

# Moral and Character Development in the Context of Slow Pedagogy

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**Abstract:** Creating favourable conditions for one's moral and character development, as key elements of one's holistic development, is vital in contemporary pedagogy. Therefore, this paper offers a brief overview of different approaches to moral and character development: moral education, character education, and the process of moral competence development. Those approaches are further considered through the prism of one specific pedagogical theory, the so-called '*slow pedagogy*.' From that point of view, the paper emphasizes the importance of ensuring time for deep learning experiences where students show curiosity, reflection, and collaboration and realize supportive relationships for learning. The paper aims to contribute to understanding slow pedagogy as one possible pedagogical framework which enables creating favourable conditions for holistic development of a moral individual who will be competent to plan his/her moral actions and act according to that plan in favour of the other in a humane and respectful way.

**Keywords:** Cooperation, dialogue, reflection, values, virtues.

## 1 Introduction

One does not have to be a religious person to know famous Bible verses from the New Testament: "*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God*" (*English Standard Version Bible*, 2001, John, 1:1). If considered in the context of pedagogy, these verses might be rephrased as: *In the beginning was the Upbringing, and the Upbringing was with Pedagogy, and the Upbringing was Pedagogy*. Furthermore, if those verses are considered in the context of virtues and moral education, maybe they can be rephrased this way: *In the beginning was the Virtue, and the Virtue was with Upbringing, and the Virtue was Upbringing*. Reasons for these associations can be traced back to the beginning of the 19th century, when pedagogy was established as a science, and when the essence of pedagogy was in virtue and in the process of (moral) upbringing since Johann Friedrich Herbart posed virtue as a purpose, and morality as the highest aim of upbringing (Hilgenheger, 1993). But, today, the question arises: What happened to virtue and upbringing in pedagogic theory and practice? If carefully observed, and read "between the lines," it can be noticed that for several decades pedagogic theory and practice have been more focused on the process of education than on the issues of

upbringing<sup>1</sup>, even though these two are equally valuable and inseparable processes. Many authors have warned for several decades about the crisis of upbringing (as pointed out in previous research, e.g., Jukić, 2013; Jukić & Mandarić Vukušić, 2018; Vukasović, 1989, 1991, 2010, 2013) and its neglect in the educational process (Jukić & Mandarić Vukušić, 2018; Previšić, 2010; Vukasović, 2010, 2013). Reasons for such a state are mostly found in the prevalence of an intellectualist approach to education, moral relativism and nihilism (Vukasović, 2010), and the loss of the importance of upbringing in the family, school, and society (Jukić & Mandarić Vukušić, 2018). This is not a surprise since different studies show a higher prevalence of examining variables related to the cognitive aspect of personality, such as gaining knowledge, than variables related to the conative aspect, such as attitudes and values (Toomela, 2008), although both processes are equally needed for one's holistic development. This notion is very important for discussing how to enhance one's moral and character development because, as there is an unjustified dichotomy in the debates on the importance of upbringing and education, the same unjustified dichotomy can be noticed in the debates on how to approach the issues of one's moral and character development. Therefore, this paper emphasises is on the need for holistic development of a moral individual who will be competent to plan and implement his/her moral actions in favour of the other in a humane and respectful way.

## 2 Moral education, character education, and the process of moral competence development

Among different approaches to moral and character development, 'moral education' and 'character education' can be singled out as the most prominent ones with moral education initially being predominantly focused on the cognitive aspect of one's personality, i.e., on the process of education, and character education initially being predominantly focused on the conative aspect of one's personality, i.e., on the process of upbringing. As Althof and Berkowitz (2006) state, the term 'moral education' is usually related to Kohlberg's theory on moral development while 'character education' is usually connected to Aristotelian virtue ethics. While the Kohlbergian approach was rather narrow-focused and stable over time, character education was broad in its scope and variable in goals and methodology. Both of those approaches have changed over time as there has been some criticism (Purpel, 1999; Rest et al., 2000) pointing to the need for their improvement in theoretical

