

# Ethics and Educational Leadership and Influence

Ways in which teachers shape moral  
formation in students



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# Introducing ethics

- Students - an important aspect of becoming a mature, responsible citizen or leader is having a strong sense of moral and ethical values
- Moral values decisively affect society
  - A major factor in the decline of the Roman Empire was the loss of moral strength; society crumbled from within
- Each society follows some model for its moral formation

# Introducing ethics

- Each person already has morality and ethics, whether we realize or not.
- Your ethics are the organized ideas of right and wrong you use to decide whether a belief, attitude or behavior is good or bad, right or wrong
- Your morality is how well you live up to the ethical system you believe is true

# Introducing ethics

- Individuals and societies have often sought to guide and direct their moral behavior by appealing to a single principle or maxim
  - Famous slogans
    - The majority rules
      - Majoritatea are dreptate
    - Do unto others as you would have done to you
      - Ce tie nu-ti place, altuia nu-i face
    - The end justifies the means
      - Scopul scuza mijloacele
    - Other examples
      - Pestele incepe sa miroasa de la cap
      - Sa moara si capra vecinului

# Introducing ethics

- C.S. Lewis observed that an ethical system ought to address what constitutes a healthy individual, society and overall goal for the society or individual.
- Ethical slogans tend to address three relationships that are basic to any ethical system
  - How I should relate to myself (my internal ethics.)
  - How we should relate to each other (our group ethics.)
  - What our overall purpose or goal ought to be and how it affects us individually and collectively.

# Introducing ethics

- Most ethical principles share a common problem - they require information or abilities none of us possess. We don't know enough and/or cannot do enough to make any of these ethical systems really work.
- For an ethical system to be truly effective over time, two things should be true:
  - One would have to know all of the possible options, alternatives and consequences of any ethical choice, and then choose the best one
  - One should have the power to carry out the best ethical choice. This is not a very realistic possibility

# Introducing ethics - conclusions

- An ethical system is only as good as its grasp of reality. Christian ethics hold that there is a spiritual reality (God) that can and does greatly influence our physical reality.
- A person's ethics are the organized ideas of right and wrong he or she uses to decide whether a belief, attitude or behavior is good or bad
- A person's morality is how well he or she lives up to the ethical system he or she has accepted.

# Ethics in education

How can teachers and educators more actively influence the moral development of children and youth

Education is value-based - students are constantly learning values in the course of their education

# Character education

- Has been knowing a renaissance of sorts
- Local communities and grass root parent coalitions desire character development education for their youth
- All have a responsibility to form their conscience
- We are not born with our consciences already formed

# Principles of personal vision

(S. Covey)

- Self-awareness
- Social mirror
- Determinism (stimulus/response theory)
  - Genetic
  - Psychic
  - Environmental
- Between stimulus and response, man has the freedom to choose

# Principles of personal vision

(S. Covey)

- Three central values in life (Victor Frankl)
  - The experiential
  - The creative
  - The attitudinal → paradigm shifts
- Taking the initiative
  - Resourcefulness & Initiative
- Reactive vs. Proactive people
  - Reactive language vs. Proactive language
  - Reactive people - driven by feelings
  - Proactive people - subordinate feelings to values

# Interaction with students

- Do you have a compass in your head, a magnet in your hearts?
- What are your desires?
- Primary colors - Red, Green, Blue



# Interaction with students CHARACTER

- **Honesty is foundational to Moral Development**
- **Are you being honest?**
  - Institutions (school, church, etc.) cannot make you honest
- **Do you have personal dignity?**
- **Do you instill dignity and respect in students**

# Interaction with students PERSPECTIVE

- What are you going to see in your life?
- Do you know where you would like to go?
- How do you see your problems?
  - Are you a problem person or a possibility person?



# Interaction with students      COURAGE

- Examples of people who had courage
- Courage can be contagious
- Taking risks
- Failure
- Michael Jordan, Beethoven, Isaac Newton, Albert Einstein

# Moral Formation

- What is the content of the moral domain?
- What is the means by which we pursue moral development in own lives?
- The job of teachers - to bring new members into their moral community

# Moral Formation

- Moral reflection is done against the background of an existing moral consensus
- The ability to critique a society by the light of its own moral commitments - an important aspect of social progress (Walzer)
- Children are surely capable of moral insight
  - Different than adults (they are part of a moral community already)

# Moral Formation

- Humans are capable of both:
  - Greed and generosity
  - Rationality and irrationality
  - Discipline and random behavior
- A democratic society requires the development of some of these traits over others
- Decisions to be made with attention to the intellectual, moral and psychological requirements of democratic life

# Moral Formation

- The job of education
  - To prepare every member of the moral community to be able to offer “internal critique”
  - To teach children customary morality in such a way that they can become reflective about it



# Integrating structure and content in moral education

- “Whose values?”
- Mistakes:
  - Moral education / sex education
  - Moral education / religious education
  - Not enough of the above



# Three basic approaches

- **Indoctrinative**
  - Presupposes a justified content and proposes to teach that content in a variety of methods
- **Romanticist**
  - Provide the nurturing context in which the natural tendency to develop a moral agent can “flower”
- **Cognitive-structural approach**
  - Construction of moral reasoning capacity (interaction between one’s genetic, developmental and biological endowments and experience with the physical and social worlds)

