

Professional Practice in Strategic Leadership and Societal Development

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ABSTRACT

A demonstration in the research focuses on the development of a syllabus for high school assemblies. The Peaceful Solution Character Education Incorporated (PSCEI) is a non-profit organization committed to “promoting character education as its main tool for positive character development with a variety of courses designed to reach all ages so the impact of character change can be realized and effected in society.” Theories by Addler (1982), Dewey (1907), Greene (1988), and Illich (1970) are discussed in terms of their underlying principles about the strengths and limitations for professional practice in strategic leadership and societal development.

PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE in STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP and SOCIETAL DEVELOPMENT

Contrary to the belief that freedom means doing whatever one desires to do, freedom should be connected to the idea of the regulation of conduct in terms of ought or should (Adler, 1982). In other words, freedom does not operate in a vacuum by itself. Responsibility accompanies freedom. When men/women do whatever they want without any regard to consequences of their actions or the feelings of others, the desires of individual men/women will bring them into conflict. Freedom from laws necessarily means subjection to the war of each person against every other (Adler). Many believe that instilling within their children the significance of the words right, wrong, responsibility, discipline, and duty are some of the first educational steps toward a positive social change in a free society.

Knowing the difference between right and wrong and having a clear understanding of the responsibility of duties are some of the key ingredients that are needed to set the foundation for an effective and efficient free society. According to Adler, "Civil rights and duties are instituted by laws, and so it is through law, and the discipline it imposes upon our social conduct, that men are able to live together freely and in peace." Learning these virtues at an early age and sustaining its practice throughout the formative years, makes the transitioning period into adolescents and eventually into adulthood much easier with little or no risk factors involved.

According to Dewey (1907), "Learning how to be self-sufficient and functional in the world constitutes true freedom. All that society has accomplished for itself is put

through the agency of the school, at the disposal of its future members. Here individualism and socialism are one.” From scriptural references in the Bible which admonishes parents to train up their children in the way that the children should go, and reaping the reward of not seeing them go astray (Proverbs 22:6) to behaviorist and psychologist who agree that the earlier the stage of development the better it is to train that child, society is presented with the message that self-control that is taught at an early age in life and reinforced consistently, firmly, and lovingly, are the necessary ingredients for a society of individuals that are peaceful and respectful.

In keeping with the theme of individual freedom, society, and self-control, Greene states that “freedom is a matter of choice by the individual. Therefore, the same voices of society that speak about irresponsibility, illiteracy, relativism, and unethical behavior, are the same voices that increases an uncomfortable feeling that focuses more on everyday life and education (Greene). In other words, in order to have a free society for everyone to enjoy, the responsibility of training the future members of society is a focal part of the responsibility of parents and educators. Curriculums such as *The Peaceful Solution* Character Education addresses the theories of Adler (1982), Dewey (1907), Greene (1988), and Illich (1970) with regards to providing character education development training to children in schools to prepare them to be productive citizens in society when they become adults.

As the topic of self-control is taught to students as well as the adults who will be modeling the behavior of self-discipline, there may be a few critics who would suggest that any action and attitude, whether positive or negative that may exist in a student or an adult, is the right of that individual to express themselves as they choose as part of the

freedom that they have. Adler's philosophy states that "just as political freedom is liberty under just laws, so moral freedom is liberty under the direction and discipline of moral virtues." A quote from St. Augustine succinctly summarizes the importance of utilizing the personal freedom that one has in a responsible manner when he said:

Nothing can take our free will away from us, neither tyrannical government nor a vicious character; but tyranny and vice can prevent us from using our free will properly, that is, for our ultimate good and for the common good of the society in which we live.

Therefore, if a person truly wants to be free that person would have to accept the responsibility that accompanies freedom. The responsibility that accompanies freedom is discipline. According to Adler, "true freedom is identical with duty and discipline is indispensable to such freedom."

In the peer reviewed article, *Cultural differences in academic motivation goals: A meta-analysis across 13 societies* Dekker delineated the differences and similarities of each category of each country's behavioral philosophy which impacted students' learning and achievement outcomes. According to the achievement goal instruments that were used, researchers found that "egalitarianism and autonomy were compatible and aligned next to each other because both stressed that individuals should take responsibility for their actions and base decisions at their personal understanding and interpretation of the situation; whereas, embeddedness and hierarchy were related because both emphasized role fulfillment and obligation to the larger groups that took precedence over the individual's aspirations and desires" (2008). Therefore, there appears to be a correlation

between the expectations of societal values, the instruction by parents at home, and the instruction by educators in schools that determine the academic and social goals of youths living in the various communities in society.