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<sup>1</sup> Contemporary Croatian pedagogical terminology distinguishes the terms '*odgoj*' (Ger. *Erziehung*, Eng. *upbringing*), '*obrazovanje*' (Ger. *Bildung*, Eng. *education*) i '*izobrazba*' (Ger. *Ausbildung*, Eng. *training*). '*Odgoj*' refers to the process of the predominant development of the conative aspect of one's personality (development of socio-emotional abilities and skills, attitudes, habits, interests), '*obrazovanje*' refers to the process of the predominant development of the cognitive aspect of one's personality (acquiring knowledge and intellectual abilities and skills development), and '*izobrazba*' refers to the process of the predominant development of the psychomotor aspect of one's personality (psychomotor abilities and skills development). Those three aspects of personality are inseparable, and by developing one aspect, to some extent, other two aspects are being developed as well, so that is why it is said that *odgoj*, *obrazovanje*, and *izobrazba* refer to the *predominant* development of a particular aspect of one's personality. Jointly, those processes integrate into an individual's competence development (Milat, 2005). See more about pedagogical terminology issues and the relationship between the terms upbringing and education in (Bagarić, 2010; Milat, 2007; Stepkowski, 2021).

and/or practical aspects, so today neo-Kohlbergian and neo-Aristotelian approaches to cultivating character and moral judgement are being discussed (Walker, 2022). There is also the third approach that combines enhancement of one's cognitive, conative, and psychomotor characteristics in their moral and character development and refers to the process of moral competence development, e. g. moral education, upbringing, and training (Milat, 2005).

According to Kohlberg's developmental theory, moral development focuses on cognitive transformations regarding moral judgement and their analysis in the context of universal developmental moral stages. The concept of values is understood relative to different societies (Lapsley & Narvaez, 2006). Therefore, moral education focuses on methods that enhance one's cognitive ability to enable him/her to use higher-order thinking to solve different moral dilemmas and moral problems (de Vries, 1997; Kohlberg & Hersh, 1977), putting the emphasis on moral reasoning, critical selection of values, and moral decision making (Leming, 1997; Pritchard, 1988). Problem-based learning, cooperative and service learning are determined to be effective in moral education since they enable dialogue and interactions among students on moral issues (Schuitema, ten Dam & Veugelers, 2008). Also, open-ended dialogue, role plays, and peer counselling are proposed since they enable respectful interaction and the creation of a certain 'conflict' which allows cognitive changes in an individual and encourages their perception of other people's perspectives (Paolitto, 1977). The need of a school as a democratic and moral community where students are included in decision making is emphasized as well as the need for discussions on moral issues that lead to moral actions (Oser, 1996). When it comes to the teacher's role in moral education, teachers are seen as moral exemplars (Oser, 1994), and, in that context, they should always reflect on their own behaviour and live their values since they expect the same from their students (Ćurko et al., 2015).

On the other hand, the idea of 'character education' started to develop in the end of the 19th century. It was firstly related to adopting preferable habits and later was connected to Aristotelian virtues ethics (Althof & Berkowitz, 2006). Among different approaches to character education Berkowitz and Bier (2005, p. 2) point to character education oriented to: a) instilling values (e.g., caring, honesty, responsibility, kindness etc.) in students, b) raising children as citizens who express moral responsibility and self-discipline, c) developing good character built on basic virtues, and d) helping children and young people become caring and responsible individuals with principles. Character education initially focused on enhancing ethical-moral qualities and accepting virtues in order for them to become relatively stable personality characteristics according to which the individual bases his/her behaviour (Pritchard, 1988). Virtues were mostly seen as one's 'good' personal characteristics which contribute both to an individual and society since they enable personal fulfilment and societal harmony and efficiency, and it was considered that students "learn morality by living it" (Lickona, 1997, p. 67). In character education, teacher is seen as a role model (Lickona, 1997; Lumpkin, 2013; Sanderse, 2013), caregiver, and moral mentor (Lickona, 1997). All those roles presuppose a respectful teacher whose task is to create respectful and caring classroom conditions

