

Pedagogy of Care and Dialogue: A Theoretical Review of Approaches to Moral Education

Fatih Isik

This paper aims to offer a theoretical review of approaches to moral education and proposes a dialogic and care-based alternative to the conventional moral education approaches. It starts with a review and critique of the two most common approaches to moral education: traditional, moral character education and the cognitive developmental approach. Then, it explores an alternative strategy, Integrative Ethical Education (IEE), which prioritises dialogue and care in education. It is suggested that the IEE approach has the potential to address the issues that contemporary educators face.

Keywords: Moral education, Cognitive approach, IEE, Dialogue, Pedagogy

Introduction

This paper sets out to explore different approaches to education that are used by educators across the world, to better understand and discern their differences and to analyse their strengths and weaknesses. Traditional approaches to education can differ widely from more recent approaches that attempt to rectify some negative attitudes in traditional education that have been found to be wanting. In this sense, the paper discusses Integrative Ethical Education (IEE) as an example of an alternative to other forms of education. I start with a look at traditional moral education with its general characteristics and outlook. Then I analyse the cognitive developmental approach. Finally, I conclude my paper with a look at the IEE method, which is the focus of this study.

Traditional Moral Education

Traditional character education is usually associated with an instrumental and functional form of direct moral education (Benninga 1991; Solomon et al. 2002). The traditional approach puts forward 'the inculcation of virtuous traits of character as the proper aim of education' (Narvaez 2006, 703). It aims to maintain 'the Great Tradition' that regards education as the transmission of knowledge from adults to the younger generation (Wynne and Ryan 1993). Content is highlighted

Fatih Isik obtained his BA and MA degrees in English Teacher Education from Bilkent University and has completed his PhD at Leeds Beckett University. Fatih's areas of interest include moral character education, social and moral development and citizenship.

for teaching virtues rather than process, and environment for forming student behaviour (Wynne 1991). As well as the direct teaching of virtues, exemplary character traits, role-modelling and the reinforcement of good behaviour are emphasized (Snarey and Samuelson 2008, 55). Moral formation is monitored by parents, teachers, and any other moral authorities (*ibid.*). Cultural socialisation and cultural transmission are inherent means of teaching what is socially acceptable. Social norms influence the way the individual thinks, feels and acts. These norms are acknowledged and freely lived out in social spheres such as families, schools, and religious organisations (Coser and Rosenberg 1964).

The sociologist Durkheim (1903) believed in the significance of moral socialisation and attached importance to parenting, schooling and the wider community in children's moral development and education. He argued that schools are supposed to raise responsible citizens through the internalization of various values (Arthur 2003, 90). He supported the school's active involvement in inculcating social values and norms. His view of morality was quite functional in that morality needs to be taught in order to preserve society and the social order. To this end, schools are permitted, and also expected, to impose authority and discipline. Social rules are the most efficient means of control, not just because they come from society, but also because they are voluntarily digested to create a 'society living in us' (Coser and Rosenberg 1964). Durkheim postulated that what can be regarded as true for a larger society can also be considered true for a school classroom (Snarey and Samuelson 2008, 56).

Durkheim presupposed a proper and direct moral education (Snarey and Samuelson 2008, 55). Content is favoured over process. Parents, teachers, and other authority figures around are assigned the role of moral authority to provide discipline and to maintain social order. Moral pedagogy is conveyed through the direct teaching of virtues, exemplifying traits, role-modelling desired behaviour, and reinforcing good deed with rewards.

The three elements of Durkheim's morality were also the end of moral education according to Durkheim (1903): the spirit of discipline, attachment to social groups, and autonomy. He endorsed the necessity of discipline, reward, and punishment in order to avoid the degeneration of society and the loss of social values. Although he was not in favour of blind submission to authority, he has been criticised by later progressives because of his tight attachment to duty and responsibilities as well as moral authority and discipline.

Piaget, similar to Durkheim, thought that morality is acquired through social immersion and interaction. However, Piaget rejected Durkheim's understanding of proper and direct moral education. Durkheim (1903) believed that individuals

develop morally as a natural result of attachment to the group, which is manifested as respect for rules, symbols, and authority. In contrast, Piaget (1932) described this process as individuals constructing moral knowledge and internalizing it by struggling to make fair decisions. Thus, Durkheim (1903, 120) concluded that, 'To teach morality is neither to preach nor to indoctrinate, it is to explain.' Teachers are supposed to help children to understand both their duties and the reasons behind them.

