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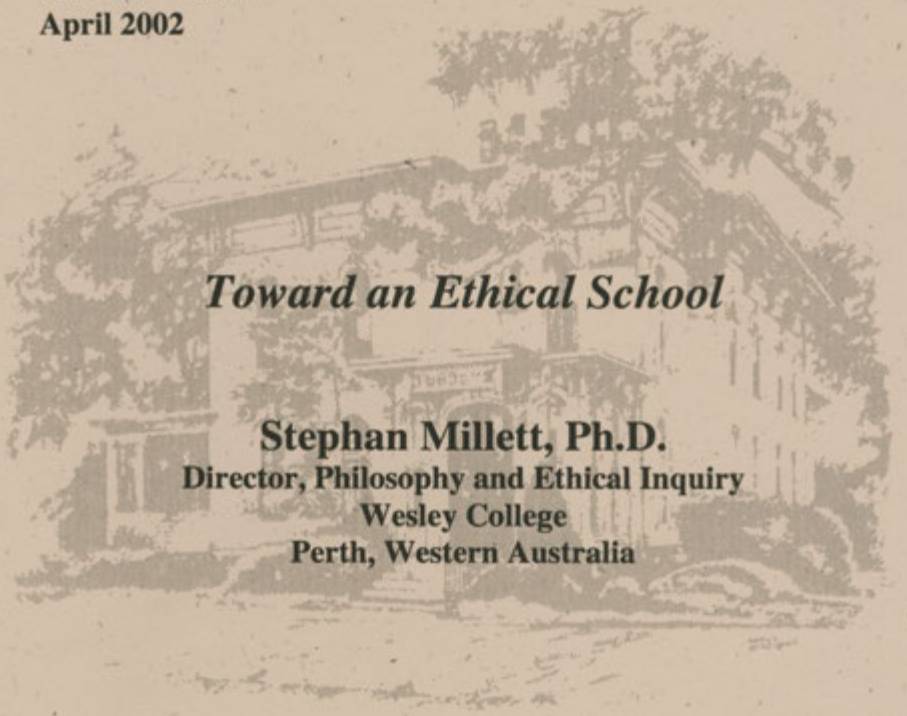

Toward an Ethical School

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Toward an Ethical School

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Stephan Millett

Stephan Millett is a former newspaper editor and journalism academic specializing in ethics. Since 1998, he has been the Foundation Director of Philosophy and Ethical Inquiry at Wesley College, an independent K-12 college in Perth, Western Australia. He was awarded his doctorate in Philosophy from Murdoch University in 1996 for a dissertation that examined Aristotelian teleology and its application to contemporary environmental ethics.

Dr. Millet taught Journalism at Curtin University for twelve years, during which time he wrote and taught most of the undergraduate syllabus. He was course controller for the Journalism program and, as part of an interdisciplinary postgraduate program, he taught units in media theory and the philosophy of technology. Dr. Millett has also taught undergraduate Continental philosophy at the University of Western Australia, for which he has also consulted on the establishment of a multidisciplinary communications course.

Dr. Millett's most recent papers and publications reflect his current focus on the ways in which philosophical and, in particular, moral thinking can be incorporated across the curriculum in a K-12 environment.

Dr. Millett is actively involved in moves to establish a center for ethics in Perth.

This talk is given in honor of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., as part of the celebration of Martin Luther King week. Dr. King was a world hero, but he was first and foremost an American hero – and I am an Australian with no unique insight into Dr. King's ideas or the role he has played in helping Americans live out their creed. So, I shall not address here the life and works of Dr. King. There are, however, a number of ideas in this talk that I believe would do honor to Dr. King – such as trying to eliminate bullying, or trying to foster open and free discussion, but I will leave it to you to draw your own inferences about how what I have to say does honor to the memory of Dr. King. It is clear to me, however, that Dr. King valued education. I wish to ask what it is in education that we should value most.