favourable for character development. In the traditional approach to character education, direct instruction was mostly used while teachers were models of how to behave, and students practiced those desirable behaviours (Winton, 2008). Later, different methods were proposed, both explicit (i.e., explanation and lessons in virtue) and implicit ones (i.e., modelling and cooperative learning) (Lickona, 1997). Berkowitz and Bier (2005) determined more than 30 programs that proved successful in character education by using different classroom, school-wide and/or community learning and teaching strategies: interactive and direct teaching strategies, modelling/mentoring, as well as strategies that enhance family and/or community participation and professional development for implementation. Recently, based on Aristotle's understanding of personal dispositions development, virtues are seen as characteristics of a *person-in-action*, as "an ability to act in favour of the other in a certain human and beautiful way" (Rajský & Wiesenganger, 2021, p. 20). The emphasis is not on virtues as one's inner characteristics, but on one's action that is morally good and in relation to the other, e. g. on relationality as an important factor in virtue achievement. Teachers, from that point of view, are seen as character friends, not role models, since character friendship as mutual character cultivation is proposed as one possible non-instrumental and unobtrusive 'method' which can be practiced in educational settings by encouraging students' deep and close friendships (Kristjánsson, 2020).

Finally, some authors see the need to combine different approaches to moral and character development and consider the concept of morality and character cultivation more broadly and comprehensively (Althof & Berkowitz, 2006; Elias et al., 2008; Jukić, 2013; Kirschenbaum, 1992; Narvaez & Lapsley, 2009; Prehn et al., 2008; Walker & Thoma, 2017). Prehn et al. (2008) see approaches to moral development focused only on the cognitive or conative aspect of one's personality as unilateral since their research confirmed both cognitive and conative abilities and skills being important for one's morality. Jukić (2013) concludes that a combination of cognitive and conative abilities is needed in moral education and could include familiarization with generally accepted values that should be further critically and creatively considered and discussed so that students can build individual value criteria within the general reference value framework. Kirschenbaum (1992) proposes a model called 'Comprehensive Values Education,' emphasizing its comprehensiveness in content (that includes both personal values and moral issues), methodology (that includes modelling values, critical thinking skills, and personal moral decision making), and social environment (that includes consistency in expectations and engagement of all stakeholders throughout the school and community). Althof and Berkowitz (2006), Elias et al. (2008), Narvaez and Lapsley (2009), and Walker and Thoma (2017) point to the need to determine the common elements of different approaches to moral and character development that can be synthesized on the basis of adequate and sound theoretical and scientific consideration. Finally, Benner (2021) points out that virtue training must be united with *Bildung* and moral education (*Ger.*

*Moralische Erziehung, Cro. Moralni odgoj*)<sup>2</sup>. This author sees the need for the synergy of ethical-moral knowledge, and competence of ethical-moral judgement and action, and therefore, emphasizes the importance of developing a person's competence to act. Benner (2021, p. 76) considers virtues to be based on people's decisions about actions, so he sees ethical-moral education as a process of developing a person's "competence to plan one's own actions."

The third approach to moral development brings together the processes of upbringing, education, and training in moral competence development. It is an approach which combines some elements of moral and character education and emphasizes three key elements in moral competence development: moral judgement, moral action as a virtue – kindness, and noble heart as a moral action that is not based on self-interest. Having in mind the definition of the term 'competence' as a dynamic combination of cognitive and metacognitive skills, knowledge and understanding, interpersonal, intellectual, and practical skills and ethical values (Croatian Agency for Science and Higher Education, 2022), it can be said that '*moral competence*' refers to the dynamic combination of ethical-moral knowledge and understanding, ethical-moral relevant cognitive, metacognitive, interpersonal, and practical abilities and skills, ethical-moral attitudes and values in different contexts. Namely, Milat (2005) points to the notion that each person has a unique personality, and every individual is born with predispositions to gain knowledge, to develop reasonable interests, attitudes, and habits as well as intellectual, socio-emotional, and psychomotor abilities and skills. How the individual is going to fully develop depends both on their genes and conditions in the environment. Most of all, it depends on the third relevant factor – a person's self-activity and active relationship to the environment. The same factors are important for the process of one's moral competence development.

