A NATURALISTIC STUDY OF THE MORAL LANGUAGES OF CHILDREN

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

Moral education is one of school's oldest missions and one of our newest fads. (Purpel, D. & Ryan, K., 1975). Since the time of the ancient Greeks, moral thinkers and educational reformers have given attention to the school's role in moral development. Due to the perceived moral decline of our post-modern culture in the latter half of the 20th century, our nation has experienced a dramatic increase in the political, religious and educational rhetoric about the role of schools in the moral education of the young.

Our search for a moral compass has intensified over the last decade with the shocking increase in school violence that has shaken the foundations of the moral fabric of our society. Just a decade ago, violence was something we saw on our TV screens that took place in the urban cities of our nation. Middle class America seemed immune from the nightly news scenes of inner-city neighborhoods besieged by daily shootings, drug dealers, gang rapes and murder.

However, violence has hit home. What used to be an inner-city problem has now become the problem of middle-class suburbia. Nicky Cruz, an expert in urban violence observed in 1995 (Mintle):

> The middle and upper class suburbs were content to let those in the inner city destroy themselves. When I first started warning America about the powder keg, no one

projected that the ghettos' problems were going to become everyone's problems, including the suburbs (p. 11).

In Jonesboro, Arkansas; Paducah, Kentucky; Springfield, Oregon; Littleton, Colorado; Edinborough, Pennsylvania and Fort Gibson, Oklahoma, kids are killing kids. People of opposing political parties, differing religious factions, educational philosophies and worldviews agree on one thing—there is a moral crisis in our nation. But beyond that, there is little agreement on what to do about it.

In response to the tragic events that have plagued our nation, the school's role in the development of morality has become a topic of heated debate and clashing opinions among educators, parents and politicians. Moral education has become top priority on our national agenda. In January of 1997 Present Clinton made the development of children's character a national priority in his Annual State of the Union Address.

Moral education has been described as "a name for nothing clear" (Purpel, D., Ryan, K., 1975) but because it deals with fundamental human concerns that relate to our day-to-day living, it has the potential to stir up deep emotion and passion, creating a situation that is much like a minefield.

Background of the Problem

John Dewey wrote (cited in Purpel & Ryan 1975):

A child's moral character must develop in a natural, just, and social atmosphere. The school should provide this environment for its part in the child's moral development (p. 659).

The first American schools were founded upon the belief that school should be an active and positive force in the moral development of the young. Throughout the colonial period and into the nineteenth century, schools flourished under this notion. Things began to change, however, by two powerful forces—industrialization and immigration. With the advent of the industrial revolution and new technologies, kinship ties were broken and old values began to be replaced by new ones. Massive immigration introduced new cultural mores and values. A large number of immigrants were Catholics and Jews who were in opposition to the explicit Protestant moral code being taught in the public schools. Over a period of time, the school's role as a moral force began to be neutralized. Scientific reason and cultural relativism began to quench Protestant moral values. The teaching of an explicit moral code began to disappear.

The 1940's and 50's in America were shaped by World War II, the Korean War and the Cold War. By this time, a specific moral code identified with Protestant theology had all but disappeared, but a more generalized imperative was given to schools to reflect the best values of their community. Often with the zeal of a preacher, public school teachers preached what they knew to be the correct way to live. America and the democratic way were taught as the last great hope for a world threatened by communism (Ryan, 1986). Children were taught to obey the rules and respect authority.

With the 1960's came the Kennedy administration and a brief surge of idealism. Young Americans were challenged to serve their country. Almost immediately after the assassination of President Kennedy in 1963, an attitude of distrust toward the government swept our country, and there began a focus on individual rights. The new anti-authority attitude began to gradually erode the esteem and value heretofore given to teachers.

Young people began to question sexual mores, the role of patriotism and began to test the limits of civil disobedience. Individual rights and freedom were celebrated over responsibility. Lickona (1993) describes this new philosophy of morality as "personalism." Societal oppression and injustices were rightly protested, but personalism delegitimized moral authority and eroded belief in an objective moral norm. As a result, people turned inward toward self-fulfillment and social commitments to marriage and family were weakened. According to sociologist, Amitai Etzioni, young people began to chafe under the confines of traditional community values and in the name of freedom and self-realization there emerged a disconnected, self-centered, aimless quest for personal advancement (cited in Damon, 1995). The real tragedy, says Etzioni, is that "when a sense of community vanishes, then the fundamental sense of 'we-ness' that established the very basis of morality cannot long endure" (p. 66). In response to the moral chaos of the time, teachers began to retreat from their positions as moral authorities and began to take a more technical approach to teaching (Ryan, 1986).

In the 1970's, the academic community introduced the concept of values clarification in reaction to moral ambiguity of the times. Based on the work of Abraham Maslow and Carl Rogers, students were directed to use both rational thinking and emotional awareness to examine personal behavior patterns and to clarify and actualize their values (Huitt, 1998). The concept embraced a moral relativity in which one person's values are as good as another's, even when opposing values are embraced (DeVries, 1998). Students were encouraged to engage in discussion and activities that caused them to wrestle with such issues as war and family and human relations of all kinds. It was very much an individual process as opposed to a social one. Very little was required of

teachers except to remain neutral during discussions and not impose their own values on the students or declare anyone's perspective to be right or wrong.

In reflecting upon the values clarification movement, William Damon contends that values neutrality on the part of adults has the very opposite effect than that intended. "By failing to confront children with real beliefs, genuinely held, such displays engender in children an attitude of passive indifference—and even cynicism towards the enterprise of moral choice. Why should a child bother working through a moral problem, or risk taking a stand, when the child's moral mentor refrains from doing so" (Damon, 1995, p. 150.)?

By the 1980's, with the Vietnam War behind us, a society exhausted by the internal strife of Watergate seemed to be ready to return to "normal". With the election of Ronald Reagan, an upbeat manner seemed to sweep our nation (Ryan, 1986). Church attendance began to rise, the divorce rate started to decline and the national economy and national spirit were high. In 1980, there were predictions that President Reagan would abolish the Department of Education and forget about schools. In reality, quite the opposite happened. Throughout the Reagan administration, education was kept on the front page of newspapers across the nation. An array of government task forces and commissions published reports citing the failure of public schools both academically and morally.

In 1980 a Gallup Poll addressed the issue of moral education in the public schools. It posed the question, "Would you favor or oppose instruction in the schools that would deal with morals and moral behavior?" (Ryan, 1986). Seventy-nine percent of the participants in the survey indicated that they would favor such instruction. Eighty-four percent of the participants with children in public schools favored moral education in the

schools. Educators, politicians and academics pondered the ramifications of this strong public call for moral education in the schools and anguished over what moral values should be taught in a pluralistic society.

Two men appeared on the public scene at this point in time who were quite willing to offer solutions to the problem. The first was William Bennett, who was at the time, Secretary of Education. The second was Bill Honig, California State Superintendent of Public Education. Both men supported the notion that public schools should teach the traditional American values of love of country, courage and respect for elders, including parents, teachers and other adults. Teachers were urged not only to help children become smart, but to also help them become good. Both men criticized the value-neutral, contentless moral approaches of the 60's and 70's. They both spoke out in support of character education which sparked the beginning of the character education movement in the mid 80's and continues to enjoy popularity today.

In 1993, a national coalition called The Character Education Partnership (CEP) was launched with the goal of putting character development at the top of the nation's educational agenda. Representatives from business, labor, government, youth, parents, faith communities and the media serve with the coalition. This organization defines character education as: "the long-term process of helping young people develop good character, ie. knowing, caring about, and acting on core ethical values such as fairness, honesty, compassion, responsibility, and respect for self and others" (Schaeffer, 1999, p. 3).

This surge of interest in character education has been fueled by three widely recognizable trends: the decline of the family, troubling trends in youth character and the

recovery of shared, objectively important ethical values (Lickona, 1993). But perhaps the most appealing aspect of the character education movement is the fact that it stresses the importance of socialization, a notion that was very much out of vogue in the moral philosophies of earlier decades (Ryan, 1986). Learning how to live together in a civilized fashion is an underlying principle of character education.

CEP has identified "Six Pillars of Character" that should be incorporated into any character education program. They are trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring and citizenship (www.charactercounts.org.). Effective techniques for teaching these six pillars of character may vary, but it is generally agreed that character education must be deliberate, intentional and integrated into all aspects of school life, such as academic curricula, sports and other extra-curricular activities (Schaffer, 1999).

A Critique of Character Education

Alfie Kohn (1997) has this to say about the character education movement:

> What goes by the name of character education nowadays is, for the most part, a collection of exhortations and extrinsic inducements designed to make children work harder and do what they're told...the preferred method of instruction is tantamount to indoctrination. The point is to drill students in specific behaviors rather than to engage them in deep, critical reflection about certain ways of being (p. 429).

Kohn asserts that character education programs have a "fix the kid" orientation that stems from an underlying dark view of children and human nature in general as revealed in the writings of Kirkpatrick and Ryan. In his book, Why Johnny Can't Tell Right from

Wrong (1992), Kirkpatrick acknowledges that "a comprehensive approach to character education is based on a somewhat dim view of human nature" (p. 249).

This sentiment is also echoed by F. Washington Jarvis, the headmaster of Roxbury Latin School in Boston, one of Ryan's favorite examples of what character education should be. Jarvis describes human nature as "Mean, nasty, brutish, selfish and capable of great cruelty and meanness. We have to hold a mirror up to students and say, 'This is who you are.'" (cited in Kohn, 1997).

Character education programs often embody the Protestant work ethic which says that children should "work hard and complete their tasks well and promptly, even when they do not want to" (Ryan, 1993, cited in Kohn, 1997). Kohn questions the wisdom of training people to never question or challenge what they have been told to do and to label such passive compliance as virtue. Character education curriculum often stresses the value of such qualities as "respect," "responsibility," and "citizenship." Kohn criticizes this notion as, "slippery terms, frequently used as euphemisms for uncritical deference to authority" (Kohn, 1997, p. 432). His point of view is shared by William Glasser who observed that: "many educators teach thoughtless conformity to school rules and call the conforming child 'responsible'" (Glasser, 1969, p.22).

Is Kohn then, opposed to teaching values in schools? No, definitely not. In his own words (1997):

> Should we allow values to be taught in school? The question is about as sensible as asking whether our bodies should be allowed to contain bacteria. Just as humans are teeming with microorganisms, so schools are teeming with values. Whether or not we deliberately adopt a character or moral education program, we are always teaching

values. Even people who insist that they are opposed to values in school usually mean they are opposed to values other than their own (p. 432).

Kohn believes that in order to raise children who are intrinsically committed to a particular way of being and who are motivated to continue that way of life, we must engage children's minds in critical reflection so that certain ways of being become integrated into the child's personal value structure. Rheta DeVries (1998) echoes Kohn's position:

> Constructivist character development is not only following moral rules, but also wanting to follow them out of personal conviction and belief that these rules are necessary in relations with others. The central conception in this view is that the child must actively construct the values implicit in good character in the course of social relations. The underlying human capacity that gives rise to character development (both undesirable and desirable) is the capacity for constructive activity (p 40).

Constructivist Moral Education

A Piagetian constructivist view of moral education puts emphasis on the active and social nature of development. Piaget distinguished between two different types of morality. "Heteronomous" morality means unquestioning obedience and conformity to external rules and those in authority. By contrast, "autonomous" morality means commitment to self-constructed principles which are adhered to out of a feeling of personal necessity.

In an adult-child relationship characterized by heteronomous morality, coercion or restraint is used to control the child. The child is expected to respect the adult who uses authority to instruct and socialize the child. The child's behavior is not determined by a system of internalized beliefs, but is motivated by a system of rules and constraints imposed by someone else. Heteronomous control can range from being hostile and punitive to sugarcoated control. This is not to say that heteronomy is never appropriate and always unavoidable. For practical reasons, psychological pressures on adults and for matters involving health and safety adults must sometimes exert control and restraint upon children. However, if children are always controlled and constrained and never given the opportunity to regulate themselves, such submission can lead to mindless conformity both morally and intellectually.

In contrast, an adult child relationship based on autonomous morality is characterized by mutual respect. The adult restrains himself from exerting unnecessary external control in order to provide opportunity for the child to develop a system of internal self-control and to develop moral ways of being that take into account the best interest of all parties involved. It was Piaget's belief that coercion only superficially affects a child's behavior and actually reinforces the child's reliance upon external regulation by others. On the other hand, when adults respect the viewpoint of the child and encourage the child in turn, to consider the viewpoint of others, an opportunity is given to the child to develop relationships based on mutual affection and trust that results in feelings of sympathy and consciousness of the intentions of self and others (DeVries, 1997).

So what are the implications of constructivist moral teaching on the classroom? The first principle is that the teacher must strive to establish an interpersonal atmosphere in

which mutual respect is continually practiced (DeVries, R. & Zan, B. 1994). In such an atmosphere of mutual respect, the teacher appeals to the child's sense of cooperation rather than to their obedience in matters of behavior and classroom control. Coercion and control are minimized so that the child can regulate his own behavior and construct a confident self that values and respects others. As interactions between teacher and child and child to child, based on mutual respect and cooperation, occur over and over and day in and day out, the child gradually begins to construct a stable system of moral, social and intellectual feelings, interests and values that is not dependent upon any external constraints or controls. The child becomes a moral person, not just a moral student. (DeVries, R. & Zan, B. 1994).

To the moral traditionalists, the constructivist approach is a waste of time. If a set of accepted values and traditions already exists, ready to be handed down to the next generation, then "surely we don't have to reinvent the wheel," remarks Bennett (1993, p.11). Wynne shares his sentiment by saying, "Must each generation try to completely reinvent society?" (cited in Kohn, 1997). Kohn's response to these critics is:

> The answer is no—and yes. It is not as though everything that now exists must be discarded, and entirely new values fashioned from scratch. But the process of learning does indeed require that meaning, ethical or otherwise, be actively invented and reinvented, from the inside out. It requires that children be given the opportunity to make sense of such concepts as fairness or courage, regardless of how long the concepts themselves have been around. Children must be invited to reflect on complex issues, to recast them in light of their own experiences and questions, to figure out for themselves—and with one another –what kind of person one ought to

be, which traditions are worth keeping and how to proceed when two basic values seem to be in conflict (p. 435).

What does constructivist moral education look like in practice? First of all, there is a commitment to creating a "community of learners" based on mutual respect. One way to do this is through class meetings where children can share, plan decide and reflect together. Such exchanges provide children with opportunities for perspective taking which involves imagining what the world looks like through the eyes of others. The use of rich, complex literature to engage children's minds to reflect upon the ideas and lives of others helps children begin to construct an internalized system of values. Classrooms that focus on problem solving, critical thinking and creativity as opposed to getting the right answers are compatible with constructivist teaching. Games, group projects and cooperative learning give children the opportunity to exchange ideas and develop an understanding of the moral necessity of rules.

The Research Question

We gain insight into how children construct their knowledge about moral ways of being in relationship to themselves and others as we listen to languages children use to represent their knowledge. I am not defining language in the traditional narrow sense as that which is spoken or written, but in a much broader sense that includes a complexity of signs and symbols. Young children's understandings are not confined to simply what can be written or spoken but also what they reveal in their play, drawings, paintings, movement and spontaneous song (Gallas, 1994). The research question is:

What is the nature of the moral languages of children in a first grade classroom?

Much of the focus of this study will be developed as the study emerges, but because the notion of fairness is central to constructivist socio-moral development, particular attention will be given to the language of "fairness." Fairness is defined as "the ability to consider consistently and without contradiction the interests and intentions of others: to act bearing these in mind and without the guidance of a superior authority and to generalize fully this behavior on all relevant situations" (Siegal, 1982, p.1).

The following questions will guide the study:

1. What does the notion of "fairness" mean to first graders?
2. How do first graders enact their understanding of fairness?

Significance of the Study

Reaching a deeper insight into the process by which children construct their understanding of moral issues.

This study is significant in that it will seek to understand the complexity of children's thinking and understanding of moral issues in the classroom as revealed in their "moral languages." There are those who believe that character lessons on honesty, loyalty and responsibility will protect our children from immorality and prescribe a William Bennett-style "book of homilies" approach to moral education (McCadden, 1998). I personally believe that the issue is far more complex than simply dispensing a set of prescriptions for living or creating another course of programmed moral education to lay on top of the existing curriculum. It is my belief that classroom life is saturated with moral meaning

(Hansen, 1995) and all that transpires is inherently "moral" whether the teacher is aware of the moral meanings or not. The inherent moral implications of the classroom are sometimes referred to as the "hidden curriculum," a term used to describe the implicit messages transmitted to students concerning appropriate values, beliefs and behaviors (DeMarrais, K. & LeCompte, M., 1999.) Though there are no tests to verify the lessons learned, they are nonetheless very powerful. Though these lessons may be invisible to the teacher, they are very clear to the children, and we gain insight into the nature of these messages as we observe the many languages of children. Morality "plays out" in the classroom as children actively engage in the process of constructing understandings and meanings relating to social issues (McCadden, 1998). Students develop perceptions of what being a good person entails. They learn what their responsibilities are to those in the classroom and the larger society. They acquire an understanding of their rights as an individual (Ryan, 1986).

Morality unfolds in the ordinary activities, interactions and relationships that take place in every classroom in America. Educators and psychologists have attempted to define and delineate stages and progression of moral development. It is my opinion that children possess a wisdom and understanding of moral issues and meaning that often defies such examination. I believe that in order to understand the role that school should play in moral education, we must first intently listen to and closely observe children in the context of their classroom experiences to understand how they construct their understanding of moral issues in the context of everyday life. As schools are being called upon to respond to the moral crisis in our society, it is imperative that we have a thorough understanding of how children develop morally in order that we might facilitate that

growth in the most meaningful way. As Dempster (1958) once said, "we cannot know too much about the children who fill our schools or about their problems."

Reaching a deeper understanding of children's thinking on issues of fairness

Vivian Paley says that the three main concerns of young children are fairness, friendship and fantasy. "It's not fair" is a familiar phrase to any teacher of young children. How children think and enact their thinking on matters concerning fairness determines how they are viewed by others, the kinds of relationships that they will develop with others and the image that they will ultimately construct of themselves. A child who is unable to successfully negotiate issues of fairness will have difficulty establishing positive relationships in the classroom. Since our own self concepts are greatly influenced by how we are perceived in the eyes of others, the nature of relationships that we establish will become a part of the fabric of our personality. Children who are unsuccessful in negotiating issues of fairness will come to perceive themselves as being rejected by others.

Definition of Terms

Character education

Alfie Kohn (1997) identifies two meanings for the term character education.

> In the broad sense, it refers to almost anything that schools might try to provide outside of academics, especially when the purpose is to help children grow into good people. In the narrow sense, it denotes a particular style of moral training, one that reflects particular values as well as particular assumptions about the nature of children

and how they learn (p. 429).

When most schools speak of character education, they are using it in the narrow sense, in that it generally refers to a well-defined curriculum, the intent and purpose being to instill a particular set of values or character traits into children.

The Character Education Partnership defines character development as:

> the long-term process of helping young people develop good character, i.e., knowing, caring about, and acting on core ethical values such as fairness, honesty, compassion, responsibility, and respect for self and other. The goal is to surround students in an environment that exhibits, teachers, and encourages practice in the values our society needs so our children not only are told about the values, but also internalize them and make decisions and act in accordance with them (Schaffer, E., 1999, p. 3).

Values Clarification

The philosophy of logical positivism led to a worldview that emphasized personalism which rightly opposed social injustice and oppression but also delegitimized moral authority, hence eroding belief in objective moral norms. Personalism valued the worth, autonomy and subjectivity of the person. As a result, morality was relativized and privatized and made a matter of personal value judgement. This paradigm led to an approach in education called "values clarification" whereby children were directed to use both rational thinking and emotional awareness to examine personal behavior patterns and to clarify and actualize their values (Huitt, 1998). The concept embraced a moral relativity in which on person's values are as good as another's values, even when opposing values are embraced (DeVries, 1998). It was very much an individual process as opposed to a social one.

Morality

Morality is a way of being that is in accord with the principles and standards of right conduct that have been embraced by the local community and the society at large.

Moral education

Methods and activities that educators use to affect the moral well being of their children. Some of these things are intentional in design and are engaged in with the intent being to leave a moral mark of some kind on the children. In other instances, the moral education of children is part of the "hidden curriculum" and is not purposefully undertaken as a moral act (Jackson, P., Boostrom, R.& Hansen, D., 1993).

Moral heteronomy

According to Piaget's theory, heteronomy refers to the lack of ability to think for one-self and the dependence upon external sources and reward systems to dictate right from wrong. Morally heteronomous people do not have a well-developed system of internal values and convictions, but adhere to externally imposed laws and restraints out of fear of punishment or a desire for rewards.

Moral autonomy

According to Piaget's theory, autonomy refers to the ability of the individual to be self-governing. Moral autonomy is the ability to think for one's self and to decide between right and wrong by taking all factors into consideration, regardless of reward or punishment (Kamii, 1994). The morally autonomous person is governed by an internal set of values and convictions that has not been externally imposed by others. Martin Luther King, Mother Theresa and John Dean are examples of morally autonomous

people. According to constructivist theory, moral and intellectual autonomy is the goal of education.

Constructivism

Constructivism is a theory of learning that "refers to the view that knowledge and moral values are learned not by internalization from the outside but by construction from the inside in interaction with the environment" (Kamii, C., DeVries, R., 1980). At the heart of constructivism, is the belief that "meaning-making" is not a spectator sport (Solomon, M., 1999). Knowledge is a process of constructing ideas, rather than finding them in the external world, and once those ideas are constructed by the learner, they are dynamic, lasting and not easily extinguished.

Fairness

The notion of "fairness" is central to constructivist socio-moral development and is defined as "the ability to consider consistently and without contradiction the interests and intentions of others: to act bearing these in mind and without the guidance of a superior authority and to generalize fully this behavior on all relevant situations" (Siegal, 1982, p.1).

Languages of children

We can capture the nature of the deep, transformative learning that takes place in the classroom when we expand our definition of language to include not only what is spoken and written by children but also their dramatic play, drawings, paintings, movement and songs (Gallas, 1994).

CHAPTER TWO

Review of the Literature

Throughout most of the 20th century, systematic research and scholarship on moral development has been an on-going concern on the part of social scientists. Historically, the study of moral development has centered around the concept of justice which embraces the notions of fairness, equality, reciprocity, the rights of individuals and the rules and roles that regulate and serve as guidelines to human behavior (Garrod, 1993). Equating moral development with the concept of justice was first introduced into the literature by Jean Piaget (1965), in The Moral Judgement of the Child. His work is one of the most recognized variants of what has come to be known as cognitive structuralist theory.

Basic Principles of Cognitive Structuralist Theory

Cognitive structuralist theory of moral development is founded upon three basic convictions (Thomas, 1997, p. 51):

1. Each time someone encounters a moral incident, that individual's cognitive structures fashion the meaning that he or she will assign to—or derive from—the incident. Cognitive structures, in effect, serve as mental lenses that cast life's experiences in particular configurations. Because one person's structures differ in some degree from another's, the interpretation that one

person places on a moral episode is expected to differ somewhat from the interpretation that another assigns to the same episode.

2. During the years of childhood, cognitive structures change with advancing age. The characteristics of anyone's cognitive structures are determined by a combination of that individuals' genetic inheritance and environmental encounters. In effect, the composition of a person's mental templates at any point in life is the product of transactions between that individual's genetic code and daily experiences. The genetic timing system establishes the time in life that a given structure can be activated; then experience in the world fashions the exact way the structure evolves.
3. The development of moral reasoning consists of a sequence of changes in a person's cognitive structures (the interpretive mechanisms of the mind) and in the contents of the mind (memories, beliefs) that have been forged by the operation of those structures.

Piaget's Theory of Cognitive Development

Piaget's theory of cognitive development can serve as a framework to help understand the process by which children grapple with the complexity of moral issues. The stages of mental growth are important because the child's particular level of intelligence is the foundation upon which moral judgements are constructed.

Sensorimotor Period (Birth-2). The infant advances from performing only simple reflects actions to finally possessing the capability of representing objects mentally, which allows him to cognitively combine and manipulate them. At this stage children do

not submit to rules of social play but behave in an individualist manner and practice regularities only according to their own particular fantasies.

Preoperational Thought (2-7). This stage begins with the child being dependent on perception rather than logic in problem solving situations. The child then enters into a transition phase between perception and logical thought that is characterized by an intuitive approach to life. During this phase the child is constrained by his limited ability to take the perspective of others.

Concrete Operational Thought (7-11). In this stage the child is able to perform logical mental operations on concrete objects that are directly observed or imagined. The ability to conserve also develops. The child begins to be able to consider the viewpoint of others in immediate real-life situations and understand the spirit of rules governing behavior.

Formal Operational Thought (11-adult). During adolescence the child is no longer limited by what is concretely observed. He is now able to imagine various conditions that affect a particular situation and can think in terms of past, present and future and can devise hypotheses about what might logically occur under different combinations of such conditions. By approximately the age of 15, the child is able to engage in all of the forms of logic characteristic of adult thinking. The child is able to consider the viewpoint of others and take that into consideration when solving problems.

Piaget's Stages of Moral Reasoning

Piaget focused a large part of his research on the moral development of children around young boys playing the game of marbles. After observing and establishing the facts of their play, he probed their consciousness of the rules of the game by asking such things as where rules come from and whether or not a new rule could be invented or

changed (DeVries, R. & Kohlberg, L., 1987). From his research, he generated a model moral development based on children's changing understanding of rules. Piaget asserts that children begin life in a stage of heteronomous moral reasoning, which is characterized by strict adherence to rules and duties and unquestioning obedience to authority. This heteronomous orientation is due in part, to the young child's "egocentrism", defined as the inability to take into account another person's perspective. The egocentrism, coupled with the child's relative powerlessness creates a heteronomous moral orientation.

As children interact with others, the heteronomous orientation becomes increasingly problematic. Children begin to view rules critically and apply them based on the goal of mutual respect and cooperation and not out of obligation. As the child moves away from an egocentric orientation, he becomes increasingly able to take into consideration the perspective of others and begins to act from a sense of reciprocity and mutual respect. As the child becomes increasingly autonomous, he begins to operate from an internalized system of values rather than externally imposed obligation.

As the child progresses from a heteronomous orientation to a more autonomous way of being, Piaget identified three stages in the elementary years (Thomas, 1997). Between 7 and 8 years of age the child believes that justice is whatever has been prescribed by adult authority. Between 8 and 11, justice comes to mean equality. Justice means treating everyone alike. At around 11 or 12, the child advances to a higher level, where equality is tempered by equity.

As Piaget observed the child's developing understanding of rules, he identified three increasingly complex categories: individual rituals, collective rules and principles. The

term ritual is used by Piaget to describe a kind of idiosyncratic pre-rule constructed by the pre-operational child to endow certain behaviors with a sense of regularity and habit. These rituals control behavior and heavily reflect affective or conatative influences. For example, a child may feel it necessary for no explainable reason to brush their hair fifty times before going to school but feels no need for anyone else to do likewise.

The primary factor that differentiates a ritual from a collective rule is the consciousness of obligation. Children begin to construct a system of rules that they no longer adhere to simply out of habit and regularity, but choose to follow out of a sense of obligation.

Eventually, children construct principles or "meta-rules" to live by that represent statements about relationships between rules and are abstract and propositional in structure. In early adolescence, children acquire the ability to engage in hypothetical, future oriented thinking and can evaluate rules in comparison to utopian possibilities.

