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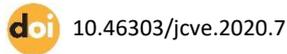Model: Repercussions for Students, Teachers, and Families.

A Value and Character Educational Model: Repercussions for Students, Teachers, and Families

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Abstract

The aim of this article is to provide some insight on the implementation of a series of values
in the educational system. The approach sought is holistic, considering that we weigh the
effects of those values not only related to students and teachers, but also to families,
government, and school administrators. This approach is new since many values and character
education studies are centered on either students or teachers, or both. Also, this article
tackles the concept of values and character education, adding the review of several related
studies, providing valuable information about the benefits and advantages that this
educational model offers based on the expectation that those values must be present in all
factors of the learning process. Finally, this article delivers a reflection on those same elements
with the goal to use it as a thought-provoking tool to consider more solutions to help students
face academic challenges and those related to life.

Keywords: values education, character education, educational leadership.

Introduction

We live in conflictive times. Different problems affect our societies—poverty, belligerent
conflicts, dictatorships, corruption, extreme ideologies, etc.—and have done so throughout
history. This article centers on the review of some literature regarding the implementation of
a series of values in school systems and how those values have helped students, teachers, and
communities. The hope is that by implementing universal values into schools' curricula,
present and future generations will benefit from those principles (Saith, 2006).

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It is important to stress the holistic approach of this endeavor: Universal values should be considered not only in connection with students, but also related to teachers, administrators, families, and governments responsible for the legislative process affecting our educational systems (Epstein, 2018).

The purpose of this paper is to show how the use of these values in schools around the world is helping students be better and happier, so that their lives are also better and more fruitful. If our students are independent, pro-active, inspired, hardworking individuals who love and enjoy their learning experience, all the world around them will be affected in a positive way, and kindness, patience, respect, compassion, and love will serve as daily instruments for a wonderful and meaningful life.

Values and Character Education

The incorporation of values in education has been present since the mandatory obligation to send children to school. As far back as in ancient Judea (11th century BCE), there are records of Jewish leaders recommending that parents be mindful about the need for educating their children. Later, Plato's *The Republic* (360 BCE) advocated for the urgent convenience of setting a system of compulsory educational services. The Aztec Empire, an alliance of three city-states (Mexico-Tenochtitlan, Texcoco, and Tlacopan), was the first organized state that obliged to provide a formal education for all children.

Within this frame of mandatory schooling for children, and as Farmer and Farmer (2015) state, "In the 1870s and 1880s, values were written into the charters of many states and territories in a number of countries, particularly Australia" (p. 22). During those times, it was expected that schools would teach values. After this time, it was preferred that schools would remain neutral or not involved in the teaching of values. Later came a period that Farmer and Farmer (2015) call "the values clarification period" (p. 22), according to which students are entitled to believe in personal or moral values that they consider appropriate. The role of the teacher was to help students understand those values.

However, in the 21st century, there has been an increased effort in schools to enhance the values or character education model. (The massacre at Columbine High School in Colorado, USA, in April of 1999, where two adolescents murdered 13 people and injured 21 others, may have had something to do with that.)

Values education, positive education, character education, or resilience learning are concepts used in many countries to express the need to help students develop their values and character. With that purpose, different organizations have been created in order to help children around the world: the Association for Living Values Education, Character.org, and Human Values Foundation, to name a few.

Values and character are interconnected. According to Farmer and Farmer (2015), "good character and the five Human Values are of course synonymous" (p. 44). The five values

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mentioned are Love, Truth, Peace, Right Conduct, and Non-Violence. Character is understood as the practical implementation of positive values by the individual (Lickona, 2008).

Values Education

Zajda (2014) defines the concept of values education as "a multifaceted process of socialization in schools, which transmits dominant values, in order to provide and legitimate the necessary link between the individual, the group and society" (p. 835). It seems that values education is the teaching of a series of values to students in order to improve the society in which we live. But what are the values in question? Zajda (2014) mentions a specific list of 22 values: tolerance, altruism, asceticism, benevolence, honesty, courage, fairness, moderation, conscientiousness, selflessness, sincerity, humility, modesty, magnanimity, sympathy, tactfulness, diligence, nobleness, trust, self-mastery, solidarity, and frugality. This author warns us about the character of these values, since he considers them to be subjective and relative.

