing alternatives by the central character in the dilemma, with clear implications for behavior (see VAT Curriculum at the end of the chapter).

*Hypothetical dilemmas* are believable dilemmas, with no basis in fact, that focus on situations students can easily relate to. In other words, a fictitious but believable story with a character who is faced with a values-based choice. Hypothetical dilemmas are particularly useful for generating discussion, because they are not usually threatening to students. Students are often more willing to make public statements, take positions, and express their attitudes when dealing with a hypothetical situation.

*Curriculum dilemmas* are dilemmas from educational subject matter. Taking material from subject matter promotes integration of values education with the regular school curriculum and promotes more involvement in course content. There are at least five curriculum areas from which to draw ideas for dilemmas. *Literature* is an excellent source of material. An example from literature would be the dilemma faced by Huckleberry Finn created by his conflicting loyalties to his friend and runaway slave, Jim, and Miss Watson. *Social studies* is also a good source of ideas. Recent history, for instance, provides an example in the issues surrounding Truman's decision to drop the atomic bomb on Hiroshima. *Science*, too, is an area where conflicts in values often arise. For example, Walter Reed's decision to deliberately infect a group of subjects with yellow fever to conduct an experiment involves important ethical issues. *Vocational education* also provides opportunities to raise questions related to values. Temptations to steal from an employer or knowledge of illegal or unethical behavior in fellow workers are examples of values issues related to vocational education. Finally, school *athletic programs* can be a source of values education material. An example in this area would be the issues raised by illegal recruiting activities to build a school's or a coach's reputation. When you use subject matter material you should focus on the development of units or mini-units rather than on one-shot lessons. For example, you might develop a mini-unit on values related decisions faced by scientists while conducting their research or a unit on values issues raised within some families with divided loyalties during the Civil War.

*Real dilemmas*, unlike hypothetical dilemmas, are based on real situations from daily life. Dilemmas in this area can be from current events in the school, community, nation, or world. Perhaps the most useful source of material is school-based events. Many issues in school have potential for use in a moral education program. For example, you could use issues related to theft, cheating, sharing, sex, truth, rule violation, drugs and friendship. School-based issues have considerable

potential for working with problem students, since many of the difficulties they get into are related to some of the issues suggested above. When you use school-based issues, you should be careful to present the issue in an impersonal way. That is, don't identify the dilemma with any individual in your class or school.

Kohlberg (reported in Hersh, Paolitto, & Reimer, 1979) identified ten universal moral issues. These issues can be useful to the dilemma writer. The issues can serve as a source of ideas for hypothetical dilemmas and as guide to identifying potential dilemmas in curriculum materials and in daily life. The ten issues identified by Kohlberg follow:

1. Laws and rules
2. Conscience
3. Personal roles of affection
4. Authority
5. Civil rights
6. Contract, trust, and justice in exchange
7. Punishment
8. The value of life
9. Property
10. Truth

Before beginning a class meeting in which a moral dilemma will be discussed, you should create an appropriate classroom atmosphere. The following is adapted from Hersh, Paolitto, and Reimer's (1979) discussion of influences on classroom atmosphere during groups.

1. Physical arrangement. Whatever physical arrangement is used, it must encourage communication, e.g., a circle arrangement that allows each member of the group to see all other members of the group.

2. Grouping. If possible, students should work in small groups of from three to five. If students are reluctant to take a public position about which choice the central character in the dilemma should make, assign each student a choice and give him or her responsibility for arguing and defending that position. If possible, try to have a mix of students who exhibit different aspects of moral development in each group, e.g., students that you judge to be at the moral knowledge level, socialization level and empathy level. It is unlikely that you will have any students at the autonomy level. It is not necessary that all levels be represented but at least two different levels is desirable. When a mix is not possible, you may interact with the group representing someone at a level not reflected in a student participant.

3. Model acceptance. You must model and encourage a nonjudgmental attitude. Critical to this effort is your acceptance and respect for students' thoughts, ideas, and feelings.