According to Gomez and Ang (2007) in their peer-reviewed article *Promoting positive youth development in schools: Theory into practice*, they examined the culture of schools and demonstrated through measurable goals how schools could effect positive social change through a concerted effort on the part of those who worked at the school beginning with the administration. The administrator has to communicate the expectations of the school's mission, vision, goals, and philosophy to faculty, staff, students, parents, and other administrators consistently and concisely while articulating the desired outcome. That desired outcome should translate into the success of students academically as well as socially as they interact respectfully with their peers, teachers, and any other adult working on campus.

The goal of Peaceful Solution Character Education is to bring peace to the world through education. Their vision and mission is "persistent determination to bring a peaceful solution to the world's problems through character education." Their curriculum instructs both students and adults on disciplining themselves and incorporating the character traits that will assist individuals to become responsible, respectful, thoughtful, caring, and tolerant with other individuals. It is therefore beneficial to schools to have individuals who share the common vision, mission, and philosophy of the school in a manner that diffuses potential areas of conflict from escalating into unnecessary bigger problems. It is the role and responsibility of all employees working at the school to support students by being accessible, available,

supportive, and encouraging. One of the ways that students are supported and encouraged is by celebrating their successes while being firm enough to set healthy boundaries and expectations physically, socially, and psychologically.

As principals focus on effecting positive social change through the school's culture, organizational systems within the school, and student achievement, strategies which reflect the school's mission and vision are formed. Principals should have a vision of what success is and how it translates into students' achievement demonstrated through growth academically and socially.

A demonstration in the research focuses on the development of a syllabus for high school assemblies. The Peaceful Solution Character Education Incorporated (PSCEI) is a non-profit organization committed to "promoting character education as its main tool for positive character development with a variety of courses designed to reach all ages so the impact of character change can be realized and effected in society."

This character education program focuses on the positive character traits that are accepted universally and deemed as important for individuals to possess. These character traits that are considered as important for one's success in life are as listed:

- Acceptance
- Character
- Respect: ownership, asking, do not steal
- Responsibility
- Self-Control
- Anger Management
- Tolerance

These character traits are taught in the middle school/junior high school level: 6th – 8th grades. Life Skills and healthy relationships are incorporated into the previous mentioned character traits that have already been taught on the middle/junior high school level where these same character traits are re-enforced on the high school level: 9th – 12th grades. These life skills and healthy relationship character traits that are presented to the high school student are topics addressing:

- Substance abuse
- Respect for life
- Food and health
- Promiscuous behavior
- Sexual activity
- Marriage and planning your future

The consequences of negative social behaviors and the benefits of positive social behaviors are taught and encouraged by a number of adults and children. This character education will be presented to 9th - 12th graders at weekly assemblies over a span of ten months (August-May or September-June) and reinforced in the classrooms every day through the writing of essays, power point presentations, role playing, and the modeling of the desired character trait by the personnel at the school through their speech and deportment on campus.

According to a testimonial from one of the teachers in Texas who used The Peaceful Solution Character Education Program: “I am amazed with this program... I was surprised that even I learned a new way to look at things. It is an added bonus that my character is being improved as I teach my children. Thank you for such a great

program.” The positive impact of this character education program is not only beneficial for the students but to the educators using the program as well. It is a “win-win” situation that benefits students, educators, parents, and society.

The Peaceful Solution Character Education Program (PSCEP) consists of three educational series: Elementary, Intermediate, Advanced, and also Parenting and Prison Programs. For the purposes of this research, the focus will center on the intermediate (6th-8th grades) and the advanced (9th-12th grades). Both the intermediate and the advanced levels focus on the issues that affect pre-adolescent and adolescent age groups. According to PSCEP, “positive character development is explored through the concepts of respect, acceptance, responsibility, self-control and anger management.” PSCEP assert that, “Through these concepts, issues such as promiscuity, substance abuse, bullying and tolerance are addressed. Students have the opportunity to benefit from a Student’s Handbook which provides reading material, statistical data and real life scenarios which help the reader to see the consequences of negative social behaviors and the benefits of positive social behaviors.” For the advanced level (9th-12th grades) the structure is similar to the intermediate level but “with additional information on life skills and healthy relationships needed to help each student mature and become stabilized in the adult world. Embodied in this curriculum are themes, such as substance abuse, respect for life, food and health, promiscuous behavior, sexual activity, marriage and planning for your future” according to PSCEP.

