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## Moral Development Interventions in Early Adolescence

Moral development theory provides useful models for the design of intervention programs for early adolescents. As Collins (1977) has pointed out, there are two reasons why this is so. One is that stage descriptions of structural change provide diagnostic and prognostic categories for the assessment of reasoning. Another is that stage theories actually suggest what an intervention might look like in order to effect a reorganization of thinking at a higher level. According to Kohlberg (1976), there is maximal assimilation of moral judgments one stage above one's current stage level, suggesting that an effective intervention would involve structuring moral discourse to reflect this type of cognitive conflict.

The moral stage progression as defined by Kohlberg (1976) is as follows:

*Stage 1:* The child takes one perspective, that of the authority, and believes it is best to acquiesce to that authority to avoid punishment.

*Stage 2:* The child takes a self and other perspective and believes that both self and other should benefit in any social interaction. Reciprocity is the key to fairness.

*Stage 3:* The child takes a group perspective and believes it is best to conform to group norms which may lead to approval from the group.

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*Stage 4:* The adolescent takes a systems or societal perspective and believes that he/she should follow the law for its own sake to maintain an orderly society.

*Stage 5:* The person formulates his or her own moral principles, or abstract rules that guide moral behavior. The principles usually concern a social contract in which the majority must agree on a given moral sanction.

Although a stage 6 exists, it is considered so rare that it has not been included in Kohlberg's recent scoring manuals. Those in early adolescence usually reason at stage 2, 3, and 4, but as Rest (Note 1) points out, one rarely, if ever, reasons at one stage only. Therefore, early adolescents in all probability still use stage 1 as well as stage 5 on occasion.

Assessment is usually in the form of a lengthy Moral Judgment Interview (MJI) of up to nine dilemmas followed by questions (Kohlberg, Note 2) or by a standardized, paper-and-pencil Defining Issues Test (DIT: Rest, Note 1). The latter does not give a stage score but instead gives a percentage of time the subject uses stage 5 and 6 reasoning in solving the dilemmas. Although some moral education programs use a paper-and-pencil form of the Kohlberg interview, this measurement form has not been examined psychometrically.

The theoretical foundation of Kohlberg's structuralist approach to moral reasoning involves the assumption that ontogenetic change occurs through an invariant sequence of qualitatively distinct stages, with each successive stage representing an inte-

gration and hierarchical organization of previous stages. It is further assumed that there is no regression and that corresponding stages of logical reasoning and role taking are necessary precursors for the emergence of a given moral stage. While Kohlberg's theory certainly has its detractors (e.g., Kurtines & Greif, 1974), we believe it fair to say that the preponderance of evidence after 20 years of intensive research still favors the theory, though there have been important revisions (Rest, Note 1; Colby, 1978).

Moral education is far more recent than the 1958 origins of moral development theory (Kohlberg, 1958). While a number of moral education reviews are already available (Enright, Lapsley, & Levy, in press; Leming, 1981; Lockwood, 1978), none has focused exclusively on the period of early adolescence, a particularly sensitive period in cognitive development. With the adolescent only beginning to acquire formal operational capacities during this period, a program designed to induce new cognitive acquisitions could be expected to be maximally effective. We will review in this paper a number of strategies for promoting moral development in early adolescence. We will first review the "plus-one" model where an educator generates cognitive disequilibrium by exposing a student to reasoning one stage above the student's current stage. We will next review Deliberate Psychological Education, where training in communication skills and role taking are seen as stimulants to moral development. Finally, we will consider the effectiveness of didactic courses in social studies and a high school Just Community on moral reasoning.

### **Plus-One Exchange Strategy**

Table 1 summarizes the design features of studies employing a plus-one methodology with early adolescent students. As noted above, this model assumes that development is facilitated when the adolescent is exposed to reasoning at the next higher stage in the developmental sequence. One of the first studies to employ a plus-one methodology was conducted by Turiel (1966). In this now classic study Turiel distributed seventh grade boys, determined by a pre-test to be in Kohlberg's stages 2, 3, or 4, into three experimental groups and a control group. The experimental groups corresponded to whether subjects were exposed to reasoning +1, +2, or -1 their current stage of reasoning. For each of these dilemmas (from the Kohlberg interview), the subject played the role of the main

character. The subject was required to seek advice from two "friends," each role played by the experimenter. The "friends" gave conflicting advice on how to resolve the dilemma (pro vs. con), but always at the treatment-appropriate stage of reasoning. While there is some controversy over the results (see Kurtines & Greif, 1974), Turiel concluded that exposure to the stage directly above one's dominant stage ("plus-one") is the most effective strategy for inducing new modes of moral thought (see also Turiel & Rothman, 1972).