4. Encourage student-to-student interaction. A major purpose of the discussion group is to create interaction among students. Your purpose for creating a good classroom atmosphere is to promote interaction. Research on dilemma discussions (Kruger, 1992) indicates that one critical component in a successful dilemma discussion program is peer-to-peer interaction. You must, however, be alert for and quickly defuse hostile interactions. You should also be alert for interactions, while not hostile, may be causing a student significant distress. Such a student needs to be talked with privately about the nature of his or her distress. Having one's position on an issue challenged can, for some students, be very discomforting.

5. Listening and communication skills. Meaningful communication can only take place if all parties can listen to and communicate with others. You can model good communication skills by asking questions to verify comprehension, to clarify, or to seek elaboration on what students say. Selman and Jaquette (1978) found communication skill deficits were common in students with disabilities who had interpersonal problems. When you have students with communication skill deficits, you should give particular attention to facilitating the development of communication skills during discussions. At a more advanced level of communication, research by Berkowitz, Gibbs, and Broughton (1980) found that the level of *thoughtful discussion* in groups was an important factor in the success of a discussion program. By thoughtful discussion, Berkowitz, et al. mean the use of such skills as those in the examples below. You can also develop such skills through modeling and skillful questioning that leads a student to use an advanced skill.

1. Use of Clarification: “Not really, what I'm saying is...”
2. Use of Extension: “Then what you say also means that...”
3. Use of Integration: “I think we're saying the same thing because...”
4. Pointing out Contradiction: “What you're saying now is just the opposite of what you said a few minutes ago because if...”
5. Criticizing Reasoning: “Your argument doesn't support your conclusion because...”

The use of questioning strategies is crucial for a teacher's role as facilitator. Hersh, et al. (1979) divide questioning strategies into *initial strategies* and *in-depth strategies*. Your initial questioning should be directed at ensuring the following:

1. Understanding the conflict that the central character is experiencing.
2. Understanding the values issue in the conflict.
3. Getting students to give their reasons for why they think the central character should make the choice they think is correct or the choice they have been assigned to defend.
4. Creating interaction among students with different points-of-view about the reasons for a choice.
5. Promoting thoughtful discussion of an issue.
6. Maintaining focus and keeping the discussion from going off on irrelevant tangents.

You may not want to use in-depth questioning strategies in every discussion or with some

groups of students who don't appear ready for more in-depth discussions. In-depth questioning strategies should be directed at the following:

1. Exploration of terms used in a discussion, e.g., trust.
2. Generating discussion of the conflicting values in a dilemma.
3. Encouraging students to take the perspective of different characters in a dilemma.
4. Asking students to consider the implications for everyone taking a particular position.
5. Extending or complicating an issue, e.g., by "what if" questions.

Empathy Role Plays

While it is important to develop empathy, simply being able to understand a situation from another person's perspective doesn't mean that the understanding will lead to empathetic behavior. Hogan suggests that there are two principle ways that empathetic behavior comes about. First, one must have experienced empathetic treatment by other people. Children who have authoritative parents and teachers will have the best opportunity for receiving such treatment. Second, one must have experienced non-empathetic treatment at the hands of others. Such experiences are most likely to come from interaction with peers. It may also be possible to help students get a sense to what non-empathetic treatment is through discussion of various situations in class meetings. These situations can best be presented as role plays and then discussed. By doing them as role plays, a student playing the character who receives non-empathetic treatment gets a simulated experience. Since only one student at a time can have such a simulated experience, it is important that multiple role plays be used. Some possible topics for these role plays include:

1. Being taunted.
2. Being ostracized.
3. Being intentionally cheated.
4. Being discriminated against.
5. Being humiliated.

