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22

NEL NODDINGS

Tammy Shel

It would be fair to claim that, nowadays, any form of discussion on caring in education includes references to Nel Noddings (born 1929). A veteran scholar, Noddings has established her academic career in association with the ethics of caring in education. Her prime argument is that anything we learn needs to stem from the ethics of caring, including science and math, because the goal of education is first and foremost to cultivate caring and good human beings.

Noddings's academic career is very impressive, and to summarize it is a challenge. She started her academic adventure at Montclair State University, where she received her bachelor's degree in mathematics. She then went on to receive a master's degree in mathematics from Rutgers University. In 1973 she received her Ph.D. in philosophy of education from Stanford University. Prior to her academic career, she taught grades 6–9. She also taught K–12 teachers modern math and served as a high school assistant principal. Her vast experience as a teacher has always been the guiding voice in her writings. Altogether, she has been involved in many writing projects, has received many honorary awards, has been invited to teach and to lecture in many places (including Columbia University and Stanford) in many parts of the world, and her books have been translated into many languages.

Overall, her philosophy of education has two important influences. First, Carol Gilligan's book *In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and*

Women's Development (1984) emphasizes a feminist ethic of care. While this book has been criticized for overgeneralizing women's experiences and essentializing caring, Noddings found in it a new notion of ethics that was not reliant on masculine forms of thought. While traditional ethics is often concerned with death and the afterlife, Noddings and Gilligan argue that starting ethics from a feminist perspective would focus more on questions of birth and life. Noddings then combined Gilligan's groundbreaking work with the existential philosophy of Martin Buber. To help the reader understand caring, Noddings borrowed Buber's theory of the "I-Thou" relationship. Rather than see students as passive objects, a caring theory of educational ethics would see students as active subjects.

Caring, Noddings contends, has three major components: engrossment, motivational displacement, and reciprocity. The first, *engrossment,* is related to how the carer understands the needs of the cared-for. It is the notion of "feeling with . . . I receive the other into myself, and I see and feel with the other. I become a duality." The second, *motivational displacement,* occurs when we transcend our own interests to the cared-for experience, with empathy. That is, we feel the cared-for from his or her standpoint. The last one, *reciprocity,* is recognition of our acts by the cared-for that helps us to complete the caring relationship. Reciprocity does not oblige, in Noddings's view, though, equal exchange of acts but it does require acknowledgment of the receiver.

With respect to education, Noddings writes: "The fundamental aim of education is to help children grow in desirable ways. This is best accomplished by modeling, dialogue, practice, and confirmation." First, a teacher must be a role model of good behavior. Then a teacher needs to establish a genuine dialogue with his or her students through mutual exploration. In practice, teachers rationalize what they require from their students to practice instead of just giving them instructions. In confirmation, the teacher encourages the students and reinforces their confidence in the process of learning. In other words, the teacher gives constructive and positive feedback. Caring is more than emotions. Noddings's main contribution is to promote caring as an approach to life, to others, and it is an approach to teaching and learning. While traditional, male-oriented curricula focus on the training of reason and abstraction, Noddings focuses on the need to develop an overall ethical disposition that includes reason, practical action, and feelings.

What are Noddings's main contributions? There are many, and it is impossible to cover them all in this brief introduction. To begin with,

Noddings synthesized many scholars' philosophies into a well-established theory. Likewise, she does not attempt to get the entire credit for herself and, by that, she demonstrates and promotes a more humble and genuine academic discourse. Her other contribution is equally important in changing the academic discourse vocabulary. Because of her, caring, which is traditionally associated with women and the private sphere, has become an acceptable word in any academic discourse, especially in education. Prior to her, philosophers of education did not use the term on a regular basis, and if care was mentioned, it was stigmatized as "unintellectual" women's work associated with the home. Nowadays, even male scholars focus on caring and elaborate on it as an important way of rethinking ethics, yet there are significant problems with Noddings's theory. For instance, she does not provide readers with ethnographic and empirical studies to support her arguments. Second, her theories do not address multicultural possibilities in understanding caring. Her theories need to be examined and developed by including multiple individual and cultural experiences and interpretations of care.

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CARING

The German philosopher Martin Heidegger (1962) described care as the very Being of human life. His use of the term is very broad, covering an attitude of solicitousness toward other living beings, a concern to do things meticulously, the deepest existential longings, fleeting moments of concern, and all the burdens and woes that belong to human life. From his perspective, we are immersed in care; it is the ultimate reality of life.

Heidegger's full range of meanings will be of interest as this exploration continues, but the meaning that will be primary here is relational. A *caring relation* is, in its most basic form, a connection or encounter between two human beings—a carer and a recipient of care, or cared-for. In order for the relation to be properly called caring, both parties must contribute to it in characteristic ways. A failure on the part of either carer or cared-for blocks completion of caring and, although there may still be a relation—that is, an encounter or connection in which each party feels something toward the other—it is not a *caring* relation. Even before I describe the contributions of carer and cared-for, one can see how useful this relational definition is. No matter how hard teachers try to care, if the caring is not received by students, the claim "they don't care" has some validity. It suggests strongly that something is very wrong.

In *Caring* (1984), I described the state of consciousness of the carer (or "one-caring") as characterized by engrossment and motivational displacement. By engrossment I mean an open, nonselective receptivity to the cared-for. Other writers have used the word "attention" to describe this characteristic. Iris Murdoch (1970), for example, discussed attention as essential in moral life, and she traced the concept to Simone Weil. Weil placed attention at the center of love for our neighbors. It is what characterizes our consciousness when we ask another (explicitly or implicitly), "What are you going through?" Weil wrote:

> This way of looking is first of all attentive. The soul empties itself of all its own contents in order to receive into itself the being it is looking at, just as he is, in all his truth. Only he who is capable of attention can do this. (1951, p. 115)

To say that the soul empties itself of all its own contents in order to receive the other describes well what I mean by engrossment. I do not mean infatuation, enchantment, or obsession but a full receptivity. When I care, I really hear, see, or feel what the other tries to convey. The engrossment or attention may last only a few moments and it may or may not be repeated in future encounters, but it is full and essential in any caring encounter. For example, if a stranger stops me to ask directions, the encounter may produce a caring relation, albeit a brief one. I listen attentively to his need, and I respond in a way that he receives and recognizes. The caring relation is completed when he receives my efforts at caring.

As carer in the brief encounter just described, I was attentive, but I also felt the desire to help the stranger in his need. My consciousness was characterized by motivational displacement. Where a moment earlier I had my own projects in mind, I was now concerned with his project—finding his way on campus. When we watch a small child trying to tie her shoes, we often feel our own fingers moving in sympathetic reaction. This is motivational displacement, the sense that our motive energy is flowing toward others and their projects. I receive what the other conveys, and I want to respond in a way that furthers the other's purpose or project.

Experiencing motivational displacement, one begins to think. Just as we consider, plan, and reflect on our own projects, we now think what we can do to help another. Engrossment and motivational displacement do not tell us what to do; they merely characterize our consciousness when we care. But the thinking that we do will now be as careful as it is in our own service. We are seized by the needs of another.

What characterizes the consciousness of one who is cared for? Reception, recognition, and response seem to be primary. The cared-for receives the caring and shows that it has been received. This recognition now becomes part of what the carer receives in his or her engrossment, and the caring is completed.

Some critics worry that my account puts a tremendous burden on the carer and very little on the recipient of care. But we must keep in mind that the basic caring relation is an encounter. My description of a caring relation does not entail that carer and cared-for are permanent labels for individuals. Mature relationships are characterized by mutuality. They are made up of strings of encounters in which the parties exchange places; both members are carers and cared-fors as opportunities arise.

Even in the basic situation, however, the contribution of the cared-for is not negligible. Consider the mother-infant relationship. In every caring encounter, the mother is necessarily carer and the infant cared-for. But the infant responds—he or she coos, wriggles, stares attentively, smiles, reaches out, and cuddles. These responses are heartwarming; they make caregiving a rewarding experience. To see just how vital the infant's response is to the caring relation, one should observe what happens when infants cannot respond normally to care. Mothers and other caregivers in such situations are worn down by the lack of completion—burned out by the constant outward flow of energy that is not replenished by the response of the cared-for. Teachers, too, suffer this dreadful loss of energy when their students do not respond. Thus, even when the second party in a relation cannot assume the status of carer, there is a genuine form of reciprocity that is essential to the relation.

The desire to be cared for is almost certainly a universal human characteristic. Not everyone wants to be cuddled or fussed over. But everyone wants to be received, to elicit a response that is congruent with an underlying need or desire. Cool and formal people want others to respond to them with respect and a touch of deference. Warm, informal people often appreciate smiles and hugs. Everyone appreciates a person who knows when to hug and when to stand apart. In schools, all kids want to be cared for in this sense. They do not want to be treated "like numbers," by recipe—no matter how sweet the recipe may be for some consumers. When we understand that everyone wants to be cared for and that there is no recipe for caring, we see how important engrossment (or attention) is. In order to respond as a genuine carer, one does have to empty the soul of its own contents. One cannot say, "Aha! This fellow needs care. Now, let's see—here are the seven steps I must follow." Caring is a way of being in relation, not a set of specific behaviors.

