Wisdom as Mature Moral Functioning:

Insights from Developmental Psychology and Neurobiology

Darcia Narvaez, University of Notre Dame

The goal of this chapter is to examine briefly the nature of mature moral functioning, or wisdom, from the broad view of human development. Although wisdom has been studied for some time, here I try to fill in some gaps in its conceptualization by addressing the development of emotion and expertise (e.g., specific skills and self-monitoring). It is assumed here that under optimal conditions, all (normal) persons are able to develop wisdom.

The Nature of Wisdom

What is wisdom? Perhaps we know it when we see it, but researchers cannot agree on a definition. Some define it as cognitive expertise, others as a personality factor or a matter of ego development.[1] Moreover, researchers typically either collapse moral and practical wisdom or emphasize practical wisdom as a priority. For example, Kramer defines wisdom as "excellent judgment about human affairs."[2] Life-span researchers define wisdom as a form of practical wisdom: "a metaheuristic to orchestrate mind and virtue toward excellence," an "expert

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[1]D. J. Shedlok and S. W. Cornelius, "Psychological Approaches to Wisdom and Its Development," in *Handbook of Adult Development*, eds. J. Demick & C. Andreoletti (New York: Springer, 2003), 153-168.

[2]D. Kramer, "The Ontogeny of Wisdom in its Variations," in Demick & Andreoletti, 131-152.

knowledge system concerning the fundamental pragmatics of life," or "expertise on the conduct and meaning of life."[3]

Research on wisdom, defined broadly, has made several key findings, based largely on interview data using scenarios for judging and deciding a course of action. One is that wisdom is apparent in only 5-10% of subjects. It also seems that wisdom does not show a general age trend although it is found more commonly among older than younger adults.[4] Moreover, wisdom arises in early adulthood and is further refined throughout adulthood with particular experience.[5] In addition, all age groups are better at reasoning wisely when the scenarios are familiar to their age group, suggesting that there is an experiential element.[6] Finally, wisdom is correlated with particular personality characteristics (e.g., openness, creativity) and requires basic levels of intelligence.[7] Again, these findings reflect interview data, a method that taps explicit knowledge.

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[3]P Baltes & U. Staudinger, "Wisdom: A Metaheuristic (Pragmatic) to Orchestrate Mind and Virtue Towards Excellence," in *American Psychologist* 55 (2000): 122, 123, 124.

[4]P. B. Baltes and J. Smith, "The Psychology of Wisdom and its Ontogenesis" in R. J. Sternberg (Ed.), *Wisdom: Its Nature, Origins, and Development* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 87-120.

[5]P.B. Baltes & U. Kunzmann, "Wisdom," in *The Psychologist* 16, no. 3 (2003): 131-133.

[6]D. Kramer, "The Ontogeny of Wisdom in its Variations," in Demick and Andreoletti, 131-152.

[7]U. Staudinger & M. Pasupathi, "Correlates of Wisdom-related Performance in Adolescence and Adulthood: Age-graded Differences in 'Paths' Toward Desirable Development," in *Journal of Research on Adolescence* 13, no. 3 (2003): 239-268.

In contrast, Robert Sternberg, who has perhaps has the strongest generalist definition of wisdom, emphasizes non-conscious or implicit knowledge.[8] He describes a balance theory of wisdom, which is mediated by values: "Tacit knowledge underlying practical intelligence is applied to balance intrapersonal, interpersonal, and extrapersonal interests to achieve a balance of the responses to the environmental context of adaptation to, shaping of, and selection of environments in order to achieve a common good."[9] (Again, practical and moral wisdom are collapsed.) In this paper, I adopt an expertise view of wisdom as comprised of both non-conscious intuitions built from experience and deliberate conscious understanding.

The research on wisdom described so far has focused primarily on judgment or decision making. This work can be enriched by combining it with research in moral psychology that has also emphasized judgment, but has focused on reasoning used to advocate a certain action choice in a moral dilemma. In this tradition, researchers find that people conceptualize moral problems differently, based on age and education.[10] As individuals develop in moral judgment, transformations occur in how they construe their obligations to others. Kohlberg described these changes in complexity as stages of moral reasoning.[11] These transformations also can be viewed

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[8]R. Sternberg, "Abilities are Forms of Developing Expertise," in *Educational Researcher* 3 (1998): 22-35.

