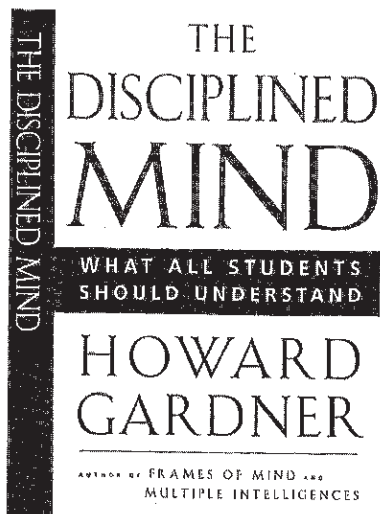


# Reviews

## Ruth Hamm and Marina Gorny, Editors

The opinions stated are those of the reviewer and not of the editors or the American Orff-Schulwerk Association. The editors wish to thank those publishers and members of industry who graciously donate copies of books and material for review.



**THE DISCIPLINED MIND**  
**What All Students Should Understand**  
by Howard Gardner  
Simon & Schuster. \$25.

In this latest publication Howard Gardner writes of his efforts to develop educational principles for our public school population, using his credo of a curriculum based on the true (or false), the beautiful (or not), and the good (or wicked), which give depth and understanding to students' studies. These three precepts and their opposites are not cast in total certainty, but are molded around cultural ideals. We should be aware of the ideals of other world communities and be knowledgeable about them, as a means to mutual understanding.

From his travels, his impressions include "the variety of educational visions that work for different groups, in different parts of the world." He jokes that "one should go to infant school in France, preschool in Italy [Reggio Emilia], primary school in Japan, secondary school in Germany and college or university in the United States." (He uses the Suzuki approach as an example of a teaching method that is consistent with Japanese culture — but he does point out that it offers very little means to creative experiences.)

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He informs us of the Key Learning Center in Indianapolis that embodies his approach of the six separate multiple intelligences — linguistic, musical, logico-mathematical, spatial, bodily-kinesthetic and interpersonal — which are outlined in his 1996 book *Intelligence: Multiple Perspectives*, written with Mindy Kornhaber and Warren Wake (Harcourt, Brace College Publishers).

Gardner views his ideas of "the true, the beautiful and the good" as contrary in many ways to the "core curriculum" espoused by E.D. Hirsch. The author judges it rote learning, yet he realizes this "core curriculum" is a benefit for disadvantaged children who speak English as a second language, and/or have a sterile home environment. However, he feels "core curriculum" programs often are less apt to delve deeply, thus superficiality reigns. He argues for greater depth of understanding of the disciplines.

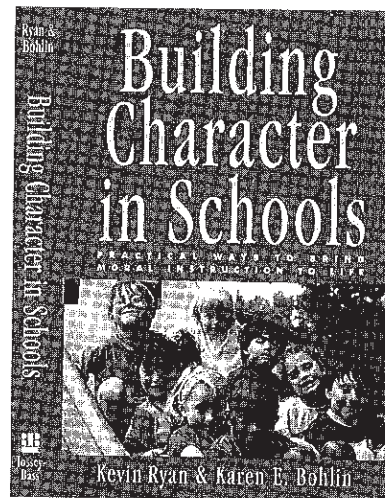
The examples the author uses to instill his vision are: understanding the theory of evolution, (the truth) the music of Mozart (the beautiful) and the Holocaust (the wicked). He stresses these are only examples. Study begins with an "attention grabber," adds analogies, moves then to core ideas and expands extensively.

However, he warns us the art of teaching is not grounded in following a pattern precisely. (How true for Schulwerk teachers!) His "alternative educational vision" emphasizes that "an individual understands a concept, skill, theory or domain of knowledge to the extent he/she can apply it appropriately in a new situation."

Gardner posits that students must accept high standards, using accurate materials to understand and judge others with honesty, sincerity and respect. But, as differences of opinions occur, they should be appraised carefully and with depth. Education, plus many other components, should be taken beyond the

shallowness we find in today's schools. Says Gardner, "We must help students proceed from recognition to admiration, from admiration to an enduring desire to pursue truth, beauty and goodness in their own lives." Ultimately, success depends upon excellent teaching, parental involvement and community support.

-Ruth Hamm, Ohio



**BUILDING CHARACTER IN SCHOOLS**  
**Practical Ways to Bring Moral Instruction to Life**  
by Kevin Ryan and Karen E. Bohlin  
Jossey-Bass Publishers. \$25.

What is "character"? Ryan and Bohlin define character as "knowing the good, loving the good, and doing the good." As the authors point out, "the world is filled with people who know what the right thing to do is but lack the will to carry it out." What should be the role of schools in building character? How do we go about doing it? This book provides practical answers to these questions.

Some of the topics covered in the first chapter include definitions of "the good" and descriptions of the Greek cardinal

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virtues: wisdom, justice, self-mastery, and courage, which are considered important in almost every culture. The authors argue that it is possible to work aggressively to improve our character. "Like a craftsman etching a metal plate or a sculptor shaping a stone into a fine statue, so, too, each of us is called to make our life into a work of art. [We must] consciously decide to act to acquire particular habits and gradually, though time and effort, to make deeper and deeper marks on our hearts and minds."

In the second chapter, "Views, Values, and Virtues," the "Three Vs" are defined using classroom examples. Although all three are important, the authors feel that only virtues provide the true moral support critical for building character. This is an interesting chapter, as sample classroom scenarios for view-based, values-based, and virtues-based instruction are presented, along with the consequences of each approach.

For example, the views-based lesson encourages students to confront issues, listen to and think about different views, and arrive at their own point of view. Students are congratulated for their interest and participation, though not necessarily for the truth or merit of their positions. This approach promotes controversy, which can prompt thought and insight, but it can also provoke anger and a contentious spirit. The values-based approach encourages students to clarify their feelings about issues. Both views and values approaches leave the impression that there are no absolute moral standards, just individual preferences.

The authors feel that only virtues-based lessons are able to help students understand that character comes not from acquiring particular points of view or values, but from basing one's life on virtuous ideals.

The next chapter gives practical suggestions for building a community of virtue, giving examples of schools that

have succeeded or failed in certain aspects of character education. Other chapters discuss character-building curricula, ways to involve parents in character education, the important role teachers play in guiding individual students, and the responsibility of students to take command of their own character development. Finally, the authors give us a chunk of appendices labeled "Good Ideas," which are indeed full of good ideas, and "Action Strategies," which provide sample lesson plans on a variety of subjects. This book provides the opportunity to think about character and virtues in an objective way. Character does matter, and the authors make a compelling case that it is too important to personal happiness and the health of society to leave to chance. Anyone serious about adding a character development component to their curriculum would benefit from reading this book.

*-Martha Riley, Indiana*

