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ABSTRACT

This section, from a larger report describing a project designed to systematically investigate how religious and traditional values are represented in today's public school curricula, addresses the question of why values should be taught, and if so, what rationale for teaching values is most defensible. Education systems have conducted enculturation through thousands of years of history and pre-history. On the basis of anthropology it is argued that values are an inescapable part of any culture or subculture, including schools. To fulfill the socialization functions, schools must transmit the cultural heritage, the technology and the skills and tools necessary for survival, the norms of the mainstream culture, the awareness of other cultures, and the cognitive and affective expertise needed to analyze, synthesize, and appreciate other value systems and cultures. Eight universals common to all cultures (a value system stressing preservation of society, a sense of community, social organization, body of knowledge and skills, economic system, form of governance, aesthetic system, and a socialization process) are discussed and ways that schools can actively enlist the support and engagement of parents to help meet the challenge of managing values transmission in schools are examined. (LH)

SECTION 2: PART 1

# Transmitting Values to the Young: A Cross-Cultural Perspective

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# TRANSMITTING VALUES TO THE YOUNG: A CROSS-CULTURAL PERSPECTIVE*

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The discipline of anthropology studies human life patterns in different societies. It concerns itself primarily with habitual behaviors -- individual and group -- inherited and learned, and examines the strains that different institutional settings place on individuals (Oliver, 1964).

## Transmitting Values to the Young

To anthroplogists, schools are subcultures, and classrooms are subsystems of those subcultures. Schools and classrooms, like other systems of human behavior, form environments which are complex, probabilistic, and self-regulating. Also, like cultures, most schools and classrooms can be observed to have purposes, patterns and some form of coherence. As such, one can view schools and classrooms in terms of some commonly accepted anthropological constructs or universals (Hershkovits, 1949). These universal aspects of classrooms and schools inevitably develop as teachers transmit knowledge to students, and as they, the teachers and students, interact with the values, skills, knowledge and attitudes involved in their curriculum materials.

Eight cultural universals can be identified. Each classroom, school, community and culture must have some way of handling these common universal aspects. All cultures and subcultures have a value system that gives the highest priority to survival of that culture in the face of any serious external or internal threat. The value system indicates what ought to be the preferred way of doing things, or beliefs about what is good and what is bad. All have a cosmology or world view, which specifies what constitutes reality in the school, the community, the church or the classroom. Each cultural unit

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**With the assistance of Owen Mould.

has some form of social organization which governs individual and group relationships and even determines forms of verbal address. Each system has a technology, a body of knowledge and skills used to perform the tasks necessary for the system to function and survive. There is an economic system which regulates the allocation of goods and services in the school and the classroom. Further, there is a form of governance regulating individual and institutional behavior, and specifying which decisions are made and who participates in those decisions. There is an aesthetic system which defines what is beautiful, creative and artistic. Finally, there is a socialization process which regularizes the transmission of knowledge to the neophytes, the unlearned ones in the group.

As the preceeding inventory demonstrates, values are one cultural universal interacting with seven others, plus group pressures, institutional expectations, and personality needs. As a result, the acquisition and changes of values in schools by pupils must be viewed in a rather broad context.

## The Inevitability of Values in Schools

Should values be taught to pupils in public schools? Many would say yes (Derr, 1973). Indeed, most anthropologists would say it is impossible not to give values to students, either by explicit or implicit means. The crucial and perplexing questions are what values should be taught, how they should be taught, and who should decide.

The values of a particular culture establish the standards of conduct for individuals. They also determine the relative worth of actions, objects and people in relation to each other. Many societies have written codes of values and behavior -- in the form of a Bible, Koran, charter or constitution -- but such codes are always supplemented by unwritten taboos and principles defining requisite attitudes for certain situations.

Growing children and adolescents go through stages of development and learnin 'n which they acquire the values and skills useful for participating in their society. Thus, while the institution we call school is a western invention, education itself is a cultural universal (Cohen, 1970; Hambley, 1969; Meyers, 1964). In folk and tribal societies, through the institutions of kin and community, children are taught to assume adult roles without "schools." In urban technological societies, schools to a large extent replace these traditional modes. If we examine how education has been conducted in other societies -- including pre-industrial environments -- we may attain a better comprehension of the principles governing values transmission in our schools. As one anthropologist put it: "In the process of inculturation, an individual learns the forms of conduct acceptable to his group. He does this so well that his thought, his values, his acts rarely conflict with those of fellow-members of his society." (Hershkovits, 1949, p. 43). The precise means of enculturation of the young varies widely among cultures. Still, certain basic principles can be identified:

*** The process is governed by policies determined by significant, mainstream adults. As young people grow older, their opportunity for input increases; but, until the child is a full adult, adults generally are in control. For instance, among some Plains Indian tribes, young men accepted fasting and deprivation to receive a vision which would suggest the future shape of their lives (Erickson, 1964, p. 149). But, after they attained such a personal vision, they went to a shaman -- an officially designated adult -- to have his help in vision interpretation.