Durkheim set out a direct pedagogy of moral education emphasizing content over the process of moral learning and teaching. He showed that moral rules are products of socialisation and that moral education is inevitably a social process. So, people learn to be moral through socialization and by internalizing the norms of a community, be it a small classroom, a school environment, or a larger society (1903). Durkheim attached an instrumental value to morality in schooling and believed that the individual is secondary to society and social rules (Arthur 2003).

In this approach, morality is readily available and good moral character entails the pursuit of such ready-made norms (Lapsley and Narvaez 2006, 261). Progressive approaches such as cognitive and indirect models of moral instruction are not trusted because they are eager to compromise the authority of the teacher in favour of more democratic practices. They are against tradition as they encourage students to discuss value-laden issues in a highly relativistic manner. Such practices arouse alternative opinions with regard to traditional values such as obedience and loyalty to one's country (35). Wynne thought that there is no need for confusing children's minds by asking them to rediscover those values:

Is it wise to 'teach' pupils that basic moral principles and conventions generally accepted by responsible adults should be considered *de novo*, and possibly rejected, by each successive adolescent cohort? Must each generation try to completely reinvent society? (Wynne 1991, 142)

However, the prioritisation of society, discipline and moral autonomy put Durkheim in a questionable position. Still, he left his legacy by reminding us of the indispensable place of discipline, socialisation, and modelling moral behaviour and moral authority in moral education, which are sometimes maintained at the expense of moral agency. Therefore, the pedagogy of traditional moral education has been contested for being outdated, inconvenient and superficial (Kohn 1997). It was critiqued by Kohlberg (1981; 1984) due to its overemphasis on a specific set of virtues together with socially desirable behaviour as an outcome. As a result of that, the real meaning of virtue cannot be conceived. For Kohlberg, in the traditional approach, the process of teaching was quite similar to indoctrination. He also did not acknowledge that individuals can be rewarded or punished on

the basis of social norms and rules. Similarly, Kohn (1997) did not approve of the employment of memorisation, exhortation, and punishment for teaching morality since those would not really foster learning.

The following section is going to introduce one of the key representatives of a more progressive model of moral character education. Piaget had reservations about the traditional model of direct moral instruction and proposed a more consensually democratic view of the classroom, with a shared role between students and teachers, with students being at the centre.

Cognitive Developmental Approach

The cognitive developmental approach prioritises the process rather than the content for a child's cognitive moral progress. In this sense, the basic premise of Piaget's approach is that 'all knowledge is constructed' (Noddings 1995, 115). The child is a lone learner and constructs moral knowledge through interaction with the environment. Moral education is in the hands of the individual as well as his peers (Snarey and Samuelson 2008, 55). Hence, the child is called the 'moral philosopher', an agent actively building up her or his own thinking on what is right and what is wrong. The role of school and teachers is limited to ensuring 'the participation of the student in moral thought and action through moral dilemma discussions, role play, collaborative peer interaction, and a democratic classroom and school culture' (55). Therefore, Piaget also sees schools as moral institutions (Arthur 2003, 62) where heteronomous and autonomous morality can be observed.

In heteronomous morality, the individual submits to rules because of the fear of the authority. Children accept the authority and the rules without questioning. However, in the case of autonomous morality, children follow the rules because they understand them and feel the necessity to do so. Children freely choose to do so as a consequence of an internal conviction. Piaget (1932) was aware of the fact that heteronomous morality is a natural part of an adult-child relationship, but he also knew that autonomous children are more confident, respect themselves and others, have strong motivation, and are open to cooperating with other children. That is why, according to Piaget, schools have to create opportunities for children to become more autonomous in their moral choices.

