CHARACTER EDUCATION
AT A
JUVENILE DETENTION FACILITY

By
Raymond Lee Fox II

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Masters of Arts in Education

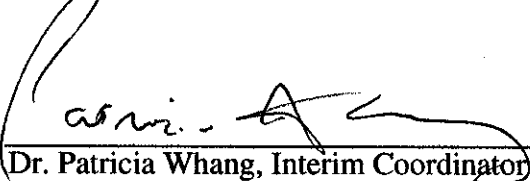California State University, Monterey Bay

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CHARACTER EDUCATION
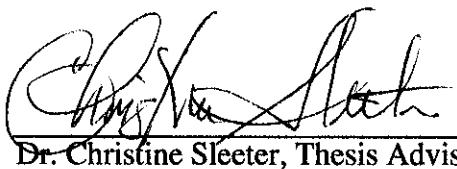## AT A
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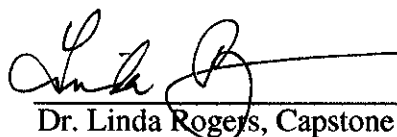APPROVED BY THE DEAN OF THE CENTER FOR
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ABSTRACT

Moral education in juvenile detention facility schools presents unique curricular and pedagogical concerns because of the distinct cultural and socio-psychological perspectives of students in these facilities. In response to these concerns, this project presents the results of action research using virtue-based character education as a curriculum and hermeneutical dialectic as a pedagogical method for multicultural moral education in juvenile detention facilities.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First, I am very thankful to the students at the juvenile detention facility for their trust and confidence to let me into their lives and try to understand how they think. Some students were not willing to reveal themselves and I am thankful for them too because they taught me about the bridges I still need to cross.

I will always be grateful to Dr. Paul Kashap, former professor of philosophy at the University of California at Santa Cruz, who many years ago taught me the power of a question. He was a master of Socratic method.

I am especially grateful to Dr. Christine Sleeter whose academic integrity and expertise as a teacher has been a constant source of inspiration during the entire period of my studies at CSUMB.

Most of all I am thankful for my family, for my incredible wife and two sons. We share the same heart and mind. We are a team. Thanks to my father for showing me by his example how to be inquisitive and to my mother, the ultimate cheerleader.

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Chapter One

Introduction

Pursuing explicit moral education in schools raises unique questions about curriculum and pedagogy to insure that the teaching of ethics is multicultural in nature and at the same time concrete in content, avoiding the pitfalls of relativism. Moral education in juvenile detention facility schools presents additional curricular and pedagogical concerns because of the distinct cultural and socio-psychological perspectives of students in these facilities and because of the institutional ethos of the facilities themselves. In response to these concerns this project presents the results of action research using virtue-based character education as a curriculum and hermeneutical dialectic as a pedagogical method for multicultural moral education in juvenile detention facilities. First, some introductory thoughts will situate my perspectives and professional experiences that led to this research.

Personal Focus in Moral Education

Moral education has been of particular interest to me since the time of my undergraduate studies many years ago as a philosophy major and particularly in the philosophy of ethics. In moral philosophy I would most closely ally myself with Richard M. Hare, White's professor of moral philosophy at Oxford from 1966 to 1983. Hare successfully combined concepts from Kant and utilitarianism to argue that morals are both prescriptive and universalizable (Hare, 1952). Hare defended the logical nature of moral language, distinguishing preferences or values, which are arbitrary and subjective, from moral principles that express the logic of moral obligation (Hare, 1981).

Hare provides a logical structure for thinking about moral precepts but his purpose was not to describe the content of specific, universally prescriptive moral principles. For the content of moral principles, the "what" to teach in the classroom, I agree with the current character education's foundation in Aristotelian virtues. There are certain virtues or character traits that

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describe moral behavior about which human beings can agree. Kevin Ryan (Ryan and Lickona, 1992) argues that these moral traits, "are not relative, in the sense of being purely subjective or arbitrary; rather they are objectively grounded in human nature and experience. For example: to be fair, honest, and caring in our relations with others is to act in ways that are consistent with, and enhancing of, our essential human dignity" (p. 14). Thus, one side of this action research project, the curriculum side, will look at how well virtue-based character education works as a curriculum foundation for moral education at a juvenile detention facility.

To the ideas of Hare and Aristotle I would also add certain cautions from conservative hermeneutic philosophy which warn about the contextualization of our language and, more broadly, of our understanding. According to Gadamer (1960), preunderstanding always colors our understanding. Moral language is especially submerged in cultural and psychological (emotional) context. The practical meaning of justice, for instance, is full of cultural connotations. Within some social groups justice may mean "due process" while in other groups it may mean "retaliation." Because we do not practice ethics in isolation from other human beings, ethics have social and multicultural consequences. To be able to live to together we have to arrive at some agreement on meaning. There must be, therefore, some way for moral language to escape the confines of cultural context in order to be able to practice ethics that are multicultural in nature. The method for moving out of cultural narrow-mindedness is dialectic, which is the other, pedagogical side, of this action research project. This research will look at the results of using a dialectical pedagogy in combination with a virtue-based curriculum for moral education among juvenile detention students.

My interest in moral philosophy finds relevance and expression in my work. For more than twenty-five years now I have been a minister of a Christian church. I have spent the majority of these years working with a multicultural congregation of low to middle income residents of a community with a mix of part urban but mostly agricultural resources. Much of the focus of my

teaching and counseling in this environment has been in the practical application of ethical principles. In addition I teach parenting classes for the local community's adult school. Generally, the adult participants in these classes are mandated by the court or school district to attend along with their children who have been involved in minor offences with the law or problems with school life. One thread I have always woven through these classes is moral education. About three years ago, as an extension of the classes I already taught, the County Office of Education asked me to teach weekly parenting classes at the local juvenile detention facility for young men or women who are or are about to become parents. It soon became apparent, however, that very few young people were presently or prospectively parents. Because it was difficult to interest the students in material that was not immediately relevant to them, I suggested to my supervisors that teaching about character in general would be more appropriate. Discussions about character qualities such as respect, responsibility, self-discipline, and trust could relate to the needs of young parents as well as serve the social and emotional needs of other students. Since that time, for the last four years, I have been involved in teaching moral education in the form of character education at this facility.

<div align="center">The Challenges of Teaching Moral Education

at a Juvenile Detention Facility</div>

The students in such a setting compose a spectrum of cultures, with distinct worldviews, traditions, and values that undeniably represented the Other to me. Nevertheless, from the time I began working with these young people I have felt genuinely pulled into their worlds. They are not all criminals. Some are innocent. Some are incarcerated because their angry reaction to constant abuse finally turned violent. Some have been little served by a system or institutions that glorify values that they do not possess. Some are connected to each other by the culture of drug use. Others belong to gangs with strict rules and expectations for behavior. In the case of some groups, the morally right thing to do is to violently retaliate on members of opposing

gangs, view their own women as "hinas" and generally disregard moral responsibility towards anyone outside of their group. What sort of purpose does character education have in this setting? Is drug abuse, for instance, really a character problem? One young man barely into his teens is a vowed gang member who is ready to "go down" for his homies - - but he can't read. Does he need the confidence and attention required to learn to read or does he need to learn about character and how to make decisions - - or does he need both? Doesn't the loyalty and trust that one gang member feels for another count as character? - - but how do these loyalties affect their own neighborhoods?

What purpose would character education serve for these students? What do I really expect to do? Character education is not meant to solve all problems but it clearly supplies a need. It could supply some emotional and social skills to fight against the institutional and social obstacles that face these young people. It could give them the self-confidence to break some of the destructive cycles they find themselves in. It could open their vision to what they can contribute to people around them and to build relationships that they never had before. For those on the brink of some self-destructive decision, character education could be a spark of motivation to step away from the edge.

The problem was curriculum and pedagogy: what to teach and how to teach. Whose moral principles am I going to teach? What teaching strategies could I use to get beyond the natural suspicion these students have for authority figures, or for anyone who is middle-class White, in order to communicate with trust? How could I come to see their choices from their perspectives? How could ethics lessons be multicultural and at the same time avoid the trap of relativism?

At the present, while interest in character education in schools is actually in the midst of reviving, there are very few examples of multicultural curriculum that might be relevant to the specific needs of juvenile detention facility students. Because the educational atmosphere at a

detention facility was a compelling challenge, intellectually and emotionally, that I found I could not avoid, I began to experiment with curriculum ideas and teaching strategies.

Experimenting with Curriculum and Pedagogy

When I first began teaching at the juvenile detention center, I felt absolutely alienated from the students. I knew little about their perspectives and experiences. Although as a minister I have worked with families from a wide variety of economic, social and cultural backgrounds, I have not been where these young people have been. I have not personally experienced institutional and economic barriers, abusive relationships, drug or alcohol addiction, racial and social discrimination, or the level of despair and resignation that some of these people feel at such a young age. So I began by asking lots of questions about what they think while trying to teach about character themes reflected in social issues and current events. We were basically talking *about* character traits such as respect, self-discipline, and responsibility. Most of the learning taking place in the classroom was probably on my part because their answers to my questions opened me up a little more to their perspectives. Character education, however, is supposed to bring about change in thinking and hopefully some change in behavior. Just talking about character seemed to me to bring little change in thinking.

After becoming somewhat better informed, I made a change in the structure of these classes, more specifically a change in the pedagogy I was using. Instead of simply asking general questions about what they thought, I decided to use a modified form of Socratic dialogue. I would map out a series of questions to raise in the class that would lead, based on their answers, to conclusions about the practice of character. This method proved to be a more useful tool to encourage critical thinking. In addition, I did try to raise questions that reflected issues they personally dealt with so that the content was relevant. At the same time, however, it was still just an exercise in critical thinking. What I was hoping for was some kind of realization or new understanding that would motivate them to rethink the direction of their lives.

Then one day something happened in the class that demonstrated to me the need to make another change in pedagogy that might bring about this moment of understanding I was hoping for. The subject for the class was toleration. To introduce the subject I brought photos of different examples of cultures present in the United States that I had cut out of National Geographic issues. Each student had a photo of a different cultural scene. I gave them ten minutes to think about what the people in their photos were thinking and feeling, where they might be from, what language they might speak and what distinctive cultural traits they might have. Then they each would have five minutes in turn to speak about the culture represented in their photo. After they all took their turn to speak, I raised some questions about what is required of the members of a society in which so many cultures must coexist. They, of course, started talking about toleration. I wanted them to talk about toleration enough to commit themselves to a clear concept of this character trait. I raised questions that helped the students explore meanings and practical applications for toleration upon which we could mutually agree. I knew however that many of these young people were involved to one degree or another in serious and often violent gang conflicts between members of the same culture. After they had clearly defined the meaning of toleration from their perspective, I consciously paused the course of discussion, setting aside some papers I had in my hand and leaned back on the desk I was standing next to. I said to them, "You know, I'm White, a minister, a teacher. I'm forty-five years old and I have never really been where you are so I want to ask about something that really confuses me. Why is it that young people from the same culture, who speak the same language, from the same race, who have lots of the same traditions - - why is it that they are killing each other?" What followed was an absolute silence that lasted for several seconds. It was one of those silences in which people are caught with their thoughts. They had defined toleration themselves, committing themselves to its meaning. At the same time they committed themselves to the contradiction - - it suddenly, if only for a moment, didn't make sense to be so violently

intolerant of each other. The intensity of the moment ratcheted up even higher when a girl, who had been a gang member herself, shouted, "They don't know, that's why they can't tell you!" More silence. Under different circumstances, if I were to ask them why gangs are so violent, they would probably raise all sorts of justifications but at this moment, through their own discussion, they themselves had eliminated these justifications.

That was the sort of moment of realization I was hoping for in class. Minds were engaged. They were thinking about a topic precisely relevant to their lives. Self-examination was happening. I too had opened my understanding to interrogation. Now we were not just talking *about* character; instead we confronted the personal demands of character. I don't know if anyone decided that day to get out of the gangs or if the events in class convinced anyone in the long term to make different decisions. I had the sense however that creating this kind of classroom event has more power than lecture or general discussion to promote maturity in character. It was more than just an activity in critical thinking.

Hermeneutical Dialectic as a Pedagogy

Later reflection on what happened that day in the classroom called to mind previous work I had done in philosophical hermeneutics. Some of the principles of modern hermeneutics were playing out in the class. One of those principles is that all understanding is hermeneutical understanding. Even though we are not reading a text in class, interpretation is taking place in the dialogue between students and between teacher and students. Another key element of hermeneutic philosophy is the concept of preunderstanding. When students and teacher work to uncover the meaning of a moral trait such as toleration, they have preconceptions that influence their understanding; but through the classroom process they can identify and examine their preconceptions. In addition there was movement back and forth between one interpretation and the other as those involved in the dialogue critiqued, revised, modified, enlarged, and reexpressed what they understood. This movement is the dialectic of hermeneutics. Then that

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moment of silence, a moment of new realization, when ideas that used to be familiar suddenly appear strange, is what I would call a "dialectic moment" in moral discourse that provides the possibility of change in moral perspective.

Viewing the class through a hermeneutical lens offered the promise of duplicating on some level in future classes what happened in this particular class. As I began to read through current literature on moral education in addition to literature connecting hermeneutics and education, hermeneutical understanding and dialectic process seemed to provide the foundation for a pedagogy that could lead to a common understanding of moral virtues while respecting different cultural voices. Recent work in education and hermeneutics confirms this observation. Shaun Gallagher in Hermeneutics and Education (1992) defends the proposition that, "Educational experience is always hermeneutical experience. Put another way, learning always involves interpretation" (p. 39). Gallagher argues that,

"Hermeneutical analysis of educational experience is opposed to the narrowly

defined, epistemological notion of cognition. Interpretation is not to be construed

as fundamentally an intellectual activity that happens only in the mind, or only

when our cognitive faculties are exercised. Rather, interpretation is a universal

feature of all human activity" (p. 40).

Pedagogy from a hermeneutical viewpoint must encourage the dialectic that happens between the interpretations of student and teacher. McCleary (1993), in The Logic of Imaginative Education, explains that the results of dialectical teaching can be transforming for both student and teacher and for the relationship between them.

"In their efforts to develop and practice a dialectical pedagogy, teachers and

learners transform themselves in transforming their ways of coexisting. Sometimes,

as the upshot of their efforts, they can learn to show how a given pedagogical

problem, the method of dealing with it, and the transformations of historical

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coexistence required to resolve it have developed dialectically to constitute a new critical practice that they can now apply to analogous situations. Whenever that happens, dialectical teaching and learning has succeeded" (p. 46)

In a juvenile detention facility, instructor and student are distanced and alienated by culture. Both instructor and student may be talking about toleration but may be talking about two entirely different things, their words simply passing by each other without understanding. The meaning of their words are couched in cultural, social contexts that are foreign to each other. Pedagogy that encourages the interchange and mutual interrogation of different understandings holds the promise for some consensus of meaning and practice. This dialectical consensus is a necessary goal in moral discourse if ethics are to be social in nature.

Action Research

The class on toleration was a turning point that indicated a direction for further research in the classroom that could focus specifically on the usefulness of hermeneutical dialectic. To this end I began writing a virtue based character education curriculum structured by hermeneutical dialectic as a pedagogical method. Putting this curriculum and pedagogy into practice at the juvenile detention facility where I teach, I was interested in two general observations: how dialectic method could produce dialectic moments with the potential for transforming understanding and how the results of classroom events could in turn further inform curriculum for future classes. The overarching goal is to produce a curriculum that is genuinely multicultural because it pays attention and responds to voices not normally taken into account in moral education.

There are many issues that this specific research does not intend to answer. As previously mentioned, there are many reasons why young people find themselves incarcerated at juvenile hall and there are many reasons why young people turn to violence, drugs, and destructive behavior that may only indirectly relate to character. Some reasons are beyond character and

have more to do with institutional and social concerns. Nonetheless, character education in this form provides something that many students actually find practical - - - like one student who made my day said, "I like this class - - we really learn something we can use." So do I. I am learning too. Of course another student once entered the classroom, shook his head in disappointment and said, "I hate this class." I asked him why and he said, "Because you make us think." That made my day too.

Following this introduction, Chapter Two consists of a literature review that forms an argument in favor of multicultural character education based on virtues in terms of content and guided by hermeneutical dialectic concerns in terms of pedagogy. Chapter Three describes the methodology for the classroom research using the virtue-based curriculum and dialectic pedagogy. Chapter Four presents a detailed explanation of the actual classroom practice that formed this action research. Chapter Five is the analysis of data from the classroom experience, including the methodology for the data analysis and samples of the anecdotal results from the classroom practice. Chapter Six contains some reflections on the literature review subsequent to the classroom practice and reflections on the classroom experience itself followed by some concluding thoughts and suggestions for future direction in character education.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

This action research project in moral education examines the usefulness of virtue-based character education as a curriculum and hermeneutical dialectic as a pedagogy for teaching multicultural moral education in a juvenile detention setting. One of the principle premises of this project is that students in a juvenile detention setting represent unique cultural perspectives. To be successful the curriculum and pedagogy must be responsive to their cultural voices. The second premise is that virtue-based character education is an appropriate curriculum model for moral education at a juvenile detention facility. The third premise is that hermeneutical dialectic as a pedagogy is especially suited for the culture of students at a juvenile detention facility.

In support of these premises this review of literature will answer the following questions: With regards to the first premise, in what ways do students in juvenile detention facilities represent special cultural groups? What kind of literature can genuinely inform curriculum concerning the culture of students in this setting? Then, to support the second premise, what are the historic trends in moral education that have led to the current focus on virtue-based character education? What is virtue-based character education? Why is virtue-based character education an appropriate model for students at a juvenile detention facility? Finally, in support of the third premise, what is the pedagogical role of hermeneutical analysis? What is the nature of dialectical process as a pedagogy? What does hermeneutical dialectic offer as a pedagogy that makes it useful in a juvenile detention facility? As the literature answers these questions it provides legitimacy for this action research project practicing virtue-based curriculum using dialectical pedagogy at a juvenile detention facility.

The Cultures of Youth Detention Clients

One commonly raised question in regards to moral education in the schools is, "Whose moral principles or whose values will we teach?" As we shall see later in a historical review of

approaches to moral education, in some cases the response to this question has been to teach a contentless form of moral education that does not promote specific principles or values but instead focuses on developing the cognitive side of moral decision making. Part of the burden of this review is to show that virtue-based character education offers moral content that is multicultural, respecting the moral perspectives and understandings of the instructor and students alike while actually teaching concrete principles. Moral education that is multicultural will have to be responsive to the cultural voices of the students. Moral education at a juvenile detention setting will have to recognize that the students represent unique cultural perspectives. In what ways do students in juvenile detention facilities represent special cultural groups?

Lindsey, Robins and Terrell (1999) in Cultural Proficiency, define culture in the following manner,

> "Culture is about groupness. A culture is a group of people identified by
> their shared history, values, and patterns of behavior. Culture provides
> parameters for daily living. The purpose of a culture is to assist people who are
> members of a group to know what the rules for acceptable behavior are and to
> provide consistency and predictability in everyday actions. These rules are called
> *cultural expectations*. The cultural expectations for a group assist in screening
> outsiders and controlling insiders, thus providing the basis for a group to sustain
> itself" (p. 27).

This definition correctly goes beyond racial and ethnic differences to include all types of organizational cultures whose members share common values and expectations for behavior that give them a sense of belonging and a sense of the Other, those who do not belong. There is a common tendency to equate culture with nationality or race and then view different groups within a race or nationality as "subcultures." However defining a group as a subculture could provide an excuse for not focusing on the perspectives of that group and instead paying greater

attention to the overarching culture. Subcultures are self-contained cultures in accordance with the above cited definition even though they may have closer relationships to some related cultures than they do to others. For the classroom teacher, making distinctions between cultures and subcultures may not be as important as coming to know the students who are in the classroom and understand how they view the world.

Describing marginalized gang youth as unique cultures, James Virgil (1999) wrote, "Today these gangs have become a firmly entrenched gang subculture.... These children have internalized norms and values derived from survival strategies that many unsupervised youths have developed to cope with the limited opportunities and extensive dangers they face in the streets" (p. 271). According to Virgil, street socialization for gang members forms, "a particular culture and compelling reality, with its own rules, regulations, values, and norms that guide children in ways that conflict with school and conventional social habits" (p. 274). Virgil offers examples of how gang subculture affects classroom dynamics. He argues for instance that cooperative learning techniques tend to fail with gang youth because teachers may inadvertently duplicate the street groupings, reinforcing social isolation of the group and the social bonding between the members of the group. He concludes, "In the classroom, this sense of identification with other street youth is intensified and expanded into behavioral expectations for the classroom. In this environment, protection and friendship, among other gang attributes, can also mean standing up for one's friends if the teacher is criticizing them, regardless of whether the treatment is deserved or not" (p. 274-275).