I have put great emphasis on caring as relation, because our temptation is to think of caring as a virtue, an individual attribute. We do talk this way at times. We say, "He is a caring person," or even, "She is really a caring person, but she has trouble showing it." Both of these comments capture something of our broad notion of care, but both are misleading because of their emphasis on caring as an individual virtue. As we explore caring in the context of caregiving—any long-term unequal relation in which one person is carer and the other cared-for—

we will ask about the virtues that support caring. But for now, it is important not to detach carers from caring relations. No matter how much a person professes to care, the result that concerns us is the caring relation. Lots of self-righteous, "caring" people induce the response, "she doesn't really care about me at all."

Even though I will often use the word *caring* to apply to relations, I will also need to apply it to capacities. The uses should be clear in context. I want to avoid a concentration on judgment or evaluation that accompanies an interpretation of caring as an individual virtue, but I also want to acknowledge that people have various capacities for caring—that is, for entering into caring relations as well as for attending to objects and ideas.

When we discuss teaching and teacher-learner relationships in depth, we will see that teachers not only have to create caring relations in which they are the carers, but that they also have a responsibility to help their students develop the capacity to care. What can this mean? For Heidegger care is inevitable; all aware human beings care. It is the mark of being human. But not everyone develops the capacity to care for others in the way described above. Perhaps very few learn to care for ideas, for nonhuman life, for objects. And often we confuse the forms of caring and suppose caring to be a unitary capacity that transfers easily from one domain to another.

Simone Weil is a good example of an outstanding thinker who seems to have believed that intellectual caring and interpersonal caring are closely related. In the essay from which the earlier passage was extracted, Weil observed that the study of geometry requires attention and that attention so learned could increase students' concentration in prayer. Thence, we may suppose, Weil concluded that closer connection in prayer would produce more sensitive interpersonal relations; that is, she believed that intellectual attention could be transferred to interpersonal attention. This is doubtful. Evidence abounds that people can attain high levels of intellectuality and remain insensitive to human beings and other living things. Consider the Nazi high command or the fictional Professor Moriarty (Sherlock Holmes's nemesis) who attended lovingly to his orchids but was evil incarnate in the human domain. So the varieties of care need analysis.

Unequal caring relations are interesting not only in the human domain but also in the realm of nonhuman animals. It is doubtful

whether any animal can be a carer with respect to humans (although there are those who have argued the case for dogs), but many animals are responsive cared-fors, and taking care of animals can be a wonderful way to learn caring. In our interaction with animals, we also have an opportunity to study the forms of response that we value. Some animals respond with intelligence, and we usually value that. Some respond with affection; they like to be stroked, cuddled, held, or scratched. Still others respond vocally. All of these responses affect us and call forth a caring attitude. Further, certain physical characteristics that suggest the possibility of a valued response also affect us. Most of us feel sympathy for baby seals threatened by hunters, because they look as though they might respond in the ways mentioned. Creatures that are slimy, scaly, or spiny rarely evoke a sympathetic response in us. The nature of our responses will be seen as important when we consider the roots of ethical life.

In another sense of care, human beings can care about ideas or objects. An approach to education that begins with care is not, as I pointed out earlier, anti-intellectual. Part of what we receive from others is a sense of their interests, including intellectual passions. To enhance a student's understanding and skill in a given subject is an important task for teachers, but current educational practices are riddled with slogans and myths that are not very helpful.

Often we begin with the innocent-sounding slogan mentioned earlier, "All children can learn." The slogan was created by people who mean well. They want teachers to have high expectations for all their students and not to decide on the basis of race, ethnicity, sex, or economic status that some groups of children simply cannot learn the subject at hand. With that much I agree.

But I will argue that not all individual children can learn everything we might like to teach them. Further, the good intentions captured in the slogan can lead to highly manipulative and dictatorial methods that disregard the interests and purposes of students. Teachers these days are expected to induce a desire to learn in all students. But all students already want to learn; it is a question of *what* they want to learn. John Dewey (1963) argued years ago that teachers had to start with the experience and interests of students and patiently forge connections between that experience and whatever subject matter was prescribed. I would go further. There are few things that all students need

to know, and it ought to be acceptable for students to reject some material in order to pursue other topics with enthusiasm. Caring teachers listen and respond differentially to their students. Much more will be said on this highly controversial issue in later chapters. For now it is enough to note that our schools are not intellectually stimulating places, even for many students who are intellectually oriented.

Few students learn to care for ideas in school. Perhaps even fewer learn to care for objects. I am not talking about mere acquisitiveness; this seems to be learned all too well. I am talking about what Harry Broudy (1972) called "enlightened cherishing" and what the novelist and essayist John Galsworthy (1948) called "quality." This kind of caring produces fine objects and takes care of them. In a society apparently devoted to planned obsolescence, our children have few opportunities to care lovingly for old furniture, dishes, carpets, or even new bicycles, radios, cassette players, and the like. It can be argued that the care of many tools and instruments is a waste of time because they are so easily replaced. But one wonders how long a throwaway society can live harmoniously with the natural environment and also how closely this form of carelessness is related to the gross desire for more and more acquisitions. Is there a role for schools to play in teaching care of buildings, books, computers, furniture, and laboratory equipment?

Caring for ideas and objects is different from caring for people and other living things. Strictly speaking, one cannot form a relation with mathematics or music or a food processor. The cared-for cannot feel anything for us; there is no affect in the second party. But, oddly, people do report a form of responsiveness from ideas and objects. The mathematician Gauss was "seized" by mathematics. The poet Robert Frost insisted that "a poem finds its own way" (see the accounts in Noddings & Shore, 1984). And we know that well-tended engines purr, polished instruments gleam, and fine glassware glistens. The care we exert induces something like a response from fields of ideas and from inanimate objects. Do our students hear enough—or anything at all—about these wondrous events?

Finally, we must consider Heidegger's deepest sense of care. As human beings, we care what happens to us. We wonder whether there is life after death, whether there is a deity who cares about us, whether we are loved by those we love, whether we belong anywhere; we wonder what we will become, who we are, how much control we have over

our own fate. For adolescents these are among the most pressing questions: Who am I? What kind of person will I be? Who will love me? How do others see me? Yet schools spend more time on the quadratic formula than on any of these existential questions.

In reviewing the forms of care, it becomes clear that there is a challenge to care in schools. The structures of current schooling work against care, and at the same time, the need for care is perhaps greater than ever.

The Debate in Ethics

No discussion of caring today could be adequate without some attention to the ethic of care. In 1982 Carol Gilligan published her now famous *In a Different Voice*, describing an alternative approach to moral problems. This approach was identified in the voices of women, but Gilligan did not claim that the approach is exclusively female, nor did she claim that all women use it. Still, the avalanche of response from women who recognized themselves in Gilligan's description is an impressive phenomenon. "This is me," many women said. "Finally someone has articulated the way I come at moral problems."

Gilligan described a morality based on the recognition of needs, relation, and response. Women who speak in the different voice refuse to leave themselves, their loved ones, and connections out of their moral reasoning. They speak from and to a situation, and their reasoning is contextual. Those of us who write about an ethic of care have emphasized affective factors, but this is not to say that caring is irrational or even nonrational. It has its own rationality or reasonableness, and in appropriate situations carers draw freely on standard linear rationality as well. But its emphasis is on living together, on creating, maintaining, and enhancing positive relations—not on decision making in moments of high moral conflict, nor on justification.

An ethic of care—a needs- and response-based ethic—challenges many premises of traditional ethics and moral education. First, there is the difference of focus already mentioned. There is also a rejection of universalizability, the notion that anything that is morally justifiable is necessarily something that anyone else in a similar situation is obligated to do. Universalizability suggests that who we are, to whom we are related, and how we are situated should have nothing to do with our moral decision making. An ethic of caring rejects this. Next,

although an ethic of care puts great emphasis on consequences in the sense that it always asks what happens to the relation, it is not a form of utilitarianism; it does not posit one greatest good to be optimized, nor does it separate means and ends. Finally, it is not properly labeled an ethic of virtue. Although it calls on people to be carers and to develop the virtues and capacities to care, it does not regard caring solely as an individual attribute. It recognizes the part played by the cared-for. It is an ethic of relation.

In moral education an ethic of care's great emphasis on motivation challenges the primacy of moral reasoning. We concentrate on developing the attitudes and skills required to sustain caring relations and the desire to do so, not nearly so much on the reasoning used to arrive at a decision. Lawrence Kohlberg (1981) and his associates, following Plato and Socrates, have focused on moral reasoning. The supposition here is that moral knowledge is sufficient for moral behavior. From this perspective, wrongdoing is always equated with ignorance. Gilligan explicitly challenged Kohlberg's scale or hierarchy of moral reasoning (suggesting a powerful alternative developmental model), but others of us have challenged the whole idea of a developmental model, arguing that moral responses in a given individual may vary contextually at almost any age. (The language used to discuss what one is doing and why may, of course, depend on intellectual development, but moral behavior and its intellectual articulation are not synonymous.)