Lovat, Clement, Dally, and Toomey (2011) stress the importance of considering the process of education as a holistic mechanism that determines the necessity of valuing all of the student's learning factors: cognitive, emotional, and social. This approach is essential if we want to find out what an effective learning process should look like since it is not limited to just one aspect of this mechanism. Newmann (1996) pointed to the learning atmosphere or ambience of learning as the key to effective teaching and learning.

Farmer and Farmer (2015) declare that there are five core universal human values: Love, Truth, Peace, Right Conduct, and Non-Violence. These authors advocate for these values to be followed in schools, to become an integral part of our educational systems. They ask for a change in ourselves as human beings: "Human Values Education is about changing ourselves so that our children, our students can change" (p. 26).

The Australian government has been a pioneer in the implementation of values education in its educational system by creating the Australian Values Education Program. This program was responsible for conducting a Values Education Study in 2003, and the final report came to important conclusions (DEST, 2003). This study was followed by the establishment of a National Framework for Values Education (DEST, 2005). In addition, the Australian Values Education Program was responsible for a series of research and practice projects from 2005 to 2009. Two of those important projects were the Values Education Good Practice School Project (VEGPSP) (DEST, 2006a, 2006b) and the Project to Test and Measure the Impact of Values Education on Student Effects and School Ambience (Lovat, Toomey, Dally, & Clement, 2009). These studies and reports will be addressed in more detail later in this article.

In Europe, the Values in Education in Europe Project (VEEP) was inaugurated in 1991. It was based on three goals: to provide guidelines on values education, to develop and publish an annotated bibliography, and to undertake a questionnaire survey on values in Europe. Taylor (1993) offers a comparative overview regarding the implementation of the values education system in 26 different European countries. Another European Values project is the European

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Values Study, which has attempted to draw conclusions regarding values since the late 1970s. In 2008, the last phase of this study took place, gathering information about values related to specific topics such as politics, religion, work, family, society, well-being, and Europe.

Outside of Europe, other countries like India, Indonesia, Japan, the Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand have established Values Education systems in their educational systems.

In India, especially in the last 10 years, the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) has started a process in all CBSE-affiliated schools by which these schools promote an educational approach where values are central. Also, organizations like Values Based Education (VbE) are promoting the addition of a values system in the schools' curriculum by helping students be better citizens, good communicators, eager contributors to society, positive thinkers, and eager learners.

The Philippines conceptualized its Values Education Framework in 1987. In 2012, a Values model was implemented in public K-12 schools. Some courses designed to reinforce these values are required, such as Introduction to Philosophy of the Human Person and Personal Development.

Character Education

Over the last 30 years, hundreds of schools throughout the world have been adding to their curriculum specific aspects to promote, enhance, and support a series of values that would shape the character of the students in a positive manner. Many researchers (Berkowitz & Bier, 2005; Carr, 2008; Lickona, 2008) stress this fact, adding that a fundamental educational reform is taking place, given the "spiritual emptiness of much of the modern life" (Lickona, 2008, p. 33). This educational movement is possible due to different organizations. One of these organizations is Character.org, founded in 1993 by a group of educators, business leaders, and researchers with the goal of helping individuals and groups develop their character through an inspiring and compassionate approach. In connection with schools, this group of professionals developed the 11 Principles of Effective Character Education:

Principle 1: Core values are defined, implemented, and embedded into school culture.
Principle 2: The school defines "character" comprehensively to include thinking, feeling, and doing.
Principle 3: The school uses a comprehensive, intentional, and proactive approach to develop character.
Principle 4: The school creates a caring community.
Principle 5: The school provides students with opportunities for moral action.
Principle 6: The school offers a meaningful and challenging academic curriculum that respects all learners, develops their character, and helps them succeed.
Principle 7: The school fosters students' self-motivation.
Principle 8: All staff share the responsibility for developing, implementing, and modeling ethical character.

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Principle 9: The school's character initiative has shared leadership and long-range support for continuous improvement.
Principle 10: The school engages families and community as partners in the character initiative.
Principle 11: The school assesses its implementation of character education, its culture and climate, and the character growth of students on a regular basis.