In theory, there should be a structural match between a child's level of cognitive development and the complexity of the type of rules they construct. Preschoolers should prefer rituals over rules and principles, elementary students should prefer rules over rituals and principles and adolescents should prefer principles over rituals and rules. However, in reality, it is not so simple.

Kohlberg's Theory

Building on the work of Piaget, Lawrence Kohlberg, a cognitive structuralist and the architect of the modern moral development paradigm, also equated the moral domain with the concept of justice. Kohlberg's theory building focused around the relationship

between the self and society's rules, roles and expectations. He selected a sample of male participants and examined their responses to hypothetical dilemmas.

As a result of his study, Kohlberg asserts that all people in all cultures progress in moral reasoning through a hierarchy of stages. He identifies three major levels of moral development, each level being subdivided into 2 separate stages. The preconventional level, which is most descriptive of children, is characterized by a concrete, individual perspective (Nucci, on-line). At stage one, unquestioning obedience to authority and adherence to the rules for fear of punishment is the primary motivation for behavior. The child is not able to consider the perspective of another or take into consideration extenuating circumstances or intentions of others. Stage two is characterized by a "I'll scratch your back, you scratch mine" philosophy that places primary importance on the satisfaction of one's own needs. Issues of fairness are settled on the basis of equal exchange.

At the second, or conventional level, there is an understanding that norms and conventions are necessary for the welfare of society. Morality means acting in the way that society has deemed to be right. Within this level, the stage three person defines what is right according to the perspective of the local community or the family. He or she generally operates by the Golden Rule—do unto others as you would have them do unto you (Thomas, 1997) and is primarily concerned with maintaining mutual trust and social approval. At stage four, there is a shift from defining right and wrong in terms of the local community or family to a consideration of the laws and norms established by the larger society, including those prescribed by legal and religious systems.

Level three, or post-conventional morality, is characterized by a concern with the underlying principles that determine rules and norms. At stage five, the sanctity of human life is sacred and a universal right (White, 1999) and regard for human life and welfare transcends norms and conventions created by a particular culture or society. A concern for the rights of minority persons not protected by the laws of a given society is evident. At stage six, the highest level of moral reasoning, laws are evaluated and upheld on the basis of fairness principles rather than upheld simply because society says they exist.

Carol Gilligan and the Ethic of Care

From its inception, the Kohlbergian framework for moral development has been heavily criticized by a number of his colleagues that his theory is culturally, educationally and sexually biased (Walker, 1986). The most noteworthy criticism, In a Different Voice, was published in 1982 by Carol Gilligan. The most obvious point of criticism is the fact that Kohlberg based his entire theory on the responses of eighty-four males whose development he followed over the course of twenty years. The female voice is strangely absent, yet Kohlberg claims universality for his hierarchical theory of stage progression. Interestingly enough, when women are evaluated according to Kohlberg's scale, they generally perform at a stage three level of moral development and thus appear to be morally deficient. At this stage, morality is constructed within the context of the local community and family, and goodness is equated with helping and pleasing others. Gilligan (1982) states: "Herein lies a paradox, for the very traits that traditionally have defined the 'goodness' of women, their care for and sensitivity to the needs of others, are those that mark them as deficient in moral development" (p.18).

Gilligan believes that Kohlberg's theory reflects an underestimation of the complexity of women's moral reasoning abilities and the deficiency lies in the theory and not in women (Daniels, J., D'Andrea, M. & Heck, R., 1995). She argues that women are not morally underdeveloped, as Kohlberg would indicate, they simply look at morality through a different lens than males. She attributes this difference in moral orientation to the process of gender identity that takes place in the very early years of a child's life. Because the primary caretaker is generally a woman, the process of identity formation is different for girls than it is for boys. For females, the development of gender identity is inter-woven with the experience of attachment to the mother. Girls experience themselves as being like the mother. For boys, on the other hand, separation from the mother is necessary for the development of a male identity; therefore, separation and individuation characterize the process of male identity formation. The implication of these different experiences is explained by Gilligan in the following way:

> Since masculinity is defined through separation while femininity is defined through attachment, male gender identity is threatened by intimacy while female gender identity is threatened by separation. Thus males tend to have difficulty with relationships, while females tend to have problems with individuation (p. 8).

Men's individualism and separation from the feminine contribute to the development of a moral perspective based on justice and rights. Such a perspective focuses upon problems of inequality and oppression while upholding the ideal of reciprocal rights and equal respect for individuals. Women's affiliation and identification with their mothers contributes to the development of a moral perspective based on an ethic of care (White,

1999). This perspective focuses on problems of detachment or abandonment, while upholding an ideal of response and attention to the needs of others (Gilligan, 1982).

However, in Gilligan's (1988) later research, she is careful to point out that these two moral orientations are not mutually exclusive or polar opposites. It does not imply that the morality of justice means the absence of caring and the morality of care means the absence of justice. When presented with real life moral dilemmas, both males and females took into consideration aspects from both the care and justice perspectives simultaneously. However, one perspective tended to dominate the focus, while the second was only minimally represented. Women tended to predominantly take a care focus and men tended to predominantly take a justice perspective.

Though these different moral orientations focus on different aspects of thinking, they both represent a mature way of thinking about moral issues. Gilligan argues that the care perspective is not inferior to, or less mature than the justice perspective as the Kohlbergian model would suggest. Further analysis reveals that:

> the tension between these perspectives is suggested by the fact that detachment, which is the mark of mature moral judgment in the justice perspective, becomes the moral problem in the care perspective, that is, the failure to attend to need. Conversely, attention to the particular needs and circumstances of individuals, the mark of mature moral judgment in the care perspective, becomes the moral problem in the justice perspective, that is, failure to treat others, fairly, as equals (p. 232).

It is interesting that in The Moral Judgement of the Child, Piaget observes differences between boy's and girl's attitudes toward rules in the context of playing games, yet builds his theory around the responses of the boys. He found that throughout childhood, boys

become increasingly fascinated with the development of fair procedures and the legal elaboration of rules in the experience of playing games. Girls, on the other hand, take a more pragmatic view toward rules. Piaget did not find a single group game played by girls that had a system of rules as elaborately and consistently organized and codified, as did games played by boys. Girls were found to be much more tolerant in their attitude toward rules, more willing to make exceptions and more accepting of innovations than were boys.

Further research on gender differences in play, conducted by Lever (1976), found that boys' games tended to last longer than those played by girls. When disputes broke out among male players, everyone involved, including marginal, less skilled or smaller players, engaged in legal debate over the squabble at hand. Lever reported that the boys appeared to actually enjoy the legal debates as much as the game itself and never once did she observe the break up of a game over a legal issue. Girls, on the other hand, tended to stop playing when disputes broke out. Most of the girls whom Lever interviewed preferred to subordinate the continuation of the game to the continuation of the relationships among each other.

In Pitcher and Schultz' (1983) study of sex role development in preschool children, they observed distinctive gender differences in children's moral orientation in play situations. In their observations of 255 preschool children, they categorized children's interactions with same-sex peers as being either affiliative/positive or nonaffiliative, negative. Affiliative /positive interactions are defined as facilitative or cooperative acts that elicit approval of another child and are designed to initiate or maintain contact with another. Nonaffiliative/negative behaviors are defined as those occasions in which the

child physically or verbally acts in a way that hurts or conflicts with the interests and needs of another child (Garrod, 1993). The researchers found that females engaged in more affiliative/positive interactions than males and such interactions appeared at younger ages than in males. "These results suggest a logical connection between affiliative/positive interactions in preschool girls...and the care orientation focus on maintaining and restoring relationships" (p.45). This is not to say that affiliative/positive interactions were absent in male relationships; this type of interaction appeared less frequently and emerged at a later age in males as compared to females.

The female orientation to care was also observed in Pitcher and Schultz's observations of children playing in the "housekeeping center" of the preschool. The girls frequently demonstrated nurturing behaviors to initiate and sustain play. As they played house, the girls were often concerned with responding to the needs of others and demonstrated many with "helping" behaviors. Pitcher and Schultz (1985) report that nurturing behaviors are almost absent in preschool aged boys (p. 35.)

In contrast, the researchers observed the "rough and tumble play" of boys and saw within the dynamics of the interaction the emergence of a moral orientation toward justice. Wrestling against one another, pretending to shoot one another, and other acts that could be labeled as "aggressive" actually served to enable the boys to construct moments of psychological separation from one another. This psychological separation from others has been theorized to be one of the underlying forces creating a moral orientation toward justice. The arguments and dialogue that developed among the boys in rough and tumble play centered around rules, roles, rights, and autonomy.

Garrod (1993) summarizes the results of Pitcher and Schultz's study:

> In summary, the developmental portrait of early childhood that emerges from the foregoing analysis is highlighted by evidence that the dynamics at work underlying development are different for young boys and young girls in part because from the beginning, same-sex peer relationships are not the same phenomenon. Young girls and boys appear to socialize each other in ways that reflect the distinctive themes of the two different moral orientations (p. 48).

Gender Differences or Cultural Constructs?

There are those who would argue that the perceived gender differences in moral orientation are really just reflections of differences in culture. This theory was tested by Gump, Baker and Roll (2000). In a comparison study between Anglo-Americans and Mexican-Americans, the researchers predicted that a moral orientation of care would be present in both male and female Mexican Americans due to the cultural emphasis placed on interpersonal connectedness as opposed to the Anglo-American emphasis on individuality. To Mexican-Americans, the particular role that one assumes in the context of the family is of primary importance. Patterns of respect and ritual have been observed in social relationships of Mexican-Americans that have not been observed in the Anglo-American population. For these reasons, researchers expected to find a predominantly care based orientation among both male and female Mexican Americans.

Researchers used what was described as a "newly designed instrument that taps interpersonal concerns" (Gump, l., Baker, R. & Roll, S. 2000) to assess the moral orientations of 100 college students. The results of the study supported Gilligan's later research that indicated a simultaneous consideration of both moral orientations. Mexican-Americans scored higher on care considerations than did Anglo Americans, but

surprisingly, Anglo-Americans did not score higher than Mexican Americans on justice considerations as was expected. In other words, higher scores on care do not imply lower scores on justice (p.85). The study also demonstrated gender differences in both ethnic groups, females scoring higher on care considerations than males, thus supporting previous findings of gender differences.

Challenges to Gilligan's Theory

The generalizability of Gilligan's research has been challenged on the grounds that it was conducted among a very select group of people. The participants in her study were described as being White, middle-class people, living in urban areas in the northeastern part of the United States. It is argued, that in order to generalize her findings across a larger population, studies must be conducted involving persons from different racial, cultural, geographic and socioeconomic backgrounds. With this in mind, Daniels, D'Andrea and Heck (1995) designed a study with the following research question in mind: "Do gender differences exist in the moral reasoning abilities of children and youths from a cultural setting different from the one used in previous studies?" (p. 90). In this particular study, Hawaiian children were the subjects. Eighty children, ranging in age from ten to eighteen, were presented with fables involving a moral dilemma. The children were asked to think of their best solution to the problem. The researchers found that there were no significant differences between male and female responses and both sexes preferred a perspective of care over justice. The predominance of a moral orientation of care can possibly be explained by the fact that Hawaiian culture is distinguished by what is referred to as the "aloha spirit" which characterizes the values, lifestyle, and worldview of the Hawaiian people (p. 92). The Hawaiian culture is built

upon a foundation of kindness, patience, and harmony with others and one's environment. This study points out the need for research to be conducted across a wide variety of cultures and ethnic groups in order to more fully understand the effects of culture upon moral orientation.

A few studies have been conducted by private and public organizations to investigate the effects of gender differences on moral development. Why would this be of concern? If gender differences in moral reasoning do, in fact, exist it would have profound implications for administrative concerns of any organization (White, 2000).

The United States Coast Guard investigated the gender effect and report some interesting results. A "Defining Issues Test" (DIT) was administered to 480 members of the Coast Guard. The DIT is based upon a Kohlbergian framework and is designed to assess where an individual is functioning among the six different stages. Women in this study were found to score significantly higher than males in moral development, providing evidence that Gilligan's criticism of Kohlberg is unfounded.

Several explanations have been offered for the higher scores of women. There are those who believe this is representational of women in general and women do in fact function at a higher level of moral development than men, even when measured with a Kohlbergian framework. There are others who attribute the results to the fact that women who choose to join the Coast Guard have a higher degree of altruism than does the general population and are, therefore, more morally advanced than most women. A third explanation is that the lower DIT scores for men reflects the rigid hierarchical organizational design of the military. Autonomy is not valued and encouraged in the

military, so enlisted members will naturally score in the lower stages due to the authoritarian nature of their culture.

Domain Theorists

During the last 20 years Elliot Turiel and his associates, known as "domain theorists", have challenged Piaget's argument that young children are basically heteronomous and conform to the rules of games and social institutions as if they were absolute and unalterable facts, like morals and the laws of physics (Nobes, G., 1999). Turiel has gathered a body of evidence which reveals that young children are able to make a distinction between moral issues, social conventions and personal issues. For example, in the moral domain, children are able to recognize the intrinsic undesirability of hitting someone even when no social rules are in place that prohibit such action. The child is able to recognize the "wrongness" of hitting someone because it jeopardizes the welfare of another. Morality is structured around concepts of harm, welfare and fairness (Nucci, online).

In contrast, children are able to understand that certain rules and codes of behavior are a function of social convention and are necessary for the smooth functioning of a group. For example, when questioned about the "rightness" of a classroom of children being noisy, the vast majority of children said it would be wrong to be noisy only if there was a rule. They recognized that being noisy did not put anyone in harms way and was an arbitrary social convention.

Personal issues concern matters of privacy, control over one's bodily state or activities, ideas and their expression, and choice of associates (Weber, online). Even at

very young ages, children have an intrinsic sense of what should be determined by them and what should be controlled by others.

To the domain theorists, morality and convention are distinct but parallel developmental frameworks and not just a single system as Kohlberg postulates. When guiding children's thinking about moral issues in the classroom, teachers should help children to coordinate their understanding from the perspective of the different domains.

Social Learning Theorists

Generally speaking, social learning theorists are more concerned with the process by which people acquire moral values as opposed to the content of the acquired values. Social learning theory is based on four assumptions (Thomas, 1997, p. 67):

1) Moral values and habitual behavior are not inborn, nor do they evolve over the years. Moral values and habitual behavior are learned through ordinary social encounters of daily living.
2) Moral values and ways of behaving can be learned from direct participation in social interactions or through observation of such transactions.
3) The moral values and ways of behaving that one chooses to adopt is governed by the nature of the consequences that are associated with the interaction that takes place. Moral values and ways of behaving that are positively rewarded become accepted as one's manner of being and those that are negatively rewarded or simply ignored are rejected.
4) Moral development does not progress in a stage like fashion with sudden advances followed by periods of relatively little change. It is a gradual, day-by-day process of accumulating and refining one's values and way of being.

Social learning theorists generally believe that moral behavior results from a combination of cognitive (rational) and affective (irrational) sources. The three most influential rational sources are moral values, prudential considerations and ego-protection techniques (p. 68).

Moral values are convictions that one adheres to concerning good and bad ways to behave in moral situations. Examples of moral values are: don't cheat, don't lie, and don't steal.

Prudential considerations are beliefs about how a contemplated action could influence one's own welfare. Of particular concern is what other people might think about the contemplated behavior and what undesirable social consequences may result. At times, prudential concerns may conflict with moral values when behaving in accordance to the moral value would jeopardize one's immediate welfare. For example, a person may be reluctant to testify in court against alleged drug dealers for fear of being killed by them.

Ego protection consists of excusing one's self for what might appear to be a violation of a moral law. It involves rationalizing behavior that appears to be morally wrong. For example, someone may justify punching someone else on the basis that the other person was advancing toward them in a menacing way with the perceived intention of hitting them first.

To the social theorists, the primary irrational source of moral behavior is any sort of strong emotion that can alter or overwhelm a person's rational decision-making ability. Fear, rage, lust, shame, affection, or sympathy are examples of emotions that can interfere with one's ability to make a rational decision.

In explaining the interrelationship between cognitive and affective influences upon behavior, Bandura (1991, cited in Thomas, 1997) states:

> Social cognitive theory adopts a cognitive interactionist perspective to moral phenomena. Within this conceptual framework, personal factors in the form of moral thought and affective self-reactions, moral conduct, and environmental factors all operate as interacting determinants that influence each other bi-directionally (p.69).

Hilgard has called the place where cognition intersects with affective concerns "hot cognition" (Hilgard, cited in Siegal, 1982). According to Hilgard, cognition, affective concerns, adult influences and peer interaction play complimentary roles in the child's construction of fairness.

According to the hot cognition theory, adults influence children's understanding of fairness primarily through verbal instruction and through modeling. It is through peer interaction that the child makes meaning of the instruction and modeling he has been given. In other words, the instruction and example provided by adults does not take on meaning until the child has had opportunity to experience and apply in real life what he has seen and heard. Though peer interaction is central to Hilgard's theory, he believes that adult instruction and identification become increasingly influential as the child matures.

Of particular significance is the work of social learning theorist, Lev Vygotsky, a Soviet psychologist who wrote during the 1920's. As children acquire an understanding of various concepts, Vygotsky makes a distinction between two types of concepts: spontaneous concepts which the child develops mainly through his own mental efforts and non-spontaneous concepts which are imposed on the child through formal instruction

by adults. In some areas of learning, children spontaneously develop an understanding of a particular concept which is further enhanced at a later time by adult explanation and formal teaching. For example, a young child often understands through his own efforts that he has a brother. However, it is not until he is given formal adult instruction that he can generalize the term to similar situations and come to the realization that his brother also has a brother (Siegal, 1987).

On the other hand, there are those concepts that are not spontaneously understood. The child acquires some degree of understanding through adult instruction, imitation and/or reinforcement and this understanding is further enhanced at a later time through experience. For example, a child may be taught a particular definition of slavery but will not be able to apply it in different contexts until he encounters a variety of experiences that enable him to understand that slavery is slavery no matter what the circumstances. Forcing people to build pyramids for Pharaoh in Egypt and doing forced labor in a twentieth century concentration camp constitutes slavery.

Social learning theorists believe that there is evidence to believe moral concepts such as fairness are non-spontaneous ones. They argue that children are not born moral beings and do not consider the interests of others unless prompted by adults to do so. Adult instruction through imitation and reinforcement conveys the importance of acting fairly to children who have no experience in considering the interests and perspectives of others. These moral concepts learned through adult instruction provide the "structure of cognitive maturity" (Siegal, p. 41) for future experience.

Moral Education in the Classroom

The development of good character is currently in vogue in public education. This current preoccupation has come about through the media and political rhetoric which has created the perception that today's youth have no moral bearing. The development of character through curricular intervention has been the prescribed remedy in a system that is perceived to be morally deficient. The basic assumption is that public education has been void of any moral training and by spending some time each week talking about character traits such as honesty, loyalty, and responsibility, we can raise children of character and moral bearing.

Such a view of moral education is simplistic and naïve in that it fails to recognize that classroom life is saturated with moral meaning (Hansen, 1995). Whether or not a teacher intentionally engages in moral education, the fact is that teachers are engaged in a powerful curriculum of moral teaching by the witness of their lives. Their manner of being with others and way of speaking to them sends moral messages to the children in their care. Teachers are defining "character" as they act and interact within the classroom. As Robert Coles (1998) has stated:

> Character is ultimately who we are expressed in action, in how we live, in what we do, and so the children around us know: they absorb and take stock of what they observe, namely, us—we adults living and doing things in a certain spirit, getting on with one another in our various ways. Our children add up, imitate, file away what they've observed and so very often later fall in line with the particular moral counsel we wittingly or quite unself-consciously have offered them (p. 7).

It is in those unself-conscious moments, in the doing of everyday things that become the most persuasive and powerful times, morally.

In January of 1988, a research project called The Moral Life Project, was launched in six mid-west schools for the purpose of investigating the ways in which moral considerations permeate the everyday life of schools and classrooms. The researchers were acting on a hunch that teachers and school administrators are only partially aware of how they contribute to the moral upbringing of their students. They also believe that if educators new more about the moral influence they have on their children, they would be capable of doing moral education more effectively, or at least more self-consciously.

Jackson, Boostrom and Hanson (1993) have identified two avenues through which moral content is transmitted to students—moral instruction and moral practice. Moral instruction consists of activities that are avowedly moral (p. 3). The five catagories of moral instruction include:

1. Moral instruction as part of the formal curriculum. This would include formal religious instruction taught in private schools as well as character education programs proliferating in public schools.
2. Moral instruction within the regular curriculum. Very often the content of the regular curriculum has a decidedly moral tone. For example, as students read biographies of famous Americans, issues of social injustice inevitably arise, instigating debate over moral issues. The purpose of these lessons are usually to help the students understand a particular character or social phenomenon and lack the hard-edged prescriptive moral tone that is typical of religious

instruction or character education. Nevertheless, implicit moral lessons are implied in the process.

3. Rituals and ceremonies. School wide assemblies such as graduation ceremonies, pep rallies and assemblies are moral in nature. Such gatherings seek to engender feelings of pride, loyalty, inspiration, reverence, piety, sorrow, prudence, thankfulness and dedication (p. 7). The children are left to discern the moral messages inherent in such activities yet; the impact is powerfully present.
4. Visual Displays With Moral Content. Signs, pictures and posters are visible on the walls of most schools that carry inscribed messages meant to be uplifting or morally inspiring.
5. Spontaneous Interjection of Moral Commentary into Ongoing Activity. Spontaneous interjection of comments with moral implications is sometimes triggered by a breach of moral conduct. At other times, it is in response to exemplary conduct of students.

The second category of moral influence shifts from direct means of moral instruction to classroom practices and personal qualities of teachers that –sometimes unintentionally- embody a moral outlook or stance (p. 11).

1. Classroom Rules and Regulations. Every classroom is, in a sense, a micro-society governed by a mini-constitution or a code of laws. On the surface, these rules and regulations constitute an obvious moral code. However simple and direct such rules appear to be, their enactment is often quite complicated by the fact that classroom rules are often inconsistently enforced and they are

often the "surface manifestations of broader moral principles that reflect the individual teacher's vision of his or her role in the classroom (p.14).

2. The Morality of the Curricular Substructure. In every classroom there is a set of underlying, typically invisible conditions, inherently moral in nature, that allow instruction to proceed smoothly and amicably. Some of these underlying assumptions deal with the issues of honesty and truthfulness, the underlying worth of the lessons taught and the necessity of fair practices in the classroom.

3. Expressive Morality Within the Classroom. Facial expressions convey moral messages, particularly the area around the eyes. Saint Jerome once said, "The face is the mirror of the mind, and the eyes without speaking confess the secrets of the heart" (Bartlett, 1980, p. 128). In the course of a lesson, the facial expressions of a teacher are many and varied. From a moral perspective, what makes them of interest is the value—the goodness or badness-- that they communicate about what is going on. Looks of kindness, impatience, anger, disgust, indifference, sternness convey a moral message about the class as a whole or about individual children (p.30).

Finding a Moral Pedagogy

The question facing educators today is "What constitutes effective moral pedagogy?" Many teachers approach moral education much like they approach the teaching of math or science in that reason and logic are considered the means by which moral character will be achieved. Morality and ethics are taught as a "how to" manual on successful living.

The late Jewish philosopher, Martin Buber, recognized the folly of teaching morality in such a didactic fashion. In his essay, The Education of Character (cited in Guroian, 1998) he speaks of how he fell into the fatal mistake of presenting morality as a set of formal rules and principles. He soon came to the realization that very little of this kind of teaching gets translated into character. Buber writes:

> I try to explain to my pupil that envy is despicable, and at once I feel the secret resistance of those who are poorer than their comrades. I try to explain that it is wicked to bully the weak, and at once I see a suppressed smile on the lips of the strong. I try to explain that lying destroys life, and something frightful happens: the worst habitual liar of the class produces a brilliant essay on the destructive power of lying.

Buber believes that mere instruction in morality is not sufficient to develop people of character and moral virtue. Teaching that is heavily exhortative and coercive is unlikely to transform the mind and convert the heart of young people and might even backfire and produce the exact opposite of what we are trying to accomplish—hearts of rebellion and indifference.

Claes Ryn, chairman of the National Humanities Institute, believes that a good education is one which recognizes that the will, imagination and reason all work together, the reason being pulled along by the imagination. The term "imagination" is not meant to equate imagination as mere fancy or "vain imagining." George McDonald described it as a perceptive power that illumines the mystery hidden beneath visible reality (Guroian, 1998). In our technological society, heavily influenced by logical science and positivism, there are those who would question the role of imagination in education and in particular,

its place in moral education. William Kilpatrick (1992) believes that those who would elevate reason and logic over imagination grossly misunderstand and underestimate the imaginative powers of the mind. Nietzsche, a 19th century German philosopher recognized the power of the imagination and believed that imagination rules reason, and in turn, rules society. The greatest rulers, he claims, were great artists because they possessed the power to capture the imagination of people and instill within them a bold vision of their destiny.

Hitler is an example of one who conceived of Nazism as an artistic endeavor. He rallied people around his cause and ideology through grand theatrical events called the Nurembourg Rallies. Thousands of Germans turned out to see elaborate parades, banners, and carefully rehearsed speeches. The event would climax at nightfall with an impassioned, well-rehearsed speech by Hitler performed under a "cathedral of ice" created by hundreds of searchlights piercing the sky (Kilpatrick, 1992).

Those who acknowledge the power of the imagination, quite naturally, believe that the arts are crucial elements in a moral education. Ryn believes that all art, and in particular, stories, contains a moral lesson because art passes judgement on people's behavior and is intimately related to our lives. Good art should foster within us a realistic revelation of ethical reality. Unfortunately, many schools today underestimate and fail to take seriously the importance of the arts. In our technological society the arts have taken a back seat to computer literacy and budget crunches. Yet, if we look at modern culture, the importance of aesthetics in the form of song, story and image has not gone unnoticed by the media which has for many children become a finishing school in moral education.

In his book, Seduction of Crime: Moral and Sensual Attractions of Doing Evil, Jack Katz (cited in Ryan, 1999) offers intriguing insights into the increasing attraction of gang membership to adolescents of our society. It is his assertion that a child whose imagination has not been nourished by rich, meaningful art forms runs the risk of being captured by the aesthetics of the street. What we often label "random acts of violence" is often an artistic expression or a form of "street theater." Katz believes that aesthetics play a large part in the ritual life of gangs. Gang members see themselves as the elite who are above conventional rules of right and wrong and good and evil. Rather than conform to the demands of school and society they make a decision to make life a work of art. Katz bases his claim on the fact that status in the group is not dependent upon physical strength or fighting ability but is based on style. One's style of dress, manner of bearing, mastery of street language and leadership abilities determines one's place in the gang. Gang members often see themselves as actors who are constantly on stage in a street theater. They practice getting just the right swagger in front of a mirror, or brandishing a switchblade with finesse. What these children need, asserts Katz, is a more vital, realistic aesthetic that will nurture their moral imagination.

Nurturing Moral Imagination

According to Robert Coles, psychologist and leading authority on child development, one of the most important roles that schools play in the moral development of children is nurturing the moral imagination which he defines as:

> That "place" in our heads, our thinking and daydreaming, our wandering and worrying lives, where we ponder the meaning of our lives and, too, the world's ethical

challenges; and where we try to decide what we ought or ought not to do, and why, and how we ought to get on with people, and for what overall moral, religious, spiritual, practical reasons. A reflecting and self-reflecting mind at some point gives way to a "performing self": the moral imagination affirmed, realized, developed, trained to grow stronger by daily decisions, small and large, deeds enacted, then considered and reconsidered (Coles, 1998, p. 7).