In two studies, Blatt and Kohlberg (1975) explored the effects of guided peer discussions of moral conflicts (plus-one) upon junior and senior high school students' reasoning. In the first study with 11-12-year-olds, 13 of 30 subjects were randomly selected for pretesting. Of these 13, 11 were available for posttesting, and 10 were available for a one-year follow-up test. Three comparison groups were used from the Turiel (1966) experiment. The first group served as the basic pretest control. The second group served as the control for the one-year follow-up test. The third control group was added to determine whether the intervention produced a larger change than that obtained by mere exposure to higher level thinking. The experimental condition consisted of asking children to resolve moral conflict situations. Spontaneous peer arguments were said to arise because of the wide range of moral judgment levels exhibited by the children. The examiner would then "...take the 'solution' proposed by a child who was one stage above the majority of the children discussing the dilemma and clarify and support that child's argument" (Blatt & Kohlberg, 1975, p. 133). The role of the examiner throughout was to summarize and clarify arguments, and to encourage higher level thinking by demonstrating the inadequacy of lower level reasoning. The major finding of this study was that the plus-one intervention led to significant increases in Moral Maturity Scores. These gains were still evident a year after the first posttest. The average gain from pre- to posttest in the treatment group was over one-half stage, while change in the control group was negligible. This pattern of change was replicated in a more extensive investigation using randomized groups in the second study (Study 2), and in a recent study by Hayden and Pickar (1981). In the latter study, which used 24 seventh grade girls as subjects, classroom moral discussion based on the plus-one method increased moral judgments one-quarter of a stage on the average.

**Table 1**  
**Plus-One Exchange Studies**

Author	Age/N	Measure	Length of Treatment	Treatment	Results
Turiel (1966)	44 seventh grade boys, 12-13.7 years	MJI	1 session (length unspecified)	S role-plays both sides of an issue for 3 dilemmas	+
Turiel & Rothman (1972)	43 seventh & eighth graders randomly assigned to two experimental groups and one control	MJI	1 session (length unspecified)	exposure to reasoning plus-one and minus-one stage	0
Colby (1973)	42 11-12-year-olds assigned to two experimental groups and a control	MJI	16 sessions over 10 weeks	moral discussions for both experimental groups	++ <sup>a</sup> "small forward movements"
Keasey (1973)	42 10-11-year-olds assigned to one of six experimental groups (stages) and a control group	MJI	1 session	exposure to 3 reasoning conditions through role-play, +1, dominant stage, and unsupported opinion	+ 0 <sup>b</sup>
Dozier (1974)	112 sixth graders randomly assigned to two experimental and control group	MJI	twelve 55 minute sessions	discussion of dilemmas vs. self-examination of value vs. control	+ <sup>c</sup>
Blatt & Kohlberg (1975)	Exp. 1: 30 11-12-year-olds, three control groups from Turiel (1966) used for comparison Exp. 2: 132 12-16-year-olds from 4 schools randomly assigned to 2 experimental conditions; one comparison group was used	MJI	12 hours of discussion over 12 weeks 18 sessions held twice a week, 45 minutes each	discussion of open moral dilemmas discussion of moral dilemmas	++ <sup>d</sup> (2/3 stage change) ++ <sup>d</sup> (1/3 stage gain)
Keefe (1975)	70 eighth-graders randomly assigned to 4 treatment groups and a control	MJI	10 sessions over 10 weeks	write answers to and discuss two types of dilemmas; discussions led by a "biased" or "neutral" teacher	+
Bono (1975)	45 sixth graders divided equally by sex and social class randomly assigned to two experimental groups and a control	MJI	3 half-hour sessions a week for 10 weeks	adult-stimulated discussion of moral issues vs. direct inculcation vs. control	+ <sup>e</sup>
Wright (1978)	38 sixth-grade "delinquent" or "non-delinquent" assigned to experimental, "placebo," and control condition	MJI	6 half-hour discussions over 6 weeks	stimulated moral discussion vs. social studies vs. control	0
Walker & Richards (1979)	44 female adolescents age 14-16; assigned to experimental or control group on basis of logical reasoning tasks vs. control	MJI	one 25-40 minute session	role-playing moral dilemmas with 2 adults	+ <sup>f</sup>

