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ABSTRACT

This paper reports the opinions about moral topics expressed by 140 elementary and secondary student teachers, 49 in Indiana and 91 in California. Teachers' judgments of the suitability of topics were collected via a questionnaire containing 20 topics in two versions. The presentation consists of: (1) a description of the opinionnaire teachers filled out; (2) the process of administering the opinionnaire; (3) a report of the teachers' responses; and (4) a summary of the results and of other applications for moral-topic opinionnaires. The first version asked about using the topics with sixth graders and the other, with university undergraduates. The topics chosen represented a diversity of moral issues found in newspapers and television broadcasts. Subject matter included crime, religion, health, functions of government, sexual behavior, business practices, intergroup conflicts, gender equality, and personal rights. Four styles were used in presenting topics in the opinionnaire: (1) problem identification and proposed solutions; (2) question not including a value judgment; (3) question or statement containing an imbedded value judgment; and (4) pros and cons of an issue. Findings indicated that teachers were more willing to include the 20 topics in a university class than in a sixth grade class, although there were marked differences in the proportion of respondents who would recommend including particular items in the curriculum, e.g., more than 90 percent of the teachers would propose studying at both levels how to resolve ethnic conflicts and how to avoid AIDS, only 4 percent would choose to identify the "best religion" at the university level, and only 9 percent would suggest studying the prostitution issue in sixth grade. The distribution of preferences among teachers in Indiana was basically the same as the distribution of preferences among teachers in California. (CK)

Good and Bad Topics for Moral Education

Patricia Davidman, George Petersen, and R. Murray Thomas

What students will be taught in school is decided at various stages of the curriculum-planning process. Legislatures decree particular topics, school boards require the inclusion of others, parent groups pressure the school to teach content they favor, and curriculum committees specify their version of the scope and sequence of what students should learn. However, the most influential agent of all is the classroom teacher. It is the teacher who ultimately decides whether a topic will be addressed in class, how much time will be spent on it, how the topic will be phrased, the value judgments attached to it, and the evidence offered in support of those values.

Perhaps the curriculum area most often affected by teachers' value commitments is that of moral education, especially because moral matters are not confined to a single subject-matter category. Instead, moral issues arise in all subject fields—the physical and social sciences, humanities, arts, vocational studies, athletics, and more. Thus, to understand what kinds of moral topics students will likely meet in school, we can profit from learning teachers' beliefs about which moral issues should be included in school programs and which should not. The following pages report the opinions about moral topics expressed by 140 new elementary and secondary school teachers, 49 of them in the Midwestern United States and 91 on the West Coast.

The presentation consists of (1) a description of the opinionnaire teachers filled out, (2) the process of administering the opinionnaire, (3) a report of the teachers' responses, and (4) a summary of the results and of other applications for moral-topic opinionnaires.

The Opinionnaire

Teachers' judgments of the suitability of topics were collected by means of a printed opinionnaire containing 20 topics. In the case of each item, the respondents' task consisted of (1) telling whether or not the topic should be taught and (2) offering reasons in support this decision. The 140 participants completed two versions of the opinionnaire. The first version asked about using the topics with sixth graders; the second version asked about using the topics with university undergraduates. The purpose of administering two versions was to discover what influence students' ages and grade levels might have on the teachers' assessment of topics.

The Selection of Topics

Topics were chosen to represent a diversity of moral issues commonly found in newspapers and television broadcasts. The topics differed from each other in two respects—in subject-matter focus and presentation style. Subject-matter foci included crime, religion, health, functions of government, sexual behavior, business practices, intergroup conflicts, gender equality, and personal rights. The following items from the opinionnaire illustrate the four styles used in presenting topics. Each topic in the list is worded exactly as it was on the opinionnaires.

Style 1: Problem identification and proposed solutions (4 items)

—Kinds of conflicts among the nation's ethnic groups, and methods for resolving those conflicts.

