Chapter 11
Guiding Children for Virtue

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Abstract: The RAVES model (Relationships, Apprenticeship, Virtuous Village, Ethical skills, Self-authorship) for guiding students in moral character development is described. It can be adapted by every teacher, applied in a way needed for the students in the particular classroom…

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Human beings learn from their immersion in community. In fact, they are biologically shaped by their social experience. Ideally, their experiences from birth are those of love and care, shaping a prosocial and cooperative nature. When early supportive care is missing, humans will exhibit various forms of dysregulation. Unfortunately, many children are not receiving the supportive care they need in early life and arrive at school anxious and stressed out, leaving them unprepared to learn well. Their underdevelopment impairs not only intellectual development but also socioemotional and moral development. In this chapter we discuss some of the causes of children's ill preparation, describe ways to structure classrooms to foster virtuous human beings, and explore how educators can address students' needs, integrating the pedagogical philosophy of Janusz Korczak.

The Industrialized Child

Humanity's heritage is to offer tender and loving care of young children and community-wide social support (Narvaez, 2013). Now we know what the elements are that comprise tender care for young children and how important they are for neurobiological development (Narvaez, 2014). Rapid development occurs in the first six years of life and how its quality relies on experience, so experience during those years needs to be especially supportive. However, brain development continues to need particular experiences to grow properly. The human species evolved a caregiving system to provide for the needs of young children—the *evolved nest*--- that optimizes normal development. The evolved nest includes soothing perinatal experience; responsiveness to needs mitigating distress by multiple familiar adult caregivers; frequent positive touch and co-sleeping; breastfeeding on request for several years; self-directed free play with multiple aged mates; positive social climate, and support for mother and child (Hewlett & Lamb, 2005; Narvaez, 2018). Each component is related to human neurobiological development (for reviews, see Narvaez, Panksepp, Schore & Gleason, 2013). (See chapter 21 for how educators can provide some evolved nest components.)

Unfortunately, children are no longer consistently immersed in the evolved nest, which is having harmful effects on human potential (Narvaez, 2014). Births in the United States are often traumatic for mother and child, undermining the normal course of bonding and development (Block, 2007). Additionally, babies and young children are regularly left in childcare centers that have non-intimate caregivers, undermining key developments such as secure attachment which is rooted in neurobiological development (Carter et al., 2005). Moreover, stressed parents often use techniques for early care that are detrimental to body and brain development: artificial feeding, mechanical and electronic gadgets to keep their baby preoccupied and quiet instead of being "in

arms" socializing with the family. These modern day caregiving practices set children up on a less-than-optimal trajectory and teach them insecurity, low self-esteem, lack of trust, and self-centeredness from not getting needs met and carrying around a wounded self (Narvaez, 2014). Korczak (1967a) spent many hours observing and studying children who suffered from wounded selves as a result of unmet needs. He keenly diagnosed this pain as potentially pervasive, sometimes being carried over into subsequent generations.

> There are some rare children whose age is not just their own ten years. They carry the load of many generations and ... under the action of a slight stimulus ... the latent potential of pain, grievance, anger, and rebellion [is released]. Then it is not a child but the centuries weeping (Korczak, 1967a, p. 8).

His acute awareness of the inner-workings of children and their sufferings was developed through years of working as a *wychowawca (in Polish or vospitatel in Russian),* a special type of teacher or educator who dedicates his/her entire life towards understanding, seeing, caring for and providing for children. His vocation as *wychowawca* was not limited to pedagogy or instruction. Rather, he lived out his professional role as *wychowawca* by means of taking responsibility for the physical, social and moral development of the child (Korczak, 1967b; Lewowicki, 1994).

What can educators and caregivers outside of the home do to repair children's maladaptive neurobiological systems and provide for their basic needs? They can provide a *sustaining* environment that both reconstitutes critical brain functions and meets basic needs (Narvaez, 2010; see more in chapter 21). Sustaining environments provide neurobiological supports such as procedures for and skill building in self-calming, social pleasure and communal imagination. Educators and caregivers can help students learn ways to calm themselves and enhance self-regulation. *Self-calming* practices include deep belly breathing, mindfulness and meditation/visualization. Children today often have not been immersed enough in social environments that foster a sense of social pleasure in being with others. Educators and caregivers can help students *rewire the social brain* areas with socially pleasurable activities. Practices that can build social pleasure include self-directed free play with others of different ages, social art and music making.[1] Educators and caregivers can help grow an *imagination that is communal*—that keeps the welfare of others in mind. Communal imagination includes a sense of attachment to a positive group, feeling connected to the rest of humanity and feeling connected to the natural world.