Moral education from the perspective of an ethic of caring has four major components: modeling, dialogue, practice, and confirmation (Noddings, 1984). Modeling is important in most schemes of moral education, but in caring it is vital. In this framework we are not trying to teach students principles and ways of applying them to problems through chains of mathematical reasoning. Rather, we have to show how to care in our own relations with cared-fors. For example, professors of education and school administrators cannot be sarcastic and dictatorial with teachers in the hope that coercion will make them care for students. I have heard administrators use this excuse for "being tough" with teachers"because I care about the kids of this state"—but, of course, the likely outcome is that teachers will then turn attention protectively to themselves rather than lovingly to their students. So we do not tell our students to care; we show them how to care by creating caring relations with them.

There is a second reason why modeling is so vital. The capacity to care may be dependent on adequate experience in being cared for. Even while a child is too young to be a carer, he or she can learn how to be a responsive cared-for. Thus our role as carer is more important than our role as model, but we fill both simultaneously. We remind ourselves when we are tempted to take short cuts in moral education that we are, inevitably, models. But otherwise, in our daily activities we simply respond as carers when the need arises. The function of modeling gets special attention when we try to explain what we are doing and why in moral education. But the primary reason for responding as carers to our students' needs is that we are called to such response by our moral orientation.

Dialogue is the second essential component of moral education. My use of the term *dialogue* is similar to that of Paulo Freire (1970). It is not just talk or conversation—certainly not an oral presentation of argument in which the second party is merely allowed to ask an occasional question. Dialogue is open-ended; that is, in a genuine dialogue, neither party knows at the outset what the outcome or decision will be. As parents and teachers, we cannot enter into dialogue with children when we know that our decision is already made. It is maddening to young people (or any people) to engage in "dialogue" with a sweetly reasonable adult who cannot be persuaded and who, in the end, will say, "Here's how it's going to be. I tried to reason with you. . . ." We do have to talk this way at times, but we should not pretend that this is dialogue. Dialogue is a common search for understanding, empathy, or appreciation. It can be playful or serious, logical or imaginative, goal or process oriented, but it is always a genuine quest for something undetermined at the beginning.

Dialogue permits us to talk about what we try to show. It gives learners opportunities to question "why," and it helps both parties to arrive at well-informed decisions. Although I do not believe that all wrongdoing can be equated with ignorance, I do believe that many moral errors are ill-informed decisions, particularly in the very young. Thus dialogue serves not only to inform the decision under consideration; it also contributes to a habit of mind—that of seeking adequate information on which to make decisions.

Dialogue serves another purpose in moral education. It connects us to each other and helps to maintain caring relations. It also provides us with the knowledge of each other that forms a foundation for response

in caring. Caring (acting as carer) requires knowledge and skill as well as characteristic attitudes. We respond most effectively as carers when we understand what the other needs and the history of this need. Dialogue is implied in the criterion of engrossment. To receive the other is to attend fully and openly. Continuing dialogue build up a substantial knowledge of one another that serves to guide our responses.

A third component of moral education is practice. Attitudes and "mentalities" are shaped, at least in part, by experience. Most of us speak regularly of a "military mind," a "police mentality," "business thinking," and the like. Although some of this talk is a product of stereotyping, it seems clear that it also captures some truth about human behavior. All disciplines and institutional organizations have training programs designed not only to teach specific skills but also to "shape minds," that is, to induce certain attitudes and ways of looking at the world. If we want people to approach moral life prepared to care, we need to provide opportunities for them to gain skills in caregiving and, more important, to develop the characteristic attitudes described earlier.

Some of the most fascinating work in contemporary feminist theory is devoted to the study of women's experience and its articulation. It seems likely that women's traditional experience is closely related to the moral approach described in ethics of care. Women, more often than men, have been charged with the direct care of young children, the ill, and the aged. They have been expected to maintain a pleasing environment, to look after the needs of others, and to mediate disputes in ordinary social situations. If we regard this experience as inseparable from oppression, then we might agree with Nietzsche that what I am describing is merely "slave mentality." But if we analyze the experience, we find considerable autonomy, love, choice, and consummate skill in the traditional female role. We may evaluate the experience as essential in developing fully human beings.

Women have learned to regard every human encounter as a potential caring occasion. In nursing theory, for example, Jean Watson (1985) defined the moment in which nurse and patient meet as a "caring occasion." It is not just that the nurse will provide care in the form of physical skills to the patient. Rather, it is a moment in which each must decide how to meet the other and what to do with the moment. This is obviously very different from defining a medical encounter as a problem-solving event. Problem solving is involved, of course, but it

is preceded by a moment of receptivity—one in which the full humanity of both parties is recognized—and it is followed by a return to the human other in all his or her fullness.

If we decide that the capacity to care is as much a mark of personhood as reason or rationality, then we will want to find ways to increase this capacity. Just as we now think it is important for girls as well as boys to have mathematical experience, so we should want both boys and girls to have experience in caring. It does not just happen; we have to plan for it. As we will see, such planning is complex and loaded with potential pitfalls.

Some schools, recognizing the needs just discussed, have instituted requirements for a form of community service. This is a move in the right direction, but reflection produces some issues to worry about. The practice provided must be with people who can demonstrate caring. We do not want our children to learn the menial (or even sophisticated) skills of caregiving without the characteristic attitude of caring. The experience of caregiving should initiate or contribute to the desired attitude, but the conditions have to be right, and people are central to the setting. This is a major point, to which I will return.

Next, practice in caring should transform schools and, eventually, the society in which we live. If the practice is assimilated to the present structures of schooling, it may lose its transformative powers. *It* may be transformed—that is, distorted. If we were to give grades for caregiving, for example, students might well begin to compete for honors in caring. Clearly, then, their attention could be diverted from cared-fors to themselves. If, on the other hand, we neither grade nor give credit for such work, it may inevitably have second-class status in our schools. So long as our schools are organized hierarchically with emphasis on rewards and penalties, it will be very difficult to provide the kind of experience envisioned.

The fourth component of moral education from the perspective of caring is confirmation. Martin Buber (1965) described confirmation as an act of affirming and encouraging the best in others. When we confirm someone, we spot a better self and encourage its development. We can do this only if we know the other well enough to see what he or she is trying to become. Formulas and slogans have no place here. We do not set up a single ideal or set of expectations for everyone to meet, but we identify something admirable, or at least acceptable, struggling to

emerge in each person we encounter. The person working toward a better self must see the attribute or goal as worthy, and we too must see it as at least morally acceptable. We do not confirm people in ways we judge to be wrong.

Confirmation requires attribution of the best possible motive consonant with reality. When someone commits an act we find reprehensible, we ask ourselves what might have motivated such an act. Often it is not hard to identify an array of possible motives ranging from the gross and grubby to some that are acceptable or even admirable. This array is not constructed in abstraction. We build it from a knowledge of this particular other and by listening carefully to what she or he tells us. The motive we attribute has to be a real, a genuine possibility. Then we can open our dialogue with something like, "I know you were trying to help your friend . . ." or "I know what you're trying to accomplish. . . ." It will be clear that we disapprove of this particular act, but it will also be clear to the other that we see a self that is better than this act. Often the other will respond with enormous relief. *Here is this significant and percipient other who sees through the smallness or meanness of my present behavior a self that is better and a real possibility.* Confirmation lifts us toward our vision of a better self.

It is worth repeating that confirmation cannot be done by formula. A relation of trust must ground it. Continuity is required, because the carer in acting to confirm must know the cared-for well enough to be able to identify motives consonant with reality. Confirmation cannot be described in terms of strategies; it is a loving act founded on a relation of some depth. When we turn to specific changes that should occur in schooling in order to meet the challenge to care, I will put great emphasis on continuity. Not all caring relations require continuity (some, as we have seen, are brief encounters), but teaching does require it.

Confirmation contrasts sharply with the standard mode of religious moral education. There we usually find a sequence of accusation, confession, penance, and forgiveness. The initial step, accusation, causes or sustains separation. We stand in moral judgment and separate the other from ourselves and the moral community. In contrast, confirmation calls us to remain in connection. Further, accusation tends to produce denial or rationalization, which we then feel compelled to overthrow. But the rationalization may in fact be an attempt on the part of the accused to find that possible motive and convey it to

us, the accuser. Because we have to reject it in order to proceed with confession, penance, and forgiveness, offenders may never understand their own true motives. This sequence also depends heavily on authority, obedience, fear, and subordination. We can be harsh or magnanimous in our judgment and forgiveness. Our authority is emphasized, and the potential power of the offender's own moral struggle is overlooked.

I do not mean to suggest that there is never a place for accusation and confession in moral education. It is not always possible for us to find a motive that is morally acceptable; sometimes we have to begin by asking straight out, "Why did you do that?" or "How could you do such a thing?" But it is gratifying how often we really can see a better self if we look for one, and its identification is a first step in its realization.