The above list is certainly not exhaustive but merely illustrates the kind of situations that are appropriate for this type of role play. Before beginning a discussion, select participants to play the roles in a scenario. The best way to think of these scenarios is as mini-plays. Give each participant a copy of the scenario to read over or describe the scene and their role in it to them. The student playing the central character should be told to try to imagine that the situation is really happening to him or her. One must exercise some caution in doing these role plays because they will sometimes evoke very strong feelings in students, particularly the character who is being mistreated. Because of this potential, it is best to assign central character roles only to volunteers who have been informed of the type of treatment they will experience in the role they will play. If a student appears to be having real difficulty handling his or her feelings, you should have a private and supportive discussion with the student emphasizing that the role play is not personal but acting. Such a student may need to be excused from playing a central character in future role plays until they think they are ready to

participate again. In a discussion following a role play, the discussion should focus on four things:

1. How did the central character feel about the way he or she was treated?
2. Why did the central character feel that way?
3. How could the other character(s) have acted differently to spare the feelings of the central character?

Following the discussion, the role play should be re-enacted and incorporate the suggestions made in step three.

**Here is an example of a scenario based on role play topic (2) above:**

On his first day at a new school, William gets his lunch and spots a table with a vacant seat. He carries his tray over to the table and sits down with the group of students at the table. William says, "Hi, my name is William. I just moved here from out-of-state."

No one at the table says anything to William and the students continue talking amongst themselves. William says, "Hello, is anyone there?"

One of the students at the table says to the others, "Let's space this rude dude's butt from our private conversation."

The speaker gets up, takes his tray and begins walking away. The other students follow.
William is left sitting alone at the empty table.

In using a role play like the one above, you would get a volunteer to play the part of William. You would then select other students to play the parts of the lunch-table group, including one who would be assigned the role of the speaker for the group. The students would all get a short description of the situation and their role in it. Each student with a speaking part would get a card with what they're to say and when to say it. Finally, you would setup any props that are needed and conduct the role play. After the role play, a discussion following the outline given earlier would be conducted and then a re-enactment with modifications suggested in the discussion would be performed.

Autonomy

*Autonomy* does not lend itself very well to direct programming. However, some of the things that seem to be prerequisites to autonomy have already been either implicitly or explicitly discussed. We have previously mentioned the importance of social competence for the development of moral character and have covered teaching social skills in another chapter. It is also important for a child to develop a sense of personal competence. This should be the primary focus of the overall educational program; i.e., it should be developing competence in academic skills, physical skills, and

technical and vocational skills. Of course, both social and personal competence are also significantly affected by experiences outside of the school program as well. Finally, autonomy is facilitated by experiencing an environment that both models and encourages independent behavior, which includes taking responsibility for oneself and for managing one's own behavior. As you may recall, one of the rules that was in the illustrative list earlier in this chapter was "Be Responsible for Yourself," and the encouragement of autonomy is one reason for having that rule. A very important aspect of learning to be responsible for oneself is the opportunity to make free choices and experience the consequences of those choices. This is one reason for the criterion about rule selection that says rules should not interfere with the right of a child to make personal choices that don't limit the rights of others to make personal choices.

## Activities

1. Administer and score a scale that assesses socialization, e.g., the L Scale on the JEPQ or empathy, e.g., An Index of Empathy for Children and Adolescents and write objectives for the student based on his profile.

2. Develop a set of rules that you could use in your classroom. Provide a rationale for each rule that supports its moral validity and acceptability to the local community.

3. Select one of the rules from (2) above and develop examples of situations in which the rule would and would not apply. Do not make the examples too clear-cut.

4. Use the rules developed in (2) above or the expectations for classroom **prosocial behaviors** selected during the social skills activities in Chapter 7 in this activity. Select a **focus value** (or values) for a classroom character education program (see choices below). Develop a set of rationales for the expectations based on the focus value(s) selected. Specify the discipline procedures that you will use and relate the focus value(s) to those procedures.

    1. Caring
    2. Civic Justice
    3. Fairness
    4. Respect
    5. Responsibility
    6. Trustworthiness

5. Develop some examples of students in conflict that can be used by your students to practice deciding how the situation should probably be handled, e.g., withdrawing or compromising.