This group of professionals considers these principles to be a guide for schools and districts. The application of these principles is oriented to be worldwide. In the United States alone, Character.org has given the denomination "School of Character" to schools that have decided to implement the above 11 principles into their daily practices: 87 schools and 3 districts in 18 different states. Overall, at the present time, more than 500 Schools of Character are recognized, and more than 3 million educators, families, students, and other community members have benefited from this character development action plan.

Goodcharacter.com is another organization that promotes the implementation of character in schools. This company born in 1987 developed materials such as teaching guides, videos, etc., that are intended to be used by schools to incorporate character education into their curricula. The Goodcharacter.com website discusses its aim and mission: helping young people making good and productive choices in life. In order to attain that goal, they offer a series of media resources to inspire and inform.

According to Berkowitz (2011), other examples of organizations and initiatives regarding character education include the Center for Character and Citizenship; Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning; Developmental Studies Center; The Character Project; Character Plus; Character Education Partnership; Manners of the Heart, Educators for Social Responsibility, etc.

Studies on Character Education

As mentioned earlier, Australia developed the Values Education Good Practice School Project (VEGPSP), active from 2005 to 2009. This project involved two different stages, in which 316 schools around the country, with approximately 100,000 students, 10,000 teachers, and 50 college institutions, added a values education approach to their daily educational practices. The findings were expressed in two different documents related to each of the two stages: Stage 1 findings (DEST, 2006b) showed a correlation between the use of values and a better pedagogical practice. Specific improvements were strengthening the learning environment, great student attention, students more respectful and trying to strive to do their best, happier faculty and students, and a much calmer school. Stage 2 findings (DEEWR, 2008) corroborated the correlation between the implementation of values in school curricula and students' improved academic behavior and learning.

Dietsch and Bayha (2005) investigated the short-term effects of the implementation of character literature in the lesson plans among 372 fourth grade students. Table 1 summarizes the different categories considered and the effects found.

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Table 1. Implementation of character literature in the lessons plans of fourth grade students

Categories	Significant effects
1. Math grades	Yes
2. Attendance	Yes
3. Reading grades	No
4. Citizenship grades	No
5. Support and care by teachers and staff	Yes
6. Shaping the environment	Yes
7. Friendship and belonging	No
8. Student respect	No

We observe in this table that the implementation of character literature produced significant effects on four of the eight categories used in this study. The positive influence of the character approach was over math grades, attendance, support and care by teachers, and shaping the environment.

Lovat, Clement, Dally, and Toomey (2010) present a series of findings derived from several values projects carried out in Australia. Gathering evidence from the Values Education Good Practice Schools Project and the Project to Test and Measure the Impact of Values Education on Student Effects and School Ambience, they conclude that the implementation of values education contributes to an improvement in education, academic achievement, school culture, and classroom ambience.

Berkowitz (2011) mentions a list of 15 categories (see Table 2) of educational practices that enhance the fostering of an individual's values, presented as a result of a review of research.

Table 2. Research supported character education implementation strategies

Research supported character education implementation strategies
Peer interactive strategies
Cooperative learning
Moral dilemma discussion
Service to others
Developmental discipline
Role-modeling and mentoring
Nurturance
Trust and trustworthiness
High expectations
School-wide character focus
Family/community involvement
Pedagogy of empowerment
Teaching social-emotional competencies
Induction
Professional development

Elements

In this section, we address the question of how a values-oriented school can help the lives of the members of that school and community. We will focus on the elements that have an influence in the educational process, and the different possibilities available for them, with

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the common goal of helping students become the best possible versions of themselves as human beings, which ultimately will help them to be better prepared for life and its continuous challenges. The order in which we address these elements is not random. We believe that the main influences students have in life is home and family. Schools, then, help support the education and readiness of students for life. However, schools and teachers must follow the guidelines imposed by governments and administrators. Addressing the question of values education and leaving some of these elements out (government, administrators, and family) would tackle the issue in a partial manner, not in a holistic way as we envisioned from the beginning. Also, we wish to stress that the approach toward these elements is based on the perspective of values.