Educators can create sustaining environments, help foster development of the social brain and expand children's communal imaginations because of the privilege and power that is entrusted to them as teachers. Korczak recognized this privilege in shaping children's minds because he was self-aware: "every word of mine enters a hundred minds, every step is watched by a hundred pairs of vigilant eyes" (Korczak, 1967c, p. 61). He knew the power of his vocation and practiced self-reflection in order to continually better his pedagogical skills. Korczak also emphasized the importance of persevering in these endeavors, describing that even when the entire classroom seemed to dismiss his instruction, later on (sometimes even the next day) one or two children would demonstrate proof that the teaching was effective. Through perseverance and continual self-reflection, the educator has the ability to help build the social brain and increase children's communal imagination.

The Need for Moral Character Development: The RAVES Model

[1] As Tatyana notes, this is very much in tune with what was done in Korczak's "Nash Dom" Orphanage.

Though it may be necessary and wise to provide to children what was missed in early life, this is just getting back to the starting gate. If our aim is for moral character development, we must do more. In the past, when children and youth had more family and social support, best practices in education might have been enough to foster ethical character in students—to cultivate goodness as well as smarts. But today not only are children missing the early experiences that foster health, wellbeing and sociality, they are typically not immersed in a society and daily activities that emphasize moral character development (rather, the opposite in entertainment media). They do not receive the close guidance and supervision needed for moral cultivation as a few generations ago when the neighbors took a role in guiding and watching out for children in the neighborhood.

Educational institutions, because they are a constant presence in the lives of children, must fill this role. They can take a more deliberative approach to moral character education (Narvaez, 2006, 2007). Throughout Korczak's writings, he continually repeated that knowledge alone is not enough nor is love alone an effective means to fostering child flourishing (Korczak, 1967a). What is needed, then, is the translation of a well-developed theory into an effective model that can facilitate the much-needed skills required for moral character development.

To this end, we propose the RAVES model, a research-based approach, which offers educators guidelines to foster moral character while teaching academics. The aim is to help children grow into intelligent and morally agile adults with high moral quotients (MQ) as well as high IQs. The RAVES model begins with high expectations for ethical behavior alongside achievement. It is also designed to provide high community support for reaching these goals. The acronym RAVES stands for relationships, apprenticeship, virtuous models, ethical skill development and self-authorship. See Table 1 for an outline of the RAVES model.

Relationships in the RAVES Model

Secure attachment relationships are fundamental to a good life (Carter et al., 2005). Such relationships are characterized by social trust and interdependence that are built through emotional presence as well as verbal, nonverbal, emotional, and cognitive consistency.

There are two aspects to establishing caring relationships in the relationship component of the RAVES model. First is the relationship between student and educator. We suggest that each educator establish a caring relationship with each student, recognizing that each child is different with individual needs and preferences. What does caring look like? The educator shows respect by tuning in to the needs of the child and showing care in a way that honors the child's culture and preferences. Children need the experience of *being-with* another person who is emotionally present and engaged in the moment. Korczak was a moral exemplar when it came to respectful relationship. His pedagogical philosophy proposes a relationship of equality above all else (Boschki, 2005). The teacher is not above the student nor is the pupil below the educator. He lived *being-with* his students until the very end, accompanying them to Treblinka (Efron, 2005).

Often times, adults and parents wish their children would develop into better versions of themselves (Korczak, 1967d). Korczak viewed this as a potential violation of children's intrinsic right to develop into their own person, disregarding their uniqueness. He did not view children as developing into a human nor did he see childhood as a preparation for an adult life. Rather, he deeply respected both the child as a person and the period of childhood, demonstrating that both called for protection from the adult community (Reiter, Asgad, & Sachs, 1990; Sheridan, & Samuelsson, 2001). "Children are not future people, because they are people" (Lewowicki, 1994, p.41). Korczak reminds us that at times, adults are focused on their own struggles and problems

and consequently, fail to see children as people. He relates this back to other points in history where society failed to see and acknowledge the rights of women, peasants, and other oppressed groups of people (1967b). He used these historical references to ignite an awareness among adults that children should be treated, respected and valued as any other adult member of society.

When children experience this unconditional positive regard and deep respect for their personhood, it helps open up their uniqueness. The carer-for, the adult, sets aside the self to feel-with the other, develop mutual reciprocal communication that shows active listening and fosters trustworthiness (Noddings, 2002), though this may take longer with some students (Watson & Ecken, 2018). Students need experiences of *being cherished* where caring is customized to their needs and preferences, where forgiveness is ready and available, and where the child's unique spirit and 'best self' are evoked. Students also need *responsive, playful* relationships where child-like spontaneity and positive humor are fostered.