This whole way of looking at ethics and moral education challenges not only parts of the religious tradition but also the ideas of Freud and like-minded theorists. Freud believed that our sense of morality develops out of fear. The superego, Freud said, is an internalization of authority—of the father's voice—and its establishment results from resolution of the oedipal conflict. Sons fear castration by the father if they disobey or compete with him. Resolution of this desire to rebel and compete involves acceptance of the father's power and authority, and the superego (Freud's guide to acceptable behavior) takes up residence within the son. This account of moral development led Freud to conclude that women must be morally inferior to men. Because girls need not fear castration (having been born in that dread condition), their moral voice never attains the strength and dependability of men's.

Recent criticisms of Freud suggest that more attention should be given to the preoedipal period. Nancy Chodorow (1978) has theorized that girls and boys develop different psychological deep structures because females are almost exclusively the primary caregivers for both. Girls can find their gender identity without separating from their mother and, hence, develop a relational personality structure and perhaps even a relational epistemology or way of knowing (Keller, 1985). Boys, however, must construct their gender identity in opposition to all that is female. Here we have the possible roots of the different moral voices described by Gilligan. We will consider other alternatives as well.

Eli Sagan (1988) has also suggested that moral development begins and is strongly affected by preoedipal life. Without rejecting the Freudian framework entirely, Sagan recommends a shift in emphasis. If we give due weight to early childhood, we see that conscience (a sense of right and wrong, not mere internalization of authority) develops as much out of love and attachment as out of fear. Further, the primary fear is not of harm and punishment but, rather, of disappointing a loved parent and, at worst, losing that parent's love. This is a major challenge to masculinist psychology and a suggestion compatible with an ethic of caring and the model of moral education outlined here. Love, caring, and relation play central roles in both ethics and moral education.

I want to suggest that caring is the very bedrock of all successful education and that contemporary schooling can be revitalized in its light. Before describing a broad plan to make caring central in education, I need to explain why the current ideal is inadequate. Liberal education has been the Western ideal for centuries. Even when it is poorly funded in comparison with technical and professional education, it is still the ideal that puts pressure on precollegiate education. It is the form of education—done well or poorly—that most of us experienced. What is wrong with it, and why should it be rejected as a model of universal education?

CARING FOR IDEAS

In our discussion so far, I have concentrated on ideas as they are connected to actual life, existential questions, and general education. Now I will consider how we should approach ideas for their own sake. How should we teach students who are passionately interested in a realm of disciplined thought? How should we teach those who have an instrumental interest in a subject? In short, how should we teach the disciplines as long as they remain in the curriculum?

I have already argued that the disciplines as we now know them should not be used as the heart—or organizing organ—of the curriculum. A first step toward weakening the hegemony of the disciplines is to cease teaching them for their own sake except to those who show a passionate interest in them. Everywhere today, educators in the particular disciplines want to teach their subject from the perspective of

experts in the field. Students are supposed to learn to think like mathematicians, scientists, historians, literary critics, aestheticians, and ethicists. This attitude is pernicious and actually does violence to the disciplines thus presented. The average student need not think like a mathematician; lots of people other than mathematicians use mathematics effectively, and students should be encouraged to find their own uses for mathematics and choose their own attitude toward it. Pedagogy should begin with the purposes, interests, and capacities of students. But some students have a passionate interest in particular subjects. These students should have an opportunity to learn those subjects in considerable depth.

In this chapter I will look at two subjects from this perspective. The first, mathematics, I have had extensive experience in teaching. The second, art, I will look at as a philosopher and general educator. My major claim in both cases is that students who have passionate interest in a subject should be initiated into the discourse of the disciplinary community; others need not be. Further, beyond providing the best possible education for individual students, a pedagogy that posits different objectives for students with different capacities and interests stands the best chance of meeting our needs as a nation. If we need mathematicians, engineers, and scientists, then we should invite those students who have the appropriate interests and capacities into a rigorous and wondrous working partnership in the relevant disciplines. Otherwise the threat is not just mediocrity but outright intellectual rebellion.

Mathematics

There is now a tremendous push to get more students involved in mathematics. Many colleges and universities require three years of mathematics for entrance, and this requirement presses high schools to increase their enrollments in college preparatory mathematics. Preparation for college is highly standardized. Whether students plan to study art, religion, or engineering, three years of mathematics is supposed to be good for them.

What jobs really require algebra, geometry, and trigonometry? Think of all the things one could do in this society without using algebra. One needs to be literate in numbers, of course, and everyone should be able to compute percents, compare rates, and understand simple descriptive statistics. Beyond such basic skills, people should

understand the mathematics involved in their own spheres of interest, but as I said earlier, this mathematics need not be taught by expert mathematics teachers. Indeed, it could be more convincingly taught by people using it in the fields where it is needed. Consider a problem suggested for students in an algebra class. A set of data is presented on soil acidity and plant growth (Goldin, 1990, p. 20). Students are asked to construct a scatter plot and look for trends. No explanation of pH is given, no mention is made of the type of plants, and no other variable is considered. This problem does not belong in a mathematics class! If it is to be treated at all, it should be done in a biology class where, preferably, students will actually grow plants. Students should consider the variables to be controlled (light, heat, water, nutrients) and the type of plants. They should be thoroughly familiar with the pH scale and the range preferred by most plants. They should also know how to change soil acidity. Selecting one kind of plant, they might experiment by varying the pH; then they should try another type of plant. In this context the statistical exercise becomes real. If scientists and science teachers do not use the mathematics described in this exercise, why should students be interested in looking for trends in a meaningless scatter plot?

Mathematics has served as a well-oiled piece of sorting machinery. Many students are discouraged from college preparation because they hate or fear mathematics, and if they drop it in high school and then decide at the community college level that they want a four-year education, they still have to take mathematics even if it's irrelevant to their projected field of study.

The schools are caught in a web of paradox. There is no question that mathematics, foreign language, and laboratory science were thought to be effective testing-sorting instruments for college entrance. Thus there has long been great pressure to make these courses rigorous and demanding. But now there is even greater pressure to give all children—especially minority children—a fair opportunity to get to college. That means enrolling many more children in college preparatory mathematics. One way to force students into algebra and geometry is to offer no alternative mathematics, and schools that make this choice must enroll everyone in college preparatory mathematics. In our eagerness to give everyone "a fair chance," we offer minimal courses—two years of mathematics taken over a three-year period with everything deep and interesting removed. It does

not occur to us to change the requirement—to insist that students prepare well for a line of study and to study mathematics only if it is relevant to that line. Such a requirement would mean that students taking mathematics (or any other subject) would usually see the point of their involvement.

At the level of national interest, we are shooting ourselves in the foot with good intentions. Instead of coining slogans"All children can learn!"—and forcing all children into algebra "for their own good," we should be teaching college preparatory mathematics to fewer students and doing a better job at it. The mathematics supposedly necessary to understand other subjects should be taught there.

I do not mean to suggest that students should be kept out of mathematics classes by grade requirements, or unless they show proof of aptitude. Classes should be totally open—even, as I said earlier, honors classes. Teachers should talk with students about the receptivity required in caring about mathematics. People can become engrossed in mathematics, hear it "speak to them," be seized by its puzzles and challenges. It is tragic to deprive students of this possibility. "Honors" classes should be classes for the passionately interested. Any student who wants to tackle the work and has at least minimal prerequisite experience should be allowed to do so. The key here is that we accept students' legitimate aims and desires.

The complaint has been made against such a mode of operation that some students will short-change themselves. Ignorant or unconvinced of what a rigorous education can mean in their lives, they will choose courses and topics based on how little work they require. But this complaint rests on a misunderstanding. I am certainly not suggesting that some courses be challenging and others "mickey mouse." Nor am I suggesting that students be left alone to choose what they will do on the basis of mere whim. Rather, the idea is for teachers and students to establish relations of care and trust so that valuable information can be effectively exchanged, advice given, and challenging projects undertaken. I do not believe that many teenagers will downgrade their own education. When they seem to be doing that, it is because we have already told them that their interests are irrelevant to schooling and (explicitly or implicitly) that engineers are better than child care workers, physicians better than nurses, lawyers better than police-persons, executives better than cooks, and so forth. In

such a system, choosing what one really wants to study can be—by definition—downgrading one's education. However, it need not be so, and it should not be so.

But, perverse as it is, let's face the reality of today's schools. Students who want to "make it" in life have to take academic mathematics. Can we do anything to improve life in mathematics classrooms without changing the whole system?

There is a movement in mathematics education that is growing in influence and popularity. It is called constructivism. (See Davis, Maher, and Noddings, 1990.) I want to say a little about it here because it offers some positive possibilities, but at the same time, it contains the seeds of its own destruction. Unless it is embedded in an encompassing moral position on education, it risks categorization as a *method*, as something that will produce enhanced or slightly modified traditional results.

Constructivism is a cognitive position holding that all mental acts, both perceptual and cognitive, are acts of construction. No mental act is a mere copy or externally imposed response. If you pass some information to me, I must actively listen to make out what you are saying, and then I have to fit what I have heard into what I already know and decide what to do with the new material. What I do with it depends on my purposes. I may respond with a sympathy-like interest because I care about you even though I do not care about the topic you are discussing. Or I may care deeply about the topic and realize that what you are saying suggests that I have been wrong about something. Or I may evaluate your remark and decide that *you* have made a mistake.