**Table 1 (cont'd)**  
**Plus-One Exchange Studies**

Author	Age/N	Measure	Length of Treatment	Treatment	Results
Walker (1980)	146 fourth-seventh graders classified by cognitive and perspective-taking stage vs. control	MJI	one session	role-playing (stage 3) moral dilemmas with two adults	+ <sup>g</sup>
Hayden & Pickar (1981)	36 seventh grade girls assigned to experimental or control group	MJI	6 1/2 hours over 10 weeks	discussion of moral dilemmas	+ (about 1/4 stage change)

Note. + = reported significant treatment effects; 0 = No significant results.

- a. Moral development found to be constrained by logical operational limitations. The second posttest was 3 months after the first posttest.
- b. Plus-one exposure was more effective only on the first posttest.
- c. All treatments were equally effective.
- d. Follow-ups were approximately one year after intervention.
- e. Discussion group more successful than inculcation and control. Inculcation group did not differ from control.
- f. Attempts to stimulate moral development to Stage 4 successful only for subjects in "early basic" formal operations.
- g. Development to Stage 3 constrained by cognitive and perspective-taking stage.

Three equivocal findings on the effectiveness of the plus-one approach have been reported. Keasey (1973) exposed fifth-grade subjects to three reasoning conditions involving role-play, plus-one exchange, and unsupported opinion. While exposure to a model using higher stage reasoning induced immediate change, it was no more successful than any other approach in inducing longer term (two weeks) changes. Wright (1978) found no significant effect at all in a plus-one treatment for early adolescent delinquents and nondelinquents. Finally, while Turiel and Rothman (1972) found that subjects displayed a preference for stages one above their own, there was no stage change as a result of a plus-one treatment.

A number of studies have attempted to evaluate what effect the nature of the discussion moderator has on the effectiveness of a classroom intervention. Keefe (1975), for example, attempted to determine whether a teacher who actively argues with his students based on an understanding of the moral development sequence is more effective than a "neutral" teacher who does not argue with students. Keefe was also interested in whether dilemmas found in short stories or those found in "case-accounts" would be more efficacious in involving students in thinking about moral issues. Fifty-seven eighth graders were factorially ( $2 \times 2$ ) combined into four treatment levels. Thirteen additional subjects served as a control group. The results of the factorial analysis indicated that the biased teacher vs. neutral teacher and short story vs. case account

conditions did not differ significantly. However, when these conditions were compared against the control group, the total treatment group's pre-posttest differences were statistically significant. Thus, there were no differences between groups led by teachers who actively directed the discussion and neutral teachers who acquiesced to student leadership in the direction of the discussion. Both groups, however, improved significantly when compared to a control group. These findings are in contrast to Blatt and Kohlberg's findings (Study 2), where teacher-led groups with no deliberate plus-one strategy were found to have no influence on moral growth; deliberate plus-one strategies worked best.

An advance over the above general classroom applications is the attempt by researchers to clearly specify the prerequisite for moral growth. In her dissertation, Colby (1973) attempted to determine whether interventions designed to stimulate principled moral reasoning would be constrained by one's lack of formal operational reasoning. She found that experimental subjects showed more progressive moral development than control subjects. Importantly, however, Colby also demonstrated that only those subjects who exhibited formal operations benefited from the intervention. Subjects at the concrete operational stage on a pretest showed no advancement to principled moral reasoning.