The second aspect of establishing caring relationships is a *sustaining community* of caring relationships. What should an educator pay attention to in building a sustaining community? The Child Development Project (Battistich, 2008) helped discover many of these components:

1. **Foster student motivation**. Educators can create a motivating climate for students by allowing developmentally appropriate autonomy (e.g., providing self-direction, building self-efficacy and self-regulation) as well as by encouraging positive student interaction (e.g., promoting collaboration, providing opportunities for helping others).
2. **Foster community fellowship**. A climate of fellowship can be nurtured by promoting solidarity, diversity, and oneness (e.g., emphasizing unity, the common good, and connectedness), establishing trust (e.g., treating students with respect and expecting the same, building a class narrative or "our story"), and creating nurturing leadership.
3. **Cultivating human potential**. Educators can bring out the best in their students by nurturing their creativity, using developmental discipline (e.g., building skills for self-control and social connection), and creating a supportive physical structure (e.g., promoting an aesthetic environment).
4. **Building a democratic organization**. Educators can structure democracy by providing open governance, setting up open communication channels, and promoting community building (e.g., encouraging shared norms, shared values, authenticity). Korczak suggested the creation of a children's newspaper, a project that creates community among students by means of freely choosing article topics and voluntary discharge of work. The newspaper also replaces rumor and gossip with honest publicity (1967e).

<u>A</u>pprenticeship in the R<u>A</u>VES Model

Good educators know that students' abilities and skills can be developed through dedication and hard work (i.e., educators having a growth mindset; Dweck, 2006), but they also understand that students need structured guidance to foster development in their abilities and skills that are needed to live a good life (Lave, 1988). Such structured guidance requires modeling and coached practice along with immersion in experience for developing well-educated intuition (Hogarth, 2001). Thus, educators using the RAVES model establish an apprenticeship context of modeling and guidance. The Minnesota Community Voices and Character Education project (Narvaez, Bock, Endicott, & Lies, 2004)[2] advocated a *novice-to-expert* instructional approach to teach ethical skills (the skills are described later in the Ethical Expertise section). Though expertise in a particular area takes many years to develop, classroom

[2] See footnote 1.

instruction can be designed to move students along the path toward expertise. RAVES suggests four levels of novice-to-expert instruction.. Educators using this approach often employ more than one level at a time to include a range of student developmental readiness.

Level 1 involves immersion in examples and opportunities aimed for plunging students into multiple, engaging activities. Students learn to recognize broad patterns in the domain, acquiring *identification knowledge*. They develop gradual awareness and recognition of elements in the domain.

Level 2 focuses attention on facts and skills. The teacher guides student attention to the elemental concepts in the domain in order to build *elaboration knowledge*—increasing associations of how the skill operates and how it relates to other knowledge. Skills are gradually acquired through motivated, focused attention and practice of subskills.

In Level 3, students practice procedures. The teacher coaches students in applying skills and ideas throughout the domain to build an understanding of how best to solve problems. Capacities are developed, and students ultimately attain *planning knowledge*.

Level 4 integrates knowledge and procedures. The student gradually integrates and applies skills across many contexts and learns how to take the steps in solving complex domain problems, thereby demonstrating *execution knowledge*.

Virtuous Models in the RAVES Model

For any aim, we all need examples, stories and guidance that supportive communities provide. Moral character, or virtue, development is about learning for life (Dewey, 1938). The kind of life that is considered virtuous is conveyed though the culture (i.e., shared practices and beliefs) in which a child is immersed. The narratives and stories, practices and expectations of a community implicitly guide children's development. Children and youth learn, practice and apply the ethical competencies considered important by the community.

Stories can be a powerful influence for shaping what we believe about the world and ourselves. They guide our actions. They provide role models for behavior. Children learn who they can and should become from the stories we tell them (MacIntyre, 1981). How we treat children are stories they internalize. What stories guide virtuous behavior? Adults can pass on the stories of the community. In doing so, it's important that adults understand that their own characters are "under construction" by the activities they pursue and by how they use their imaginations.

For example, *Stories to Light Our Way* (Singh, 2010) from the Wisdom Thinkers Network provides a set of multicultural positive stories to guide children's moral character development that align with social and emotional learning goals (SEL; Elias & Berkowitz, 2016) as well as with academic benchmarks. Like Korczak's stories, stories from Wisdom Thinkers present virtuous models for students as well as concrete examples of ethical skills. The Wisdom Thinkers' story of "The Real Bargain," which is drawn from the life of Guru Nanak in the Sikh tradition, features Young Nanak, who is faced with the choice of making a good bargain in the market to prove to his father his skills as a trader. Young Nanak chooses to use the money to feed and clothe a group of poor people, thinking it a better "bargain" to share with those in need. This sets up a clear conflict with what the father and society considered a bargain, and the ideals or ethical approach. However, as a testimony to Nanak's "victory" in taking action for the poor, to this day each Gurdwara (Sikh Temple) features a free community meal where all are welcome to share the food regardless of their backgrounds. In this way, "The Real Bargain" spawns discussions on inclusive communities, poverty and our social responsibility, or social justice.

