

Howard Gardner is a well renowned American development psychological who is a professor of Cognitive and Education at Harvard University. Along with his teaching at the university, Gardner has published several books and is the Senior Director of Harvard Project Zero, a study initiative to improve the realm of education. Gardner is most famously known for formulating the *multiple intelligences*, a theory that highlights the idea that we as humans have different modalities or specific abilities. This theory has taken the educational world by form and many (myself included) take his ideas in mind when trying to differentiate instruction. In this unit, we read a new book of Howard Gardner's entitled Truth, Beauty, and Goodness Reframed. In this book, we investigate the three virtues (truth, beauty, and goodness) and how these ideas have drastically changed from the premodernism/ modernism eras to the postmodernism era. Along with looking closely at how these virtues have evolved throughout these time periods, Gardner argues the need to redefine and tweak these virtues to make them adaptable to the postmodernism/ digital media era. As Gardner emphasizes on page 13, "They (truth, beauty, and goodness) must not and will not be abandoned." Aside from this, Gardner emphasizes the importance of highlighting all three virtues, not just *truth*, to enhance education and educational inquiry in our current educational institutions.

Gardner begins by defining the three virtues in their respects. Truth – *a set of statements*; beauty - *an experience one has with an object*; goodness - *how we act with other people* (both people we know and do not know). As stated earlier, Gardner highlights the importance of these three virtues and how they must not disappear. With the new postmodernism era, it is essential that the virtues be updated to make them applicable. Gardner expresses that the ways to find truth in the postmodern era are, "Show power and limitations of sensory knowledge, explain methods that the several disciplines (math, science, history) go to arrive at their respective truths, demonstrate how we evaluate disciplinary evidence (from multiple disciplines) – in determining truth value, how to find *valid* sources..." (page 35.- 36) To put it simply, with the amount of content and sources available to people, especially on the world wide web, it is crucial to teach people (in particular young people) how to find valid sources, how to find a variety of sources, and understanding ways that certain ideas are determined to be truthful or factual.

As we move to the next chapter, Gardner argues that it is more subjective to determine what is *beauty* and what is not ; he states that *beauty is affected by historical, cultural, and personal factors that may differ amongst individual* (page 41). Therefore, Gardner articulates that the ways to determine whether something has beauty in the postmodern era is by containing these three factors: the object in question is interesting, it is memorable, and it gives the observer a desire or need to return to the piece again. Lastly, Gardner discusses the idea of *goodness*. Gardner classifies goodness in two respects: *neighborly morality* and *the ethics of roles* (pg 88). To put it simply, how people act towards others locally and globally, in and outside of the work place. The idea of ethics is not nearly what is used to be.

As Alan Greenspan stated, “There have never been so many ways to cut corners” (pg 96). Therefore, bringing into light the *Three Es of Good Work* (Excellent, Engaging, Ethics) helps bring an updated view to the traditional virtues in and outside of the work place. To put it lightly, times have changed and the virtues are essential entities in our culture; it is important to do what we can to continue to practice these qualities in our everyday lives.

When looking specifically at educational institutions, it is evident that all three virtues at one time have been visible. With regards to the *children’s experience with virtues; truth are experiences at school, the idea of good are the models of influential old people, and beauty are the judgments influenced by peers and the media* (pg 109). Nonetheless, truth is the virtue seen most often. Therefore, it can be argued that curriculums treat truth at the focal point, where beauty and good are treated incidentally when looking at our current educational institutions (page 130). While it is important for students to learn the *truth* or facts and how to find these truths, through *constructive engagement* and *modeling ways of thinking* (page 128) in the hopes that they will later be able to discover the truths on his/ her own, Gardner stresses beauty and good should also been seen more focally in educational institutions.

With regards to goodness or morality, this virtue is known as the *hidden curriculum*, meaning that is not directly embedded within our current curriculum. Gardner argues that while rules are established, without concrete understandings of why they are valid, students are unlikely to follow through with these expectations (page 131). It is one’s hope that certain qualities of what it means to be a *good* person are instilled in the child prior to entering schooling through influential older people (parents, grandparents, guardians, older siblings) and then these foundational understandings are then built upon once they begin to go to school. Sadly, this is not always the case. In particular, what was once known as *common courtesy* can no longer be considered *common* as it is not seen in our everyday lives; holding doors for people, greeting others (whether or not the person is known) are not seen as often and this negatively effects our youth and their perception of what it means to be a *good* person and citizen. Exposing students to model examples of moral and immoral *exemplar* through people, literature, and media; emphasizing the consequences on not upholding these moral expectations; having consequences that are appropriate to the crime in questions; daily reflections on how behavior are ways to help make the idea of morality focal within the classroom and school environment. As Gardner emphasizes, “...(In order to make morality a reality) – what is needed is the *will* to do these things and the *vigilance* to keep them always in mind” (page 132). The Good Play Project established a set of *ethical issues* that could be vital within the classroom setting: 1. Sense of identity; 2. Trust one another; 3. Privacy; 4. Ownership and authorship; 5. Participation in a community. Teaching students the importance of what is good and what is not, modeling these ideas, and presenting many resources to uphold these ideas will only create a stronger community within the classroom that students hopefully will apply into their everyday lives.

When looking at beauty in the classroom, it is important to note that the virtue of beauty is not seen as vital in an educational institution. The arts are the first to be cut and unfortunately, taking these assets away only hurt the students in the long run. It is difficult to decipher whether beauty should be taught and if so, how? Gardner feels that students should be given a plethora of art and within several

artistic realms. As these types of arts are presented, have students observe the art not just by whether or not it has *beauty* but whether or not the art in question shows interestingness, memorability of form, and impulse to visit it again (136). Providing multiple types and letting students compare and contrast to determine what matters and what doesn't will only help present a stronger sense of individuality of his/her perspectives to what he/she finds to have *beauty*. Gardner emphasizes that, "In my view, we should strive to expand adolescents' notion of artistic possibilities and to stretch their sense of what might be considered beautiful" (page 141). In our current society, the news is partial to highlighting negative happenings of the world. By implementing the virtue of beauty as part of the curriculum, students will see a more positive perspective to the world around them.

In conclusion, after reading this book, it is evident to uphold the words of Gardner and to take a closer look at the importance of all three virtues when reaching for educational inquiry. Presenting these different virtues within the curriculum highlights different modalities and perspectives seen within the multiple intelligences. Not everyone is a scientist or mathematician; some people prefer a more gray area of thinking and learning. Creating a stronger emphasis to the virtues *good* and *beauty* will make learning more subjective yes, but will appeal to far more students and will make school a place to enhance their interests and abilities, not restrict them to merely the *truths*.