The fact that must always be present before the mind of an educator in a juvenile detention facility is that the students in such a setting represent culture on several levels. Not all young people in a juvenile hall setting have committed crimes and not all are "offenders." Some of them are incarcerated while they await trial, although they are innocent. Others are at juvenile hall because they are addicted to drugs and the probation department may have decided that the

best place for them to be while they are waiting for a rehabilitation plan is to be incarcerated. Some have spent years participating in criminal behavior while others are incarcerated because of a one-time mistake in judgement. So not all of the students in a juvenile hall classroom share the same culture in terms of criminally offensive behavior. When they come into the same classroom, wearing the same clothing, expressing some of the same feelings and frustrations that most experience at juvenile hall, the uninformed person might group them together and assume they share the same world view. This is not the case. There are clear cultural distinctions that distinguish and unify the youth: mentalities, emotional responses to society, gang memberships, neighborhood groupings, and, of course, ethnic and racial demarcations. Lindsey, Robins and Terrell (1998) use the term "cultural proficiency" to describe an educator's ability to accept, respect, and incorporate these more subtle cultural distinctions into the classroom experience. "Culturally proficient educators recognize that *culture* involves far more than ethnic or racial differences. They demonstrate an understanding of the cacophony of diverse cultures each person experiences in the school setting" (p. 31).

Moral education and specifically virtue-based character education has a particular responsibility to be culturally responsive because of the tendency one has to formulate moral questions from distinct, culturally derived worldviews. Beverly Cross (1997) raised serious questions regarding the role of culture and character education. She asks whether the teachers of character education are:

> "Using platitudes to distance themselves further from the lives of the children by defining the conditions of the social order that placed the students beneath them by class, race, and intellect? (Are) the teachers' efforts degrading students by making them feel they were at a particular social level and implying that if they displayed certain character traits they could rise to higher social levels?" (p. 125)

A culturally proficient educator will have to answer these questions and similar ones in order to produce curriculum that reaches the actual students in the classroom in their cultural context instead of some students imagined in the mind of some other educator who may have written the curriculum with certain counterproductive preconceptions. Where will the educator get this information that is necessary to contextualize character education curriculum in a juvenile detention facility?

The most immediate source of insider information is the students themselves. Let them talk. Create dialogue in the classroom. Take them aside and privately listen to their life experiences. Self-disclosure on the part of students depends on having a relationship of trust with the teacher. At the same time the teacher can only build a relationship of trust with the students through communication. This dilemma forms a sort of "catch-22" in that one needs knowledge to build confidence but disclosure is built on confidence. This dilemma has a possible remedy in informed, insider testimony from outside the classroom. Here work in the fields of sociology, psychology, and anthropology can inform the educator and the curriculum, but especially if such knowledge comes from an emic perspective.

Literature that Communicates Cultural Understandings

Since students in a juvenile detention setting represent unique cultural perspectives, what kind of literature can adequately inform educators and curriculum of their perspectives? Moral educators will have to acquaint themselves with the life context of the students to have some idea in advance of how the students might respond to the curriculum and to understand why they actually respond in the way they do in the classroom discussions. Moral discussions are highly contextualized discussions because they involve themes that are, to some degree, products of culture, such as values, methods of moral justification, the meanings of moral terms, and worldviews that define particular instances of moral action. There is much literature in the relevant fields of research describing the thinking and behavior of youths who have been

involved in crimes or some form of behavior that society considers to be delinquent, but the most useful literature directly communicates the moral culture of young people in this setting based on their own perspectives as insiders. The following five sources are examples literature that come progressively closer to an emic perspective of the moral culture of youth in a detention setting. This progressively more intimate analysis demonstrates the need to hear the voices of youth without the mediation of outsiders.

First of all, the book Delinquents on Delinquency (Goldstein, 1990) represents one attempt to gain an insider perspective on youth who have been adjudicated for a variety crimes. Such a book might be useful on some level to understand the mindset of gang members who are usually invested in various levels of criminal activities. Goldstein, a sociologist, argues that, what he calls "ordinary knowledge," representing the experiences and accumulated wisdom of members of a group, can be used to supplement and even replace "professional scientific knowledge." Goldstein was interested in comparing and contrasting what professional criminologists, sociologists and psychologists have to say about the causes and preventions of delinquent youth activities versus what the youth themselves have to say. He used 35 staff members who were teachers, counselors, and youth care workers to interview 250 young people, males and females, Black, White and Hispanic, mostly of lower socioeconomic status. Goldstein as a sociologist is concerned with the causes and prevention of delinquency so the questions his interviewers asked the subjects were: Why do you think kids get into trouble? What's your opinion about why juvenile delinquency happens? What do you think can be done so that there would be less juvenile delinquency in America? While these are open-ended questions, they are not general enough to elicit a wider worldview. These questions only encouraged the subject to talk about what they perceived as the general experiences of others and not necessarily their own experiences. The usefulness of this kind of information is limited because the subjects may just be reflecting what they have heard other people, even professionals whom they might have

known, postulate about juvenile delinquency. The subjects were insiders but they might not have been giving an insider perspective. Furthermore, Goldstein himself was not an insider and thus was not able to critically think about the answers his subjects offered.

Daniel Robb is a teacher, not a anthropologist, but he achieved the ethnographic work of a anthropologist in writing Crossing the Water (2001). Robb was a teacher at a school for juvenile offenders remanded to the little island of Penikese off the coast of Cape Cod. The teachers live on the island with the students for six months at a time, although the teachers do come off the island periodically in shifts. They share with the students in the daily chores, cooking, chopping wood, cleaning the latrines and maintaining the buildings on the island. The book is a journal in which the author tries to convey what it looked like, felt like, and sounded like, teaching the young, teenage boys on the island. The relationships and conversations he records paint a vivid picture of an intimate view of the emotions and values of these young men and views of their own world and the world outside their own. Concerning the young men whom Robb taught while on the island for a total of eighteen months, he could draw no stereotypes about mentalities, reasons for being on the island, or reactions among the students to the environment. All came to the island different in ways determined by their previous social, educational and psychological experiences. At the same time they represented a culture because of their shared fears, hostilities, distrust, and despair.

The book provides useful insights for character educators, not just because it reveals how juvenile offenders think, but also because it uncovers a kind of disquietude that enables teachers to permit the interrogation of their preconceptions and assumptions in the struggle to communicate. Robb wrote, "I feel as if I am moving between two worlds; even though I am the same man, the person I was, I'm not. I see these guys, how everything in them is understood in terms of what they saw as they grew up, what blows fell on them" (p. 165). A question someone asked Robb when he first arrived brings this challenge into focus: "How will you deal

with a boy who tells you freely to go fuck yourself when you know your intentions are good? And this is a boy who has been defending himself against his father or guys a lot bigger than you for a long time. He's less afraid of a beating from you than of trying to trust you" (p. 31). Although Robb did not actually partake in the moral culture of his students, he participated with them on a level that brought him closer to an emic perspective than Goldstein.

Coming even closer in some ways to an insider's perspective is Martín Sánchez Jankowski's book, Islands in the Street: Gangs and American Urban Society (1991). Jankowski's (who is of Latino decent and appearance) narrative of the social, economic and power structures of gangs succeeds because of the ethnographic nature of his research. He lived and participated with the gangs of various ethnic groups that he was studying. Jankowski reports in first person what he observed during his experiences and makes use of extensive verbatim quotes of gang members to give them voice in the report of his research. So although the author was an outsider to the gangs, he came as close as possible to representing an emic perspective because of his personal experience of trusted relationships with gang members. (He actually had to participate in some violent activities to gain their trust and respect.) The title of his book reflects the author's view of the mutual relationships of gangs and the communities in which they are found. Islands are defined by the ocean surrounding them and at the same time give definition to the ocean in which they are found. So it is with gangs. Gangs are "islands" in the plural sense because they form archipelagos in the urban ocean of American society.

However, Jankowski is a sociologist with apparent political interests, being involved in public policy making. What is most interesting about the analysis and presentation of his data are the terms he uses throughout his book to describe gang activities, such as, "entrepreneurship," "economic activities," "financial objectives," "profit motives," "creativity," to describe the gangs criminal motives and activities. These are not terms the gang members themselves use. Jankowski's conclusions about how to deal with gang persistence may be true

but he ignores the basic hermeneutical problem of preconceptions or preunderstanding in ethnographic analysis. This is precisely the problem that can arise in the classroom when the instructor has a preestablished framework for interpreting the language and concepts of students without allowing the students to speak from their own frame of reference. Nonetheless, Jankowski's intimate observations of gang behavior and organization can be extremely useful to anyone in a position of dealing directly with gangs in the classroom because he provides insights into gang mentality that are obtainable only through privileged, close observation. Research such as Jankowski's undermines our preconceptions and that is what instructors require, an interrogation of their own cultural assumptions, before they enter a multicultural environment to *listen* and *hear* as well as teach.

Aaron Kipnis, who wrote <u>Angry Young Men</u> (1999), was a juvenile delinquent who became a clinical psychologist. Based on his personal experiences and those of people with whom he coexisted on the streets and in institutions, he examines the relationships between young male criminality and the sociological and psychological forces of such things as: physical, emotional, or sexual abuse, inappropriate and inadequate education, absent fathers, rigid gender roles, class and race disparities, social and political disenfranchisement, child poverty and neglect, and the inculcation of shame by adults. His book contains a great deal of social analysis and recommendation. The strength of the book for a character educator is the personal narrative of his own experience that he intertwines throughout the text. He was first arrested when he was eleven and spent virtually his entire teenage years incarcerated or on the streets. His mother, an alcoholic, divorced his father when Kipnis was three. From the age of four through nine he lived in six different foster homes. His mother had a number of relationships that further ingrained a sense of abandonment in him. Before turning to the streets, his final stepfather, whose name was "Zombie," turned out to be hostile and violent. His account of his experiences in various schools

in southern California, juvenile hall in Los Angeles, and in California Youth Authority show how the juvenile justice system closes off hope and profoundly inculcates despair and anger.

After meditating on Kipnis' narrative, it is easy to understand how young people in a juvenile detention facility come to have such a cynical view of "virtues" such as justice, trust, responsibility, and self-control. He especially focuses on the sources and expressions of aggression. He writes,

"Boys who present a hard-edged, violent posture to the world around them are not necessarily 'looking for trouble.' Many angry young men develop a menacing demeanor as an unconscious defense designed to keep the violence in their world at bay. Often it is merely a sociopathic façade covering an inner experience of profound anxiety" (p. 33).

To teach about the virtue of self-control when aggression is a tool of survival will require understandings that normal pedagogy does not include. Why be responsible when most adults in a youth's life have not been responsible to him/her? Why even imagine there is such a thing as justice when one has almost universally experienced injustice? In speaking about the instability of his non-existent family life, Kipnis states, "The cumulative effect of this chaos gradually instilled a belief that nothing was stable, the world was unsafe, everything was subject to change, all relationships were conditional, and no one could really be trusted" (p. 91). It was a probation officer who finally put enough trust in Kipnis when he was in his early twenties whom Kipnis gives the credit for the turn around in his life. Kipnis' insights are invaluable to a character educator who wants to contextualize the rage, despair, and cynicism of students in a juvenile detention setting in order to design moral curriculum that is responsive to their realities.

Now from an even closer, "eye-level" viewpoint, Rodríguez, Martínez, and Rodriguez' book Eastside Stories (1998) provides an intensely personal view of the lives of members of two East Los Angeles gangs. The book is a pictorial essay of gang life using the incredibly evocative

black and white images taken by Rodríguez, a photographer with ties to the barrio. Martínez adds sparse narrative and quotes to contextualize the photographs. The results are far more powerful in communicating the worldview of gang members than other literature such as the books by Goldstein or Jankowski, principally because there is no middle-person interpreting and structuring the results of the research. The reader can see the raw data in the photographs and quotes. Before reading a book such as this, the teacher may approach a gang member in the classroom as a competitor for power in the class. However after experiencing the book, the educator will understand that it would be impossible to win a battle for power and still teach the youth. The classroom relationship has to change from a power struggle to a partnership. Any teacher whose main goal in class is to establish and maintain power instead of communicating will fail. Furthermore, the pictures portray the symbols, the loyalties, and the paradoxes of gang life that cannot be ignored in the classroom, especially in regards to moral education.

An informed educator enters the classroom as if entering a hermeneutical process of interpretation and communication. The culturally proficient educator struggles to perceive the world from the context of the student. Each individual student enters the detention facility with a worldview formed by social and cultural influences outside the facility. Once inside, the student participates in the creation of culture with other students through their shared experiences in the facility itself and within the classroom. A consideration of the students' social and cultural context should raise essential questions in the mind of the educator before and during instruction. How will the student see the relationships in the classroom? How will the student hear the lesson material? What in the life context of the student might make it difficult for her or him to respond positively to the lesson? How could the material encourage the students to critically think about their view of the world while still respecting the students' personal sense of worth? At the same time, in order to answer these questions with as little bias as possible, the educator has to understand his or her own cultural context, recognizing presuppositions and setting them

aside. Literature from an insider perspective holds the possibility of enabling educators to see from the students' perspective and design curriculum that adequately respects and responds to those cultural perspectives.

After exploring some of the multicultural issues of curriculum design for moral education at a juvenile detention facility, the focus of this chapter now turns to the curriculum itself. A historical review of approaches to moral education in the United States in the past few decades serves to elucidate reasons justifying the use of virtue-based character education as a curriculum foundation.

The Historical Trends Leading to Virtue-Based Character Education

The second premise of this action research project of moral education in a juvenile detention facility considers the effectiveness of virtue-based character education as a curriculum. The most recent focus of moral education curriculum, written within the last decade, has centered on virtue-based character education. Such popular curriculum programs as Character Counts!, WiseSkills, CHARACTERplus, and the Heartwood Ethics Institute's curriculum are examples of virtue-based character education curricula that schools across the country are presently using. These curricula represent an important shift from "values clarification" and the Kohlbergian form of cognitive training that characterized moral education in the seventies and eighties to an emphasis on virtue-based character education. An understanding of the historical course that moral education has taken in the last few decades in the United States illuminates the appeal that virtue-based character education has today and, further, why it might be appropriate for a juvenile detention setting. What are the historical trends in moral education that have led to the current focus on virtue-based character education?

E. Edward McClellan (1992), in his definitive history of moral education in American schools, explains that at least three forces gradually eroded moral education altogether in the late 1940's and 1950's. First of all, says McClellan, "A growing need for high-level technical and

scientific skills, associated especially with revolutions in electronics, physics, and medicine, led Americans to call upon schools for a greater emphasis on intellectual achievement and basic academic skills" (p. 79). Thus, a change in educational priorities pushed aside courses or curriculum space that developed the social and moral character of students. Secondly, in the fanatically anticommunist climate following the end of World War II, educators reinterpreted moral education in terms of national duty, replacing the focus on personal moral responsibilities. Says McClellan, "Teaching national loyalty and giving students the cognitive skills to contribute to the economic and military competition with the Soviets seemed to some educators to exhaust the school's responsibilities for character and citizenship education" (p.80). Finally, adds McClellan, a growing distinction between public and private domains caused schools to avoid the discussion of moral questions as a private matter of home and religion. "Parents of the day became increasingly confident of their ability to impart values and increasingly jealous of their prerogatives in the realm of personal morality, making them somewhat more likely than their predecessors to scrutinize and criticize the moral education provided by the schools" (p. 80).

The social and cultural upheavals of the 1960's led to a further, if not complete, erosion of moral education's role in public schools. Confrontation with deeply embedded racial discrimination, the moral futility and despair of the Vietnam War, and increasing cultural pluralism led to a profound moral skepticism. A growing distrust for anything that represented authoritarian imposition, including the teaching of values and moral principles, led to demands for schools to teach skills and leave morals for the family or church to teach. According to McClellan's research, during this period, especially in the last half of the 1960's and the beginning of the 1970's, the courts also saw a tremendous increase in litigation decided in favor of broadening the rights of students and limiting the power of schools to enforce behavior codes. Under the fear of litigation, administrators emptied behavior codes of everything but the bare legal minimum of acceptable behavior. Ironically in a moment of history when social and

political challenges like overt racial discrimination and the Vietnam War could have raised ethical discussion to a higher level of importance, general skepticism produced suspicion of moral education programs. The paradoxical result was to embrace the moral relativity that had been simmering in previous decades.

Values Clarification

To reconcile moral relativity with an abiding sense of the need for some sort of moral education program in schools, two groups of theorists popularized new approaches to moral curriculum and pedagogy in the early 1970's. The first approach to impact the classroom was values clarification and the second was Lawrence Kohlberg's theories concerning cognitive moral development. In the area of values clarification, two central works, Values and Teaching (Raths, Harmin, and Simon, 1966) and then Advanced Values Clarification (Kirschenbaum, 1977) proposed to give children a process for choosing their own values instead of learning a set of fixed values. Against a cultural backdrop in which individuals were looking for authenticity and commitment, the proponents of this program sought to give young people a sense of direction through identifying their personal values for themselves. Because the authors offered a variety of instructional materials and pedagogical counsel, outlining all the strategies and listing clarifying questions, educators could easily and quickly adopt the system into their classroom. Values clarification consisted of three methods for accomplishing the proposed end: dialogue composed of questions raised by the teacher to help students clarify their values, written statements of dilemmas that asked students to answer questions privately on "value sheets," and group discussions that were less structured but organized around some theme suggested by a picture or a scene from a movie. Teachers however were expected to be absolutely neutral and serve only as facilitators in order to allow the students to freely arrive at their own values. Teachers played a role akin to a therapist helping a struggling soul discover his or her own way in a confusing world muddled by a myriad of philosophies and traditions.

It was, however, naive to think that teachers could maintain absolute neutrality. In fact, the questions and strategies in the curriculum had built in biases. McClellan cited one written exercise for example that asked students to make a list of ten things they could do for the environment. The exercise, of course, had a built in bias in favor of preserving the environment. Taking care of the environment is certainly an admirable value and even a justifiable moral principle but this is precisely an example of an assumption that the method of values clarification supposedly avoided. Values clarification claimed to be content free (that is, that it did not teach specific, concrete values), but, at least in subtle ways, the curriculum and the pedagogy of teacher facilitation actually taught moral content.

Interestingly, if the curriculum and pedagogy of values clarification could have been value free, it would have also been content free. Without any moral content the program must depend on another assumption for successful clarification of values: that people are naturally good and civilized, and that young people, when given the intellectual freedom, will clarify healthy values. One might imagine trying to use this method at a juvenile detention facility. Youth gang members believe they are at war with other gangs. Clarification of their values would include a lucid justification for violent retaliation. A neutral teacher-facilitator would have difficulty calling into question their views of retaliation since there is no logical structure available in the pedagogy to do so.

Kohlberg's Cognitive Moral Training

By the late 1970's values clarification was already falling out of favor among educators because it simply did not lead to any genuine moral progress. During the same period Lawrence Kohlberg, a Harvard psychologist, developed his theories of cognitive moral development that shared some of the same preconceptions of values clarification. He wanted to avoid moral indoctrination and was more interested in the process of making moral decisions than in the content of those decisions. Kohlberg's work, however, was much narrower in focus since he

concentrated principally on the cognitive dimensions of moral reasoning. Kohlberg (1984) postulated that the development of moral reasoning passes through six stages. Each successive stage represents higher motives for moral decisions than the previous stage. These discrete levels of reasoning lead from primitive, self-centered motives through stages of submission to convention or authority and then to the highest levels of universal, principled behavior, doing right because it is right. Kohlberg believed that students matured morally through "cognitive conflict." According to Kohlberg, contemplating moral conflicts or dilemmas from a lower level of reasoning produces a "sense of disequilibrium" about one's moral stance and, in turn, leads students to see the advantages of reasoning on a higher level. To produce the essential moral conflicts, Kohlberg's pedagogy involved encouraging debate in the classroom about ethical dilemmas. How would you reason if you were on an airplane that was about to crash and there were twenty passengers and only fifteen parachutes? Who would get the parachutes? The exact answer to the dilemma was never as important as the level of reasoning students used to arrive at the answer. The emphasis on reasoning thus unnecessarily excluded concrete moral principles, the same shortcoming that values clarification suffered.