As part of a debate on academic freedom carried out in the Australian press last year there was a generalized call for a return to ethics in universities.[1] In this same debate it was suggested that this return to ethics should be achieved using a two-prong approach: establishing an ethical community and teaching ethics.

While there is plenty of work in ethics needed in universities, I believe work on ethics and values must start much earlier than university. By then it can be too late. Work on ethics needs to start in schools - and the earlier the better.

I will look briefly at these two prongs, starting with the establishment of an ethical community, before suggesting an alternative.

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[1] Steven Schwartz and Gregory Schwartz (2001). *The Australian*, HES, 27 June

Establishing an ethical community requires there to be open discussion and the capacity for all voices to be heard. In an *ideal* ethical community, all voices are *prima facie* equal. This is not to say that all the ideas expressed are equally valid. It is to say that to assess the validity of ideas, the voices expressing them need to be heard. So, we should ask: how can we set up our schools so student voices can be heard? (And what of our workplaces: how can they be set up differently?). I am not here to give a single prescription to bring this about because although a necessary part of establishing an ethical community is to allow the space in which ideas can be aired and challenged, how the space appears will be site-specific in practice. Each workplace, each school, needs to accept in principle that all voices need to be heard and provide its own mechanisms by which this can occur.

If the idea and the practice of establishing ethical communities can be developed in schools, the task for universities, other tertiary institutions - and workplaces - becomes one of *continuing* that development, rather than working on people whose ethical viewpoints (or lack thereof) are already largely in place. The work of establishing ethical communities needs to begin well before the post-compulsory years of schooling, in part because later in a student's education the pressure to do well in the exams that will get them into university does not allow the space for reflection on ethical issues. That work can be aided by academics, particularly philosophy academics, working with children and teachers in schools.

Now to the second prong.

Teaching ethics is important. *How* ethics is taught is even more so. Discussion of ethical issues needs to be naturalised, to be become part of the fabric of all courses, not just an add-on. It needs to be incorporated into the curriculum, right from the earliest years. But for this to take root, teachers at all levels of the education system - from earliest primary school through to college and postgraduate programs - will need themselves to undertake some form of professional development in ethics – perhaps provided by philosophers. Whatever discipline you are working in, but especially if you think you might go into teaching - at any level - ask yourself how often ethics is discussed in your course and how much formal teaching is devoted to it. If there is much discussion you are among the privileged few.

A great many school systems promote an *instrumental* view of education – get educated to get a better place in a better university to get a better job and more money - a view replicated in a large number of professional disciplines at tertiary level. Now while this is not necessarily all bad, it is not all good either. A system predicated only on instrumental logic is out of balance. To begin to balance this instrumental tendency, there is a need for general moral education, coupled with critical thinking, in pre-tertiary education. This is something in which academics and university graduates should be involved, to help ensure that it is rigorous, relevant, critical and related to the curricu-

lum - and does not simply promote this or that value as good or desirable.

So, how can we make our schools ethical places?

Firstly, I take it as a given that everyone is interested in having an ethical school because it is a singularly important site for fostering social responsibility. What is not given is agreement on what an ethical school is, or how to work toward one.

Rather than the two-prong approach just discussed, I want to suggest that work toward an ethical school has to take place on three fronts:

The first is to ask what it means to be ethical, what ethics means. This is because, before we can create an ethical school, we need to have a reasonably clear picture of what it means to be ethical - in effect to understand what ethics is.

The second is to recognise that creating an ethical school requires a whole-school approach. It is not enough simply to offer an ethics or religious education period in the timetable.

The third front is to look at the pedagogy of ethics: the teaching. How and where do we build an environment in which the children in our care can learn values, can learn what it means to be a person of good character and can learn how to think about what it means to behave morally.