In Coles view, the elementary years can be described as "the age of conscience," a time when a child's conscience is built or isn't; a time when a child's character is consolidated or isn't. These are years when the moral imagination is stirred by the arrival of a new world of knowledge and possibility through the reading of books, music, art, athletics and relationships with peers, coaches and teachers. These are the years in which children are concerned about why and how the world operates and why and how one should behave in different situations. School is the first place outside of the family where the child experiences what it means to live in "community" and assume the inherent responsibilities of a responsible citizen.

The elementary school child now possesses a language proficiency that allows him to look self-consciously at the world, to wonder aloud, to ponder what it means to be good and to think silently and introspectively about the moral issues of life. This is the age when children begin to express opinions to others. As teachers provide direct and indirect answers to questions, offer suggestions and recommendations, tell stories, share memories—all of this becomes part of the child's minute-by-minute moral experience. The child is constructing an understanding of what matters and why, what doesn't matter, how one ought to be with others and how one should think of oneself.

Vigen Guroian, Professor of Theology and Ethics at Loyola College, also believes in the importance of nurturing a child's moral imagination and has this to say about the issue:

> The moral imagination is not a thing, not even so much a faculty, as the very process by which the self makes metaphors out of images given by experiences and then employs these metaphors to find and suppose moral correspondences in experience. The moral imagination is active, for well or ill, strongly or weakly, every moment of our lives, in our sleep as well as when we are awake. But it needs nurture and proper exercise. Otherwise, it will atrophy like a muscle that is not used. The richness or the poverty of the moral imagination depends on the richness or the poverty of experience (Guroian, 1998, p. 24).

How is moral imagination nurtured? One of the most powerful ways is through children's literature. Flannery O'Connor (1990) once said, " A story is a way to say something that can't be said any other way...you tell a story because a statement would be inadequate." In describing the process that takes place when reading stories, John Gardner says that when a child or adult reads, metaphors of goodness are ingested which serve as a model for our behavior. Kilpatrick, author of Why Johnny Can't Tell Right From Wrong (1992) echoes his belief:

> One way or the other, art is intimately related to the way we live our lives. One way or the other, some aesthetic vision of the life governs our behavior. A proper education nourishes the imagination with rich and powerful, yet realistic images. From that fund the child can build a deep and adequate vision of life. The alternative is not that children will be left without images, symbols and stories, but that their

perceptions of life will be colored almost totally by the commercialized dreams and illusions that come out of Hollywood and Madison Avenue (p. 169).

The stories we tell fill children's imaginations with a storehouse of images, experiences and events. These images have the power to transform children's hearts and lives. In The Brothers Karamazov (1879), Dostoyevsky remarks at the close of his novel that one good memory, especially a memory from childhood, is enough to change a person even at the end of her life. Cynthia Ozick, author of The Shawl (1989) and other children's stories of the Holocaust, believes that what we remember from childhood, we remember forever. Why does imagination have such an impact on moral character? Ryan (1999) believes that knowing what is right is not enough. Knowledge must be accompanied by desire to actually do what is right. Stories have the power to awaken desire and provide the motivation necessary to transform desire into actual practice. The dramas that play out in the theater of the child's mind is eventually played out in behavior.

Igniting Moral Imagination

In order to ignite moral imagination, teachers need to select literature that, in the words of Louise Rosenblatt, offer the "gift of transport." She states:

To enter a story, we must leave ourselves behind, and this it may be argued, is precisely what is needed to get a proper perspective on ourselves. The willingness to let go of self-concern is a requisite for both moral health and mental health (Rosenblatt, 1978, p. 44).

Teachers need to choose stories that captivate children, enlighten them and move them to reach for their highest potential. Alfie Kohn (1997) asserts that we need to choose stories that motivate rich deep reflection in the minds of children.

Unfortunately today, most school curriculums use texts that are designed to teach skills but are devoid of any substance or meaning. Pre-primers, primers and basal readers use controlled vocabularies and simple stories designed to entertain, but add nothing of importance to a child's life. Even stories written and included in many character education programs are of questionable value. Guroian argues that many character education programs misunderstand the use of stories. Creators of character education curriculums often include or write practical or realistic stories designed to teach a specific moral or principle. He calls these stories "disposable" stories because once the moral has been extracted "they are discarded much like an empty milk carton". Frances Kazemek (1986) warns against using "literature as a means into an end in itself. Using children' literature in a crudely didactic fashion is dangerous. Such moral didacticism can be harmful to children's developing love of books and developing sense of moral interdependence" (p.269).

Bruno Bettelheim (1989), the renowned child psychologist, recognizes the power of aesthetics on young children very early in life. It is his belief that young children do not make choices based on what is right and what is wrong. They make their choices according to who is able to arouse their sympathy and antipathy. The question is not "do I want to be good?" but becomes "Who do I most want to be like?" It is the educator's job then to help students come to know the right people through the use of children's literature. Kilpatrick (1992) argues that good literature doesn't introduce children to

"someone just like me" but introduces children to others who are what he might become if he fulfills his potential for goodness.

Children need to read about Beethoven's determination to continue composing music even when he could not hear. They need to know about Helen Keller's triumph over multiple handicaps. We need to introduce stories that tell of human courage; the story of Jane Adams who spent her life helping the poor in the Chicago slums or of Harriet Tubman who despite great personal risk, lead her people to freedom. Kathrine Patterson (quoted in Ryan, 1999) puts it well when she says, "characters in stories may be more real to us than the people we live with each day, because we have been allowed to eavesdrop on their soul."

Stories have a unique way of inspiring the child to imagine other ways of being. One of the most common childhood fantasies is the child's desire to be a hero. Though most adults would have difficulty admitting it, this desire is also carried into adulthood. Kilpatrick believes that wishing to be a hero is somehow connected to the hope that one's life can make sense, not in a mathematical or scientific sort of way, but in the way that a story makes sense. Stories have a plot and it is the nature of humans to want our lives to have a coherent plot.

Bettelheim takes this same line of reasoning in his assertion that man's greatest need is to find meaning in life. His belief is echoed by Victor Frankl (1984) in the book, Man's Search for Meaning. Both men believe that the most powerful way one can find meaning is to cast one's life in the form of a story. In order to conceive of one' life being a story then one must be familiar with stories and Bettelheim believes that the most powerful stories are fairy tales and those with a hero. Through these stories:

> The message gets across...that a struggle against severe difficulties in life is unavoidable, is an intrinsic part of human existence—but that if one does not shy away, but steadfastly meets unexpected and often unjust hardships, one masters all obstacles and at the end emerges victorious (Bettelheim, 1985, p. 8).

In order to find meaning in life, it is necessary for one to believe that one will make a significant contribution to life—if not now, then at some point in the future. According to G. K. Chesterton, the great literary critic, the best way to do this is to visualize life as a story. In his book, Orthodoxy (1959), he writes: "My first and last philosophy, that which I believe with unbroken certainty, I learnt in the nursery" (p. 49).

Kilpatrick believes that stories work their magic by reinforcing to us the notion that life makes sense. He argues that those who attempt to commit suicide have lost the "narrative thread of life" and their existence has become pointless and without a plot. But not only do stories give us the courage to continue living, they inspire us to live well. Stories make us conscious of the flow of time and understand the rippling effects of our actions. We see how yesterday's behavior affects today's and how today's behavior affects tomorrow. We become cognizant of the fact that we have a role to play and that morality is not just about keeping the rules. Stories beckon us to live our lives in such a way as to become a hero.

Nurturing moral imagination through literature helps children develop empathy. As Atticus Finch in To Kill A Mockingbird (Lee, 1984) so aptly put it, empathy is the capacity to "climb into another person's skin and walk around for a day." Empathy is the ability to understand and appreciate the perspective of others and their life circumstances.

By vicariously entering in to the thoughts and feelings of another we become connected to other people both real and imaginary.

Enriching the moral imagination gives children the courage to consider and think about moral issues. As children encounter the trials and life circumstances of fictional characters in stories, they can ask, "What is the right thing to do?" in a setting that is detached and less risky than asking the same question of their own lives. As children meet diverse people encountering and dealing with life's problems in a variety of ways, they ponder the many ways in which to deal with moral dilemmas. As children encounter the lives of others and the decisions that face them, the reader comes to a better understanding of good and bad choices, they see the consequences of irresponsibility and they learn what it means to live with integrity.

Moral Talk

"Talk is cheap," so the saying goes. Talk is one of those ordinary activities that takes place in all classrooms, but is usually considered a mundane, taken-for-granted act. Some classes are dominated by teacher talk and others are characterized by more interactions among peers. Classroom talk is important because our conversations reveal how we inherently view human beings as a collective group and individuals of that group. However, there are no studies that explicitly address the moral implications of classroom discourse (Buzzelli, C., 1996). The fact that classroom discourse is inherently moral, suggests that moral education must be seen as "woven throughout all that happens in the daily fabric of classroom life" (p. 516). What teachers say to children does matter and what children say to each other is important.

The issue of classroom discourse is of particular importance to the early childhood educator because it is in these early years that the child has his first experiences outside the home and is developing understands of themselves as learners, friends and students. In some instances, the classroom agenda is overtly moral. An example of overt moral influence would be the wide variety of character education programs currently proliferating in our nations schools. These programs generally seek to instill a particular set of values, accepted by the school and community, into children through dialogue and stories dealing with character traits and values. For some, the moral implications of the classroom are described as the "hidden curriculum," a term used to describe the implicit messages transmitted to students concerning appropriate values, beliefs and behaviors (DeMarrais, K. & LeCompte, M., 1999.) Though there are no tests to verify the lessons learned, they are nonetheless very powerful. Students develop perceptions of what being a good person entails. They learn what their responsibilities are to those in the classroom and the larger society. They acquire an understanding of their rights as an individual (Ryan, 1986).

Fairness

In her book, Wally's Stories (1981), Paley makes the observation that her kindergarten children are "certain that absolute safety lies in absolute fairness" (p. 25). Despite the obvious concern that children have for fairness, educators know little about children's use and understanding of the concept. (Thorkildes, T., Nolen, S. & Fournier, J., 1994).

In his book, Fairness and Children (1982), Michael Siegal defines fairness as the ability to consider consistently and without contradicting the interests and intentions

of others: to act bearing these in mind and without the guidance of a superior authority and to generalize fully this behavior in all relevant situations...To treat others in ways similar to treating oneself is both consistent and at the heart of the concept of fairness (p. 1).

Siegal makes a point of differentiating a fair act from one that is altruistic; an act that is altruistic may not necessarily be fair. He defines an altruistic act as one that (1) is an end in itself and is not directed at gain; (2) is emitted voluntarily, and (3) does good (p. 1). He points out that according to this definition, someone who helps a friend rob a candy store without the intention of sharing in the spoils is committing an altruistic act but at the same time is engaging in an action that is unfair to the candy storeowner. Thus, a fair act must be one which does good as well as takes into consideration the interests and intentions of all parties involved.

Likewise, it would be equally erroneous to equate fairness with a sense of empathy. Newborns often demonstrate a degree of empathatic distress when they hear the cries of other newborns, but their response would hardly be classified as a fair response. There are instances when empathy can interfere with a person's ability to make a fair judgement or response in a given situation. Siegal gives the example of a judge in a court of law who may attempt to empathize with the plight of a particular defendant and as a result, hand down a sentence that unfairly neglects the interests of the victims. Fairness involves an element of rationality and is a deliberate act as opposed to something that someone does by accident.

There is no consensus over just how and when children become fair. Some people believe that the preschool years are critical in the development of fairness, while others

believe that the elementary years are the most important. Some believe that it is primarily through peer influence and interaction that people become fair and some believe that it is primarily through adult role models that children develop an understanding of fairness.

Siegal takes the position that a sense of fairness is developed through a combination of four ingredients:

(1) Cognitive development: In order to imagine the interests and intentions of others requires a considerable degree of intellectual awareness.

(2) The structure of the problems which the child confronts: the nature and context of the problem will have an effect on children's thinking about fairness.

(3) Adult instruction and identification;

(4) Peer-group influence.

In Siegal's theory of fairness we see elements of both social learning theory, and cognitive structuralism and he argues for a social-cognitive approach to the study of moral development in general and to the study of fairness in particular (p. 5).

Siegal borrows from the social learning theorists and the importance that they place on adult influence. It is Siegal's opinion that adult behavior can serve as a model for the child and the adult can reinforce what children say and do by verbal praise or physical rewards. By verbalizing what is right and wrong, adults can direct children to control their own behavior.

It is Siegal's opinion that instances of regression or stagnation in socio-moral growth are primarily due to difficulties in the strength of parent-child identification. He argues

that the more strongly the child identifies with the parent, the more likely the child will adhere to parental values. A pre-operational child with little understanding of collective rules, may display rule-following behavior out of a sense of identification with parental assent to these rules. Thus, the child acquires the "shell of morality" through formal adult instruction, imitation, and reinforcement (Siegal, 1982). Once the shell of morality is formed, the "filling of morality" takes place as children acquire practical experience with peers and through identification with adults.

Because peer group interaction is central to the social learning theorists, it is Siegal's opinion that preschool children can only develop a primitive notion of right and wrong due to their limited experiences with other children. He argues that preschool children's conflicts are basically limited to issues of sharing and they do not experience the more complex issues of team play, rejection from the group or being left out.

It is my opinion that Siegal has a very naïve and narrow view of the world of preschool children. The majority of young children today have quite a wealth of experience in group situations and live in a far more complex moral world involving more than simply issues of sharing. Certainly the domain theorists have found, as indicated in the previous discussion, that young children have a somewhat complex understanding of moral issues and make distinctions between moral issues, conventional issues and personal concerns.

Siegal discusses the elementary school years and what he deems to be a dramatic change that occurs. Upon entry into formal schooling the child's social interactions become increasingly complex and problematic. They encounter the collective rules and conventions of school. They encounter multiple models of both adult and peer behavior.

They are rewarded and punished for their behavior by an increasing number of authority figures and peers. Their original definitions of right and wrong acquired from their parents are challenged and they are forced to redefine their construction of right and wrong. In order to do so, they must increasingly be able to take into consideration the perspective of others.

Though Siegal is critical of Piaget's minimizing of adult influence, he is in agreement with Piaget's assertion that children cannot develop a sense of fairness without being able to imagine the intentions and interests of others. Thus, he embraces the role that cognition plays in the development of moral concepts.

He is critical of Piaget's assumption that verbal moral judgements and actual moral behavior are consistent with each other. Piaget often used stories involving moral dilemmas to elicit a child's thinking about moral issues. Siegal is dubious that a child's enacted knowledge will always correspond with his verbal expressions and therefore, is skeptical of Piaget's methodology.

Constructivist Views on Fairness

In the constructivist classroom, fairness is central to creating a healthy socio-moral atmosphere. The Golden Rule of "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you" is the heart of constructivist thinking about the issues of fairness and justice (Kamii C. & DeVries, 1980). The Golden Rule is a concept that takes many years to develop. According to Kamii (lecture, 1999), the egocentric child thinks about fairness in terms of "what is most advantageous to me?" In deciding issues of fairness, the egocentric child is heavily influenced by his or her affective feelings. If one feels bad about something, then

the egocentric child would conclude that something must be unfair. On the other hand, if one feels good in a particular situation, then fairness is being exercised.

The question of "who goes first" is often a big issue in the mind of young children. Kamii says that this is due to the fact that the preoperational child reasons that the person who goes first always wins. It is at the end of first grade that a child begins to realize that even though others go first, they still have the possibility of winning. Kamii points out that a child's notion of fairness is very flexible and may change from week to week. The child's conception of fairness is often very different from the classroom teacher's thinking on the issue

Constructivists believe that children, in part, construct their understanding of the Golden Rule and their understanding of fairness as they encounter instances when they are unjustly treated by their peers. As they suffer injustices, child are able to view a situation from an underdog's perspective which will eventually lead to an understanding of the Golden Rule and issues of fairness. Central to constructivist thinking on the issue is the importance of the role of peer group interaction.

Constructivist thinking emphasizes the fact that children do not learn to be fair by listening to a lecture or sermon on fairness. It is through interaction with peers and active participation in the creation of classroom rules that children develop a sense of fairness and justice.

A Review of Quantitative Studies on the Issue of Fairness

In the early 1990's researchers interviewed children, aged 7-12, about the fairness of certain school practices for influencing motivation to learn. The study was designed so that children could choose among a humanistic, whole child, fundamentalist, back-to-

basics, and student as worker orientations. The results of the study revealed that relatively few children favored extrinsic rewards. Praise for performance or economic rewards was considered to produce a momentary thrill and pride that was short-lived and not conducive to long term benefit. Focusing on a student's effort was considered to be the most fair and effective way to motivate students (Thorkildsen, T., Nolen, S. & Fournier, J., 1994).

In a previous study, Thorkildsen (1989) asked first, third and fifth graders to evaluate the fairness of different practices for teaching high and low-ability students. She found that children judge peer tutoring as being fair while judging competition and other practices that magnify differences between high- and low-ability students as being unfair. Children clearly saw mastery as the goal in this particular situation and felt that competition undermined that goal. This result also suggests that children evaluate the fairness of practices in terms of the goals involved. If a practice does not produce the desired goals, then that practice is considered to be unfair.

Myrna Shure (1967) conducted a study to determine how children and adults perceive fairness, generosity and selfishness in specific situations. The thesis of the study hinged upon the notion that where there are incompatible wants between individuals there is a "fair" or just solution. The fair or just solution begins with the idea of equality of rights of the participants but sometimes the fair solution favors one of the parties involved based on ownership, effort or enjoyment of benefits. Her findings indicate that previous enjoyment of benefits was the clearest determinant of a fair solution for both adults and children as young as four years old. For example, the child who enjoyed playing with the

blocks for the longest period of time was determined to have the most responsibility for cleanup.

The second factor most considered was the issue of effort. The person who puts forth the most effort should have the first turn or longest turn with the item or activity in question. For example, when two children are looking for a shovel with which to dig, the child who looked for the longest period of time got the first turn digging or was given a longer time to play with the shovel.

Ownership was the factor that was least considered and generated some interesting responses. The participants were presented with a senerio in which a child brings a truck from home to school. A friend wants to play with the truck. When asked who has the most right to play with the truck, results were mixed. Some said that the owner should let the other child play with it because the owner could play with it anytime at home. Others said that the owner had more right to play with it.

My conclusion from the review of the literature is that the moral development of children is multifaceted and there is no one theoretical framework that fully explains how a child constructs moral understanding. Actual research on moral development has been limited and what has been done by Kohlberg, Piaget, Gilligan has some very obvious oversights and omissions. Much of what is being done in schools today under the label of moral education or character development is actually "shooting in the dark" due to the lack of real understanding as to how children construct moral understandings. There seems to be a real lack of understanding on the part of educators that moral education is not something that we do but is entrenched in who we are and in our very ways of being. I don't believe most educators have fully grasped the concept that nearly everything we

do in the classroom has moral implications and moral education is not just another program that we sandwich in among all of the other academic subjects. We have only to look around us at the moral crisis facing our nation to conclude that we still have much to learn.

CHAPTER THREE

Methodology and Procedures

According to Lee Shulman (cited in Graue, E. & Walsh, D., 1998), "the purpose of research is to get smarter about the world in order to make it a better place" (p. xiii). The process by which we "get smarter about the world," especially the world of children is often difficult intellectually, emotionally, and physically. However, never has the challenge been so great to "find out" about the world of children. James Gabarino (1997) argues that America is raising its children in a "socially toxic environment." The social ills that plague our society and the violence that is destroying our children are evidence that there is much more to find out about the moral development of children. The alternative to not finding it out is to make it up or have someone else make it up for us. In our present culture, what we know about children is dominated by those who "make it up" (Graue, E. & Walsh, D., 1998).

When it comes to issues concerning the moral development and education of children, politicians, educators, parents, clergy and civic leaders have jumped on the bandwagon to express their views and opinions, much of the rhetoric being "made up" and not based on the actual lived experience of children. Although it would be incredibly presumptuous and smug to believe that this research will make the world a better place, hopefully it will contribute a tiny piece of knowledge and understanding into the complex nature of the moral development of children. Because of the controversial nature of

moral issues in education, there has been little in depth research on the construction of morality in the classroom. Most of the research of the past has been quantitative in nature, failing to capture the richness and complexity that the topic deserves.

Nature of the Study

The purpose of this study is to understand the nature of the moral understandings of first grade children. The question that will guide the research is:

What is the nature of the moral languages of first grade children?

The researcher has chosen to look through the lens of hermeneutic-phenomenology at the nature of the moral languages of children. "Phenomenological human science is the study of lived or existential meanings; it attempts to describe and interpret these meanings to a certain degree of depth and richness" (van Manen, 1990, p. 11). This study begins with the premise that all that transpires in the classroom is inherently moral and children are actively engaged, at both a conscious and unconscious level, in the process of moral meaning-making in the everyday lived experience of the classroom. I agree with Gallas (1994) that children "are acutely sensitive to the nuances of their lives. They take greater notice of unusual events, and they use impression from all aspects of their experience to form personal narrative that attempts to explain and order their worlds" (p. xiv).

The researcher will attempt to capture and describe children's moral understandings as revealed in their many languages, both spoken and written, as well as those messages communicated in drawings, paintings, movement, and spontaneous song.

As we capture the richness of children's expressions of meaning revealed in their narratives, we engage in what the Greeks called "practical philosophy" (Gadamer, 1983), or what is known as hermeneutics. As we seek to make sense of lived experience, "we are surrounded by the 'expressions of life' in texts, artifacts, gestures, voices and so forth and we understand them to the degree to which we can show how they emerge from 'lived experience', that deep sediment and texture of our collective life. Good interpretation shows the connection between experience and expression" (Short, 1991).

The assumptions of a grounded hermeneutic approach are as follows (Crabtree & Miller):

1) Children are meaning-giving beings and those meanings are crucial in understanding behavior.
2) Meaning is not confined to written and verbal expression; meaning is also expressed through actions and practices. In order to gain a deeper understanding of the meaning of a particular phenomenon, one must look at everyday actions and not just intellectual belief.
3) The meaning-giving process is intricately tied to the participant's background, immediate context, social structures, personal histories, shared practices and language.
4) The meaning and significance of human behavior is seldom precise, clear and unambiguous. Meaning is not a static, once and for all activity. It is a dynamic process in which meaning is being constantly constructed and changed over time.

5) In order to understand human action, it is necessary to interpret those actions. It is impossible to for any individual looking at a particular phenomenon to ever be completely objective or value-free. Facts are value-laden and the values of the researcher will be reflected in his work.

The researcher will follow the guidelines of naturalistic inquiry, as explained by Erlandson, Harris, Skipper & Allen (1993, p. 15):

1) Because the naturalistic paradigm assumes a holistic view of reality, qualitative methods are preferred because they more adequately capture the richness of the interrelationship with their context through "thick data" collection.
2) Although both rigor and relevance are important, relevance is valued over rigor.
3) Grounded theory, that is theory that emerges out of data analysis, is preferred to a priori theory, that is theory that is predetermined before data analysis.
4) Tacit knowledge (including emotions and intuitions) is treated differently but on an equal basis with propositional knowledge (knowledge that is expressed in language).
5) The primary research instrument is the researcher.
6) The research design emerges out of the research.
7) A natural setting is preferred as opposed to a laboratory setting.

The researcher has chosen to assume the role of participant observer. In the course of classroom life, children make sense of the world around them; they give it meaning and they interact with each other on the basis of these meanings. What goes on in the classroom influences the way children look upon themselves and others. Classroom life contributes to the growth of character and in some instances may contribute to the erosion

of character. In many instances schools are unaware of the moral messages being sent and the meaning making that is being constructed by children. It is sometimes described as being a part of the "hidden curriculum". The methodology of participant observation is especially conducive to this study because it "focuses on the meanings of human existence as seen from the standpoint of insiders. The world of everyday life as viewed from the standpoint of insider is the fundamental reality to be described by participant observation." (Jorgensen, 1989). Through participant observation, the researcher will focus on the moral reality of first graders in their daily life in the classroom.

Participant observation is defined in terms of seven basic features (Jorgensen, 1989, p. 13-14):

1) A special interest in human meaning and interaction as viewed from the perspective of people who are insiders or members of particular situations and settings.
2) Location in the here and now of everyday life situations and settings as the foundation of inquiry and method;
3) A form of theory and theorizing stressing interpretations and understanding of human existence
4) A logical process of inquiry that is open-ended, flexible, opportunistic, and requires constant redefinition of what is problematic, based on facts gathered in concrete settings of human existence;
5) An in-depth, qualitative case study approach and design
6) The performance of a participant role or roles that involves establishing and maintaining relationships with natives in the field; and

7) The use of direct observation along with other methods of gathering information.

As a participant observer, I sought to focus on the meaning of human existence in the classroom as seen from the standpoint of insiders, this case being the children. I sought to describe everyday life as seen through their eyes.

Data Collection

Participants

I derived my data by observing, interviewing and being with a classroom of first graders in an urban, public elementary school. The children were six and seven years of age. Participation in the study was voluntary. An IRB consent form was sent home to the parents describing the purpose of the study, the duration of the of the child's participation, how their identity would be kept confidential, and a description of the interviews conducted and the nature of the artifacts that were collected.

The identity of the children has been protected by using fictitious names and any identifying descriptions of students has been edited for identifying elements.

Field Notes

Field notes were taken from information gleaned from classroom observations. Particular attention was focused on inter-relational aspects of the classroom as children interacted with each other, their teacher, the environment and myself. I recorded dates, times, places, the statuses, roles and activities of key people, and major activities and events. I sought to capture vignettes and anecdotes that reflect children's thinking about moral issues and fairness. Casual conversations and interviews were recorded.

All field notes were kept in a locked filing cabinet in the researchers home and all computer files will be destroyed after the study is approved.

Interviews

I spontaneously interviewed children as events unfolded in the classroom that had moral implications. The dialogue was recorded in the written field notes. In addition to informal interviews, I conducted formal interviews with each child in the classroom.

> The purpose of in-depth interviewing is not to get answers to questions, nor to test hypotheses, and not to "evaluate" as the term is normally used. At the root of in-depth interviewing is an interest in understanding the experience of other people and the meaning they make of that experience (Seidman, 1991, p. 3).

Through the formal interviewing process I attempted to capture the children's stories that revealed something about their thinking on fairness and moral meaning making in the classroom. The following questions were used as a guide for the formal interviews.

1) What does the word "fairness" mean to you?
2) Can you tell me about a time when you treated someone with fairness?
3) Can you tell me about a time when someone treated you with fairness?
4) Can you tell me about a time when you treated someone unfairly?
5) Can you tell me about a time when someone treated you unfairly?
6) Does your classroom have rules?
7) Do you think your classroom rules are fair? Why or why not?

In keeping with the emergent nature of naturalistic inquiry, interview questions were refined and adjusted as the study developed and as the dynamics of particular conversations unfolded. As Erlandson, Harris, Skipper & Allen have said,

Once the study is begun, the design of a naturalistic study continues to emerge. As the researcher gets deeper and deeper into the context, he or she will see that early questions and working hypothesis, however helpful in getting started, are very simplistic. First sources of data reveal others that the researcher could not have imagined (p. 75).

Formal interviews were unobtrusively recorded with a small hand held tape recorder.