Following Colby, Walker and Richards (1979) and Walker (1980) have also attempted to demonstrate the "necessary but not sufficient" relationships between moral development and cognitive

and perspective-taking development. In the first study, Walker and Richards (1979) attempted to stimulate subjects at the "early basic" and "beginning" formal operations stage to reason at Kohlberg's moral stage 4. Since the beginning formal operations substage is theoretically linked with moral stage 3, it was hypothesized that the intervention would not be successful for subjects at this stage, since that would require reasoning at a higher moral stage (4) than was capable in the cognitive domain (beginning formal). On the other hand, subjects in the early basic formal substages were expected to benefit from the intervention since moral stage 4 is associated, in theory, with reasoning at that cognitive substages. The treatment consisted of brief role-playing situations where the subject was asked to imagine that he/she was the main character in the dilemma. Consistent with the plus-one methodology, subjects were also exposed to reasoning one stage above (stage 4) their current mode of reasoning (stage 3) by role-playing the dilemma with two adults. Using the Kohlberg interview in a pre-test-posttest design, Walker and Richards did indeed find that the intervention had the greatest effects on experimental subjects in the early basic formal substages, as opposed to subjects in the beginning formal substages or control group(s).

In a subsequent study, Walker (1980) found that not only were subjects constrained in their moral development by the concomitant stage of cognitive development, but they were also constrained by their stage of perspective taking. Taken together, then, these studies (Colby, 1973; Walker & Richards, 1979; Walker, 1980) indicate that moral education programs should not expect to advance moral reasoning beyond the cognitive and perspective-taking capacities of children. The success of an intervention may very well depend on how well logical reasoning and perspective-taking exercises are incorporated into the moral education curricula (Walker, 1980).

Two studies involving those in early adolescence have attempted to compare the plus-one approach with other intervention methodologies. Bono (1975) compared a plus-one technique with direct inculcation to determine which would be the more efficacious stimulant to development. In one group, the teacher stimulated discussion by asking probing questions about moral dilemmas. The teacher was said to have insured that each subject was exposed to moral judgments one stage above her dominant stage. The second group of subjects was presented the same dilemmas, but here the

teacher resolved the issues using the range of rationales which emanated from the first group. A control group participated in free reading sessions. Bono found that the plus-one discussion method was significantly better in advancing the subjects' progression through the moral stages than were the inculcation approach or the control condition.

The plus-one technique did not fare as well in a study by Dozier (1974). Here a directed discussion group was compared with an "experiential" condition and a control group. The experiential condition required subjects to participate in activities designed to encourage self-reflection and examination of parent beliefs and attitudes. No significant differences emerged between the two experimental treatments, although both treatments differed significantly from the control condition.

### **Summary of Plus-One**

Of the 13 studies in early adolescence reviewed here, 10 showed positive results. Of the three to include a follow-up assessment, Blatt & Kohlberg (1975) showed that experimental gains in moral development remain stable at least one year after intervention, while Colby and associates (Colby, Kohlberg, Fenton, Speicher-Dubin, & Lieberman, 1977) showed a similar pattern after three months. Keasey (1973), on the other hand, reported a wash-out of experimental gains after two weeks. This result is not surprising since his intervention was only one session whereas the other two interventions lasted more than two months. Taken together, these three studies point to the dangers of plus-one strategies. Gains in some cases, as in Keasey's, may be due to short-term memorization of "correct" responses that are quickly forgotten. Actual cognitive structural change that is more enduring may take months of intervention.

It should be noted that the plus-one technique is effective not only in early adolescence, but also as early as kindergarten (Jensen & Larm, 1970) and even into adulthood (Arbuthnot, 1975). Those interested in implementing this strategy are referred to Arbuthnot and Faust (1981) for a thorough discussion of the strategy.

### **Deliberate Psychological Education**

Deliberate Psychological Education studies rely on the theoretical and practical work of Mosher and Sprinthall (1971). Although the studies range in content from junior high school classes in English (Erickson, Colby, Libbey, & Lohman, 1976) and psy-

chology of counseling (Dowell, 1971) to a women's issues course (Erickson, Note 3), most include a seminar and practicum format designed to improve students' counseling communication skills. The basic idea is to first learn communication techniques and then to try them out by counseling, role playing, or teaching.