The last two of these imply, quite properly, that the structures in place within a school must reflect the ethics that the school wants to

espouse. If we say we wish to value cooperative endeavour, should we have reward systems that valorise only individual achievement? If we say that achievement in the dramatic arts is as valuable as achievement in sport, why have an honors system for sport, and not for the arts? Why, in fact, would we need an honors system for individuals at all if we valued cooperative effort over individual achievement? If we say we want students to become independent learners capable of working in a team environment, our teaching strategies need to reflect that. So why would we teach *at* our classes - spoon feed them - rather than set up collaborative learning patterns? If we say we value honor and integrity then teachers at all levels of education need also to model that - in class and out of class. If we say we want a school where bullying has no place, we need to ensure first that the behavior of teachers and administrators cannot be interpreted as bullying. There are many ways (some of them subtle) in which a teacher can bully his or her class. This can be through belittling those who underachieve, by putting down that bright spark who makes an untimely interjection, or by creating an environment of fear and trepidation instead of creating an environment where they enjoy learning - an environment of enforced conformity rather than one that celebrates difference. If we say we value democracy, then children need to see how democracy can work in their daily lives at school - and they need to be part of it.

An ethical approach cannot simply be added on to existing structures or teacher behaviour patterns if those structures and behaviours are themselves inherently unjust, unfair or even undemocratic.

What is ethics?

So, if we need to understand what it means to be ethical before we can build an ethical school, what is this thing called ethics?

Ethics deals, basically, with the question: "What is it that we *ought* to do?" where the word "ought" carries with it some sense of obligation. The word "ought" is used rather than "must" because for an act to be ethical, the person performing the act must always have been free to choose how he or she will act. If a person is not free to choose, then he or she is not morally accountable.

Theoretical ethics is generally divided into what is called normative ethics and metaethics. Normative ethics deals with norms of behavior. They are a guide to action. They show us ways to act. The Ten Commandments is a normative ethic. Metaethics deals with questions about ethics itself, about ethics as a subject. We are involved in metaethical considerations when, for example, we try to define ethical concepts or terminology, such as when we try to find a definition of, say, justice or fairness.

Traditionally, Western ethics has been analysed in terms of three key concepts, Consequences, Duty and Virtue, although there has been a re-evaluation in recent years that has seen the inclusion of such concepts as Responsibility and Care - where these are seen as some-

thing other than duties or virtues. The concept of Care has come into the philosophical lexicon through, primarily, the work of feminist philosophers who objected to what they saw as a male bias in traditional ways of thinking about ethics. A "male" approach can be seen when we talk about Care in the abstract. Real moral Care happens only when we as moral agents do something to help a moral "patient" - someone or some thing whose interests are looked after through our care. Talking about "care" is not the same as the moral act of caring.

It might be useful to think about ethics in the terms set out by Felicity Haynes[2], who borrows the metaphor of the Borromean knot from the French philosopher Lacan. The Borromean knot comprises three interlocking rings, each of which is essential. Ethics for Haynes is what results from the conjunction of Consistency, Consequences and Care.

Ethics is not just taking consequences into account. It is not just being consistent in our treatment of others i.e. basing our actions on the same general principles. Nor is it just caring for others. All three are necessary. If one of the three elements is missing, in Haynes' analysis, then the ethics is deficient. Haynes argues that we need to pay attention to all three elements if we are to create ethical schools. But these are also elements that we need to build into the thinking of our young people as well. They need to know what it means to Care. They need to understand the Consequences of their thoughts and ac-

[2] Haynes, Felicity (1998). *The Ethical School*, London: Routledge.

tions. And they need to understand that there ought to be a principle or set of principles that they can apply with Consistency in all the decisions they have to make.

Most of us are familiar with the ethical concepts of Consequences and Consistent Principle. Consequentialism is a commonsense approach to ethics. Its most famous elements are hedonism (doing that which brings the most pleasure to me) and utilitarianism (doing that which brings the greatest balance of pleasure and pain to all those affected). And anyone from a religious background, particularly the mainstream monotheistic religions, knows what it means to follow a consistent principle: do unto others as you would have done unto you, for example. But what does it mean to Care?