Although the curriculum of PSCEP covers different topics over the span of nine months, here is a sample of the topic of self-control that can be presented at school assemblies every week for a month and reinforced in the classrooms and on campus.

Chapter one of the topic of self-control begins with a note to the teacher/presenter. “It is vital for students to learn that as they mature it is their responsibility to control how they behave and interact. No longer is it the sole responsibility of those in authority to control their behavior, because as young adults they are now accountable for their own actions.” The concepts in this lesson that are covered within this month are: *How morality applies to self-control, The role of self-control in the development of other positive character traits, Developing self-control begins with controlling negative thoughts.* The goal of this lesson of self-control according to PSCEP is to teach students not only how to do well academically but also how to learn to become morally responsible adults “who have respect for themselves and for others.”

The lesson of self-control begins with the purpose and objective which states that: “Students will learn what self-control is and why it is important. They will also learn that controlling their thoughts is an important part of practicing self-control.” The lesson plans continue with the procedure of how the lesson will be taught, and lists the materials that will be used for the lesson. Different scenarios are also presented to allow the students an opportunity to read, comprehend, and respond to the scenarios of actions that they the students would take if they were in a similar situation. Suggestions and reasons why those suggestions were offered are also presented as a guide for students to learn what constitutes appropriate and inappropriate behavior. This begins with the thoughts that are allowed to control actions and decisions good or bad.

Through the curriculum of Peaceful Solution Character Education, the objective is to instill within the students the responsibility needed to make wise and informed decisions that would positively impact their lives, as well as those who are close to them.

Eventually, the lives of the community where they live will become better, as the society also benefits from the positive choices of individuals who are committed to living in a world that is peaceful.

The following is a sample syllabus of the character education program that can be presented at school assemblies.

Demonstration

Audience: 9th-12 Grades

Location: Auditorium/Gymnasium

Time: **September**

Topic: Acceptance

Intro: Story of the Ugly Duckling

I. The Uniqueness of Humanity

- A. Different Cultures
- B. Different Races
- C. Different Creeds/Beliefs
- D. Same Emotions
- E. Similar Life Experiences

II. The Golden Rule

- A. Do Unto Others...
 - 1. family
 - 2. friends
 - 3. neighbors
- B. Teach by Example

1. speech
2. deportment

III. Admonition

- A. Embrace Differences; Focus on Similarities
- B. Allow Love (Agape) to Be the Basis of Relationships with Others

Conclusion: Treat others in the same way you would like others to treat you.

October

Topic: Responsibility

Intro: Definition of the word responsible

I. The Importance of Responsibility

- A. Become Dependable
- B. Become Trustworthy
- C. Become Successful

II. Steps to Becoming Responsible

A. At Home

1. chores
2. completing homework on time
3. obeying curfew

B. At School

1. following classroom procedures
2. obeying school rules

III. Rewards of Being Responsible

- A. Trusted with Greater Responsibility that Brings Greater Rewards

B. Placed in a Position of Leadership

1. decisions are made by you
2. you are in control (responsible) of your situation, life, and others
3. difficult for others to control and manipulate you

Conclusion: Start to become responsible in the little things, and you will be trusted to be responsible with bigger things that carry with it bigger rewards.

November

Topic: Self-Control

Intro: Illustration of one glass of cold water, one glass of hot water, and two tea bags.

Demonstrate that the glass of hot water draws out the tea from the tea bag and not the cold water. Compare illustration to life when we are in “hot waters,” what is revealed from our character?

I. Watch Your Thoughts

A. Thoughts Are Powerful

1. saying: “you can’t prevent birds from flying overhead, but you can prevent them from building a nest in your hair.”
2. guard your mind
 - a. think on things that are good, positive, and lovely
 - b. dismiss any and all negative thoughts; don’t dwell on those things that don’t help you to become a better person

B. Thoughts Affect Your Entire Being and Decisions

II. Watch Your Words

A. The Tongue Is a Small Organ but, Is Very Powerful

1. man can tame wild animals
 - a. lions
 - b. bears
 - c. horses
 - d. snakes
2. man has difficulty taming the tongue

B. The Untamed Tongue Can Destroy

1. family members
2. friends
3. other individuals

C. Test to Take before Speaking: It has to be all three.

- Is it true?
- Is it kind?
- Is it necessary?