[9]R. Sternberg, "Abilities," 22-35.

[10]E.g. Lawrence Kohlberg, *The Psychology of Moral Development: Essays on Moral Development*, Vol. 2 (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1984) and J. R. Rest, *Development in Judging Moral Issues* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1979).

[11]Kohlberg, *Psychology*.

as alternative moral schemas about how it is possible to organize cooperation.[12] As moral judgment matures, an individual's concerns expand, and he or she is able to consider the welfare of more and more "others" when conceptualizing ideal forms of cooperation (e.g., at the lowest schema, one is primarily concerned for self, whereas in the most developed schema, one includes concern for those one will never meet). These changes certainly contribute to wisdom.

So far, we have seen that in the attempt to understand wisdom, some psychologists emphasize practical intelligence, whereas others emphasize the integration of virtue and expertise. [13] We have also seen that other research on moral reasoning can tell us more about the processes involved in the development of wisdom. But philosophical reflection also needs to inform our understanding of wisdom.

In the history of philosophy a distinction has been made between *phronesis*, practical wisdom used to meet one's goals, and moral virtue. Narvaez, Gleason and Mitchell identify three perspectives on the relationship between practical wisdom, *phronesis*, and moral virtue.[14] One

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[12]James Rest, D. Narvaez, M.J. Bebeau and S.J. Thoma, *Postconventional Moral Thinking: A Neo-Kohlbergian Approach*, (Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1999).

[13]For an example of the first type, see R. Sternberg, "Abilities are Forms of Developing Expertise," in *Educational Researcher* 3 (1998): 22-35. For an example of the second, see P Baltes & U. Staudinger, "Wisdom: A Metaheuristic (Pragmatic) to Orchestrate Mind and Virtue Towards Excellence," in *American Psychologist* 55 (2000): 123-136.

[14]D. Narvaez, T. Gleason, & C. Mitchell, "Moral Virtue and Practical Wisdom: Theme Comprehension in Children, Youth and Adults," in *Journal of Genetic Psychology* 171 No. 4 (2010):1-26.

view considers practical wisdom and virtue as essential to if not separable from the virtues.[15] Aristotle contended that *phronesis* unites and powers the use of the virtues, making moral virtue impossible without *phronesis*.[16] In this case, the two cannot be separated. The second view divides practical wisdom from morality entirely.[17] In Kant's view, the human being has an empirical side driven by prudential self-interest. Humans also have a rational side which allows the individual to set aside self-interest and use moral reasoning as a guide to behavior. In this view, *phronesis* is primary and moral virtue comes later with the skills of rationality. A third view, which Narvaez and colleagues call the "developmental view," emphasizes the role of experience in wisdom development.[18] Because experience is founded in sociality, moral virtue develops first, and because life experience occurs over time, *phronesis* develops more slowly. The latter requires domain specific experience for its success and can take years to develop. On the other hand, the development of moral virtue starts from birth and is necessary for social survival. Narvaez and colleagues' developmental studies supported the third view, showing that moral understanding comes first before practical wisdom, findings that conform with virtue ethics theory.[19]

<div align="center">The Development of Wisdom and Virtue</div>

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[15]Plato, *The Republic*, 2nd ed. rev. trans. D. Lee (London: Penguin Books, 1955/1987).

[16]Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. W.D. Ross (London: Oxford, 1925/1988).

[17]Immanuel Kant, *Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals*, trans. James W. Ellington (New York: Hacket, 1785/1993).

[18]D. Narvaez, et al, "Moral Virtue and Practical Wisdom," 363-388.

[19]Ibid.

