



Educating for Character: How Our Schools Can Teach Respect and Responsibility

By Thomas Lickona

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Calls for renewed moral education in America's schools, offering dozens of programs schools can adopt to teach students respect, responsibility, hard work, and other values that should not be left to parents to teach.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Lickona, a professor of education at the State University of New York and the author of the highly praised *Raising Good Children*, addresses the controversial topic of "values" education and its place in today's classrooms. In a well-balanced presentation distilling his decades of experience, Lickona suggests practical approaches that have been developed by several programs of moral education. Proceeding from the principle that "there is no such thing as value-free education," the author demonstrates that character development is as necessary as academic achievement, and that parents and school administrators are increasingly aware of this need. In his view, two great values, expressed as respect and responsibility, should define the public school's moral agenda. Acknowledging that values education has often proved divisive, Lickona specifies strategies likely, he believes, to make moral education effective and less anxiety-provoking for parents and teachers. This important study will be a resource for those concerned with the "ethical illiteracy" of children.

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From Library Journal

Lickona, author of *Raising Good Children* (LJ 9/15/83), views the school as a major force in responding to America's moral crisis. He defines values, discusses how they may be taught, and outlines the role of school and family. He emphasizes values as an important factor in the well being of a nation, family, and individual. His arguments are good ones. However, this is the age of diversification, political action committees, and special interest groups. Issues such as homosexuality, condom distribution, abortion, and AIDS call forth a number of opinions absolutely believed in with little tolerance for opposition, reasoned or otherwise. These aspects make a commonality or sharing of values a very difficult prospect. On a technical level, the lack of an index reduces the book's utility. Notwithstanding these criticisms, *Educating for Character* should be made available to teachers, future teachers, and parents.

- *Federico U. Acerri, Wayne Cty. Regional Educational Svce. Agency, Mich.*

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From Kirkus Reviews

An accessible, ultimately skewed argument for moral-values education. Lickona (*Education/SUNY at Cortland; Raising Good Children*, 1983) sees respect and responsibility as the fourth and fifth R's, and he presents his case for values education in a soothing no-exceptions voice with lots of examples from satisfied teachers and parents. He believes schools should teach specific moral values-- not emphasize the process of moral choice, as Kohlberg first espoused in the 70's--and though he anticipates some kinds of resistance, he has counterarguments for many objections, even that of the girl who despairs, "We don't want to be ethical all the time." When Lickona identifies broadly shared values (honesty, caring), repeats teachers' anecdotes, or acknowledges the importance of narrative in engaging children in moral discussion, he sounds reasonably in command of his material, drawing on major theorists (Gardner, Goodlad), offering many kinds of strategies--to foster cooperative attitudes, to assure timely homework-assignment completion--and acknowledging that changes don't happen quickly. But when he leaves common classroom issues for the more complicated and controversial problems of our age-- sex, AIDS, abortion--he reveals a bias that some readers will reject. Lickona's book is written "for God" and his ideas--values--relating to sex education are the strongest expression of that devotion. He opposes all premarital sex and sees both homosexuality and masturbation as violations of "God's imperative that sex be reserved for a man and woman united in marriage." Lickona goes beyond Tipper Gore in recognizing forces outside the school that put stress on young lives, and he knows the influence of a school's moral climate ("Schools inevitably teach good or bad

values in everything they do"), so for many this neatly organized dismissal of relativist approaches will be a call to action, a schoolhouse extension of *Raising Good Children*. For others, his underlying beliefs and impatience with genuine contradiction will be the larger issue. -- *Copyright ©1991, Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved.*

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Stephen Stover:

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