

Moral education through moral intelligence

Aleksander Tsvetkov
alex.tsvetkov1@gmail.com

Abstract:

Though less established and studied than the more well-known cognitive, emotional, and social intelligences, moral intelligence holds enormous potential to further our knowledge of cognition and behavior. The ability to apply moral principles to one's own goals, values, and behaviors is referred to as moral intelligence. This paper will look at what moral intelligence is and how it can be taught to teachers and students. There are four distinct competencies that comprise moral intelligence: integrity, responsibility, forgiveness, and compassion. When combined with Michelle Borba's seven virtues, have demonstrated the role of moral intelligence in the development of children's characters. In other words, the argument seeks to demonstrate how integrating moral intelligence frameworks can benefit guardians, parents, and educators alike in their quest to model morally adept children. This paper will explore the fundamental pillars upon which moral intelligence is founded, as well as how its capacity can be used to foster character development in children.

Keywords: moral intelligence, moral principles, virtues, integrity.

Given the apparent lack of morality in business and public affairs, which has brought the world to the brink of economic collapse, the need to develop moral intelligence in the general population is becoming increasingly important. Moral intelligence development in schools is extremely important. Education is a moral endeavor^{1, 2}. Teachers are to be moral role models, exemplifying the virtues they hope to instill in their students. Teachers must be knowledgeable and competent in order to instill moral values in others. Educational leaders and administrators should demonstrate these same behaviors to faculty, staff, students, parents, and others. Individual and collective moral development are influenced by education. The classroom is saturated with moral meaning³. What happens in the classroom has the potential to either encourage or discourage the ability and desire to seek the truth and serve the greatest good. Developing a sense of humanity's oneness, unity in diversity, open-mindedness, understanding, tolerance, honesty, fairness, courage, wisdom, trustworthiness, and caring lays the groundwork for morality and moral intelligence to emerge.

What makes someone moral is a question that is more relevant now than ever before. A moral person, according to the Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD) Panel on Moral Education, is one who respects human dignity and is concerned about the well-being of others, integrates individual interests and social responsibilities, demonstrates integrity, considers moral choices, and seeks peaceful conflict resolution. Morals and ethics must be taught because they are not ingrained genetically. Humans are not born with innate morality. We are taught moral and ethical behavior. They are distinct from manners and etiquette, but they serve as a precursor to moral being.

Moral intelligence refers to our ability to apply universal human principles to our personal values, goals, and actions.⁴ While cognitive (IQ) and technical intelligence are important in education, moral intelligence is far more important because it directs and provides meaning to the other intelligences. Moral intelligence can have a significant – and positive – impact on the educational process. Scholars have recently investigated moral intelligence, presenting key pillars, features, and practices that ensure the same. This paper has embraced two models that have provided valuable insight into the importance of aligning children with the concept of moral

¹Goodlad, J. (1990). *Teachers for the nation's schools*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

²Goodlad, J., Soder, R., & Sirotnik, K. (ed.). (1990). *The moral dimensions of teaching*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

³Hansen, D. T. (1995). Teaching and the moral life of classrooms. *Journal for a Just and Caring Education*, v. 2, 59-74.

⁴Doug Lennick, Fred Kiel Ph.D. *Moral Intelligence 2.0: Enhancing Business Performance and Leadership Success in Turbulent Times*, Pearson Prentice Hall, 2011

intelligence. Lennick and Kiel (2011) four moral intelligence principles and seven necessary virtues for modeling morally intelligent children will be examined.⁵

Four universal moral principles (Figure 1), respected by people of all cultures and creeds, serve as the foundation for educational success and the global education's health. Trust is built by demonstrating integrity. Forgiveness for well-intentioned mistakes is essential for innovation to thrive. Compassion - caring for others as human beings rather than as a means to an end - has a direct impact on talent retention. Finally, admitting mistakes and demonstrating that you "care for the commons" - or care about "leaving the world a better place" - inspires and energizes people – teachers and students.⁶