*** The process applied a great variety of techniques; prayers, preaching, rites, the acceptance of deprivation, a stress on obedience by the proposed initiates, the memorization of elaborate materials and the use of symbols,

music and poetry (Eisenstadt, 1956).

*** The process was related to many other aspects of family and social life such as the religion of the community.

*** The process was often a subtle mix of the adolescent's acceptance of general adult demands, with elements of individualization to allow for individual differences. Among the Kikyu of East Africa, adolescents could select the time when they choose to submit to the demanding puberty ritual -- though, if they waited too long, social pressures would make their status uncomfortable (Gathereu, 1964).

*** The communication of values to children and adolescents essentially rested on "irrational" premises. Adults did not finally rely on logic to persuade their next generation that the existing adult values were correct. The adults did not have that much trust in the maturity and wisdom of their young successors (Plato, 1968, p. 70).

*** The process often made allowance for intellectual or cognitive elements. However, such allowances occurred through the acceptance of a preexisting framework. Among traditional Jews, the Bar Mitzvah, or puberty ritual, required the young participant to deliver a public address to a group of adults, analyzing a passage of the Talmud. The address had intellectual content; but its substance was constrained by a long intellectual tradition. The youthful candidate needed to memorize scripture, accept its truth, and apply approved techniques of analysis and presentation.

Some readers may recognize that the preceeding examples are often included as parts of adolescent "rites of passage." They may then conclude that enculturation is basically a brief, dramatic process. This conclusion would be incorrect (Eisenstadt, 1965). Enculturation takes place through conscious and unconscious conditioning toward norms of culture in successive stages over

the passage of time.

It is true that some of the examples -- such as the vision quest of young male Americans -- were brief and stressful. It is also true that many -- but far from all -- pre-industrial cultures relied on various forms of puberty rituals to assist youth enculturation. But, whether a culture had a typical puberty ritual or not, the forming of a child or adolescent into an adult, with wholesome adult values, was always highly incremental. Even in the instance of a technique like a vision quest, the potential seeker had been embedded in a social environment where visions were treated as an important source of insight. Youths heard tales of the importance of visions told by prestigious adults. There were significant persons who were designated to interpret visions and perform other parapsychic tasks, and the boys knew that youths slightly older than them were beginning their vision-seeking. All of these factors helped determine the efficacy of an individual quest.

Similarly, in our own society we have potentially important moments of transition, which may be termed rites of passage. Some such moments are relatively secular -- graduating from school, acquiring a car licence, earning a first paycheck. Others have a more moral and sacramental nature -- getting married, being confirmed or enrolling in a religion, joining certain organizations, recognizing certain obligations to our parents and other relatives, or dealing with the death of persons close to us. The immediate meanings of such occasions are partly determined by the social environments in which the participants have previously participated. Thus, since young Americans spend long periods of time attending school, we would expect that the environment of the school would work to help prepare them for such moments. In other words, the school would try to "teach" pupils the common values their families and communities apply to such occasions (Derr, 1973).

If the values taught by schools about such occasions are significantly different from those taught outside, or if schools "ignore" such occasions, the inevitable stress of such moments of transition would be greatly aggravated.

The anthropological assumption is that any set of values widely applied in any society can be learned by any child, irrespective of his race or birthplace -- if the child is "inserted" into the society at a young age (Cohen, 1964). Thus, there is an enormous potential for human diversity.

If one were to identify a paramount universal value orientation, it would be the emphasis on survival of the cultural unit. All members are expected to support their culture against all others; not to do so may result in the members being charged with treason, expelled from the social unit or being maimed or killed. In vital cultures, members experience guilt, tension and diminution of self-esteem when they endanger the survival of the group.