Can I care about you and yet not act to protect you if you need protection? Can I care about the environment and not do something tangible to help protect it? In one sense of care, at least, when I care *for* something I have to act. I have to do something to help or protect the interests of that which I care *for.* But, can we be forced to Care? Haynes argues that "care and respect for others, equity, rational autonomy and concern for long-term benefits are more important for a school community than short-term power and control"[3]. So, maybe we have to re-think some of the ways we control the young people in our care so that they can be free to choose whether and how to care. For them to be moral individuals, students have to be free to choose

[3] Haynes (1998).

and have to come to know that their intentions are relevant, despite what the consequences might be. This is not, however, to advocate a complete laissez-faire approach. Children do need guidance. They do need some clear guidelines, but they also need to be able to some extent to choose for themselves how they ought to behave.

As with Care, likewise with responsibility. There are a number of ways of thinking about responsibility. If I am throwing a ball around and it breaks a window, I am responsible in the sense that I *caused* the window to break. Am I then also responsible for having it repaired? And what of the student who is *given* the responsibility of making sure that, say, the library books are taken back to the library. Is this responsibility different from the student who *volunteers* to take this responsibility? Freely choosing to take responsibility because it is a good thing to do is in a different category from being given responsibility by someone who will punish you if you get it wrong. We should reflect on this difference when we talk about how we can get our young people to take responsibility, how we can help them to become responsible people.

And, if we are to create an ethical school, what might be the place of religion? Ethics and religion are often linked. However, although religions do generate ethical positions and are important to discussion of ethics, there is for me no *logically necessary* relationship between religion and ethics. It is possible to discuss ethics without discussing religion, although it is difficult to divorce religion from discussions of

ethics because most religions offer ethical guidance to their adherents. In a school setting it is possible to teach ethics without also teaching religion, although it would probably be an impoverished ethics course that ignored the role religions play in ethical life. If it is important for a school to include religious study in its curriculum, then it is, I think, equally important that this be a study of religion*s (plural)* so that students come to see what religions have in common, particularly in terms of their normative ethics.

The extent to which ethics are tied to religion or religious studies is something that each school community must decide for itself. At the school where I teach, Wesley College in Perth, Western Australia, we operate from a position of what Brian V. Hill calls "committed impartiality" in which our position as a Uniting Church school is clearly stated, but as one of many possible voices on a given topic. In the classroom and other discussion forums, teachers are free to give their own opinions on controversial matters as long as they also put the position to which the school is committed.

This notion of committed impartiality brings me to the second of the three elements involved in the creation of an ethical school - the idea that there needs to be a range of policies across the whole life of the school that reflect the desire to create an ethical environment.

A school-wide approach[4]

[4] I am indebted to Mr John Bednall, Headmaster of Wesley College, for introducing me to the foundations on which a whole-school approach to ethics can be built and for helping to implement these across the whole life of the College.

It is not enough to introduce a teaching program in values or ethics, although that is probably necessary. The creation of an ethical school needs help in a number of areas across the whole life of the school. Here are some:

Staff agreements. If staff are to be allowed to engage in dialogue on values - and I strongly suggest that they should - there needs to be some safeguards built in to their contracts that allows them the freedom to comment. At Wesley College, for example, staff are free to put their own personal opinions forward in class discussions on ethical matters as long as they also encourage examination of other positions, including the College position. This freedom to comment is possible, in part, because the College has adopted a policy of "committed impartiality" on such matters. To allow staff the freedom to do this without exposing them to undue criticism, a statement on professional and ethical conduct was negotiated with staff and entered into the Enterprise Agreement to which the staff and the College are signatories. The relevant clause (10.4) reads, in part, that staff may air their own views as long as they ensure:

> *...(their) personal values and beliefs do not compromise the encouragement of students and the objective assessment of values and beliefs espoused by the Uniting Church of Australia or held to be central to the educational philosophy of Wesley College as defined within the College's Aims and Objectives....*

Discipline and Pastoral Care. No distinction should be made between discipline and pastoral care. And the decisions made need to be specific to each individual. Suppose two students are involved in something they shouldn't. One student has not been in trouble before. The other is consistently in trouble. If a penalty is called for, should they suffer the same penalty? Where I work, the school "does not accept the view that 'good discipline' requires absolute uniformity…There is a view that if sanctions are to have any *formative* outcome, they must be fashioned to suit the individual and not the offence itself. ".[5]

It is sometimes difficult to explain this approach to students, and parents, because there is still a common perception that in the interests of fairness or alleged justice, specific offences should always receive the same sanction. Mandatory sentencing is a controversial issue and is not something that is often countenanced in the judicial system. Why should it happen in schools?

Pastoral care is every person's responsibility. Whatever formal systems are in place for pastoral care, no staff member can be absolved from pastoral responsibility. Schools should be in the business of caring for their students.

Conformity vs. individuality. There is a fine line to be trod between conformity and individuality. Students are required to conform within certain guidelines. If the guidelines are sensitively framed they

[5] Wesley College Council, Discipline and Pastoral Care Policy. Clause 6.

will take away some of the pressures on young people, not impose more pressures on them. If it is clear how they should act in certain situations, it is one more choice they do not have to make. School students these days face a complex and "high risk" world. In their school lives they deserve a safe environment where they are not fearful and where they can be encouraged to do the right thing because it is the right thing to do - and not because they will be punished if they don't.

If we can help them to make moral sense of the complex world they face, we have done them an important service. If we simply encourage them to follow rigidly a set of rules imposed on them, then we have done them no service at all. **In the classroom.** In the middle and junior years in particular, each class should be encouraged to negotiate a set of class rules that are then posted in the room. Periodically the classes should re-appraise the rules and assess the extent to which they are being observed. Rules can include: not interfering with other people's property; not talking while others are talking; not answering back and, doing your best at all times. By engaging in a process of reflection about their own rules, students can come to think more clearly about the rules and why they are there. For one Year 5 class group I was working with, their reflection led them to the idea that they only needed one rule: always try to do your best, because this encapsulated all the others.

And what of homework? Why do we set it? If the amount of homework given to children makes it difficult for them to take part fully in their family life, should we do something about it? If children are too busy with homework to do chores at home, is there an expectation that a parent - usually Mum - will do the chores? What does this say about sex stereotyping? What does this tell boys and girls about the role of women?[6] If there is a lot of homework, the likelihood of effective communication between parents and children is reduced and young people don't learn the essentials of managing their own households. In the case of boys, this runs the danger of producing another generation of men who are dysfunctional in a domestic setting.

- **Student empowerment.** If we are to promote democracy as an ethical norm, we need to empower our students to take an active part in the running of their school. There are many possible models for student involvement, and each school needs to grow its own. The single most important element in all models, however, should be that the practice matches the rhetoric, as students have a strong in-built hypocrisy detection ability. If we say there is going to be democracy - however limited it needs to be in practice - we had better deliver on it.

[6] See, e.g., Steve Biddulph, *Raising Boys*. Sydney: Finch, 1997. pp 134-135

- **Leadership**. Much is made of student leadership in schools. Whatever the names given to the role, the traditional model - in Australian schools, at least - is for a School Captain and vice-Captain (or Head boy and Head girl) to be chosen, along with a group of Prefects. However, designating individuals for leadership roles runs the danger of students assuming that if they are not *chosen* for leadership then they are not capable of leadership. It also signifies that one is chosen for leadership roles, rather than it being a person's choice to demonstrate leadership. This attitude may tend to encourage passivity and prevent some students from demonstrating leadership. In line with the principle of choice that underlies ethical decision-making, it is important for the establishment of an ethical school that we foster an environment where students are encouraged to *choose* to take a lead on issues that interest them.
- **Litter.** The amount of litter in a school is one pointer to the respect the students feel for their school. A litter policy is also part of establishing an ethical school.
- **Comfort and choice in congregation**. The physical environment in a school has a strong impact on the extent to which it can consider itself an ethical school. If the school "space" allows students easily to choose where and with whom to congregate and (within reason) what they do when they come together then some tensions can be removed. For example, giving students a choice between