Documents

Children's stories, journal entries, poems, drawings, paintings and spontaneous songs were analyzed for a deeper understanding of the moral constructions of children. Field notes, interviews and documents formed the triad that will be an essential check for the researcher. This triangulation of data helps create "trustworthiness in data collection by trying wherever possible to use multiple methods and divergent data sources" (Crabtree & Miller, 1992, p.177).

Teacher

The teacher was interviewed her own observations of the moral languages of children. The interview centered on:

Her attitudes and feelings toward others.

Her own understanding of fairness.

An understanding of community.

An understanding of the golden rule.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

As I and analyzed the data collected, I sought to:

> look with imagination and not with preconceptions that may limit my understanding...What follows and intertwines with the process of data collection is a continuous cycle of reflection and of questioning those reflections, "seeing imaginally,"of looking at the data without boundaries so that the children, the teacher, the data, the process and even the questions are all constantly changing and rearranging themselves in different relationships (Gala, 1994, p. 9).

As I "looked imaginatively" at the vast languages of learning that children employ to represent their knowledge, I anticipated being able to have a better understanding of what is known and unknown, what is understood and misunderstood by children as they make meaning of the moral aspects of classroom life.

Data analysis was on-going from the very beginning of the project. The researcher sifted and sorted through the many signs, symbols and texts generated by children to uncover and discern the themes that are often hidden from the casual observer. van Manen (1990) describes a theme as:

1) the experience of focus, meaning or point.
2) A simplification
3) Something that is intransitive.
4) A description of an aspect of the structure of lived experience

He uses the metaphor of a spider web to capture the essence of the meaning of a theme. He says that themes are "like knots in the webs of our experiences, around which certain lived experiences are spun and thus lived through as meaningful wholes" (p. 90).

The researcher was a participant observer in a first grade classroom, spending 26 days in the field. Field notes were taken and analyzed, formal and informal interviews were conducted and member checks were made with the teacher and the children to verify recurring themes.

CHAPTER FOUR

Findings

As I begin to discuss the findings of my research, I believe it necessary to explain the theoretical lens through which I interpret my findings. The theoretical framework of this research rests upon the work of Jean Piaget and the fundamental notion that children construct knowledge of the objective and social world as they interact with objects and people in their immediate environment. Knowledge and moral values are not learned by internalization from the outside but are constructed from the inside through interaction with people and the environment. As children acquire bits and pieces of knowledge, they form relationships and connections among these parts and often construct knowledge that is different from what they have been taught.

In regard to schooling, it is my belief that children learn best in an atmosphere that seeks to promote the development of the whole child—socially, morally, affectively as well as intellectually. In order to promote optimum socio-moral development it is my belief that the teacher-child relationship be one that is characterized by mutual respect in which the teacher minimizes the exercise of unnecessary authority in relationship to children (DeVries & Zan, 1994). A cooperative relationship between teachers and children is, in my opinion, crucial to optimum socio-moral development. This is not to say that adults forfeit their authority altogether, but it means that adults seek to nurture positive and secure relationships with children that allows the child to develop autonomy in thinking and in behavior.

It is my belief that interactions with peers are essential for optimum moral development to occur. As children interact with one another and share differing viewpoints, their perspective taking ability is developed and a sense of empathy and justice is developed.

I believe that everything that takes place in the classroom is inherently moral in nature and it is out of these seemingly ordinary, everyday occurrences that the construction of moral understanding takes place.

What is the nature of the moral languages of children? This is the question that guided my study. I will begin my discussion of the findings first by describing the socio-moral atmosphere of the classroom which forms the context in which the moral languages of children are expressed. Next, I will describe the many ways in which the first graders in this classroom expressed their attitudes and feelings about themselves, others and their community and what those messages conveyed. Finally, I will conclude the chapter by discussing the children's thinking on fairness, the Golden Rule and awards.

The Socio-Moral Atmosphere

Flintstone Elementary is located in the suburbs of an urban, midwestern city. The surrounding neighborhood is economically and ethnically diverse. In the first grade classroom in which this study took place, there were five Hispanic children, two African American children, one Asian child, and nine Caucasian children.

First grade teacher, Mrs. Brown, is a Caucasian teacher who has been in the classroom for seven years, four of which have been in first grade. She returned to college

in her late thirties, after her children were grown, and earned her teaching certificate. She continued her education and received her master's degree which she completed during the course of this study.

Thirteen out of the seventeen children in Mrs. Brown's classroom participated in this study. It was difficult getting permission slips returned, and the information letter was sent home several times, accompanied by a personal phone call. Though it would have been nice to have full participation, I don't think the lack thereof hampered the study in any way.

The children were receptive to me and very enthusiastically welcomed me into their classroom. For several days, I was greeted with cheers and hugs. After the novelty wore off, I became just another part of the classroom. One child introduced me to her mother as the "the teacher who is nice all the time and never yells or gets mad. The principal of the school was very friendly and supportive of my work. Being a graduate student herself, she was sympathetic to my cause.

The moral languages of children emerge and are expressed in the context of the socio-moral atmosphere of the classroom. DeVries and Zan (1994) define "sociomoral atmosphere" as the entire network of interpersonal relations that make up a child's experience of school (p. 7). Two major themes emerged that characterized the socio-moral atmosphere of this particular classroom—schooling as a factory experience and lack of pedagogical tact.

Schooling as a Factory Experience

DeVries and Zan (1994) have identified and described three major types of sociomoral atmospheres: the "Boot Camp," the "Community" and the "Factory." The

sociomoral atmosphere in the Boot Camp is characterized by strong pressure for obedience. The teacher assumes the role of the "Drill Sergeant" and regulates the behavior of the children through threats, punishment and external rewards. The sociomoral atmosphere of the community is one of respect. The teacher assumes the role of a Mentor and seeks to facilitate interaction and problem solving among the children themselves. The sociomoral atmosphere of the Factory centers around obedient production of class work. The teacher assumes the role of "The Manager" and determines what and how much will be produced. The atmosphere is not as negative as that of the Boot Camp but neither is it as positive as The Community. The classroom in which this study took place could be characterized as the "Factory."

Mrs. Brown, the Factory Manager, sets the agenda for the day by having worksheets ready and waiting for the children as they enter the classroom. As each child arrives, he/she stops by the table that serves as the designated "worksheet station" to pick up their morning work. The activities for the day are fairly predictable, usually consisting of a small booklet which the children are expected to color and assemble, a sequencing worksheet, "Flintstone News," a lined piece of paper for spelling and some sort of worksheet that emphasizes a particular skill. There is usually an additional writing activity added to these assignments.

The emphasis is on production of work and, more specifically in this case, on the production of writing. On numerous occasions Mrs. Brown said to me, "All I want them to do is write." Many times throughout the day Mrs. Brown calls out a child's name and asks, "Are you working?" Usually in the writing assignments the children are expected to produce a certain quota of sentences. It is interesting that by observing the children's

work it is apparent that many of them do not understand the meaning of a "sentence." Most children counted the number of lines that were filled on the paper and considered each line to be a sentence. This lack of understanding was never addressed by Mrs. Brown.

In the Factory there was an emphasis on correct answers and following directions. Every art activity that I observed in the course of this study was of the "cookie cutter" nature. Everyone's final product was to look the same. For example, at Christmas time the children were given a Santa advent calendar to color and assemble. Charles colored his Santa orange instead of red. Upon seeing the orange Santa, Mrs. Brown demands, "Why did you color that orange?" Charles' face turns red as he glances back and forth from his paper to Mrs. Brown, but he does not verbally respond. After staring at him for a few seconds the Factory Manager walks away in anger.

Math worksheets are done together as a class. Mrs. Brown clips a workbook page to the blackboard and walks the children through the correct answers. She often prefaces the activity by commenting on how difficult math is, but they need not worry because she will help them get it right. Mrs. Brown progresses through the worksheet line by line and instructs the children where to put their answers.

If the factory workers do not produce their quota of work, they are not allowed to go to recess or participate in center time. Each day she checks each child's work for right answers, the correct number of sentences and conformity to directions before the child is allowed to go to center time. I never observed her to comment on a child's understanding, problem solving ability, creativity or the content of their stories.

As DeVries and Zan (1994) discovered in their observation of the Factory model, there is little room for self-initiative and the development of autonomy. "The children...are kept under strict teacher control throughout and have little opportunity for autonomous self-control" (p.18). Mrs. Brown dictates what will be learned, how it will be learned and solves the problems and conflicts that arise in the classroom. The following examples are illustrative of the tight control that is exerted in the academic arena.

> 12/5/00 The children are given a round peppermint shape, and they are to label alternating sections with the words "red" and "white." Charles puts the words on the peppermint the wrong way and Mrs. Brown sharply reprimands him, "You are not listening. Look at how your neighbor is doing it. I also said to use a long pencil." She grabs the pencil out of Charles' hand and throws it in the trash.
>
> 12/12/00 The children are given an outline of a large candy cane and a ruler. Mrs. Brown begins the lesson by saying that they will be drawing slanted lines on the candy cane with their rulers. Upon hearing this Carl immediately draws a slanted line on his candy cane. Mrs. Brown sees him drawing and says, " You are not listening." He erases the line and draws another line near the bottom of the candy cane. Sandy, his neighbor, says to him, "You're not supposed to do it yet." He begins erasing the second line.
>
> At this point, Mrs. Brown notices that Dante has several lines drawn on his paper. The teacher tells him that he, too, is not listening. She then reveals that she wants the children to draw the lines three inches apart. Dante resumes drawing the lines after she has given them permission to start, and when he is

finished he begins cutting out his candy cane. Mrs. Brown tells him to stop cutting. He puts his head down on his desk. Several minutes later, she tells the class to cut out their candy cane.

Mrs. Brown then asks the class to help her make a list of Christmas words and she begins calling on children to contribute a word which she prints on the board. At one point Mikie raises his hand and she responds to him by saying, "I'm not coming to your table."

After a list of words has been accumulated, Mrs. Brown notices that Carl has traced the lines on the candy cane in red. She says to him, "Did I say to color it red?" With his hand covering his face, he responds, "No." Mrs. Brown then says, "You are not following directions." He begins trying to erase his red lines.

The children are then instructed to write one Christmas word on each line and to draw a picture to illustrate the word. She draws a few examples on the board and then makes the comment, "I don't want to stifle anyone." She notices that Mikie has drawn his pictures next to each word. She tells him to erase his pictures and put them above the words as she has done in her example. His face turns red and he begins looking around at the papers of other children.

5/16/01 Mrs. Brown walks by Andy's desk and demands, "Why have you done your spelling words like that?" Andy had written the words horizontally across the page instead of vertically. "You need to do them over," she says as she takes his paper. A blank sheet of writing paper is put before him and she demands, "Do them just like we have done them for the last 166 days."

Conflicts between children in the Factory are handled by the Manager who "tends to 'gloss' over situations without taking children's feelings seriously" (DeVries, Zan, 1994). In such classrooms, teachers usually respond to conflicts by sermonizing, forcing an apology or exhorting the children to be more careful or pay attention (p.20). The following examples are illustrative of Mrs. Brown's manner of dealing with conflict.

> 12/04/00 The children are playing on the playground. Charles tells Mrs. Brown that Carl hit him in the face with his jacket. She tells Charles to go get Carl. As the two are walking toward Mrs. Brown, they inadvertently step in front of two children who are playing hopscotch. Mrs. Brown demands, "What did you boys just do?" Both look at her with a blank expression. She tells them that they just stepped in front of two children who are playing hopscotch. She demands that Charles and Carl apologize to the children before they do anything else. Carl moves toward the children and with his eyes cast to the ground says, "sorry." Charles says nothing. Then Mrs. Brown and the boys have the following conversation:
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> Mrs. Brown: "Tell me what happened."
>
> Charles: "Carl hit me in the face with a jacket."
>
> Mrs. Brown: "Did you hit him with your jacket?"
>
> (Carl silently stares at the ground.)
>
> Mrs. Brown: "Did you?"
>
> (Carl nods.)
>
> Mrs. Brown: "Why did you do that?"
>
> Carl: "Because he pushed me."

Mrs. Brown: "Did you push him?"

(Charles nods.)

Mrs. Brown: "Both of you go to the wall and sit out the rest of recess."

5/10/01 As the children were lining up to go to lunch, Tina butts in front of Sandy. Instead of allowing the children to work out their conflict, Mrs. Brown immediately tells Tina to go to the back of the line.

5/17/01 On another occasion, Mikie, Danny, Anne and Sandy are having difficulty deciding who will work at the computer during center time. Mrs. Brown, upon hearing the discussion, asks the children what they think is a fair way to solve the problem. Anne responds, "I think the quietest child should get to use the computer." Mrs. Brown then points to Sandy and says, "Let the class leader decide." (Each morning, Mrs. Brown appoints a boy and girl to be the leaders for the day.) The interesting thing is that Danny is the male leader for the day. Danny immediately begins to say, "Me, me, me." Mrs. Brown turns to him and sharply says, "Stop begging. I've gotten on to you all day—you and Mikie." Danny responds by covering his face with his arm and Mikie's face turns red. Sandy decides that she and Anne will use the computer.

In another instance, Mrs. Brown sermonizes to the children:

5/01/01 The children have been given paper cut outs and pipe cleaners, which they are to use to assemble a flower. Andy is gluing his pieces together. Mrs. Brown notices him and says, "Mr. Smith, you may not do art unless you have your spelling and reading done." He does not look at her but responds by putting his flower down and shuffling though his papers. Mrs. Brown then addresses the

class: "When you are at home with your parents do you answer them when they talk to you?" The class chimes in, "Yes." She continues, "Sometimes in this class you don't listen to me when I talk. I want all of you to listen now, especially those of you who don't usually listen to me very well." She begins a homily about the playground rules, emphasizing the fact that they are not to kick each other. She concludes by saying, "You are to keep your hands to yourself and you keep your bad words to yourself. We need to watch our hands, watch our feet. We are only responsible for us. Some of you are real leaders and tell people what to do all day long. That's not your job. Are we going to remember the rules?" The class chimes in, "Yes."

In the study of the different socio-moral atmospheres of classrooms, DeVries and Zan (1994) found that children in the Factory have a tendency to stop production when the Manager leaves the classroom. In contrast, children in the Community will continue about their tasks uninterrupted by the teacher's absence. Their rationale is that children who have internalized behavioral constraints will behave in the same manner with or without teacher supervision. Children in the Factory do not develop the necessary internal controls to carry on with their work in the Manager's absence because they are accustomed to rely on external constraints. I found their argument to be true in Mrs. Brown's classroom.

I documented twenty-one different occasions when Mrs. Brown stepped out of the room. Production was seriously disrupted in each instance. The most obvious change in behavior was the immediate increase in the noise level. Children begin calling out to others across the room. Many children engaged in silly behavior that would otherwise be

prohibited. The following examples are illustrative of the type of behavior that occurred on a regular basis when Mrs. Brown left the room:

12/04/00 Just before Mrs. Brown steps out of the room she announces that it will be an outside day for recess. As soon as she leaves, Andy starts bouncing up and down in his chair, chanting, "Outside day! Outside day!"

12/04/00 Dante takes the snowflake he has just cut out, stands up and dances with his snowflake around his table.

5/04/01 Mikie turns around in his chair, raises his hand in the air and calls out, "Give me five, give me five." Carl and Sandy respond by raising their hands. Tina starts imitating another child. She leans from side to side in her chair as she imitates the behavior of another. Maria rubs the head of her neighbor. Dante drums on the desk with his pencil. Carl and Sandy imitate and join in.
In response to the noise level, Dante puts his fingers in his ears and shakes his head around.

5/04/01 Tina jumps to her feet and begins loudly humming like a bee. Sandy hops around the room.

5/10/01 Charles begins playing peek-a-boo with the child sitting across from him. He then takes his water bottle and his glue bottle, holds them on the top of his head and asks, "Do I look like a monster?"

5/11/01 Mikie and Danny get out of their seats and begin dancing around, wearing the pretend mustaches that Mrs. Brown has given them. Danny then takes off his mustache and engages Dante in a pretend gunfight, using the paper mustaches as guns. After the gun fight ends, Dante puts his mustache back on his

lip, taps Mikie on the shoulder to gain attention, then theatrically produces a fake sneeze to make his mustache fall off. They roar with laughter.

5/17/01 Danny gets out of his seat to look at the tadpole and on the way back to his seat begins walking around the room acting like a duck. Dante and Charles make faces at each other. Andy taps Danny on the shoulder to get his attention and begins wildly shaking his head back and forth, and making funny faces.

The mood in the classroom when Mrs. Brown leaves seems to be that of celebration. When the Manager leaves, the factory workers rejoice together in their brief moment of freedom from their shared oppression.

DeVries and Zan (1994) found that the Factory Manager often relies on external rewards and punishments as did Mrs. Brown. She often used threats of isolation and the taking away of playtime to control children's behavior. Whenever the children had a creative writing project, they lined up at the gate to the teacher's "space" to get their "payment"--a sticker on their paper. The teacher rarely reads their creations; she mechanically places a sticker at the top of their page.

The factory workers were constantly threatened with isolation for talking or not getting their work done. The interesting thing is that she often threatened and isolated certain children arbitrarily. I observed occasions when the entire class was talking but she reprimanded and singled out a particular child. She would move the child to the writing corner to work alone or put the child in the middle row, which was reserved for the "problem children." Mikie, Andy, Carl, Sandy, Dante, Zane and Tina were usually the children singled out for their transgressions.

Lack of Pedagogical Tact

van Manen (1991) uses the metaphor of parent to describe the relationship between the teacher and the child. He believes that in the absence of the parent, teachers are to

> exercise a responsibility in loco parentis toward all those children entrusted to their care...So what is relevant for the relation between parents and children may be informative for the pedagogical relation between teachers and students. (p.5.)

Crucial to the role of "loco parentis" is the quality of pedagogical understanding which van Manen describes as follows:

> One element of pedagogical understanding is the ability to become aware of the inner life of the young person. For this the adult first of all needs to be able to listen to the child in an open, warm and receptive manner. Young children and older youths communicate their feelings and self-understanding about their lives in a variety of ways, and it is the task of pedagogical understanding to encourage children to express themselves, to talk about anything that concerns them and to let them know that their feelings are acknowledge and respected (p.87).

van Manen proposes that the way in which pedagogical understanding is fleshed out in the everyday practice of teaching is through "pedagogical tact." Pedagogical tact is pedagogical understanding in action. van Manen describes the tactful person as possessing a complex array of qualities:

> First a tactful person has the sensitive ability to interpret inner thought, understandings, feelings, and desires from indirect clues such as gestures, demeanor, expression, and body language. Tact involves the ability to immediately see through motives or cause and effect relations. A tactful person is able, as it were, to read the

inner life of the other person. Second, tact consists in the ability to interpret the psychological and social significance of the features of this inner life (p.125).

According to van Manen (1991) pedagogical tact manifests itself in six different ways:

1. Tact shows itself as a holding back. In other words, one who possesses the quality of pedagogical tact is patient. Patience often requires that the teacher hold back and allow the child to figure things out on his/her own. Pedagogical tact knows when to "pass over things, when to wait, when "not to notice" something, when to step back rather than to intervene, draw the attention or interrupt." (p.151).
2. Tact shows itself as openness to the child's experience. Pedagogical tact always asks, "What is this experience like for the child?" (p.152)
3. Tact shows itself as attuned to subjectivity. Pedagogical tact realizes that it is the teacher's job to cross the street in order to go to the child's side. "The teacher has to know 'where the child is,' 'how the child sees things;' how it is that this student has difficulty crossing the street to enter the domains of learning" (p. 155).
4. Tact shows itself as subtle influence and recognizes that teachers are always in a position to influence for the good of the child or to the detriment of the child.
5. Tact shows itself as situational confidence. Pedagogical tact reveals itself when teachers demonstrate genuine confidence in their ability to handle ever-changing situations and circumstances in the classroom.

6. Tact shows itself as an improvisational gift. Just as a jazz musician knows how to improvise in playing a musical composition, so the teacher knows how to improves the curriculum pedagogically for the good of the students.

After defining how pedagogical tact manifests itself, van Manen describes what pedagogical tact actually does in the classroom. Simply stated, those who have pedagogical tact do what is right and good for the child (p.161). How do they do this?

1. Tact preserves a child's space. Pedagogical tact is aware of the child's need for support as well as the need for personal space.
2. Tact protects what is vulnerable. Pedagogical tact demands that teachers not abuse their power and deal with the child's vulnerabilities with compassion and care.
3. Tact prevents hurt. Ordinary experiences at school can sometimes create painful memories that leave long lasting scars. Pedagogical tact is sensitive to those experiences that could cause emotional trauma to the child and seeks to make those experiences bearable.
4. Tact makes whole what is broken. Pedagogical tact keeps in mind that all education is ultimately the education of the whole child and remains conscious of both the objective and subjective aspects of the child's experience with schooling. Tact recognizes that the seemingly trivial happenings in the course of everyday schooling such as conflicts between friends are experienced as giant obstacles in the eyes of children.
5. Tact strengthens what is good. Pedagogical tact believes in children and recognizes the possibilities and strengths in each child.

6. Tact enhances what is unique. Pedagogical tact recognizes and nurtures what is unique about each individual.
7. Tact sponsors personal growth and learning. Pedagogical tact encourages children to accept personal responsibility for their own learning.

As I observe the interactions between Mrs. Brown and her students, there is a very noticeable absence of pedagogical tact. Mrs. Brown often spoke to the children in ways that were hostile and belittling. "All you do is talk, talk, talk;" "you need to have your ears cleaned out," "You're not working fast enough;" "you're not listening" were common remarks by the teacher.

van Manen says that pedagogical tact "manifests itself primarily as a mindful orientation in our being and acting with children" (p.149). There are certain children in Mrs. Brown's class with whom there is an obvious lack of "thoughtful engagement," some that seem almost invisible to her. Mikie is one of them. His struggle to learn and his accomplishments seem to go unnoticed. At the beginning of this study, my attention is immediately drawn to him because of his posture. He sits in the first seat in the middle row reserved for the "problem children." Most often he has his arms folded on his desk with his chin resting on his arms. At some point in the study it dawns on me that he is trying to make himself small so as to hide. He rarely speaks and he works slowly and hesitantly at his worksheets, often looking at the papers of the children surrounding him. When he raises his hand to ask for help he is usually rebuffed by Mrs. Brown with the comment, "You're not listening." I often sense a look of fear in his eyes.

Mrs. Brown is oblivious to the body language of this child. His posture, his demeanor, the look in his eyes scream out a message of fear, vulnerability and insecurity.

One day I ask Mrs. Brown if she has ever noticed the fear in Mikie's eyes. Her face flushes, and she responds by saying, "Oh you should have seen him at the beginning of the year. At least now he goes to the front to show his work." She is referring to a curious ritual carried out in this classroom many times a day in which the children go to the front of the classroom alone or in groups to read their completed worksheets and stories. Mrs. Brown explains to me that the reason for doing this is to build the children's self esteem. She reasons that they need the recognition because in second grade they won't get any personal attention. The curious thing about this ritual is that she rarely gives any indication that she even sees most of the children when they go to the front to read or show their work.

She continues by telling me that Mikie told her at the beginning of the year that he would never go to the front of the room to show his work and points out that at least he does so now. She goes on to say that he is bilingual and his mother speaks very little English. The family speaks only Spanish at home. I suggest that perhaps the reason he talks so little is because he doesn't feel confident in his command of the English language. She simply replies, "At least he's doing better now."

I notice that he always goes to the front of the room alone, and he makes no attempt to gain anyone's attention. He shyly and very quietly reads his paper, usually without attracting attention from anyone, including the teacher. However, on one occasion I observe him desperately wanting to be noticed. He takes his story to the front of the room and quietly reads it to the class, completely unnoticed by the teacher and the students. He quietly sits down. A few minutes later Maria goes to the front of the room and reads her story. No one notices, so she sits down. Carl follows with his story. Mrs.

Brown takes note and tells the class to "Listen up." He reads and sits down without any further comment from the teacher. Maria returns to the front with her story and reads it for the second time. Mrs. Brown responds by saying, "Very, very good, now go read it to Mrs. Sorrels." Mikie returns to the front of the room and reads his story again but goes unnoticed. He then takes it to Mrs. Brown and reads it aloud to her but she makes no comment whatsoever. He quietly returns to his seat and puts his head on his arms. Zane goes to the front and reads unnoticed. Anne, one of the top readers in the class, goes to the front to read her story, and Mrs. Brown says, "Shhh, listen everybody." After reading her story, Anne is applauded by several of the children. A few minutes later Mikie goes to the front of the room for the third time and begins reading his story. Mrs. Brown interrupts him in the middle of his reading and tells table two to go wash their hands. He returns to his seat with head down.

van Manen suggests that when adults recognize the vulnerability of the child, it awakens a sense of compassion. The child's vulnerability transforms the adult's brusqueness and thoughtlessness into gentleness and consideration. Mrs. Brown seems oblivious to Mikie's vulnerability. He obviously struggles to understand his work but, never does she make a special effort to check to see if he needs help, offer any additional explanation or support or any reassurances of his success. His struggle goes unnoticed.

Mikie loves to draw, yet his gift seems unappreciated by Mrs. Brown. During a reading lesson she reads a book to the class about some children who fix a surprise breakfast for their mom. After the shared reading the class is to draw pictures of items that they would like to serve their own mother for breakfast. As usual, Mrs. Brown dictates to the children what they are to draw and puts examples on the board. Someone

suggests that they would serve their mom tea in a teapot. Mrs. Brown tells them that a teapot is too hard to draw, and they are to draw just a cup. Mikie offers that he can draw a teapot and Mrs. Brown, in an annoyed tone of voice, tells him that he can just draw it by himself because it is too hard for everyone else. She misses the opportunity to validate this child's uniqueness and the talent that he possesses.

Andy is another child toward whom there is a very noticeable lack of pedagogical tact. He is a child who also struggles with his work and during the course of this study experiences a traumatic experience at home that goes unacknowledged by Mrs. Brown.

> 5/01/01 On this particular day, the children are instructed to write a story about a flower and they are given paper cut outs and a pipe cleaner with which they are to assemble an iris modeled after the teacher's example. Throughout the day, I observe Mikie staring into space, turning around in his seat and looking around the room. It is a rule in this classroom that those who do not finish their work by the end of the day are not allowed to participate in center time which takes place during the last thirty minutes of the day. After the children return from their final recess, Mrs. Brown calls their name, one by one, and checks to see if they have finished all of their work. If their work is complete, they are allowed to choose an activity. On this particular day Mikie tells the teacher that he is not finished with his flower. He is told that he cannot go to center time until it is finished. I observe him fumbling with the paper cut outs, arranging them in different configurations with an air of uncertainty about him. I approach him and ask if he needs some help. His face turns red and he shyly nods his head. I show him how

to arrange the cutouts and how to cut the pipe cleaners to the appropriate length. A look of relief crosses his face; he smiles and proceeds to assemble his flower.

After assembling his flower, he takes it to Mrs. Brown to show her his finished product and get permission to go to center time. When he presents his flower to the teacher she responds by saying, "Why did it take you so long?" He replies that he didn't understand. Mrs. Brown angrily asks, "What should you do when you don't understand?" Mikie's face turns red, and he just stands there staring at the teacher. She then sharply says to him, "You should raise your hand. Next year when you go to second grade, and you don't raise your hand, they will tell you that you need to go back to first grade. How would that make you feel?" Mikie makes no response. His face continues to be red and he seems transfixed. There is no movement or change of expression. Andy is standing nearby, observing this interaction. Mrs. Brown then points to Andy and says to Mikie, "Don't be like him. He just blurts out." Then pointing to Andy she says, "You need to raise your hand." Andy blinks hard and sucks in a large breath of air. His chest puffs out, and both boys turn and walk back to their desk and sit down.

