



## Call for Papers

### “Pre-College Ethics Education”

IAPC Session at the American Philosophical Association  
Eastern Division 2010 Annual Meeting

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*The problem of how to improve the moral judgment of the young  
is as complex as any that a society must cope with.*

- Matthew Lipman, *Philosophy in the Classroom* (1980)

The Institute for the Advancement of Philosophy for Children (IAPC) invites papers on the theme “Pre-College Ethics Education,” to be presented at the IAPC session at the American Philosophical Association, Eastern Division 2010 Annual Meeting, which takes place December 26-30, 2010 at the Marriott Westin Copley Place in Boston, Massachusetts. Following the conference, revised papers will be submitted to *Teaching Ethics* for blind review. Papers accepted will be published in a subsequent issue of *TE* ([www.wmich.edu/ethics/journal.html](http://www.wmich.edu/ethics/journal.html)).

As many critics have noted, the *study* of ethics in higher education – of historical texts, of theory and meta-theory, of hot-button social and cultural issues, of professional codes of conduct and relevant civil and criminal law – has become far removed from *being* ethical, in the sense of being a certain kind of person or living a certain kind of life.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, most approaches to ethics education below college are so concerned with shaping students’ ethical beliefs and conduct that they tend to be academically insubstantial, for students: lacking in historical perspective, philosophical depth and in methods of value inquiry. As Paul Camenisch has observed, the linguistic difference between “ethics” and “values” in pre-college education signifies a difference in the objectives of moral education undertaken by different disciplines. Programs originating in philosophy tend to focus on conceptual analysis and moral reasoning, and use the term “ethics,” while programs originating in psychology and education tend to focus more on “morally relevant feelings ... choices and actions” and use the term “values” (1986, 496, 497).” However, this does not explain the problematic fact that the latter is directed mostly at young children, while the former is directed almost exclusively at adolescents and adults.

Forty-three states in the U.S. have enacted laws mandating or supporting pre-college values education,<sup>2</sup> which includes programs in behavior modification like D.A.R.E. (Drug Abuse Resistance Education), and the “Just Say No” campaign, as well as “character education” – virtues-based programs that aim to shape moral belief and feeling, as well as behavior (Lickona 1998, 78, cited in Brimi 2009, 129). Both kinds of programs might be classified as “values transmission,” in that they advocate pre-defined behaviors and virtues. Competing with these programs are those – quite the minority – that might be classified as “value inquiry,” which invite children to grapple with moral ambiguity and pluralism, to confront their own moral doubts, to criticize conventional norms and to engage in open-ended ethical inquiry. These programs include ‘values clarification,’ in which students individually work out a coherent set of moral beliefs, values and actions (Raths, Harmin et al. 1966; Simon, Howe et al. 1995), critical thinking approaches derived from analytic philosophy and informed by stage-theory developmental psychology, in which students are taught methods of conceptual analysis and critical reasoning as the means of reaching sound moral judgments, and Philosophy for Children, which attempts to help children recognize aspects of their daily life that take on an ethical (or aesthetic, political, or logical) nature, to inquire into these aspects in dialogical ‘communities of inquiry,’ and to

reach judgments they can apply in dealing with these aspects of their lives. More recently, a third approach has emerged, of introducing children to mindfulness and contemplative practices, derived largely from Asian philosophical traditions, aimed to replace habitual mental, emotional and behavioral reactions with deliberate, self-aware responses to ethical and other kinds of problems and opportunities that arise in experience.<sup>3</sup>

This complex and controversial terrain of pre-college ethics education will be the focus of the IAPC session at the 2010 APA Meeting. We are calling for papers that consider such topics as:

- What is the nature of children's and adolescents' ethical experience?
- How / Can ethics education be justified as a part of pre-college (public) schooling?
- What should the goals / objectives of pre-college education be?
- How should pre-college ethics education be similar to and different from programs of ethics education in higher education – in philosophy departments, social services programs and in professional schools?
- Are the distinctions proffered above, among academic, values transmission, value inquiry and contemplative approaches to ethics education necessary or important?
- Can / Should ethics education be un/related to religion or religious education?
- Can / Should ethics education be un/related to communitarian values or citizenship education?
- To what extent can / should children's ethical growth be self-motivated and self-regulated?
- Does teaching ethics require any particular ethical life or project or practices on the part of the teacher?
- What empirical evidence is there of the effectiveness of various approaches to pre-college ethics education?
- How / Should pre-college ethics education be informed by developmental psychology?
- How might pre-college ethics education be informed by critical theory?
- How might pre-college ethics education be informed by feminist philosophy?
- How might pre-college ethics education be informed by ancient Greek and Roman modes of self-discipline and "spiritual exercise," and, more broadly, by the classical notion of the Care of the Self?
- How might pre-college ethics education be informed by ancient Asian modes of mindfulness and contemplative practice, especially as these have been introduced in schools in recent years?
- How / Should ethics education for young children be similar to and/or different from ethics education for adolescents and young adults?
- How can pre-college ethics education accommodate the learning-disabled, special-needs, or autistic student?
- What implications does a philosophical approach to pre-college ethics education hold for other aspects of schooling, e.g. discipline, governance, curriculum and testing?
- In what ways can / should communities of inquiry, classrooms, schools and neighborhoods be conducted as ethical communities?

Agreement: In submitting a paper for this conference and journal publication, you warrant that the paper is your original work and has not been published in print or online anywhere. You also agree that if your paper is accepted, you will attend the IAPC session at the APA Eastern Division Annual Meeting in December, in Boston. You further agree to make final revisions of your paper, to be submitted to the conference organizers by February 1, 2011.

### Timeline

- April 15, 2010: Paper submissions due to conference session organizers Maughn Gregory ([gregorym@montclair.edu](mailto:gregorym@montclair.edu)) and Joe Oyler ([oylerj@verizon.net](mailto:oylerj@verizon.net))
- May 31, 2010: Authors notified, conference program submitted to APA
- September 2010: Conference program published in *Proceedings of the APA*
- December 26-30, 2010: APA Eastern Division Annual Meeting at the Marriott Westin Copley Place in Boston
- February 1, 2011: Revised papers due to Joe & Maughn for final editing
- March 1, 2011: Submission of revised papers to *Teaching Ethics* for blind review

### REFERENCES

- Camenisch, P. F. (1986). "Goals of Applied Ethics Courses." *The Journal of Higher Education* **57**(5): 493-509.
- Lickona, T. (1998). "Character education: Seven crucial issues." *Action in Teacher Education* **20**: 77-84.
- Raths, L. E., M. Harmin, et al. (1966). *Values and Teaching*. Columbus, OH, Charles E. Merrill.
- Simon, S. B., L. W. Howe, et al. (1995). *Values Clarification: A Handbook of Practical Strategies for Teachers and Students*. New York, Warner Books.

### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> See M. Gregory: "Ethics Education and the Practice of Wisdom," forthcoming in *Teaching Ethics*, Spring 2009.

<sup>2</sup> "Character Education Legislation," web page of the Character Education Partnership, <http://www.character.org/charactereducationlegislation>, accessed 02/09/09.

<sup>3</sup> The Center for Contemplative Mind in Society recommends a number of such practices under the categories of stillness, activist, generative, movement, ritual, creative and relational practices. <http://www.contemplativemind.org/practices/tree.html>, accessed 02/09/09.