Although he published his work soon after Durkheim's, Piaget (1932, 362) considered his position in regard to moral development and education as the 'opposite pole from the Durkheimian pedagogy'. He believed that educators with an indoctrinative authority role will only foster a more childish reasoning (Snarey and Samuelson 2008, 56). Piaget was in favour of a more democratic teaching environment in which children are provided with a healthy atmosphere to cognitively

move forward to more autonomous thinking. He was against intervention by an authority. Piaget (1970, 715) reported that '[e]ach time one prematurely teaches a child something he could have discovered himself, that child is kept from inventing it and consequently from understanding it completely'. So, a child actually does not need adult intervention for learning, and adult authority might even cause a child to move to less autonomous cognition. Piaget (1932, 363–364) detailed his position:

The problem is to know what will best prepare the child for its future task of citizenship. Is it the habit of external discipline gained under the influence of unilateral respect and of adult constraint, or is it the habit of internal discipline, of mutual respect and of 'self-government'?... For ourselves we regard as of the utmost importance the experiments that have been made to introduce democratic methods into schools. We therefore do not at all agree with Durkheim in thinking that it is the master's business to impose or even to 'reveal' rules to the child.

Piaget alternatively suggested a safer way of learning and cognitive moving up: building more trusting relationships and interacting with peers. Schools are expected to facilitate such an environment. Rather than imposing moral authority and rules, schools can also create platforms so that students can discuss and speak out their ideas, testing them out with their peers. Given that, a school teacher has quite a difficult role in Piaget's classroom: she is supposed to provide students with opportunities for self-discovery and problem solving instead of imposing specific rules and norms. Therefore, schools should attach importance to 'co-operative decision making, and problem solving, nurturing moral development by requiring students to work out common rules based on fairness' (Murray 1997). In addition, schools can also engage children in activities that require participatory involvement for taking responsibility. Smith et al. (2011, 332) recommended activities such as 'being elected to the school council, being a class representative, and taking part in a peer support service'.

Although Piaget supported peer interaction for moral development, he did not provide a detailed account of how such interaction might enhance a child's development. Smith et al. (2011, 331) elaborated this process further:

- a) By adapting their own actions to those of their peer group, children are led to construct new ways of behaving which they could not have arrived at on their own.
- b) From the experience of being challenged, for example in situations of conflict, children internalize new patterns of behaviour.

c) Thus the process of engaging in various types of challenging social encounter becomes a source of cognitive progress.

d) However, initial social competencies are necessary for the individual child to benefit from a particular type of social situation. If it is too challenging, the child may become discouraged and feel less competent than before.

All in all, it can be said that Piaget set children free from authority so as to build their own moral confidence and autonomy. Peer interaction certainly has a significant place in moral development and education. Dilemmas and discussions help children to justify their moral position and test out their moral reasoning. Those valuable aspects of moral education are emphasised by Piaget and his tradition.

On the other hand, Piaget missed out the social side of moral education and this, to a certain extent, requires the moral authority of teachers in a school context and parents in a family context. Cognitive developmental theory creates serious concerns when it comes to the classroom and the school environment. These will be raised after a discussion of the Kohlbergian pedagogy of moral education and his idea of 'just community schools'. Kohlberg's understanding and the pedagogy of moral education are quite similar to Piaget's, and his methodology develops the tradition of the cognitive development approach for moral education (Snarey and Samuelson 2008, 57). Like Piaget, Kohlberg also regarded the child as a philosopher who actively engages, understands, and constructs his or her world. With this in mind, the role of an educator is to create such conditions and facilitate such development naturally through ethically stimulating activities (Murray 1997). Optimum conditions for moral development can be sustained by providing cases and activities that encourage students to choose between moral variables.

Kohlberg believed that education of morality should be designed considering the stages of moral development, so the goal of such education needs to be to help students to reach a higher stage in their moral development (Power, Higgins and Kohlberg 1989). Although Kohlberg was against the idea of inculcating specific virtues as the pedagogy of moral education, he also resisted the idea of moral relativity in favour of the principles of justice and fairness. He believed that justice can provide a comprehensive moral ground for everyone based on his observations in a variety of cultures around the world (Kohlberg and Turiel 1971).