Family

Family values represent an essential influence in children's lives in school in the United States (Ginsburg & Hanson, 1985; Weisner & Garnier, 1992). Different families have different sets of values depending on their own backgrounds, cultures, education, experiences, and beliefs. For instance, Reese et al. (1995) mention the concept of agrarian values as opposed to an academic occupational model. Judd et al. (2006) state that agrarian values are proper for those living in rural areas, farming communities, or small and isolated areas, in which live stoic, self-reliant individuals prone to coping with problems, suffering in silence, and inclined to rely more on family and friends than on professionals. Also, the residents of these areas are likely to assume more self-responsibility. Reese et al. (1995) consider that "under certain conditions, these values may be complementary to those of the school and in fact serve to support educational adaptation and achievement" (p. 57). Jorge Puyó (1898-1990), an illustrious self-taught shepherd and author, embodies the perfect example of what those agrarian values are. He reminds us of the importance of being loyal and truthful to these values, which helped him in his insatiable eagerness to keep learning and improving in every way. He was the last person who wore the *traje típico ansotano* as a symbol of his loyalty and commitment to a set of values that helped him be a remarkable member of his community. Those values influenced every page of his books (Puyó, 1950, 1967).

Regarding the academic occupational model, on the other hand, Reese et al. (1995) state that it "is characterized by a competitive labor market, social mobility, schooling as preparation for economically specialized occupations, and mass participation in national government" (p. 76). At the same time, parents' involvement in education is considered a positive influence on students' performance (Anderson & Minke, 2007). Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (1995) distinguish three main causes of parents' involvement: they developed a sense of participation in their children's education, they believe that their help is beneficial for their children's success in school, and they see opportunities for getting involved with the school.

Regardless of the different reasons that parents decide to get involved in education, the values that the family transmits generation after generation has a powerful influence on their children. Also, those same values produce specific effects in the interactions between families and teachers and administrators, as essential elements of the schools (Ginsburg & Hanson, 1985; Weisner & Garnier, 1992).

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Government

The government as a representative institution has the responsibility to represent its citizens and transmit the values upon which a society has been founded. In any activity, in any profession, in order to deliver the responsibilities related to that post in the best way possible, it is essential to respect and appreciate the members and the organizations that represent a specific field. Those people must feel respected, appreciated, and treated with dignity. They need government support. This is an essential factor that entails the support that politicians offer to schools to deliver the best education possible (Friedman, 1955).

The Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) is a study by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) to evaluate the educational systems of 72 different countries in the fields of math, reading, and science. The study started in 2000 and takes place every three years. During the 2015 study, 540,000 15-year-old students took part. Each student was given two hours to complete the assessment. Results of the 2015 PISA study are shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Top 10 countries of PISA (2015) study in math, reading, and science

#	Math	Reading	Science
1	Singapore	Singapore	Singapore
2	China, Hong Kong	China, Hong Kong	Japan
3	Macau	Canada	Estonia
4	Taiwan	Finland	Taiwan
5	Japan	Ireland	Finland
6	China	Estonia	Macau
7	South Korea	South Korea	Canada
8	Switzerland	Japan	Vietnam
9	Estonia	Norway	China, Hong Kong
10	Canada	New Zealand	China

Given these results, it is suitable to ask ourselves: What is the educational model in those countries that allow them to obtain such results? What are the principles and values that their governments apply to their educational models to be successful? What are the government values and principles that teachers are encouraged to implement to be effective? Specifically, Table 4 shows the amount of disciplines in which those countries' results allow them to be in the Top 10 of the PISA.

Table 4. Countries and disciplines within the Top 10 of PISA results.

Top 10 countries in all categories	Top 10 countries in two categories	Top 10 countries in one category
Singapore	China Taipei (math & science)	South Korea (math)
Japan	Taiwan (math & science)	Switzerland (math)
Estonia	Macau (math & science)	Norway (reading)
China (Hong-Kong)	Finland (reading & science)	Ireland (reading)
Canada		New Zealand (reading)
		Vietnam (science)

It is obvious that further research is necessary to answer the above questions.