Several minutes after this transaction takes place, Mrs. Brown tells me that she needs to call the school counselor to talk to Andy. On Saturday, his mother left the family to go live in another state. She summons the counselor and a few minutes later Andy is called to the office.

Pedagogical tact seeks to heal. I am not suggesting that Mrs. Brown could have taken away the hurt of this child's profound loss, but pedagogical tact seeks to make hurts bearable. Other than calling the counselor to talk to Andy, I never observed her attempt

to talk with Andy about his feelings. I did not see any demonstration of compassion. In fact, I was appalled that she ran roughshod over this child while knowing that the day before he had experienced one of the most traumatic events a child could ever experience—the abandonment of his mother. It certainly did not seem to evoke a sense of compassion and gentleness on the part of Mrs. Brown.

van Manen (1991) asserts that those who possess pedagogical tact continually ask the question, "What does this experience look like in the eyes of the child?" (p.152). Mrs. Brown often seemed annoyed when the children's struggles and difficulties got in the way of her own agenda. She had very little patience, a key component of pedagogical tact, with those who interrupted her plans.

> 5/16/01 On this particular day, the children were to write a story about a ladybug. When they were finished writing, they were to go to the back of the room to get materials to assemble a paper plate ladybug. Toward the end of the day Mrs. Brown tells the children to clear their desks in order to go to center time. She spots Andy putting his papers in his desk and very sharply demands of him, "Why are you putting those things in your desk?" He gives her a bewildered look and pulls everything back out. She asks him if he has made his ladybug and he shakes his head. She tells him to go to the back of the room and get his ladybug. He goes to the back of the room and starts to pick up the sample ladybug that Mrs. Brown has made. She shouts at him, "No, Andy, not mine. I think someone needs his ears cleaned out." Andy takes his materials back to his seat and tries to assemble the bug but has difficulty knowing how to put things together. He asks his neighbor how to do it and she shows him where to put the various pieces. He has trouble getting his

glue to come out so Mrs. Brown tells him to throw his glue bottle away and use hers. He puts the glue on the wrong side of the paper plate. Mrs. Brown grabs the glue and the plate out of his hands and squirts a line of glue on the front of the plate. Andy puts the paper cut out on the wrong side of the ladybug. Mrs. Brown grabs the ladybug from him and throws it on her desk as she shouts, "You are not making any more messes." Andy says nothing and returns to his seat. She comes up behind him and shoves him under his desk. His face is red and he stares straight ahead but makes no response.

The irony of this situation is the fact that Mrs. Brown often complained to me about the callousness of her university professors. During the course of this study she was finishing up her master's degree and was often annoyed that her current professor was too harsh in grading her papers, and her advisor was insensitive to her in failing to return her phone calls in a timely manner. She was very critical of their lack of understanding, yet seemed unaware of her own callousness.

According to van Manen, teachers who possess pedagogical tact look at children through the lens of goodness and strength, for it is after all, our view of children that will determine how we act toward them. Throughout history different societies have held various views of the child that differ across time and across culture. To borrow a metaphor from Isenberg and Jalongo (1997) the changing view of the child is like giving different groups of people an assortment of professional photographer's lens and asking them to film the same reality. The result will be that some will focus on details, some will capture a more panoramic view, and others will see the dark shadows surrounding the object in contrast to those who will see it in dazzling sunlight. Some may use filters

which soften the harshness of the picture and some will view it from such a distance that it is hardly recognizable. The final products will in some cases carry a thread of similarity, but others will stand in such sharp contrast so as to create controversy.

On a more personal note, not only do societies invent a particular viewpoint of children, but every individual carries within them on a conscious or subconscious level, an image of the child which is shaped by a combination of factors. Our own childhood experiences, our family of origin, our cultural traditions and our religious beliefs will profoundly influence our thinking. As educators we must rigorously and thoroughly examine our own personal views of the child and that of our society because our notions will determine our educational practices as a nation and as individuals (Elkind, 1993).

Mrs. Brown looks at the children through a lens of deficiency both academically and morally. She constantly made reference to the fact that these were "low income" children and expressed the feeling that university professors do not understand what it is like to teach "these children." During one particular math lesson she tries to explain how to add a vertical column of three numbers, 4 + 3 + 4. The conversation is as follows:

> "This is very difficult and we will try to walk through this. (She puts 4 + 3 + 4 on the board in a vertical column.) The way I was taught, you add 4 + 3 and then add 4, but the book says you add 4 and 4 first and then add 3. I don't know. (She puts 5 + 6 + 4 on the board in a vertical column) Then this next one, 5 + 4 +6 they say to make 10 first but how would you know it made 10 until you added it. I don't know. It doesn't make sense to me. (She does a few more problems like this on the board then walks over to me.) This is so hard and abstract for them. This is way beyond what they can do. I don't know who makes up these

standards. Actually I said something to the principal and she said that she and so-and-so make them up, and I told her they didn't understand about kids in Oklahoma."

On yet another occasion (5/21/01), she expressed the opinion that the pass skills are too hard and too detailed for "these kids."

She also saw the children as lacking the ability to do good. On one particular afternoon (5/15/01) Danny and Maria were straightening the library and writing corners. Mrs. Brown says to me, "You need to go over there and write about this. It isn't very often that these children do something good."

Pedagogical tack does not handle social situations through intimidation, domination and authoritarian exercise of power (van Manen, 1991). Mrs. Brown often uses her power to control children and ignore their needs. The following is an example of her misguided use of power.

> It is a rainy day and the children are not able to go out to recess. As usual, they bolt their food down in ten to fifteen minutes in order to have as much playtime as possible. Mrs. Brown is in her room and is just sitting down to eat when the first children begin arriving back into the room. With anger in her voice she states, "Mrs. Brown hasn't finished her lunch...she hasn't even started. You all just inhale your food so I don't feel sorry for you. You just sit there and put your heads down." The children look down at the floor and quietly go to their seats and put their heads down.

Pedagogical tact does what is right and good for the child, even when it conflicts with the agenda of adults. In this instance, Mrs. Brown's need to eat lunch conflicts with the

children's need to remain indoors for recess, and she vents her anger toward them. Instead of allowing them to play board games or engage in other tabletop activities, she uses her power to intimidate and control.

The experience of school as a factory and a classroom environment noticeably lacking in pedagogical tact influences how children feel about themselves, others around them and their place in the classroom community. Not only does the classroom climate affect the messages that children communicate, but it also affects the medium by which children communicate their experiences and feelings. What do the children in Mrs. Brown's class communicate, and how do they communicate their experience of schooling? This is what I will discuss next as I look at the nature of the moral languages of children.

The Moral Languages of Children

Carlina Rinaldi, senior consultant to Reggio Children, once said,

> Children are searching for the real meaning of life. We believe in their possibilities to grow. That is why we do not hurry to give them answers; instead we invite them to think about where the answers might lie. The challenge is to listen (Hendrick, 1997, p. 86).

What does it mean to listen to children...really listen to them? Reggio educators often speak of the "hundred languages of children,"(Edwards, C., Gandini, L. & Gorman, G. 1998) reflecting a belief that children communicate in a myriad of ways that extends beyond the spoken and written word. Through various forms of art, a certain look, the slump of the shoulders, a smile, a touch of the hand, children are constantly communicating their understandings of themselves, of others and the world around them;

therefore, in order to really listen to children we must become closely attuned to their way of being in the world.

Vivian Paley, an uncommon kindergarten teacher in Chicago, Illinois spent 36 years reflecting on children in the classroom. What made her uncommon was her wonderful way of listening to children, learning from them, and telling others their story (Paciorek & Munro, 1999, p. 218). It is Paley's belief that young children disclose more of themselves as characters in a story than as participants in a discussion. What takes place in the classroom is akin to what takes place in the theater; therefore, it becomes imperative to follow the plot as well as the dialogue. As we seek to understand and interpret the "moral languages" of children we must keep in mind Paley's perspective:

> As anyone who attends the theater knows, clues and signals are given all along the way, but the answers are never revealed in the first act. The classroom has all the elements of theater, and the observant, self-examining teacher will not need a drama critic to uncover character, plot, and meaning. We are, all of us, the actors trying to find the meaning of the scenes in which we find ourselves. The scripts are not yet fully written so we must listen with curiosity and great care to the main characters who are, of course, the children (quoted in Paciorek & Munro, 1999, p. 228).

As we listen with great care to the main characters in the theatre of the classroom, it becomes apparent that children speak many more languages than the typical adult. The many ways in which they express their feelings and their thinking are not limited by the confines of the spoken word. They reveal their thinking and tell their stories in dramatic play, in their artwork, in spontaneous singing and chants, and with their bodies. Over the course of time, as they move into adulthood, the spoken word begins to dominate, but in

early childhood the imaginative and creative ways in which children express themselves is limitless. Unfortunately, their languages often seem foreign to the adult, and we miss the story that they are trying to tell.

As I began to look at the many ways in which first grade children express their attitudes toward themselves, others and their classroom community I realized that I needed to expand and enlarge my thinking to include forms of expression not previously considered. In the first chapter I defined the "languages" of children as not only including the spoken word but also their dramatic play, drawings, paintings, movement and songs. I soon realized that I had not considered one of the most powerful languages of children—the body.

I realize that a moral reading of what goes on in a classroom is a different kind of reading than just a flat description of the activities or arrangement of the room. Some may choose to describe the difference by using the words subjective or objective but I find the use of these words to be inadequate. The implication is that the latter is real and the other is not. The ontological assumptions of these words imply that that which is objective provides a window to reality and truth and that which is subjective does not. Jackson, Boostrom and Hansen (1993) address this troubling dichotomy and give some fresh insight:

> When we describe a teacher as responding candidly to a student's question or as patiently for the room to become quiet, we believe that description to be fully as real and objective as the color of the teacher's eyes or the chalk smudge on his sleeve. This is not to say that everyone will have seen the same thing and will agree with our perception. Others who were present in the room may have failed to note the qualities

> of candor and patience, just as they may have failed to note the color of the teacher's eyes or the chalk smudge on his sleeve. Or the observers, particularly if they are very young students, may lack the conceptual tools that allow them to see candor and patience when they are expressed. But the failure of others to see what we have seen does not by it self discredit our observations or imply that what we have seen is somehow unreal. It would take observers who were looking for such qualities and who were equipped conceptually to make such distinctions to begin to challenge our description (p. 48).

Instead of looking through the lens of objectivity and subjectivity, I agree with Jackson, Boostra and Hansen (1993) that a more appropriate way of looking at research of this nature is to look at it as being open and closed; a description that is open is one that invites further reflection and commentary. One that is closed is not.

I hope that this research will be viewed as a document that is intended to be open, inviting further reflection that will continue to add depth and meaning. I hope it will also invite early childhood professionals to look with new eyes at the seeming ordinariness of everyday classroom life and discover that there really isn't anything ordinary about living with children. It is also my hope that this paper will remind us once again that to really listen to children means to listen with all of our senses and not just with our ears.

The Body Language of Children

I realize as I enter into the world of body language that I am venturing into an area that is very much open to interpretation. Yet, interpreting and responding to the body language of others is something that we do everyday, usually on an unconscious level. As previously quoted, van Manen (1991, p. 125) reminds us that "a tactful person has the

sensitive ability to interpret inner thoughts, understandings, feelings, and desires from indirect clues such as gestures, demeanor, expression, and body language." My hope is that by bringing attention to the many messages children communicate through their bodies, the interpretation of these messages will brought out of the unconscious realm into the world of conscious reflection in order that teachers and caregivers can be more emotionally attuned to the children in their care. In order for us to become more attuned to the moral subtleties that take place everyday in the classroom the unconscious must be brought into conscious focus.

As every early childhood professional knows, the early childhood classroom could be described as "perpetual motion." Even when the children are supposedly sitting still for group time there is an underlying ripple of movement. As I had the luxury of observing children for hours on end with out the added responsibility of their education, I began to look with new eyes at the constant movement, the posture and facial expressions of the children. I became amazed at the messages that were constantly being communicated in the wiggles and squirms, the postures, movements and faces.

Facial expressions. Jackson, Boostrom and Hansen (1993) use the term "expressive morality" to describe the messages that are conveyed through the body and face. Saint Jerome once wrote, "The face is the mirror of the mind and the eyes without speaking confess the secrets of the heart" (cited in Jackson, Boostra & Hansen, 1993). The face is the most expressive part of the human body, especially the area around the eyes, which is the place where most people focus their gaze when engaged in conversation with someone.

van Manen (1991) also recognizes the importance of the messages conveyed through the face and the eyes:

> From moment to moment, teachers and children read from each other's face and eyes what is important, interesting, disturbing, moving, boring, stirring, disquieting. Through their eyes the adult and the child are immediately known to each other. When face and voice contradict each other, children are more likely to believe the eyes than the mouth. Why? Because children know intuitively that the eyes have a more direct connection to the soul than the words which flow from the mouth. Good teachers in this respect are like children. Unlike many adults, who have forgotten this truth, they cannot be fooled by mere words. A good teacher can read a child's face, just as the attentive parent can read the face of his or her child (p.179).

I found the facial expressions of children to be extremely fluid, conveying a wide range of emotions often in a very short period of time. The clenching of the teeth, a hard blink of the eyes, a flushed face, a smile a frown, a grimace all carried a message.

Tina is a child whose face communicates anger. Tina usually enters the classroom each morning with a scowl on her face, and her manner of walking resembles a stomp. What is the source of her anger? It is not immediately apparent so I carefully watch her interactions with Mrs. Brown and the children to attempt to give some meaning to her angry demeanor. Mrs. Brown feels that her home life is the primary source of her anger. She explains that Tina has twin baby sisters and she doesn't get enough attention at home. I have a hunch that the lack of attention at home does not fully explain her anger. There does not seem to be any undue animosity in her conversation toward her twin siblings and often draws pictures of the three of them playing.

As I observe her interactions with others, I suspect that her angry demeanor is due in part to her inability to form positive relationships with others.

12/4/00 The class goes next door to another first grade class for a phonics lesson. As Tina sits down on the floor she bumps her head on the desk behind her. She begins to cry and tells the child sitting in front of her that it is his fault. He ignores her. The children begin singing a song with motions. They are sitting very close together so when the song calls for the children to stretch out their arms, Andy flings his arms in Tina's face. She scowls and elbows him in the side. She then moves as far away from him as she can. Tina never joins in the singing and continually taps the child in front of her on the head throughout the phonics lesson.

4/12/00 When I arrive in the classroom Tina is already sitting by herself in the writing center in "time out." Her face reflects the usual scowl. Mrs. Brown tells me that she was knocking things off of another child's desk and putting "x's" on his paper. I ask Tina what happened, and she tells me that the other child called her "stupid" and that's why she knocked the things off of the desk. Mrs. Brown pulls me aside and says she is lying.

12/18/00 The children gather on the rug to read a story. Tina sits very close to Andy and knowingly makes her foot touch his leg. He pulls away and she continues to press her foot into his leg.

5/1/00 Mrs. Brown calls the "Rabbit Readers," the top reading group, to the rug to read together. Anne and Sandy, usually inseparable, sit close together with their bodies slightly turned toward each other. Tina sits to the side of Sandy with

her back to the two girls. Anne initiates the shared reading and reads the selection very loudly. Sandy immediately joins in. Tina's lips are moving but she appears to be mumbling. Suddenly she shouts out, "Sandy, I hate it when you do that." Tina's face is red and her usual scowl is even more pronounced. I say to her, "Tina, you seem to be upset." The following conversation ensues:

Tina: "Yeah, Sandy used to be my best friend but now she only plays with Anne."

Sandy: "I do not."

Tina: "You do to."

Sandy: "Do not."

Tina: "Do too."

Sandy: "Well, you always tell me that I can't play."

Tina: "I did not."

Sandy: "You did too."

Anne: "Yes you did, Tina"

Sandy: "You won't let me be Silver Moon. You always make me be the horse when we play."

Tina: "Well, I like Silver Moon."

Sandy: "So do I."

Amanda: "You two have to take turns. Kids should share."

Tina: "Maybe next time we play you could be the mother and that way we both can have power."

Sandy: (smiles) "Okay."

I make a note to observe their interaction on the playground. However, just a few minutes later the following episode occurs, preventing any further interaction on this particular day.

5/01/00 Mrs. Brown joins the Rabbit Readers to read aloud. Tina is scratching her head vigorously. Mrs. Brown says, "Tina, are you okay?" Tina responds very matter-of-factly, "I have lice. My mom wouldn't even look at it this morning." Anne and Sandy quickly move away from her and Anne says, "We can get them from you. They jump." Mrs. Brown jumps up from her chair and in an angry tone of voice says, "You're going to the nurse." Tina's face is beet red and she moves quickly from the room.

A few minutes later Tina stomps back into the room. Sandy immediately blurts out, "What did they say?" Tina responds in a very matter-of-fact way, "I have lice." Anne, replies, "I'll tell Kyle you have lice." Tina smiles, gathers her things and leaves the room. Mrs. Brown doesn't acknowledge her.

5/5/01 Tina is at the front of the room reading her worksheet. Sandy laughs aloud. Tina immediately stops, glares at Sandy and says, "What?" Tina's face is very red. Sandy giggles. Tina glares at her for a few seconds and then sits down.

5/08/01 A substitute teacher is showing the class math flash cards. Anne and Sandy are responding very loudly with the answers. Tina's face is very red, and she is scowling. She puts her head down on the desk and does not participate.

5/08/01 The substitute tells the class that the quietest table will get to line up to go to lunch first. Tina is scowling at Carl who sits across from her. He is playing with his scissors. Their table is finally called to line up. Tina and Carl are next to

each other. Tina is scowling at Carl, and he tells her that she is a "trouble maker." Tina tells Carl that he has "gap teeth" and orders him to "get away" because he isn't supposed to be standing near her. She tells him that Mrs. Brown doesn't want them together because Carl "bothers her." Carl blows on the back of her neck, and she starts crying.

5/10/01 Tina butts in line in front of Sandy. Mrs. Brown immediate says, "You're butting. You go to the end of the line." Tina's face turns red, and she scowls.

5/11/01 Tina returns from the bathroom crying. I ask her what is wrong and she says that Danny told her in the hallway that her table had not been called to go to the bathroom, and she wasn't supposed to be out of the room. She told him to "shut up," and he said he was going to tell on her. She is upset because she has "no more chances." I call Danny over to discuss the incident with us. He says that he wasn't involved at all—she had this conversation with someone from another class." Tina responds very curiously. She stops crying and replies, "Oh, I thought it was you," then calmly sits down at her seat.

5/14/01 Anne and Tina are at the art center in the back of the room. Anne is punching holes in a picture of a sunflower that Mrs. Brown had given them to color earlier in the day. Tina grabs the hole punch out of Anne's hand. Anne says, "No, I'm not done." Tine gives it back. She begins folding a piece of paper into a triangle and says to Anne, "Do it like I do." Anne replies that she wants to do it her own way. Tina glares at her.

5/15/01 Anne and Sandy are sitting side by side on the rug as they prepare to read with the Rabbit Readers. Tina sits next to Sandy with her body facing the girls. Sandy looks at Tina with a blank look. Tina says, "What?" in an angry tone of voice. Sandy says, "You don't have to be so mean." Tina scowls and begins flipping through her book. Anne and Sandy begin reading aloud. Tina continues to flip through the pages of her book and does not join in the reading.

5/23/01 Tina, Sandy, Dante and Maria appear to be arguing. They are supposed to be coloring a picture of a bug. Sandy made a bug that covered the entire paper. Tina tells Sandy that she did her paper wrong because she was supposed to "color little." Sandy told her that she could do what she wanted. Tina tells Sandy that she is bossy. Sandy tells Tina that she always gives her mean looks.

After observing Tina's interactions with others, I interpret her scowls and angry demeanor to reflect more than lack of attention at home. I suspect that part of her anger is due to the fact that she has a great deal of difficulty making friends, and I sense that there is some jealously toward Anne and Sandy. Tina very much wants to be friends with Sandy but yet Sandy obviously is put off by Tina's "mean looks" and their friendship is very fickle.

Although Tina communicates a great deal of anger, she was at the same time, the child who initiated hugs more than any other student.

12/12/00 When Tina turns in her coloring picture, she hugs Mrs. Brown.

12/18/00 When Tina turns in her artwork, she hugs Mrs. Brown.

Mikie, as previously mentioned, usually sits with his arms folded on his desk, his chin resting on this arms, as if he is trying to make himself small. There is no one immediately available for him to interact with so he rarely interacts with others.

I also observe that when the children line up to leave the classroom, Mikie always hangs back so as to be the last in line. I finally mention to Mikie that I notice he likes to be at the end of the line, and I ask him what he likes about it. He looks at me shyly, grins and says, "I just like it back here." When he walks down the hall, his body is very tight. His hands are clasped tightly behind his back and his arms are pressed firmly to his side. I came to interpret his desire to always be at the end of the line as wanting to be as far away as possible from Mrs. Brown who always walked at the head of the line.

When Mrs. Brown steps out of the room, Mikie seems to come alive. He sits up straight and begins interacting with others. Over time, Mrs. Brown's absence from the room is accompanied by Mikie immediately appealing to me for some sort of help with his work. The first time it happened, Mikie looked at me with a pleading look in his eyes and mouthed the words, "Please help me." I went to his desk, and he said he didn't understand what to do with his worksheet. After a brief explanation, he caught on quickly and he began finishing his paper. It became almost routine that when Mrs. Brown stepped out of the room, Mikie would signal my help.

Mikie's facial expressions are many and varied. When his head is propped upon his folded arms, he often has a blank stare on his face. On the rare occasion that he asks Mrs. Brown for help, he nervously looks about him, pulls on his ear, becomes red in the face and often looks frightened. When Mrs. Brown scolds him, his facial expression moves from a look of fear to a look of terror.

With other children on the playground, Mikie's face becomes animated and relaxed. He smiles often and grins. When he wants to initiate a conversation with someone, he often sits close to them and shyly grins and looks away several times before speaking.

In contrast, his posture assumed a very different look as the study progressed and he felt more comfortable with me. As soon as each child finishes eating his/her lunch, they are immediately dismissed to the playground. Needless to say, the children gobble their food down so as to have as much time as possible to play outside. Mikie would often wait to walk with me down the hall. He usually walks with his hands in his pockets or clasped firmly behind his back. As we walk side by side he often glances up at me and grins. He never initiates conversation but would quickly respond if I attempt to engage him. I believe that Mikie is desperately looking for a safe harbor at school.

Lack of eye contact. The most notable thing about Carl is his lack of eye contact with anyone, adults and children alike. He usually sits with his chair slightly pulled back from his desk and with his downcast eyes looking into his lap. He often fiddles with his scissors and crayons and other school supplies in his desk. On several occasions he chops up his plastic bag that contains his crayons. He rarely ever looks at Mrs. Brown when she addresses the class and even when spoken to on a one-to-one basis he rarely makes eye contact with anyone, including his peers. Often times he lays his head on his outstretched arm which is usually slung across his desk. When doing a worksheet he constantly erases his paper, often rubbing holes in his work, creating a messy appearance. He rarely smiles and often mutters to himself.

I found it difficult to interpret the meaning of Carl's body language. Is he sad? Is he depressed? Is he bored? I began to realize that children's body language must be

interpreted in context of their interactions with others. Body language alone can be ambiguous, but as it is observed in the context of everyday interactions, it begins to take on form and meaning. I began to notice that Mrs. Brown's interactions with him are rarely positive and I sense that she doesn't like him. She often complains to me what a problem he is and complains about his mother. I observe only one occasion when Mrs. Brown speaks an encouraging word to him. This moment occurred on 4/30/01 when Carl went to the front of the room to read his story. Mrs. Brown took note and said, "very, very good." The following examples are illustrative of Carl's interaction with Mrs. Brown and with others.

> 12/4/00 Carl is attempting to write a story for "Cooper News," the daily news account for the class. He is flipping through his dictionary apparently trying to find a particular word. The following interaction takes place:
>
> Carl (mumbling): Donna, how do you spell "club"? (Donna does not answer or acknowledge that she has heard him.)
>
> Mrs. Brown: (She happens to look his way and sees him talking.) Mr. Jones, you need to get to work.
>
> Carl: (He does not look up or make any acknowledgement that he has heard Mrs. Brown. He continues flipping through his dictionary.) "Donna." (She does not respond.) "Donna." (He does not look up and he begins underlining words in his dictionary and audibly sounding out letters. Then he begins erasing the marks he made in the dictionary.)
>
> Donna: "You're gonna get in trouble." Turning to Sandy she says, "Look, he ain't supposed to write in the book."

Carl: "It's my book."

(Meanwhile, Tina is sitting across the room loudly trying to sound out the word "mommy.")

Donna: (Upon hearing Tina trying to spell "mommy") "M-O-M-M-Y.

Despite Carl's requests for help, his classmates rarely offer any assistance to him.

3/28/01 Out on the playground a group of boys are sitting in the shade under the climbing equipment. It is very windy on this particular day. Carl uses both hands to scoop up some sand and he lets it slowly run through his fingers. A gust of wind catches the sand and blows it into Andy's eyes. Charles immediately jumps up and exclaims, "I'm going to tell Mrs. Brown." He and Andy run to Mrs. Brown and tell her that Carl threw sand. Mrs. Brown comes marching over to Carl and orders him to sit "on the wall" meaning that she wanted him to sit along the side of the building, a spot reserved for time out. He quietly says, "I just wanted to do something good." I come to his defense at this point and tell Mrs. Brown that I observed the entire situation and the fact that he did not deliberately throw sand in Andy's eyes—the wind blew it. She dismisses me by saying, "He always has an excuse."

4/18/00 Charles returns to the room and reports that Carl was fighting in the bathroom with a boy from another class. Mrs. Brown calls Carl to her desk and asks him what happened. He makes no eye contact with her and does not respond or acknowledge what she said. After repeated demands to talk, he finally volunteers that he told the boy he was his best friend. His words are mumbled and difficult to understand. The boy apparently responded to Carl's comment by

5/4/01 Sandy's mother comes to eat lunch with her. As she leaves the room with her mother, Tina jumps up and hugs Sandy. Nicole's aunt comes to eat lunch with Nicole. As she leaves the room Tina jumps up and hugs her.

5/10/01 Sandy's grandfather arrives in the classroom and announces that he has brought Sandy's horse to school. Tina, Dante and Carl jump up and hug each other.

5/11/01 Mrs. Brown's daughter arrives in the classroom. Tina jumps up and runs to hug her. Later in the afternoon she returns from the bathroom and hugs Mrs. Brown and her daughter. When Mrs. Brown announces that it is center time, Tina runs to hug her.

5/14/01 The class is lining up to go to another classroom to see a movie. Tina grabs Sandy from behind and hugs her.

5/21/01 Mrs. Brown's daughter comes into the room, and Tina and Anne give her a hug.

What meaning do I attach to Tina's hugs? It seems to me that they are a way of asking for acceptance. She doesn't have the social skills necessary for initiating positive interaction so she does it through body language.