—Recent examples of corruption in our national government, and how to stop such corruption.

—How to avoid contracting AIDS (acquired immune deficiency syndrome).

—The causes of conflicts among different religious groups, and how the conflicts might be solved.

Style 2: Question that does not include a value judgment (7 items).

—Should ordinary citizens have the right to own guns and to carry guns in their cars?

—Should people ever be put to death for crimes they commit? If so, what kinds of crimes and why?

—What are the basic beliefs of the nation's most popular religious groups?

—What are the main kinds of crime in the nation, and what are the causes of such crimes?

— Who should pay for people's medical care—the government, employers, or the people themselves?

—Should prostitution be made legal, or should it be against the law?

—Who should pay for taking care of old people?

Style 3: Question or statement containing an imbedded value judgment (7 items).

—Women and men should have equal rights in occupations, in religious positions, and in marriage.

—Reasons that advertising cigarettes should not be permitted on TV, on radio, or in newspapers.

—Which religion in our nation is the best one, and why is it the best?

—The reasons that movies featuring sex and violence should not be allowed on TV.

—The reasons that selling alcoholic beverages (beer, wine, whiskey) should be against the law.

—Which industries are destroying the nation's natural resources, and how can the damage be stopped?

—Why the government should limit the number of children that are born to a family.

Style 4: Pros and cons of an issue (2 items):

—Advantages and disadvantages of gambling—betting on horse races, games, and lotteries.

—Advantages and disadvantages of different methods of birth control.

Respondents' Rationales

Learning only whether a respondent would or would not advocate teaching a given topic is of some practical interest but is of no help in revealing the principles that guide teachers' judgments of such matters. To discover those principles, researchers need to learn the rationales behind respondents' choices. The simplest way to request this information is to ask, "What are the reasons for your decision?" However, previous studies of similar matters had shown that this sort of open-ended question elicits only a segment of the wider range of people's reasons that could be revealed through probing inquiries (Thomas & Diver-Stamnes, 1993; Diver-Stamnes & Thomas, 1995). Thus, by means of a pilot study with 20 teachers, we were able to identify a set of reasons that respondents often cite either for or against studying a given topic. Eighteen such reasons were listed in two parallel columns on the opinionnaire—nine reasons for rejecting a topic (the left column) and nine for accepting a topic (the right column). Each reason was identified by a code letter. The following directions explained how respondents should fill out the opinionnaire.

> If you think a topic should be taught, circle **Yes.** If you think a topic should not be taught, circle **No.** Then show the reasons for your decision by writing the code letters of your reasons on the line labeled **Code Letters.** If you do not find all your reasons in the lists of **Supporting Reasons**, then write your extra reasons on the line labeled **Other Reasons.** You can give one reason or more than one for each topic.

Supporting Reasons

For Rejecting a Topic		For Accepting a Topic	
Code Letters	Reasons	Code Letters	Reasons
A	The topic is too complex for students to understand.	**Z**	The topic is easy for students to understand.
B	It is not the university's responsibility to teach this.	**Y**	I would enjoy teaching this topic.

C The university program is already too crowded.
D Too many parents would object.
E Important people in the government would object.
F Teaching this topic would be against the law.
G Students would find this topic too emotionally upsetting.
H Most teachers are not prepared to teach this properly.
J It could cause public demonstrations and conflicts.
W The topic is important for the nation's welfare.
T Most parents would want to have this taught.
R Students would find the topic very interesting.
P University is the best place to learn it.
O The topic helps students make good decisions.
M It helps students be well-informed voters.
L It is a peaceful way to face a social problem.

Administering the Opinionnaire

The research instrument was prepared in two versions, one asking whether topics should be taught to sixth graders and the other asking whether the same topics should be taught to undergraduate university students. The 140 individuals who completed the two opinionnaires were currently engaged in practice teaching in elementary and secondary schools. Parallel to their teaching assignments, they attended a university class bearing on teaching methodology. The opinionnaires were administered during two sessions of the university class.