<p>1.1.1.1. 1.1.1.2. 1.1.1.3. 1.1.1.4. 1.1.1.5. 1.1.1.6. HEAD</p>	<p>1.1.1.7. A. Integrity 1.1.1.8. <i>Competencies:</i> <i>Acting consistently with principles, values and beliefs</i> <i>Telling the truth</i> <i>Standing up for what is right</i> <i>Keeping promises</i> 1.1.1.9. 1.1.1.10. Results in: Trust</p>	<p>1.1.1.11. B. Responsibility 1.1.1.12. <i>Competencies:</i> <i>Taking responsibility for personal choices</i> <i>Admitting mistakes and failures</i> <i>Embracing responsibility for serving others</i> 1.1.1.13. 1.1.1.14. <i>Results in:</i> Inspiration</p>
<p>1.1.1.15. 1.1.1.16. 1.1.1.17. 1.1.1.18. HEART</p>	<p>1.1.1.19. C. Forgiveness 1.1.1.20. <i>Competencies:</i> <i>Ability to let go of one's mistakes</i> <i>Ability to let go of others' mistakes</i> 1.1.1.21. 1.1.1.22. Results in: Innovation</p>	<p>1.1.1.23. D. Compassion 1.1.1.24. <i>Competencies:</i> <i>Actively caring for others</i> 1.1.1.25. 1.1.1.26. 1.1.1.27. 1.1.1.28. <i>Results in:</i> Retention</p>

Figure 1. Four Universal Moral Principles⁷

The ten dimensions developed based on the four principles of moral intelligence by Lennick and Kiel: (A) integrity means "acting consistently with principles, values and beliefs," "telling the truth," "standing up for what is right," and "keeping promises;" (B) responsibility means "taking personal responsibility," "admitting mistakes and failures," and "embracing responsibility for serving others;" (C) forgiveness means "letting go of one's own mistakes" and "letting go of others' mistakes;" (D) compassion means "actively caring about others." He also introduced a similar list of characteristics of a moral person who "respects human dignity, cares about the welfare of others, integrates individual interests and social responsibilities, demonstrates integrity, reflects on moral choices, and seeks peaceful resolution of conflict"⁸

Moral intelligence principles

A. Integrity

One of the core principles of moral intelligence is integrity. Integrity is described in the Merriam-Webster dictionary as a strong predisposition to a code guiding moral values⁹. To put it another way, if parents and guardians want to raise morally responsible kids, they should try to lead by example with their ideas and

⁵ Multi-Knowledge Electronic Comprehensive Journal For Education And Science Publications (MECSJ) ISSUE (4) , Jan (2018)

⁶ Doug Lennick, Fred Kiel Ph.D. Moral Intelligence 2.0: Enhancing Business Performance and Leadership Success in Turbulent Times, Pearson Prentice Hall, 2011

⁷ Doug Lennick, Fred Kiel Ph.D. Moral Intelligence 2.0: Enhancing Business Performance and Leadership Success in Turbulent Times, Pearson Prentice Hall, 2011

⁸ Clarken, Rodney. (2010). Moral Intelligence in the Schools. Online Submission.

⁹ Daly, M., & Caputi, J. (1987). Websters' first new intergalactic wickedary of the English language. Beacon Press (MA).

behavior¹⁰. Children are taught to accept the truth as the best option when given a choice based on this framework. This is done not just through verbalization but also by modeling, in which the adult always picks the truth, generating a domino effect since youngsters imitate what they see. Their behavior is mostly influenced by what the adults they look up to do, like clockwork¹¹. Importantly, educators uphold integrity by using incentive programs and having in-depth discussions with the students, by teaching kids the importance of taking responsibility for one's actions when wrongdoing has been done. According to Clark and Fujimoto¹², a person's integrity is established by the decisions they make when faced with several options. Mentoring is important for teaching kids to act with integrity and to always speak up for what is right. By letting the young ones know that hitchbacks frequently accompany the same, we can help them become more prepared for the harsh realities of the outside world. This method helps kids build strong character by teaching them to understand that everything comes down to what's inside¹³. Furthermore, one has the option to focus on oneself and make a difference in society rather than blaming others. Integrity basically means upholding your word. Parents and other concerned parties should be aware that in addition to making promises, keeping them will help raise moral kids by instilling in them the subconscious belief that keeping your word is what builds trust.¹⁴