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Governments are chosen to represent their citizens. The vision that a government holds about a specific issue is extrapolated into specific measures. Education is one of the most important aspects in our societies. Being able to provide a high-quality education will help to create a much better world. But in order to provide that level of service in education, governments must help the educational institutions to ensure they can offer good conditions for their teachers, administrators, and students (Friedman, 1955).

Governments have the possibility to influence the culture of schools by developing a vision in which administrators, teachers, and students believe in high expectations, where high standards are part of any school's main core of values. As Berges-Puyó (2018) declares, students in the United States are not helped enough, since the general expectations are becoming less demanding with the passing years. It is time, then, to change that culture and help students be who they are: amazing human beings capable of extraordinary things, under the right culture, vision, and direction.

School Administration

Administrators are leaders in educational institutions. Under their vision, leadership, and guidance, schools can create a specific culture that influences all the elements involved in the school system: students, parents, faculty, and staff. If schools want to be successful, they must develop a plan where all these elements are acknowledged and invited so that they become a part of the common goal: helping students succeed (Greenfield, 1995).

Administrators have the crucial possibility to develop an environment in which all the people inside the school feel safe, heard, and protected, knowing that in times of struggle, their administrators will come to help, to support. Administrators will lead schools to develop a set of values that they envision to be the guiding principles for that institution. Based on those values, administrators can build a foundation where leaders put others first. Consequently, teachers will do the same, putting students first. If administrators as leaders make the choice to put the safety of others first, to sacrifice themselves first, teachers will develop a feeling of trust, loyalty, and cooperation, and then they will be willing to do the same not only for the administrators but also for the students. Kersaint et al. (2007) mention administrative support as an important factor that influences teacher retention and resignation. Margolis and Nagel (2006) show in their study how beneficial administrative support is when teachers are included in conversations related to school policies and their daily work is acknowledged.

Administrators also have the responsibility to establish a mission, based on their own vision and philosophy. All of that will be reflected in the day-to-day decisions at the school, which at the same time will consolidate the above-mentioned culture, a culture that will embrace some chosen values to guide the people in that school. That culture will impact everything and everyone. Having approachable, open, caring, and respectful communication among all the elements will serve the purpose to help students flourish in life (Murphy, 1992).

Teachers

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"We live in a society that celebrates executives, coaches, and other leaders yet doesn't put a very high value on teaching as a profession" (Carroll, 2010). As a reflection of that, it has long been claimed that the salary of teachers is lower in comparison to other jobs. Strauss (2017) cites in Table 5 the eight college degrees with the lowest starting salaries in 2017. Among those eight degrees, three are in Education (Pre-K & Kindergarten; Elementary Education; Special Education), and two more are most likely carried out by educators (English & History).

Table 5. College Degrees with Lowest Starting Salaries in 2017.

#	College degrees with lowest starting salaries in 2017	Average Starting Salary ($)
1	Pre-K & Kindergarten Education	35,626
2	Social Work	37,115
3	Anthropology/Sociology	37,672
4	Elementary Education	37,803
5	Special Education	38,002
6	Psychology	38,079
7	English	38,303
8	History	38,361

If we want an educational system of prestige, it is necessary to facilitate the conditions to attract professionals that, apart from their inner passion, are incentivized to do their best. In this sense, politicians as the representatives of the different governments should develop a vision in which the educational sector is attractive and fulfilling for the professionals in the field. A vision based on the value of respect seems to be logical to retain devoted professionals. As the Global Teacher Status Index for the year 2018 (GTSI18) states, "Now we can say beyond doubt that respecting teachers isn't only an important moral duty, it's essential for a country's educational outcomes" (p. 2). According to the Global Teacher Status Index for 2013, among all the countries reviewed, teachers occupied a mid-ranking status, China being the country where teachers had the highest status.