According to some modern virtue theorists, practical wisdom cannot be found in the young. Although children and adolescents may have developed moral virtue appropriate for their ages, they lack world experience on how to apply moral virtue well. According to Hursthouse, "Both the virtuous adult and the nice child have good intentions, but the child is much more prone to mess things up because he is ignorant of what he needs to know in order to do what he intends."[20] In other words, practical wisdom involves knowing what ends are good and how to reach them in a beneficial way. Hursthouse implies a developmental story to wisdom development that has been corroborated by research.[21]

Nevertheless, moral character is often discussed from the viewpoint of an adult—almost as if you are born with it, or not. Some subscribe to a biological determinism (i.e., "bad seed", "poor genes"), a perspective not rooted in valid empirical evidence.[22] Genes might play a role in character, but there are many other factors that also play a role, making the role of genetics very small (but easiest to measure).[23] Also, something might look genetic, like temperament, but only because other environmental factors have not been examined such as gestational and perinatal experiences that make deep impressions on the child and the mother-child relationship.

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[20]R. Hursthouse, "Virtue ethics," in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Vol. 3, ed. E. N. Zalta (2003), http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2003/entries/ethics-virtue/.

[21]D. Narvaez, et al, "Moral Virtue and Practical Wisdom," 1-26.

[22]Although it was rooted in bad science, see R.C. Lewonton, S. Rose, & L.J. Kamin, *Not in Our Genes: Biology, Ideology and Human Nature* (New York: Pantheon, 1984).

[23]R. C. Richardson, *Evolutionary Psychology as Maladapted Psychology* (Cambridge: MA, MIT Press, 2007).

If moral character is not genetic or inborn, how does it develop? We know quite a bit about how relationships with caregivers in early life influence well-being and personality throughout life. [24] Caregivers actually shape the systems and functioning of body and brain, the latter of which is only 25% complete at birth. For example, the functioning of the vagus nerve which is implicated in the proper performance of all major body systems and also linked to capabilities for compassion, is dependent on warm responsive care. Caregivers also help determine how emotion systems develop—which ones become habitual or are easily triggered by outside events. They form implicit understandings of what relationships are for—in warm, responsive settings, relationships are enjoyable, in neglectful and abusive settings, relationships are for manipulation and power. Caregivers instruct the child on how to manage emotions (e.g., as informative or as dangerous) and how to deal with the needs of the self (e.g., kindly or harshly). Factors like these shape moral character from birth.

Although there are other sensitive periods in life, none seem to be as sensitive as the first years of life when irreversible designs are established. Other periods of increased plasticity include early adolescence, therapy, but most important for this paper, emerging adulthood (ages 18-26). During these periods the brain is more malleable than it normally is, allowing for a greater impact of experience. In sum, most critical for moral formation, perhaps in contrast to other areas of expertise, are personal relationships —beginning with the mutual co-regulation established with the caregiver and the life-long co-construction by parents, friends, mentors and others. So if you want to be a socially or morally adept person, you should be immersed, like an

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[24]For more information, see the forthcoming D. Narvaez, J. Panksepp, J. Shore, and T. Gleason, eds, *Human Nature, Early Experience, and the Environment of Evolutionary Adaptedness* (New York: Oxford University Press).

apprentice, in an environment where good social skills are encouraged and supported by those with more capacities. We look next at the moral propensities that humans carry.

<div align="center">The Beginnings of Moral Character: Triune Ethics</div>

Evolution predisposes human beings to three basic ethical orientations according to Triune Ethics Theory (TET).[25] These moral orientations are rooted in unconscious emotional systems shaped by experience and predispose one to react to and act on events in particular ways. The three ethical orientations proposed by Triune Ethics theory are called Security, Engagement, and Imagination. See Table 1.

<div align="center">--insert Table 1 about here--</div>

The Ethic of Security is based in instincts for self-preservation, often relying on defensive aggression (Bunker Security) or conditioned submission (Wallflower Security). The conditioned, primitive ethic (Security) perceives choices with filters of threat and safety. When emotions are dysregulated, the security orientation may dominate in situations of threat either as an externalizing, aggressive morality (bunker security) or an internalizing, collapsing morality (wallflower security). The individual has a difficult time dealing with social stress and is caught in a self-centered manner of making moral decisions.