Critics of Kohlberg's system charged him with being too narrow in his focus on cognitive development. McClellan notes that skeptics argued "that the heavy emphasis on moral discussion neglected the problem of motivation and led to a kind of rhetorical sophistication that gave students the ability to rationalize their actions without inspiring them to behave in principled ways" (p. 94). Many of the young people who return several times to juvenile detention centers following repetitive behaviors are very adept at rationalization and self-justification. Glenn Walters, a criminal psychologist, wrote in The Criminal Lifestyle (1990) about this characteristic mentality, commenting that some people become emotionally stuck in "early adolescent priorities: pleasure, immediacy, and self-justification being more important than accountability, delay, and self-discipline" (p. 130). Moral decisions involve more than

rational skills. For instance an individual must understand how to separate emotional states from questions of right and wrong. Emotions motivate one to make the right or wrong decision but moral principles go beyond changing emotional states. Moral principles deal with what is ultimately right. One will have to learn to control impulsiveness, the desire for immediate gratification, and ego-centrism. Daniel Goleman argues in his book, Emotional Intelligence, that "emotional literacy goes hand in hand with education for character, for moral development, and for citizenship" (p. 286). Furthermore the ability to make moral decisions involves a level of psychosocial development. People who see themselves as isolated from the rest of the world, such as clients in a detention facility, may not have a very deep sense of social-moral responsibility. Moral decisions are prescriptive (in that they imply moral obligation) for the very reason that they contemplate the welfare of others in society, often before one's own welfare.

The Shift to Virtue-Based Character Education

The shortcomings of values clarification and Kohlberg's focus on reasoning strategies and a steady rise in racial and cultural intolerance, violence, and drug abuse on school campuses led to a major shift in moral education beginning in the 1980's. An articulate group of politicians and educators such as William Bennett (former Secretary of the Department of Education), Bill Honig (past superintendent of public instruction in California), Kevin Ryan (professor of education at Boston University), Thomas Lickona (developmental psychologist and professor of education at State University of New York) and Edward Wynne (professor of education at University of Illinois), began to develop and advocate moral education in the form of virtue-based character education. They sought to develop a view of character education that would avoid some of the criticisms and pitfalls of earlier decades. Their view of moral education included moral content, in the form of virtues, about which consensus was possible. Their curriculum and pedagogy aimed more broadly at various skills and areas of knowledge that are fundamental to a complete moral development. The new form of character education promised

to appeal to a broad spectrum of political and philosophical perspectives. The fact is that character education has achieved broad appeal. School districts across the country have adopted character education programs. Administrators have lost their former skittishness about setting norms for conduct. A section of the California Education Code specifically mandates programs for moral instruction. "The Legislature finds and declares that there is a compelling need to promote the development and implementation of effective educational programs in ethics and civic values in California schools in kindergarten and grades 1-12...." (Section 44790 cited in DeRoche & Williams, 1998). California has also set aside special funding for curricula and programs for moral education under the "Safe Schools" program. The most popular curricula and programs benefiting from such mandates and funds are based on character education.

Moral education has entered a new era but the question is: what exactly is character education? A detailed answer to this question is necessary in order to understand what character education might have to offer as an appropriate multicultural curriculum model for a juvenile detention facility.

<div align="center">The Philosophy of Virtue-Based Character Education</div>

Because of its popularity, character education has become a label for a variety of programs that intend to contribute to moral education. For this reason Alan Lockwood (Lockwood, 1997) argues a clear case for carefully defining the nature of character education. First, a precise definition provides guidance for curriculum developers. Next, for the purpose of evaluating the success of programs, schools need to know the exact aims and practices that constitute a character education program. In addition, critical dialogue concerning ways to improve programs is pointless unless participants in critical examination know what each other is talking about. If every program designed to promote desirable behavior among young people wore the label "character education," then the resulting lack of focus would defeat any continuity and overall unity in purpose. Drawing from the most popular character education literature,

Lockwood suggests the following as a tentative definition: "Character education is defined as any school-initiated program, designed in cooperation with other community institutions, to shape directly and systematically the behavior of young people by influencing explicitly the nonrelativistic values believed directly to bring about that behavior" (p. 179). Furthermore he sees the need for character educators to explicate a more complex, research-based psychology of moral behavior and to develop an explicit, philosophically credible way of dealing with the common problem of conflicts between values.

The integrative model for moral aptitude that Ryan and Lickona (1992) together have formulated best illustrates the most current thinking about what character education should include. They describe moral agency as the interplay of three components: knowing, affect, and action. Moral knowing, according to these two authors, includes moral content consisting of foundational virtues, the ability to reason morally in order to derive principles for action from the virtues themselves and deal logically with conflicts, cognitive strategies for making moral decisions, the moral imagination to picture the short term and long term consequences of decisions, and the practical wisdom to listen to both sides of an issue, to avoid hasty decisions, to seek advice, and to consider how other people have solved the same problems. Educating and training the cognitive side of moral aptitude must touch all of these areas. Next they explain that the second component, moral affect, focuses of course on the emotional aspects of moral decisions. Emotions are certainly involved in making decisions but a morally mature person is able to control emotions so that they play their proper role. The problem of impulsiveness is the result of allowing emotion to take precedent over reason. Immediately lashing out in retaliation for some offense can later cause regrets if, once one stops to compare the retaliation with the offense, one discovers that it was unwarranted. Emotions play a motivating role once moral knowing has supplied the information and the reason. The affective side of moral aptitude asks questions like: How deeply do we hold the values we hold? To act in a different way would I

violate my sense of who I am? Do I love the good? How committed am I to living a moral life? How willing am I to feel another person's suffering or to make myself vulnerable because of some moral decision. Moral action, the third component of their model, consists of will, competence, and habit. Will provides the energy to desire to work through a problem, weigh different choices, and to follow through with the appropriate action. Competence includes skills such as listening, communication of concepts, being able to feel what others feel, conceiving and carrying out plans to act morally, and generally acting in socially acceptable ways that are conducive to moral cooperation. Habit is a necessary quality of moral beings because moral habit carries one through the difficult or surprising moments when long deliberation is not possible. Moral aptitude then depends on moral knowing, affect, and action. A program that emphasizes only moral reasoning, for instance, can never be adequate because moral decisions consist of more than just clear thinking.

Ryan and Lickona's model serves as an effective rubric to judge the breadth of moral education programs. By way of contrast this model shows that Kohlberg's focus on moral reasoning alone was too narrow. Likewise it suggests further reasons why values clarification was too limited to be a program of moral education. Clarifying values might have led to a more concrete perception of one's own beliefs but moral behavior and action involve more than defining beliefs.

The beginning point and most fundamental feature of character education that distinguishes it from all other programs of moral education is the centrality of virtues. Depending on the specific curriculum, these virtues include qualities such as respect, responsibility, trustworthiness, loyalty, citizenship, compassion, generosity, honesty, fairness, courage, integrity, self-discipline, effort, empathy, tolerance, love, and caring.

The centrality of virtues actually provides character education with its philosophical grounding and its ability to be culturally responsive without falling into the trap of relativism.

Those authors who articulate the philosophical basis for character education trace their concept of virtue somewhat loosely to Aristotle. Lickona (1997) reflects the thinking of Aristotle when he calls virtues, "qualities of good character" and then states,

> "Virtues such as the cardinal virtues of prudence, justice, temperance, and fortitude advanced by the ancient Greeks are objectively good human qualities. They are good for the individual - - they help a person lead a fulfilling life - - and they are good for the whole human community. The virtues provide the moral content that defines good character" (p. 46).

Moral virtues describe excellence of character but "excellence," in Aristotle's thinking, would be the fulfillment (*telos*) of what it means to be human. Alasdair MacIntyre in After Virtue (1984) explains the nature of Aristotelian virtues,

> "Human beings, like the members of all other species, have a specific nature; and that nature is such that they have certain aims and goals, such that they move by nature towards a specific *telos*.....What then does the good for man turn out to be?....He gives it the name of *eudaimonia* - - as so often there is a difficulty in translation: blessedness, happiness, prosperity....The virtues are precisely those qualities the possession of which will enable an individual to achieve *eudaimonia* and the lack of which will frustrate his movement toward that *telos*" (p. 148)

Agreement on the identity of virtues is possible because we share humanness. Through contemplating the essential, common nature of human beings we can discover what qualities will fulfill the nature and purpose of human beings. Furthermore, Aristotle believed that moral virtues do not arise in us by nature but must be developed through habits of right thinking, right choice and right behavior. Virtues only become virtues through action. Without needing to accept all the metaphysics of Aristotle, character education locates its core belief in this Aristotelian tradition of virtue.

When Lickona speaks of the "cardinal virtues" he is quoting straight from the ideas of Aristotle. However, although Aristotle spent much philosophical energy determining that these were the most fundamental virtues from which other qualities could be derived, the character movement in general has no unifying list of virtues. Edward DeRoche, Dean of the University of San Diego's School of Education and a prolific author of character education literature, refers to virtues as "consensus values" (DeRoche and Williams, 1988). He uses the word "consensus" to describe the process for selecting the specific virtues addressed by any given school or curriculum. The administrators, teachers and students involved can draw up lists of character qualities that they respect in people or that they believe lead to an excellent life. Through dialogue they narrow the list to a manageable set of qualities they can reasonably teach in the classroom. They might decide that some qualities are included in others or some can be derived from others. Some traits that first appear on their lists may not be character traits at all after closer analysis. Braver schools may tackle twenty-five virtues and other less ambitious schools may teach ten. Of course, if school administrators purchase a ready made curriculum then they surrender consensus to the moral aptitude of the curriculum's authors. In reality consensus allows for the possibility of teaching character education in different cultural contexts. For instance, among clients at a juvenile detention facility respect may be a cardinal virtue, probably because they see and receive so little of it. In a community suffering from violence, peace and tolerance may be principle virtues. Practically speaking, character education does not depend on teaching certain virtues but instead depends on the teaching of virtues along with other aspects of moral skills necessary for moral action.

Before discussing the appropriateness of virtue-based character education curriculum for juvenile detention facilities, it is necessary to clarify some correctives that would give character education more philosophical depth.

Some Philosophical Amendments to Character Education

In his critique of some of the weaknesses of the character education movement, Lockwood (1997) cites a lack of philosophical sophistication. He specifically raises the problem of dealing with moral conflicts.

> "While we might generate a list of abstract values to which all, or most, would subscribe, there are many situations in which desirable values conflict or general values do not provide clear guidance. A richer development of these philosophical matters would serve well the intellectual credibility of the current movement" (p. 183).

The leaders of the character education movement are for the most part educators, psychologists, and sociologists and not moral philosophers; perhaps for this reason they have paid inadequate attention to critical, foundational issues. There are in fact three specific philosophical issues that character educators need to address: the problem of possible conflicts in the application of different virtues, the necessity of a logic to move from general virtues to specific moral principles that direct practical action, and the philosophical problems associated with using the term, "value," with respect to morals. A resolution of these issues is absolutely necessary for virtue-based character education to be an effective model for juvenile detention facilities. Here we will consider these three problems in reverse order.

First of all, a superficial use of "value" in the literature is a symptom of the lack of philosophical sophistication among the leadership of the movement. Much of the character education literature refers to character qualities such as respect, responsibility, trustworthiness, etc., as either virtues or values. However the word "value" is a loaded word in moral philosophy that can rob moral endeavor of its prescriptive nature.

Although it is common to hear people speak of "moral values," the two terms "moral" and "value" can be logically contradictory. Values expressing preferences are subjective. Values

evaluate from personal perspectives. On the other hand moral decisions have social ramifications. Richard Hare (1981) defends the logical use of the word "principle," instead of the word "value," when describing moral action. According to Hare moral principles possess two characteristics, prescription and universalizability, that distinguish them from mere value statements. To say that moral principles are prescriptive means that they carry an inherent obligation expressed in the "deontic" meaning of "ought." Hare writes, "In a true account of the structure of moral thinking….it is a misuse of the word 'ought' to say, 'You ought, but I can conceive of another situation, identical in all its properties to this one, except that the corresponding person ought not'" (p. 10). When one believes a certain principle is a moral principle, then one must be able to express that principle using the word "ought" or "must" but never "should." When the vice-principal of a high school suspends a student for bringing a gun onto campus, how would the administrator express the rule that the student violated? "One shouldn't bring a gun to school," or "One must not bring a gun to school"? Is carrying a gun onto campus a matter of preference or prescription? To say that a moral principle is universalizable is to say that, if we can logically accept a world in which everyone lives by this rule, then the principle is universalizable and therefore moral. Hare writes, "Universalizability….comes to this, that if we make different moral judgements about situations which we admit to be identical in their universal descriptive properties, we contradict ourselves" (p. 21).

Moral principles are meant to provide society with rules for conduct that everyone can agree to live by for the good of the one and the many. "Moral relativism" is, in reality, an oxymoron. If a principle is a moral principle, it is not just true in a private sense that is relevant only to the individual. Aristotle would agree with this. MacIntyre concludes that, "An Aristotelian theory of the virtues does therefore presuppose a crucial distinction between what any particular individual at any particular time takes to be good for him and what is really good

for him as a man" (p. 150). Virtues find their foundation in human nature and not in particular, individual existence. It is a falsely private sense of moral behavior that may lead young offenders to the moral isolation from society that enables them to ignore the effect of crime on the victim.

A second weakness in the philosophy of the character education movement is that there is no clearly explicated procedure for deriving principles for action from the virtues themselves. Ryan and Lickona include this skill under "moral knowing" in their integrative model but they do not pay enough attention to producing a practical and philosophically responsible procedure for carrying out the skill. How can we flesh out Aristotle's virtues? How can we move logically from what courage is to what we specifically ought to do if we are courageous? What will we say to a gang member who says he must kill to prove his courage?

Marilyn Keats (1992), whose background is in philosophy and moral education, suggests a solution to this problem of moving from virtue to practical moral principle through a synthesis of Kant and Aristotle. She argues that, while it is common to speak of the difference between Kant's ethics of principle and duty and Aristotle's ethics of virtue, both approaches provide necessary elements to moral action. Citing the work of the famous German philosopher of hermeneutics, Hans Gadamer, she shows how synthesis is not only possible between Aristotle and Kant but in fact is helpful to the program of character education.

> "Gadamer explores the two theories, arguing that what is necessarily
> unconditional is the law: 'Kant's 'categorical imperative' must be understood as
> a principle of all morals precisely because it does nothing else than represent the
> form of obligatoriness of the ought, that is, the unconditionality of moral law.'
> He (Gadamer) adds, 'The autonomy of ethical reason thus has...the character of
> intelligible self-determination; but this does not preclude the empirical
> conditionality of all human actions and decisions.' *Phronesis*, the rational

deliberative and action component of Aristotle's ethics, is conditioned by the ethos in which it is situated, within a moral milieu humans struggle to discern what is just, right, good, and then to act. Gadamer illuminates this as a natural dialectic within practical reason, between ordinary and always situated moral consciousness and our philosophical-practical reason" (p. 454).

Aristotle gives us the foundations of moral content in the virtues. Which virtues to choose and how to interpret them will depend on the cultural milieu or the "situatedness" in which we find ourselves. Then Kant teaches us how to treat the virtues. The categorical imperative of Kant demonstrates that if these virtues are moral virtues then they are obligatory. He takes us from *is* to *ought*, from describing excellence to obliging excellence. As stated by Kant, the categorical imperative is, "Act only on that maxim through which you can at the same time will that it should become a universal law" (Kant, trans. 1964). Another more practical form of the same principle is ask, "What would the world be like if everyone acted as I do?" "Can I accept such a world?" Once we interpret the meaning of the virtues in practical life and begin to derive moral principles that are prescriptive and universalizable, we can test these principles, by asking ourselves, "What would the world be like if everyone acted in this way?" A young drug dealer who defends his right to use a gun to rid his turf of competitors will have to ask what would the world be like if the manager of the local supermarket did the same. So then Kant's categorical imperative is a logical tool that enables us to move from virtue to practical moral principle.

A third philosophical problem that character educators need to solve is one that Lockwood mentions specifically: the resolution of moral conflicts. MacIntyre wrote that one of the vulnerabilities of Aristotle's moral philosophy was the inability to properly deal with moral conflicts. MacIntyre states,

"Just because of the multiplicity of human practices and the consequent multiplicity of goods in the pursuit of which virtues may be exercised - - goods

which will often be contingently incompatible and which will therefore make rival claims upon our allegiance - - conflict will not spring solely from flaws in individual character" (p. 197).

Experiencing moral conflict is not necessarily a character flaw but instead is a problem with conflicting practices or "goods" in the sense of virtues. Character education will have to go beyond Aristotle to find a philosophically sound method for resolving conflicts.

Conflicts between the practical requirements of two virtues and conflicts between the implications of two apparently competing principles make moral dialogues in the classroom challenging and have the potential for divisiveness. Divisiveness, unresolved, leads to moral pessimism or, worse, cynicism. It is Kant not Aristotle who offers character educators help. The usual method for solving moral conflicts is to throw up arguments, pro and con, thinking that the best sounding argument wins or whoever runs out of counter arguments first loses. In reality the conflict never finds logical resolution in this way. Richard Hare, in the tradition of Kant, discussed what happens when, on an intuitive level people try to use some weighing process to determine which of two conflicting moral principles ought to be obeyed. On the intuitive level there is no determinate procedure for settling moral conflicts. The chief difficulty is that the exceptions formed with regards to intuitive moral principles will require justification. But justification will be only in terms of some other intuitive moral principle that also requires justification. Hare writes,

"However well equipped we are with these relatively simple, prima facie, intuitive principles or dispositions, we are bound to find ourselves in situations in which they conflict and in which, therefore, some other, non-intuitive kind of thinking is called for, to resolve the conflict. The intuitions which give rise to the conflict are the product of our upbringings and past experience of decision-making. They are not self-justifying...To use intuition itself to answer such questions is a

viciously circular procedure; if the dispositions formed by our upbringing are called into question, we cannot appeal to them to settle the question" (1981, p. 40).

The "non-intuitive" reasoning that Hare calls for is based on the fact that the words expressing moral principles have logical properties and therefore lend themselves to a logical process for resolving conflicts. Hare explicates this process. First one must carefully define the relevant descriptive characteristics of the words expressing the principles in conflict. Next, given the logical characteristics of moral language, prescription and universalizability, we can raise the questions: What other moral actions share the same relevant descriptive qualities? Can I also accept these other actions, not only for myself but also for the world? An example of an apparent conflict between loyalty and justice illustrates this procedure. In discussing the subject of loyalty, a gang member might express his loyalty to his group. "Whatever they ask, I do it." But loyalty to the group may require them to commit murder, killing someone who is innocent, or at least someone who does not deserve capital punishment. The gang member may have a moral sense of fairness or justice but he resolves the conflict by creating a hierarchy of loyalty over justice. This hierarchical, intuitive thinking however is a dead-end because it produces the same infinite regression Hare referred to. Instead we begin by asking what loyalty is and what different kinds of loyalty there are, carefully defining each with examples: loyalty to people, loyalty to a cause, loyalty to an ideal, blind loyalty, informed loyalty, etc. We ask, are all of these loyalties virtues that we could practice and that the world could practice? What would the world be like? We raise historic examples of what happens when people obey such loyalties. Next we carefully define the relevant descriptive characteristics of instances in which we would accept the killing of innocent people. We ask the question, what would the world be like if everyone followed the same moral principle and committed relevantly similar acts? The result of applying reason instead of simply giving reasons is that the conflict either disappears or we are forced to reject one of the principles (or both) that was in conflict.

Kohlberg was Kantian in his pursuit of moral action through better moral reasoning; however his approach to moral education was problematic, philosophically, because it lacked the necessary foundation of moral content. On the other hand, character education programs have relied too heavily on Aristotle for content and paid too little attention to the issues inherent in moral reasoning. Character education, especially in a juvenile detention setting, requires this synthesis between Kant and Aristotle in order to fulfill more completely the requirements of moral education. In a juvenile detention setting students may need to learn more than the meaning of virtues, they need to discover how to apply them in complex situations, their own complex situations.

Virtue-Based Character Education in a Juvenile Detention Setting

Having considered the philosophical grounds for virtue-based character education and some points requiring more philosophical depth, we can begin to see what a moral education curriculum based on virtues might have to offer for the specific needs of a juvenile detention setting. The previously reviewed literature suggests some possibilities. Whether these possibilities can be realized will depend the results of the actual classroom practice of action research.