active and passive recreation usefully separates different interest groups. Something as simple as installing seats and tables throughout the school, so that students may sit and talk if they wish has a significant effect on behavior patterns – even in all-boy environments (contrary to common sexual stereotyping).

- **Religion**. I believe it is not necessary for the ethical school to take this or that religion as its focus, although exposure to religions and the spiritual elements of life are warranted. I want my students to know that they can be good people even if they reject religion. It would be good if they also had a faith or spirituality, but religious belief *per se* is not a necessary element of being a good person. Openness to the value of religion may well, however, be an element of what it means to be a good person.

Curriculum and pedagogy

There are a number of ways to create an ethical school through changes in the way the curriculum is approached.

1. A whole-school philosophy.

In Australia there are curriculum frameworks mandated for all schools. Although different in each state, they place a significant emphasis on values and promote the idea that treatment of values should be integrated into all of the Key Learning Areas. In Western Australia, for example, the framework deals with values in five categories:

- **pursuit of knowledge and a commitment to achievement of potential;**
- **self-acceptance and respect of self;**
- **respect and concern for others and their rights;**
- **social and civic responsibility; and**
- **environmental responsibility.**

But how should teachers deal with values?

One approach is to be prescriptive - to tell students precisely what values they should have. This is not an approach I favor because it is unlikely to produce adults capable of making sense of the moral dilemmas arising in an ever-more complex world.

Another approach might be to require teachers to develop their professional expertise in matters ethical. While this is desirable, it is difficult to put into practice because it requires time that already hard-pressed teachers do not have. Including such an approach in teacher-training programs in universities is a start, but does not address the in-service needs of currently practising teachers.

Yet another approach might be to teach children how to think about moral issues, to give them, in effect, a toolbox with which to deal with moral issues. But how do we do this?

One approach that has been shown to work involves philosophers or other academics coming in to schools and working with students and teachers. A model worth looking at is where Moral Philosophy is established as an academic department in a school. While the Philosophy staff also teach specific classes, one of the main benefits comes when they act as on-site consultants to staff in matters of ethics as they arise in the classroom. Part of this consultancy involves working with class teachers in their classrooms to develop curriculum-specific teaching materials and teaching methods that focus on questions of values and ethics. Another part involves working with staff on small action research projects designed to improve learning in their classes - and specifically, incorporating ethical inquiry into existing areas of the curriculum. A visiting academic specialist can also make a contribution.

2. Ethics across the curriculum

As I just noted, one of the ways of integrating questions of values into the existing curriculum is for a philosopher and other academics to work with class teachers in their classrooms: in effect having the philosopher as consultant. If this process generates projects and exercises for classroom use, then the benefits of in-class consultancy can be shared with other teachers.[7] Teachers can supplement their existing

[7] Stephan Millett (2002, forthcoming). *Ethics and Values in the Classroom.* Melbourne: Hawker Brownlow Education.

resources with values-oriented materials within their curriculum areas.