Constructivists believe that people are internally motivated and that they construct their own mental representations of situations, events, and conceptual structures. Constructivist teachers, then, usually spend time trying to find out what their students are trying to do and why. They are ready with suggestions and challenges that will help students to make strong and useful constructions.

What motivates constructivist mathematics educators? For the most part, they want to teach mathematics in ways that are compatible with their beliefs about how people learn. They also tend to believe that mathematical thinking is rich, complex, tolerant of ambiguity, filled with attempts that may or may not succeed, and broadly

useful in many human activities. Believing all this, they want to promote their students' mathematical growth. This is fine to the degree that students are concerned for whatever reason with their own mathematical growth.

But constructivism as a pedagogical orientation has to be embedded in an ethical or political framework. The primary aim of every teacher must be to promote the growth of students as competent, caring, loving, and lovable people. Teachers with this aim will work flexibly in teaching mathematics—inspiring those who care about mathematics for itself to inquire ever more deeply, helping those who care instrumentally about mathematics to prepare for the line of work they desire, and supporting as best they can those students who wish they never had to encounter mathematics. To have uniformly high expectations for all students in mathematics is morally wrong and pedagogically disastrous. It is part of a sloganized attempt to make our schools look democratic and egalitarian, when in fact they are systems continually struggling for tighter control.

Now I want to describe in detail an actual program that embodies some of the ideas discussed here. First I will describe the program itself, and then I will present an analysis of what could go wrong if the primary aim is forgotten.

The mathematics department of an average suburban high school (about 1,500 pupils) was faced with an increasing number of students enrolled in third-year college preparatory mathematics"11th algebra/trig." The school was also pressed for space, and this fact made the plan proposed by the department administratively attractive. They proposed to work with two large classes (seventy-five to eighty students each) taught by a team of teachers in the school cafeteria. Each student could choose a minimum course, a standard course, or an accelerated course. This provision was designed to accommodate students who disliked math but needed the third year to qualify for university entrance, as well as students who loved math and wanted as much as they could get. The syllabi made clear that students could change their minds—slow down or speed up if they preferred. The minimum course covered six chapters of the course text and required students to pass one chapter test each marking period; completing this course would not qualify a student for twelfth-year mathematics. The standard course required completion of nine chapters, and the accelerated course

demanded twelve or more chapters. Further, assignments varied. Students in the accelerated course might skip the easy exercises, but they had to do the difficult ones.

A serious attempt was made to reduce test anxiety. Grades were earned cumulatively. Everyone started the marking period with a grade of 50. When a test was passed, the grade became, say, 70; a second test passed meant perhaps an 85; a third test 95. This method reduces anxiety considerably because nothing can be lost by taking a test. The old (almost tribal) fear of entering the last test of a marking period with a 92 and leaving with a 72 is removed. All tests were graded "passing," "not passing," or "passing + 1." This last acknowledged a top-notch performance, and the extra point was added to the student's basic grade at the end of a marking period.

The course was designed as a continuous progress program. Students could not move on to chapter 3 until they had passed a test on chapter 2. One teacher, Ms. Jones let us say, would start the whole group off with an introduction to chapter 1, and then the students would work together at tables while the teachers circulated to give help. Fridays were test days, and on the very first Friday there were always some students ready to take the test on chapter 1. Students who passed the chapter 1 test would move on to work with the teacher who had major responsibility for chapter 2. This process continued until some students were ready for chapter 4, for which Ms. Jones again had responsibility. Usually there were still a few students working on chapter 1, so Ms. Jones divided her time between students in chapter 1 and those in chapter 4.

Every week, one day was designated for "enrichment," and one of the team teachers took a group of students to a separate classroom for discussion of some topic that did not appear in the text. Enrichment topics included Diophantine equations, cryptography, abstract algebra, logic puzzles, history of mathematics, and computer problems. Any students could elect to participate. If I were working with such a team today, I would want to introduce topics from each of the centers of care. Possibilities: our own psychology of learning math, effective tutoring, population and hunger studies, animal populations, matrices for agricultural studies, the special contributions of various ethnic groups, women mathematicians, religious interests of great mathematicians.

In the years that I was involved with this program, results—traditionally interpreted—were good. On year-end standardized tests, no student scored in the bottom decile and very few in the lowest fifth. Everyone learned something. The span of achievement in terms of material covered ranged from the minimum six chapters to more than sixteen! Motivation to do mathematics varies enormously.

For me, however, and certainly for our present discussion, traditional results are not the main concern. Our concern should center on what the students are learning about themselves, about helping each other, about contracts and meeting obligations, about the fascinating applicability of mathematics to human endeavors, and—for some students—about the nature and beauty of mathematics itself. Many things can go wrong if the primary purposes are not kept firmly in mind, and it is worthwhile to analyze the program from this perspective because in doing so we can learn much about why educational reforms fail.

One temptation is to overdo the individual, continuous progress aspect of such a program. Our students were encouraged to work together; they were not placed on individualized schedules. Teachers provided mini-lectures, special help, and advice on which other students to consult; they were not bogged down in checking work as often happens in individualized programs. The press to scientize teaching and learning could easily lead to an overemphasis on tests, to isolation in learning, and to standardized roles for teachers. Participants have to remember why they are engaged in a program of this sort and resist that pressure.

When team teaching is used, there may be a move (as mentioned above) to differentiate the functions of team members: a lead teacher to lecture, one to supervise individual tutoring, one to check work, and so forth. This is deadly and works against the primary purpose. Teachers and students must work together cooperatively as whole human beings, not as bits of pedagogical machinery. From the perspective of caring, team teaching can be a wonderful idea; differentiated staffing, however, is a terrible one.

As the year moves along, teachers may question the capacity of students for self-evaluation and self-governance. This actually happened in our program. Sometimes students would achieve their desired grade, say an 85, by the middle of a marking period and prepare to do something other than math for the next two or three weeks. Although I always tried to persuade such students to try for a top grade, I accepted their decision. After all, we had a contract. One team member, let's call her Ms. Smith, was aghast at this acceptance on my part. She believed that it was our duty to *make* students do their best, and she also believed that they should do nothing but math in math class. Ms. Smith's attitude was thoroughly conditioned by the control ideology that pervades our schools. Students must be controlled—for their own good, of course. To give way to Ms. Smith on this, I now understand even better than I did then, is to distort the whole program.

Another form of distortion is equally troubling. Over the years, a few teachers trying the approach in other courses (algebra 1, for example) interpreted the facilitative function of the teacher to mean that the teacher should only respond to student requests for help. These teachers never intervened and actually let students sit idle for days, even weeks. Nothing could be further from the spirit we are discussing here. Of course teachers should initiate! They should suggest, persuade, inspire, encourage, negotiate compromises, offer concrete help. Above all they should engage students in dialogue so that decisions are well informed. We do not respect students when we leave them alone to make decisions on whim.

Ms. Smith introduced another concern about control. She complained that too many students were electing to take tests on Fridays even though they were unprepared. Clearly many had not completed the assignments and were simply hoping to pass by luck. She insisted that their notebooks should be checked before they were allowed to take a test. Again, there was the need to control. Indeed Ms. Smith honestly felt it was her duty to control student work in this way. She staggered home every Thursday night under a tremendous load of notebooks. I compromised. On Thursday in class I would gather around me those students who wanted to take Friday's test. Then I would choose specific problems in their notebooks and ask how they had been done, why some had been skipped, whether the student had considered an alternative method that seemed important. These sessions were more conversations than quality checks, and other students would regularly chime in with suggestions. This way of operating is compatible with induction into a community of discourse. We ask different questions of students who are passionately interested in mathematics and expect a different level of response from them. From some students an answer

that tells "how it works" is entirely adequate; from others we should expect a response that reflects deep structural understanding.

Finally, someone might challenge the whole notion of mixing minimum, standard, and accelerated classes in one program for which all students would get five credits. The question would be raised: Is this fair? My response is that a criterion of fairness is irrelevant here. Needs are being identified and met. That is what matters. One might want to argue that meeting needs *is* fair, but I have learned to identify that language as a danger signal. It means that the system wants tighter control.

With the ideology of control so firmly entrenched in our professional and personal lives, it is very difficult to move to an approach that emphasizes mutual respect, responsible freedom, self-evaluation, open cooperation, caring, and sharing. Even well-intentioned people can make or accede to decisions that will press promising programs back into the control mode. Constructivists risk having this happen when they insist on *understanding* as a legitimate goal for all students without analyzing the varieties of understanding. The goal should be for students to understand what they are doing and to what end. This need not require a deep structural understanding of mathematics.

Here I want to say a little more about Jaime Escalante, of whom I spoke appreciatively earlier. I cannot admire everything Escalante does. In particular I cannot approve throwing students out of class, browbeating them for not working as hard as the teacher wants, and using sarcasm as a pedagogical strategy. Many of Escalante's students see the caring that lies underneath the surface cruelty, but some probably do not. We have to ask whether getting students to pass an advanced-placement calculus test is an adequate reason for treating them impolitely. On the positive, polite side, Escalante says repeatedly to his students, "You are the best!" But that lovely compliment means, You can do A.P. calculus!" It also implies that other students (those not studying A.P. calculus) are less than best. My preference is to respect the full range of human capacities and to help students do high-quality work in whatever field they choose. A student should not have to succeed at A.P. calculus to gain a math teacher's respect.