Consider Sprinthall's (Note 4) program, which is prototypical. The core of the curriculum is Carkhuff's (1971) Active Listening Scale which ranges from 1 (no awareness or communication of the other's feelings) to 5 (providing the other with a major new view of the emotions expressed). The goal is to achieve level 3 communication (expressing an accurate understanding of the other's feelings, expressed in the listener's own words). The students first practice level 3 listening and responding skills through role playing. As the course progresses, the students shift from role playing to "reciprocal helping," in which actual counseling among the students occurs. The weekly training was conducted with a seminar and a practicum format. The seminar includes didactic instruction on effective counseling skills, watching films of the "masters" such as Carl Rogers, Fritz Perls, and Albert Ellis, and reading/writing assignments. The seminar also includes a discussion of the counseling experience. The practicum involves applying the skills in role playing and helping. All studies described in Table 2 share a major strength of clearly explaining the intervention content.

Of the nine studies reviewed, six show significant positive results and three show none. The results must be interpreted cautiously, however, because all but one (Paolitto, 1976) have methodological or statistical flaws. Paolitto's results are encouraging and suggest that direct moral experiences in the community can foster moral development. It should be noted that Deliberate Psychological Education has not been tested below junior high school age. As Sprinthall (Note 4) instructs, the procedures require the students to take multiple perspectives; the reflection or seminar aspect may require abstract thought in order to synthesize the practicum experiences on a higher moral level.

### **Didactic Instruction Strategies**

Four studies involving direct instruction in social studies can be classified as didactic instruction (see Table 3). Rest, Ahlgren, and Mackey (Note 5) attempted to change junior high school students'

attitudes toward the police, while Morrison, Toews, and Rest (Note 6) and Colby et al. (1977) held more traditional courses in civics (in the former study) and ethics, politics, and history (in the latter study). Arrendondo-Dowd (1981), on the other hand, introduced immigrants to United States culture.

The striking pattern is that three of the four did not work. Only Colby et al. (1977) report positive results, and even these must be interpreted cautiously because not all classrooms showed gains in moral development. Also, it is unclear whether those in early (13-year-olds) or late (17-year-olds) adolescence gained more. Although Arrendondo-Dowd claims significant, positive results, the conclusion is incorrect. The author makes a claim for significance from a one-way ANOVA comparing four groups: an experimental group of immigrants, a control of immigrants who wished entrance into the program, and two control groups of white Americans. It is clear that the first control group is the most crucial comparison with the experimental. The main-effect ANOVA was significant, but no post-hoc analyses were done to see which group(s) differed from which others. Our re-analysis of the data with a post-hoc Scheffe test revealed no significant differences between the experimental and control immigrant groups; both improved to a statistically equivalent degree. English language improvement may be the mediator here.

The didactic instruction strategy fares little better on the high school and college levels (see Beck, Sullivan, & Taylor, 1972; Boyd, 1980), although some do show positive results in later adolescence (see Panowitsch, 1975). When it is realized that the Colby et al. and the Panowitsch (1975) curricula directly concern Kohlbergian moral dilemmas, the results begin to make sense. Both use techniques that have been shown previously to work. Most curricula here are only remotely related to the Kohlbergian model. Changing attitudes toward police (Rest et al., Note 5), for instance, is not a cognitive as much as it is an affective/attitudinal intervention. In other words, moral development in early adolescence does not seem to be influenced by general social curricula.

### **The Just Community Strategy**

The Just Community involves those in early through late adolescence. It is the most ambitious