Posture and orientation of the body. The posture of the children and the orientation of their body in space communicate something about their attitudes toward themselves and their place in the classroom community. Their nearness or their separateness, their slumped or upright posture, their fidgeting tell something about that child. Mikie is a child whose posture and orientation in space is particularly notable. He was introduced previously in this paper but a few other details of his body language are noteworthy.

saying that they weren't going to be friends anymore because he had found another friend. Charles then adds that Carl punched the boy in the bottom. Carl admits it by nodding his head but never looks at Mrs. Brown. She asks if there is anything he would like to say to the boy and he says, "Sorry." She dismisses them to sit down without any constructive discussion of the event or any acknowledgement of Carl's feelings of rejection.

5/7/01 Mrs. Brown has forbid Carl to stand next to certain children in line. The class is lining up to go to lunch and Carl is standing next to Tina, who tells Carl to get away from her. Carl tells Tina that she is a troublemaker. Tina retaliates by telling Carl that he has "gap teeth." He misunderstands what she says and replies, "I don't have black teeth." Tina and Nicole begin whispering to each other and looking and pointing at Carl. Tina again tells him to get away from her because Mrs. Brown says he always bothers her. Carl blows in the back of Tina's neck and she begins crying. Mrs. Brown sends him to the end of the line.

5/9/01 The children are writing stories about flowers. When they finish writing their story, they have a flowerpot to color. Carl has finished his story and is coloring his picture. Mrs. Brown sees him coloring and says, "you are supposed to be writing, not coloring." He makes no response other than to put his crayons away.

5/15/01 Carl is sitting at the lunch table with Andy and Mikie. They banter back and forth as they eat their lunch. When they are given the signal that they may go out to recess Carl says, "Come on guys, let's go." They ignore him and remain seated while Carl goes out to play alone.

As I look at Carl's body language in the context of his interactions I conclude that he is a depressed child with much pent up anger. During the course of the study, I mention to Mrs. Brown my observation that Carl seems to be depressed. Unlike Mikie, Carl's body language did not go unnoticed by Mrs. Brown. She agreed with my interpretation of his body language that he seemed to be a depressed child but made no attempt to address the issue with his parents or with the school counselor.

van Manen (1991) asserts that when children live in a negative atmosphere where they sense distrust and negativity in their relationships with others, particularly adults, it may "produce in the child stealthy glances, a stammer, awkward pauses, a down cast look, or a propensity to be apologetic and to say things the adult supposedly wants to hear" (p.168). It is my feeling that Carl's refusal to make eye contact, his downcast expression is a direct result of the lack of pedagogical tact that he experiences in the classroom and the rejection by his peers.

Sandy's body language, on the other hand, is notable for reasons entirely opposite of Carl. I quickly pick up on the confidence and exuberance that she conveys. She holds her head high, walks with a spring in her step and frequently smiles and laughs. She is only one of two children that ever initiates a conversation with Mrs. Brown. She is also the only child that I ever observe to enter Mrs. Brown's "space" without being asked to do so. Unlike Mikie, she reports that she hates to be last in line. I ask her why and she says, "I don't know, it just makes me feel sad." Sandy often walks arm in arm with Anne and whenever the class gathers on the rug she sits next to Anne, their bodies touching. On a few occasions she walks arm in arm with Tina.

Sandy loves to talk and is often seated in the middle row for the "problem children." Her face flushes easily and on the many occasions in which she is reprimanded for talking, her face turns red and she silently returns to her work for a few moments.

Smiles. What is the meaning of a smile? That is a question that I pondered throughout the study and continues to remain a mystery to me. Zane and Nicole shared one thing in common—they most always wore a smile on their face. Both children were loners, rarely playing or interacting with others. Both remained physically aloof from other children on the playground, yet they always had a smile on their face. Zane walks around the periphery of other children playing, occasionally calling out to them to come chase him, always wearing a smile. Ashley walks and plays alone on the playground always wearing a smile. Questions directly addressed to them are usually met by silence and a smile.

Zane's family is from the Middle East and they speak Arabic at home. His first contact with English speaking children was in kindergarten. He reads well and writes very meticulously, often physically placing his fingers between words to get the accurate spacing. He does all this with a smile. Mrs. Brown reports that he attends church school every evening from 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. to become well grounded in the Muslim religion. When I ask Zane what he learns in church school he responds only with a smile. When I ask him what he likes best about school he smiles.

Ashley is a child who has been abandoned by her mother. Her father works long hours so she and her sister live with her Aunt Becky. Given the life circumstances of this child, a smile is the last thing that I would expect to see on her face, yet it is almost always there.

What is hidden behind these smiles? Do these smiles hide insecurity, pain, timidity or fear? Are they smiles of children who are resilient to life's struggles and difficulties? I leave with only questions.

The Language of Connection

In studying the moral complexity of a kindergarten classroom, McCadden (1998) identifies two kinds of morality that operate in the classroom-- "organizational morality" and "relational morality." Organizational morality is initiated by the teacher and is oriented toward strong classroom control. Self-discipline, attentiveness to tasks, hard work and the development of problem solving skills are part of "organizational morality." On the other hand, "relational morality" is primarily constructed and initiated by children, apart from any adult interference and is oriented toward connection with others. McCadden (1998) defines relational morality as consisting of two basic elements. One is their desire to "make connections to people; to make friends, to be accepted, and to be approved. The other was their need to be able to negotiate for access to people, games, and equipment" (p. 81). He believes that the children's relational morality often conflicts with adult's organizational morality. Like McCadden, I found that the children in this classroom were driven to connect with each other and it happened in a myriad of ways.

Imitative behavior. One way in which the children establish connection with one another is through imitative behavior. I also came to realize that imitating one another and participating in some sort of mutual behavior was a way of experiencing community. I found it interesting that many children, even the ones who had lesser power in classroom had the power to initiate some sort of imitative behavior among their

classmates. The following examples are typical of the kinds of imitative behavior that I observed:

12/4/00 Donna, Anne, Sandy and Nicole are painting with water colors at the round table. Sandy reaches over and makes a paint mark on Donna's paper. Donna shouts, "No, I'm not going to be your friend anymore." Donna leans away from Sandy as if to get as far away from her as possible and scowls at her. Sandy ignores her and continues to paint. Anne dips her paintbrush in the paint and begins to blow on the bristles as she giggles. Nicole begins to imitate her by blowing on her paintbrush. Sandy joins in, with Donna soon following. The four girls continue giggling and blowing on their paintbrushes for several minutes. It is interesting to see how intently their eyes focus on one another and they revel in their shared moment of laughter. Finally Donna commands them all to stop. Anne says, "No," and continues to blow. Nicole and Sandy hesitate for a moment, then resume blowing on their brush. At this point Mrs. Brown calls an end to center time and the girls put their things away.

12/5/00 Mrs. Brown passes out a round peppermint candy to the children. They discuss the color and the shape and then she tells them that they can eat the candy. Danny puts the candy in his mouth, sucks on it for a while then puts it between his teeth. Anne comments that his stripes have disappeared. Donna, Zane, Carl and Tina begin showing their candy in their teeth also. Zane takes a deep breath and experiences the coolness of the mint and lets out a big sigh. Sandy begins to imitate him by breathing in and sighing. They giggle together. Donna, Anne, Carl and Tina join in and soon they are all giggling together.

12/12/00 The children are returning to their seats after reading a story together in the library corner. Mrs. Brown tells the children they have "30 minutes to fly," meaning that they have 30 minutes until it is time for afternoon recess. Donna begins to flap her arms as if she is flying. Tina, Sandy and Zane join in as they all giggle together.

5/2/01 The children are coloring a picture of a caterpillar and a strawberry. I suddenly hear a pencil rapidly tapping and very quickly I hear other pencil's rapidly tapping and giggling erupting. It happens so quickly that I am not able to identify for certain the person who initiated the tapping but I suspect that it is Sandy. The entire class erupts into gales of laughter and tapping as they make the seeds on their strawberry.

5/18/01 Danny, Dante and Mikie are working with playdough during center time. The three of them are standing at Mikie's table cutting out circles with the top of the playdough can. Danny picks up two playdough circles and holds them up to his eyes. The boys begin to laugh and imitate him. Danny then cuts two crescent shapes and holds them up to his eyebrows. Their laughter becomes even louder and Mikie and Dante imitate him.

5/21/01 The children are in their seats doing their usual worksheets. Anne shakes her head back and forth, making her long ponytail swish back and forth. Dante laughs and begins shaking his head. Anne shakes hers faster and makes Dante laugh harder. He imitates her. After several minutes of giggling together they get back to work.

Not only do I see their imitative behavior as a way of connecting, but it also reveals something about their cognitive development. According to Piaget (cited in Siegal, 1982, p. 52) imitative behavior is indicative of egocentrism. The child who imitates is not able to separate his own interests and intentions from those of others. Such children, according to Piaget (1965), lack "conscious minds" that are subject to an inner locus of control. So not only is it a language of connection but also a language of conformity.

Rough and tumble play. Pellegrini and Perlmutter (1988) describe "rough and tumble play" as laughing, running, smiling, jumping, open-hand beating, wrestling, play fighting, chasing and fleeing that takes place among children. Though many classroom teachers fail to distinguish the difference between rough and tumble play and real aggression, Pellegini and Perlmutter found that there is, in fact, a distinct difference. In rough and tumble play, children are happy as indicated by their smiles and laughter as opposed to aggressive forms of play in which children are angry. When children engage in play fighting they swat at each other with open hands as opposed to fists. When rough and tumble play ends, the children involved do not part ways but continue to engage each other in other forms of play. Aggressive play, on the other hand, results in the parties involved parting ways.

Pellegrini and Perlmutter agree that rough and tumble play is an important part in the social development of young children because they alternate playing the role of victim and victimizer which fosters social perspective taking, social flexibility, negotiation, the formation of alliances and situation redefinition.

McCadden (1998) believes that rough and tumble play is an important way in which young children establish connection among themselves. He found that one of the

simplest and most immediate ways that children related and connected to each other was through chasing. I, too, found this activity to be an important way in which children connected with each other and I was surprised at the persistence and duration of the activity. On most days, the children went outside to play two different times. There were five first grade classes on the playground at each recess and at any given time, a group of children were engaged in a game of chase. The participants, the location and the rules were constantly changing but it was ever present in one form or another. They often reminded me of a swarm of bees, constantly reforming as they moved from one side of the playground to the other.

Usually every recess would start with a group of boys from the various classes gathering near the climbing equipment to play chase. The game usually began by one child calling out the name of another to "chase me." The entire group would begin to run from the child whose name was called. The game was very fluid with the configuration of the game constantly changing. The following scene is typical of what happened on a daily basis.

> 4/30/01 Mikie, Andy, Zane, Dante and Charles gather with boys from other classes to play chase. It begins with Charles calling to Andy to "chase me." The entire group begins to run from Andy. After a few moments of running Charles is caught. Someone then announces, "let's play monster." The nature of the game doesn't change—they begin running from Charles. The playground is very large and the games moves very rapidly from one side of the playground to the other, making it difficult to keep track of who is "it." Someone then announces, "let's play hide and seek." "It" closes his eyes and counts to 10 while the rest of the

group begins running across the playground. When he gets to 10, "it" runs after the group, tagging someone else to be "it."

Usually a particular post or the baseball backstop would be declared "base." However, "base" would change throughout the game. One child would declare base to be a particular post on the climbing equipment and then someone would say, "this isn't base anymore, that fence over there is base." Never did I hear anyone protest a change in the name of the game, the location of base or a pronouncement of "I'm it."

Throughout the game, participants would run off to play on the monkey bars or the climbing equipment, sometimes rejoining the game at a later time and sometimes not. New participants were constantly entering the game by joining the flow of running from someone or calling someone's name and saying, "catch me."

I noticed that Zane had a difficult time joining in the ritual of the chase scene. He ran around the periphery of the activity with his ever-present smile, often calling out someone's name to chase him. I was amazed at his persistence in trying to enter the game usually with little success. The following scene was typical of his behavior:

> 12/4/00 Zane walks around the periphery of the location of the game of chase calling out, "Carl, come get me." Carl ignores him. Zane then calls out to Charles, "Charles, come get me." He is again ignored. At this point Carl runs across the bridge to the climbing equipment and Zane follows him on the ground below again calling, "Carl, come get me." After crossing the bridge, Carl chases him for a few seconds but then spies someone digging in the sand and drops out of the chase to join the digging. Zane continues running while smiling and laughing without noticing that Carl is no longer behind him. After running to the

other side of the playground he turns around and realizes that Carl is no longer there. He walks back toward the climbing equipment, still smiling.

Pelligrini and Perlmutter (1985) found that children who are not well liked have a difficult time engaging other children in rough and tumble play. In Zane's case I don't think that he is necessarily disliked, but his shyness and insecurity with the language interfere with his ability to form social connections. It is painful to watch him day after day attempting to establish connection with others and not succeed.

Quite often the girls in Mrs. Brown's class would join the game of chase at some point, but their participation would usually not last very long. Usually Anne initiated the girl's entry into the game by calling out the name of a boy, usually Charles or Carl, to "chase us," meaning the girls. The girls would run from the boys at first but would usually turn at some point and run toward the boys, obviously wanting to get caught. Usually after a couple of rounds, the girls would run off to play elsewhere. Maria was the only girl who often remained with the boys to play for any length of time.

Nicole and Donna were the only two that rarely participated. Donna usually played with children from other classes and Nicole usually walked around the perimeter of the playground alone.

There was never a time on the playground when there was not a group of children playing the game of chase. It often reminded me of a swarm of bees constantly changing configurations and participants.

I also observed many instances of rough and tumble play in the form of play fighting. The nature of the play and intent of the players was usually misinterpreted by Mrs. Brown. The following story is typical of the events that transpired:

4/30/01 Mikie, Andy, Zane, Dante and Charles are playing chase. The game is very fluid. At one moment they are calling it "chase," then "monsters" and then "hide-and-go-seek." The "bases" constantly change. With the simple pronouncement, "this is not base anymore," the "safe" place to stand constantly moves around the playground. The focus of the game changes after several minutes and the boys begin "rough hugging." They throw their arms around one another and squeeze or lift the person off their feet. They are laughing as they play. Mrs. Brown spies the boys activity and starts fussing at Dante to stop fighting. He blames it on Andy. She calls Mikie and Charles over and asks them why they are fighting and they say, "Andy started it." Andy responds by saying, "We aren't fighting, we're playing," but no one jumps in to agree with him. Mikie quietly says, "We shouldn't be mean, we should be nice." What began as a way of forming social connections ends in an experience of separation and blame.

Due to Mrs. Brown's misunderstanding the nature and intent of their game, what begins as a way of connecting ends with blame and separation. This incident underscores the importance of teachers looking for the subtle clues, the gestures and facial expressions to truly understand what it is that they are seeing. The game started out very playful and the participants smiled and laughed with one another as they engaged each other in play. It wasn't until Mrs. Brown imposed her interpretation on the group that they began to get upset with one another.

Silly behavior. According to Pelegrinni's and Perlmutter's definition, silly behavior as in laughing, smiling and jumping up and down could also be part of rough and tumble

play. Every childhood educator is familiar with the silly behavior and antics of young children that produce smiles, giggles, and gales of laughter in the early childhood classroom. What is behind the silly behavior? Is it simply a diversion from the activity at hand? Is it just a result of an immature nervous system?

In a study by DeVries and Zan, they make a brief reference to the silly behavior of children and the fact that it needs to be further studied. They observed children as they played checkers together in a controlled setting. On one occasion the boys playing checkers got in a fight which they were unable to resolve. After a few moments of silence, one of the children made a silly gesture to the other child who responded with laughter. He also reciprocated with a silly gesture and with the tension replaced by laughter, the boys resumed their game.

Most adults have the verbal sophistication and social savvy to know how to tactfully engage another human being in conversation. We usually do this by making a friendly comment or asking a question. It soon became obvious to me that children often use silly behavior to make connections with those around them. The following examples illustrate the ways in which children use silly behavior to initiate social connections:

> 12/04/00 As the children are standing in the cafeteria line, Mikie and Danny stand side by side. They are both quiet children who rarely speak in the classroom. Mikie leans into Danny and makes a face by pulling his eyes down with his fingers. Danny laughs and makes a face by wrinkling up his nose. The line moves on and Mikie doesn't notice. Danny grabs Mikie by the nose and turns his face to see that the line is moving forward. They move up and begin hopping and laughing together. As they hop up and down their bottoms accidentally bump

each other and they laugh harder and begin bumping their bottoms together over and over again. As they stand side-by-side, hips bumping together, their faces are turned to each other, nose to nose. Their eyes are fixed on each other and they are thoroughly engaged in their moment of laughter. Danny leans hard into Mikie as if to knock him off his feet. Mikie leans back and the friendly shoving begins, the boys laughing the whole time. The cafeteria worker reprimands them for fighting and tells them to straighten up. They stop the shoving and bumping but look at each other and grin.

12/5/00 Anne and Sandy are walking around the track with their arms linked together, their hand in their own pocket. Each girl is trying to get the other to pull their hand out of their pocket and a sort of tug-o-war begins. They giggle and push each other from side to side. Anne then says, "A bird almost pooped in my eye."

"EWWWW," says Sandy and they both laugh. "Yeah," continues Anne, "it was on my face and almost in my eye!"

"EWWWW," laughs Sandy.

"Bird poop, bird poop, poo, poo, poo, poo…," says Amanda. The girls continue giggling and trying to wrestle each other's arm out of the pocket.

12/4/00 Mrs. Brown gives the children a Christmas stocking to color. Tina says to Mikie as she laughs, "Color it fast, color it fast, color it fast." Mikie burps back to her, "Okay, okay," and they both giggle and smile.

12/4/00 Danny flips a piece of foil in Anne's face. She smiles at him and Danny smiles back.

12/5/00 Mikie is writing a story and Danny pulls on the strings of the necklace that Mikie is wearing. Mikie turns around and laughs then returns to his writing. Danny wiggles his fingers behind Mikie and playfully jerks the strings of his necklace again. Mikie turns and laughs and they begin vigorously wiggling their fingers at each other. Danny grabs Mikie's forearm and walks his fingers up his arm. Mikie laughs and with their fingers end to end they wiggle their fingers in each others face.

12/12/00 While writing, Donna makes silly faces at Sandy who is sitting across the room. They giggle. A few moments later, Carl, who is sitting next to Donna suddenly goes "Booo," in her face. She does not respond to him.

5/11/01 In connection with a unit of study that they are doing on spaghetti, Mrs. Brown brings some spaghetti to the classroom for the kids to enjoy. She cut out cardboard mustaches for the children to wear to pretend that they were dining in a French restaurant. Dante and Danny pretend to have a gunfight with their mustaches. Andy walks by and Dante and attracts his attention by making a silly face. Dante and Andy are nose to nose, laughing and making faces. Then Dante taps Mikie on the back and after gaining his attention performs a fake sneeze that makes his mustache fall off. They wale with laughter.

Over and over again throughout the day, the children initiated contact through their silly behavior. I rarely heard any conversations among children that had any serious content to them. They seemed to take advantage of every opportunity possible to connect with one another.

Their silly behavior, however, takes on a different meaning when Mrs. Brown leaves the room. In the section describing the socio-moral atmosphere of the classroom, I documented the silly antics that take place when Mrs. Brown leaves the room. Not only does their behavior reflect a lack of autonomy but I believe their silliness became a way of celebrating their brief moments of freedom from the scrutiny of the factory Manager. Mrs. Brown's frequent absences from the room was a signal to celebrate. Even the quietest children seemed to revel in their brief moments of freedom. However, as I reflect upon these moments a question arises. Is their silly behavior a way of celebrating or is it a safe way in which to express rebellion. I can only speculate that perhaps it is a little of both. (See pages 10 and 11 for documentation of incidents.)

The Language of Art

Arnheim (1992) observed that "art serves as a helper in times of trouble, as a means of understanding the conditions of human existence and of facing the frightening aspects of these conditions, and as the creation of a meaningful order offering a refuge from the unmanageable confusion of the outer reality" (p. 170).

Recognizing that art can communicate something of the emotional life of a child, therapists have long been interested in children's drawings. Although most therapists agree that art can provide important information about personality and emotions, there is very little reliable information to support specific interpretations of affective elements in children's drawings (Malchiodi, 1998). Nevertheless, it is generally accepted that children's art is a "language," or a way of expressing affective feelings.

The children in Mrs. Brown's class were expected to illustrate just about everything they wrote so there were many opportunities to observe their drawings. Most of the

drawings are unremarkable—typical drawings of themselves, their family members and friends. The figures are usually smiling, happy people; however, there are two children whose drawings stand out for some unusual reasons and seem to be communicating something about that child.

In December I notice that Carl almost always draws himself with a sad face. Golocomb (1990) noted that before the age of 10, children use the faces of the figures they draw to communicate emotions. After age 10 the emotion is communicated in the body of the figure. I brought Carl's drawings to Mrs. Brown's attention and she confirms that the sad face has made an appearance in all of his drawings since the beginning of school. When I returned to the classroom in April and May most of his pictures still portray a sad face, but occasionally he draws himself with a happy face. I attempted to engage him in conversation about his pictures but he was unresponsive. What is interesting is that his stories did not reflect sad or depressing topics; he wrote about things typical of a first grader—his family, his bike and the things he did on the weekends.

When I take the pictures, the body language and interactions with other children into consideration there is an underlying tone of unhappiness of some sort in Carl's life. I can say for certain that Carl is communicating a message through his drawings. The content of that message, I can only speculate.

Andy also has some notable drawings. In all of his work he colors himself and others in the picture with dark brown skin, though he is a Caucasian child. The faces of his figures are so darkly colored with heavy brown crayon, that the expressions are barely visible. Protinsky (1978) and Malchiodi (1998) recognize that figures that are heavily

colored or shaded fall outside of the parameters of "normal" and indicate that the child is revealing something of himself. Protinsky (1978) believes that heavy shading indicates a high level of anxiety within the child—anxiety over the relationships with those around him. As I take Andy's artwork, his body language, his behavior and his words into consideration, I believe his art is a significant way in which he is trying to communicate his story. As previously noted, Andy's mother left the family during the course of this study. Perhaps the heavy shading of his figures is reflective of the turmoil in his home and the anxiety that he feels. After discovering the facts of Andy's home life, I mention to him that I understand that a very sad thing happened in his home. He immediately tells me, "my mom went to Florida to live with her boyfriend." I ask him how he feels about it and he replies, "sad," but is quick to follow up his remark with, "but she will come back soon and we will be a family again."

The Language of Silence

I am troubled by the silence of the children and their docility. In my first hours in the classroom I was impressed by the lack of conflict and the seemingly peaceable atmosphere, but I soon realized that all was not as well as it appeared. Never did I observe a child to outwardly rebel or attempt to express hi/her own point of view when being punished or reprimanded by Mrs. Brown. Though there were many instances in which the children disagreed with their teacher, they remained silent and accepted her handling of the situation with unquestioning obedience.

4/30/01 Carl is sent "to the wall" during recess for not finishing his work in class. I ask him if he thinks it is fair and he says no. I ask him what he thinks the

teacher should have done and he replies that she should let him stay inside and finish his work and then let him come outside when he is done.

5/4/01 Dante is moved to the center of the room for talking. I find this unusual because he is a very quiet child and was not talking more or any louder than anyone else at the time. I ask him if he thinks it is fair that he has to sit alone in the middle. He says no. I ask him how he would handle the situation if he were a teacher. He shrugs. I ask him if there is anything that the teacher should have done differently and he shrugs again.

When Mrs. Brown gets in Mikie's face and scolds him for not asking for help, he swallows hard and looks down at the floor. When the teacher shoves Andy and his chair under his desk he stares straight ahead, makes no verbal response and begins writing on his paper. When Mrs. Brown singles out the children in the middle row, chastises them for talking when the entire room is talking, they say nothing. When Dante has his head quietly resting on his desk and Mrs. Brown sends him to the writing corner for "talking and wanting attention all day," he says nothing. When she sends Carl to the wall for supposedly throwing sand, even after I come to his defense, he says nothing. When she yells at Charles for coloring his Santa orange he says nothing. When Danny, Dante and Mikie are constructively and amicably engaged in playing with the play dough and Mrs. Brown tells them that one person must leave because only two people can play, they say nothing. When Mrs. Brown passes out the supplies for special activities day after day, never allowing the children to help, they say nothing.

What does this silence say about the children's attitudes toward themselves and others? Though I would not expect the children to overtly challenge the authority of their

teacher, I would expect on occasion to hear some protest and an appeal to tell their side of the story. But there was only silence.

Piaget (1965) addresses the child's tendency toward moral realism. One of the features of moral realism is the young child's tendency to submit to adult authority regardless of the fairness or "rightness" of the adult's demands or requests. Being good is rigidly defined as unquestioning obedience. Dictates handed down by those in authority are regarded as intrinsically good and right. In the Factory model of the classroom, moral realism abounds.

Understanding of Fairness

Vivian Paley (cited in Paciorek and Munro, 1999) calls fantasy, fairness and friendship "the three F's" of early childhood. She found that as she listened closely to children these three topics were of utmost importance to children. When I began my study, I anticipated that in this first grade classroom, I would hear the words, "that's not fair" many times a day. Having been a first grade teacher for three years, I found this refrain to echo quite frequently throughout the day.

However, much to my amazement, I only heard one child, on one occasion say "that's not fair." One Friday afternoon Mrs. Brown ordered pizza as the culminating activity for a unit on pizza. The room mother came to the room to help serve. The children were allowed to choose a piece of pizza with a topping of their choice. For some reason, Danny was given two pieces of pizza. No one seemed to notice that he had more. After everyone had been served, there was plenty left over, so those children who were still hungry could have another piece. Danny got a third piece and still no one protested. A few minutes later, as the room mother began cleaning up, she announced that there was

still more pizza. Danny got up to get a forth piece and Andy called out, "Hey, that's not fair. He got five pieces!" No one responded or joined in the protest. Andy repeated his declaration again and still no one responded.

I asked him why he thought the situation was unfair. He replied that Danny got five pieces and he only got two. I asked him why he thought it was unfair and he replied, "Because he got more than anybody else." I asked him if he would like some more and he said, "No, I'm full." I asked him if there was anything else we should do to make it fair and he just looked at me with a blank expression. The simple fact that Danny had more made the situation unfair in Andy's mind and the issue of hunger or lack thereof was irrelevant.

William Damon, (cited in Steigel, 1982) influenced by the works of Piaget and Kohlberg, studied children's thinking on fairness and social justice and identified the following stages in a child's thinking:

> **Level 0-A (age four)** The child's wishes are equated with justice, the rationale being that "I should get it because I want it."
>
> **Level 0-B (ages four and five)** The child feels the need to justify his/her choices, even though the focus is still self-centered. Choices are justified by illogical external factors such as size, sex or other physical characteristics.
>
> **Level 1-A (age five)** Thinking is governed by strict equality. Everyone gets the same amount or same treatment. No special concessions are made based on need or other external factors.
>
> **Level-B (ages six and seven)** Merit and reciprocity become important factors in thinking. Those who work harder deserve more.

Level 2-A (age eight) Equally valid but different claims to fairness and justice are taken into consideration. Special needs and mitigating factors are taken into account.

Level 2-B (age eight) The notion that everyone should be given a fair share prevails. Merit and need, as well as the demands of a specific situation, are taken into account.

In this particular instance, Andy's thinking reflects that of Level 1-A; everyone gets the same regardless of any other relevant factors. The fact that he can have more pizza but chooses not do does not change his perception of the situation as being "not fair."

