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EDPC 610 – Foundations II
Assignment Five

Journal Reflection – Character Education

In Thomas Lickona's book "Educating for Character," Lickona states that "character education is the deliberate effort to help people understand, care about and act upon core ethical values." In an article, "How to Do Character Education," Elkind and Sweet state that Character Education is a process that involves a combination of knowledge, feelings and action. And, that the best way to teach character education is to incorporate it throughout the curriculum. The first step that we as educators must do is to take a look at ourselves and our own attitudes, stereotypes and biases. Just like in multicultural education, when teaching character education you must be aware of any negative attitudes, stereotypes or biases that may affect your day to day approach toward teaching a specific subject. This is important because in teaching character it is important that teachers must first and foremost model the appropriate behaviors, as well as, the values that are taught.

Teaching values in classrooms is typically a controversial issue. Who determines what values are to be taught? As with all lessons, the best place to start is by looking at the State Standards. They are filled with excellent opportunities to incorporate the teaching of values. There are so many values that can be taught that you can easily incorporate them into any lesson. Some examples of values education for students, at any age, are Honesty, Trustworthiness, Respect, Responsibility, Fairness, Caring, Citizenship, Cooperation, Prejudice, and Conflict Resolution. Character Education for younger students might include being friends, controlling anger, bullying, asking for help

and doing the right thing. In addition, older students might benefit from more from a focus on diligence, integrity, courage, and dealing with pressure. And, we can do this by incorporating lessons that already exist in your classroom.

Character Education can be taught through class discussion. It could be as simple as analyzing a character in a novel or as complex as arguing both sides of genetic testing. There are many opportunities for students to participate in Service Learning Projects. Sites like Charactercounts.org list various project-based learning activities that focus on Character Education. The Internet provides innumerous resources for students, teachers, administrator and parents. Boston University's site The Center for Advancement of Character and Ethics provides students, teachers and parents with curriculum resources, booklists for parents and students, parenting tips and professional publications. The CACE's site bases Character Education on the Six E's: Example, Explanation, Exhortation, Ethical Environment, Experience and Expectation of Excellence. According to the article these "concepts will help educators promote morality within each student and in the class and school environments.

We must think of school as a community where students must exhibit the values that make up Character Education. In the article, "How to Do Character Education," the authors list ways that everyone in the school, teachers, students, staff and administrators, can build a caring community: hold class meetings to decide on class rules, plan activities or to solve problems, use cooperative learning groups, organize a Buddies program between younger and older students and by teaching conflict resolution. By instilling these values in students early on, students form healthy habits and will hopefully become successful students and eventually adults as they grow older.

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