My research indicates clearly that teaching thinking skills as we deal with questions of values enhances the quality of discussion.[8] Teaching children, and boys in particular, to think critically and to value different thinking preferences is a key to reducing their sense of alienation as they move into adolescence. Boys get into trouble at school much more often than do girls, taking up a hugely disproportionate amount of pastoral time. Getting boys to engage better with their schooling and with the hard questions they have to face is certain to improve their behavior at school and produce more balanced men. There are clear implications also that fostering an environment where boys can discuss ideas freely, where they can learn to think critically, and where they can learn to value different thinking preferences, if applied more generally, may lead to fewer incidents of self-harm in young men.[9]

The most significant element of an effective classroom approach to values is to establish a "community of inquiry" in which the students learn how to ask questions, learn how to respond to questions from their peers and where they learn to value views other than their own. The community of inquiry approach is a key part of the Philoso-

[8] Stephan Millett and Geoff Kay (2000). "A Community of Inquiry Approach to Teaching Values..." *Unicorn Online*: Australian College of Education.

phy for Children programs developed by Mathew Lipman. One of the beauties of the approach is that there is a wide range of materials already available because a great many existing books and articles can be used in a community of inquiry classroom. In brief, a text is read aloud by the class and the class generates questions about the text. These questions then become the foundation of inquiry into some of the key issues raised in the text. With experience, teachers can recognize and promote the issues that they think are most relevant.

Other approaches

The use of the community of inquiry technique should be taken in the context of a whole-school approach to re-thinking teaching and learning. There needs also to be ongoing programs of professional development in collaborative learning, student-centred learning, multiple intelligences and the like.

Teaching thinking

There are many useful approaches to the teaching of thinking in schools:

- Although in some ways oversold, the work of de Bono, such as the Six Hats and the CoRT thinking skills are very useful. If introduced in early primary school then re-inforced in successive

[9] See also, Jim Burdett, "The Community of Inquiry as a Means of Reducing Youth

years, the key skills can become very powerful tools for creative thinking. But even older students who have not previously been introduced to the skills can pick them up quickly, and at a level that is immediately useful.

- The thinking skills promoted by the Philosophy for Children movement as part of establishing a community of inquiry are particularly important in establishing the groundwork for moral thinking. These skills include:

1. asking questions
2. listening to others
3. understanding the importance of being reasonable
4. respecting persons and their points of view
5. detecting vagueness and ambiguity
6. understanding and evaluating arguments
7. understanding relationships (logical): part/whole, means/end/cause/effect etc.
8. making (and where appropriate, withholding) value judgements
9. acknowledging different perspectives and viewpoints

(Splitter and Sharp, 1995, pp9-10)

- **Countering the dominance of strategic thinking**

Suicide", *Critical and Creative Thinking*. Vol. 7, No.1, March 1999.

One of the imperatives in teaching young people, but boys in particular, is to challenge the norm in which strategic thinking dominates. Strategic thinking sets a goal and tries to achieve it. This is a necessary part of thinking, but it is not sufficient. Young men in particular get stuck in it - and this affects their attitudes to work, to relationships with women and to the problems they confront. It sees them set themselves up to win or to lose in situations where winning or losing are not necessarily the only appropriate ways to perceive things.

Strategic thinking is thinking oriented to success. This form of reason sees things in terms of goals that have to be achieved, and achieving the goals is the only measure of success. Issues are seen in terms of problems that need to be solved. Men, in particular, appear to be dominated by this form of thinking so when they see a problem they feel they have to try to resolve it. John Gray, in *Men are from Mars, Women are from Venus*, gives men the title of "Mr. Fixit" because they see problems as something that they, individually, have to solve. Being a Mr. Fixit can be useful, but there are times when others simply don't want to be "fixed" or they want to work through a problem in their own way.

Strategic action. If people are interested solely in success (the consequences or the outcome of their actions) they will try to reach their objectives by influencing their opponent's definition of the

situation and thus his decisions or motives, through external means by using weapons or goods, threats or enticements. Such people treat each other *strategically - and not as valuable in their own right.* If strategic action is the only or the dominant form of action, there are clear implications for ethics. For a start, persons are treated as means to an end and not as something intrinsically valuable.

If people who are stuck in the mode of strategic thinking can't solve a problem, they may feel they have failed. I think we can do our young people (in particular our young men) a favor by helping them out of the straitjacket of strategic thinking. Let's have a look at an alternative - no, an adjunct to this form of thinking.