The strength of the value of survival is forcefully demonstrated in many parts of the world where cultural units (which perceive threats to their own survival) threaten each other with violent annihilation. Internal dissension can also threaten cultural survival and result in open conflict (revolution) or negotiated change (evolution). Because the defense of culture can take such intense extremes, an adaptive, resilient, approcah to internal and external survival threats -- in contrast to the persistent tactic of confrontation -- is typically a sign of a vigorous culture.

"Healthy" Societies and Universal Values

It is extremely difficult to prove the existence of universal moral absolutes. At first glance it seems that cultures differ widely on many fundamental issues and that there is no common agreement on any one thing, including the value of human life -- for example. Some cultures, such as the

Judeo-Christian societies, value the worship of a single, all knowing, omnipotent, coherent God who created the universe. Other cultures believe in a group of divinities, or do not seriously address the issue of organized worship at all.

Closer examination shows that, beneath the disagreements over details of observance, are common foci or axes of attention. In other words, the "values" of a society are one of the nine central characteristics of any persisting society. Furthermore, those values themselves deal with a number of themes which regularly occur across different societies. Thus, every society, in some way, relates its values to some form of "spirit world," or cosmology. These beliefs identify some regulating force which pervades the universe, from which all things arise and to which all things eventually return. This force is variously termed God, the Tao, the One, the Oversoul, Buddha, Allah, or Karma, and abut as many other names as there are languages.

Each one of these diverse religions helps explain to members of a given society their relationship to the universe. Other themes common to the value systems of different societies are:

1) Preservation of the society
2) Sense of community, the commonwealth
3) Prosocial behavior vs. antisocial behavior
4) Ethics
5) Cleanliness
6) Wisdom, knowledge
7) Standards of truth
8) Beauty
10) Art; aesthetics

To express these orientations, most healthy cultures surround these facets

of human endeavor with elaborate rewards, rituals and language, punishment and folk heroes. Again, in literate cultures, the study of ethics has been one way of regularizing the exploration of cultural and personal values with attendant behavior. In tribal cultures, ethics are examined by reviewing the lessons of folklore and family and tribal history.

The ways in which a given culture defines its values determines the character of the culture. What one culture calls beautiful, another culture may call ugly, but both cultures have a value placed on beauty in its various forms, including some ideal of feminine beauty. One could conceivably go further in stating that the characteristics of beauty in all cultures include what Aquinas calls "wholeness", "harmony" and "radiance"; however that may become a philosophical issue, depending on th definitions given to the words. Many of these common themes become linked in certain areas or objects. The occurence of the ankh symbol (i.e., a cross with a loop at the top segment) in several cultures, for example, is associated with the attention and ceremony accorded magic, art, birth and beauty.

American Values and the Schools

As remarked elsewhere in this report, during much of American history, public schools applied the values transmission techniques common in all societies (Baily, 1960: Tyack & Hansot, 1980; Yulish, 1980). American children spend a substantial portion of their waking hours in the public school. It is foolish to believe that with all of the subliminal cues, geography and history lessons, school discipline and teacher role models acting on the child, a significant portion of enculturation does not take place within the school away from the parents.

At one time, the orientation held by sociologists and educators, as well as most figures in authority, was of an image of America as a "melting pot" of

world cultures. Immigrants from all over the globe simply shed their native traditions and ways of thinking to become assimilated into the larger society, adding a few elements of their previous culture to the whole (Eisenstadt, 1956).

Assimilation does surely occur. However, we must appreciate the full complexity of the process. The fact is that assimilation extends over several generations, as -- over many decades -- successive cohorts of children and youth from a particular immigrant "wave" are gradually educated and socialized towards some general American norms. Due to the gradual nature of this process, high proportions of our citizens, in all eras, have followed life patterns applying diverse unique ethnic traditions. Furthermore, due to persistent in-migration into America, many foreign-born persons regularly are "joining" our country. And these new inhabitants inevitably continue important elements of the life pattern to which they were socialized in their previous homeland.

In sum, there is a gradual movement towards general national norms among the descendants of immigrants. However, the process is incremental. As a result, America is -- and will continue to be -- an extremely heterogeneous country. Our education policies should reflect this reality. It is also appropriate to recognize that, in the recent past, there has been a considerable degree of interest, among many groups, in the revitalization of particular ethnic patterns. One cannot predict how much practical effect this interest will generate. There are surely many important forces for homogeneity operating in our country: the national media, our relatively integrated educational system (up through higher education), our national systems of production and consumption, and a powerful and relatively stable national government. However, there is no denying that young Americans must

learn values whic.. enable them to participate in a whole society and simultaneously have some appreciation of the immense diversity prevailing in our country.