Later, in a formal interview, I further questioned Andy on his thoughts about fairness. He was not able to give me a definition of fairness but he gave me the following example of an instance in which someone treated him with fairness: "I was walking to a center and Daniel was running to get there. I got there first so I played first and Daniel left."

I then gave him the following dilemma to think about:

> Two children are out on the playground and they both want to swing on the only swing available. What is a fair way to decide who will swing first?

He quickly responded that the younger child should go first. When I asked why he thought this should be so, he said, "cause they are littler and younger and they're not smarter." He also told me a story about a time when he and another child wanted to play in the same center and there was only one chair left. He reported that he allowed the other child to take the seat because he was younger.

Andy makes the illogical connection that smaller size means smaller intellect. He defers to the younger and "littler" child because he is not smarter. His thinking reflects Damon's 0-B level of thinking in that his decisions are based on illogical external factors.

Interviews on fairness. All of the children were formally interviewed to better understand their thinking about the notion of fairness. To begin the interview, I asked the children if they have ever heard anyone in their classroom say, "That's not fair." If they responded affirmatively I asked them to tell me a story about that particular time. I then asked them to define the word fairness and tell me stories in response to the following questions:

1. Have you ever treated someone fairly?
2. Have you ever treated someone unfairly?
3. Has someone in your class ever treated you or another person fairly?
4. Has someone in your class ever treated you or another person unfairly?

In response to the question, "have you ever heard someone in your class say, 'that's not fair,'" the following examples were given:

> Charles and a friend were juggling with scarves during center time. Another child came along and wanted to join in. Only two people are allowed to play together in a center so they told the child to go play somewhere else. The child responded, "That's not fair." He then left to play elsewhere.
>
> Nicole reported that two people were playing in a center and another child wanted to play too. Since only two people are allowed to be in a center, they told the third child that he could play when they were done. The third child said, "That's not fair" and left to play elsewhere.

Andy reported that two children were going to the same center. One got there first and the other child said, That's not fair" and left to play elsewhere.

Anne reported that whenever Sandy picks someone other than Tina to be her partner, Tina says, "That's not fair."

Maria reported that one time she was playing with a friend on the playground and another friend wanted to join them. The third child says, "Maria, I thought you were going to play with me." Maria tells the child that she will play with her tomorrow and the child replies, "That's not fair."

Mikie says, "oh, you mean like when someone else has more cookies or something and the other person says, 'that's not fair.'"

Tina reports that in reading group, Beth always reads faster than anyone else and Tina says to her, "That's not fair, you're supposed to read together."

Donna said, "yeah, like somebody have a piece of candy and they say "that's not fair" and they say, "I want some too." And like that...uhh...that's what they say." I responded by asking, "what do people usually mean when they say, "That's not fair?" Her answer is very interesting. "They mean uhh...they mean...that's not fair because they wanted something too."

In each of these stories we see an element of the lowest level, 0-A, thinking about fairness. The situations are deemed not fair because the child in question is not getting what he/she wants. Kamii (lecture, 1999), also influenced by the work of Piaget would agree that the thinking of these children reflects an egocentric orientation in which they think about fairness in terms of "what is most advantageous for me?" She would also add that the egocentric child is highly influenced by his/her affective feelings and if one feels

badly about something, then it must be unfair. In all of these stories, circumstances are not working in favor of the child who says, "That's not fair." The child is basically saying "I'm not getting what I want." Their decision to deem a particular situation as not being fair is not based on perspective taking of other people, but is based on what they perceive as not being advantageous to their personal interests. "That's not fair" becomes a socially acceptable way of saying, "I'm not getting what I want."

When asked what the word "fairness" meant to them, most of the children simply shrug or say they don't know. Only two of the children are able to offer an explanation of any kind. Nicole tells me that fairness means, "you like people and uh...that you be nice to them." Sandy tells me that "it means that you share, be kind to others and respect others and I want to be respected." I ask Sandy what it means to respect someone and she replies, "it means you be nice to them...say nice words to them...and help them if they need help...and if they drop a lot of papers help them pick them up."

As previously mentioned in Chapter Two, Siegal (1982) defines fairness as

> the ability to consider consistently and without contradicting the interests and intentions of others: to act bearing these in mind and without the guidance of a superior authority and to generalize fully this behavior in all relevant situations (p.1).

I believe that in the thinking of these two girls we see an emerging understanding that fairness involves the consideration of other people, but it is not generalized across the board to all interactions. In Sandy's response we see a hint of the "Golden Rule," a foundational understanding of constructivist moral thinking coming into play.

In the course of the interview with Nicole, she discussed her ideas on what it means to be good and to show respect. She equates being good with showing respect and reports

that "giving respect means that people care about you." When asked to give examples of care she was not able to do so. She tells me that she treated someone fairly when she let them go down the slide first. This causes me to ponder the difference between a fair act and an act of altruism. Seigal (1982) makes the point that there is a difference between an act of altruism and an act of fairness. An act of altruism does good but does not necessarily take into consideration the interests and intentions of all parties involved, as does an act of fairness. Is letting someone go down the slide first truly an act of fairness with the inherent implication that it involves perspective taking or is it simply and act of altruism? I don't believe I can honestly make that judgement based on our conversation.

When I ask Nicole if she can think of a time when she observed a classmate treating someone fairly she responds, "You mean like nicely? Anne...she treats everyone nicely. She helps people...one time she even helped me." When I ask Nicole if she has ever treated someone else unfairly she tells me, "I've never done that." She is also not able to give me any examples of instances in which she has observed anyone else treating someone unfairly.

When I ask Sandy if she has ever treated someone fairly she reports that one time she gave a friend a pencil for playing with her and she thought this was an act of fairness. Her response raises a couple of questions in my mind. Is this an act of fairness or is it an act of altruism? According to the definition of fairness upon which we are operating, perspective taking is an essential ingredient in an act that is truly deemed to be fair. I don't see any solid evidence that there is perspective taking involved.

This leads to yet another question—is this an act of altruism or is it reflective of Kohlberg's stage two, "I'll scratch your back if you scratch mine," as described in

Chapter Two, page 26. I sensed in Sandy a need to be liked. She constantly asked for Anne's assurance that she was her best friend. Eisenberg-Berg and Hand (1979) point out that "it is important to consider the motivations underlying behaviors that superficially appear to involve altruism or 'morality'" (p.361). Children often share or engage in other acts that appear to be altruistic for the sake of gaining favor with other children.

Sandy also reports that Anne treats her fairly because "she shares with me when I ask her to." It is interesting that asked-for sharing versus spontaneous sharing is given as an example of being treated fairly. Again, we see reflected Kamii's and Damon's notion that fairness is equated with getting what I want. When I ask her to tell me a story about a time when she or someone else treated someone unfairly, she says she can't remember.

Dante told me that fairness meant, "scared." I was puzzled by Dante's answer and asked him if he was telling me that he was scared to give me an answer or if the word fairness meant that someone was scared. He replied that it meant people were afraid. Throughout Dante's responses to interview questions I strongly suspect that the language barrier presented a problem because his answers reflected a great deal of confusion. As previously mentioned, his family speaks only Spanish at home and he has been in this country only two years.

The example he gives of a fair action also reflects an element of confusion that I believe is related to language. He reports that he cannot think of a time when he has treated someone else with fairness but he tells the following story as an example of a time when someone was fair to him. "My brother told me to eat my spaghetti at dinner. I told

him no, so he punched me. After he punched me, I ate it." He says that he cannot think of a time when he or someone else in his classroom treated someone unfairly.

Charles is not able to give me a definition of fairness but gives me the following example of a time when he treated someone fairness: "I was playing with my friend and someone hit us. I told my mom and I came back to school and looked for him but he was no where." Despite my attempts to help Charles clarify his thinking, I did not feel that Charles was able to effectively tell me what he was thinking. He is a child who does not talk much and I sensed that he was having difficulty "hanging words" on his thoughts. He simply shrugged when I asked him to tell me a story about a time when he or someone else treated someone unfairly.

Maria is also not able to give me a definition of fairness but provides the following example of a time when she treated someone fairly: "When I gave my friend where I used to live...when I gave her my toy...because they were moving."

I believe Maria's response is an example of an act of altruism rather than an act of fairness. Perhaps it could be argued that she gave the toy in response to the child's perceived sadness at moving but there is no indication that this is the reason. When I asked her why she gave away the toy she simply said, "Because they were moving."

She tells me a story about a time when someone treated her fairly: "There was four people on the swing and I was waiting to go and she got off and let me swing." Again I see the difficulty in attempting to discern the motive of those involved. Did the child get off the swing simple because she is tired of swinging and wants to do something else or did she truly take Maria's perspective into account and base her actions on Maria's desire to swing?

When I ask Maria to tell me a story about a time when she treated someone unfairly she looks very uncomfortable and shakes her head but she tells me of a time when someone else treated her unfairly. She was standing in line to go outside and realized her shoe was untied. She stepped out of line to tie her shoe and when she returned to her spot another child accused her of butting. Maria explained to the girl that she was tying her shoe but the girl got "all mad." Maria reported that she remained in her place in line and ignored the girl. I believe that in this example we see some hint of understanding the notion of perspective taking. She tried to explain her point of view to the other child though it was not accepted.

Mikie was not able to give me a definition of fairness but gave the following example of an instance when fairness is demonstrated: "When one child asks others if they can play and the other one says, 'sure' and they play together and get along well." Mikie's response could be interpreted to carry an element of perspective taking. Perhaps the child who allows the others to play is taking their perspective into consideration. He was not able to give me an example of time when he nor someone else treated another unfairly.

Carl was not able to give me a definition of fairness but told the following story as an example of when he treated someone fairly: "My friend lied to me and started to play with someone else and then we played together and took turns." Due to Carl's difficulty in expressing himself, it is difficult for me to discern the intent of his comments but I am wondering if his example hints at the notion of forgiveness. Perhaps he sees this as an example of fairness because he forgave the offending child and continued to play with him. It is interesting that he mentions turn taking which is a concept that seems well established in this classroom. Never did I witness any children argue over taking turns.

Carl was not able to give me an example of unfair behavior.

I found it interesting that Anne and Donna, two of the most verbal children in the classroom, could not give me a definition of fairness. At first, Anne was not able to give me an example of a time when she treated someone fairly; however the notion of "unfairness" seemed to register with her. She gives the following example of someone being unfair to her: "Whenever we play tag and I wanted to play…they didn't let me play." I ask her if she knows why the children wouldn't let her play and she replies, "Cause there's uhh…there's only…cause there's four people playing and they said I can't play."

She gives the following example of an instance when someone was unfair to others: "Tina…every time…people ask if umm…they could play with her and she says no and then I ask if I could play and she says yes." I ask her if she knows why Tina says no to other children but not her and she says that it is probably because Tina doesn't know them but she knows her.

I believe this story reflects an element of perspective taking. She is able to recognize the feelings of others in being rejected by Tina and is able to empathize with them.

At the end of the interview she is finally able to recall an instance in which she observes someone treating others fairly. "Whenever someone asks another kid if they could play with them and another kid they said, 'sure you could play.' So they play together and then they…and then they get along well."

When I asked Donna to tell me a story about a time when she treated someone with fairness she responds by saying, "What does that mean?" She was never able to tell me a story about herself.

Her example of being treated unfairly is as follows: "This girl named Tina in our class..umm...she uh...she ummm...When I first met her she was talking about me and she was hitting me and stuff and then uhh...and then uhhh...she went to detention because she was talking about my mama and stuff."

I find it interesting that Donna is the only child that is able to reflect and tell me about an instance when she treats someone else unfairly. She speaks of a time when she built a sandcastle, and a child named Kayla knocked it over. She reports that she acted unfairly by slapping Kayla on the leg. In our subsequent conversation she reports that, "I should have said 'sorry' and then we hug and then we uh...hug and be friends again."

Tina tells me that she cannot think of a definition of fairness and can't remember any examples of anyone being fair. When I ask her if she ever observed anyone in her classroom being unfair she says with conviction, "That never happens in here."

I am surprised by the children's limited ability to articulate some understanding of the word "fairness" and their limited ability to tell stories about their understanding of the concept. I believe that the immature level of understanding is directly related to the socio-moral atmosphere in the classroom. The factory model does not afford children many opportunities to meaningfully engage in thoughtful discussion about moral issues. The emphasis is on production of work. The predictable nature of the activities that take place in the classroom and the routines that focus on efficiency effectively minimize conflict which reduces opportunities to share perspectives. The limited interaction and conversation about things other than procedural issues, does not allow the children to share perspectives.

Spontaneous conversations about fairness. There are several occasions when I question children about the fairness of events that take place in the classroom.

5/01/01 The class goes to the school nurse to have their head checked for lice. As the children wait in line they are talking among themselves in the hallway. When Mrs. Brown emerges from the nurse's office she singles out Charles for talking and sends him to the end of the line. I asked him if he thinks it is fair that he is sent to the end of the line when other people were also talking. He agrees that it is fair. I ask him why and he simply says, "because I was talking and nobody else could."

5/4/01 Mrs. Brown is moving children around this morning. During seatwork time, she admonishes them to be quiet several different times. At one point she says to Zane, "you'll be moved again—you just keep on." I find this comment to be odd because Zane rarely speaks and he was certainly not talking any more or any more loudly than anyone else in the class. A few minutes later she moves Zane to the middle row reserved for the "problems."

I ask Zane if he know why he was moved to the middle and he shrugs. I say to him, "so you don't now why you are here?"

He replies, "I was talking."

I ask him if he thinks it is fair that he has to sit in the middle by himself and he shrugs and grins. I then ask him, "if you were the teacher, what would you do?"

He replies, "I would make them sit here."

I respond to his comment by saying, "so you think that it is fair that you have to sit in the middle for talking?" and he responds with a nod and a smile.

Later she moves Dante to the middle for talking. I find this particularly interesting because just the day before, Mrs. Brown comments that Dante hardly ever speaks and for that reason she never reprimands him for talking. I ask Dante if he knows why he was sent to the middle and he says, "for talking." I then ask him how he feels about being in the middle and he responds, "sad". I ask if he thinks he has been treated fairly and he says, "no." I ask what he thinks the teacher should have done and he just shrugs and will not respond to any more questions.

Shortly after Dante was moved to the middle, Andy turns around in his seat and puts something on Dante's desk. From my vantage point I cannot identify the object in question. Mrs. Brown immediately says to him, "Andy, take your things and go sit in the writing corner. We need to be in control." A few minutes later I have the opportunity to talk to Andy about the incident. I ask him why he was moved to the writing corner and he tells me, "Because I wasn't working." I ask if he thinks it is fair that he was moved to the writing center and he says no. I ask him what he would do if he were the teacher. He replies that he would make the children sit in the hallway or "over here" meaning the writing corner. I try to clarify his thinking and ask if he is telling me that he thinks the teacher acted fairly and he said, yes....ohhhh, no, it's not fair."

5/10/01 The children are lining up to go to lunch and Tina butts in line in front of Sandy. Before any protest or discussion ensues, Mrs. Brown says, "you're butting, go to the end of the line." Later I ask Tina if she thinks the incident was handled in a fair manner. She says no because she wanted to stand by Sandy.

5/11/01 During center time Dante and Mikie are hanging their cardboard mustaches on their noses sideways. They giggle at each other. Mrs. Brown gets angry and sends them out of the room to sit in the library. I ask them if they think it is fair that they have to sit in the library and Mikie says yes. Dante says nothing. I ask Mikie why he thinks it is fair and he says, "because we were playing."

5/17/01 Dante is in the writing corner by himself and I ask why he was sent there. He tells me that he was showing his new pencil to his neighbor and Mrs. Brown got mad. He tells me that he thinks it is not fair and if he were the teacher he would just tell the kids to stop talking but not make them sit by themselves.

I find it interesting that Dante is the only child who expresses disagreement with Mrs. Brown. He is a very quiet child who doesn't speak much. His willingness to voice his own opinion and disagree with Mrs. Brown possibly indicates that he is moving toward moral autonomy as opposed to moral heteronomy.

Children's Thinking About the Golden Rule

At the heart of constructivist moral thinking is the Golden Rule, "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you." The goal of constructivist moral development is to help children come to understand the spirit of this rule and the moral necessity to treat others as you wish to be treated (DeVries & Zan, 1994). On the walls in Mrs. Brown's room are posted classroom rules and the Golden Rule is one of them. I was curious to know if any of the children understood the meaning of this rule so I questioned them about their classroom rules.

First of all, I asked the children who made the rules in their classroom and the unanimous response was that Mrs. Brown made the rules. This is very interesting because in my interview with Mrs. Brown she said that the children made the rules the first week of school. The responses of these first graders are consistent with the research conducted by Castle (1998). In her study comparing children's understanding of classroom rules and game rules, she found that first grade children were least likely to say that they hand any role in rule making. It is difficult to say if these findings are due to a particular stage of development or if they do in fact reflect a lack of autonomy and power in the classroom.

Then I asked them to name some of the class rules. They can be classified into two categories—behavioral rules and procedural rules. The rules named are as follows:

Behavioral rules:

1. Be nice.
2. Respect the teacher—that means be nice to her and listen…listen very carefully.
3. You have to respect every single teacher.
4. You have to learn to read.
5. Don't spit on the floor.
6. Don't run.
7. Don't push.
8. Don't cut.
9. Don't push people away from the center.
10. Don't throw paper.

11. No talking when we have reading groups.

12. No kicking.

13. No hitting.

14. Don't say bad words.

15. Do all of your work if you can.

16. No fighting with your best friend.

17. Don't push a kid on the playground.

18. You can't smoke.

19. You can't have guns.

20. You can't say, "You're stupid and ugly."

21. Share.

22. If someone asks you to play, let them play.

Procedural Rules:

1. Do your first paper and then your spelling.

2. Don't work until Mrs. Brown says.

3. There's supposed to be two people at a center or you'll get in trouble.

When I ask Carl if he knows any of the class rules he immediately turns to look at the wall and begins to read the rules posted: "Keep your hands to yourself. Walk everywhere. Listen when someone is talking. Treat others like you want to be treated. Raise your hand when you want to talk at group time."

When I ask the children if they have ever heard of the Golden Rule, all but one tells me they have never heard of it. Sandy says that she heard it on "one of her songs." I explained to them that one of their classroom rules is actually called the Golden Rule and

I ask them if they know what it means to treat other people the way that they would want to be treated. All of the children respond that they do not know what it means.

Kamii (1980) asserts that children learn to understand the principle behind the Golden Rule, in part, as they construct rules and experience the consequences of those rules. She maintains that as children suffer injustices in their interaction with peers they will come to understand the moral principle behind the Golden Rule.

This kind of interaction is absent in Mrs. Brown's classroom, therefore it is not surprising that no one is able to articulate the meaning of the rule, even though it is posted on the wall.

When I ask the children if they would like to change any rules in their classroom, they all say no, except for Sandy. Her response is interesting. When I ask if she thinks any rules in the classroom need to be changed, she looks at me incredulously and says, "If I was the teacher? I don't know...I'm not a grownup yet." I pose the question to her again, "Even though you're not a grownup yet, are there any rules that you would like to change?" She again responds with dismay, "If I was the class president?"

I'm not sure if her dismay at being able to change the rules is a reflection of the lack of power that she feels or if it is simply a developmental stage. She finally tells me that she thinks they should allow children to drink water in the classroom because children get thirsty.

Children's Thinking About Rewards

During the last week of school the first grade teachers decided to have a "play day" for the entire grade level. The children were encouraged to bring playground equipment from home, and they spent the day outside. At the end of the day, Mrs. Brown

announced that everyone who shared with his or her friends would get an award. Everyone except Nicole, Tina, Zane and Charles received a ribbon. Tina burst into tears when she realized that she didn't get an award so Mrs. Brown gave the four children without ribbons a piece of candy.

Later, Mrs. Brown revealed to me that the night before the play day she remembered that she had purchased some awards earlier in the year, and she needed to use them. She realized at the time that she did not have enough for the whole class but she was too tired to go out and purchase more. She reported that Nicole did nothing but sit around all day, but she did not give me any reason for excluding the others. I believe that at this point in the conversation she sensed my displeasure because she became very defensive. She rationalized to me that these children needed to learn that they don't get rewards for everything they do. She went on to say that the only time in her entire life she received an award was for a contest in which the contestants were to eat crackers and see who could be the first to whistle. She was the first to whistle.

The day after the incident, Mrs. Brown continued to defend her actions by saying that she talked it over with her college-age daughter, and she too agreed that these children needed to learn that not everyone gets awards every time.

Later that day I informally interviewed the children to hear what they had to say about the incident. Much to my surprise, Tina and Charles said that it was fair that they didn't get a ribbon. Zane would not respond. Nicole was the only one who believed it wasn't fair. However, even though Tina did not challenge the situation, her body language spoke volumes during our conversation. The entire time that we were talking, she continually glanced over her shoulder at Mrs. Brown and would not make eye contact

with me. She told me that it made her feel sad to not get a ribbon but Mrs. Brown did the right thing and was fair in passing out the rewards.

Charles told me that the other kids got awards because they did "good stuff" when they played. I asked if he did any good stuff that day and he nodded but continued to insist on the fairness of Mrs. Brown.

Zane would not engage in conversation but when I asked him if he thought it was fair that he didn't get an award he simply shrugs his shoulders and grins. I ask him if he thinks it is fair that most of the other children got awards and he again shrugs and grins.

The conversation with Nicole is as follows:

Researcher: Do you think it is fair that the other children got ribbons at the play day and you didn't?

Nicole: No.

Researcher: Why did the other children get the awards?

Nicole: Because they were nice and let other people play with them.

Researcher: Were you nice to other children?

Nicole: Yes, I was.

Researcher: So do you think you should have received an award also?

Nicole: Yes.

Researcher: What would you do if you were the teacher?

Nicole: I would give everyone an award.

She is the only child that expresses disagreement with Mrs. Brown.

A few days later I had another opportunity to question their thinking about the use of rewards. It was announced over the public address system that an awards assembly

would be held the last day of school in order to recognize the "good citizens" at Flintstone Elementary. Mrs. Brown announces to the class several days before the assembly is to take place that some of them would be getting awards for "being really, really good." Sandy immediately responds, "And some of us who have been good won't get an award." Mrs. Brown affirms her statement by saying, "Yes, some of you have been good but you haven't turned in any homework." The interesting thing is that I have never heard Mrs. Brown ever mention homework to the children. I have never known her to assign homework and have never observed a child turning in any homework. Sandy replies, "Yes, I've kind of controlled my talking but I haven't turned in any homework."

Later, in a private conversation, I ask Sandy what she thinks about some kids getting awards and some not and she says that if she doesn't get an award she will feel guilty. I ask her why she would feel guilty and she replies, "Because it is your responsibility to keep control of yourself and if I don't get an award it means that I didn't keep control. I was a little bit good but not real, real good."

Her comment generates a conversation about what it means to be good. She tells me that being good means respecting people and not talking. Respecting people means to say nice things to them. I ask her if she thinks it is fair that some children will get awards and some won't and she reports that she believes it is fair because "I wasn't good at the beginning the year, only half of the year because I talked."

After the awards assembly there is only a few minutes left before the children officially complete first grade and leave for their summer vacation. As the children are preparing to go home, I take the opportunity to informally talk with the children about the

assembly. I ask the children why some of the children got awards and others didn't. Their responses are as follows:

Dante: Because they were being good in class.

Zane: They were good.

Carl: For being good.

Sandy: Because they were being good and they got perfect attendance. And they sort of didn't miss one day.

Anne: Because they were nice and they played fairly.

Nicole: Because they were very good and they read 14 or 15 or 16.

Danny: Because they bring back their homework and they are never late.

Maria: When they do something good.

Mikie: They were doing good and they brought their homework back.

Charles: Cause they were being nice.

Tina: Cause they were good and they didn't treat anybody else mean...they respect other people.

The only two children in the study who received the good citizen award were Carl and Anne. All but one of the children reported that it made them sad when others get awards for being good citizens and they don't. Nicole is the only one who says she is happy not to get an award because she "doesn't have to carry the piece of paper home."

Some of the children also verbalize feelings of inadequacy for not receiving the award. Zane, the quietest child in the class, believes that he didn't get an award because he talked too much. Sandy believes that she was good but not really, really good. Danny believes that he didn't get one because he was late all the time and didn't do his

homework. Mikie says he doesn't understand why he didn't get one because he brought his homework back. Tina thinks that she didn't do as good a job as the children who received the awards.

It troubles me that many of these children walk out of their classroom at the end of their first grade year feeling sad, guilty and with a sense of inadequacy. The arbitrariness of the rewards also bothers me—what does it mean to be a "good citizen or to be "really, really good?" What is intended to be something positive and uplifting to children actually becomes a punishment and a discouraging thing to the majority.

Kohn (1999) addresses the punitive aspect of rewards:

That rewards punish is not due only to the fact that they are controlling. They also have that effect for a second, even more straightforward reason: some people do not get the rewards they were hoping to get, and the effect of this is, in practice, indistinguishable from punishment. Many managers and teachers make a point of withholding or withdrawing a reward if their charges do not perform as instructed. The goody is dangled and then snatched away. In fact this is precisely what many behaviorists recommend doing. While taking care to urge that children not be punished...they freely prescribe the use of 'response costs' (by which is meant making something good not happen to them.)...The whole point is to control people's behavior, and the most effective way to do this is to describe what will be given to them if they comply—or done to them if they don't comply. For this very reason, the possibility of ending up without the reward, which makes the process essentially punitive, is always present. The stick is contained in the carrot (p. 52-53).

Instead of arbitrarily giving rewards to a few children why not end the school year with a celebration of learning. As an alternative to the traditional, but mindless award ceremonies, why not allow each child to choose something that he/she is proud of accomplishing during the school year and present or display it to a gathering of parents. Why not allow children to share their portfolios and end the year celebrating all that has been gained?

Conclusions Concerning Results

Did this study answer my question, "What is the nature of the moral languages of children?" Yes, I did gain a great deal of insight and understanding into the many ways in which children communicate moral understandings and the messages that are conveyed; however, I believe that the results cannot be generalized to all first grade classrooms. I gained insight into the moral languages of this particular group of children as they live out their experience in this particular classroom that could be described as a factory. I believe that similar results would be obtained in another factory setting, but I believe that the results would be different in the boot camp or community.

I believe that in this Factory setting, I observed the more covert or clandestine moral languages of children. Had I been in a Community setting, I believe that I would have observed more overt ways of communicating moral understandings. I would anticipate hearing more conversation reflecting moral understanding than I did in the factory.

CHAPTER FIVE

Reflections

Reflections on the Moral Languages of Children

As a result of my study, my thinking about the moral languages of children have broadened and expanded. Previous to my research I have never given much conscious thought to the powerful messages conveyed by children through their bodies. I find it interesting that there is very little literature or study on the body language of children, yet there is a great deal written and studied on the body language of adults.

I have also added the language of silence to my understanding of the ways in which children communicate because I found that even when there seems to be no communication, the child is telling us something.

I found that the moral languages of children are persistent. Children are constantly revealing their understandings and attitudes about themselves, others and their community. I have come to the conclusion that all behavior is purposeful, either on a subconscious or conscious level and, the child is constantly conveying his/her perceptions and interpretation of his/her world and experience.

