

THE NEED FOR VALUE EDUCATION

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The goal of education may be broadly stated to be the development of an effective model, or representation, of the world, so one can interact with the world under a realistic view of it. The role of a world model in our daily lives cannot be overstated -whether it is for conducting a study, making a policy, designing a product, or interacting with people. No matter how diverse, specific, intense, or pervasive an activity is, the model is needed since the activity must eventually relate to the world. In addition to its intrinsic quality, an activity's success is intimately tied to the quality and validity of the world model used.

By its definition, the world model is concerned with aspects that are independent of and common to many activities. The following questions exemplify issues that the model can address. What is our purpose in undertaking a specific task? What would make that purpose meaningful, i.e., achieving it would give satisfaction? What may lead to dissatisfaction? Why others behave the way they do? How should we relate to others? What relationship do we have with our environment? What is success? What makes for a productive career? What strategies can help maximize the chance of achieving success and satisfaction?

We all develop and continue to refine a model of the world as a part of living, whether we are aware of it or not. Historically, the learning of such model has occurred significantly in the family and social settings. A long time ago, when education was imparted in part through informal, social settings, learning of the model also became an integral and natural part of it. However, with the decreasing degree of interpersonal interaction that the society is now witnessing, with changes in lifestyle, technology, etc., new ways have to be found to fill the void. That there is a deepening void can be seen in the decreasing savvy that successive generations exhibit in dealing with others, and with vicissitudes of life in general.

As far as formal education goes, one way forward may be to expand its scope to include model building. A program of education focused on specificity (e.g., engineering, business...), without making model a part of the formal discourse, leaves model development at the mercy of too many unknowns. Although a student with an aptitude for a subject will learn it one way or another, systematic education improves and expedites this process. Analogously, attention to world modeling - possibilities, analysis, comparison, strategies - will instill in students a greater degree of world readiness.

Expansion of the scope of curricula in the aforementioned ways will therefore make for a more complete education, which is what we have implicitly meant here by value education. The success a student will achieve, even in the usual "career" sense, will be enhanced through value education. Many other benefits, e.g., increased satisfaction from practicing one's career, will be added bonus. There is ample evidence of the truth of this from the experiments that have conducted so far.