The survey was conducted at two sites—a state university in California and a private university in Indiana. The purpose of collecting opinions in two regions was to discover possible differences in attitudes that might be associated with those settings, which often have been characterized as representing contrasting viewpoints and styles of life typical of the populations in those two environments.

The California sample consisted of 77 women and 14 men ranging in age from 21 to 56 years, with a mean of 28.57 years (standard deviation 7.3). The Indiana respondents (35 women, 14 men) were younger (mean = 21.9 years) and more homogeneous (age range from 20 to 40 years, standard deviation 3.16).

The Teachers' Responses

The following presentation first summarizes responses for the entire group of 140 teachers as displayed in Table 1, then compares the responses from California with those from Indiana.

The Entire Sample of Respondents

An initial observation to draw from Table 1 is that teachers were more willing to include the 20 topics in a university class than in a sixth grade. The overall percentage of respondents advocating such topics for sixth graders was 55% and for university students

70%. However, there were marked differences in the proportion of respondents who would recommend including particular items in the curriculum. Whereas at both levels—grade six and university—more than 90% of the teachers would propose studying how to resolve ethnic conflicts and how to avoid AIDS, only 4% would choose to identify the "best religion" at the university level, and only 9% would suggest studying the prostitution issue in sixth grade.

Table 1
Teachers Advocating Topics of Study at Two School Levels
(N=140)

Topic	Grade 6 Percentages			Rank	University Percentages			Rank
	Yes	No	Blank		Yes	No	Blank	
Ethnic conflicts	91	6	3	**1**	97	3	0	**1**
Avoiding AIDS	90	9	1	**2**	94	6	0	**4**
Industries damage resources	86	13	1	**3**	88	11	1	**5**
Causes of crime	82	16	2	**4**	95	3	2	**2**
Female/male equal rights	77	21	2	**5**	85	14	1	**7**
Government corruption	66	33	1	**6**	95	5	0	**2**
Resolving religious conflicts	64	35	1	**7**	86	13	1	**6**
Prohibiting cigarette ads	57	42	1	**8**	56	43	1	**15**
Gun possession	56	43	1	**9**	73	26	1	**13**
Popular religions' beliefs	54	45	1	**10**	79	20	1	**11**
Financing care of the elderly	53	46	1	**11**	78	21	1	**12**
The death penalty	51	47	2	**12**	82	17	1	**10**
Birth control methods	47	52	1	**13**	84	16	0	**8**
The best religion	45	54	1	**14**	4	96	0	**20**
Ending TV sex & violence	44	55	1	**15**	62	38	0	**14**
Paying for medical care	44	55	1	**15**	83	14	3	**9**
Pros and cons of gambling	38	61	1	**17**	48	51	1	**16**
Outlawing alcoholic beverages	26	71	3	**18**	26	72	2	**19**
Limiting children per family	11	88	1	**19**	31	67	2	**18**
Legalizing prostitution	9	90	1	**20**	45	54	1	**17**

As the table shows, no single topic was acceptable to every respondent, nor was any topic rejected by every respondent. In effect, when teachers' preferences determine which moral issues are discussed in their classes, the most popular item (resolving ethnic conflicts) will still not appear in a few classrooms, whereas the least popular (the best religion [university], legalizing prostitution [grade six]) will still be discussed in a few classes. Consequently, the data in Table 1 do not tell absolutely whether any topic will or will not be met by pupils in their classrooms. Instead, the data suggest only the probability of students' encountering a given item in classes taught by the kinds of teachers who participated in this survey.

The order of popularity of items for sixth-graders and university students was similar, though not identical (Pearson r=.74, Spearman rho=.84). The seven most popular topics for sixth graders were also the seven most popular for university students, although the order of the seven differed somewhat for the two types of students. In a similar way, six of the seven least popular topics for sixth graders were also the least popular for university students. (The exception was "pros and cons of gambling," which was ranked 9th for university students and 15th for sixth graders.)