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[25]I develop these ideas in greater detail in my "Triune Ethics: The Neurobiological Roots of Our Multiple Moralities," in *New Ideas in Psychology* 26 (2008): 95-119; "Triune Ethics Theory and Moral Personality" in *Moral Personality, Identity and Character: An Interdisciplinary Future*, eds. D. Narvaez and D.K. Lapsley (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 136-158; and "Moral Complexity: The Fatal Attraction of Truthiness and the Importance of Mature Moral Functioning," in *Perspectives on Psychological Science* 5 no. 2 (2010): 163-186.

The Ethic of Engagement is oriented to face-to-face emotional affiliation with others in the present moment and is linked to the prosocial emotions of compassion and gratitude. It represents full presence in the moment for intersubjectivity and resonance with the Other. Engagement is a more non-verbal, right-brain-dominant ethic that is able to perceive life holistically, in rich context and with reverence.[26] An exemplar is the devoted mother who is in love with the child but at the same time respects the child's individual dignity.

The Ethic of Imagination is able to abstract from the present moment which is helpful when prosocial emotions are engaged (Communal Imagination) but potentially harmful when detached from emotion (Detached Imagination) or related to morally-mandated aggression toward and dominance of others to satisfy ego needs (Vicious Imagination). When emotions are discouraged or discounted in formative years, the more verbal, more left-brain ethic (Imagination) may become dominant in one's personality. One may adopt a more detached approach to relationships and moral functioning, focusing more on abstractions like decontextualized principles or non-human areas of life. Human life itself may be less valued.

Each ethic is dominated by different parts of the brain, influenced by physiological systems which can unconsciously shape perception and action choices. Each ethic can distinctively influence ideological choices, perception, attention, and information processing. When an orientation is used as a driver of moral action, trumping other choices, it becomes an ethical orientation.

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[26]P. Woodruff, *Reverence: Restoring a Forgotten Virtue* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002).

In contrast to moral development theories that focus on top-down, deliberative reasoning,[27] Triune Ethics theory focuses on bottom-up construction of moral propensities shaped by experience. Their availability and interplay are shaped by experience during sensitive periods. One may be dispositionally oriented to an ethic based on early life experience. In several studies, Narvaez, Brooks and Mattan found that attachment was related to personality factors and both to ethical orientation one adopts or strives for.[28] Those with poor attachment were more likely to have a security orientation whereas those with good attachment were more likely to have an engagement or imagination orientation. Moreover, one's ethical orientation was related to moral behavior. For example, those with security identities were less likely to report being honest, having integrity or taking action for the less fortunate, whereas the opposite was found for those with engagement identities. Thus, capacities for moral functioning begin from a young age and are based in emotion development.

Situations can promote one ethic or another. Fearful situations activate the security ethic whereas nurturing situations are likely to activate the engagement ethic. An active ethic influences sensibilities such as perception, for example, narrowing vision in the case of Security and widening it in the case of Engagement.[29] However, when an ethic is primed by the circumstance, it occurs in interaction with personality disposition. For example, when agreeable

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[27]E.g. Kohlberg, *Psychology of Moral Development*.

[28]D. Narvaez, and J. Brooks, *The Three Faces of Morality: The Relation of Moral Mindsets to Personality, Identity, and Action* (Manuscript in preparation, 2010).

[29]T. W. Schmitz, E. DeRosa and A.K. Anderson, "Opposing Influences of Affective State Valence on Visual Cortical Encoding," in *Journal of Neuroscience* 29, No. 22 (2009):7199-7207.

people are provoked, they are less likely to aggress subsequently, unlike those who are less agreeable.[30]

So far we have expanded the notion of wisdom to include emotion development. However, there is more to be accounted for beyond reasoning and emotion. Mature moral functioning requires expertise in the components and subcomponents of ethical sensitivity, judgment, motivation and action.[31] It is this broader view of moral and practical wisdom that is described here.

<div align="center">Fostering Mature Moral Functioning</div>

Integrative Ethical Education provides an empirically-derived model for fostering mature moral functioning.[32] It proposes five ways to foster moral wisdom: through relationships,

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[30]B.P. Meier, M.D. Robinson, & B.M. Wilkowski, "Turning the Other Cheek: Agreeableness and the Regulation of Aggression-related Primes," in *Psychological Science* 17 no. 5 (2006): 136-142.

