How Not to Teach Values: A Critical Look at Character Education (*)
values fashioned from scratch. But the process of learning does indeed require that meaning, ethical or otherwise, be ... concepts themselves have been around. Children must be invited to reflect on complex issues, to recast them in light of

If "repeated messages" don't work, then you simply force students to conform: "Sometimes compulsion is what is needed to ... premise of that sentence that really ought to give us pause. When education is construed as the process of inculcating

Were you to stand somewhere in the continental United States and announce, "I'm going to Hawaii," it would be understood ... you would probably be talking about one specific island in the chain – namely, the big one to your southeast. The word

In the case of the proponents of character education, I believe the answer to this riddle is quite different. The reason ... techniques that seem strikingly ineffective at fostering autonomy or ethical development is that, as a rule, they are not

A huge, multiethnic elementary school in Southern California uses a framework created by the Jefferson Center for ... professionally painted Peanuts characters instruct children: "Never talk in line." A visitor is led to a fifth-grade

Indeed, if these are the goals, then the methods make perfect sense — the lectures and pseudo-discussions, the slogans ... The way you get people to do something, whether it's buying Rice Krispies or becoming trustworthy, is to "encourage

2. What is the view of human nature?

exhibit in such an environment. Instead of announcing, "This man is a hero; do what he did," such teachers may involve the students in

In fact, at least three assumptions seem to be at work when the need for self-control is stressed: first, that we are all ... unpleasant; and third, that these desires are very strong, constantly threatening to overpower us if we don't rein

writings, there lurks the assumption that only religion can serve as the foundation for good character. (William Bennett, ... of these individuals if those beliefs are ensconced in the movement they have defined and directed. What they do on

Then there is the strategy of offering students rewards when they are "caught" being good, an approach favored by ... a sizable body of psychological evidence germane to the topic is available, it is worth lingering on this particular

The point, once again, is that it is entirely appropriate to ask which values a character education program is attempting ... values. It is equally appropriate to put such a discussion in context — specifically, in the context of which values are

indistinguishable from full-blown relativism; we must "plant" traditional values in each child or else morality is ... continues to fuel character education and to perpetuate the confusion of education with indoctrination.

55. For more on class meetings, see Glasser, chaps. 10-12; Thomas Gordon, 

in Fritz K. Oser, Andreas Dick, and Jean-Luc Patry, eds.,


31. John Dewey, 

vol. 4, 1978, p. 90; Cathleen L. Smith et al., "Children's Causal Attributions Regarding Help Giving,