Educators have integrated the story in several ways into the classroom, including reader's theatres, math games, and service-learning projects focused on sharing food or supplies.

According to RAVES, children should be immersed in a community whereby they *hear* about the importance of the particular skill or virtue; *practice* active, full body experiences of the virtue with others; and *find pleasure* from the virtuous behavior. Educators can help link virtue to students' lives in several ways:

1. **Link the classroom work to the local community needs.**
2. **Promote global awareness** while connecting students' work to international issues around the world (e.g., human rights, diversity, civil disobedience for social justice).
3. **Develop global citizenship skills—**sociopolitical awareness of the world and ecological consciousness.
4. **Cultivate flourishing—**developing an engaged and purposeful life and helping students' communities flourish in the process.

Ethical Expertise in the RAVES Model

Ethical skills can be taught across the curriculum and extra-curriculum (Anderson, Narvaez, Bock, Endicott, & Lies, 2002; Narvaez, et al., 2004). According to the RAVES model, they are developed through a novice-to-expert pedagogy in the apprenticeship context described above until the individual is able to self-author (described next). To teach ethical skills educators should model, emphasize, and discuss them with their students (e.g., using stories as a powerful pedagogical tool). Due to a variety of ethical skills, the RAVES model organized over two dozen important skills into four broad categories: ethical sensitivity, ethical judgment, ethical focus and ethical action, listed in Table 2 (Narvaez et al., 2004). Note that some skills could fit multiple categories.

Ethical sensitivity (Narvaez & Endicott, 2009) involves picking up on the cues related to ethical decision making and behavior; interpreting the situation according to who is involved, what actions could be taken, and what possible reactions and outcomes might ensue. Ethical sensitivity skills facilitate four main functions: acquiring, organizing and interpreting information about the ethical situation, and expressing oneself appropriately. The "information" can represent perceived events, perceived relationships, currently experienced emotions, background knowledge of events and relationships and also existing attitudes accessed from memory (Crick & Dodge, 1994; Le Doux, 1996). Expressive skills such as empathy and compassion are developed as students observe and imitate role models and reflect on their experience and performance.

Ethical judgment (Narvaez & Bock, 2009) entails reasoning about the possible actions in the situation and judging which action is most ethical. Ethical judgment is a critical piece in the decision-making process. To make a good, sound decision or effectively solve a problem, a person must have some basic cognitive skills that enable them to thoroughly and systematically complete the decision making process. These basic cognitive skills include understanding what the ethical problem is, knowing what ethical codes can be applied to the situation, using reasoning to determine the best decision, and planning how to implement this decision.

Ethical focus (or motivation; Narvaez & Lies, 2009) is prioritizing the ethical action over other goals and needs, either in the particular situation or as a habit. If one is not driven by one's own ethical identity, the person may take actions that harm other persons. Similarly, if one does not have an ethical goal in mind when taking action, one may behave in ways that harm the self or others. Ethical focus is nurtured when a person learns to respect others, act responsibly, and develop a positive identity.

Ethical action (Narvaez, 2009) involves understanding how to behave ethically and how to follow through despite obstacles. Ethical action skills include both (1) interpersonal skills such as conflict resolution and negotiation, leadership, assertiveness, and basic communication, and (2) personal skills such as taking initiative, courage, perseverance, and working hard. A person without all or most of these skills may have a difficult time accomplishing an ethical behavior, no matter how much he or she might feel motivated to do so. These skills make it possible to follow through and complete the identified ethical activity.

Self-Authorship in the RAVES Model

Educators can guide student self-authorship and self-regulation for life tasks. Autonomy is a fundamental characteristic of intellectual and moral maturity (Piaget, 1932) and is particularly important for moral functioning (Narvaez, 2011). Moral self-authorship capacities include skills like moral self-monitoring (e.g., am I taking all sides into account in making my decision?) and moral self-regulation (e.g., can I take this moral action on my own without additional support?).