Although Kohlberg had a similar view of learning and development to Piaget's in terms of the position of the centralisation of the individual, later revisions of Kohlberg proposed the integration of the individual with the community. Re-reading Durkheim and reconciling his views with Piaget's theory, Kohlberg softened Durkheim's approach to a more democratic level. He realised that schooling is a

social phenomenon by default and so is the development of morality. Teaching entails a particular degree of authority and some form of indoctrination as well. He sincerely confessed this in his later revisions (Kohlberg 1978, 14–15):

It is not sufficient guide to the moral educator, who deals with concrete morality in a school world in which value content as well as structure, behaviour as well as reasoning, must be dealt with. In this context, an educator must be a socialiser, teaching value content and behaviour, not merely a Socratic or Rogerian process-facilitator of development. In becoming a socialiser and advocate, the teacher moves into 'indoctrination', a step that I originally believed to be invalid... I no longer hold these negative views of indoctrinative moral education, and now I believe that the concepts of guiding moral education must be partly 'indoctrinative'. This is true, by necessity, in a world [in] which children engage in stealing, cheating and aggression and in a context wherein one cannot wait until children reach the fifth stage to deal directly with moral behaviour... Now I believe that moral education can be in the form of advocacy or 'indoctrination' without violating the child's rights if there is an explicit recognition of shared rights of teachers and students and as long as teacher advocacy is democratic, or subject to the constraints of recognizing student participation in the rule making and value upholding process.

With a synthesis of Durkheim's communitarian approach and Piaget's lone philosopher, Kohlberg recreated a model of moral education which is known as 'just community schools'. Kohlberg (1983, xiii) explained the background for this model as follows:

Continuing work in the schools led me to a view ... that moral education must deal directly with action and not just with reasoning, with 'real life' situations not just with hypothetical ones... It led me to the formulation of a participatory democracy or 'just community' as the context for moral discussion and moral education. Our theory of moral education then, is changing and... developing through an interchange between psychological theorists and practitioners.

So, through his model of just community schools, Kohlberg amalgamated the Piagetian cognitive developmental approach with Durkheimian moral education as socialisation. He merged moral content with moral thinking. He forged direct instruction with indirect. He reconciled the individual with the community. He recreated a balance by giving the priority to the collective aspect but also ensuring the rights of the individual (Snarey and Samuelson 2008, 58).

Kohlberg's later emphasis on moral culture and creating a moral atmosphere reflects the change in his understanding and his move to a more developmental-socialisation

approach. Nevertheless, this is still going to be a softer version of a social approach compared with Durkheim's position. Realising the fact that morality is not only an individual but also a social business, Kohlberg endorsed the necessity of creating a moral culture within the school. On the other hand, he was quite vigilant to avoid elements that might hinder individual autonomy and independent decision making. Hence, the kind of school community that he specified as the most beneficial was 'a democratically governed group, one that recognizes the rights and responsibilities of each other and to the group as a whole' (Snarey and Samuelson 2008, 64). For Kohlberg, the types of value that a school atmosphere should be promoting were 'sense of community, democratic values, personal autonomy, individual rights and responsibilities, a sense of fair play and collective responsibility' (ibid., 66). Kohlberg's ideal community is the one that fosters moral ideals, moral goals and actions, on one hand, while encouraging moral reasoning on the other.

Developmental approaches are usually found impractical when it comes to in-class practices. Although cognitive developmental theorists recommend that teachers should regard specific proposed stages in classrooms, teachers generally do not know about these theories. What is worse, Carr (2002) warned teachers against such theories and called them to be vigilant (cited from Arthur 2003):

Teachers need to be careful to avoid giving uncritical acceptance and general application to any particular cognitive, emotional or behavioural theory in the classroom. These kinds of theories are not general educational theories but are often used to promote progressive teaching methods without a full consideration of their implications for teaching, positive or otherwise.

Arthur (2003, 73) criticised cognitive developmentalists for attributing universality to their findings which may 'go beyond that which their methodology and data can justify'. Psychologists build a thesis on the results of experiments, interviews, and direct observations. Kupperman (1991, 161) claimed, 'No questionnaire can distinguish between what a person's moral genuinely is, what a person pretends his or her moral to be and what a person thinks his or her moral to be'. He also suggested that the student who scores high on moral development tests and shows good habits may surprise the teacher at times of temptation. Likewise, Hunter (2001, 23) believed that moral education needs to be saved from 'the tyranny of popular psychology' and its claims about scientific objectivity.

Developmental theorists reject strong authority exercised by parents at home as well as teachers in the classroom for fear that children might lose their autonomy. For them, parents and teachers are expected to provide opportunities for children to make moral reasoning, justify their reasons and then make their own decisions (Piaget 1932; Kohlberg 1981), whereas Ryan (1989, 15) argued, 'Character

development is directive and sees the teacher in a more active role than does the cognitive developmental tradition’.