First, virtue-based character education provides the possibility of succeeding where values clarification and Kohlberg's form of cognitive training could not because the moral meaning and application of the virtues provide moral content. A moral educator at a juvenile detention facility who attempts to approach moral education as only a facilitator without focusing on clear moral principles might serve only to reinforce principles, even destructive principles, that the young people already live by. Moral virtues provide a starting point to enter into a concrete dialogue about moral life.

In addition the virtues provide for the possibility for multicultural moral curriculum about which people representing different cultural perspectives can agree, at least, to begin with, on a

general intuitive level. Respect, justice, loyalty, compassion, responsibility and other similar moral principles reflect commonalities in human social experience, if even in the case of some young people their experience may have been in a negative sense. Even if young people have not received respect or justice, they nonetheless believe that these moral principles ought to be practiced. Virtues thus provide for the possibility of moral consensus. Virtues establish some common ground where teacher and student can meet, which is of greatest importance in this particular educational environment given the cultural and social alienation that may exist between teacher and student.

Next, given the logical requirement of universalizability of moral principles, students have the possibility of understanding the social impact of moral decisions, that they do not live in moral isolation. Youth who have participated in criminal activity may view their actions as personal decisions without confronting the effect of their decisions on the victim or the community. When the curriculum treats virtues as universalizable, the possibility exists for students to see that moral decisions are never made in isolation.

As we have also seen, Aristotelian virtues in conjunction with the Kantian view of moral principles as prescriptive and universalizable also provide a structure for proceeding from the virtues to specific moral principles derived from the virtues. This structure allows not only a consensus on the virtues themselves but also allows for the movement towards an agreement on specific moral principles. Youth in a detention setting may agree on the moral good of justice but may have a very different view of justice in practice than the teacher. The curriculum's philosophical basis provides for the possibility of agreement concerning moral practice.

As a curriculum then virtue-based character education promises several possibilities for moral education in a juvenile detention facility. Actual classroom practice will have to demonstrate the reality of these possibilities. A later chapter of this paper will discuss the results of action research testing the practice of this curriculum in a juvenile detention environment.

In addition to curriculum, the pedagogy for teaching moral education in a juvenile detention setting will have to support the multicultural requirements of such a student population in order for a plan of moral education to be appropriate and useful.

The Hermeneutic Goals of Effective Pedagogy

So far this review of literature has shown, first of all, that the students in a juvenile detention setting represent unique cultural perspectives that curriculum and pedagogy must take into account. Secondly, an analysis of virtue-based character education has shown why it might be an effective foundation for multicultural moral education curriculum for this student population. The third premise underlying this action research project is that hermeneutical dialectic as a pedagogy for teaching character education is especially suited for the culture of students at a juvenile detention facility. Attention will now focus on this third premise.

Effective pedagogy for multicultural character education must first of all respect and give expression to the culturally contextualized voices of the students, as well as the voice of the teacher in regards to the meaning and practice of moral virtues. Ryan and Lickona hold that the virtues upon which character education rests are objectively grounded in human nature and experience. Individual and particular experience however is, of course, distinct and incomplete, colored by social and cultural forces. A person's view of justice, for example, including it's meaning and application, can run the range from idealized to cynical. Interpreting the range of meaning and practical application of virtues such as justice, courage, respect or any other virtue requires, first of all, an appreciation for the cultural context of the Other. In a juvenile detention facility, instructor and student are distanced and alienated by cultures that are foreign to each other. While both instructor and student may refer to the same virtue, such as justice, their meanings may pass by one another without really engaging. The pedagogy for character education therefore must provide some means, not only to give voice to different understandings and applications of specific virtues, but also to insure that that voice is heard in its own context.

The interchange is an ongoing movement in which, ideally, the student continually revises and enlarges his comprehension as the teacher modifies, adapts, and builds her presentation" (p. 38-39).

Since the time of the classical Greeks, hermeneutics traditionally referred to the study and interpretation of texts. In the last century hermeneutics has moved beyond the textual paradigm to analyze human existence in that understanding and interpretation are fundamental tasks of Being for humans. One of the principle hermeneutic philosophers of this century, Hans Gadamer, wrote, "The best definition for hermeneutics is: to let what is alienated by the character of the written word or by the character of being distantiated by cultural or historical distances speak again. This is hermeneutics: to let what seems to be far and alienated speak again" (Gadamer, cited in Gallagher, 1992, p. 4). If the instructor views character education as a hermeneutical process then mutual understanding becomes possible.

Anthony Thiselton in his book, The Two Horizons (1980), discusses hermeneutical and philosophical description in the interpretation of texts, using a model that works well in understanding the relationship of teacher and student in a multicultural classroom. Both the author who writes and the reader who reads act from different standpoints of preunderstanding, constituted by the beliefs and values that determine how they see. It is not only the text that has context but the author and the reader. So Thiselton describes understanding as the "engagement of two horizons." "In a conversation, when we have discovered the standpoint and horizon of the other person, his ideas become intelligible, without our necessarily having to agree with him" (p. 16). Conversation actually goes beyond the text paradigm because in spoken communication the possibility for checking and revising of understanding exists for both sides. In the classroom hermeneutical analysis has the purpose of engaging horizons instead of imposing the teacher's horizon of meaning.

Therefore in classroom practice effective pedagogy first of all will have to allow for the mutual understanding that is the goal of hermeneutics. In addition to mutual understanding, hermeneutical process must lead to the consensus of meaning that makes moral principles universalizable. The hermeneutical process of dialectic as a pedagogical technique is capable of producing this consensus.

The Pedagogy of Dialectical Process

In a classroom dialogue about the meaning of justice, the teacher needs to ask enough questions not necessarily about justice but about the students' perceptions and experiences of justice or injustice that can help place the student's horizon. The teacher also must be free to speak about his/her personal understanding of justice. But hermeneutical analysis does not stop at this point, after each person has expressed some view of justice. If it does stop at this point, which is probably what commonly happens, understanding of justice will be provisional if not relative and illusory. A multicultural classroom allows dialogue to move towards a critically formulated consensus of meaning that is necessary in order for ethics to go beyond the personal and discreet to social action.

Ashton and Watson criticized the dead-end neutrality of values clarification procedures that were divisive instead of unifying (Ashton and Watson, 1998). They suggested what they call "critical affirmation." Critical affirmation allows the teacher to take a moral stance along with the students but in a way that affirms respect for the students' personal views while at the same time subjecting both perspectives, that of the teacher and that of the student, to critical analysis. They maintain that this approach can permit tolerance and openness but at the same time it takes into account the need for clear thinking and good evidence supporting moral conclusions.

The pedagogy that hermeneutical analysis calls for in order to achieve consensus is dialectical process. A true engagement of horizons comes from dialogue that is dialectic in nature. Classroom discussion that is dialectic in nature is neither simple dialogue nor argument.

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A dialogue can be merely a conversation without direction or intentional purpose. Neither is the questioning of dialectic an argument in which both sides simply defend themselves without any movement towards each other. Hermeneutical dialectic is the movement between two poles of understanding, that of the teacher and that of the student, as they interrogate and critique one another. Dialectic has a purpose and a goal: by raising questions and seeking answers, dialectic creates movement in understanding and meaning between these two poles of understanding to arrive at a mutually acceptable truth, a consensus. The questions both teacher and student raise help each other to uncover and critique false assumptions, misunderstandings, and narrow-mindedness that have produced culturally biased moral principles based on the virtues. Classroom discussions conducted as a dialectic with hermeneutical concerns in mind provide the possibility of constructing meanings that are understandable and acceptable cross-culturally.

For dialectical process to create movement in meaning and arrive at consensus, there has to be some structure that guides the questioning so that it does not dissolve into an argument. Kant's categorical imperative provides this structure in terms of a rational procedure. Once again, as stated by Kant, the categorical imperative is, "Act only on that maxim through which you can at the same time will that it should become a universal law" (Kant, trans. 1964). A practical form of the same principle is to ask, "What would the world be like if everyone acted as I do?" "Can I accept such a world?" To test a principle of justice as an acceptable principle cross-culturally, one can ask: what would the world, the community, the neighborhood be like if everyone practiced this principle? Imagine for instance if a gang member had the following view of justice: If a member of another gang threatens or harms us in any way then we can retaliate against the gang in general without regard for finding the exact person who committed the specific act against us or without concern for corresponding compensation. Just shoot anyone. We can ask what would the world be like if everyone acted in this manner? What would the police be like if they acted in the same manner? On the other hand the teacher's

concept of justice might be: call the police, arrest the suspects and let the court system carry out justice. From a youth's perspective, however, who has experienced injustice in the "justice" system, this view of justice may not be a practical moral principle. Thus Kant provides the method for logically evaluating moral principles derived from the virtues, making dialectical movement possible.

McCleary (1993) describes dialectic as a collaborative conflict. Students and teacher are naturally situated in a relationship of conflict because of such things as economic and social class and cultural and racial differences. They must struggle to accomplish the collaboration that dialectical process requires. McCleary explains that for dialectic to succeed, both the teacher and the students must learn

> "that to collaborate in teaching and learning, they must establish an open-
> minded but reciprocally supportive relationship in which each responds
> imaginatively to the other's experiencing without abandoning his own [and] that at
> given stages of the pedagogical dialogue, teacher must become learner and learner
> teacher" (p. 46).

Dialectic is the means for arriving at a mutually acceptable understanding of the meaning of specific virtues, with the possibility for ethics that are truly universal.

A critically constructed consensus of meaning in regards to moral virtues is precisely consistent with the goals of multiculturalism. Gallagher points out that critical theorists such Jürgen Habermas and Karl-Otto Apel, whose writings form the philosophical grounds for reconstructionist views of multicultural education, believed that the end of critical hermeneutics should be objective consensus instead of the hopeless relativism of Derrida and Foucault. From the view of critical hermeneutics, Gallagher explains that "Hermeneutics is employed as a means of penetrating false consciousness, discovering the ideological nature of our belief systems, promoting distortion-free communication, and thereby accomplishing liberating consensus." He

adds, "It is conservative to the extent that it expects actually to accomplish an ideology-free situation of consensus." This consensus is also the moral objective of Kant's categorical imperative and Aristotle's cardinal virtues.

A key element of dialectical pedagogy is "making the familiar strange." It is common to view the endeavor of teaching as helping students understand some new, unfamiliar concept by explaining the new concept in terms of familiar concepts and understanding. This view of pedagogy means helping the student accommodate the new concept to his/her already formed context of understanding. It is making the strange familiar. However learning dramatically progresses when students come to see old concepts from new contexts. At the point when the familiar becomes strange, new solutions are possible. McCleary writes about this contradiction as a reason to employ dialectical method.

> "Students can make sense out of.....alternative contexts of understanding
> and coexistence about which they are being taught only if they somehow relate
> these contexts to their own familiar world. Yet in order to understand the
> alternative contexts, they must stop interpreting them in terms of their current
> context and confront them in their unfamiliar reality. This contradiction is
> essential to all teaching" (p. xxiii)

One of the goals then of dialectical method is to create, through the process of questioning, a moment, a "dialectical moment," in which the familiar suddenly becomes strange. It is the moment, for instance, when a young criminal truly sees his delinquent action from the context of the victim. Justifications melt away and the youth suddenly sees the world from a different context. The same can happen when a teacher suddenly understands, from the context of the youth, why the youth made a decision that seemed to the teacher to be a destructive decision.

In moral endeavor consensus that dialectic can produce is essential because of the social nature of ethics. One must bear in mind Kant's contribution to moral philosophy: that ethical

principles are by nature universalizable maxims. When I accept a principle as a moral principle I am at the same time accepting this principle for everyone else who is in relevantly similar circumstances, namely human. Whatever concept of justice we arrive at, we have to accept it as valid for all cultures since ethics are what allow cultures to live together. Dialectical method is also consistent with the thinking of Aristotelians because it avoids relativism and confirms the existence of concepts of virtue embedded in human nature and experience. The conservative's fear is that anytime one mentions multiculturalism in the same sentence as morality then one must mean relativism. This is not the case. Neither the student nor the teacher would disagree in the first place about the moral obligation of justice. Then dialectical procedure takes both the teacher and the student further in their understanding to mutually uncover the meaning and practice of justice that is cross-culturally obligatory.

Gang members have a strong sense of community responsibility lying beneath their neighborhood loyalties. Dialectical method can demonstrate appreciation for their community sensibilities. At the same time the question, "What would the world be like?" critically analyzes the possible destructive side of community loyalties. Having constructed a view of community responsibility using the different voices in the classroom, the next question, following the goals of multiculturalism is, what can community loyalty and responsibility motivate gang members to do for the positive good of the community they zealously guard?

Hermeneutical Analysis and Dialectical Process as

An Appropriate Pedagogy in Juvenile Detention Facilities

Having reviewed the value of hermeneutical analysis and dialectical pedagogy in character education, one see that this teaching technique offers possibilities that are particularly important in a juvenile detention setting. Although the literature suggests the possibilities held out by this pedagogy, the actual action research described in this paper will have to bear them out.

From the teacher's standpoint, the disclosures of hermeneutical analysis promise to provide essential insider perspectives that have the possibility of informing curriculum. Literature can offer emic perspectives that assist in structuring curriculum but information that comes through the dialectic is first hand. When conducting the dialectic the teacher is a participant-observer, gaining further hermeneutical understanding through careful listening and questioning in the classroom. The classroom experience is constantly informative. Through the dialectical process the teacher learns what questions to ask, what questions to ask differently, what questions not to ask, what metaphors are useful, which paradoxes can be revealing, and what gestures elicit trust and respect. The results of these observations create a desirable tentativeness in the curriculum, always revising and refining because of new understandings.

For the student a properly conducted dialectic promises to maintain respect for his or her culturally contextualized views of character virtues while at the same time providing for the possibility of moral development and growth. Moral growth comes from understanding virtues from a broader social context. The classroom experience possesses the possibility of constructing a broader consensus view of meaning, using the varied voices the students and teachers.

The dialectical process could also emphasize the very nature of moral principles, that they are universalizable and prescriptive. The procedure causes one to reflect on how one's actions affect others and what the world would be like if everyone followed the same decisions. At the same time one obligates one's self to hold to a principle and follow through with its logical consequences through the dialectical procedure.

In addition the creation of dialectical moments in which the familiar suddenly becomes strange provides the possibility for youth to interrogate their own worldviews and the self-justifications that may be a part of their mentalities. One cannot simple declare, "You are wrong the way you think!" Instead youth, through the dialectic, may come to discover inconsistencies,

assumptions, and narrow-mindedness on their own. The same of course can happen to the teacher.

In juvenile detention settings where there may be a great deal of resentment of authority and suspicion of authority figures, the question of who defines the terms of moral behavior could be grounds for dissention. In dialectical process however it is not the teacher or the student who defines the terms but the process itself. Thus dialectical process promises a less threatening way to discuss especially controversial moral decisions.

These are some of the possibilities the dialectical process offers as a pedagogy. How these tentative possibilities work out in actual classroom practice is one of the purposes of this action research project to determine the usefulness of dialectical process as a pedagogy for moral education.

Concluding Remarks

This review of literature has sought to lay out the philosophical grounds that legitimate the use of virtue-based character education and hermeneutical dialectic for moral education in a juvenile detention facility. The following chapters will discuss the results of classroom practice in order to compare these results with what the literature supports.

Chapter Three

Methodology

The possibility of including moral education in the regular curriculum of public schools raises the questions of what to teach, in order to respect the multicultural worldviews of the students, and how to teach, since moral education must encourage the level of reasoning necessary for moral decisions through appropriate pedagogy. Answering the questions of what to teach and how to teach is especially challenging in a juvenile detention environment due to the particular worldviews and patterns of thinking of such a student population. In response to these questions the preceding literature review supported the possible effectiveness of teaching multicultural moral education in a juvenile detention facility using virtue-based character education as a curriculum and hermeneutical dialectic as a pedagogy. Now the present and following chapters focus on the insights gained from implementing this specific curriculum and pedagogy among students in the a juvenile detention facility.

Research Design

As participant-observer, teacher-researcher in the tradition of ethnographic research, I proposed to create a classroom context that might provide an authentic environment to explore possibilities for curriculum and pedagogy with respect to moral education. My participation in the classroom offers the opportunity to directly observe how students respond to the subject matter of the curriculum and the pedagogical techniques. My personal involvement in the dialogue of the class also gives fluidity to the classroom experience, allowing the student experience of the material to influence my perspectives, resulting in alterations in the curriculum and pedagogy in accord with the intellectual, cultural, and emotional requirements of the students.

Specifically this project follows the phenomenological paradigm in ethnographic research. Creswell explains in <u>Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design</u> (1998) that according to the

phenomenological tradition, "Researchers search for the essential, invariant structure (or essence) or the central underlying meaning of the experience and emphasize the intentionality of consciousness where experiences contain both the outward appearance and inward consciousness based on memory, image and meaning" (p. 52). Thus consciousness interprets a specific phenomenon, in this case the meaning and practice of moral principles, using structures formed through previous experiences, values, and traditions. People act morally based on their perceptions of reality formed by these structures. For this reason moral realities are multiple, based on subjective interpretations, but nonetheless real for the subject. For moral education curriculum to be effective it must recognize and incorporate these different realities.

In agreement with this paradigm I organized and presented the curriculum in such a way to elicit from the students open and honest expression of their moral perceptions, given the context of the classroom. (A later chapter will discuss in detail the organization of curriculum and actual pedagogical practice.) As an observer I must carefully consider the language, expressions, perspectives, and gestures of the other participants in order to attempt to see from the standpoint of the students' worldviews. To be able to perceive the world the way the students perceive it, I must avoid allowing my own preconceptions to foreclose on the student's meaning without really understanding. For this reason one must identify his/her own preconceptions about the subject matter and the possible responses of the students and hold them in suspicion or "bracket" them while listening. As the class proceeds and I learn more about the student's perceptions of moral issues, it is possible to discover that I possess even more preconceptions that I must also bracket or throw out all together.

Furthermore the design of the curriculum and pedagogy assists the students in interrogating their own realities. As teacher-participant I attempted to create an atmosphere in the classroom that allowed students to confidently and safely interrogate their own moral realities to determine how their perceptions hold up to the critique of broader perceptions they might gain from the

instructive process, namely the dialectic process. By participating together in the dialectic process, teacher as well as students contribute to the questioning the can lead in a positive way to revealing and critiquing the structures of consciousness. In such a process I am also a learner in that my moral reality is also up to interrogation by the students' realities. To the extent that I am able to bracket my preconceptions I can also hold them up to scrutiny by the class dialogue.

In addition the design of the classroom experience must provide the opportunity for the students as well as the teacher to feel confident to express changes in moral perceptions when they take place through the dialectic process. According to the phenomenological paradigm, when confronted with new realities, the structures of consciousness that perceive reality can change. Carefully structuring the classroom experience to encourage mutual respect, openness, trust and a sense of safety are crucial to the success of this project.

Research Site

I conducted this research at a juvenile detention center located in a town in central California with an economic base depending mostly on agriculture and related industries. The detention facility includes a school under the administration of the county alternative education program.

The juvenile detention center is a fairly old facility dating back to the fifties. Since the school forms part of the detention center, there is a high degree of security. Teachers entering the school pass through a metal detector. All doors are always locked, including the classroom doors during class sessions. The school is surrounded on three sides by high fencing topped with barbed wire. Privileged students, who are permitted outside under guard to clean up the grounds, are responsible for the exterior maintenance of the school. The school looks old and drab with its fading institutional green paint. The windows are all barricaded. The school is located in a lower middle income neighborhood, on a busy central street.

The inside of the school is clean and maintained by youth detained in the center. However the entire school has the definite "feel" of an institution, with its light green paint, obscured windows, and fencing. The walls are free of graffiti but also free of any other sort of adornment, with the exception of a wall mural in the main quad area. The classrooms themselves have barred and obscured windows on the street side of the rooms. The windows are about five feet from the floor and so the students cannot look out the windows when they are seated. They are not allowed to remain standing near the windows to look out.

The students are always supervised by "counselors" (guards) who take the students to class from their rooms and dorms in single file with their hands folded behind their backs. Then at the end of class the guards return for the students, group by group according to their confinement area.