Throughout history, schools have always fulfilled the function of instruction in values, consciously and unconsciously. The ancient Greek academies included the formal topic Ethics among the essential subjects of study. Ethics, as a part of philosophy, remained integrated with the Western, classical curriculum through the Roman Empire, the Middle Ages, the Renaissance, and up until well into the Industrial Revolution. In many nineteenth century American colleges, the capstone of the undergraduate program was a required course in Moral Philosophy, often taught by the college's president. Furthermore, through most of the nineteenth century, most American colleges were explicitly church-related, and their curricula were affected by significant religious concerns. Eventually, the burden of instruction in science an mathematics forced a number of less "practical" studies from the curriculum. Still, despite such evident shifts, it is also significant that we are seeing a revival of academic interest in the formal topic of ethics. Many of the nation's best law schools now include courses on legal ethics. California requires that all prospective lawyers taking the bar exam also take an exam on ethics, and embedded in the California Basic Skills Test for prospective teachers are questions related to ethical behavior. Understandably, the efficacy of such courses and exams is open to dispute. It is noted that thoughtful human beings differ as to what are "correct" ethics in some problematic situations, and how to teach the good when we identify it.

At one time, values were taught in American public schools by linking moral lessons with the acquisition of other types of knowledge. A proverb would be associated with each letter in learning the alphabet, for example.

Other values were communicated through the use of American folklore, fables, parables in learning the subjects of reading, writing, or history. In American history, for instance, the students would be taught the fable of how George Washington cut down the cherry tree and refused to lie about it to his father. Rituals, rites and ceremonies reinforced the particular American values of self-reliance and egalitarianism. Graduation is still an important ritual, marking the increased skills and independece of the graduate. The community Fourth of July picnic, which shared food and love of country by retelling how we cooperatively beat the enemy to gain independence, is an example of how Americans reinforced core values.

Traditional value instruction in the American schools drew from a relatively limited reservoir of values -- the idea of uniform, homogenous culture, which was Caucasion, Anglo-Saxon, unilingual, paternal and identified with American middle-class patterns. Some authorities have contended that curriculum materials developed in this tradition -- such as the Dick and Jane reading texts of the 1960's -- have to adequately reflect the cultural and values diversity of the United States.

There is an important policy issue underlying the question of values transmission in schools. That issue deserves direct attention: Schools engage in the transmission of values; they have some choices among the values they transmit; and they can do a better job of transmission if they more deliberately weigh the implications of different values, and mixes of values.

The paramount value of cultural survival means that a society -- in particular, the United States -- must transmit, to a great majority of its children, a sense of loyalty and affection for the overall society. In a word, a country needs patriotic citizens. Concurrently, due to the great diversity of the United States, citizens need to practice considerable

awareness, and understanding of somewhat divergent subcultures. And parents must be allowed to transmit their particular unique ethnic traditions to their descendents, and have schools respect that transmission. Exactly where to draw the necessary lines between the themes of integrity and diversity is problematic. But it is unrealistic to imagine that the United States will ever peacefully evolve into congerie of vital, independent sub-cultures. Our national traditions, and the danger of recurrent external threats, are too profound to make such a development imaginable. Thus, one can safely predict that the curriculum and policies applied in almost all American schools will and should tend to communicate an important sense of national wholeness to pupils. They should receive the message that our country, in general, is good and deserves their love and commitment, and that fellow Americans, persons who do not share such concerns, are not good citizens. Simultaneously, we should hope that students will learn that citizens can share that love and commitment, and express it in slightly different forms.

Two particular core values which individuals must know how to recognize to get along in America are self-reliance and egalitarianism. A self-reliant person wants to "do it myself." The self-reliant individual believes: "You ought to do things for yourself and stand on your own two feet." "You ought to work for a living." Violation of these values causes guilt and attacks self-esteem. Therefore, taking charity from outside of the family, or being unemployed or on welfare is expected to create tension sufficient to cause individuals to change their behaviors.

By contrast, Americnas who have acquired the value of egalitarianism feel: "I am as good as anyone else;" "I should have the same things as anyone else, and everyone else should have his fair share as well;" or "No one is better than anyone else, just different; so I will share my toys and help

others and if I want to, run for Persident."