There is another point to consider with respect to Escalante's methods. It is probably true that a majority teacher could not treat minority students so; complaints would be thunderous. Perhaps minority students and teachers need the freedom to work out methods that are mutually acceptable to them. But, as coprofessionals, we should continue to question as we support. Surely not all minority students respond favorably to coercion. Again, it is not a sign of respect to simply shrug and accede. At every stage and in all of our interactions, we must remind ourselves of what we are trying to achieve, and everything else must be examined in light of our major purpose.

Minorities and women, like majority students, may sometimes fall into the passionately interested category. But often their interests are instrumental. Such interests should be respected. Teachers need to experiment with a range of methods that may be especially effective for particular groups. They should be acquainted with works that treat the various ways of knowing (Belenky, et al., 1986; Culley & Portuges, 1985; Bunch & Pollack, 1983), and, where there are mathematical topics of special interest to these groups, they should be offered for study.

Mathematics teachers should also attend to capacities other than the mathematical. Those with linguistic capacities might learn a lot of mathematics through reading and writing. (We seldom spend time on the intelligent reading of math texts, for example.) Those with artistic talent might enjoy mathematical studies of aesthetics, the mathematics of design, or even the aesthetics of mathematics. Those with strong interpersonal skills might learn best through tutoring others. Our methods must vary.

Finally, although we should encourage students to study mathematics if their interests suggest such study, and we should help minorities and women to see themselves as potentially competent in mathematics, we should not create an environment in which mathematical competence defines a student's self-worth. Lots of successful, competent, morally upstanding people hate math and find their passionate interests elsewhere. Rather than press the question, Why aren't more women interested in math?, we should ask what they *are* interested in and why. We can use the answers to those questions both to encourage alternative interests and to design more appropriate math courses.

Art

I cannot examine every subject that appears in the school curriculum in detail. Among the arts, I have chosen fine arts rather than music or drama because its current direction illustrates the major mistakes I have been criticizing throughout this book.

Many art educators are now recommending a curricular approach called Discipline-Based Art Education (DBAE). This approach is highly cognitive and appeals to the same linguistic and mathematical/logical capacities that support the rest of the curriculum. It suggests that art education should comprise aesthetics, art criticism, art history, and art production. (See Getty Center for Education in the Arts, 1985; also *Journal of Aesthetic Education*, 1987). It should, in short, look more like other disciplines in the precollege curriculum and be subject to the same high-powered cognitive teaching and testing.

I think this movement is wrongheaded even though I have a high regard for many of its proponents. (For other criticisms see a collection of articles in *Educational Theory*, 1990; Gehlback, 1990.) I want to start the discussion with some recollections from my early days as a math teacher. Before I became convinced that the major job of every teacher is much like that of a parent—to foster growth and shape acceptable children—I was certainly a discipline-oriented math educator. There's a story to be told about my conversion from that position, but the point I want to make is different; it centers on the place of art as a very special elective in high schools. Year after year there were kids in my math classes who were terrible in math. When a marvelous art teacher joined the faculty, I found out that some of these people were outstanding young artists; art boomed in that school. They became part of what was known as the "art room crowd," and they held a proud position in our high school. I came to know them because there was a "math office bunch," too, and a few students belonged to both groups, one of my own daughters among them. Once I got to know the art room crowd and moved away from the rigidities of my early position on math (a lot of factors were involved here), I started to do a better job as a teacher. I came to appreciate a multitude of talents. My students no longer appeared to me as just good and bad math students.

In that high school, art played a significant role in the lives of a substantial number of young people. It was different from the other subjects, and the "crowd" was different from the other kids. They were serious about their work, had their own jokes, were trusted in the art rooms on their own and for as many hours as they could manage. I know they did art history and criticism—that they watched slides even during lunch—and that they were involved in evaluating and eventually arranging exhibits at the county museum. These young people were aiming at postsecondary schools my math kids rarely considered—Cooper Union, the Rhode Island School of Design, Pratt Institute; they were working hard at assembling portfolios. They had their service projects, too, and were often involved in designing sets for dramatic presentations, preparing posters for various events, and even producing political cartoons.

I don't know whether tests were given on the slides shown, whether student progress was systematically evaluated as we are so fond of claiming today. I doubt it. Students who took four years of art—sometimes the equivalent of six years by packing in extra hours—treasured their status as members of a community. They were learners but not ignorant learners; they were more like talented apprentices, and their talents were cultivated. The cognitive dimension of art grew out of their passionate involvement with art production. I suspect that their knowledge was active and well integrated with their central interests. It was not that flabby stuff Whitehead called "inert knowledge."

So far I have depended on experiential evidence, personal recollection, to initiate an argument. The major concern that emerges is that students who are really talented in art will be disenchanted by the standard cognitive approach. The people who will do well in these courses are just the people who do well generally in academic courses. In a recent dissertation, Liora Bresler (1987) showed that exactly this occurred in a cognitively oriented music class at a major university. Musically talented and experienced students dropped out or did poorly; the relatively ignorant and untalented did remarkably well. Art educators should launch a careful study of this phenomenon before converting art education to a more heavily cognitive base.

You can see what worries me in the move to DBAE. I am afraid that art will lose its unique place in schools. I understand the political reasons for advocating DBAE. To a large degree, art has lost its place entirely in many schools (what occurred in my old school is no longer so familiar) and so long as it sports an arty look, it will continue to be suspect in its very difference—to be relatively unimportant in college admission, to appeal to a limited number of students, to be at the mercy of the budget ax. DBAE advocates believe that one way to make art important is to make it just like English, math, and science: require it, make it heavily cognitive, sequence it, test the daylights out of it. But I wonder, if you do this, what will happen to all those young people who

for years have found the art room the only place in school worth attending, whose interest in art has kept them in school long enough to qualify for a chance at life's standard goods. Of course it is clear by now that I reject the disciplinary approach to general education, but the example of art underscores the features that worry me most.

My concern so far has focused on the possible loss of uniqueness in art education and the effects of that loss on artistically talented students. Now I want to push the argument up a notch and consider the relation between DBAE and societal goals. "A fundamental premise," say Clark, Day, and Greer (1987), "is that general education, to be balanced and complete, must attend to all major domains of human experience, including the aesthetic domain" (p. 139). This sort of statement has a nice ring to it and has appeared perennially in arguments for the advancement of various curricula. The fact of the matter is, however, that education does not attend to all major domains of human experience, nor do many of its practitioners and theorists show signs of wanting it to do so. We have, instead, intellectualized human experience, and we have been so successful at doing this that we really suppose reading and writing about various domains is equivalent to "having experience" in those domains. Attending to all the major domains of human experience has come to mean—for schools, at least—extending the range of intellectual experience. If art educators are serious about introducing students to an experience they might otherwise not encounter in school, they might well emphasize art production, crafts, and decoration of various sorts.

DBAE does, of course, advocate balance, and art production will be given attention, but as I will argue later, balance does not have to mean equal time. Further, balance is not the point here; respect for a unique set of talents is more the point. In casting its program as it has, DBAE clearly places itself in the liberal arts tradition. "Classical approaches to selection of domains as bases for school programs rely on philosophical analysis," Clark, Day, and Greer state. Further, "These analyses identify domains of human experience that should be addressed in a well-rounded education" (p. 139). It is true that programs that use such language—that talk about the ideal of an educated person and a well-rounded education—are accompanied by or under-girded by philosophical analysis. But a philosophical analysis need not of necessity produce such a view of education. It might, as mine attempts to do,

support a view of education as learning to care or, alternatively, as self-actualization, or growth, or mere training. Whether or not to speak of the ideal of an educated adult is itself a fundamental choice that must be supported by philosophical argument.

Because DBAE, like so many other curriculum movements, defends requiring art on the grounds that a democratic society wants all its people to be "truly educated," this is a good place to review our initial argument against liberal education. Two very different views of democracy have been prominent in American education: the more or less static Greek view advocated by Robert Maynard Hutchins and the more dynamic one described by John Dewey.

The first lays out a picture of a society already formed and in decent order and asks how it can be kept that way. Its concept of virtue is reminiscent of the Greeks; it depends heavily on a demonstration of excellence in ways of life (Alasdair MacIntyre [1981] calls them "practices") that demand reflection on ends as well as skilled performance. The masses learn virtue from virtuous masters, and indeed virtue itself is ultimately defined this way. It is the constitutive quality of the good (or virtuous) person. Thus the authority of moral experts plays a large role in such a society, and of course moral expertise is coextensive with intellectual expertise in this vision. The "best" in this society are, happily for them, the best in all ways.

Greek democracy clearly was not classless, and the education recommended by its philosophers reflected this fact. In Plato's *Republic*, children were to be educated according to their diagnosed abilities for one of three main functions in adult life. The "best" education was reserved for the "best" students—those who would become guardians of the Republic. This society was certainly a democracy of sorts. Those who were citizens were expected to participate appropriately in the affairs of the society, and gaining a position in the ruling class was supposedly a matter of merit.