[31]D. Narvaez, "Moral Complexity," 163-186. Elsewhere my colleagues and I report on a set of skills that need fostering for moral action capabilities (Narvaez, et al, "Integrative Ethical Education" in *Handbook of Moral Development*, eds. Melanie Killen and Judith Smetana (Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum, 2006), 703-733; and D. Narvaez, T.S. Bock, L. Endicott, & J. Lies, "Minnesota's Community Voices and Character Education Project," in J*ournal of Research in Character Education* 2, (2004): 89-112.

[32]I develop this approach to education in more detail in my "The Neo-Kohlbergian Tradition and Beyond: Schemas, Expertise and Character," in *Nebraska Symposium on Motivation: Moral Motivation Through the Lifespan* Vol. 51, eds. G. Carlo & C. Pope-Edwards

climate, skills development through apprenticeship, self-authorship and community integration

and support. I discuss them in three groups here.

Relationships, Climate and Practices. As mentioned previously relationships and culture

are vital for moral character formation. Establishing secure relationships with students

establishes lines of influence and calm interactions that promote more engagement and

imagination. TET points out how one's moral orientation or mindset can affect moral behavior.

Moral mindsets are fostered by the situational climate and group culture. Others have pointed out

how particular attitudes influence moral decisions and behavior, such as how "five dangerous

ideas" (superiority, vulnerability, injustice, distrust, helplessness) can lead to aggression between

individuals and groups.[33] Fostering a cooperative, rather than competitive, climate in the

classroom or group allows for engagement and imagination to flourish as well.

Students of all ages can be made aware of how their moral orientations can shift from one

ethic to another depending on the situation, the person with whom they are relating, and a host of

other factors. Educators can promote a common understanding of the different ethical

orientations and how they are rooted in a different brain/body system and emotional sets.

Students can learn to attend to the type of emotion and attitude they are promoting in their action

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(Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2005), 119–163; as well as my, "Integrative Ethical

Education;" my "How Cognitive and Neurobiological Sciences Inform Values Education for

Creatures Like Us," pp. 127-159 in *Values Education and Lifelong Learning: Philosophy,*

Policy, and Practices, ed. D. Aspin and J. Chapman (Dordrecht, The Netherlands: Springer

Press International, 2008); and my "Triune Ethics: Neurobiological Roots," 95-119.

[33]R. Eidelson & J. Eidelson, "Dangerous Ideas*:* Five Beliefs that Propel Groups Toward

Conflict," in *American Psychologist* 58 (2003): 182-192.

choices and how these emotions and attitudes affect their subsequent behavior. See Table 2. The

instructor is also careful to select activities that foster positive emotions and imaginative

response, which are related to mindful morality.

Mindful Morality. Major religions and scholars of morality suggest that human potential

lies in compassion and the positive emotions of gratitude, love and forgiveness, behaviors

reflecting presence, I-Thou relationships, hospitality, and agape love. Feminist scholars have

emphasizes similar constructs, pointing to the greater capacities of women to be governed by

such orientations at least in Western societies of this era.[34]

--insert Table 2 about here--

Mindful morality uses the whole brain. It involves both a here-and-now orientation,

"Engagement Calm" or "Harmony Morality," full emotional presence and responsivity in the

moment, and "Communal Imagination," the capacity to maintain a sense of emotional

relatedness to the Other (right-brain engagement) while at the same time using the abstraction

capabilities of the left brain to solve moral problems. Also necessary is extensive experience in a

particular domain for on-the-ground understanding of context. Mindful morality makes moral

innovation possible as represented in the work of Geoffrey Canada who uses communal

imagination to envision and establish an alternative to the piecemeal efforts on behalf of poor

children, the Harlem Children's Zone.[35]

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[34]E.g. C. Gilligan, *In a Different Voice* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982); N.

Noddings, *Caring: A Feminist Approach to Ethics and Moral Education,* 2nd ed. (Berkeley:

University of California Press, 2003).