B. Responsibility

In this context, responsibility means being forthcoming and ready to admit wrongdoing and show willingness to face the consequences of those wrongdoings. Responsibility is, without a doubt, the ultimate barometer of integrity. Raising children to understand that, despite having broad swaths of freedom and rights, it is critical to carry out the actions chosen (Clarcken, 2009). In other words, admitting that, yes, one has free will, but remaining focused on the consequences of actions is the true test of moral intelligence. True intelligence, according to Gigerenzer¹⁵, is accepting full responsibility for one's actions while keeping in mind that convictions precede actions. Fostering children's understanding of the principle of cause and effect will positively influence behavior because the children will act in full knowledge that future consequences are unavoidable. This is critical because it influences positive character by forming better decision-making and morally sound approaches to issues¹⁶. Significantly, by learning to bear one's own cross, students are guided away from blame games, fostering accountability. Children learn responsibility and moral intelligence best through demonstration. This is where congruence is felt in both words and actions (Coles, 1998). A teacher, for example, should value students' correction of omissions, encouraging them to be more open. Children will learn to value responsibility as a result of this. Clearly, by encouraging children to volunteer, they will cultivate responsibility through the lens of doing something good to gain fulfillment. Combining this with not expecting immediate results improves patience and, as a result, character.

C. Forgiveness

Forgiveness entails letting down one's guard and being able to see beyond the actions and mistakes of others. Enright (1998)¹⁷ defines forgiveness as the willingness to accept the flaws of others and tolerating them in spite of the wrong done. According to Lennick and Keil, there are two types of forgiveness that one must embrace in order to achieve higher moral intelligence. One is to forgive those who have wronged us, and the other is to take a more personal approach in which one is able to forgive oneself despite self-evaluation and the discovery of iniquities. According to Peaget (1972), teaching children to forgive from their earliest formative years defines the life they will lead. Mentoring young people to embrace forgiveness is the best way to prepare them for an imperfect world full of disappointments. Instead of approaching life as if it were a perfect cosmos, forgiveness serves as a constant reminder that we are constantly learning as a result of our mistakes¹⁸. They shape who we are. Furthermore, this fosters creativity and critical thinking in young learners who are aware that their input is valued. Being wrong is, in fact, an essential part of the learning process. People become comfortable with communication and learn that communication is what resolves daily challenges, and as a result,

¹⁰ Coles, R. (1998). The moral intelligence of children. *Family Court Review*, 36(1), 90-95.

¹¹ Beheshtifar, M., Esmaeli, Z., & Moghadam, M. N. (2011). Effect of moral intelligence on leadership. *European Journal of Economics, Finance and Administrative Sciences*, 43(1), 6-11.

¹² Clark, K. B., & Fujimoto, T. (1992). Product development and competitiveness. *Journal of the Japanese and International Economies*, 6(2), 101-143.

¹³ Clarcken, R. H. (2009). Moral Intelligence in the Schools. Online Submission.

¹⁴ Narvaez, D. (2010). The emotional foundations of high moral intelligence. *New directions for child and adolescent development*, 2010(129), 77-94.

¹⁵ Gigerenzer, G. (2007). *Gut feelings: The intelligence of the unconscious*. Penguin.

¹⁶ Sivanathan, N., & Cynthia Fekken, G. (2002). Emotional intelligence, moral reasoning and transformational leadership. *Leadership & Organization Development Journal*, 23(4), 198-204.

¹⁷ Enright, R. D., & North, J. (1998). Introducing forgiveness. *Exploring forgiveness* (pp. 3-8). Madison: University of Wisconsin Press.

¹⁸ Piaget, J., & Cook, M. (1952). *The origins of intelligence in children* (Vol. 8, No. 5, p. 18). New York: International Universities Press.

children grow to be open-minded individuals who welcome criticism, which shapes their moral intelligence (Gigerenzer, 2007). Forgiveness teaches us to see beyond our bitterness and hatred.