The most-popular items concerned social problems for which solutions were being sought (ethnic and religious conflicts, AIDS, crime, environmental damage, gender equality, government corruption), whereas the least popular involved restricting people's freedom of choice (children per family, sale of alcohol, violence on TV, gambling).

Not only were respondents influenced by the subject-matter of a topic, but their choices could also be affected by the style in which the item was presented. Many of the teachers objected to casting a topic in the form of a proposed action that contained a particular imbedded value judgment (alcohol *should not* be sold, births *should* be limited). Respondents more often preferred topics in which a problem was inspected and possible solutions identified without the wording of the topic implying which solution should be favored (ethnic conflicts, causes of crime, avoiding AIDS). In effect, a values-clarification phrasing was more often preferred to a values-indoctrination mode. However, it was apparent that whether an embedded value judgment would be acceptable could depend on how closely that judgment reflected the teacher's own values. The study's participants were more apt to object to an embedded value if they disagreed with that value or did not feel strongly about it than if they heartily endorsed the value. Thus, even though respondents generally chose to present more than one side of a moral issue and then permit students to draw their own value judgments, teachers were still willing to accept value-biased topics if they themselves strongly shared the particular bias. This point was illustrated in the item about gender equal rights (in occupations, religious positions,

marriage). Even though the gender statement directly advocated equal rights, the topic was still accepted by 77% of respondents as proper for sixth graders and by 85% as appropriate for university students. Furthermore, those percentages would have been even higher if 10 of the teachers had not stipulated that the portion of the question proposing equality in religious positions should be excluded. As a further example of teachers accepting a value-biased topic, over half would use the anti-cigarette topic in both sixth-grade and university classes.

When offering reasons in support of their choices, respondents did not indiscriminately list the same reasons for the entire set of their decisions. Instead, they provided different rationales for selecting different topics, thus suggesting that they did not hastily judge the topics but seriously weighed the various kinds of values that guided their decisions.

It was also the case that respondents seldom cited only a single reason in support of a given choice. On average, across all 20 topics, 84% of the participants gave two or more reasons, with a mean of 2.8 reasons for sixth-graders and 3.1 reasons for university students. On average, for a given topic, more than 20% of the 140 teachers (22% for grade six; 24% for university) were not satisfied with selecting only reasons from the opinionnaire's lists; thus they wrote additional reasons of their own. For instance, about one-third of the participants added reasons to support their approval of the AIDS topic (36% for grade six; 31% for university). The diversity of considerations included in participants' sixth-grade comments is illustrated by the following examples:

"Many parents don't know enough about AIDS to teach their children, so someone else has to teach them."

"It is important for the health and safety of emerging teenagers."

"It's a life or death situation."

"Sixth graders have reached that age of experimentation."

"Sixth grade students definitely need to be aware of sexually transmitted diseases."

"As long as it is approached in a delicate matter; it is an important subject."

"Teaching avoidance is not promoting sexual or drug activity."

"There may be conflict about teaching it, but teaching it is necessary.

"Three girls at my son's junior high are pregnant; they should hear it all if they're doing it all."

"It might be okay if a school nurse or specialist talked about it."

"Very, very pertinent to prepubescent children who feel invincible."

"There are lots of rumors about AIDS virus, and education would help stop them."

Another of the sex-behavior items evoked a similar large number of further reasons. Comments about the birth-control topic were offered by 44% of the respondents on the

grade-six opinionnaire and 25% on the university version. Teaching birth control methods in sixth grade was an issue on which the teachers markedly disagreed, with 45% favoring it and 51% rejecting it. Typical remarks in support of the topic were:

"Forget 'morals.' Children are interested and 'doing it' very early now. Better they be informed than not."

"Some students will have no understanding of birth control."

"Many students are sexually active and need to know about his topic."

"Special programs after school could handle this issue."