[35]Tough, Paul, *Whatever it takes* (New York: Houghton Mifflin). Moral exemplars like

Canada exhibit at the same time higher affiliation with others (communion and compassion) and

Mindfulness has to do with staying emotionally and attentionally present in the moment and can be practiced through meditation and prayer. Mindfulness has all sorts of positive effects, including improved health, well-being and prosocial behavior.[36] To practice, one must pay attention to the newness of the current experience (rather than drift off absentmindedly). Free play with others is a technique for learning mindful presence. Savoring is a similar idea in which one pays attention to the positive feelings one has in life.[37] This can be facilitated through journaling about positive or negative events and become more in tune with one's reactions. For those whose emotions were habitually negated and suppressed in some fashion, change may require a responsive, caring relationship that repairs the systems of trust and attachment to others.[38] In one way or another, for mindful morality, it is important to learn to be socially mindful—to be aware of the relational context and the uniqueness of those with whom one relates. Table 2 shows several skills needed for the practice of mindful morality.

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higher self efficacy or agency (See L. J. Walker and J. Frimer, "Moral Personality Exemplified," in D. Narvaez and D. K. Lapsely, eds, *Personality, Identity, and Character: Explorations in Moral Psychology* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 232-255. These capacities are best cultivated from a young age in the methods described above. However there are ways to foster such virtues in adults and emerging adults, which I outline below.

[36]Ellen Langer, *Mindfulness* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1989).

[37]Fred B. Bryant & Joseph Veroff, *Savoring: A New Model of Positive Experience* (Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum, 2007).

[38]Daniel J. Siegel, *The Developing Mind: How Relationships and the Brain Interact to Shape Who We Are* (New York: Guilford, 1999).

Students can learn to increase positive (and decrease negative) emotions and attitudes towards others. Learning the habits of positive social emotions such as gratitude (keeping a gratitude journal), sympathy (learning to give people the benefit of the doubt) and compassion (taking the perspective of another) lubricate the opportunity for mindful moral action. Working with others of equal status towards a common goal can increase empathy and understanding.[39]

Skills for Moral Action Learned Through Apprenticeship

Although the language can sound technical, expertise development is how people become virtuous.[40] Through the course of building perceptual skills (sensibilities), motivational skills (focus), reasoning skills (judgment) and action skills (implementation), individuals move towards expertise. There are many kinds of skills necessary for moral or ethical expertise, including procedural and conditional knowledge that can be employed automatically when needed (doing the right thing at the right time in the right way).

Rest proposed a four-component model to delineate the processes of moral behavior, which Narvaez has used as a guide for developing educational interventions.[41] The four

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[39]Consider the social contact theory associated with Gordan Allport, *The Nature of Prejudice* (Garden City, NJ: Doubleday and Company, 1958).

[40]F. Varela, *Ethical Know-How: Action, Wisdom, and Cognition* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1999).

[41]For the original model, see J.R. Rest, "Morality," in *Handbook of Child Psychology*, *Vol. 3: Cognitive Development*, 4th ed, eds. P. Mussen, J. Flavell, & E. Markman (New York: Wiley, 1983), 556-629 and D. Narvaez & J.R. Rest, "The Four Components of Acting Morally," in *Moral Behavior and Moral Development: An Introduction*, eds. W. Kurtines & J. Gewirtz (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1995), 385-400. For my appropriation of it, see my "Neo-

components include capacities for ethical sensitivity (noticing and interpreting events), ethical

judgment (reasoning and deciding on moral action), ethical focus (prioritizing moral action), and

ethical action (having the wherewithal to complete the moral action). Like other kinds of

intelligence, moral intelligence is embodied in action.[42] It is not enough to be ethically sensitive

(e.g., to feel empathy or sympathy) or to make a good moral judgment or to be motivated to take

a moral action. Ultimately, it is the accomplishment of the action that matters most (which of

course relies on these other processes).[43] A great deal of practice is required to make these skills

and processes automatically available when needed.