III. Watch Your Actions

A. Watch Your Associations

1. you are known by the company you keep
2. explain saying: “Birds of a feather, flock together”

B. Check Your Self-Esteem

1. low self-esteem
2. high self-esteem

- any of the two can cause one to make poor and unwise choices

C. Remember the Golden Rule

- treat others in the same way that you would like to be treated

Conclusion: Watch your thoughts because they affect your words; watch your words because they affect your actions; watch your actions because they become a habit; watch your habits because they develop into your character; watch your character because it will determine your destiny (future).

December

Topic: Promiscuous Behavior

Intro: Story of 16 year old “Janette” and 17 year old “Robert” who indulged in sexual activity. Robert, one of the top five players in basketball on his high school varsity team, repeats his illicit actions with girl #2 as Janette looks in dismay, and overhears the same lies he told her to get her to yield to his sexual desires. She feels betrayed, hurt, angry, and depressed.

I. Physical Consequences of Pre-Marital Sex

A. At Risk for Sexually Transmitted Disease

1. oral sex is still sex and one can become infected through unprotected sex
2. unwanted pregnancy

3. condoms are only 90% effective against pregnancy; how effective is it against protecting against the HIV virus which is 10x's smaller than sperm. That is the difference between a basketball and a marble.
4. condoms don't protect against other forms of STD's that are transmitted through skin to skin contact and not only through blood or semen

B. Other Physical Consequences

1. young man has to support the baby for the next 18 years
2. his wages will be garnered to support the baby if he cannot afford to meet his obligation

II. Emotional Consequences of Pre-Marital Sex

- A. Feelings of Remorse and Loss of Respect
- B. Concern over Not Knowing the Status of Being Pregnant or of Contracting a Sexually Transmitted Disease
- C. Guilty Feelings over Thinking about or Having an Abortion

III. Social Consequences of Pre-Marital Sex

- A. Peers May Laugh and Ridicule for Poor Decision
- B. Stigma/Label Placed on the Individual
- C. Disproval, Possible Rejection by Parents
- D. Re-Living the Pain, Shame, and Embarrassment to Future Spouse

Conclusion: The proper and more preferred time for sexual activity is within the bounds of matrimony according to moral teachings.

- Admonition: During the Christmas break, guard well and protect your chastity.

January

Topic: Bullying and Tolerance

Intro: Reiterate lessons learned from the first semester concerning acceptance, self-control, and responsibility. Review the Golden Rule.

Activity: Show a video presentation dealing with the issue of bullying and tolerance. Give students a five paragraph essay to write on a scenario where they have a choice to either bully another student or to accept and respect another student who may be unpopular. This essay will be completed for homework and given to the homeroom (1st period) teacher who will read, correct, and grade the essay for extra credit.

February

Topic: Substance Abuse

Intro: Explain the different types of substances and demonstrate how they are abused.

Activity: Have students complete a five page research on an illegal substance that they have selected to research. This five page research paper is due on the last Friday of this month of February and will be given to the 2nd period teacher to read, correct, and grade the research paper for extra credit.

March

Topic: Anger Management

Intro: Introduce the invited guest speaker to speak to the student body about Anger Management.

Activity: At the end of the speaker's presentation, assign the students an assignment to complete a PowerPoint presentation dealing with Anger Management. Students should have at least ten slides with print and graphics (pictures) to help to illustrate their presentation. This assignment will be given and presented in their 3rd period classes. The assignment will be given to the 3rd period teacher who will grade it for extra-credit.

April/May

Topic: Marriage and Planning Your Future

Intro: Invite another guest speaker to speak to the student body about Marriage and Planning for the Future.

Activity: Students will present their ten slide PowerPoint presentation of 5-10 minutes to their respective 4th period classes first. Teachers of the 4th period will select the top two students from their classes, and have a run off selection at a time that is convenient for the teachers and students. The final top three students will present their presentations in the student assembly for May.

June

Topic: Food and Health

Intro: The school nurse and the Health teachers will speak to the student body about healthy living especially during the summer vacation.

Activity: Students will commit to eating healthy, exercising and putting to practice the character education learned this past school year.

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