There are six rooms in which classes are held: three regular classes, two dayrooms, and the gymnasium. The three regular classrooms are generally dreary. Some of the teachers keep their classrooms orderly and decorate them to some degree with current student work and posters. Other teachers maintain classrooms with a generally disheveled look: scattered stacks of papers, disorderly bookshelves, old posters and clippings on the walls. The two dayrooms, sort of multipurpose rooms, are also used for classrooms. There are windows on two sides of one room and on three sides of the other. These windows look out on the exercise yard of the facility. The dayrooms have high ceilings and concrete walls which make these rooms very difficult for the teacher to speak in. When the students come into the room, if they make very much noise talking, they cannot hear the teacher. Even when everything is quiet, if one of the students responds in a low voice, it is very difficult to distinguish what he or she is saying because of the echo from the high ceiling. The dayrooms are cold in the winter and warm in the summer.

The gym is chiefly used for recreation but also has, at times, doubled for a classroom. There are no windows and the concrete walls are institutional green. The gym is very cold in the

winter. When a class is conducted in the gym on rare occasion, it is held in one corner of the gym. There is however insufficient light for study and the students must either stand on sit on the floor.

A full program includes 90 students. Of these 90 students, 60 are fulltime, attending 5 periods a day. The other 30 students are on "stand-by" status, attending 2 periods a day plus 3 hours of independent studies in their rooms (cells) until they can enter the fulltime program. When the population total is 120, court appearances and room restriction (because of misbehavior) remove between 20 and 30 students from the possibility of class attendance. The curriculum, in accordance with accepted state guidelines for grade levels from 7-12, consists of language arts, math, life skills, social sciences, science, art, computer skills, career exploration, physical education, health, driver education, and GED preparation. Some course work is done together but students also work on independent study materials.

The student-teacher ratio of 15:1 is strictly followed for reasons of security. Each classroom includes a teaching assistant as well as a teacher to give individualized help and added security.

Attendance in classroom work is a privilege. The detention facility itself is divided into three levels: "A" level consisting of those with the most privileges, "B" level including medium level privileges, and "C" level (after three checks) for less privileges, less recreation time and more room time. Below the "C" level is room restriction for those not permitted to attend any classes or recreation. "A" and "B" levels live in dorms and have fuller educational opportunities while the remaining population lives in cells with more limited opportunities.

Student population

The juvenile detention center is the county incarceration facility for youth offenders under the age of eighteen. Eighty-five percent of the students are between the ages of 15 to 17. On occasion the population includes students as young as 8-12 years old. Eighty-five percent of the

students are male and 15% are female. Seventy-five percent are Hispanic, 15% are white, 8% are African-American, 2% are other (including Asian, Pacific Islander, Filipino, and Native American.)

Seventy-five percent of the student population is gang affiliated. (Eighty-five percent are from one gang, 16% are from another gang and 1% are other.) Gang affiliation is more important in this population than ethnic or racial identity. The members of the two principle gangs are sworn enemies and must be kept separate. They do not attend the same classes, participate together in recreation or stay in the same living quarters.

The students are charged with a range of violations and crimes: simple violations of probation (staying out past curfew, cutting classes in school), misdemeanors (theft, assault, drug use, driving under the influence), and felonies (murder, rape, assault with a deadly weapon, armed robbery). The detention center's capacity is 102 (72 single bed cells and a 30 bed dorm). The population is divided among four units: "A" unit with females and the youngest offenders, "B" unit with the hard core felon cases, "C" unit with the older males not quite so hard core, some of whom have already been sentenced, and "D" unit with those who live in the dorms.

The average length of stay in the facility is 3 1/2 weeks but many remain for anywhere from 100 to 250 days and some for more than a year. If the juvenile court adjudicates and sentences them, they may receive one of the following possible consequences: probation (as long as 3 years), 30 to 120 days in the juvenile detention center, home confinement, or confinement to another youth detention center that is a six month to one year program similar to "boot camp" programs, drug and alcohol rehabilitation programs, public or private youth camps or ranches, group homes, or California Youth Authority (the prison system for serious youth offenders up to 25 years of age). In addition they may be tried and sentenced as adults to county jail or state prison if the court so decides based on the seriousness of their crime.

According to current detention center statistics, 60% of the youthful offenders will return. The return rate in addition to the varied lengths of detention and the tremendous variation in educational levels in such a small population require a specialized and individualized program.

According to standardized test results, 87% of the detained youth are performing below grade level standards. 85% are behind more than 1 school credit. On the average, 12% are certified special education. 14% are limited English proficient. 8% have dropped out of school before arriving at the detention center.

Character Education Classes

The moral education classes that constitute the basis of this research project are funded by the county department of education in accord with California educational code mandates for moral instruction. I conduct four classes, back to back, one day a week as a guest speaker during regular classroom time that is usually dedicated on other days to life skills or language arts. Each class lasts 45 minutes. These four classes contain a variety of educational levels and ages. At least one class contains students accused of felonies while other classes contains students accused of misdemeanors. At least two classes usually have a small number of female students, comprising usually not more 20% of the class. The maximum size of each class is 15.

Since some students spend very little time at the detention facility before being released or sent to another facility while others spend quite a long time in comparison, the exact students present in the classes from week to week can vary greatly. For this reason the curriculum and pedagogy must lend themselves to creating a stand-alone lesson each week while at the same time connecting these weekly lessons into a thematically related series.

Recording data

On one hand data collection in qualitative research must be always open and broad enough to include expressions and gestures that at the moment of recording may not appear to have significance but later may lead to a new direction in the research. On the other hand, because the

research is focused on a specific phenomenon, the nature of the phenomenon itself dictates a certain priority in observation. This project involved implementing virtue-based character education curriculum using a dialectical pedagogy. One of the central goals then of this research was to observe and record student expressions of their moral perspectives and realities, especially in regards to the meaning of "virtues" such as respect, trust, and justice. Likewise examples of students or teacher interrogating their own moral perspectives and beliefs would also count as important data. Furthermore, the pedagogical model of hermeneutical dialectic predicts moments in which the "familiar becomes strange." Examples of such dialectic moments that I observed among the students or that I noted in my own thinking also form part of the data. Additional observations included how the moral perceptions both of the students and the teacher changed as a result of the classroom experience. Always in the background of this data collection was careful observation of the classroom context including the role of another teacher who may be present in the classroom, any power struggles or other sociological factors that might alter the level of classroom discussion, and possible distractions present in the classroom.

On occasion I gave the students a written assignment of four to five questions to answer to initiate the class or to serve as a closure to the class. I did not grade these responses but instead read through them after the class period. The answers to these questions served as another source of information concerning student perspectives of moral and character issues.

In a classroom at a juvenile detention facility suspicion is high and trust is at a premium. To maintain trust and keep suspicion low no type of recording, either video or audio, was used to record the classroom experience. Immediately after each class I jotted down a few notes to remind me later of key moments or expressions made during the class. Upon arriving at my office after class, I wrote more extensive notes in journal form, recording the classroom experiences based on the notes jotted down earlier.

I did not attempt to write down extended conversations word for word but instead summaries of conversations and in some cases one sentence quotes. Determining what to record in the way of notes depended on the hermeneutic lens through which I viewed the classroom experience.

In order to preserve anonymity in recording the data, I did not use names or other identifying characteristics. Maintaining anonymity is absolutely important among juvenile detention students since they might reveal information during the classroom discussion that someone later could use against them in the legal process or that could put them in danger of retaliation from other youth. Access to the journal notes is safeguarded in computer files.

The data I collected for this research represents observations over a period of two semesters teaching four classes once a week. Previous to the data collection period I had been teaching classes at this juvenile detention center for two years.

The following chapter will describe in detail the classroom procedures, the curriculum, and the pedagogical process of dialectic.

Chapter Four

Model for Curriculum and Pedagogy

Because this action research project explores the possibilities that a specific curriculum and pedagogy offer for moral education in a juvenile detention center, this present chapter will present the model for this curriculum and pedagogy. The curriculum revolves around the meaning and practice of virtues, that is, character traits such as respect, responsibility, self-control, trust, honesty, care, and wisdom. (For discussion on choosing which virtues to address in class, see page 79.) During a period of two school semesters I wrote and taught a three to four lesson series on each of these qualities in addition to related, tangential themes. The central element of the pedagogy I used is dialectical method which consists of a process of raising questions with the potential for uncovering assumed presuppositions, interrogating those presuppositions and discovering new perspectives, specifically in regards to the meaning and application of the virtues. The following model explicates the details of the curriculum and pedagogy. Later, in Chapter Five, based on an analysis of data from classroom experience, I will show how the curriculum and pedagogy works out in actual practice.

Prior to Writing Curriculum

According to the phenomenological model for research, the researcher must identify, as much as possible, and bracket his or her own presuppositions upon entering the research environment. One goal of the research is to see a particular phenomenon from the context of those who are participating in the research. To be able to see from the standpoint of the Other, the researcher attempts to identify his or her values, beliefs, customs, or cultural perspectives that might predetermine or prejudge the perspectives of the Other. Research from this theoretical approach is a hermeneutical process of interpreting meanings. However, as the preceding literature review confirmed, education itself, and especially moral education, is a hermeneutical

endeavor. What a researcher does upon entering the field is the same that I have to do before entering the classroom.

Even before writing a definite curriculum plan, the first step is to clarify what I believe and practice in regards to a particular character trait such as, for instance, self-discipline. How do I define self-discipline? What examples would I give of self-discipline? How do I think I model and practice self-discipline? I identify these questions and try to answer them, not because they form the basis of what I will teach but because I need to allow the classroom experience to interrogate them for validity in a broader social and cultural context. I also have to ask myself what I think about what the young people in the class may believe about self-discipline. I identify my presuppositions about student beliefs in order to also bracket this aspect of my preunderstanding for further interrogation in the class. I may suppose that someone who abuses drugs or has a volatile anger lacks self-discipline. Perhaps, however, there are ways that people might view themselves as self-disciplined, ways that would not automatically occur to me. When someone is robbing a stereo from a car, concentrating to put aside the distractions of fear and focusing on the task to accomplish it quickly and efficiently, isn't that person demonstrating a form of self-discipline? Furthermore, self-discipline is a very broad topic. In order to plan three or four lessons I have to narrow the subject to some relevant aspects. Are these particular aspects of self-discipline relevant because they are relevant to me, or because I think they are relevant to the students in the class or because they are actually relevant from the perspectives of the students. These are hermeneutical questions.

Before entering the classroom I need to answer these questions on a tentative basis in order to write a curriculum that is equally tentative. Finding some starting place to discuss a particular character trait and deciding on the focus of the lessons require some preliminary knowledge. The answers to such questions however are always up to interrogation by the classroom experience. This preliminary insight comes from literature of an emic perspective that reveals

the thinking of young people in similar cultural and social contexts as those who participate in the classroom. In addition such sources as previous conversations with similar students and observations in previous classes also inform the curriculum. Later during the actual classroom discussion student responses to the subject matter will either confirm, modify, or negate the presuppositions that we started with.

Organization of Curriculum

The purpose of the curriculum is not just to teach some knowledge about the virtues. Instead the purpose is much more specific: to begin with what the students understand about the virtues in their immediate world and then help them move, through the dialectical process of questioning, to a broader application of the virtues in their lives, considering the implications of the virtues for the community as a whole. One of the presuppositions of the curriculum is that the students agree that one ought to practice these virtues on some level. Another presupposition is that culturally or socially formed perceptions may limit one's view of the meaning and practice of the virtues. A third presupposition is that it is possible for us, given the nature of moral principles (as discussed in the previous literature review), to arrive at a consensus of meaning and practice for the virtues that is necessary, cross-culturally, in the community. Based on these presuppositions the curriculum proposes to move one from thinking of the practice of these virtues in isolation, alienated from the community, to practicing the virtues in view of participation in the community.

Since there are many possible virtues that the curriculum might explore during the course of the semester, there must be a way for determining which virtues to focus on. The question of who has the right to make this decision is an important one at the juvenile detention facility. Incarcerated students, who feel they do not have any rights and who hold adult authority in suspicion, welcome the opportunity to have some power over the curriculum. When the students decide which character traits to study, they are in essence saying that they see some reason to

study these specific virtues. When adults decide which virtues the students will study, the adults essentially are saying to the students, "We see that this is what you need." As a teacher I also benefit by being able to say to the class, "These traits that we are studying are the ones you decided you wanted to talk about." The class has a greater possibility of forming a collaboration. Thus, at the beginning of the semester I poll the classes that I teach to determine which virtues are the ones the students would like to study. I then compose curriculum with their choices in mind.

Because character education is an add-on to the regular academic subjects at the juvenile detention center, there is only limited space available in the schedule for such classes. Principally, for this reason, I teach character education at this facility in four successive class periods of 45 minutes each, one day a week. In addition, there is somewhat of a turn over in student population from week to week since new students are always arriving and other students are released. No class is ever composed of the same students from week to week. The organization of the curriculum has to accommodate itself to these constraints. Thus each class needs to stand alone in the sense that in 45 minutes we try to accomplish some specific goal in understanding the meaning and practice of the virtue under consideration. At the same time, for the benefit of those students who may be in the classes for several weeks, the curriculum should establish some continuity from week to week.

To maintain continuity from week to week while allowing for some specific progress in understanding each week, the curriculum addresses three or four individual aspects of each character trait over a period of three to four weeks. Which aspects to cover depends on some prior understanding I might have gained through conversations with the students, observations in class, or literature from an emic perspective. For example the character trait of trust might develop into a three-lesson sequence with the following titles: "Who can we trust?" "Attracting friends who are trustworthy." "Trusting ourselves by respecting our limits." These topics

however are tentative just as the curriculum itself is tentative. If, during the class discussions, other topics come to the surface that appear to be more relevant, then I can shift the focus. Nonetheless the goal of each class is to bring to the surface some new understanding in meaning or practice that can interrogate previous understandings and give rise to a broader application of the virtue.

Each lesson contains four components: an anticipatory metaphor, the dialectic, a written exercise, and closure. Each class begins with some visual metaphor or illustration that focuses attention on the subject matter. With the short, 45-minute class period and with students who have been locked up and now have a degree of freedom in the classroom, captivating their attention in the first five minutes is essential. In addition, for students who are visually or tactilely oriented, a visual metaphor can be memorable. For example, to introduce a lesson on self-discipline in terms of focusing on the right goal, I once used a peacock feather as an opening metaphor. I modeled trying to balance the feather standing up in palm of my hand by focusing on the tip of the feather resting in my palm. Balancing the feather is nearly impossible when focusing on this part of the feather. I asked students in the class to try it. Then some students discovered they could balance the feather by focusing above on the "eye" of the peacock feather instead of the tip in their hand. This moment of realization also revealed the point of the class concerning self-discipline and focus. We may have the self-discipline to maintain focus on something or on some phenomenon but the important question we have to answer is, what are we focusing on? What determines if self-discipline is constructive or destructive in focus? The metaphor that potentially presents a moment of understanding and raises questions about the theme also prepares the groundwork for the dialectic.

The center of the curriculum is the questions that lead the dialectic. Dialectic replaces teaching that is merely didactic in style. Didactic teaching in lecture form depends on the authority of the teacher to pronounce the truth about the subject matter. The students are the

audience and the teacher is the actor. Dialectic on the other hand engages the students as participants and collaborators with the teacher in the construction of truth. Using a series of questions about the subject matter, the students and teacher work together to interrogate what they believe about the meaning and practice of the particular virtue they are considering. The movement of the dialectic is towards resolution and consensus. Before actually discussing how to organize and conduct the dialectic, I will make mention of two other components of the individual lesson structure: written exercises and closure.

Each lesson includes a written exercise that roughly follows the tentative questions mapped out for the dialectic. If the dialectic is proceeding well in class then there is no need to use the written exercise since the knowledge that results from the dialectic is more powerful due to its collaborative nature. However if students, as happens in some cases, come into the classroom in an agitated emotional state for some reason and they are unable to settle down in order to have an organized discussion, the written exercise that they do individually will at least help them think through the topic. In addition, time permitting at the end of class, the written exercise can assist them in summarizing what has been discussed in class, that is, if the dialectic proceeded according to the questions mapped out in the lesson.

The final element of each lesson is the closure. Closure plays an important role in any lesson but especially following a dialectical discussion. If the dialectic has uncovered new meanings, produced moments of understanding, or clarified new moral perspectives, I need to emphasize these results before the end of class. Sometimes during a discussion some of the participants can become so involved in the movement of the discussion that they may forget the main point of the discussion. Bringing the class back to the central issue and summarizing the conclusions they have drawn through the dialectic helps them crystallize the results in their own understanding. Closure can also leave them with a challenge to apply the understanding that they have. In addition, in the juvenile detention setting, as the class comes to an end, the security

activities involved in dismissing the students from the class and taking them to their rooms quickly change the focus of their attention. The closure then gives them one final moment to recall the main point or conclusion of the class before leaving.

The Purpose of the Dialectic

Because the dialectic forms the principal part of each lesson and represents a specialized pedagogical technique, focus will now shift to a more detailed explanation of the purpose of the dialectic, formulating the questions raised in the dialectic and conducting the dialectic.

The dialectic is the central part of each lesson that consists of a process of questioning. The students as well as the teacher allow the questions to interrogate what they believe. Because of their different cultural contexts, the students and teacher represent different poles of understanding. The purpose of the questions is to help them move from those poles of understanding to arrive at a consensus of understanding that has broader cultural and social grounds. In our egocentricity, for example, we may be accustomed to asking, "What would *my life* be like if I practiced a certain virtue or if I followed a certain moral principle." There is also another question that is central to our interrogation of moral principles: "What would the *world* be like?" This is a key question that moves the dialectic from egocentric poles of understanding to community consensus. In collaboration the teacher and student construct meanings and views of practice or moral action that are good for the many as well as the one. In one class we were talking about the nature of retaliation and justice. I asked some of the young men if, when they decide to retaliate against another gang for some offence that that gang commited against them, they find precisely the person who committed the offence to pay that person back with some exactly corresponding action. The answer was no. They retaliate against anyone they think might be related to that gang with much greater force in comparison to the original offence. "You have to make them afraid of you." I then asked them if the police could do the same. What would the community be like if the police did drive-by shootings against anyone who even

slightly resembled members of a gang? Someone answered something to the effect that, "Well, the police have to go by the laws." In the classroom I could sense that people saw through this weak justification for denying the police the right to do what gangs believe they have the right to do. Another person, however, responded saying, "But we are at war," refering to gang fights. "What about the U.S. and what it's doing in Afghanistan?" After all, the question is, what would the world be like? An excellent dialectic was beginning to form that was interrogating my concepts of retaliation and justice as well.

The purpose of the questioning of dialectic is to bring to light structures of consciousness that perceive reality from a certain context, examine those structures and raise the possibility of viewing moral reality from different perspectives. The dialectical questioning serves to provoke people to see familiar moral perceptions in a suddenly new and strange way. Such a moment of new understanding is a dialectical moment that has the power to change the structures of consciousness. One student understood the power of this moment of sudden realization. In a classroom conversation about putting one's self in the position of the victim and trying to view a crime from the victim's perspective, he said that he had stolen lots of stereos during his short career. Then he bought an expensive stereo for his mother and installed in her car. Shortly afterwards someone stole it. He said it made him feel very bad about the stereos he had taken because suddenly he realized he felt what his victims had felt. He said he never had really thought much about what victims might have felt. In another class that explored the virtue of loyalty, we discussed different levels of loyalties, including blind loyalty. During the class I showed a piece of a documentary film depicting the blind loyalties of Nazi Storm Troopers during World War II. In the process of questioning, I asked the students whether sometimes one gang member would do what a fellow gang member asks him to do, irregardless of the nature of the task, just for the sake of loyalty. The question in this moment, after seeing the film, was

more difficult to answer than in other classroom contexts. An understanding of loyalty that had been familiar to them now looked strange.

The use of dialectical method can accomplish several specific purposes in a juvenile detention facility that one must keep in mind when organizing the dialectic. In the first place students in juvenile detention facilities commonly place great value on respect and power, undoubtedly because they experience the lack of both during the adjudication process. A properly conducted dialectic offers respect for the perspectives of the students. The classroom experience dignifies the perspectives of the students by considering their viewpoints as valid realities in certain contexts but at the same time respectfully examining these realities instead of cynically dismissing them. The dialectical process is a rational process and not an emotionally charged polemic. Furthermore dialectic gives place to the teacher's input. The instructor is not just a facilitator in dialectic. Dialectic requires two poles of understanding for mutual interrogation to take place. If students examined their own moral perceptions without teacher input then they might end in simply mutually affirming their understandings, no matter how destructive those understandings might be. However, especially if the instructor represents a very different context of understanding, teacher input serves to raise alternative perceptions that interrogate the perceptions of students and that are, in turn, interrogated by the students. In addition, dialectic offers students in a juvenile detention setting the possibility of examining their perceptions in a non-antagonistic, non-confrontational way that may not happen outside of the classroom in their normal cultural context. As a teacher I have to bear in mind these purposes for the dialectic as I organize the questioning process.

