



Character Education Transforming Schools, Staff, Students and Society Dr. Tom Harrison

Outward Bound Conference 14th October



Jubilee Centre : Theory





Jubilee Centre : Practice





Our examination is not know what virtue is, but to become good

Aristotle





'I have never let my schooling interfere with my education'

Mark Twain



Character and Outdoor Learning

KURT HAHN (1886 – 1974)

Six Declines of Modern Youth

- Decline of Fitness due to modern methods of locomotion [moving about];
- Decline of Initiative and Enterprise due to the widespread disease of spectatoritis;
- Decline of Memory and Imagination due to the confused restlessness of modern life;
- Decline of Skill and Care due to the weakened tradition of craftsmanship;
- Decline of Self-discipline due to the ever-present availability of stimulants and tranquilizers;
- Decline of Compassion due to the unseemly haste with which modern life is conducted .



Some Possible Theoretical Starting Points

a) Philosophical – i.e. Virtue Ethics

b) Psychological – i.e. Positive Psychology



Common Ground

- Focus on flourishing shared humanity
- Common understanding about the purpose of education
- Common understanding of the building blocks of character – the virtues
- Common pedagogical approaches
- Make challenges to dominant education policy on similar grounds



What is Character Education?

Character is a set of personal traits or dispositions that evoke specific emotions, inform motivation and guide conduct.

Character education is an umbrella term for all explicit and implicit educational activities that helps young people develop positive personal traits.





Character Education : Double Benefit

Human Flourishing: happy, mentally and physically well, successful individuals

Societal Flourishing: engaged moral and civically minded citizens







Ofsted Definition of Character

A 'set of positive personal traits, dispositions and virtues that informs their motivation and guides their conduct so that they reflect wisely, learn eagerly, behave with integrity and cooperate consistently well with others. This gives pupils the qualities they need to flourish in our society.'



Grade descriptors for personal development

Outstanding (1)

 The way the school goes about developing pupils' character is exemplary and is worthy of being shared with others.

Good (2)

 The curriculum and the school's wider work support pupils to develop character.



Department for Education

- Mentioned in white papers under Labour
- Agenda ramped up under Nicky Morgan

 schools awards, grants etc
- Agenda continued under Damien Hinds
- Idea has got broad cross party support



Damien Hinds – 7th February 2019

'One key area that I want the group to focus on will be developing a set of benchmarks for schools to use so that they can deliver their own approach to developing character and assess themselves on how they are doing.'

Character should NOT be...

...another thing on the teacher's plate...

... It should be the plate itself











Meta-Virtue of Practical Wisdom or Phronesis

- Over-arching 'moderating' virtue
- Learnt through experience development of good habits
- Useful when virtues conflict
- Useful when the rules are not clear or the consequences are hard to calculate

Virtues can be...

UBILEE CENTRE

FOR CHARACTER & VIRTUES

Caught: the school community of both staff and students provide the example, culture, and inspirational influence in a positive ethos that motivates and promotes character development.

Taught: the school provides educational experiences in and out of the classroom that equip students with the language, knowledge, understanding, skills and attributes that enable character development.

Sought: the school provides varied opportunities that generate the formation of personal habits and character commitments. These help students over time to seek, desire and freely pursue their character development.