"This must be taught in a modern, forward thinking, responsible country."

"They should be taught proper usage techniques, but I don't think a sixth grader needs to know, for example, which method feels better."

"They should be informed, but it must be done carefully."

"Some children get no sex education at home."

"Get students who may start young to be aware and responsible."

"Unfortunately they need to know it."

"I do think that birth control and condoms should be discussed but not a detailed explanation of every method."

"A school nurse can teach this."

"There are too many teenage pregnancies."

"I advocate teaching the topic to provide information as long as the program is not encouraging sixth graders to have sex by handing out condoms, etc."

The following comments are from respondents who were opposed to teaching about birth control in sixth grade.

"There are other facilities that teach this. Teachers are already faced with other responsibilities."

"This is too complex for this age."

"I feel this is an important issue but could cause many conflicts; sixth grade is a little early.

"Too controversial."

"I'm afraid it would be very promotional of sex."

"Too complex for elementary school; okay in junior high."

"Many students may not be ready to learn or discuss this subject matter."

"These students are too young to make these kinds of decisions. Abstinence should be promoted."

"Pamphlets should be given to the parents for them to discuss this."

"This may go against some religious values."

The number of teachers offering a particular reason in support of a choice varied markedly from one topic to another. For example, the reason most often cited for studying the resolution of ethnic conflicts was that such a topic was important for the nation's welfare (76% grade six, 80% university). Learning how to avoid contracting AIDS was deemed highly important both for the nation's welfare (77% grade six, 81% university) and for helping students make wise decisions (72% grade six, 80% university). In contrast, rarely did anyone exclude a topic because the school program was already too crowded. Although 96% of respondents would reject the "best religion" topic at the university level, only 4% of them would include "an overcrowded curriculum" among the reasons for their decision (Table 2).

Eliminating a topic because parents might object was far less a consideration for university students than for sixth graders. At the university level, only one item (which religion is the best; cited by 36% of participants) caused more than 15% of respondents to note parental opinions as a matter of concern. However, in judging topics suitable for sixth graders, more than 15% of the teachers gave parental objections as a reason for excluding 10 of the 20 topics from the curriculum. Such objections were mentioned most often in relation to the items focusing on the best religion (52%), legalizing prostitution (51%), limiting family size (41%), birth control methods (40%), religious groups' beliefs (24%), gambling (23%), and the death penalty (23%).

What might be interpreted as a degree of logical inconsistency appeared in some of the comparisons between opinions about sixth-grade topics and opinions about university topics. For instance, 18% of the teachers believed that learning about "the best religion" would help sixth-graders make good decisions, but no one cited such a reason for teaching that topic at the university level. So, if studying "the best religion" would contribute to decision-making in sixth-grade, why not in the university as well? Furthermore, 20% of the participants objected to the best-religion topic at the university level because "there is no best religion" or "which religion is best is just a personal opinion." However, only 11 percent offered such an objection to teaching the topic in grade six (a difference statistically significant beyond the .03 level). Hence, if determining which religion is best is just a matter of personal preference at the university level, why is it not equally just matter of personal preference in primary school?

Table 2

The Frequency of Reasons Behind Topic Choices

(in percentages, averaged across 20 topics)

Reasons for Rejecting Topics	**Grade 6**	**University**
It is not the school's/university's responsibility to teach this.	26	20
Too many parents would object.	19	5
Most teachers are not prepared to teach this properly.	15	10
The topic is too complex for students to understand.	14	2
It could cause public demonstrations and conflicts.	9	8
The school/university program is already too crowded.	6	6
Students would find this topic too emotionally upsetting.	6	4
Important people in the government would object.	5	6
Teaching this topic would be against the law.	4	3

Reasons for Accepting Topics	**Grade 6**	**University**
The topic is important for the nation's welfare.	37	43
The topic helps students make good decisions.	35	46
Students would find the topic very interesting.	22	37
The topic is easy for students to understand.	20	30
I would enjoy teaching this topic.	17	27
It helps students be well-informed voters.	11	10
School/university is the best place to learn it.	11	8
Most parents would want to have this taught.	7	16
It is a peaceful way to face a social problem.	7	13