**Table 2**  
**Deliberate Psychological Education Studies**

Author	N/Ages	Measure	Length of Treatment	Kind of Treatment	Results	Weaknesses
Dowell (1971)	grades 10-12 (n = 20)	written MJI	16 weeks (3 1/2 hours once a week)	counseling, empathy training	0	no inter-rater reliability of measure
Erickson (note 3; 1978)	23 sophomore (high school) females; follow-up included 21 only.	written MJI	10 week course (number of days per week not reported)	counseling, empathy training; discussion of women's issues; interviewing females in the community	0 pre to post + post to follow-up (1/3 of a stage change at post; 1/3 of a stage change at follow-up) <sup>a</sup>	no control group; selective attrition
Paolitto (1976)	17 eighth graders in experimental group; N not reported in control	MJI	two 40-minute sessions per week for 23 weeks	moral discussion; role-playing; interviewing people in community	+ (about 1/3 stage change)	no major weaknesses
Stanley (1976)	10 parents, 7 ninth and tenth graders in group A; 6 parents only in group B; 10 parents and 7 adolescents in comparison group	MJI	10 weeks	empathy training; family conflict resolution	0	non-randomized comparison group
Erickson, Colby, Libbey, & Lohman (1976)	19 junior high school students	DIT	English elective class (no other information given; it is presumed that it was one semester)	moral discussion; peer teaching; discussion of laws	+ <sup>b</sup>	no control group
Nichols, Is-ham, & Aus-tad (1977) Study 1	48 seventh graders in experimental; 48 in control	DIT	9 weeks, 5 days a week, 50 minute periods	moral discussions; examination of one's own values; didactic instruction in psychological needs and motives	+ <sup>c</sup>	inappropriate statistics
Nichols, Is-ham, & Aus-tad (1977) Study 2	46 eighth graders in experimental; 46 in control	DIT	same as above	moral discussion; empathy training; didactic instruction in ethics	+ <sup>c</sup>	same
Nichols, Is-ham, & Aus-tad (1977) Study 3	41 ninth graders in experimental; 41 in control	DIT	same as above	moral discussions; examination of relations between the individual and sociopolitical instructions	+ <sup>c</sup>	same
Cognetta & Sprinthall (1978)	15 tenth-twelfth graders in the experimental group; 16 in the comparison group	DIT	social studies class (no other information given it is presumed that it was one semester)	empathy training; cross-age teaching	+ <sup>c</sup>	non-randomized comparison group; inappropriate statistics

a. Pre to post with the 23 Ss was non-significant ( $p < .07$ ). With only 21 Ss the pre to post and the post to follow-up were both significant.

b. The statistical test was from pre to posttest within the experimental condition.

c. The statistics were not between groups but were a series of correlated t-tests within-group.

**Table 3**  
**Didactic Strategies in Moral Education**

Author	Age/N	Measure	Length of Treatment	Kind of Treatment	Results	Weaknesses
Rest et al. (note 5) (in Lawrence, 1980)	61 junior high school students	DIT	12 weeks (no spe- cifics given)	social studies unit to change attitudes toward police	0	no control group
Morrison et al. (note 6) (in Lawrence, 1980)	103 junior high school students	DIT	4 months (no spe- cifics given)	social studies, civ- ics unit (about civil rights)	0	non-random- ized compari- son group
Colby et al. (1977)	358 13-17 year olds in 39 classrooms (controls not speci- fied)	some oral & some written MJI	one school year (no specifics given)	social studies class that stressed moral dilemma discussion about one-third stage change	+ (mixed results;	although non- randomization occurred, the large sample allowed for replications
Arrendondo- Dowd (1981)	17 adolescents, 15- 19 years old in ex- perimental, 36 in 3 control groups	MJI	one semester, 3 hours a week	acculturation course for immi- grants	0 <sup>a</sup>	unclear inter- vention and statistical methods; non-random- ized compari- son groups; possible con- found with language de- velopment

a. The kind of one-way ANOVA used is unspecified, but it appears to be a comparison of the pre to posttest gains across the four groups. Significance was reported for the overall main effect ( $p < .053$ ), but no post-hoc analyses were done. See the text for details.

and possibly the most promising of all moral strategies, yet is the least empirically studied despite its existence since the early 1970s. The focus of this strategy is no longer on the individual exclusively, but is now on the structure of the environment. Hersh, Paolitto, and Reimer (1979, p. 235) best summarize the method as follows: "Democratic governance stands at the heart of the just-community approach. For students and teachers to overcome their reliance on traditional authority patterns, they have to learn to share democratically the responsibility for decision making."

A Just Community high school in Cambridge, Mass., is described by Wasserman (1976) and Powers (1979a, 1979b). At this school within a larger Boston area high school, there are community meetings every week in which problems are discussed. Discipline boards which include students are convened periodically. In addition, there are advisor groups in which each faculty member meets weekly with a small group of students to discuss personal and academic problems. There is also a once-a-week evening meeting to discuss the function/process of all the above groups. The only ex-

isting evidence (Wasserman, 1976) for this ambitious effort is anecdotal observations of teachers in the school, who, it must be assumed, have a vested interest in the outcomes.