D. Compassion

Compassion is important in moral intelligence because it presents two important perspectives. On the surface, it demonstrates humanity, where the need to learn about what others are going through leads to further estranged morality revision. Furthermore, compassion entails expressing patience in reasoning and being ready to leave at any time because no one is ever guaranteed to return. This way of life makes young people appreciate the little things that they would otherwise take for granted, ensuring that they do not stray from the morals and values that were instilled in them even as they grow older (Beheshtifar, Esmaeli & Moghadam, 2011). Compassion, on the other hand, looks beyond the normal physical eye, where, instead of judging situations and people solely on how they appear, one learns that there is more than meets the eye, thereby shifting criticality to distinguishing features other than physical ones that define individuals (Coles, 1998). Nurturing children from this perspective ensures that the society will have individuals who understand why laws are important rather than simply abiding for the sake of abiding. On the other hand, compassion not only has an impact on the less fortunate, but it can also play a significant role in the lives of the children in question. By understanding that it is okay to seek help if you are in a difficult situation, society has the opportunity to model morally upright citizens who believe in fellowship in times of crisis and being there for one another. (Clarcken, 2009).

Raising Children through Essential Moral Virtues¹⁹

Michele Borba defines moral intelligence as the ability to distinguish between right and wrong, to have strong ethical convictions, and to act on them in order to behave in the right and honorable manner (2001). She identifies seven moral intelligence-related virtues that children should cultivate: empathy, conscience, self-control, respect, kindness, tolerance, and fairness.

Empathy

According to Borba (2001), empathy is an individual's ability to identify with the problems of others. Empathy goes beyond pity, where other people's problems become a part of the person who feels compelled to intervene. It is critical not to confuse empathy with sympathy, as sympathy entails feeling sorry for people who are suffering rather than making efforts to help them (Borba, 2001). By introducing children to the concept of empathy through demonstration, they are taught to develop sensitivity to the feelings of others. As a result, not only are morally upright children raised who are aware of the feelings and attitudes of others, but they also learn to appreciate what has been provided to them (Coles, 1998).

Conscience

People frequently go around complaining and saying, "My conscience is cloudy." Understanding the weighty meaning of the aforementioned words is critical in the moral intelligence approach. Conscience can be defined as recognizing the right and correct way to do something and actually doing it (Narvaez, 2010). Given its role in behavior guidance, it is the focal point for moral development. Children should be cultivated to embrace positive behavior as conscience frameworks that distinguish between right and wrong. Following this model, children learn to evaluate options before pursuing them, which, when repeated, strengthens the development of positive character (Borba, 2001).

Self-Control

Self-control is the practice of training one's mind to stay in control and refrain from choosing pleasurable options in the moment that may later result in negative consequences. Based on the fact that humans are hedonistic by nature, with the ability to weigh the pain and pleasure of an action, teaching children to suppress their desire for immediate gratification is a good idea (Sivanathan & Cynthia Fekken, 2002). Instead, the children are taught to exercise self-control, especially when confronted with exciting options, and to think logically and critically when making both small and large decisions (Borba, 2001). This is accomplished by teaching the child that every choice has a consequence, which means they will want to weigh and re-weigh options because they know they are solely responsible. (Beheshtifar, Esmaeli & Moghadam, 2011).

Respect

Respect is a simple concept that humanity has struggled to master. People frequently lose their calm demeanors and exhibit levels of disrespect that stun people. Respect is at the heart of character, and it extends beyond verbalization to include behavior. Teaching children to behave respectfully can be broken down into several stages, the first of which is to help the child understand the concept of respect by not only teaching but also modeling it (Coles, 1998). Second, maintaining the child's respect for authority and strongly opposing

¹⁹ Borba, M. (2001). *Building moral intelligence: The seven essential virtues that teach kids to do the right thing*. Jossey-Bass.

impunity manifested through rudeness. The parent, guardian, or educator achieves positive character development by establishing boundaries to cross and not cross. As the child grows older, he or she will understand that respect is not negotiable.