The Greek notion of an elite education for guardians is retained in the contemporary ideal of an educated person. In the liberal arts tradition, an educated person is described in terms of the content with which he or she has become familiar, the shared language of this content, and the practices open to persons with such preparation. The education of such persons has long been considered the "best education." But notice that there is a good Greek circularity built into this

conception. What is the best education? It is the sort that our finest citizens must have had. Look at them to see what is good. How did they get that way? Through the wonderful education provided for them and through their talent and diligence. Thus the education already experienced by the "best" becomes the best education.

The contemporary version of this doctrine was beautifully described by Hutchins in the 1930s and still proficiently advocated, as we saw earlier, by Mortimer Adler in his *Paideia Proposal* (1982). Because our conception of democracy rejects a classed society, Hutchins and Adler insist that, in Hutchins' words, "The best education for the best is the best education for all." In other words, the education once frankly designed for an elite should now be the education offered to everyone.

The static assumptions in this recommendation are obvious. We know what education is best because we have its best products as examples. All we need to do is to replicate their education for each new generation, being careful of course to give each child a genuine opportunity to succeed at it. Operation of the plan must be scrupulously fair. Besides fairness to individuals, we are urged to consider the benefits such a scheme promises for our democracy. From Adler's perspective a democracy cannot long survive unless its citizens share a common heritage—a common language, set of concepts, knowledge of their past, understanding of the finest products of their culture. The society, for Adler, is a given; at least its ideal is given, and this ideal is realized in a nucleus of living experts who manifest the qualities needed in a good society. What we need to do, he suggests, is to maintain and extend this model.

The practicality of Adler's recommendations can safely be ignored for the moment, and I have so far said nothing about the practicality of DBAE either. It is the vision that I ask you to analyze and critique. Are the persons who have governed, produced acknowledged works of art, built fortunes, and conducted military campaigns really our best persons? Did their education produce a goodness we really want to replicate, or has its acquisition merely been the defining mark of those who claimed themselves to be the best? If a different sort of education had been offered, might our best have been a more compassionate, more generous, more open, less judgmental, less acquisitive, and wiser set of persons? These are important questions, and no

scheme for general education should be seriously put forward without exploring them. There is enormous arrogance in the *Paideia Proposal.* It says, in effect, "Look at us! We are clearly the best, and our education should supply the pattern for all education. Let us be generous and give all children the opportunity to be just like us." The *Paideia* totally ignores the riches of pluralistic culture—especially those cultures, such as our Native American, that reject the very premises of liberal education as it has been traditionally defined.

In contrast to the static notion of democracy, there is Dewey's dynamic conception. A democracy is not given, nor is it even illustrated in the workings of a cadre of similarly educated elites all capable of discussing the Peloponnesian Wars, Picasso, and nuclear throw weights—thereby demonstrating their competence to govern. Democracy is not the outcome of a common set of words and customs. Rather, it is an achievement—one that depends on the desire to communicate and the goodwill to persist in collaborative inquiry. common language, customs, and values are the marks of achievement in the effort at building a democracy, not its prerequisites. To achieve a democracy we must try things out, evaluate them without personal prejudice, revise them if they are found wanting, and decide what to do next through a process of reasoned consensus or compromise in which the authority of expertise is consulted but not allowed to impose its views with no discussion of how, why, and on what grounds.

The same advice is applied to education. For Dewey education, too, is a constructive achievement. It is not a matter of absorbing something already laid out, tried and true. It is a matter of trying things out with the valued help of experts (teachers), of evaluating, revising, comparing, sharing, communicating, constructing, choosing. Strictly speaking, there is no end product—no ideally educated person—but a diverse host of persons showing signs of increasing growth. There will be commonalities, of course, but these will have been achieved in the process and not necessarily through exactly similar experiences. Even when common values are achieved by one group, they cannot be simply transmitted to another. The new group can be guided; we can share what we have learned. But as soon as we *impose* our values on a new generation we risk losing those values that are most needed in a dynamic society—those that encourage reflective criticism, revision, creation, and renewal.

Present debate over plans like the *Paideia Proposal* often concentrates on feasibility. Too seldom are we encouraged to think reflectively about the total pattern of education to which we are committed and how any plan under consideration relates to it. Adler himself has discouraged such reflection by glossing over the great differences between Hutchins and Dewey. One would think, to read the *Paideia*, that the two men were both advocates of the Hutchins-Adler program. He says, for example:

> There is no acceptable reason why trying to promote equality should have led to a lessening or loss of quality. Two decades after John Dewey, another great American educator, Robert Maynard Hutchins, as much committed to democracy as Dewey was before him, stated the fundamental principle we must follow in our effort to achieve a true equality of educational conditions. "The best education for the best," he said, "is the best education for all." (1982, p. 6)

From what has already been said, it is clear that this paragraph of Adler's is very misleading; it conveys a monumental distortion of Dewey's position, since Dewey's conception of democracy was very different from that of Hutchins. Further, Adler makes it sound as though the two men never actually discussed these issues, when in fact their published debates make lively reading. My point here is that we live and work in a time when the history and philosophy of education are not regularly drawn upon to enlighten our debates. That Adler would put Dewey and Hutchins into one compartment with respect to their views on democracy and be persuasive to so many people who should know better is a dangerous sign. It is a sign that the curriculum field is still not paying much attention to its own history. (This is not a reason for forcing all education students to study curriculum history. It is, rather, part of an argument for extended dialogue between professors and students.)

Now what has all this to do with DBAE? Several paragraphs of the monograph suggest that DBAE does hold an ideal of the educated person, that education in art is thought to be necessary for an educated or enlightened citizenry, and that education in the four art disciplines should provide the basis for advanced study in art. This is part of an old and time-honored position in education, but it is one we have good reasons to reject.

There is a tone in DBAE suggesting that persons unfamiliar with, for example, Botticelli's *Birth of Venus* fall somehow short of the ideal of an

educated person. As I mentioned earlier, I have colleagues in math education who feel the same way about people who do not know the difference between a definite integral and an indefinite integral. At most meetings of such professional groups, lots of speeches include the words, "It is deplorable that . . ." Now, surely in a complex society such as ours, we cannot insist that every person attain even a minimum level of sophistication in every discipline for which there are living advocates. To insist on this is to have a faulty (static) vision of what it means to be educated. There just *are* well-educated people who have never heard of Botticelli, and there *are* well-educated people who know nothing whatever of integrals, definite or indefinite. There is nothing deplorable in this state of affairs. What would indeed be deplorable is a society in which no one cared enough to make these things available to those who might like to learn them. DBAE is a bit ambivalent on the issue of access versus compulsion. It seems right, for example, to take the position that "DBAE is based on the assumption that all members of society, not only the wealthy or elite, deserve access to the visual arts" (p. 42). I have no quarrel whatever with this. But if "access" means required study, I fear that the objective is to make competency in art a component of the static ideal so widely embraced by advocates of a host of disciplines—each seeking its own place in the educational sun. Neither the worth of persons nor their educational attainment should be measured by whether or not they can appreciate a joke involving Botticelli's Venus—or one, however improbable, involving definite and indefinite integrals.

DBAE draws in a balanced fashion from aesthetics, art criticism, art history, and art production. This tells us the domains from which content will be extracted, but it does not tell us how that content will be presented. Even if we look at the suggested three dimensions of each discipline—the community of scholars/artists, methods of inquiry, and conceptual structure—we find little help in deciding on methods of instruction. Talking about methods of inquiry, for example, is quite different from employing those methods of inquiry. Do people best learn methods of inquiry by actually inquiring and being pressed to evaluate both methods and results, or do they learn best by being given an explicit mode of inquiry and lots of practice in its use? Should the method of instruction vary, depending on the age of the learners and the method of inquiry under consideration? These are crucial questions

for curriculum developers, because we know from experience that curriculum and instruction cannot be neatly separated.

I am sure that advocates of DBAE want to respect the autonomy of teachers; one of the contrasts listed between the 1960s discipline-centered reform and DBAE is that the former "attempted to make 'teacher-proof' curricula," whereas the latter "recognizes essential roles of teachers and administrators in curriculum implementation" (Clark, Day, & Greer, 1987, p. 132). But this contrast, though capturing a good intention, is not exactly accurate. Some curricula developed in the 1960s were in fact designed to be teacher-proof, but most were not. They embodied the more fundamental error of ignoring instruction entirely. The new math was notorious in this respect. In many versions it left an absolutely crucial pedagogy at an implicit level. Its makers took for granted that teachers who understood the new material would also see that the old methods were not adequate for this new material. To this day, math educators argue over whether more blame for the failure of new math should be charged to teachers' lack of understanding of the content or their failure to adopt an appropriate pedagogy. A deeper point that I have emphasized repeatedly is that student interests, capacities, and purposes were ignored.