Formulating the Questions Raised in the Dialectic

Different instructors may have distinct methods for organizing a dialectical experience in class. I choose to employ an organization that has structure but at the same time tentativeness. Some structure is necessary in order to work towards a clear and specific outcome by the end of

the short class period. A genuine dialectic however requires some tentativeness to make movement in thinking possible, not only on the part of the students but also on the part of the teacher. In preparing for a specific lesson these are the two considerations that generally guide how I formulate beforehand the questions to raise in class.

How do I determine the questions to ask in class? I begin first with a tentative outcome that we could achieve by the end of the class period. The outcome could be a conclusion about the meaning or practice of some virtue, a new, cross-cultural understanding of a specific aspect of the virtue, or a possible dialectic moment in which previously familiar perceptions suddenly appear strange. Provisionally determining beforehand whether the outcome is appropriate depends on knowledge of the cultural contexts of the students that either comes from emic literature or previous, personal experience with the students. Whatever this outcome is, I specify it in my curriculum with clear terms in order to provide direction for the questions. Still, although having specified the outcome, I hold it as tentative since the actual classroom dialectic might expose it to be irrelevant, inappropriate or false.

Next I formulate a series of questions that might logically lead to the desired outcome. The questions should be difficult enough not to elicit an automatic answer and yet within the scope of the imagination of the students. The questions also follow a logical path to the conclusion, not according my logic but in view of the students' logic as well as I can predict based on my preunderstanding of the students' perceptions. The questions should also be tentative because the exact reaction of the students in a given classroom at a given time of the day is to some degree unpredictable. Furthermore the response of the students may very well open up the direction for a new series of questions. Allowing the dialectic to shift is important in order teach material that is actually relevant to the students and not material that I think is relevant. In one case I began a lesson on self-discipline with the intended outcome that the ability to maintain focus, as an aspect of self-discipline, also requires the ability to decide which goal to focus on.

As the dialectic proceeded in the class with respect to focusing on goals, I could see that the more relevant issue with the students was the ability to deal adequately with distractions in order to maintain their focus on a goal. They knew what to focus on. The problem with maintaining focus. Consequently I allowed the subject matter of the classroom conversation to shift to discussing successful and not so successful ways of dealing with distractions.

The structure of the dialectic I employ in the class divides the questions into three groups: questions to clarify meaning, questions that interrogate meaning, and questions that resolve meaning to bring about consensus in understanding. The first set of questions can ask for instance: "What does this mean? What are some examples of ....? Do you think that it is true that....? How would you describe someone who...? What happens when someone....? The point of these questions is for the students to explore the limits of their perceptions and expressions concerning the meaning of the subject under consideration. As they respond I can raise questions that call for further clarification and precision. There may be some disagreement among the students in the class. If I know something about the meanings and practices that other similar students have expressed in other classes, I can raise questions to ask if the present students agree. The questions that clarify meaning can begin with the metaphor or illustration that opens up the class. As an opening metaphor for another class on self-discipline, I once showed a short piece of the film, <u>Chariots of Fire</u>. In this particular moment in the film Eric Liddell, the principle character who was a star runner on Great Britain's Olympic team in 1924, is running in one of his events in the Olympics. As the runners round one of the curves in the track, another runner deliberately gives Liddell a shove and Liddell tumbles to the ground. The camera focuses on the intense anger, frustration, and desperation on Liddell's face in that prolonged, slow motion moment. At this point I stopped the film and asked, What should he do? Will he get up and if he does, what will he do? Many in the class responded that he should get up, run after the other runner and beat him up. A few others said he should finish the race.

When I continued the scene from the film, Liddell does get up, then runs past the runner who shoved him and wins the race. The film served to stimulate questions about the goals and challenges of self-discipline.

The next group of questions serves to interrogate the meanings that the first set of questions elicited. I use the word "interrogate" here not in the sense of a detective interrogating a suspect but instead of a questioning process that can elucidate broader meanings, uncover hidden meanings, and reveal inconsistencies, counter-examples, paradoxes and ironies. The following are examples of generally what I might ask: Is it really the case that...? What would happen if...? If I understand what you are saying, would this mean that...? If we believe this then would we have to say that...? Let's look at this from a different angle. What would the world be like if...? Questions that ask students to compare and contrast different examples also have the power to interrogate perspectives. In regards to self-discipline we could consider the concentration required to steal, quickly and efficiently, a stereo from a car or the focus required to "mad-dog" someone (stare at someone in a prolonged and intimidating way) with the focus that Eric Liddell demonstrated in the film. What motivates a person to focus with self-discipline on one goal instead of another?

These questions that interrogate meanings are the ones that have the potential for producing dialectic moments in which the familiar suddenly looks strange. These moments allow us to see reality in a different way that rings true and can compel us to think and behave in a different way. Recognizing counter-examples, inconsistencies and paradoxes have the power to change the structures of consciousness with which we perceive reality.

The first set of questions begins with what the students know and the second set of questions deals with what they may not understand or agree with. To prepare for the second set of questions to some degree ahead of time, I need to know something about the students' perceptions, again from emic sources, to imagine how they might answer the first set of

questions. Imagining ahead of time how they might answer helps me predict what kinds of questions to raise that might interrogate their meanings. Of course preparing ahead of time must always be, because of the nature of dialectic, a tentative process.

The third set of questions asks for resolution of the paradoxes and inconsistencies in order to form a view of the virtues, their meanings and their applications, that is broader in a cross-cultural sense and at the same time more precise in offering examples of specific moral action. This component of the dialectic seeks for the consensus in moral understanding. These sorts of questions ask the following: What can we conclude about...? What can we say now about...? If this is true then what should we do? The answers to these questions should provide direction for moral action that the students can see and accept, from a new, interrogated context, as possible alternatives for conduct. Respect, for instance, is a critical issue with most of these students because of their life context. On one particular occasion, when the subject for discussion was respect, many of the students expressed the belief that you must only respect those who first give you respect. Through the dialectic we were able to see that waiting to give respect until respect is first received is a dead-end. By the end of class the students had altered their perceptions enough to admit that there are levels of respect we can offer to anyone, just because they are human beings, and that a person who is genuinely respectful knows how to respect another person, irregardless of the character of that other person.

At any point during the dialectic process the students may elaborate views or express insights that interrogate my perceptions of moral realities. They may raise questions that make my familiar world suddenly look strange. Their answers to my questions can totally surprise me and undermine my understandings. During discussions about the consequences of drug use, I have the tendency, of course, to raise questions that emphasize the negative consequences. Some of the students have offered counter-examples to interrogate my blanket presuppositions about drug abuse. For instance, one student described a relative who makes a good living selling

drugs. His relative does not flaunt the money he earns, he only sells to people he knows, and he does not use the drugs himself. In this way he avoids problems with the police. This person has successfully sold drugs for many years without having experienced any negative consequences himself. In another class a different student was honestly describing long-term goals he planned to accomplish. He hoped one day to marry, have some children, buy a comfortable house and sell "a few" drugs to support himself. He knew of people who had achieved these goals. Furthermore, students can offer many examples of friends or relatives who have been successful in college while regularly using certain drugs in limited quantities. Such examples interrogate my worldview and examine my presuppositions, sometimes surprising me with realities I have never experienced.

Preparing for and Conducting the Dialectic

Having considered the organization of the dialectic, a discussion of the classroom set-up, preparation of the students, and guidelines for conducting the dialectic will further clarify the model I use at the detention facility.

First the classroom set-up has to lend itself to conducting a dialectic. For security reasons the classroom it limited to a maximum of 15 students. This number of students is also an adequate working limit for a dialectic that engages as many students as possible during the 45-minute class period. I arrange the desks in a semi-circle so that everyone can see everyone else in the class and so that I can more easily make eye contact with each student. I specify a semi-circle so that I can stand at the open part of the circle with no one seated at my back. I also place a white-board for me to write on at the open part of the circle. If there are females in the class they sit at one end of the circle instead of mixing in among the males in order to avoid side-conversations and other related distractions.

Next some anticipatory preparation of the students is necessary before actually beginning the class. As the students enter the class they have the tendency to look at who the teacher is and

look for any clue in the classroom about the subject matter. For this reason I make certain to write something on the white-board beforehand that indicates the subject matter for the class, perhaps an engaging title or brief quote. If I have a prop for the class that I will use as an opening metaphor, I place the prop in a conspicuous place to attract attention. As the students enter the classroom I place myself near the door to greet the students as they enter the room, saying their name, shaking their hand, looking them in the eye. These gestures are essential in order to begin to break down the distance between student and teacher the moment the students come into the classroom. Beginning the class as soon as possible after the students enter the classroom, before they can become involved in conversations among themselves, also assists in maintaining focus. In addition, with respect to the classes I teach at the particular juvenile detention center where this project took place, I am a guest speaker since I teach four classes only one day a week. During the rest of the week other teachers teach other subjects to these same groups students. While I am teaching the classes, the teacher who normally teaches the students is present. This teacher plays an important role in the class, especially in preparation of the students. When the students enter the class the usual teacher for the class first introduces me, especially for the sake of any students who may have not participated in the class before. Then the teacher briefly describes the nature of the class, explaining that this class is different from other classes in that it is a discussion. The teacher explains that I encourage people to express themselves but they must do so in a way that shows respect for everyone in the class, that I welcome disagreement with what I express, and that I respect what people have to say.

Finally, in conducting the class I follow certain guidelines for the purpose of demonstrating respect and gaining trust. To earn respect of the students and in turn be able to elicit their collaboration in the classroom experience, I must first show respect unconditionally. I must respect the person as a human being without reference to any criminal offences that person may or may not have committed. I prefer not to know any charges that the court might have brought

against individual students to assure myself that no prejudicial feelings might color my relationship with the student in the classroom. To demonstrate respect I refrain from any language that might be cynical, sarcastic, or mocking. If someone makes a comment that sounds foolish to other students, I do not allow them to laugh and instead acknowledge whatever I can find laudable in the comment, compliment it and use it to continue the dialogue. I look students in the eye while they are speaking to me. I use praise and affirmation even while raising counter-examples. The way I dress, always with a dress-shirt, tie, and slacks, also communicates respect. On occasion students have asked me why I dress the way I do to come to class at the detention center as if the detention center is not worthy of dignified dress. I have responded quickly to these questions answering that I dress the way I do to show them respect.

Dealing respectfully with disruptive students or distractions in class is essential in gaining their respect and trust. Knowing when to respond to a distraction such as side conversations and when to let it slide is a delicate matter because the side-conversations may concern the subject matter. Often certain non-confrontational techniques can work to minimize distractions without disrupting the course of the dialectic. If two students, for example, begin to communicate nonverbally across the circle I can place myself between their line of sight and/or direct some questions to these students. When a student does begin to disrupt the class by talking out of turn, making irrelevant comments or engaging in distracting activities, I give the individual one warning in non-confrontational manner, with a calm voice, and then remove the person from the class if there is no change in conduct.

Trust is the second essential element besides respect that I attempt to gain in order to encourage authentic student expression in the classroom. I try to earn trust first of all through credibility, demonstrated through an understanding of the material we are discussing and by consistently modeling the character traits we are studying in my relationships with the students. The students certainly have more knowledge than I do about their own cultural context and

perceptions and so I consistently acknowledge what they know and work from their knowledge base. I never try to pretend to know what I do not know. I also begin from the presupposition that these students are particularly sensitive to hypocrisy or insincerity and therefore I have to pay special attention to always practice what I am teaching. The level of authenticity in the comments and responses of the students during the classroom experience will demonstrate their level of respect and trust.

Rubric for Evaluation

A rubric that assists me in evaluating the class experience appears in the appendix, page 109. This rubric is a tool for evaluating how well I employ the curriculum and pedagogy. If I am successfully teaching the virtue-based character education curriculum then there are several in-class outcomes I should be able to observe: that students determine the specific virtues that we will consider in class; that the class, including the teacher, constructs meaning for these virtues; and that students are able to reason from the virtues to concrete, practical application of the virtues. If I am successful in using the pedagogical technique of hermeneutical dialectic then there are several additional in-class outcomes I should be able to observe: that students are engaged and contributing to the discussion; that they are able to listen to all perspectives respectfully; that their comments are as authentic as possible given the classroom context; that through the dialectic they are able to interrogate their meanings and moral practice; and that they are able to arrive at multicultural consensus in the understanding and practice of the virtues.

While this rubric helps me to determine if I am employing the curriculum and pedagogy with the desired in-class outcomes, the rubric does not necessarily determine the effectiveness of this particular curriculum and pedagogy in a juvenile detention facility. The rubric serves, for instance, to guide me in judging the level of student participation in class. Just because the students are talking does not mean I am practicing the pedagogy well. If I am leading the dialectic well, then I should expect, given a conducive classroom context, that the students'

comments should be authentic, introspective, and demonstrate the possibility of consensus. The rubric, however, depends on the possibility that the curriculum and pedagogy can produce the intended results. The purpose of this research is to verify this possibility as an accurate expectation. To this end the following chapter will now present an analysis of data resulting from the actual classroom practice of the model I use at the juvenile detention facility.

Chapter Five

Data Analysis

After reviewing the curriculum and pedagogy model for teaching character education at the research site, the central question that remains is, how does this curriculum and pedagogy work in actual practice? The data that describe the results of classroom practice come from journal notes I wrote over a period of two semesters of teaching at the research site. Although I had been exploring different modifications of curriculum and pedagogy for two years previous to this period, these two semesters represent classes in which I employed the model described in the previous chapter.

The lens through which I viewed the classroom experience was always hermeneutic in that I looked for expressions and gestures that communicated meanings as well as indications and signs of context for those meanings. Because of the nature of the virtue-based character education curriculum and the dialectically structured pedagogy, I was specifically interested in observing the following: student expressions of their moral perceptions and realities, especially in regards to character virtues; examples of the mutual interrogation of these moral perceptions on behalf of the students and on my own behalf as the instructor; and moments in the classroom experience that demonstrate the possibility of change in perceptions, especially towards consensus in understanding and practice. Upon making these observations, I also sought to understand how the curriculum and pedagogy might have produced these classroom experiences.

In order to relate the data in the clearest way to the model for the curriculum and pedagogy, I will present the data in the form of a structured class, representing a lesson I taught concerning community responsibility. This constructed text, consisting of a modeled classroom (per personal conversation with Dr. Linda Rogers), presents a view of the actual classroom experience, based on data from my journal notes, when the curriculum and pedagogy work according to the intended model. I will also note examples from other classes that confirm the

experiences of this class and examples that illustrate what happens when the class does not proceed according to the expectations of the model.

Choosing the Virtues to Study

The first step at the beginning of the two-semester period was to determine which character traits the students believed were most important. In all four classes that I taught, I asked the students the following question: What are the five most important qualities you look for in a person whom you recognize as mature? I asked them to think of a real person whom they knew or knew of and think of the qualities that this person models in his or her life in order to form a preliminary idea of possible qualities. I explained to them that we would then focus the future classes on those qualities that they believe are most important. The five most frequently mentioned qualities followed by the percentage of students who mentioned them were: respect (79%), responsibility (66%), self-control (44%), trust (35%), and honesty (31%). Others that the students listed, in descending of frequency, were: care, wisdom, hard work, success, loyalty, never giving up, love, helpfulness, confidence, unselfishness, understanding, self-esteem, honor, experience, encouragement, and gratefulness. Interestingly none of the students put justice or fairness on their lists. I wondered if, despite the fact that many of them have suffered injustices, they did not have this word in their most commonly used vocabulary and why. Perhaps the people they were thinking of did not necessarily model justice or fairness as obviously as other characteristics. Perhaps there was some deeper reason but it was an interesting omission given their context in the judicial process.

In response to their reflections we began a series of classes focused on various aspects of those character traits that the students most frequently mentioned. One of those qualities was responsibility. I now had to decide which aspects of responsibility to address in the classes. In earlier classroom discussions some students had expressed isolation from the community at large. Some of them said that the community had not done anything for them and they do not

feel obligated to do anything for the community. On the other hand some students claimed certain neighborhoods as belonging to them in some sense. Based on these remarks I decided to organize a lesson revolving around concepts and paradoxes concerning community responsibility. What follows is a detailed description of one of the classes I conducted on community responsibility that successfully imitated the model for curriculum and pedagogy that is the subject of this research. (See appendix, page 111, for curriculum outline from the class on community responsibility.)

Entering the Classroom

Since the classroom set aside for this particular class doubled as an art classroom, there were tables instead of individual desks in the room. Art projects decorated the walls and filled up shelves but it was also a little cluttered with supplies and piles of papers. Some of the tables still had bits of paper from the previous day's project. I spent about five minutes cleaning off the tables and arranging the tables in the shape of a "u," placing the chairs around the outside of the "u," facing towards the center. There is equanimity is this shape. Everyone can see everyone else. I have equal access to all students to approach them and to communicate eye to eye. I placed my white board on its stand at the open end of the "u" and wrote the title of the lesson, "Community Responsibility." The last thing I did was look at the roll for the class and try to match faces in my mind with the names I see on the roll. I have learned from the students' reactions that remembering their names is an especially meaningful gesture of respect to them. They have responded with surprise that I remembered their names. I have a poor memory for such things and must concentrate on recalling names with faces. The turn over in students and the fact that I see these students for one hour a week make this task especially challenging.

The classroom was ready for the students to enter. I had that queasy feeling in my stomach. I have been teaching in different capacities for more than twenty-five years and still feel a little stage-fright - - maybe because I look at the classroom experience in its totality as a

drama - - or maybe it is the same feeling one feels right before taking a final exam, wondering if the class will fly or flop. I reminded myself of what this is about: not some earthshaking, monumental event, but the most subtle of signs indicating some movement in thinking.

The "counselor" (guard) brought the students, fifteen in all, to the classroom in small groups, depending on their section at the facility. Sometimes we have to wait three or four minutes for the last group to arrive. This moment of waiting can be a little awkward because I do not want to start the class until the other students arrive, the students who are already in the classroom start talking animatedly with each other, and I don't want to just stand, isolated in front of the class, saying nothing. So in such moments I usually start a side conversation with a couple of students I know from previous classes to at least begin to approach their space. On this particular day the groups arrived one after the other.

As the students were entering, I placed myself near the door to greet them personally. I said the names of those whose names I remembered. I extended my hand to shake the hand of those who might lend themselves to this gesture. A few of students, some who did not know me, looked briefly at me and then looked past me as they entered. One student made some sort of noise under his breath to indicate that he was not happy in having to come to this class. I acknowledged him, smiled and simply said, "Don't worry, it will be good." Most of the students greeted me in a friendly way, looking me in the eye, some even calling my name.

Once everyone was seated and I was standing in front of the class, briefly looking around the room at the different postures and expressions, I experienced, as usual, a momentary feeling of alienation because I am the Other, no matter what gestures I may make to try to close the distance. Normally I immediately try to think what they may be thinking about in their context, instead of thinking about what I think about them. This day all the students in the class happened to be males. A couple of students were slightly slouched in their seats, eyeing me with some suspicion, wondering what this was all about. Two students were talking across the room

at each other, joking. Another couple of students sitting next to each other were engaged in a serious, quiet conversation, probably about something going on out on the streets or in the facility itself. One student had his head down on the table. It was early, the first class of the day.

Beginning the Class

The first order of business is always to take the roll. The teacher, whose class I was teaching and who is always in the classroom with me, took the roll, calling out names. Taking the roll is informative to me. It is another chance for me to match names with faces before I start speaking. Furthermore I can tell something about the mood of each student from the way he or she responds to the roll - - if they say nothing until the third time the teacher calls their name and then spit out "here" with disgust, or if they say, "That's not how you say it," or if they say, "Here, Mr. ____" (saying the other teacher's name in an overly sweet tone), or if they just simply say, "Here." Taking roll helps me know to whom I should address my first questions to start off in a positive fashion.

Next the regular teacher introduced me as a guest speaker for the day. I am a regular guest speaker since I come nearly every week, interrupting the normal routine of the classroom. He usually explains that this class is different. They are free to talk and express their opinions, but with respect. He tells them that I welcome disagreement and do not expect them to agree with everything I say. I then further introduced myself. I usually say nearly the same thing at the beginning of each class. I want to remind them of who I am and why I am here. "My name is Mr. Fox. I come here to discuss character once a week. I am a teacher but I also have been a minister here in Salinas for twenty years. I come here because I want to know how people think and understand the perspectives people have about character. We have had some excellent discussions about things like respect, trust, self-control, etc." Some guys have heard this speech several times but that's okay. Next I explained that the subject we were going to discuss that day was community responsibility, something that had come up in previous conversations that we

had had together in class. Before we actually began the discussion, I wanted them to think about a couple of pictures I would show them.