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Some suggested skills are listed in Table 3. Skills in ethical sensitivity include connecting

to others, using appropriate emotional expression, taking the perspectives of others, and

controlling social bias. Skills in ethical judgment include understanding ethical problems,

predicting and responding to consequences, choosing good environments, and developing

resilient thinking. Skills in ethical focus include valuing community traditions, cultivating

conscience, respecting others, and developing ethical integrity. Skills in ethical action include

resolving conflicts, taking initiative as a leader, asserting respectfully, planning and

implementing decisions.

It is obvious that only knowing *about* skills is not enough. How does one actually learn

them as capacities that become available for deployment at the right moment and in the right

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Kohlbergian Tradition," 119-163; "Integrative Ethical Education," 703-733; and "Minnesota's

Community Voices," 89-112.

[42]Varela, *Ethical Know-How*.

[43]J.D. Trout, *The Empathy Gap* (New York: Viking/Penguin, 2009).

way? Capacity or skill development, in education circles, is understood as a matter of expertise development.[44] Children are universal novices and through education can develop multiple skills towards expertise in every domain, including the skills and capacities for moral action.

What does instruction for expertise look like? Education towards expertise is best fostered by an apprenticeship model. People learn best from immersion in experience accompanied by a mentor who guides perception and offers explanation. An apprenticeship model can provide a step-by-step but holistic experience that fosters growth and change. [45]

What does the novice learn? Expert knowledge includes both deliberative and intuitive systems "knowing that" (semantic knowledge) and "knowing how when, and how much" (conditional and procedural knowledge). [46] All of these types of knowledge are fostered in mentor-guided immersion. Also, two types of understanding are cultivated in apprenticeship for expertise, good intuitions and deliberate understanding. Good intuitions are cultivated through immersion and good feedback from the contexts of learning (thus fostering implicit or intuitive understanding). Perceptions and sensibilities are fine tuned and developed into chronically accessed constructs and actions.[47] Deliberative understanding is developed by the mentor

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[44] *How People Learn: Brain, Mind, Experience, and School*, eds. J.D. Bransford, A.L. Brown, & R.R. Cocking (Washington, DC: National Academy Press, 1999).

[45]Barbara Rogoff, *Apprenticeship in Thinking: Cognitive Development in Social Context* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990).

[46]R.M. Hogarth, *Educating Intuition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001)

[47]D.K. Lapsley & D. Narvaez, "The Psychological Foundations of Everyday Morality and Moral Expertise," in *Character Psychology and Character Education,* eds. D.K. Lapsley & F.C. Power (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2005), 140-165.

providing theoretical grounding and meta-cognitive guidance. Interpretive frameworks (schemas) are learned and, with practice, applied automatically (thereby fostering semantic or explicit knowledge). Frameworks are applied for information processing, judging options, taking action.

My colleagues and I have applied expertise development to moral formation.[48] We have identified four levels that instructors can use to guide students towards expertise. The first, immersion in examples and opportunities, involves immersing students in the "big picture" showing them exemplars of action. At the second level, attention to facts and skills, instructors help the student make important distinctions within the domain. Different skills are practiced until they become second nature. The third level, practice procedures, allows students plenty of practice in the practice of skill sets. At the final level, integrate across contexts, students have opportunities to practice the skill in different contexts. All these are done under the supervision and guidance of the instructor.

<div align="center">Self-Authorship and Community Integration</div>

The typical goal for education, including moral education, is for students to be able to monitor their own performances. Ultimately the teacher wants to be not needed. Indeed, as Aristotle pointed out and modern research confirms, virtuous character takes a lot of immersed *practice* in an environment that provides good, rather than poor, information on performance ("kind" versus "wicked" environments) with a more expert *guide* at your side. [49] Aristotle pointed out the need for mentors in guiding actions and choices until one is able to mentor

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[48]See my "Minnesota's Community Voices," 89-112 and "Integrative Ethical Education," 703-733.

[49]Hogarth, *Educating Intuition*

oneself.[50] In an apprenticeship model, the expert scaffolds the learning experience, stepping away more and more as the apprenticeship is able to function well enough on their own. Yet the apprentice continues to consult with the mentor when things are challenging. It is good to remember that we all need mentor advice from time to time throughout life.