Consider the matter of structure. An emphasis on structure was paramount in new math, and it seems to be in DBAE also, in spite of a contrast explicitly made—"Focused on structure of disciplines as content source" versus "Focused on dynamic view of art disciplines including concepts, methods of inquiry, and communities of scholars" (Clark, Day, & Greer, 1987, p. 132). There is an admirable breadth here—roughly comparable to that of Harvard Project Physics over the Physical Science Study Committee (PSSC)—but the emphasis on conceptual structure is still clear. Therefore, essential pedagogical questions arise: Should an understanding of the fundamental concepts and structure precede the manipulation of objects in the disciplinary domain? Or is this understanding a developmental outgrowth of long years of manipulative work in the field? Is knowledge of structure necessary for all students?

Another great error in the new math seems now to have been the assumption that we could teach children effectively something about the structure of mathematics before they had learned the usual algorithms. Indeed the claim was that children might then invent their own

algorithms and would in any case not require hours of practice on routine computations, because they would know what to do as a result of their basic understanding. There may still be something true in this claim, but by failing to consider the sort of pedagogy that would replace didactic instruction in routine practice, we missed an opportunity to validate the claim in any form. Most of us now think that structural understanding is a product of growth through manipulating objects and applying skills rather than a prerequisite or substitute for either. Thus I think it is essential for art curriculum makers to study problems of instruction carefully. Curriculum implementation is part of curriculum making, not a totally separate enterprise.

The problem discussed here is related to the one with which I started out. It seems to me that many children and adolescents are drawn to art by a desire to *do* art; in earlier discussion, I worried over the possible loss of art's unique place in the high school curriculum. The reservation of electives emphasizing art production might relieve this worry, provided the electives do not have heavily cognitive prerequisites. But a basic issue for art curriculum makers remains. It may be that the only sound mode of curriculum-and-instruction requires placing art production at the center of the enterprise; instruction in aesthetics, art criticism, and history might then grow out of and serve this central function. Art education should serve the artistically interested or talented. Where else in school do they get the respect they deserve?

Advocates of DBAE discuss the necessity of informing students about the social, historical, intellectual, and psychological contexts in which art is produced and critiqued. (See Clark, Day, & Greer, 1987.) Issues that arise here should be considered by specialists in all disciplines, because every discipline has an aesthetic dimension, a history, and a mode of evaluation or criticism, amd all of these activities are conducted in and help to define a variety of contexts. Art educators should be applauded, then, for emphasizing these connections. These dimensions are central to caring for ideas.

When we decide to include such matters in our curricula, however, it becomes necessary to consider ideological biases and preferences. There is a temptation to teach a particular view of aesthetics, to teach history as a set of facts quite apart from the set of conflicting interpretations that characterize historical research, and to lay out criteria for criticism without engaging in real evaluation of those criteria. I see no

reason to accuse advocates of DBAE of making these errors, but I want to ask how they will avoid them.

The program as it is now outlined assumes a continuous chain of instruction from kindergarten through grade 12. Quite apart from my earlier objections to *requiring* art, the likelihood of such universal continuity must now be considered. If all students were to study art in the fashion advocated for twelve or thirteen years, curriculum makers could plan for progressive involvement with controversial matters of interpretation and the politics of art. Without this continuity, instruction in these highly complex domains might do more harm than good. Even carried through the 12th grade, there should be legitimate concern about the scope and purposes of such instruction. Concentration on the aesthetic can induce an odd and frightening form of amorality, even immorality, as Kierkegaard (1959) so dramatically reminded us. The Nazis were, for example, possibly among the best educated generation—from an aesthetic perspective—the world has yet produced.

Proceeding by example might be useful here. In a powerful historical work, Bram Dijkstra (1986) demonstrates how intimate the connection between art and immorality—in this case misogynism—can be. His opening words are these: "This is a book filled with the dangerous fantasies of the Beautiful People of a century ago. It contains a few scenes of exemplary virtue and many more of lurid sin" (p. vii). He shows convincingly that works of art, art criticism, and versions of art history have all contributed vigorously to the oppression and exploitation of women. "This book," he asserts, "amply demonstrates that there is cause to assume that works of art are by no means beyond involvement in the dominant ideological movements of the time in which they were created" (p. ix). None of us, I am sure, would deny this, but there remains the tough educational question of when and how we introduce such material to students. If, for example, we simply talk about the depiction of historical events in art or, acknowledging the ideological aspect of art, we even discuss the antiwar sentiments of a famous painting, we have not come close to the sort of influence Dijkstra documents so well. Only if education is organized around centers of care are we likely to avoid the domination of groups in power.

Feminist scholars are among those deeply concerned with these issues. This is because the masculinist ideologies pervasive in the disciplines are only now being uncovered and studied. Merlin Stone (1976) has documented the bias in archeology and religious history in her fascinating study of the ancient Goddess religion. Nina Auerbach (1982) has shown how both the literature and art of the Victorian age revealed or held hidden awaiting interpretation a combination of awe, fear, and hatred for the ancient power of the feminine. Her study focuses on the latent power of the feminine. "The mermaids, serpent-women, and lamias who proliferate in the Victorian imagination suggest a triumph larger than themselves, whose roots lie in the antiquity so dear to nineteenth-century classicists" (pp. 8–9). Dijkstra, as already noted, focuses on the misogyny and evil in these and other images of the fin de siècle. His themes of therapeutic rape, extinguished eyes, clinging vines, the nymph with the broken back, maenads of decadence, and many others are persuasively and heartbreakingly documented with art. In many cases, the art—both visual and literary— used as documentation has been greatly admired even though both creators and critics were aware of its dreadful endorsement of misogyny. Octave Mirbeau, for example, is quoted by Dijkstra as saying the following in his commentary on Remy de Gourmont's *Lilith:*

> The symbolic genesis of woman, as interpreted by Remy de Gourmont, corresponds exactly with the conclusions of anthropological science. Woman does not have a brain; she is simply a sexual organ. And that is the beauty of it. She has but one role in the universe, but that is a grandiose one: to make love, that is to say, to perpetuate the species. According to the irrefutable laws of nature, of which we feel rather than perceive the implacable and dolorous harmony, woman is not fit for anything that does not involve love or maternity. Certain women, very rare exceptions, have been able to give, either in art or literature, an illusion of creative energy. But those are either abnormal creatures, in revolt against nature, or simply the reflections of males, of whom, through sexual dysfunction, they have been able to maintain certain characteristics. (Dijkstra, 1986, p. 182)

This is not an isolated or unusual case. The world of art and literature is filled with such material. Marina Warner (1976), in her study of the Virgin Mary and Mariology, comments on the horror and significance of paintings of Mary crushing the serpent's head beneath her foot. The serpent, after all, was once a symbol of immortality, knowledge, and feminine power. Mary Daly (1984) also comments on the importance of this self-destroying act depicted in religious painting. Many other examples of the association of women with dragons,

serpents, evil, and death are described in J. A. Phillips' (1984), *Eve.* He, too, discusses the significance of Mary—as the second Eve—crushing the serpent.

As we consider in some depth the treatment of women in art, we uncover related ideologies in religion, psychology, anthropology, literature, philosophy, and even science. The present revival of interest in Jungian psychology, for example, is accompanied by new interpretations of old symbols, legends, and art. Here, too, we see interest in both the alleged power of the feminine and fear of its reputed dark and evil side.

Art educators are in a better position than I to know whether the profession is prepared to cope honestly with these matters. Are there texts that discuss the treatment of women in art openly? The issues that I have pointed to clearly go well beyond current concern about pornography. They appear everywhere in the history of art and literature. In general education, my preference would be to make these matters of central interest in themes of care and to draw on the disciplines in connection with them. But so long as art is a separate subject and discipline-based, these matters must be incorporated.

Just as not all students are interested in mathematics, not all are interested in art. My preference would be for "aesthetic education across the curriculum." All subjects have an aesthetic aspect that should be considered. But if art must be taught as a separate subject to those uninterested, it should be designed to capitalize on the capacities and affiliations of students. It should be possible for students to study engineering or mechanistic art, religious art and its themes, the art and crafts of various racial and ethnic groups, the aesthetics of motion, environmental art, political art, and the like. In response to this recommendation, many educators will say: But shouldn't all students have experience *X*? And, isn't *X* especially important for just those kids who would never choose it? By now, you (the reader) know my answer: probably not. It does no harm to suggest, to invite. But we need to entrust students with important choices concerning their own education. Indeed, helping them to choose intelligently *is* education, and we must reject the pernicious notion that some areas of study are intrinsically more valuable than others.

Conclusion

I have argued that caring for a set of ideas such as mathematics or art has much in common with caring for people. We can be engrossed—passionately interested—in ideas, and schools should make it possible for students to become so engrossed. However, this level of interest cannot be demanded, and students whose interests lie elsewhere should be respected and encouraged to choose what is useful for them in each subject.

We should expect a very different level of performance from the passionately interested. They should be introduced to the full rigor and beauty of the disciplines they study. Hard questions should be asked, and epistemologically excellent responses should be expected. For other students the level of performance and understanding might well be instrumentally defined. They should be able to do and to explain whatever is required by their own purposes. This level is not necessarily *lower;* it is just different.

Devising educational programs along the suggested lines requires careful analysis of levels of understanding. Understanding does not have to refer to *structural* understanding; it does not have to be tied to the basic nature of the discipline. Rather, it is properly defined with respect to legitimate purposes, capacities, and interests.