Using our suggested terminology, children's self-authorship was a central tenant of Korczak's pedagogical method. He respected each child's free will and encouraged children to reflect upon their actions and behaviors in order to gain greater awareness of themselves and others around them (Korczak, 1967d). One strategic way in which Korczak fostered self-authorship was through the creation of a children's government with its legal code and a code of peers both at The Children's Home for Jewish Children (1911-1942) and Our Home for Polish Children (1919-1939) (Efron, 2005). Each child was expected to reflect upon his/her actions, contribute to the larger good and participate in the community. Through this democratic system, children were able to self-author their own lives and shape the community around them, practicing the skills of self-monitoring and self-reflection.

Those with good self-monitoring are able, for example, to change strategies when a particular course of action is not working, whether working a math problem or a moral problem. Virtuous individuals must be autonomous enough to monitor their behavior and choices. Once developed, virtues must be maintained through the selection of appropriate friends, activities and environments (Aristotle, 1988).

Self-regulation is key to skill development. It has to do with preparing students for post-instruction by helping students build capacities for independent action and learn to get support they need. Individuals can be coached in domain-specific self-regulation as well as self-efficacy (Zimmerman, Bonner, & Kovach, 2002). Regarding self-efficacy, our perception of personal agency is formed from our self-regulatory skills and lies at the heart of the sense of self (Zimmerman, 2000). Virtuous individuals have a sense of efficacy for virtue.

Conclusion

The RAVES model was designed to provide a framework for establishing an intentional approach to fostering moral character in schools. The overall aim is to build well-functioning community members who have the skills to participate in a democratic society. RAVES starts where human flourishing starts—with warm supportive relationships. Then educators follow an apprenticeship model, the natural way that humans learn, with mentoring through virtuous examples, ethical skill development and helping students learn to self-author. Many school-based programs for student development can fit under the umbrella of RAVES. However, the RAVES model was built with children from the USA in mind and so is oriented to meeting many of their basic needs that these days are not fulfilled elsewhere in their lives. Other nations may be better at providing the elements of the model outside the classroom.

Similar to Korczak's philosophy, RAVES is not a manual or curriculum. Instead, educators must decide how to modify their regular instruction to integrate the model into daily practice. In the Minnesota Community Voices and Character Education project, the RAVES model was presented to local teams of educators and community members who then decided what aspects to adopt and adapt for their local needs. Each implementation was unique and took time to prepare and enlist collaborating teachers. Those who implemented deeply (across homeroom/advisory period, within all classes, in school-wide projects) showed the greatest effects when measured against a comparison group (Narvaez et al., 2004).

Korczak's life and pedagogical teachings provide an example of someone who put the personhood of the child and his/her uniqueness at the center of all he did and taught. As with the RAVES model, Korczak's pedagogy was based upon first understanding the child, entering into their world and above all, respecting and loving each child as an equal person (Lewowicki, 1994). Korczak is a moral exemplar who lived the tenants of the RAVES model in his own time and in a cultural way that was particularly his own. The numerous similarities between the RAVES model and Korczak's pedagogical method indicate a "grammar of ethics" and point to a universal call to respect the dignity of all children, regardless of age, class or ethnicity (Korczak, 1978, p. 6). Through committed efforts to implement practices that foster respect for the child, teachers will create classrooms with students who are ready to learn, and children will grow in socioemotional and moral intelligence, toward wisdom like that of Janusz Korczak.

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Table 1. The RAVES Model for Moral Character Development[3]

Each concept in model	Defining characteristics of each concept
Relationships	Attachment, positive social climate, basic needs met, village of support
Apprenticeship context	Modeling, guidance
Virtuous Models	Narratives, role models, expectations of virtuous behavior
Ethical skill development	Sensitivity, judgment, focus, action
Self-authorship	Independence, autonomy

[3] The research was initiated when all authors were at the University of Minnesota under the grant, USDE OERI Grant # R215V980001. Materials to help educators set goals, identify activities related to RAVES activities, are available at: https://cee.nd.edu/curriculum/

Table 2. Four broad ethical skills with more specific skills for each

ETHICAL SENSITIVITY	**ETHICAL REASONING**
Understand emotional expression	Understand ethical problems
Take the perspectives of others	Using codes & identifying judgment criteria
Connecting to others	Reasoning critically
Responding to diversity	Reasoning ethically
Controlling social bias	Understand consequences
Interpret situations	Reflect on process and outcome
Communicate well	Coping and resiliency
ETHICAL FOCUS	**ETHICAL ACTION**
Respecting others	Resolving conflicts and problems
Cultivate conscience	Assert respectfully
Help others	Taking initiative as a leader
Being a community member	Planning to implement decisions
Finding meaning in life	Cultivate courage
Valuing traditions & institutions	Persevering
Developing ethical identity & integrity	Working hard