I discovered that if we look carefully enough, we will discover a common theme being woven throughout their many voices. This study is defined as a hermeneutic-phenomenological study. Hermeneutics has its roots in biblical studies and interpretation. Having had a background in hermeneutics during my master's study, I

found a parallel between biblical hermeneutics and the hermeneutics of the moral languages of children. The first basic principle of biblical hermeneutics is scripture is always used to interpret scripture. In much the same way, the moral languages of children are used to interpret the moral languages of children. For example, in my first encounter with Carl I was not immediately able to interpret the meaning of his down cast eyes, the slump of his shoulder and the frown on his face. As I carefully observed his behavior, his interactions with his teacher and peers, and his drawings, these other forms of communication interpreted the meaning of his countenance and posture. I began to see a common thread of sadness and depression.

When I first noticed Mikie's "hunkered down" position at his desk, I did not immediately recognize his body language as communicating a sense of fear and a desire to hide. As I began to take all of his languages into perspective, a picture began to emerge of a child who does not feel emotionally safe in his environment.

Listening to the Languages of Children

I have also come to the conclusion that listening to children—really listening to them involves much more than listening with the ears. We need to learn to listen to children with all of our senses and be attuned to their many languages which we as adults have often forgotten how to speak. Regardless of the socio-emotional atmosphere in which they operate, children are constantly telling us their story if only we have the ears to hear.

> Being with a child is largely a matter of becoming receptive to what lies all around you. It is learning again to use your eyes, ears, nostrils and fingertips, opening up the disused channels of sensory impression. For most of us knowledge comes largely

through sight, yet we look about with such unseeing eyes that we are partially blind (Carson, cited in Curtis and Carter, 2000, p. 33).

The Drive for Connection

As I observe these children for hours on end I am struck by their persistence and drive to connect with one another in one form or another. Whether or not opportunities for connection are sanctioned by the teacher or happen in a more clandestine fashion, they are going to happen, for we are, after all, fundamentally social beings. It occurs to me how absurd it is to put young children in a social setting and expect them to act in anti-social ways by imposing our adult standards of order and quiet, for it is through these connections and relationships that the roots of morality are formed. I have come to agree with McCadden's (1998) argument that adults often, in their attempt to make children moral, actually educate them out of their simple wisdom and moral ways of looking at the world. I believe that as we strive to nurture children with moral integrity we must first look to the children themselves, to study the very nature of the children and come alongside them to assist and guide rather than hand down moral teaching from above.

Children's drive and need to connect with each other is the soil out of which both moral and intellectual development is nurtured. Classrooms that foster interaction among children meet the needs of children as well as provide fertile ground for construction of intellectual and moral understandings.

Children's Understandings of Themselves

I found that the most powerful and persistent way children reveal their understandings and attitudes about themselves is through their bodies. Through the lightness of step, a smile on their face, the desire to make eye contact with others and animated facial

expressions they communicate positive feelings about themselves. On the other hand, there were those who communicated negative feelings through the slump of the shoulders, down cast eyes and cowering posture. I found that in this particular classroom they communicated far more about themselves through their bodies than through their conversations. The only occasions in which I heard them speak of their own feelings and attitudes were in formal and informal interviews. When I asked how they felt about certain events in their classroom they responded with a description of their feelings being "sad, mad, or happy." The only child that used a different adjective to describe herself was Sandy, who said that not getting an award made her feel "guilty."

Children's Understandings of Others

I found that the children revealed their attitudes and understandings of others primarily through their drawings, their conversation and again, through their body language. As previously stated, most of the children's drawings reflected the usual interests of young children. Most of them drew pictures of themselves with smiling faces, doing ordinary activities with family and friends that are important to children—going to the zoo, going to the store, going to visit grandma and riding their bike. Except for the drawings of Andy and Carl, a sense of connection and an enjoyment of being with others were communicated in their drawings.

Sometimes the children very directly revealed their attitudes and feelings toward others in ordinary conversation. When Dawn says, "you can't come to my birthday party" or Sandy says, "I don't like your mean looks," they are openly communicating their negative feelings toward one another.

Positive feelings toward one another were verbally expressed in indirect ways: "Come chase me," "Let's go play" are an example of the way in which they communicated positive attitudes.

Once again, body language was also a significant way in which they expressed their feelings toward one another. As children leaned into one another and talked and giggled "nose to nose" they communicated a message of "I like you." As they imitated one another, made eye contact, smiled at each other, they communicated positive feelings.

Similarly, as they lean away from one another, or move away from others so as to leave significant space between them, the children communicate a sense of dislike—at least for the moment, through their body. Sitting with the back to others and deliberately moving away from someone in line communicates a sense of displeasure. Frowns and scowls communicate negative feelings.

Children's Attitudes and Understandings of Community

The children communicated their feelings and attitudes toward community through rough and tumble play, spontaneous singing and imitative behavior. The ever-present game of chase during recess time is an expression of their desire for community. The silly antics that take place when Mrs. Brown leaves is an expression of common celebration and perhaps, common rebellion. On occasion, the class breaks into spontaneous song when something is mentioned that triggers a connection to a familiar verse. I believe that the spontaneous singing provided the children with a sense of community in an otherwise very individualistic atmosphere. The constant imitative behavior that takes place in pairs or in groups and the community laughter that usually accompanies such behavior expresses a sense of joy in being together.

The Ambiguous Nature of the Moral Languages

I found that some of the messages communicated by the children remain a mystery. I leave still wondering what the smiles on Zane and Nicole's face really mean. Although I patiently waited to see if their facial expressions would eventually be interpreted by their other languages, I never felt that I could honestly gain any further insight. It made me aware of the complexity of truly understanding children.

Reflections on the Socio-moral Atmosphere of the Classroom

My study has caused me to ask the questions, "What does authentic construction of moral understandings look like in the classroom?" and "What kind of socio-moral atmosphere is most conducive to authentic moral construction?" During my first hours in Mrs. Brown's room, I was impressed by what at first appeared to be a calm atmosphere. However, as I began to witness the interaction between Mrs. Brown and her students, I came to see it as something other than calmness—it was docility. Mrs. Brown controlled the children by rewards, threats and punishments, which fostered blind obedience and conformity. I came to realize that what appeared to be something positive on the surface, belied something that was very negative. I found it unusual that the children rarely, if ever, protested or attempted to share their point of view. It is my experience that most children usually offer a "yes, but..." in their own defense when unjustly treated, even by adults. Instead, they blindly accepted Mrs. Brown's demands without protest.

In speaking of what is valued in most schools, John Holt (cited in Kohn, 1997) has this to say:

> What they prize is docility, suggestibility; the child who will do what he is told; or even better, the child who will do what is wanted without even having to be told. They value most in children what children least value in themselves (p. 129).

I've come to the realization that docility as evidenced by blind obedience and conformity is actually the enemy of authentic construction of moral understanding.

Kamii (1994), influenced by the writings of Piaget, suggests that instead of conformity the goal of education should be autonomy. She makes the difference between moral autonomy and intellectual autonomy. Moral autonomy is the ability to take all factors into account and choose between right and wrong, independently of reward and punishment. Such children are able to act out of conviction rather than blindly conforming to those around them. A morally heteronomous person, on the other hand, conforms to the wishes and thinking of other people to avoid some sort of perceived punishment or to obtain something that seems advantageous.

Intellectual autonomy is the ability to think for oneself, discern between truth and untruth by taking all factors into account, independent of reward and punishment. Unfortunately, in the Factory Model of schooling the emphasis is on getting right answers and good grades. Such children grow up to be "intellectually heteronomous," which means that they "will believe unquestioningly what he or she is told, including illogical conclusions, slogans and propaganda." (Kamii, 1994, p. 674).

How do children develop moral and intellectual autonomy? Constructivists (DeVries & Zan, 1994, Kamii, 1994; Piaget, 1965) believe that children construct moral convictions through the exchange of viewpoints with people who are close and important to them. The exchange of viewpoints between adults and children encourages the

development of autonomy by allowing the children to consider relevant factors and the perspectives of others. For example, when the children encounter a relational conflict on the playground, guiding them in a discussion of their different perspectives and allowing them to come up with a solution is a much more constructive way of handling the situation than simply banishing them to "the wall."

I have come to the conclusion that the Factory model of schooling with the inherent emphasis on obedient production of work and getting right answers does not create an atmosphere that fosters authentic construction of moral understanding. The lack of opportunity for children to engage in meaningful conversation and exchange of viewpoints in Mrs. Brown's class has resulted in these children rarely expressing their opinion or thinking on any issue. I only heard one child say, "That's not fair," during the course of this study.

Likewise, intellectual autonomy is not fostered when Mrs. Brown walks the children through the math worksheets, step by step. Her focus on getting the right answers and producing a certain number of sentences without any regard to the content does nothing to foster problem solving skills and critical thinking. According to Kamii (1994) such teaching "unwittingly teaches conformity, blind obedience and dependence on adults" (p.64). For example, on the day when Mrs. Brown tried to teach the children how to add three numbers, she became frustrated with her inability to explain the process to the children and simply told them the answers. Such an experience causes children to stop thinking and depend on adults to spoon-feed the answers to them. A much more thoughtful way to engage the children in this situation would be to allow them to debate different procedures and ways of problem-solving among themselves which would

ultimately lead them to mathematical truth. "Children will arrive at the truth in mathematics if they debate long enough, because nothing is arbitrary in mathematics" (Kamii, 1994, p. 677).

In the process of discovering mathematical truth, they will also develop intellectual autonomy.

Rebellion

I have come to the conclusion that the Factory model of schooling will eventually produce rebellion in children. Though subtle, the seeds of rebellion were present. As we saw in chapter four, production in the factory slowed when the manager left. I was surprised and someone amused at the rapidity with which the children were ready to lay aside their work and engage in their silly antics when Mrs. Brown left the room. The first noticeable change that occurred within seconds was the sudden rise in noise level and a celebratory atmosphere took over. Even the most compliant of the children engaged in the silly antics. I believe that their silliness was a "safe" way of rebelling against the authoritative atmosphere of the classroom. It causes me to wonder at what point in their lives will these children openly begin to rebel.

DeVries and Zan (9994) also believe that the Factory model of schooling will eventually lead to rebellion. Kamii (1994) addresses the issue of rebellion in her article, The Six National Goals: A Road to Disappointment:

> Many 'model' children surprise everyone by beginning to cut classes, to take drugs, and to engage in other acts that characterize delinquency. Their reason for switching to these behaviors is that they are tired of living for their parents and teachers and think that the time has come for them to start living for themselves (p.674).

Sooner or later, I believe that these children will begin to openly rebel if they continue to experience schooling as a factory.

Loss of Learning Opportunities

A natural outgrowth of the tight control of the manager is the loss of learning opportunities. Tightly structured teaching situations governed by the manager squelches children's curiosity and joy of discovery. Whenever children took the initiative to try to figure things out on their own, they were often told to stop by Mrs. Brown or told that they were doing it the wrong way. I saw very little excitement about learning in the classroom. The children rarely asked questions about anything except procedural issues. I never heard a child ask a "why?" question or express an interest or desire to explore an issue or topic of their choice.

Conspicuously absent is the underlying constructivist belief that: "human beings have an intrinsic desire to make sense of the world and that they learn best when they are personally curious, deeply involved, or in a social situation that requires them to take and defend a position. As Piaget pointed out, children work hard when they have intriguing questions to answer and problems to solve." (Kamii, 1994, p. 676).

The daily practice of walking the children through their math worksheets robbed them of the opportunity to figure things out for themselves. The emphasis on the quantity of the work produced robbed children of the experience of true understanding. There was no emergent curriculum, no child initiated projects—only teacher dictated demands that focused on quantity of work versus quality.

Mrs. Brown handled any conflicts that surfaced in the classroom and decided what punishments needed to be administered. The children were not given the opportunity to

learn from the ordinary conflicts that arose in the classroom. I have come to realize that the everyday conflicts that arise among children are the stuff out of which authentic moral construction takes place. The moral understandings that can arise out of ordinary interactions are just as important as the sort of learning that takes place through curriculum and various strategies and methods. Skillful handling of the interactions between and among children provide the opportunity to reflect deeply about one's feelings toward one's self, others and the community. The socio-moral atmosphere in this classroom robbed the children of the opportunity to develop moral understandings as evidenced by their inability to articulate any sort of understanding of the Golden Rule and their immature levels of thinking about issues of fairness.

Lack of Perspective Taking Abilities

Because there is little opportunity to share different viewpoints and perspectives among adults and children in the factory model of schooling, it is difficult for the children to "decenter" and develop perspective-taking abilities. According to constructivist thinking, there is a difference between being egocentric and selfish. Egocentrism refers to the child's inability to see things from the perspective of another. The notion of selfishness refers to someone doing something for one's own benefit, disregarding the knowledge that doing so may harm or inconvenience someone else.

The decentering process occurs as young children are given opportunities to interact with one another, engage in conversation and adjust their thinking to accommodate other perspectives. In the Factory model, peer interaction is subjugated to academic concerns. The ensuing socio-moral atmosphere is "a kind of 'nicey-niceness' in which no one is very invested the experience of being together (DeVries & Zan, 1994).

I believe that their thinking on fairness reflected a lack of perspective taking ability. As previously stated, I think that their thinking reflected the very egocentric feeling that "I'm not getting what I want." Their inability to conceive of themselves as engaging in an unfair act is also reflective of their lack of perspective taking abilities.

Not only is the child's ability to decenter thwarted but his ability to care for and empathize with others is squelched because at the heart of empathy and care is the ability to decenter and see life situations from the viewpoint of another. The experience of empathy requires that one is able to lay aside his/her own feelings for the moment and "get into the skin" of another and see life from their perspective. When this sort of interaction is stifled, children's opportunities to experience and express care for others are greatly reduced.

There were two occasions in Mrs. Brown's classroom that I noticed a lack of concern on the part of the children that I found to be very curious. One particular day Mrs. Brown smashed her finger and mentioned it to the class. Not one child acknowledged her comment. On another day a child dropped his crayon box on the floor and crayons when rolling everywhere. Only one child hesitantly reached down and picked up a crayon while the rest of the class sat and watched their classmate frantically gather them together.

I also believe that the use of rewards and punishments undermined the development of empathy and care which involves perspective taking ability. Kohn (1993) says:

> Someone who is raising or teaching children, for example, probably wants to create a caring alliance with each child, to help him or her feel safe enough to ask for help when problems develop. This is very possibly the single most fundamental

> requirement for helping a child to grow up healthy and develop a set of good values. For academic reasons, too, an adult must nurture just such a relationship with a student if there is to be any hop of the student's admitting mistakes freely and accepting guidance...This is precisely what rewards and punishments kill. If your parent or teacher or manage is sitting in judgment of what you do, and if that judgment will determine whether good thing or bad things happen to you, this cannot help but warp your relationship with that person. You will not be working collaboratively in order to learn or grow; you will be trying to get him or her to approve of what you are doing so you can get the goodies (p.57)

In all fairness, however, I don't believe that I can conclude that the socio-moral atmosphere in this classroom is the only factor inhibiting the development of perspective taking abilities or the construction of moral understandings. I believe I can honestly say that it is one factor but not the only factor. Parenting styles and community expectations would also be factors that need to be taken into consideration.

Award Assemblies

I have come to the conclusion that handing out awards for being "good citizens," a common practice in most elementary schools, is counter productive to the very thing that such practices are designed to promote. As evidenced by the responses to interview questions, most of the children had no idea what they needed to do to receive the award. I'm not sure those handing out the awards really knew themselves why they were giving it. The entire process seemed very arbitrary and subjective. Furthermore, why would educators intentionally engage in a practice that causes the majority of children to feel

sad or guilty? I believe that the whole notion of award ceremonies in early childhood needs to be given some thoughtful consideration.

Implications

Implications for Teacher Education

The most obvious implication for teacher education is to carefully evaluate the socio-moral atmosphere of classrooms and attempt, if at all possible, to place pre-service teachers in situations based on the "Community" model of schooling which is more consistent with constructivist theory. I believe that it is important for university personnel to actually observe the classroom in action and not just take the word of the prospective cooperating teacher to discern the sort of atmosphere that prevails. As Mrs. Brown said, teachers sometimes wear rose-colored glasses when it comes to their own perception of themselves and they may not be able to truthfully evaluate the sociomoral atmosphere of their own classroom.

The second implication that presents a challenge to me is the importance of addressing the notion of "pedagogical tact" with prospective early childhood education professionals. In 1802 Johann Friedrich Herbart (cited in van Manen, 1991) told his audience in a lecture "tact inserts itself between theory and practice" (p. 128). As teacher educators, we can teach theory, we can teach methods, lesson planning, effective use of media etc. but how does one teach tact? Can one teach tact?

van Manen (1991) also poses this question and has this to say:

> pedagogical thoughtfulness and tact are unlearnable as mere behavioral principles, techniques, or methods. So one will look in vain...for simplified sets of effective teaching techniques, or for sure methods for managing classrooms...The

> preparation of educators obviously includes much more than the teaching of knowledge and skills, more even than a professional ethical code or moral craft. To become a teacher includes something that cannot be taught formally: the most personal embodiment of a pedagogical thoughtfulness (p. 8,9).

My conclusion is that teacher educators must first seek to embody pedagogical tact in their own lives and relationships with students. van Manen (1991) asserts that:

> we come to embody tact by means of past experiences coupled with thoughtful reflection of these past experiences. We reflectively acquire sensitivities and insight in various ways—as through literature, film, stories by children, stories about children and childhood reminiscences (p. 209).

It requires that we attach a mindful, thinking quality to our ordinary awareness of our everyday actions and experiences and seek to lead students to do the same. Pedagogical tact has more to do with a life style than intellectual understanding of certain methods and philosophies.

Along with instruction in theory and methodology, I believe that we need to lead prospective teachers into thoughtful consideration of what it means to be a "pedagogue," a word whose Greek origins carries far more meaning than simply "teacher." In the Greek culture, a pedagogue was actually a slave whose primary responsibility was to lead the child to school (van Manen, 1992). But the job of the pedagogue went far beyond simply leading the child. The word carries with it the tasks of accompanying the child, being with the child, caring for the child and seeing to it that the child behaved properly and stayed out of trouble. The adult or pedagogue provided a sense of protection,

direction and orientation to the life of the child. van Manen (1992) points out that in essence the pedagogue says to the child:

> Here, take my hand! Come, I shall show you the world. The way into a world, my world and yours. I know something about being a child, because I have been there, where you are now. I was young once...Leading means going first, and in going first you can trust me, for I have tested the ice. I have lived. I now something of the rewards as well as the trappings of growing towards adulthood and making a world for yourself. Although my going first is no guarantee of success for you (because the world is not without risks and dangers), in the pedagogical relationship there is a more fundamental guarantee: No matter what, I am here. And you can count on me (p.38).

Prospective early childhood professionals need to be guided into thoughtful reflection on what it means to be a child and what it means to be a teacher. Likewise, those responsible for the teaching and training of future teachers need to constantly be mindful of what it means to be a university student and what it means to be an early childhood teacher educator.

The third implication is that students need to become thoughtfully aware of the fact that everything that happens in school is inherently moral and influences character, whether or not it is intentional. Ryan (1999) argues that "most students come to schools of education somewhat unanchored with respect to the moral authority they will have as teachers" (p. 151). He believes that most schools of education remain silent on the issue of moral development and character education. Pre-service teachers need to become thoughtfully aware that every classroom has a socio-moral atmosphere that either

nurtures or hinders character and intellectual development. It is not a question of if moral development will take place, but a matter of how it will take place.

The forth implication is that teacher-education programs need to promote teacher autonomy by thoroughly acquainting students with different theoretical paradigms and their implications for practice (DeVries, 1999). Students should consciously choose their paradigm and strive for consistency between theory and practice. Prospective teachers need to be able to clearly articulate their thinking and philosophy about teaching, learning and moral development. The development of teacher autonomy requires ruthless self-examination of attitudes and personal behavior that often leads to real personality change (DeVries, 1999). Therefore, an emotionally safe, risk free environment at the university level is just as important as at the pre-school and primary levels. The goal of teacher education should be transformation, not indoctrination.

Lastly, I have come to a renewed understanding and recognition of the importance of developing keen observation skills. I believe there are those people who naturally possess an ability to be astute observers, but for those who may not have a natural propensity for such, it can be and should be skillfully crafted. Observation skills need to be taught and infused throughout the teacher-education curriculum, if not taught in a separate course dedicated to such.

Implications for Administrators

Having been in the position of hiring and firing early childhood education professionals, I know first-hand the difficulty of making decisions regarding the hiring of teachers based on an interview. A teacher may have a portfolio of evidence that they have all the right trappings of being a good educator as far as methods and materials

goes, but how do you document and evaluate pedagogical tact? I think that administrators need to listen to parent feedback, listen to children and observe the interactions between teachers and children in order to access the socio-moral atmosphere of a classroom. I realize that this is easier said than done and raises a host of complex issues, but the development of pedagogical tact is crucial to the well being of children.

I also believe that it is important for administrators to understand constructivist theory and how it is fleshed out in the classroom. It has been my experience that early childhood educators sometimes run into difficulty with administrators because their classrooms are not quiet and structured in the traditional sense. Administrators need to understand how children construct knowledge and moral understandings so that they can support the teacher's efforts in implementing constructivist principles.

I also think that administrators need to re-think the wide spread use of award ceremonies that take place in most elementary schools, especially as it relates to moral development and character education programs. I think that if we really listen to children, we will discover that these practices are not in the best interest of young children and actually serve to defeat the very goals that these programs are supposedly designed to accomplish. Schools need to find ways to encourage and validate all children and focus and nurture the strengths of every child and not just a select few.

Implications for Parents

These issues also carry some complex implications for parents. Just as teachers need to become astute listeners of the moral languages of children, so do parents need to be closely attuned to the story their child is trying to convey and the emotional needs of the child. In the fast-paced world that we live in, with the societal stresses that impact

families everywhere, it is easy for parents to not "hear" the voices of their children. The need for emotional attunement in the family has become even more crucial in light of the current threats that are facing our nation.

The home has an even greater impact on the moral development of children and the same principles would apply to the construction of moral understandings at home as they do at school. An atmosphere of mutual respect should be cultivated between parents and children and the exchange of viewpoints and perspectives should be normal part of family interactions. Parents should guide children to learn from conflicts between siblings and allow children to work them out with support from adults. Parents can allow children to deeply reflect upon and discuss moral issues and dilemmas as they arise in the course of everyday life.

Controlling children by rewards, threats and punishments at home will have the same effect as controlling them in this manner at school and parents need to learn ways of guiding children's behavior so as to help the child develop intellectual and moral autonomy.

Questions for Further Study

This study has generated numerous questions and topics for further study. I have become intrigued with the notion of "pedagogical tact" or emotional attunement between children and teachers. I would like to further investigate the interactions between teachers and children, specifically focusing on the ways in which teacher affirm or disconfirm children.

I have come to believe that self-awareness on the part of teachers is a key to being emotionally attuned to children. Mrs. Brown's comment that most teachers wear rose-

colored glasses was very interesting to me and has provoked much thinking on the issue. I would like to research the notion of self-awareness and its relationship to teacher-child relationships and teacher-parent relationships.

Zane and Dante's story has caused me to become interested in bilingual education. I would like to do a comparison study between non-English speaking children who enter regular classrooms in kindergarten with non-English speaking children who participate in the English as a Second Language Program. I would like to evaluate their social development and literacy development in particular.

Personal Reflection

Needless to say, this was a learning experience. I learned a great deal about myself as a researcher and a great deal about the research process. I came to the realization that I have much to learn about effectively interviewing children. Because I did not want to put words in their mouth or influence their answers in any way, I was sometimes reluctant to probe the thinking of the children any further than I did. In some cases I think I was in error and should have asked more questions.

I also found myself facing the dilemma of wanting to probe the children's thinking further but also realizing that in doing so I might undermine the children's confidence in their teacher's integrity and authority. There were many questions that remained unspoken for this reason. It was a difficult line to walk and I don't feel like I always knew where the boundaries were.

I also struggled with the difficulty of being a neutral observer. Simply because I am an adult, the children naturally afforded me a certain degree of authority and often appealed to me to intervene in some sort of way. For example, when Mrs. Brown left the

room certain children would appeal to me to tell everyone else to sit down and be quiet. Sometimes Mrs. Brown even looked at me questioningly when she returned and saw the antics going on. I tried to remain neutral unless the children's physical well being was in jeopardy or the situation was extremely emotionally charged.

I came to realize that my natural personality is somewhat bent to do research, something that I was not aware of until now. In almost any given situation I am always asking the question, what is going on below the surface. I realize that I have unconsciously developed an "instinct" for hidden realities of meaning. I think the strongest skill I bring to the research setting is my ability to observe and pick up on subtleties.

I am very appreciative to Mrs. Brown and her principal for allowing me to conduct this research and most of all to the children and parents for all they taught me.

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Oklahoma State University
Institutional Review Board

Protocol Expires: 10/25/01

Date : Thursday, November 08, 2001 IRB Application No ED0143

Proposal Title: A NATURALISTIC STUDY OF THE MORAL LANGUAGES OF CHILDREN

Principal
Investigator(s) :

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Tulsa, OK 74133

Kathryn Castle
235 Willard
Stillwater, OK 74078

Reviewed and
Processed as: Expedited (Spec Pop)

Approval Status Recommended by Reviewer(s) : Approved **Modification**

Please note that the protocol expires on the following date which is one year from the date of the approval of the original protocol:

Protocol Expires: 10/25/01

title change

Signature : Carol Olson

Carol Olson, Director of University Research Compliance

Thursday, November 08, 2001
Date

Approvals are valid for one calendar year, after which time a request for continuation must be submitted. Any modifications to the research project approved by the IRB must be submitted for approval with the advisor's signature. The IRB office MUST be notified in writing when a project is complete. Approved projects are subject to monitoring by the IRB. Expedited and exempt projects may be reviewed by the full Institutional Review Board.

VITA 2

Barbara A. Sorrels

Candidate for the degree of

Doctor of Education

Dissertation: A NATURALISTIC STUDY OF THE MORAL LANGUAGES OF CHILDREN

Major Field: Curriculum and Instruction

Biographical:

Education: Received Bachelor of Science Degree in Early Childhood Education from the University of Maryland, 1975; Received Master of Religious Education from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1981; completed the requirements for the Doctor of Education degree with a major in Curriculum and Instruction at Oklahoma State University, December, 2001.

Experience: 1999 - 2001 Research Assistant; Oklahoma State University
Oklahoma State University School of Curriculum and Educational Leadership, Stillwater, Oklahoma
1996 - 1998 Director of Children's Ministries
Memorial Baptist Church, Tulsa, Oklahoma
1993 - 1994 Kindergarten Teacher
Florence Hill Elementary, Grand Prairie, Texas
1985 - 1992 Preschool Owner and Director
Parkridge Preschool, Fort Worth, Texas
1983 - 1984 Founder and Director
Capitol Hill Child Development Center, Washington D.C.
1981 - 1983 Elementary Teacher
Grace Brethren Christian School, Temple Hills, Maryland
Taught first and third grades.
1980 - 1981 English Teacher
Seminary South Day School, Fort Worth, Texas
Taught seventh, eighth and ninth grade English.

1978 - 1979 Child Care Worker
Golda Meir Child Care Center, Fort Worth, Texas
Cared for infants, six months to one year of age.
1976 - 1978 Elementary Teacher
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Taught first grade.
1975 - 1976 Preschool Teacher
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Professional Memberships: National Association for the Education of Young Children; Association for Childhood Education International; National Association for Early Childhood Teacher Educators; Oklahoma Association for the Education of Young Children; Oklahoma Association for Early Childhood Teacher Educators; Southern Early Childhood Association; Kappa Delta Pi National Honor Society.