Cochran (1989), adopting a more sociological aspect, suggested, ‘Acceptance of authority, loyalty to ideals, and commitment to a historical community, though they do require sacrifice and closure of options, are the very stuff of character building’. Cochran glorified the functions of society and means of socialisation, neglecting the value of being individual. This highly authoritarian perspective is open to exploitation and bears some hints of totalitarianism in itself. This is one of the main reasons character education stands on such a disputable ground.

According to social theories of character education, habit formation and character development are results of the process of socialisation. Schools as social organisations inevitably transmit some values. Johnson put it briefly: ‘Character development is a social not an individual process, because being human is a social not an individual phenomenon’ (1987). According to this approach, we are not so autonomous in building our character, indeed the process of our moral development depends on others. That is, society is primary to individual.

On the other hand, social perspectives of character education are criticised for undermining the value of human autonomy. Duncan (1997) responded to this perception and blamed character education as actually a tool for assimilation, which is a result of social interaction. Arthur (2003, 98) demonstrated that although there has been much sociological research on social behaviour and character in the last few decades, it seems impossible to encounter any agreed basis and conclusion. He concluded that contemporary sociology of education offers few practical solutions for character education.

Pedagogy of Care and Integrative Ethical Education

Noddings’s caring alternative to moral and character education sets attending to student needs as the goal of educating the young. Caring is at the very heart of moral education (Noddings 2002, 15). Starting from the period of infancy, caring is vital for developing all relations. An infant, for instance, enjoys the care so much that he or she learns to respond to it with a smile. The care-giver becomes profoundly pleased with that smile and seeks to produce more smiles by caring more. This turns into a ‘mutually satisfying relation’ (ibid.). Hence, children need to be cared for and taught how to take and give care. This view of moral education is not limited to children only but applies to anybody that we encounter. In this respect, care pedagogy differs essentially from a Kantian approach to moral education. Kant would argue that everyone’s moral perfection is their own business and project, while care ethics grants that ‘we remain at least partly responsible for the moral

development of each person we encounter' (ibid.). This brings a broader view of moral education that takes it from home and school into the wider context of life experiences.

The perspective of caring offers a relational alternative to moral education. The components of such alternative pedagogy are modelling, dialogue, practice, and confirmation (Noddings 2012, 10). Modelling is quite a common pedagogy and can be observed in both traditional and progressive accounts of moral education. Morally acceptable and desirable behaviour needs to be performed by parents and teachers. Dialogue is particularly critical in the pedagogy of care. Ideally, teachers are supposed to establish sound dialogue with students so that they can find out and attend to their needs. Students respond more when their teachers are open to listening (ibid.).

Practice is also commonly mentioned as a pedagogy for moral education. In the view of care ethics, it is also regarded as the development of empathy. Thus, the goal of such practice is diverted to feeling what others feel and being attentive to their needs. The role of the moral educator from the perspective of care ethics is to help a student discover the feelings of others (ibid.). Finally, confirmation is indeed not commonly held as pedagogy in the tradition of care ethics. Nonetheless, drawing on Buber's ideas, Noddings (2012, 11) placed confirmation as a vital element of a caring pedagogy, describing it as 'an act or series of acts that helps another recognise and develop his/her better self' (ibid.). This becomes a powerful tool especially when a teacher acknowledges the better self of a student who has committed an undesirable act. Such an act might create a realisation that 'this powerful other sees in me a better self' (ibid.) and actually foster the emergence of a better self.

IEE is a holistic, comprehensive, and empirically derived model of moral character education (Narvaez 2006; 2008; Narvaez and Lapsley 2009). It exhibits an effort to combine ancient philosophy with current scientific research on human flourishing and cultivation. It incorporates individuals as well as community as fostered by cognitive, social, and biological views (Narvaez 2008, 316). Learning is considered to be relational, so it is aimed at fostering a caring relational community of learning.

The basic foundation of IEE is developing morality and moral expertise (Narvaez 2006). Expertise development integrates two different understandings of moral development: cognitive development and virtue ethics pedagogies. This can be easily recognised in the educational implications of the theory. The first implication is that educators should address both processes and skills for moral behaviour (ibid., 11), the second is that educators should take into account both moral virtue and reasoning (ibid., 12).