Regional Comparisons

As noted earlier, the neophyte teachers participating in this survey were attending two universities located in different regions of the United States. The universities were 2,000 miles apart. The two regions, the state of California on the West Coast and Indiana in the Midwest, are often characterized in the public press as representing contrasting life styles and social attitudes. Californians have been depicted as innovative, in the vanguard of social change, welcoming diverse styles of life, and ethnically heterogeneous (Rolle, 1987). Only one-third of Californians list church affiliations, a proportion far below the

national average (Morgan, 1994, p. 437). Midwesterners have been portrayed as maintaining traditional values and patterns of social organization; they represent the fusion of "an urban industrial establishment with the sturdy conservatism of a rural hinterland" (Middle West, 1994, p. 109). More than two-thirds of the people of Indiana who are affiliated with an organized religion are Protestants, a figure considerably above the national average. Many of Indiana's people "continue to cherish an image derived from 19th-century America: largely white, dedicated to the Protestant ethic of sobriety and hard work" (D'Antonio, 1994, p. 357).

In conducting the present survey, we sought to discover if these popular stereotypes might be reflected in the opinions of moral topics expressed by the 49 teachers in Indiana and 91 teachers in California. In other words, would knowing whether a teacher came from the Midwestern university rather than the West-Coast university be of help in estimating the attitudes the teacher would hold about which moral topics to include in the curriculum? To answer this question, we planned to test the following hypotheses:

(a) That a significantly larger percentage of California than Indiana teachers would favor teaching topics bearing on gender equality, industrial damage of the environment, methods of birth control, legalizing prostitution, and resolving ethnic conflicts.

(b) That a significantly larger percentage of Indiana than California teachers would favor topics bearing on the best religion, the right to carry guns, the death penalty, and preventing sex and violence in television programs.

To test these hypotheses, we (1) computed correlations between the percentages of Indiana and California teachers who advocated teaching the 20 topics and (2) searched for differences in the percentages of Indiana and California teachers who would include the surveyed topics among students' studies.

At both the sixth-grade and university levels, the product-moment correlations between teachers in the two regions exceeded +.96 (r=.96.8 for sixth-grade topics, r=96.5 for university topics). Rank order correlations were nearly as high (rho=93.5 for sixth-grade topics and rho=95.1 for university topics). In other words, the Indiana and California teachers were essentially alike in the percentages that would include the 20 topics in the curriculum. Hence, the hypotheses were not supported.

Across all 20 topics, the average discrepancy in the percentage of Indiana versus California teachers advocating a topic was 6.9 percentage points for the university level and 5.3 percentage points for the sixth-grade level. The largest single difference appeared in the case of the cigarette-advertising topic ("reasons that advertising cigarettes should not be permitted on TV, on radio, or in newspapers"), with 16% more California than Indiana teachers accepting that item for both sixth-graders and university students. However,

neither this cigarette-advertising difference nor any of the remaining smaller differences approached statistical significance at the .05 level. Nor was there any tendency for respondents in one region to favor more topics in general than respondents in the other region. For example, at the university level, the quantity of topics that Indiana teachers endorsed in greater numbers than did California teachers (9 topics) was nearly the same as the quantity endorsed in greater numbers by Californians than by Indianans (11 topics). In effect, there were no noteworthy differences between the Midwest and West Coast in the proportions of participants advocating the teaching of any of the 20 topics in either the sixth-grade or the university.