Communicative reason involves thinking oriented to understanding and usually involves sharing information to come to a greater understanding. Under a communicative reason model, a problem is something to be shared so that more than one insight can be gained into the nature of the problem. The aim is to understand the problem by seeing it from a number of perspectives.

Communicative action occurs when people are prepared to harmonize their plans of action based on an agreement already reached about definitions of the situation and the possible outcomes. That is, once agreement is reached on the nature of the problem and the likely outcomes, a consensus plan can be developed. This is at odds with the top-down decision-making structure of many large organizations, including schools.

In both strategic and communicative action, the people involved are capable of envisaging an outcome and working toward it. The cases differ in that "for the *model of strategic action*, a structural description of action directly oriented toward success is sufficient, whereas the *model of action oriented toward reaching understanding* must specify the preconditions of an agreement, to be reached communicatively, that allows" one person to link his action to another's.[10]

Giving children (in particular boys) the means of stepping outside win/lose thinking may be one of the most important ways we can help them from harming themselves and help them to become more moral citizens.

Finally

Dealing with values from a whole-school perspective is likely to help our students to become caring, consistent, honourable adults who will help to make their communities better places to be.

There is much good work that can be done. And some of it is very simple to implement. Other aspects of creating an ethical school may take a great deal of effort and a great deal of time because it challenges the way schools have traditionally been organised.

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[10] Jurgen Habermas, *Moral Consciousness and Communicative Action.* Trans. C. Lenhardt and S. Nicholsen. Oxford: Polity, 1990. pp. 133-134.

What I am certain of, is that it is worth the effort because the result can be generations of children who have what it takes to go on to become socially responsible adults.

Exercises.

Form groups of four. Choose one of the following exercises. Timing is not critical, but allow 10-15 minutes in groups, then come together for plenary (whole class) discussion session.

Placemat activity:

This can be for staff or students. Each member of the group to think of *five ways to help my school to become an ethical school.* Write these down in the "my points" part of the placemat (5-10 mins). Read each other group member's points then discuss, aiming to agree on *five ways to help my school to become an ethical school.* Write these in the "our points" part of the placemat. (5-10 mins). If full agreement is not possible for the group on all points, allow individuals to include in the "our points" section points that they feel strongly about.

Each group has a speaker who reports the group's discussion and their points to the whole class.

Points from one group listed on the board. Additional points are added in turn from each group and the whole set discussed.
An action plan can then be developed.

PMI activity. As a group, list under the headings: Plus, Minus, Interesting all the policies and procedures (formal and informal) in place in the school. Then discuss, getting participants to explain their reasons. This can be in small groups, or as a whole-class activity.

As an alternative, write a one-sentence statement on the board, then invite PMI comments. The sentence should relate to policies affecting ethics e.g. detentions, lateness.

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January 22nd 3:00pm – 4:30pm Bernhard Center Room 205	Stephan Millett, Ph.D. – Director of Ethical Inquiry at Wesley College Perth, Australia *Toward An Ethical School*
February 13th, 7:00pm Bernhard Center Room 210	Insoo Hyun, Ph.D. – Dept. of Philosophy, Western Michigan University *What is Personal Well-Being?*
March 20th, 7:00pm Bernhard Center Room 210	JoNina Abron, Assoc. Prof. Department of Communication Western Michigan University *Racial Profiling in the News*
April 2nd, 7:00pm Bernhard Center Room 208	Rudolph Siebert, Ph.D. – Dept. of Comparative Religion, Western Michigan University *The Right Society: Personal Autonomy And Universal Solidarity*
April 11th, 7:00pm Bernhard Center Room 157	Norman Hawker, Ph.D. – Financial and Commercial Law, Western Michigan University *Convergence or Chaos: Stakeholder Theory, the Ethics of Competition and The Implications for Antitrust Law*

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