Opening Metaphor

One picture, from <u>Time</u> magazine, showed a scene from the Boyle Heights neighborhood in Los Angeles, where, by the way, I told them, I was once robbed. The photograph showed a gang member on a rooftop, looking down on the street below, holding a high-powered rifle. In the street below, his homeboy, who has a pistol in the pocket of his baggy pants, is flashing gang signs at cars coming through the neighborhood. If someone in a car were to flash the signs identifying a rival gang, then the young man in the street would pull out his gun to draw out the gang members in the car. Then his homey on the rooftop would ambush them with the rifle. The picture immediately grabbed the attention of the class. Anything that shows pictures of gangs or guns is riveting to some of them. At the same time such pictures can create too much emotion. They wanted me to pass the picture around but I said I could not do that and simply walked quickly around the semi-circle with the picture as a compromise. I told them I wanted to show them something different. I did not want the class to break down at that point into gang talk. I then produced a double-page picture, also from <u>Time</u>, showing the bucket lines at the site of the destruction of the World Trade Center towers. These lines of people from distinct cultural backgrounds were cooperating together to remove, piece by piece, body part by body part, the disaster's wreckage, looking for survivors. I told them, "Here are two examples of community responsibility. Perhaps we will see in the discussion today how they are different."

For the moment I left this illustration to their imaginations. Right now I had their serious attention and that is what I wanted at the moment. Sometimes attracting their initial attention is difficult but the opening metaphor or illustration usually serves this purpose. The opening metaphor can also serve a more important purpose by illustrating the central dialectic involved in the class. For instance, in the case of this class on community responsibility, I chose these two

pictures because they illustrated two distinct poles of understanding concerning community relationships that somehow needed resolution. I did not explain the deeper significance of the pictures at this point in the class because I wanted the actual dialectic to bring out these different perspectives. I hoped at the conclusion of the dialectic to refer back to the pictures as a closure to conclusions that the dialectic might bring out. Such illustrations are powerful too because students remember them. For example, I have used an apple and onion as a metaphor of integrity. Some people are like apples because they have a core of moral principles that they consistently live by. Others are like onions consisting of layers of different personalities, depending on whom they are with, without any core inside. Several months after giving a class on integrity, a student, whom I had not seen for a long time, said, "Hey, you're the apple and onion man!" Once, after a different class, a student asked me why I always "bring this stuff." He was referring to apples and onions, a basketball, a plastic model of a brain, a huge magnet, short film segments, a styrofoam head with a large stick through one eye, a set of measuring scales, etc. I told him the purpose of those things is to help people to remember and I complimented him for remembering.

It was now time to start raising questions: questions that would give them the chance to express their views, questions that would interrogate view points and questions that sought to accomplish resolution or consensus.

First Set of Questions for the Dialectic

To me the hermeneutical procedure of dialectic questioning is most closely allied to a dance. I choreograph the dance by tentatively mapping out the questions and the students provide the music. We dance to their rhythm, at their pace. The movement of thinking during the dialectic sometimes draws us closer and sometimes drives us apart. Sometimes they want to dance and sometimes they don't.

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When I start to ask questions, I usually begin with someone who was talkative when they came into class or someone who already knows me. There are usually at least a couple of people in class who make it known by their gestures and posture that they do not want to talk. I usually wait a few minutes before addressing a question to such students so they can see how the classroom discussion proceeds in a non-threatening way. If I come around to finally to ask one of these students a question and he or she responds by saying, "I don't know," I usually say, "Well, think about. I am interested in what you have to say. I'll come back to you." After about the third come around the person may answer a simple question and, if so, I respond with acknowledgement and respect for the answer. If a student does not want to answer I do not push it. Sometimes a student may not want to answer one week in class and then the following week will be active in class. There are many possible reasons why at a particular moment students do not want to verbally participate: they might be suspicious, they might feel an undercurrent of animosity from another student, they might not feel well physically, they might be depressed, they might be in the middle of a power struggle with some other student, or something (or a great number of things) might be going on in their life that is affecting their concentration. In this regard, the teacher, who assisted me, once told me at the beginning of one class that one particular student, a large, muscular young man from the higher security section, had expressed genuine animosity towards me during the intervening week between my classes. I had no idea what I might have done or said the previous week to produce these feelings. Nonetheless during the present class I addressed questions to him, acknowledged his answers and sincerely praised him for his participation. From that point on he was my friend.

Now, with the first set of questions that ask students to express their perspectives, I hoped to discover what they thought about community responsibility. The logical place to begin these questions from a hermeneutical perspective would be with the meaning of "community" since we can understand the boundaries of and the relationships to community in a variety of senses.

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So I asked them what they thought of when they thought of "community." Some named the city they live in. Others named the moniker that gangs have given to the city. Others said the side of town they live on. Others said, "Where I live." One young man said that he didn't care about the community because it had never done anything for him. His comment led directly to the next question I wanted to raise.

I asked, in general, looking briefly at the floor, not to put this last individual who responded on the spot, "Why do people feel separated from the community? Do you have any idea?" A couple people responded with answers like: they just don't care, the cops are always on your back, they're loners. Then I asked the young man, looking him in the eyes, "What do you think?" He answered that the community had never done anything for him. People just screw you up. At this moment the conversation could have veered in the direction of injustices, which would have been fine given a different topic such as justice. At the moment though I needed to turn the conversation back to the topic at hand. At the same time I filed away the comment for a future class.

I then asked, "Even though we may not feel part of a community, why do we sometimes have this desire to belong at least to a group or a neighborhood? Why do we need community?" "Back-up" was the first answer. You need support. You need to feel that people are there for you. From the students' context these answers may reflect their view of family or their immediate community, their homeboys. Could they see, however, that the community they are, in some sense, responsible for is larger than their homeboys? The next question had to shift their sight to a more comprehensive sense of community.

"What are some different examples of what people do to take care of their community, whether it is their street, their neighborhood or their side of town?" I received a wide variety of answers to this question. They mentioned such things as keeping the peace, picking up trash,

recycling, cleaning up tagging (graffiti), forming sports teams and building recreation centers. The next step was to come closer to them with the question.

What do you think you can personally do to make your neighborhood or community better? Sometimes we hear people "claiming" a certain neighborhood. What can you do if you claim to be from a certain part of town? They responded with a great number of ideas such as, graduating and getting a good job instead of stealing, cleaning up the neighborhood, erase the tagging, donating food to the poor, make a shelter for the poor, coach little league, serve at Mass, recycle, stop vandalizing, fund raisers, come together and fight crime, stopping doing crime, encourage people I know who do wrong to do right, stay out of trouble, go to school. Several people said they would protect their neighborhood. The answers came from about 75% of the class. There were three or four who were not saying anything but were listening.

When members of the class respond to these questions, I am interested in observing their gestures and voice to determine whether they see their suggestions as authentic and real possibilities in their lives. Are they responding just to respond? Are they answering the way they think I want them to respond? Do they see their suggestions as only possibilities way out on the fringe of their real life? I asked individuals for answers, addressing them by name. I directly asked them, "What do you think?" "Have you done this?" As I asked the questions I walked nearer to them by a couple of steps and looked in their eyes. By these gestures I hoped to elicit a more authentic answer. Sometimes the most authentic answer is, "I don't really know what I can do." Some meanings are authentic. Some are idealized. Some are playful. One student said, with an inflection in his voice that was only slightly sincere and a knowing sort of smile, "Have victim awareness programs and create a neighborhood watch to keep the bad people out." I had had him in my class several times before and I knew what he meant and he knew I knew what he meant. This was part of the dance. His neighborhood watch was the same type as the one in the

photograph of gang life in Time. I asked him, "Is that what you really think?" He said, "Yeah, it is." I said to the class, "Well, let's think about this a little further."

At this point I could see it was time to enter the second part of the dialectic that interrogates thinking, raising questions that can encourage a change in perspective. I could see the value of steering the dialectic towards an understanding of the chasm that sometimes exists between what we can think of doing and what we really can imagine ourselves doing or what we really are doing. What is possible? What do we see as possible? What do we really think we will do? What are we really doing?

The first part of the questioning had been fairly successful because students felt free to speak and they answered with a good degree of seriousness, though at times not complete authenticity. On occasion a couple of students will come into class with a giddy sort of demeanor and they will begin to play off each other in class, joking, mocking other students and answering with foolish replies. When this happens, however, the pace of the discussion is labored. I try to address questions to these students that will make them think without making jokes. If the class becomes too involved in the funny business then I pass out a worksheet with the some of the same questions as we might address in the dialogue. Once they have spent time answering some of the questions we could began a verbal discussion. I have the option of removing students from the class but that has happened only twice in two semesters: once when two students had confronted each other and were about to fight, and once when a male student made a derogatory comment to a female student. I would actually rather the students come into the classroom a little mad or irritated for some reason instead of entering the class in a state of mischievous animation.

Second Set of Questions for the Dialectic

To interrogate perceptions and understandings, the second part of the dialectic follows after the first group of questions and answers by asking such things as: Is this really the case? If we

believed this then what would we have to conclude? What would happen if we followed through with this idea in other similar circumstances? What would the world (or the community) be like if everyone did the same?

I had said to the class, after the young man suggested a "neighborhood watch," that it would be a good idea to think more about this, referring to the concept of protecting the neighborhood. To prepare for the direction in which the dialectic was headed, I asked them, "What about toleration, is that a community responsibility?" "What does toleration mean?" I was hoping for some clear commitment on the students' behalf to a meaning for this word. They answered that toleration is to live together, to get along together, to put up with other people. I asked them that if my neighbor is of a different race or culture, how to I tolerate him? They said by accepting him, by not harassing him, by helping him. "Are there people you don't tolerate?" A "no" followed by a qualification, "Well, maybe," was one student's answer. "Who don't you tolerate?" He answered that there were just certain people who didn't belong in the neighborhood. I asked if these were the people they were talking about when they said their responsibility was to protect the neighborhood. Someone else explained that there are some people who don't belong in the neighborhood. He said they don't want the neighborhood to grow too big. "Are these people different than you in some way?" They answered yes. "But you can't tolerate them? Why?" One of the students explained that they are just different and they don't belong. During this interchange the rest of the class had grown a little quiet and the conversation had narrowed to two or three students who were responding to me. The silence was okay because actually everyone was participating. More of the dance.

At that moment I stepped back to lean against the teacher's desk that was at the open end of the semi-circle. I have learned to do this to give them as much space as possible at a critical moment, instead of getting up in their faces as one might do in a threatening moment. It had worked very successfully once previously when I conducted a class on toleration and now I was

going to try it again on a different group of young men (See Chapter One, p. 7). At this moment I felt we were actually on course with the lesson plan and everything was coming together. (It doesn't always come together though and I will momentarily explain the reasons why the process does not turn out as planned sometimes.) Leaning against the desk I said, "There is something I would like to understand. I am a minister and a teacher, not a cop or a probation officer. I just want to know to be able to understand how people think. Can you tell me what the real relationship between violence and drugs is? Is it true that you cannot allow anyone on your turf to sell drugs?" Almost immediately, one young man, perhaps a year or so younger than some of the others, answered, raising his voice and gesturing with his arm, "Yeah, sure, if someone came on my turf to sell drugs I'd kill 'em!" Then just as suddenly as he had spoken, he stopped, and looked around the room, as if he was thinking, "Uh oh, what did I just say?" Another student who had been involved in the previous conversation said, "Well, that's not all there is to it," as if he was covering for the other student. There was no turning back though. The point was too clear. It was a dialectic moment. The manufactured justifications for violence, such as doing the neighborhood a service by protecting it from people who don't belong there, melted away. Violence in that moment appeared in a different light, not community responsibility, but a flagrantly self-interested way of protecting economic resources.

I did not linger on the comments the young men had made. Out of respect I did not want to appear smug or surprised or make them feel sorry they had made responded with such frankness. I treated their response as a serious observation, neutral, without direct critique or approbation, and responded with another question to continue the dialectic. "Let's think about this for a moment. The question we always have to ask ourselves is: what would the world be like? What would the community be like, for instance, if everyone did the same thing you are suggesting? Imagine that there is a Safeway supermarket on one corner of the neighborhood. Then the company that owns Nob Hill decides to build a store nearby. Can the manager of the Safeway

store take a gun and blow out the windows of the Nob Hill store? Is that what we are saying?" The students said of course not but they could not explain why not. It is just different.

This moment in which students confronted the possibility of viewing violence from a different perspective than they normally did was a dialectic moment. It was a sort of climax in the process of questioning that opened up the possibility of viewing reality using a different framework. In phenomenological terms this moment represented the possibility of a shift in the structures of consciousness that perceive and fashion reality. Self-interested community responsibility appeared different from community responsibility that looks after the welfare of others, the good of the larger community. What we imagine we are doing and what we are really doing appeared different. This is a beginning step to doing something different. On this particular occasion the dialectic process was producing penetrating results.

The dialectic, however, does not always progress as I might plan. Dialectic requires a degree of serious thinking on behalf of the students. If the students are agitated, in a mocking mood, or simply disinterested in the subject matter then the questioning will not proceed very easily towards this moment. Furthermore I really would not want to repeat such a highly emotional experience each week. Sometimes I ask the wrong questions because I am mistaken about how the students might think. On occasions the dialectic is private instead a class experience. For instance, during a particular class concerning trust we were discussing one of their sayings they had told me about: "Never trust your girlfriend with your bestfriend." One young man told me that he never denies himself any girl who comes on to him. I asked him, aside, while the group was discussing the issue among themselves, "Do you have a girlfriend?" He looked at me for a second and then said, "No, that's the problem." The moment was just between him and me. Later, at the end of class as he was walking out, he said, "Thanks for coming." Sometimes the dialectic does not work as I planned because the students interrogate my perspective and I am left without a response, forced to think differently about the student's

life-context. This happened, for instance, when I asked if they could move to avoid violence if their life was threatened. "Move?" "We can't move, our parents couldn't find jobs and new places to live."

When the dialectic process does progress well, the attitude of those students who participated in the dialectic and who then attend subsequent classes is a telling indicator of the favorable results I can expect from employing this pedagogical method. Later, following this class on community responsibility, at the next class session (which was actually three weeks later since I had had to leave on a trip) an interesting interchange took place between myself and one of the students. When some of these same students from the previous class entered the classroom, the one student, who had covered for the other student who spoke out about protecting turf, asked me if we were going to talk about gangs again. I told him no, don't worry. We were going to change themes and talk about injustices. (I knew that I could not take advantage of the relationships I had with the students and immediately return to the same emotional level of discussion.) The student was satisfied and cooperated very well in the class discussion that day. His behavior was revealing and amazing to me. He of course remembered at least something of the class after three weeks. He still trusted the classroom atmosphere. Apparently he was a leader among the other students and was the one most likely to be wary of subsequent participation, yet he did not seem guarded in any way. He did not come in with a suspicious mindset, wondering what I was up to. The students had permitted me to enter their world and even question it without holding resentment or expressing antagonism.

The class on community responsibility, however, did not end with this dialectic moment concerning the protection of turf. There still remained a third set of questions to bring the dialectic towards resolution.

Third Set of Questions for the Dialectic

The third group of questions moves the dialectic towards a possible consensus in meaning or a resolution of the paradoxes that the previous questions might have raised. In the classroom discussion the transition from one part of the dialectic to another may not be clear. One part may naturally flow into the next. On the other hand, on occasion I may make the transition explicit so the students can see the progress of the discussion.

On this particular day we were running out of time with less than ten minutes left before the class would end. We had not needed the optional written exercise because the discussion developed successfully without distractions. There would not be very much time for a separate closure activity so I decided at that moment to use this last group of questions to produce a sense of closure at the same time. What questions to ask at this point depends on where the dialectic has led. Predicting direction ahead of time is difficult because the students, the level and depth of participation, and the overall ethos of each specific class differ. Deciding what questions to ask seems somewhat intuitive but in reality the key is to remain focused on the overall goal of the class, in this case an understanding of community responsibility, and try to proceed towards that goal.

We were left with the comparison between protecting the neighborhood from intruders selling drugs on the wrong turf to a store manager protecting his sales against the competition. I hoped to bring the discussion back to the possibility of creating a positive meaning for community responsibility. I remembered the pictures I had introduced at the beginning of the class and wanted to bring attention back to them too.

"We're getting close to the end of class time so let's see how far we have come in our discussion and what we can conclude together. Remember these pictures. Think about them for a minute. In each case, how do these people leave their community? In other words, what I want to ask is how do you think the immediate community feels after the actions of these

people? For instance, when all these people at the site of destruction of the World Trade Center work together doing what they are doing, how does the community feel?" After a few seconds of silence a couple of students replied that they would feel good. There was not a lot of response at this point but everyone was looking up and apparently thinking. I asked how exactly they would feel good. Why would they feel good? Someone answered that they would feel better, like pulling together and supporting each other. "You are exactly right," I said. "And what about here in this place?" referring to the other picture of gang life in Los Angeles. Silence. "I mean, how would the people in the community feel? The older people, the young children, and even the teenagers? What do you think they feel." "Afraid," one person answered. "Do they really feel protected?" I asked. No answer. "That is probably a good question we could always ask about community responsibility: How do we leave the community?" "How do we leave the neighborhood?"

"You know, I am not against gangs. People need to belong. We need to have support. You could say I belong to a gang because I hang out frequently with a certain group of people. We share things in common, do things together, and sacrifice for each other. My question is, and maybe you might think this is a stupid question, but is it possible to use our gang to do something for the community that would leave it better? Some of you mentioned at the beginning about cleaning up the neighborhood, coaching a sports team - - could members of a gang do these things or, for instance, help fix up some elderly person's house? Do you think that's possible? I don't know but that is what I wonder about. What do you think?" (I realized while I was talking that I was talking a lot but sometimes at this point they are really focused and silent. The temptation to me is to bring things to a conclusion. On other occasions just the opposite is true. Towards the end students get involved in side conversations, mainly about the topic and I have to work to bring them together.) Someone answered, "Yeah, maybe." Someone else said, "People just wouldn't do it." "Well," I said, "just think about it."

About three or four minutes still remained before the guards would come to take them back to the rooms or dorms. I thanked them for working together on this topic and told them I really appreciate their openness. A couple of them thanked me. I told them that I respect them for what they have to say. Then I said they could have the last few minutes to talk among themselves. By the time the guards came, the conversation was back up to the same level of animation as it was when they earlier entered the classroom.

I would have enjoyed continuing this discussion. I wonder about the possibility of a group changing its relationship towards the neighborhood or community that it claims. I am sure there are those, if not in this class, in other classes, who are so involved in making money from the sale of drugs or in the power and excitement of defending their "hood" that at the moment the possibility of changing their group's goals is highly unlikely. In fact, in another class a student interrogated my thinking by responding that if they did not defend their turf then the enemy would move in and take their ground. Relying on the police to protect the neighborhood was out of the question. An interesting subject for discussion might be to talk about what would be required to form an alliance with the police. The specter of police harassment as well as drug use and sales probably form the center of this paradox for these young people.

In class I always follow the principle that one never knows what someone might be thinking. Furthermore I look at the classroom experience as a place to plant some seeds that may not germinate until some time in the future. A guest speaker once came to the detention facility who had been a former gang member and heavy drug user in another city. He eventually left the gangs, attended an ivy-league university, and graduated in sociology. He said that what motivated him to change the course of his life when he was in his twenties was the acceptance and respect he received from his eighth grade teacher. The respect that this teacher communicated left a long-lasting seed of possibility in this man. His story reminds me of what

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these classes in character are really supposed to achieve: the possibility of seeing one's world in a different way, with different possibilities.

Chapter Six

Conclusion

This action research project began with two closely interconnected questions concerning moral education at juvenile detention facilities. First, given the unique multicultural issues involved in teaching students at such facilities, what type of moral education curriculum would be appropriate? Second, due to the hermeneutical concerns inherent in moral discourse, especially when the life contexts and worldviews of students and teacher may be dissimilar, what pedagogical method would be most effective at a juvenile detention facility? Experiences in the classroom and previous work in moral and hermeneutical philosophy pointed me in certain directions that were worthy of further exploration.