There is a major emphasis on teachers in values education. Teachers must teach their content, but also communicate with administrators and parents to make sure that they can help the students in any way possible. They are expected to be role models of good character for the students and parents alike. Society holds high expectations for the teaching profession, but teaching retention is decreasing and teachers' resignations are more common in schools worldwide. At the same time, teaching ranks as one of the most stressful jobs (Johnson et al., 2005). Some authors (Farmer & Farmer, 2015; Lickona, 2013; Lovat, 2007) stress the need for the teacher to become an exemplary leader in morals and character to benefit students. Berges-Puyó (2018) conducted a study in which 173 L2 learners were asked about the most valued teacher behaviors, and the first four most important aspects in the view of their students were related to personal features of the teacher: sense of humor, respect and care, promoting good relationships in the classroom, and being kind, patient, and fair. It is clear, then, that students value the teacher first as a human being, as an individual with whom they hope to have a good relationship. As Kersaint et al. (2007) point out, teachers need support in order to balance the growing obligations of their occupation with family responsibilities. If we want anybody to perform at their best level, it is essential that the person feels supported,

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respected, and fulfilled. If we want teachers to perform at their best, parents, administrators, government, and students must work together, making sure that all are heard and a caring environment is established where a series of values will enhance the school experience for all: respect, communication, support, fairness, care, and love.

Students

Schools serve students by providing content that will help them obtain a job and earn a living in the future. As mentioned earlier, several studies (Berkowitz, 2011; DEEWR, 2008; Dietsch & Bayha, 2005; Lovat et al., 2010) showed that a values/character-oriented school helps promote academic success, a better school ambience, and a better predisposition for learning. Students need to be taught, guided, advised, helped, and supported by the different members of any educational institution. They are the future generations of parents, professionals, and leaders who will affect the world in its different aspects. Therefore, schools, with the cooperation of families, have the crucial mission to prepare the students to lead healthy, happy, and successful lives. To be able to carry out that noble mission, it is important that teachers develop a caring and respectful relationship with their students, where all feel respected, supported, and guided. On the other hand, students must take responsibility for the learning process since teachers and parents cannot learn for them. Cook-Sather (2010) shows an example of students' responsibility through teaching and learning together (TLT) and students as learners and teachers (SaLT) models, advocating for the active participation of the students in teaching/learning aspects, which "strengthens students' sense of connection, affording them opportunities to build their capacity, and making room for them to take responsibility" (p. 571). Being a part of that conversation, in which teaching and learning are discussed, may help students understand the motivations and goals of the teachers' decisions. A values and character education system promotes the implementation of a series of values like responsibility based on the different roles that the individuals involved should have. Providing feedback is always beneficial and helps to prepare the conditions for further conversations conducive to improving the learning and teaching processes.

The mission of teachers, administrators, and parents is to provide the best possible environment where students feel safe, protected, and supported. That type of atmosphere can only be sustained by the pillars of a series of values, so that in times of difficulty, those pillars help maintain a firm and stable environment where all individuals involved respect and help one another.

Conclusion

Educators, parents, administrators, governmental institutions, and authorities have the immense privilege to affect the lives of thousands of students with the purpose of preparing them for life, with the goal to make this world a better place. The great news is that this is possible! It is possible if we become aware of a set of values that help us be better, whether we are parents, students, educators, or government officials. We can do better if we all decisively remember that love, tolerance, respect, compassion, humility, etc., are crucial values in human existence. We can help share the notion that these values unite us all. We

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can develop a culture where we see individuals as human beings, as hearts, as brothers and sisters. Schools can play an essential role in all of this. We advocate here for schools committed to developing this awareness, adopting a curriculum-values approach, and pointing out the need to treat students holistically as learners and above all as human beings. These schools can develop an ethical leadership, filling the students' minds but also their hearts, reminding them that the knowledge must be used for the benefit of the entire society.

Different studies cited in this article prove that the implementation of a values-based education system favors academic excellence and a sense of fulfillment in the students, based on a higher development of self-awareness, empathy, compassion, and understanding. What is next, then? I believe that there is no better time than now for teachers and administrators to speak up about the meaning of life and about values to live by. The present article and the following conclusions serve to break this silence and try to join this beautiful endeavor:

(1) The character and values education model is implemented worldwide in different school systems. The Toogoolawa School in Australia is one example of many schools in which the entire school curriculum is based on a values education model. On their website, www.toogoolawa.com.au, the first message we see along with the name of the school is its motto: "A place in the heart." This sends a powerful message to students, teachers, and the community about what is considered important.