An empirical investigation similar to the above in early childhood and early adolescence suggests that school type may influence the students' moral development. McCann and Bell (1975) report on 20 children between the ages of 6 and 11 matched on various characteristics and assessed in two different schools, one stressing adherence to authority and the other stressing democratic decision making (a Freire school of Montreal). The children in the latter environment showed significantly higher levels of moral development than the other group. The dependent measure, however, involved stories adopted from Piaget (1932) using Kohlberg's (1963) scoring criteria. No reliability or validity properties of the measure are reported. It should be noted, however, that this study did not measure *change* as it is directly influenced by an intervention. Instead, it showed differences that exist across types of courses. *A priori* subject characteristics, then, may be responsible for the differences. The Just

Community approach must await carefully planned intervention analyses before its effectiveness can be explored.

## Discussion

Moral education in early adolescence represents a diverse set of intervention techniques. Both the plus-one approach and Deliberate Psychological Education seem to work in that the adolescents become more complex moral reasoners following most programs. Didactic instruction does not seem effective for these ends, and it is still unclear whether the Just Community significantly influences the students' moral development.

Perhaps early adolescence is the most challenging and most difficult group in which to effect change because of the transitions that are often occurring at this time. In the studies reviewed here across all strategies, the students at pretest were predominantly on levels 2 and 3 (Arrendondo-Dowd, 1981; Colby et al., 1977; Erickson, Note 3) and some samples showed a predominance of stages 2, 3, and 4 (Blatt & Kohlberg, 1975; Turiel, 1966; Turiel & Rothman, 1972). One cannot, therefore, do a homogeneous intervention (e.g., talking only on stage 4) and expect to influence all students.

Even if all students in a classroom were predominantly stage 3 reasoners, one should not expect a homogeneous intervention (such as the teacher talking on stage 4) to be effective. As Walker and Richards (1979) have shown, one grows from stage 3 to stage 4 in moral development if one has "early basic" formal operations. Yet, because early adolescence is a transition to formal operation (Inhelder & Piaget, 1958), it is likely that many will still be in concrete operations, necessitating different instructional approaches for this group.

The instructor of early adolescents would do well to follow Walker's procedure of first assessing the students' formal operational capacities and then designing a moral development intervention. We would not expect, as a speculation, that Deliberate Psychological Education would be as effective with a group of non-abstract thinkers. The reflection phase might be lost on them. What, then, should an educator do who suspects that the majority of the class is on the concrete operational level?

There are several options as follows: (1) The instructor could do a traditional plus-one exchange technique by talking on stage 3 with those now on stage 2. As Rest (1974) warns, however, instant

diagnosis of a student's stage is very difficult; (2) The instructor could delay moral intervention and begin with a cognitive intervention in which abstract problem solving processes are encouraged; or (3) a variant of the Just Community could be tried with any age group, as long as power is not entirely given over to young students. The Just Community is interpreted on all levels. Those on stage 5 see the moral principles at work; those on stage 4 focus on the formation of laws to maintain order; those on stage 3 adhere to the newly formed school rules to seek approval; and those on stage 2 realize there may be a payoff for obedience.

Whether one chooses plus-one, Deliberate Psychological Education, or the Just Community, one should realize several dilemmas about moral education. First, does the instructor have the right to deliberately change a predominantly stage 4 early adolescent to stage 5? Many studies here did find stage 4 reasoners. The student who may now adhere to parental authority (stage 4) may begin to question it and invoke higher principles as a cause for disobedience. Given that the student will be economically and emotionally dependent on the parents for many years to come, will such intervention reduce or accelerate conflict within the home?

Second, will the exclusive use of the Kohlbergian paradigm blind the instructor to other useful moral interventions? Teaching respect, for instance, may be an attitudinal or a virtue intervention rather than an intervention in higher thought forms (respect can be considered on many different moral stages). Do we abandon teaching attitudes and values at the expense of complex thought?

Finally, it seems to us that uncritical acceptance of the Kohlbergian model may exclude moral behavior. Might the instructor think that success has been achieved when the students advance up the cognitive moral ladder? If so, he/she may not consciously try to link the new thoughts to behavior. After all, it is unclear what the behavioral assets of moral education are. Not one of the studies reviewed here measured a behavioral outcome. More attention must be given to assessing moral action if success in moral education is to be claimed.

## Reference Notes

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