# Six Pillars of Character

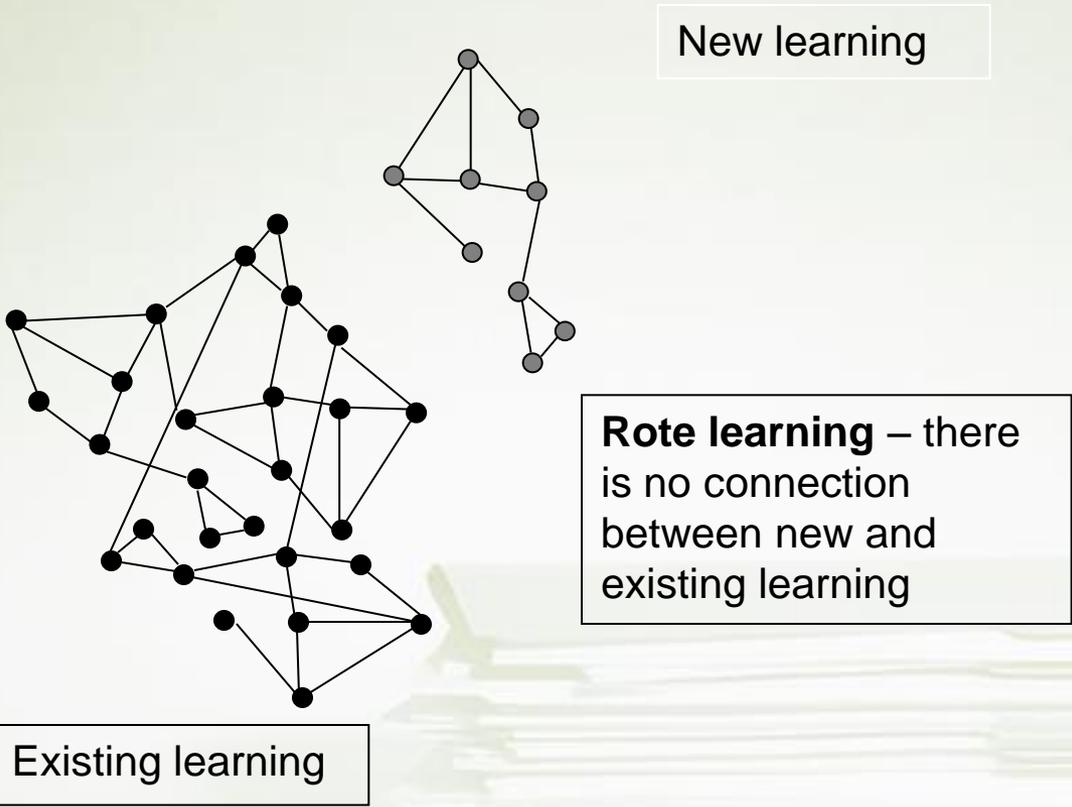
- Trustworthiness
- Respect
- Responsibility
- Fairness
- Caring
- Citizenship



# Four domains

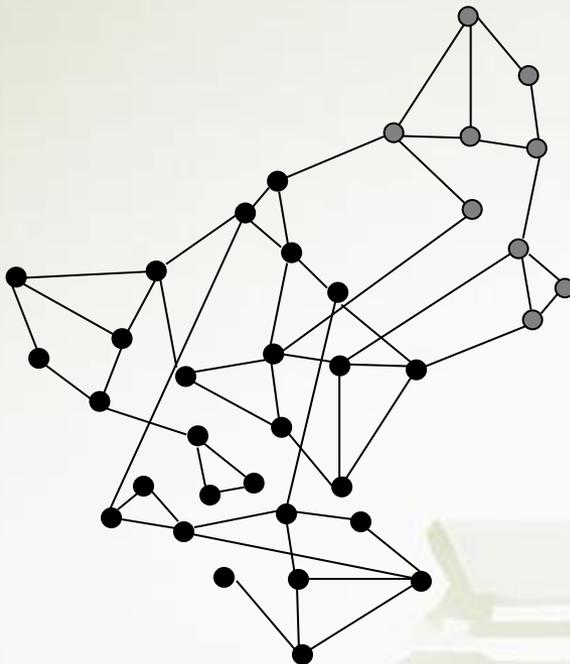
- Society
  - Truth, human rights, law
- Relationships
  - Others for themselves
- The Self
  - Each person - a unique being of intrinsic worth
- The environment
  - Duty to maintain a sustainable environment for the future

# Constructivism (1)



- Learning is personal 'meaning making', and it involves making neural connections
- Only the learner can make these neural connections
- The existing learning of every learner is unique
- Only active methods require students to make these connections

# Constructivism (2)



New learning

Existing learning

**Deep learning** – the learner makes connections between new and existing learning:

- 'Understanding' is created. That is:
- The learner can reason with the new learning
- Learning is less likely to be forgotten

- Learners make errors and omissions in constructing their learning, and these must be discovered and corrected. This requires active learning too.
- There are more connections in the brain than atoms in the known universe! (So the diagram is a gross simplification)
- Connections make learning, memory and intelligence. They literally grow the brain
- The brain is like a muscle, the more it is used, the stronger it gets

# Transformational teaching

- Presence and pursuit
  - Being open
  - Taking the initiative
  - Preparing ahead
  - Undivided attention
- Listening
  - Level I - “listening to you for me”
  - Level II - “listening to you for you”
  - Level III - “listening to you, for you and through you”

# Transformational teaching

- **Accountability**
  - “Account” for the set agenda
  - Goal-focused
  - Voluntary
  - Realistic
  - Flexible
- **Curiosity**
  - Powerful questions
- **Encouragement**
  - Refreshing hope along the way