Narvaez had reasons to advocate moral expertise. She believed that experts and novices are different from each other in several ways (Narvaez 2008, 312). First, experts know more, and their knowledge is better organised. Second, they have implicit, explicit, and situational knowledge. That is to say, they can distinguish what knowledge to access, which procedures to apply, as well as how to apply it or them (*ibid.*). Third, they approach and view events differently from novices with awareness of underlying patterns and an understanding of necessity. Finally, experts behave automatically without an effort, whereas novices have to spend conscious effort to solve a problem (Narvaez 2006, 11).

For Narvaez (2008), virtuous people are very much like experts with highly trained skills. Moral expertise requires the right virtue at the right time in the right place (Narvaez 2008, 312). The implication of moral expertise as an educational pedagogy is the establishment of novice-to-expert instruction in the school, as children are novices in almost all domains. The teacher is regarded as the moral exemplar and moral authority. Moral intuitions are cultivated through imitation of role models (Narvaez and Lapsley 2009, 261). Feedback needs to be provided in a way that is both timely and appropriate. Mentor guidance is needed while being immersed in the activity. Multiple contexts need to be created for procedure (Narvaez *et al.* 2003). Adults – teachers in the school context – guide children through dialogue and theoretical explanations and guidance in selecting activities, and the right environment for developing good intuition might be needed.

Narvaez designed a five-step strategy for implementing IEE in schools. These steps can be practised simultaneously, but to start a step-by-step application might be more practical. These steps can be listed as follows (Narvaez 2008, 316–321; also see Narvaez 2006):

1. Establish a caring relationship with each student;
2. Establish a climate supportive of achievement and ethical character;
3. Teach ethical skills across the curriculum and extra-curriculum using a novice-to-expert pedagogy;
4. Foster student self-authorship and self-regulation; and
5. Restore the village: asset-building communities and coordinated developmental systems.

Narvaez also put these steps into practice in school, in the family, and in other relevant contexts. These steps are reminiscent of the Character Education Project's eleven principles, which will be raised in later sections dealing with character

education practices (Lickona *et al.* 2007). Caring community, academic and ethical focus, curricular and extra-curricular activities with an ethical focus, and community coordination are some of the aspects that have been emphasised in both strategies. All the steps considered, Narvaez's moral expertise is quite distinctive, a methodology which would be supported by Plato, Aristotle and MacIntyre. Novice-to-teacher instruction is an adaptation of Vygotsky's constructivist pedagogical concepts of the 'zone of proximal development' and 'scaffolding.' Vygotsky (1935) also viewed children as apprentices to adults. They naturally require guidance and 'scaffolding' to move on to a higher learning stage. Narvaez successfully adapted this to moral character education, developed strategies for moral expertise and integrated them into her model.

IEE was implemented as part of a character education project by the Community Voices and Character Education Project (Narvaez 2006, 17). Assessments of this indicated that those schools which deeply implemented the ethical development programme gained higher scores, especially in terms of ethical sensitivity and concern for other people. On the other hand, the schools with minimal implementation showed little sign of any positive effect. As a holistic model which considers all the aforementioned approaches to moral development and moral character education, IEE is one of the most promising views of moral character education. It addresses all aspects of morality: emotional, cognitive and behavioural. It is concerned with virtue development. It incorporates moral content with moral process, and so integrates direct and indirect methods of teaching. Freudian early child development is taken into consideration as well. It is aware of the necessity for family and community involvement.

It does not, however, tell us very much about how to train teachers for instructing moral character education, or how to improve the school and the outside-school community. Narvaez (2008, 320) was well aware of the negative messages from popular culture, the media, and the outside community, but she failed to offer any practical strategy for developing moral culture and atmosphere outside the home and school contexts.

Conclusion

In this paper, I have tried to explain and expand on the educational strategy of IEE and how it places dialogue at the centre of its educational framework. I have juxtaposed IEE with two more widely known educational frameworks, namely moral character education in the traditional sense and the cognitive developmental approach to education. I provided a general review of these two approaches and criticised their shortcomings. In sum, the paper argues that the Integrative Ethical Education approach could be the much-needed remedy to mend the issues that

are found in other educational approaches. In light of these discussions, it can be argued that dialogue and care are indispensable in education, and as an approach that focuses on these two central concepts, IEE as an alternative educational strategy has the capability to transform education to become more dialogue- and care-centred and complement the aspects of education that the other educational approaches fail to address adequately.

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