Kindness

Being kind revolves around putting others first. A kind person naturally shows genuine concern for the welfare and well-being of others. Children should be taught the importance of being kind to others from a young age. The culture can be nurtured by implementing reward mechanisms in which children are gifted for demonstrating impeccable respect, as repeated repetition of the same creates habit (Clarken, 2009). Importantly, embracing the concept of kindness teaches children to accept and acknowledge that, despite our diverse origins and backgrounds, we are all the same (Borba, 2001). The modeling can be enhanced by purchasing books, for example, that depict good characters who are rewarded with happy endings, as well as videos that the child can relate to.

Tolerance

This can be defined as remaining objective and upholding the dignity and rights of all people regardless of their beliefs. Political opinions, race and origin, and religious beliefs are just a few examples (Sivanathan & Cynthia Fekken, 2002). Tolerance, as opposed to stereotypic thinking, demonstrates high level moral intelligence through the application of the concept of "live and let live." One chooses to judge the coherence of arguments and reason rather than traditional fallacies that advocated for intolerance and automatically dismissing "the other" as wrong simply because their arguments and beliefs contradict one's own. Non-participant observation should be used by educators and those in charge when modeling young people to assess how intolerant the children are. This provides a solid foundation for developing appropriate measures, which, when properly geared, can be used to cultivate moral intelligence (Borba, 2001).

Fairness

Borba begins with the virtue of fairness and defines it as choosing openmindedness, which leads to acting fairly and justly at all times. Setting a good example for children as a parent or educator is beneficial because they will grow up doing what their mother or teacher does (Sivanathan & Cynthia Fekken, 2002). Treating all of the young people at one's disposal fairly allows the children to embrace the same values. Furthermore, teaching the children to behave fairly and calling them out when they deviate helps significantly as they learn to recognize the gravity of their actions (Beheshtifar, Esmaeli & Moghadam, 2011). Looping these foundations over a long period of time becomes a part of the children, resulting in them having great character and being worthy of emulation.

Borba's plan for teaching moral intelligence to children is easily adaptable to schools and classrooms. To teach children empathy - the ability to identify with and feel the concerns of others - she suggests developing awareness and an emotional vocabulary, increasing sensitivity to the feelings of others, and developing empathy for another's point of view. Teachers can create the context for moral growth, teach virtues to strengthen conscience and guide behavior, and foster moral discipline to help students learn right from wrong to help students develop conscience - to know the right and decent way to act and to act in that way. Self-control is the ability to regulate your thoughts and actions in order to resist external or internal pressures and act in the way you know and feel is right. Teachers can model and emphasize self-control, as well as encourage students to self-motivate, resist temptation, and think before acting. Educators and educational leaders demonstrate respect by modeling how they value others by being courteous and considerate. In the classroom, they can teach respect, increase respect for authority, and emphasize good manners and courtesy. Kindness is taught by demonstrating concern for the well-being and feelings of others by teaching its meaning and value, establishing a zero tolerance for meanness, and encouraging and emphasizing its positive effects. Tolerance is taught by teaching students to respect the dignity and rights of all people, even those whose beliefs and behaviors we disagree with. We foster it by instilling a respect for diversity, challenging stereotypes, and refusing to tolerate prejudice. We can teach fairness by treating others fairly, assisting them in learning to behave fairly and standing up to injustice and unfairness.

Conclusion

Looking at the education system, it is clear that the same seriousness as should, given the peaking immorality, is being applied²⁰. In terms of the future, it has become clear that it is best to begin with the children, as they will determine the future dynamics in the morality debate. The Moral Intelligence of Children²¹ identifies a new type of intelligence that is necessary for life success and fulfillment. It can be used as the authoritative

²⁰ Coles, R. (1998). The moral intelligence of children. *Family Court Review*, 36(1), 90-95.