(2) Studies (DEST, 2006; DEEWR, 2008) show that there is a correlation between the use of values and an improvement in pedagogical practice, student attention, happier faculty, and a much better learning environment. Those values can come from different sources, as Miller (2015, p. 137) states: "Spiritual presence, guidance, and values can come from extended family, close friends, psychologists, youth workers and clergy, coaches, and educators." Creating a learning environment based upon a series of values has a crucial impact on the lives of others, making those lives happier and more fulfilling.

(3) Educating our children is a mission in which all the people involved should be willing to communicate and work together. Developing a sense of "being heard" would promote a sense of empathy and understanding.

(4) Agrarian values represent a series of principles that help individuals become more resilient, with a propensity to be more focused on solutions than on problems. These values help individuals rely mainly on family and friends rather than on professionals. Reese et al. (1995) remind us of the value of these principles, being complementary to those present in academic occupation models. Being exposed to those values is an enormous asset for the education of our children, since there is a correlation between the implementation of those principles and a major degree of responsibility and capacity to deal with difficulties.

(5) Governments have the faculty to help develop school culture with the pursuit of the implementation of a series of values conducive to bring together all the actors involved in education. Also, they can propose legislation to provide all the means necessary to better serve students, teachers, parents, and administrators. According to the results of the PISA

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study (2015), a majority of Eastern countries excel in math, reading, and science. Further research on these educational systems would be beneficial to learn how they are able to obtain these results, which show the effectiveness of their methods and practices.

(6) Administrators as leaders in schools are responsible to take care of their employees, faculty and staff alike, making sure that all aspects of the school as an institution are transparent. We agree with Sinek (2009) that transparency in the workplace creates a working atmosphere where there is trust, and trust promotes loyalty and cooperation. Once the teachers and staff feel that they can trust their leaders, they will serve their students better knowing that the administrators are there to support and protect them. Also, administrators can have a decisive influence over teacher retention and resignation, promoting conditions in which teachers can deal better with stress with the administrative support they need (Margolis & Nagel, 2006).

(7) Teachers are the leaders in the classroom. As Farmer and Farmer (2015) state, "teachers and the school environment have a vital role to play in the development of students' character" (p. 23). The implementation of a school environment based on a series of human values is going to help students be better not only as students but as human beings. Hundreds of schools around the world are implementing these values with remarkable results. Values like courage, justice, resilience, compassion, responsibility, respect, humility, gratitude, civility, integrity, love, truth, peace, right conduct, and non-violence are shaping the minds and spirits of the next generations of learners because of the culture that is being set in those schools. A culture is established based upon a series of actions that affect all the individuals and communities around them. As Berger (2003) notes, excellence is born from a culture. A culture based on the above-mentioned values is going to help children and students acquire powerful principles where ethics become their norm. Teachers, in this respect, must be the first to follow those values, leading by example. Farmer and Farmer (2015, p. 67) declare that "the teacher needs to become a blazing log whose example in living the Human Values will set a fire the student's latent impulse to excel in both moral and performance character."

(8) Students need to be inspired and guided by their teachers. If students are led by their teachers with a consistent set of values, students will be inspired to follow the same path. Students will perform according to the expectations that teachers establish. Lower expectations produce low levels of achievement. Responsibility, honor, hard work, a sincere love for learning, independent learning habits, and a predisposition for embracing academic challenges will help students develop their academic skills and facilitate the development of confidence and reliance.

Students need to be directed and guided to help them be their best possible selves. Students will follow their leaders, teachers, and administrators if they feel that those leaders deeply care about them, because of the actions they carry out day after day. Actions always show our priorities.

Schools around the world are doing a remarkable job, helping students and families teach not only content but also preparing students for life. Knowledge itself should be an instrument not only to pass examinations but to serve others. When we make someone's life better, we

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are making this world a better place. A values and character educational system promotes a caring and inspiring environment and helps our future generations to thrive not just academically but as human beings. Helping students be respectful, caring, hardworking, empathetic, understanding, tolerant, compassionate, and loving is a noble way to remind them of how wonderful and amazing they can be, how amazing we *all* can be.

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