It is evident that the two core values contain some potential for conflict. If "independence" means people should make it on their own, then the egalitarian demand that "I should have as much as you," can be resisted by the plea that "You are only entitled to what you independently earn." And so, as in many cultures, we collectively pursue values which contain the potential for inherent conflict -- and which also provide certain benign effects. There are necessarily shifts over years and decades in the values orientation prevailing in a society. Thus, one anthropologist proposed that America's traditional values of hard work, success, future time orientation, individualism and moral absolutism have been changed by the emergent values of social conformity, present time orientation, group orientation and moral relativism (Spindler, 1963).

Sometimes, values shifts are evinced via the overt popularization of new values, and sometimes, what happens is the redefinition of previous language and symbols. The analysis of such apparent or potential shifts is difficult. For instance, differences in the values orientation of children and adults -- which some researchers have found -- may partly reflect simple age differences. To the extend this is the case, when the children "grow up" -- when they become parents, or wage earners -- the difference may gradually dissolve. However, in some cases, differences undoubtedly reflect the divergent circumstances in which successive generations have been reared: As an adult, one "feels" differently about certain things because one was raised during World War II, compared to the Vietnam War. In addition, beyond the matter of important but transitory events -- such as World War II, the Vietman War, or the Great Depression -- there is the matter of the systemic changes. Such changes can be trends like the increasing penetration of the mass media,

the stretching out of the typical life span, or the higher levels of formal education absorbed by successive generations. Such powerful systemic changes, if they persist, should cause permanent changes in national value patterns. There also should be a recognition that evident or predictable values shifts are not always inevitable, desirable or persistent. For instance, it is possible for a potential values shift to severely threaten the security of a society, or to be in severe conflict with another, more profoundly based value. In such cases, social institutions may eventually take strong positions in opposition to such new values, and may even prevail in their resistance. One instance of such successful resistence may be the slow but noteworthy decline in adolescent drug usage. In general, the institutions of society -- the schools, the police, other government agencies, and parents -- have gradually evolved a line of persistent resistance to the remarkable rise in such usage. And that opposition has apparently had an effect. The level of reported adolescent drug use has been gradually declining since 1978.

It is extremely difficult to perscribe deliberate in-school techniques of appropriate values transmission which can be appropriate to such varied exigencies. One possibly constructive approach was suggested by Shaftel and Shaftel (1967), in Role-playing for Social Values. The approach presents students with realistic values dilemmas, which they are expected to act out, e.g., what to do if they see someone jump on a bus and drop his wallet as the bus rides away. The approach recognizes that young people often do not reflexively carry-out appropriate values (which they have been "taught") when confronted with real-life challenges. It aims to help students identify and anticipate the stresses which arise during such challenges, and to prepare themselves to deal with them.

Summary

From studying surviving, or recently expired tradition societies, we can derive a good idea of how education systems have conducted enculturation through thousands of years of history and pre-history. Education systems and schools have always been deeply concerned with values transmission. From the perspective of the anthropologist, schools must satisfy a number of criteria to fulfill the socialization functions. They must transmit: the cutural heritage; the technology and the skills and tools necessary for survival; the norms of the mainstream culture; awareness of other cultures; and the cognitive and affective expertise to analyze, synthesize and appreciate other value systems and cultures.

Undoubtedly, other specific value-related concerns that affect school will arise, or demand attention. But, in order to go further, schools should actively enlist the support and engagement of parents -- who have paramount authority over their children. Such support and engagement can occur partly via the formal involvement of parents, or parent representatives, in developing values priorities for a school or system. Or, alternatively, it can occur through providing parents with choices among schools with differnet values priorities. Readers can recognize that, at this time, a variety of forms of parental educational choice are being offered and proposed. The options range from the accepted right of parents to "buy" private education for their children (subject to general government controls), to choices among magnet schools in particular public schools systems, to various forms of state and federal subsidies (or tax benefits) offered to parents to facilitate choices among public and private schools. A number of arguments can be offered on behalf of such alternative. But the problem schools necessarily face in dealing with divergent family and subculture values is one important

reason for the popularization of these proposals.

It is evident that the challenge of managing values transmission in schools is a persisting and important problem. But, at the same time, it is one worthy of our full attention. By skillfully confronting that challenge, we are playing a vital role in insuring the future of our country -- and paying our debt to our predecessors, who developed and preserved the society which has nurtured, reared and protected us, and enabled us to bear and rear our own children.

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