6. Develop a lesson that could be used teach the process for a fairness discussion. Include both instructional components and activities.

7. Develop a list of five (5) focus issues derived from the list of general and specific issues for dilemmas found in the VAT Curriculum that would be appropriate for students in your program. Remember a good dilemma issue is one where there are potentially both positive and negative consequences for going in either of two different directions.

8. Plan and write a dilemma for one of the focus issues in (7) above. Use the planning form found in the VAT Curriculum.

    a. What might an IEP long-term objective related to this dilemma look like.
    b. What might an IEP short-term objective related to this dilemma look like.

9. Illustrate, with dialogue, an example of how you might teach thoughtful discussion to students in a dilemma group. Illustrate either: clarification, extension, contradiction, criticism, or integration. Use the following structure:

    a. Student comment(s)
    b. Teacher prompt
    c. Student comment(s)

10. Develop a lesson plan for conducting an empathy role play and discussion.

# VALUES AWARENESS TRAINING (VAT) CURRICULUM GUIDE

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## Introduction to VAT

The following is an outline of three basic perspectives on moral issues important in character development. In this model, stories involving values-based dilemmas are used for group discussions. The discussions reveal the perspective on moral issues an individual student is applying to a dilemma through his or her comments about the resolution of the dilemma in the story. Further, exposure to the thinking of children or youth applying thinking from different perspectives on moral issues to the dilemma stimulates the development of those perspectives in students who have not learned to operate from those perspectives. An overview of the three basic perspectives on moral issues will be presented shortly.

Dilemma stories should focus on a problem that has two or more possible resolutions. The facts in the problem situation should not favor any particular choice, nor should there be any doubt about the facts in the situation. That is, an argument could be made for any of the available courses of action. It is the type of arguments used to justify a particular course of action, chosen by each participant, that is the important dimension of the discussion. Each dilemma should focus on a central character, in a conflict situation, with whom the participants in the discussion can, to some extent, identify.

**Perspectives on Moral Thinking**

Introductory Comments:

A child or youth's rationale for his or her favored solution to a conflict situation will approximate one of the following perspectives. While it is helpful for the facilitator of a discussion group to be able to quickly and easily recognize these perspectives, as reflected in participants' comments about why the conflict situation under discussion should be resolved in a particular way, it is not essential to be highly skilled at making these discriminations before the program can be employed. With experience, the ability to make more exact discriminations will develop, provided the facilitator maintains familiarity with the model and a reflective attitude toward the content of the discussions.

1. **Egocentric Perspective**. Individuals using this perspective tend to be operating at the level of *moral knowledge*. The most basic rationale or justifications used for decisions usually reflect compliance with rules out of a deference to adult authority with the intent of avoiding adult censure. A somewhat more sophisticated rationale or justification for decisions reflects compliance out of a desire for adult approval or reward. This perspective can also be seen operating where the individual substitutes the peer group for adult authority. Typical of early childhood

2. **Social Perspective**. Individuals using this perspective tend to be operating at the *socialization* level. The most basic rationale or justifications used for decisions usually reflect compliance with the values and rules of the immediate social groups to which one belongs, e.g., the family, peer group, church, or school and the belief that these rules are fair and good. A somewhat more sophisticated rationale or justification for decisions usually reflect compliance with more abstract values and rules of broader social groups to which one belongs, e.g., political, religion, culture and society, which take precedence over the values and rules of more immediate social groups if they are in conflict. There is a firm belief and commitment to these more general values and rules as being just and necessary. Typically first seen in middle childhood.

3. **Reflective Perspective**: Individuals using this perspective tend to be operating at the *empathy* level. The most basic rationale or justifications used for decisions usually reflect compliance with values and rules out of respect for the rights of others; i.e., “do unto others...” Compliance with rules seen as arbitrary and not supportive of the rights of others may not be obeyed. At a more intense level this perspective may result in decisions that recognize and respond to the needs of others whether or not such actions conform to the rules in the situation and may even violate the rights of some party; e.g., supporting an act of theft because the thief had a real need for the stolen item, for example, medicine. Typically first seen in late childhood to early adolescence.