First, a virtue-based character education curriculum, focused on such moral principles as respect, responsibility, trust, self-discipline, and integrity, promised to provide grounds for a multicultural understanding of moral responsibility. Second, dialectical process as a pedagogy also provided the possibility of movement between the contextualized perspectives of students and teacher to arrive at the mutually acceptable moral understandings required in a culturally diverse society.

With these directions in mind, I completed a review of literature from the pertinent domains of social science as well as moral and hermeneutical philosophy to discover what support there might be for using this particular curriculum and pedagogy at a juvenile detention facility. Based on the possibilities presented in the literature I designed and implemented an action research project using a virtue-based character education curriculum in conjunction with a pedagogy modeled after hermeneutical dialectic. After having analyzed the data from this project in the previous chapter, I would now like to reflect back on the literature to consider how the classroom experience compares with the expectations of the literature. In addition I will

consider some significant themes that emerged from the classroom practice, followed by some final, personal reflections.

Reflections from the Literature Review

First, in regards to the effectiveness of virtue-based character education, the literature predicted that moral virtues provide concrete moral content that could form the basis for common moral understanding and practice across diverse cultural groups. In the classroom we found that we can all agree on the validity of acting justly, responsibly, honestly, with trust and self-discipline. One student once told me, "Mr. Fox, we understand what is right. We just don't do it. We don't think." In the classroom, for instance, we could agree that a person ought to act responsibly and justly. The objective of class discussions, however, was to move from an understanding of the meaning of these abstract virtues to the practice of concrete principles that derive from these virtues. Clearly some young people do not think, as this young man remarked, and, instead, act impulsively. There are certainly other reasons why people fail to practice the virtues in a way that would be good for the whole of the community, across cultural boundaries. Sometimes the good of the group conflicts with the good of the community and young people, out of loyalty to the group, commit acts that harm the community as a whole. Furthermore, students have a tendency to see themselves in moral isolation from the rest of society. When I told a student about an acquaintance of mine, a professional and father of two small children, who was killed in gang crossfire when he drove down the main street of a central California town, the student responded, "Well, he just got in the way." To escape moral isolation, the literature of moral philosophy suggested a structure for moving from the virtues to specific moral principles that are universalizable. Kant's categorical imperative implies the questions, What would my family be like? What would my community be like? What would the world be like if everyone followed the same moral principles I do? These questions would help this student interrogate the implications of his reasoning. What would he think or how would he respond if it

was his brother or his friend who "just got in the way?" In the classroom these questions proved useful to move thinking away from narrow cultural confines to broader, socially responsible perspectives.

Secondly, the literature indicated the possibilities that hermeneutical dialectic offers as a pedagogy to teach the virtue-based curriculum at juvenile detention facilities. Dialectical process appreciates the hermeneutical issues involved in discussing topics, like moral understanding, that are deeply couched in cultural contexts. It gives students the opportunity to express their perspectives within the context of the classroom. At the same time the dialectical method practiced in this research project provided a procedure for respectfully interrogating cultural perspectives and arriving at consensus or resolution in moral understanding. The dialectic moments, in which the familiar suddenly becomes strange, that took place in the classroom experience indicated the first important steps in the progress of understanding. Sometimes, simply because of the respectful atmosphere of the dialectic, moments of sudden realization developed. Once we were engaged in a dialectic about the affects of marijuana on young developing brains. I had explained, physiologically, why thought processes tend to slow down when a young person regularly uses marijuana. The students admitted that some people get "stuck", as they say, but offered counter-examples of smoking marijuana without any lasting effects. Then one student said that he had been smoking marijuana since he was ten (he was now sixteen) and had had no side effects. However he said this, quite incredibly, with slow, lethargic expression, not realizing how he sounded. Many of the other students suddenly had a look of surprise perhaps mixed with a little fear. They looked like they were asking themselves, "Oh _____, is that how I sound?" Such moments coupled with authentic student participation demonstrated the value of dialectic in permitting respectful self-interrogation. Furthermore, the honest responses of students constantly informed the curriculum with emic perspectives.

In addition to confirming the predictions of the literature, practicing the curriculum and pedagogy in the classroom also elaborated other discreet themes relative to moral education in a juvenile detention facility.

Reflections from Classroom Practice

The nature of qualitative research opened up my range of vision to observe phenomena that I was not necessarily expecting. As a participant-observer, I even became part of the object of my research, noting how the class changed me as a teacher. Through the classroom practice certain themes emerged that further informed my understanding and practice.

For instance, I began to appreciate the centrality of respect in the lives of these students and the need for me to consistently show respect. Because of a multitude of factors in their lives, not the least of which is their incarceration, respect is at issue. Some turn their incarceration into a symbol of respect. Others demand respect through the instrumentality of fear. Some capitulate and surrender even their self-respect. The fact that respect figures high on their lists of virtues that they expect to see in people is revealing. During a class on the subject of respect, I asked students what signs and gestures communicated respect to them. One student, a physically intimidating gang member who had been in my classes several times, looked up from his desk and quickly responded, "Looking you in the eyes and shaking your hand." I took his words to mean that all the times I had looked him in the eyes and shaken his hand when he entered the class had counted for something in our relationship. The success of the pedagogy depends on consistently demonstrating respect because the students consciously follow the principle of respecting those who respect them. Consistency in showing respect is possible if respect is unconditional, separating the person from the deeds, respecting the person as a human being.

Power was another theme, related to respect and equally important among the students, that emerged from the classroom experience. They have experienced many contexts in their lives in which they have felt powerless. In one class the students were speaking about their experiences in court. During their hearings in juvenile court they have the opportunity to speak on their own behalf but many of them feel very intimidated by the whole process. Once they are in court, with

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little knowledge of legal proceedings, sitting below the eye level of the judge, next to their public defender who may or may not be competent, whether they are guilty or innocent, they commonly feel very little confidence to speak on their own behalf. One girl told me that her throat closes up and she can't say anything when it is her turn to speak. In class, for the dialectic process to work, students must feel empowered to express their moral beliefs and must feel safe enough to examine them. If I can create this kind of atmosphere in the classroom, progress in understanding will take place. The dialectic can be successful because it creates a sort of balance of power in the classroom. As the instructor I can give direction to the dialectic but, at the same time, the students can shut down the process anytime they wish by either refusing to participate or answering in an inauthentic way. There are sometimes students who act as gatekeepers in the classroom and, unless they let me in, the discussion does not move and I end up lecturing to empty looking faces. In such cases I lose. The students must decide to let me in and then I can guide the questioning process. I am reminded of one occasion when I asked them to teach me about drugs, an issue where knowledge construction could be a tool of power. During the class they began to ask me questions and at one point said, "You tell us." They were interested in a more exact knowledge of the physiological effects of drugs, beyond the street mythology. At that point I felt like they had given me permission that I did not want to abuse. Another issue of power relates to female voices. Girls at the facility commonly answer, "I don't know," to questions I personally address to them. In the classroom I must concentrate on giving them voice and asking them to participate while modeling respect for their views. Some girls have taken advantage of this and have been very expressive.

Another key theme that emerged through the classroom practice is the need to see new alternatives and new strategies for moral behavior as possible. The degree to which the students take to heart the dialectic moments depends on whether they actually believe changing their way of life is possible given their life context or just an ideal far from practical realization. In a class on self-discipline at the detention facility, a student, who had been convicted of a crime and was about to leave for a prison in the California Youth Authority system, asked me, "How can I do

this at CYA?" There was doubt in his voice but yet he had not said, "I can't do this since I'm going to CYA." So we discussed, along with other students in the class, how to exercise self-discipline in the harsh environment of CYA. The dialectic has to bridge this gap between the ideal and the possible with direction that is practical from their point of view.

The final theme that continually manifested itself in these classes is an admission on my part: dialectic process is not easy to use. In the detention facility classes, conducting a dialectic means constantly trying to imagine what the students are thinking from their contexts, trying to predict how they might react given their presuppositions, imagining during the process which questions might lead in which directions, being aware of possible dialectic moments that might develop, maintaining focus on the topic of discussion, bringing people into the discussion who might be lost on the fringes, and showing respect and patience. On the outside I have to be patient and confident, not in a cocky way but in a humble way, letting them know that I know what I know, and that I know what I do not know, and that I am ready to let them teach me what I do not know. On the inside I feel the pressure of having to think several steps ahead and the anxiety of really not knowing what is coming next. If I go into class ill prepared I am dead. If I stay up too late the night before worrying over my preparations and do not get enough sleep to have the energy to think clearly, I am dead. If I go into class with my mind cluttered by my own personal issues, I am dead. Teaching through dialectic method is not easy in this environment but didactic styled lecture would clearly be ineffectual. It is not easy but it is worth the effort, if for no other reason than the transforming power it has had on my character as a teacher. It has been character education for me

Personal Reflections

Teaching ought to be transforming because it is a relational activity. We are at least with people when we teach and in some cases, unfortunately, that is the extent of the relationship: the teacher is just with the students. Authentic teaching, of course, is interrelational when teachers teach and learners learn and, more, when teachers learn and learners teach. A teacher communicates meaning and then must interpret the meaning that students give to what they

learn. The interpretation of the students' meaning then alters at some level the meaning that the teacher subsequently communicates, unless the teacher just robotically repeats the same meaning despite what the student communicates in return. This reality recalls Gallagher's statement that, "Educational experience is always hermeneutical experience (1992). To put it another way, teachers can learn from students because of the dialectic nature of human experience. Whether we are involved in formal dialectic process or simply communicating and interpreting meaning, we move from our poles of understanding, if only infinitesimally. From a hermeneutical viewpoint then teaching ought to be transforming.

Teaching at the detention facility has changed me. I do not remember anymore what I thought about gang members before I started teaching at this facility. Through our classroom conversations about issues that really matter, I have experienced on some level their dilemmas, their paradoxes, their doubts, and their realities. Some have let me into their world, they have confided in me, and now I see differently. I live to understand people, how they come to believe what they believe, how they make choices, and why they decide to live one way and not another way. Understanding changes my perspectives and changes me.

The dialectic process not only gives students the chance to interrogate their beliefs but it also interrogates my perspectives, suppositions, and worldview as a teacher. I could sit at home and read a book that might raise questions and stimulate some new creative thinking but there is something powerful about live dialectic. At the detention center there is something real at stake; it is not just a mental activity. Interrogation is vital to me. I want to get it right because people are getting hurt.

These experiences have altered the context of my teaching. The hermeneutical context of life is not stagnant if we are out in the world, always with different people. Now when I teach, the context of my communication has broadened to include new understandings I would not have otherwise discovered. No doubt the students have experienced something a little different than the world they are accustomed to through our conversations and their context may have changed.

Have they changed? This is the question program assessment would raise. I may never know the answer. They certainly have not become like me, nor have I become like them. This is not the goal. The goal that we have realized is the possibility of seeing moral decisions in a different light. If dialectic process can alter perspectives then it opens the possibilities of changing consciousness and, consequently changing behavior. In this way my expectations have changed. I am not looking for some dramatic change on a grand scale but, instead, indications of the first steps that can lead to change.

To picture how transformation happens in me as a teacher, I would like to relate one final story. There was one student I had in my class over a period of fourteen months, on and off. He was sixteen when I first met him. Medium height and stocky, he had all the typical markings of gang membership, including tattoos identifying what he claimed. When he spoke he moved his hands and arms in classic gang gestures. His voice had the practiced inflection of Chicano street speech. I did note one difference in his demeanor that distinguished him from some other gang members: he had never given me that hard look in class that says, "I don't know what you're up to but just don't mess with me." Instead he was laid back and liked to joke.

Although he participated in class discussions he joked enough that I never knew for a long time whether I was getting through to him. I did not know if he was taking seriously what we discussed in class. Then one day I began a class on self-discipline and I asked the students what they understood the word "self-discipline" to mean. I asked them to think about someone they knew who was self-disciplined and to describe the qualities they saw in that person. The class happened to be a small group of students who were accused of serious crimes and this young man was present. He immediately answered, "You, Mr. Fox." At first I thought he was joking. Then I discovered he was serious and I felt embarrassed because I had not taken him seriously. I could only respond by asking him why. He said, "Because you come in here in nice clothes, you know how to talk, and you know what you are talking about." I thanked him for his comment but continued with the questioning as quickly as possible because I did not know how to handle

the moment. It was a dialectic moment for me - - thinking that I could be a role model for a gang member - - the familiar was really looking strange.

Then sometime later I conducted a class on wisdom. This same student had asked that we discuss wisdom. The first class session I brought a variety of wisdom sayings and asked each student to interpret one. After each student spoke, we critically examined the saying for its practical value. I then asked the students to bring their own wisdom sayings to the next class session the following week. That week we followed a similar procedure. Each student read his or her wisdom saying, interpreted it, and then we critically examined its practical application in dialectic fashion. This student was the last one to speak and his wisdom saying was, "Only the strong survive." I asked him what that meant. He said, with his usual gestures and street voice, "If you have the weapons and the back-up, you'll survive." I asked him if he had ever heard of the strong dying for the weak. He said, well, yeah, he had. We talked about instances of self-sacrifice for a moment. Then I asked him, "You say that only the strong survive. Wouldn't it be possible for some weak, skinny, little guy to come up to you when you're alone and shoot you?" He thought about it for a second, smiled big, and said, "Eh, Mr. Fox, let's just forget I brought it up." About that moment the class ended.

Later he was released from the facility. I saw him one day in a department store in the local mall or, rather, he saw me. I heard someone calling out my name from across the store. It was him. He was dressed well in street clothes, no gang colors. I said, "Hey you're on the outs. You look great." He told me, "Mr. Fox, I want you to meet my mom." It was another dialectic moment: a gang member wanting to introduce me to his mom. The three of us spoke briefly. I told him I had to be gone for awhile but when I return I wanted to talk some more with him. He said he would like that and so I gave him my phone number.

A couple days later I left for three weeks to teach in Russia. Upon returning I went back to the detention facility to teach. The first day I was back one of the teachers who assisted me asked if I had heard about _____. I said, "No, why?" "He's dead." I was stunned. It wasn't possible. "But I just recently saw him. What happened?" The teacher explained that he had

been walking down the street in broad daylight and someone came up to him and shot him in the stomach, killing him. That day I just went home. I could not teach. For the moment I did not have the strength to face the students, their paradoxes and their dilemmas.

Two days later I went to his funeral. I was the only white person in the crowd, a huge crowd made up of many gang bangers, some who knew me from classes they had been in with me. Police cars patrolled up and down the street in front of the church to ward off follow-up violence. I had a moment to speak with his mother and express the sadness I felt and the respect I had for her son, but she was dazed, emotionally drained of words.

What had happened? Did he know too much to leave the gang? Had he been tempted to step back in? Had he really left? The secrecy enveloping gang movements did not permit answers to these questions. His mother quickly moved to another state, mainly for the protection, I suspected, of her younger son.

One thing I do know is that he had let me in. He was willing to be interrogated and he interrogated me. He always reminds me that I really don't know what students are thinking, no matter how they may respond in class. His memory still fills me with courage to continue teaching.

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Rubric for Multicultural Character Education
in a Juvenile Detention Facility

The following rubric is useful for describing progress in development and use of virtue-based character education curriculum using hermeneutical dialectic as pedagogy in a juvenile detention facility.

Element	Practice inconsistent with curriculum goals	Beginning practice	Developing practice	Experienced practice consistent with curriculum goals
Consideration of list of virtues by the students themselves	Teacher or administration composes list of virtues	Students have input concerning list of virtues but teacher makes final decision based on curriculum requirements	Students draw up list without critically thinking about the virtues	Teacher instructs in critical thinking techniques that students use to compile list
Knowledge construction of the meaning of the virtues	Teacher explains meaning and refers to preselected quotes	Teachers raises questions relevant to students but answers those questions without listening to students	Dialogue with students concerning a particular virtue without direction or synthesis	Dialectic with critical analysis, respecting students contextualized perspectives while arriving at a critical synthesis
Ability to reason to derive practical principles from virtues	Teach virtues without showing practical application that logically follows	Teacher explains what principles derive from which virtues	Teacher instructs students through guided practice to learn to derive their own principles	Students logically derive practical principles they are personally committed to follow
Engagement of students in class	Continuous side-conversations and distractions – teacher tries to talk over the confusion	Teacher conducts discussion with two or three students while others looked disinterested	A few students contribute to the discussion while others listen	Nearly all of the students contribute to the discussion and remain focused on the theme.
Ability to listen to both sides of an issue	Classroom discussions are free-for-all	Teacher sets out rules for discussion but is inconsistent in application	Orderly and calm discussion but little intellectual engagement between sides	Students practice orderly intellectual engagement
Level of authenticity of students' comments	Students say what the teacher wants them to say.	Students say what other students want them to say.	Students say what they believe and mean.	Students interrogate what they believe ane mean.

Dialectic interrogation	Students say whatever comes to their mind about the subject matter	Students consider the responses and meanings of other students and of the teacher, but without self-interrogation.	Students respond and make comments showing that they are examining their own meanings from different contexts	Students express movement towards a broader, cross-cultural view of virtues.
Consensus	Students do not elaborate their own meanings concerning the virtues.	Students express their own understanding but with little motivation to come to agreement with other perspectives.	Students begin to work towards consensus by recognizing other perspectives and attempting to reconcile them with their own.	Students accept consensus constructed through classroom experience.

Lesson: Community Responsibility

I. Purpose

    A. Discuss the meaning and practice of community responsibility

    B. Interrogate the paradox of isolation from community and the sense of claiming community.

    C. Discuss how to make a positive commitment to the community

II. Opening metaphor

    A. Show two pictures that illustrate two entirely different perspectives on community responsibility.

        1. Picture of bucket line at the site of the destruction of the World Trade Center towers. People of all cultures working together to rescue people, support each other, and clean up the rubble

        2. Picture of gang members standing watch over their neighborhood. One gang member is on roof top with a rifle, over looking the street below. Another gang member (not seen) is in the street below with a hand gun in his pocket, flashing signs to passing cars. If a car of rival gang members comes through the neighborhood, the gang member on the roof top ambushes them. This is their way of protecting the neighborhood.

    B. How are these two pictures different as examples of community responsibility? In each case how would the members of the community feel?

III. Dialectic

    A. First set of questions (expressions of concept).

        1. What are some different ways people may understand what the word "community" refers to?

        2. Why do people want to feel a part of a community?

        3. People who don't want to feel a part of the community?

        4. Can people live completely without the community?

        5. What motivates people to help their community in some way?

        6. What are some different examples of what people do to take care of their community or neighborhood?

        7. What do you think you are responsible to do for your community if you "claim" it?

B. Second set of questions (interrogation of concepts).

1. Why is toleration a community responsibility?

2. In what ways do you expect people to tolerate you?

3. In what ways are you responsible to tolerate others?

4. What do you think people mean when they describe their responsibility as the protection of their neighborhood?

5. What or who are they protecting it from?

6. What does violence in the neighborhood have to do with drugs?

7. What would the community be like if other people in other circumstances did the same?

C. Third set of questions (consensus, resolution).

1. What can we conclude about the meaning of community responsibility?

2. In what condition do you leave the community? In other words, how does the community look or feel after you do whatever you do?

3. What can you commitment yourself to do for the good of the community?

4. Is it possible for gangs to organize to create some positive good in the community?

5. What would stop them from doing this? Drugs, rival gangs, just the enjoyment and excitement of fighting?

6. What could be done about the obstacles?

IV. Written exercise (optional)

A. What does the word "community" refer to? Town? Neighborhood? Street? Family? Friends?

B. Explain how you feel about your relationship to the larger community you live in.

C. Do you depend on this community for anything?

D. What are some examples of things people do because they feel responsible to their community?

E. What can you commit yourself to do for the community?

V. Closure

A. Quick review of ground covered and conclusions.

CPHS # 02-017

Dear Mr. Fox:

Your research project "Character Education from the Perspectives of Students in Youth Detention" has been reviewed by the CSUMB Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects under Full Board Review "Level III" procedure because the study involves sensitive issues, vulnerable population and it is considered to be high risk. This project is approved for human subject research, and is valid for a period of one year from the Board approval date of January 30, 2002.

NOTE:
1. This Committee complies with the requirements found in Part 56 of the 21 Code of Federal Regulations and Part 46 of the 45 Code of Federal Regulations.
2. Re-review of this proposal is necessary if:
    Any significant alterations or additions to the proposal are made and/or if;
    You wish to continue beyond the above date.

All the best with your project. The Committee apologies for the delay in notification.

Sincerely,

Cindy Lopez
Administrator, CPHS

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