²¹ Gullickson, Terri. (1997). *The Moral Intelligence of Children: How to Raise a Moral Child*. PsycCritiques. 42. 10.1037/001425.

guide for children's moral development by parents and teachers. When leaders and teachers model moral intelligence competencies, exemplifying the virtues they seek to instill in their students, they play a critical role in transforming their schools, classrooms, and students. If we are to effectively address the numerous problems confronting our lives, societies, and world, we must actively work to develop moral intelligence in all. The purpose of this paper was to highlight the main features in moral education through the main abilities of Moral Intelligence. Certainly, more work is required to further develop the framework²², define what normatively appropriate standards, values, and reactions should be, develop useful and valid assessments of Moral Intelligence, or determine how the environment, education, and training should be designed to facilitate and cultivate Moral Intelligence development. Benefits to schools and society will result from increased moral intelligence, more positive organizations, improved relationships, and students who are both smart and good, and who value universal human principles and rights.

References

- Beheshtifar, M., Esmaeli, Z., & Moghadam, M. N. (2011). Effect of moral intelligence on leadership. *European Journal of Economics, Finance and Administrative Sciences*, 43(1), 6-11.
- Borba, M. (2001). *Building moral intelligence*. Jossey-Bass
- Borba, M. (2001). *Building moral intelligence: The seven essential virtues that teach kids to do the right thing*. Jossey-Bass.
- Clark, K. B., & Fujimoto, T. (1992). Product development and competitiveness. *Journal of the Japanese and International Economies*, 6(2), 101-143.
- Clarcken, R. H. (2009). Moral Intelligence in the Schools. *Online Submission*.
- Clarcken, Rodney. (2010). Moral Intelligence in the Schools. *Online Submission*.
- Coles, R. (1998). The moral intelligence of children. *Family Court Review*, 36(1), 90-95.
- Daly, M., & Caputi, J. (1987). *Websters' first new intergalactic wickedary of the English language*. Beacon Press (MA).
- Doug Lennick, Fred Kiel Ph.D. *Moral Intelligence 2.0: Enhancing Business Performance and Leadership Success in Turbulent Times*, Pearson Prentice Hall, 2011
- Gigerenzer, G. (2007). *Gut feelings: The intelligence of the unconscious*. Penguin.
- Goodlad, J. (1990). *Teachers for the nation's schools*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Goodlad, J., Soder, R., & Sirotnik, K. (ed.). (1990). *The moral dimensions of teaching*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Gullickson, Terri. (1997). The Moral Intelligence of Children: How to Raise a Moral Child. *Psyccritiques*. 42. 10.1037/001425.
- Hansen, D. T. (1995). Teaching and the moral life of classrooms. *Journal for a Just and Caring Education*, v. 2, 59-74.
- Lennick, D., & Kiel, F. (2011). *Moral intelligence 2.0: Enhancing business performance and leadership success in turbulent times*. Pearson Prentice Hall.
- Multi-Knowledge Electronic Comprehensive Journal For Education And Science Publications (MECSJ)
ISSUE (4) , Jan (2018)
- Narvaez, D. (2010). The emotional foundations of high moral intelligence. *New directions for child and adolescent development*, 2010(129), 77-94.
- Piaget, J., & Cook, M. (1952). *The origins of intelligence in children* (Vol. 8, No. 5, p. 18). New York: International Universities Press.
- Sivanathan, N., & Cynthia Fekken, G. (2002). Emotional intelligence, moral reasoning and transformational leadership. *Leadership & Organization Development Journal*, 23(4), 198-204.
- Tanner, C., Christen, M. (2014). Moral Intelligence – A Framework for Understanding Moral Competences. In: Christen, M., van Schaik, C., Fischer, J., Huppenbauer, M., Tanner, C. (eds) *Empirically Informed Ethics: Morality between Facts and Norms*. Library of Ethics and Applied Philosophy, vol 32. Springer, Cham.
- Tom, A. (1984). *Teaching as a moral craft*. New York: Longman.

²² Tanner, C., Christen, M. (2014). Moral Intelligence – A Framework for Understanding Moral Competences. In: Christen, M., van Schaik, C., Fischer, J., Huppenbauer, M., Tanner, C. (eds) *Empirically Informed Ethics: Morality between Facts and Norms*. Library of Ethics and Applied Philosophy, vol 32. Springer, Cham.