4. **Independent Perspective**: Individuals using this perspective tend to be operating at the *autonomous* level. The rationale or justifications used for decisions reflect, in whole or part, commitment to a personal code of conduct that represents a unique and individualistic perspective

on right and wrong. The personal code of conduct may or may not correspond to the operative rules in a situation. When action is consistent with the rules operative in a situation it is not because of a commitment to the rules but because of a commitment to the personal code. Individuals who are low in both socialization and empathy are at risk of developing a personal code that may be perceived by others as *amoral* or even criminal. Typically first seen in late adolescence to adulthood.

## VAT Curriculum Outline

The following is a list of ten *general issues* related to values with three illustrative *specific issues* for each category. Other specific issues in each category are possible. Many individual dilemma stories with different *focus issues* can be generated for any given specific issue. Some issues will be more relevant for younger children, some more relevant for older children, and some will be relevant for children of any age, depending on how the story is framed.

1. **Laws and rules**

a. Stealing
b. Cheating
c. Lying

2. **Conscience**

a. Draft resistance
b. Whistle blowers
c. Breaking the law

3. **Personal roles of affection**

a. Obligations to parents
b. Obligations to siblings
c. Obligations to friends

4. **Authority**

a. Obeying adults
b. Obeying teachers
c. Obeying police

5. **Civil rights**

a. Discrimination
b. Free speech
c. Freedom of religion

6. **Contract, trust, and justice in exchange**

a. Abiding by agreements
b. Keeping a confidence
c. Paying a fair price

7. **Punishment**

a. Revenge
b. Rehabilitation
c. Deterrence

8. **The value of life**

a. Animal rights
b. Euthanasia
c. Suicide

9. **Property**

a. Use of property
b. Confiscation of property
c. Taxation

10. **Truth**

a. Scientific
b. Religious
c. Political

**VAT Teaching Strategy Summary: Dilemma-Based Group Discussions**

A. Group discussions.

1. Physical arrangement: Use a seating arrangement that promotes communication, e.g., circle.

2. Set rules: Every group needs a set of ground rules to maintain orderly discussion.

3. Grouping: If there is a large number of participants, group students into small groups of three to five. Try to have at least two perspectives represented in each group.

4. Model acceptance: Be a model for being non-judgmental and for respecting others' point-of-view.

5. Model listening and communication skills: Ask questions, e.g., to reflect, clarify, obtain elaboration, and thoughtful discussion.

6. Encourage student-to-student interaction: Ask questions to promote interaction and stimulate cognitive conflict. Try to promote interaction between students with different perspectives.

7. Be alert for distress: Watch for students who may become particularly distressed as a result of the discussion.

**VAT Dilemma Planning Form**

1. Target Population for Dilemma

a. Age mix of the group:

b. Gender mix of group:

c. Cultural mix of group:

2. Type of Dilemma to be Written

a. General Issue:

b. Specific Issue:

c. Focus Issue: (relate to target population):

3. Dilemma Scenario Components

a. Central Character (relate to target population):

b. Choice to be made by central character*:

c. Consequences of choices
   1. Positive outcome of first choice:
   2. Negative outcome of first choice:
   3. Positive outcome of second choice:
   4. Negative outcome of second choice:

d. Supporting Character/s (relate to target population):

e. Situation/Setting for the scenario (relate to target population):

4. Write a Dramatic Narrative** (use description and dialog focused on above components).

5. Write Questions

a. Required questions: 1. Which choice should the central character make? 2. Why?

b. Optional questions to stimulate understanding or discussion.

* Ask yourself: Does your central character have a difficult choice to make? and Why?

