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Character Development and Moral education: Cultivating Ethical and Responsible Citizens

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Abstract

Overall, the aim of SEL is to prepare students for life in a complex and ever-changing world succeeding academically. In an age of rapid change and global interdependence, the SEL competencies of adaptable, empathetic, collaborating people are the right kinds of people. Students who are talented in these areas are well equipped to face future problems of personal relationships, labor market, or higher education. They are the type of people who will be able to solve conflicts peacefully, lead with love and make significant contributions to their communities and even further. This needs to be implemented and enhanced continuously across the board for the sake of this initiative, in which individuals need to be socially and emotionally intelligent on top of the intellectual. In communities where resilience is second nature and adaptability is the norm, empathy and comprehension are the norm of the day. From being a trend in education, social and emotional learning (SEL) has spread widely into the classroom, indicating a shift towards a future where individuals can fulfil their responsibility to lead fulfilling lives and contribute meaningfully in a diversifying and interdependent global context.

Keywords: Character Development, Moral education, Cultivating Ethical

Introduction

During their lives, individuals are nourished in particular moral frameworks, not in moral or ethical isolation (Reiss, 1999). However, liberal democracies only develop a chance to flourish when their citizens engage in virtues and are involved with the moral and civic ideals (Althof & Berkowitz, 2006). In modern society, modern technology influences social and ethical part as well as it is shaped by society; modern society also tries to shape science and technology. Morals, values, and ethics are important, and have valuable benefits to the community, not only when the community is so complex that we can only truly exist socially by agreeing to behave in a certain way, but especially so in the case of rapid advancements in these fields. Ethics encompasses the systematic and logical examination of human behavior, whereas morality pertains to the practical implementation of these ethical principles (Churchill, 1982). There exists a strong connection between beliefs and values, as beliefs guide individuals’ actions (Rennie, 2007). Furthermore, morals, values, and ethics are intricately intertwined with society, spirituality, and culture (United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation, 1991).

Science and technology have progressed rapidly since the 19th century, with globalization recently exerting a profound influence on

society, education, and pedagogical approaches. Before the 19th century, scientific methodologies were grounded in philosophical and metaphysical understandings of science education, alongside moral and religious values. At that time, societal activities provided support for scientific practices. This framework not only fostered moral and elevated ideals but also enabled science to contribute positively to individuals' moral and spiritual growth. In contrast, the contemporary system is often viewed as significantly inferior, lacking adequate support for scientific endeavors. It has been argued that the prevailing mindset in current scientific practice largely undermines the moral and spiritual development of individuals (Witz, 1996). Individuals may not be able to perceive the goodness and beauty inherent in life and truth due to competing ideologies.

Thus the current educational framework is not in the position to provide the needed direction and foundation needed to facilitate the development of a decent mind in a decent body, an essential aspect of societal, religious and traditional cultural values and ethics, which it has done for over 350 years that educating society and serving it (Hurd, 2000). But, in the last 4 to 5 decades the picture has changed completely in the nature of scientific practices and the method of teaching methods. However, during the 1980s and 1990s, notable efforts were made to identify higher order thinking and social skills that can be used as a basis for developing educational systems pertinent to science-technology literacy.

The concept of a lived curriculum encompasses the promotion of morals, values, and ethics, aiding students in adapting to changes that affect human well-being (Hurd, 1998). This article elucidates the necessity of integrating ethics, values, morality, and character education into the educational process. It discusses the societal benefits of such integration, providing justifications and rationales, while emphasizing how an enhanced scientific education curriculum can foster the development of students' morals, values, and ethics. The author examines the significance of morals, values, and ethics within science education and instruction, particularly in light of rapid advancements in science, technology, and globalization, which contribute to the complexities of social life. The philosophical and pedagogical dimensions related to morals, values, ethics, and character education are synthesized and analyzed, potentially leading to the establishment of a robust theoretical framework for educational programs.

Furthermore, the article explores the implementation of character education within the sciences and the challenges associated with teaching ethics and morals. Thus the current educational framework is not in the position to provide the needed direction and foundation needed to facilitate the development of a decent mind in a decent body, an essential aspect of societal, religious and traditional cultural values and ethics, which it has done for over 350 years that educating society and serving it (Hurd, 2000). But, in the last 4 to 5 decades the picture has changed completely in the nature of scientific practices and the method of teaching methods. However, during the 1980s and 1990s, notable efforts were made to identify higher order thinking and social skills that can be used as a basis for developing educational systems pertinent to science-technology literacy. The recommended approaches aim to enhance students' abilities in moral and ethical reasoning, as well as their problem-solving and decision-making capabilities. Furthermore, the effective implementation of these strategies may address the pressing issues of student disengagement and lack of motivation in the sciences.

Through the proposed modifications, students will gain a deeper understanding of the societal implications of their scientific inquiries, including the corporate and environmental impacts. They will also learn to differentiate between scientific considerations and personal or political values, recognize various scientific limitations, grasp scientific concepts, and apply these concepts to real-world situations. Ethics and morality are integral components of a lifestyle, intricately connected to all aspects of life (Kang & Glassman, 2010). The primary aim of moral education is to facilitate

the development of students’ character and moral integrity. Moral philosophy, moral psychology, and practical moral educational methods make up the theoretical basis of moral education, and moral education (Han, 2014). True moral education should promote significant and personally transformative knowledge that extends beyond mere natural or social scientific comprehension, while also fostering rational pro-social skills and virtues (Carr, 2014). Ultimately, the objective of moral education is to inspire personal transformation.

A spiritual concern emerges from the internalization of the fundamental tenets of Islam (Halstead, 2007). The field of philosophy referred to as ethics examines the reasoning that informs our moral conduct. Our ethical concepts and principles offer essential scrutiny and analysis that underpin our moral choices and actions (Reiss, 1999). It is common in common usage for the term ‘ethics’ to refer to ‘morals,’ but less favorably. It tends to be unclear to many professionals and students alike (McGavin, 2013).

The Importance of Character Education

Historically, the importance of character education was acknowledged during periods when religious institutions played a pivotal role in societal norms. However, as the advancements in science and technology surged, the emphasis on character education diminished, coinciding with significant changes in the socioeconomic and political fabric of society driven by increasing demands and expectations. It is essential for educators to prioritize character education to foster virtues, admirable traits, personal development, and leadership skills in children. This focus is particularly crucial in the early years of schooling, as children are in the process of shaping their own perspectives on the world.

Conclusion

On the other hand, technological advances, globalization, and development of complex social structures have much to do with both social dynamics connected with the economic and political aspects of human life as well as with organization and running of research. Future science educators have further challenges striking a balance, particularly in role of moral principles, values, ethics, and character education in the curricula they create and execute. Currently, the existing scientific curriculum does not offer students enough internal guidance and necessity support that would allow students to develop and achieve their intrinsic moral values and desires of their development. Thus, there is the pressing need for ethics, morals, and values to be emphasized in this more effective science education framework. The reintegration of values in education, which is being requested by some of the most recent voices of researchers and educators as well (Corrigan et al., 2007) is corroborated by this assertion.

The purpose of this paper is to build and articulate a strong theoretical framework in which to design good school programs and way to teach, based on comprehensive syntheses and analyses of the philosophical and pedagogical problems of morals, ethics and education. As a teaching methodology, a student centered and inquiry based approach is favoured to enhance student motivation and engagement, and to develop some human values and encourage the feeling of connection with individual and broader social issues. According to this paper, the strategies of teaching and learning science may be effectively implemented at the same time as they foster ethics, values and morals.

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