In the same way, all people need a community of support for their learning and behaving. It is only in the West that a person is viewed as an individual who can (and should) stand on his own. In the rest of the world, typically, persons are understood only as members of communities—no one lives life alone and to try to do so is madness. The individual is comprised of his or her relationships. How well he or she is doing depends on how well the relationships are doing. A virtuous person is aware of this level of embeddedness, the nesting of the individual person in a network of relationships, an ecological context that includes other life forms as well as human beings. The virtuous person knows what Aristotle pointed out, that a person learns and practices virtue within a community, and that the practicing of virtue leads to individual and community flourishing.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have integrated research on wisdom with my own work on educating moral exemplars. In doing so, I have suggested that we should treat wisdom as mature moral functioning, something that develops over time. I have identified three different ethical orientations that are grounded in neurobiological structures and shaped by both general experience and skills training. Treating moral development as a form of expertise development,

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[50]J.O. Urmson, *Aristotle's Ethics* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1988).

we see that, by apprenticeship, one is able to develop the moral self-authorship that is a sign of mature moral functioning.

Although the detailed work is yet to be done on day-to-day moral expertise development, prior scholarship suggest that the college years are particularly good (a sensitive period) for making students aware of their potential—for good or for ill—and for fostering the habits and attitudes that will accompany them through life. [Footnote: Anne Colby, Thomas, E., Beaumont, E., & Stephens, J. *Educating citizens: Preparing America's undergraduates for lives of moral and civic responsibility* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2003); Sharon Daloz Parks, *Big questions, worthy dreams: Mentoring young adults in their search for meaning, purpose, and faith* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2000).] The development of self awareness, including of one's moral propensities and how to foster them, can get a good start in these impressionable years. Although many years of practice are required, college can shape the path towards moral wisdom.

Table 1. *Triune Ethics Moral Orientations*

Triune Ethics
Major Types and Sub-Types
Engagement Calm and Communal Imagination
Mindful Morality (The "Moral Zone")
Imagination
Detached Imagination (Intellectualized Morality)
Vicious Imagination (Righteous Morality)
Communal Imagination (Agape Morality)
Engagement
Engagement Distress (Co-Dependent Morality)
Engagement Calm (Harmony Morality)
Security
Wallflower Security (Submissive Morality)
Bunker Security (Challenging Morality)

Table 2. Skill and Knowledge Base For Mindful Morality

KNOWLEDGE

Competing moral mindsets within the self (TET types and subtypes)

How emotions and habits foster a mindset

DISPOSITIONS

Fostering of positive emotions

Non-judgmentalness of others

Sympathy for others

Taking perspective of others

SKILLS FOR MINDFULNESS

Self-awareness of feelings

Maintaining presence in the moment

Self monitoring of habit development (e.g., controlling social bias)

ETHICAL PROCESS SKILLS (see Table 3)

Ethical sensitivity

Ethical judgment

Ethical focus

Ethical action

Table 3 Ethical Process Skills

_____

ETHICAL SENSITIVITY

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, what possible reactions

and outcomes might ensue.

Sample Ethical Sensitivity Skills:

connecting to others, responding to diversity,

interpreting situations, communicate effectively

Exemplar: Mother Teresa

_____

ETHICAL JUDGMENT

Reasoning about the possible actions in the situation

and judging which action is most ethical.

Sample Ethical Judgment Skills:

use context-specific codes of conduct; coping and resiliency;

understand consequences; reflect on the process and outcome;

Exemplar: King Solomon

_____

ETHICAL FOCUS

Prioritizing the ethical action over other goals and needs

(either in the particular situation, or as a habit).

Sample Ethical Focus Skills:

respecting others, cultivate conscience, act responsibly, help others,

finding meaning in life, valuing traditions and institutions,

developing ethical identity and integrity

Exemplar: Martin Luther King, Jr.

_____

ETHICAL ACTION

Involves implementing the ethical action by knowing how to do so

and following through despite hardship.

Sample Ethical Action Skills:

resolving conflicts and problems, assert respectfully,

taking initiative as a leader, planning to implement decisions,

cultivate courage, persevering

Exemplar: Paul of Tarsus

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