If there were no significant differences between the two regions in teachers' preferences for topics, might there still be interregional differences in the rationales teachers offered in support of their choices? To answer this question, we compared the Indiana and California respondents in terms of the percentages of teachers citing each reason for rejecting or accepting a topic. This computation involved 720 comparisons between the two groups (18 types of reasons for each of 20 topics at the sixth-grade and the university levels). Nineteen of the differences between the regional groups were statistically significant at or beyond the .05 level (2.6% of the comparisons), and seven were significant at or beyond the .01 level (1% of the comparisons). In other words, no significant differences appeared between the groups in 96.4% of the comparisons of reasons supporting respondents' decisions.

The only observable tendency among the 26 (out of 720) differences between regions that exceeded at least a .05 level of significance was in a slightly greater proportion of California teachers citing three types of reasons in several of the topic choices. In nine of the 26 instances, the percentage of California participants exceeded Indiana participants in selecting a topic because "It helps citizens be well-informed as voters," in five instances Californians more often than Indianans chose a topic because it "helps pupils make good decisions," and in three cases more Californians stated that "The topic is important for the nation's welfare." The topics that these differences concerned were ones involving such social issues as the death penalty, the right to carry guns, industries destroying natural resources, legalizing prostitution, and financing the care of the elderly. What these differences might signify is not at all clear. It may be that the California participants were indeed slightly more concerned about students making wise decisions as citizens. Or perhaps the differences were no more than the result of sampling deviations. In any event, the results do not appear to support the hypothesized popular stereotypes regarding life styles and attitudes in the Midwest and on the West Coast. The distribution of teachers' opinions in one region was fundamentally the same as the distribution in the other region.

Knowing that a teacher came from the Midwest rather than the West Coast would be of no help in estimating that teacher's attitudes about what moral topics to include in the curriculum.

Summary and Applications

Among the 140 new teachers who participated in the moral-topic survey, the popularity of different topics varied markedly. Whereas for the university curriculum 97 percent of the respondents favored studying ways to resolve ethnic conflicts, only 4 percent advocated studying which religion is best. Although 95 percent would include a topic on the causes of crime, no more than 26 percent would include the issue of outlawing the sale of liquor. The most popular items concerned social problems for which solutions were being sought (ethnic and religious conflicts, AIDS, crime, environmental damage, gender equality, government corruption), whereas the least popular involved restricting people's freedom of choice (children per family, sale of alcohol, violence on TV, gambling). Even the most popular topics were rejected by a few teachers, and the least popular were still advocated by a few. The distribution of preferences among teachers in Indiana was basically the same as the distribution of preferences among teachers in California.

In the present study, the 20-item moral-topic opinionnaire was used to discover teachers' attitudes about which topics are suitable for inclusion in the curriculum. However, in addition to such a purpose, the opinionnaire also has other applications. For example, it can serve as the focus of discussion during values-clarification sessions. This was demonstrated in the present authors' classes in which teacher-education candidates filled out the opinionnaire and subsequently used the results as the basis for exchanging opinions about which topics are most appropriate and why. Such value-clarification exchanges can be conducted in the form of a general class discussion or else with students divided into small groups that offer each individual more opportunity to participate actively.

A moral-topic opinionnaire can also serve for identifying attitudes of candidates for teaching positions. For instance, some schools prefer to hire teachers who subscribe to moral principles consistent with the values to which the school is dedicated. Such is particularly the case in institutions sponsored by religious orders. When interviewing applicants for teaching positions, officials in charge of selecting personnel often include questions about the applicants' views on selected moral and philosophical issues. In contrast to such institutions, other schools seek to develop a staff that represents the diversity of opinion found in the general society. Thus, rather than trying to maintain a unanimity of opinion among faculty members, officials endeavor to have their teachers reflect a variety of viewpoints on moral issues. Therefore, when interviewing applicants,

officials include questions about the individuals' attitudes toward selected issues so as to obtain diversity. A moral-topic opinionnaire can aid officials in both of these kinds of schools—those seeking unanimity and those seeking diversity. In each kind, applicants for teaching positions can fill out an opinionnaire that is then used as the basis of discussion between an applicant and the officials responsible for selecting personnel.

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