** Ask yourself: Will my students find this an interesting story and situation?

**VAT Dilemma Planning Form**

1. Target Population for Dilemma
a. Age mix of group: 14-15
b. Gender mix of group: Male
c. Cultural mix of group: White
2. Type of Dilemma to be Written
a. General Issue: Personal roles of affection
b. Specific Issue (relate to target population): Obligations to friends
c. Focus Issue: Smoking Pot
3. Dilemma Scenario Components
a. Central Character (relate to target population):
Floyd, a relatively new student at the school
b. Choice to be made by central character*:
To refuse and be excluded or to go along and be accepted.
c. Consequences of choices
1. Positive outcome of first choice: Be consistent with his personal standards.
2. Negative outcome of first choice: Risk exclusion by peers.
3. Positive outcome of second choice: Gain acceptance by peers.
4. Negative outcome of second choice: Violate his personal standards.
d. Supporting Character/s (relate to target population):
Larry, a friend who is a long-time member of a particular peer group within the school.
Jeff, the leader of the peer group.
e. Situation/Setting for the scenario (relate to target population):
A school sporting event.
4. Write a Dramatic Narrative** (use description and dialog focused on above components).
5. Write Questions
a. Required questions: What should Floyd do? 2. Why?
b. Optional questions to stimulate understanding or discussion.

* Ask yourself: Does your central character have a difficult choice to make? and Why?

** Ask yourself: Will my students find this an interesting story and situation?

**Sample VAT Dilemma: Floyd Has a Problem**

Floyd has been at his new school for about a month and has met a bunch of guys he likes and has been hanging out with at school. Floyd and one of his new friends, Larry, go to a Friday night basketball game at the school. When they arrive at the gym they go to the concession area and meet up with some of the other guys who have been waiting for them.

Jeff calls the group in close and in a low voice says, "O.K., guys, like I promised, I finally got that dynamite dope." Murmurs of approval are voiced by several of the boys. "Let's head out behind the gym and get this on before the game starts."

As the group starts for the exit door, Floyd says, "I'll catch up. I've gotta go to the john real bad."

"Yeah, me, too. I'll go with you," says his friend Larry. We'll be out in a minute."

In a few minutes the two boys leave the gym and Larry starts walking toward the back of the building. Floyd hangs back and doesn't follow. Larry sees Floyd isn't following and comes back for him. "Come on, man. There isn't gonna be anything left if we don't hurry."

"You go ahead. I'll meet y'all back here in a few minutes."

"What's the matter with you? Don't you wanna get trashed?"

"I don’t smoke dope, Larry.”

"Man, we've been planning this for a long time. The guys will never let you live it down if you don't show."

"That stuff isn't good for you, and I don’t think its the right thing to do."

"Hell, man, everybody that's anybody does a little dope for fun. Nobody I know ever died from it. You want the guys to think you're a nerd?"

"I don't know. I wish I hadn't come tonight."

"Com'on, you're either going to be one of the guys, or you're gonna be a loner at this school,” says Larry as he starts for the back of the gym.

1. Should Floyd go with Larry and smoke dope with his new friends? Yes or No?

2. Why should he or shouldn't he?

**Sample VAT Teacher Evaluation Form**

Student ____________________________________ Date __________

Dilemma Title_______________________________

General Issue _______________________________

Specific Issue _______________________________

Focus Issue _________________________________

Decision: Yes or No

What perspective is used to support the decision? Check one or more as appropriate. **Note**: it is not unusual to find more than one perspective used in a student's reasoning about a dilemma. This may occur if a student thinks good arguments can be made from more than one perspective, or a student may be strongly influenced by the reasoning of an influential member of the group arguing from a particular perspective. The latter will usually be evident by a mere imitation of the statements of the influential student rather than making one's own arguments from that perspective.

_____ Egocentric Perspective (Moral Knowledge)

_____ Reflective Perspective (Empathy)

_____ Social Perspective (Socialization)

_____ Independent Perspective (Autonomy)

Sample comments that support the assigned perspective(s):

**Note**: Initially, it may be useful to unobtrusively tape the discussion group so that you can come back later and evaluate more carefully the students' comments at your leisure. With some practice, you will probably no longer find this step necessary.

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