From this point of view, when one's moral and character development is considered, different situational contexts and self-activity, as well as intrinsic qualities, are of high importance. Lind (2008) points to different research showing some differences in individual's ethical-moral attitudes and values in different situations and contexts yet need to be investigated and explained. Milat (2005) concludes that pedagogical efforts in moral competence development should be based on general human ethical values (such as philanthropy, honesty, solidarity) and aimed at: building and nurturing moral awareness, developing moral feelings based on moral awareness, training for moral behaviour and moral activity, developing a sense of cooperation and moral attitude towards oneself. It can be noticed that these pedagogical tasks engage the whole personality and refer to moral competence because they include the process of acquiring moral knowledge, the development of moral awareness, moral feelings, and moral interests, as well as the development of relevant (meta)cognitive, socio-emotional, and

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<sup>2</sup> In German pedagogical terminology "*Erziehung* is education related to cultural, social, and moral patterns of behavior and action, and it is closely connected with acquisition of virtues and social skills of pupils; *Bildung* is the education of reason, knowledge, and independent thinking, and it is focused rather on cognitive powers of pupils" (Benner, 2021, p. 71).

psychomotor abilities and skills necessary for moral action. Milat (2005) therefore proposes teaching methods focused on the encouragement of moral action, development of moral awareness, acquisition of knowledge about moral values, and persuasion about the need to adopt ethical attitudes as personal rather than imposed values, since moral awareness and ethical attitudes are the bases for moral behaviour and action. He also points to the importance of practicing moral behaviour and living a life according to moral norms in one's society. For Milat (2005) the emphasis is on character development on the bases of pedagogic contents and activities that enhance critical thinking and moral action. All those elements presuppose a teacher who expresses his/her respect, empathy and understanding to students and creates favourable conditions and relevant factors for moral competence development.

When these three approaches to moral and character development are being analysed, it can be seen that, although they differ in their theory and some teaching strategies, they also have some overlapping elements. Therefore, a possible conclusion is that the contemporary approach to one's moral and character development might carefully synthesize those similar elements and combine them (Althof & Berkowitz, 2006; Elias et al., 2008; Narvaez & Lapsley, 2009; Walker & Thoma, 2017) to achieve better understanding of character and moral development and, hence, quality character and moral education as a result of interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary approach (Walker & Thoma, 2017). Elias et al. (2008) conclude that intentions to act morally, moral awareness, moral behaviour, and moral problem-solving skills are needed for a person to be able to spot opportunities in his/her environment favourable for his/her moral action. Therefore, they point to the importance of noticing one's development in his/her environment and noticing opportunities for that environment to enhance one's moral skills and values.

Among the overlapping elements of those three approaches to moral and character development, there is the need for a stimulating, respectful, and cooperative pedagogical environment (family, school, community) that encourages and enables moral action. With this in mind, the topic of moral and character development will be further approached in this paper through the prism of one specific pedagogic theory, the so-called '*slow pedagogy*,' since it can be a pedagogical framework which enables aforementioned preconditions for one's moral action and holistic development.

### **3 Slow Pedagogy**

#### **3.1 Slow Pedagogy – Basic Principles**

The concept of '*slow pedagogy*' evolved out of criticism of the standardization of education (Holt, 2002) and reference to the need of a curriculum driven by quality learning process, deep understanding, and creativity instead of a curriculum driven by outcomes, speed, and conformity (Holt, 2014). In the context of slow pedagogy, the essence of education is in capacitating students for problem solving and responsible acting in a complex society (Holt, 2009, 2014). The concept of slowness is usually connected with doing something at

one's own tempo, at one's own pace (Shaw et al., 2013), and with virtues related to tradition, culture, a good life, and humanistic approach to education (Holt, 2004).

Slow pedagogy focuses on certain principles that can help discussion on favourable conditions for one's moral and character development in contemporary pedagogy. The first principle of slow education (Slow education, 2022) is 'time for deep learning experiences with real outcomes.' With this in mind, the curriculum is based on the idea of co-creation and accountability of all stakeholders in the educational process and, therefore, on aspects that have real meaning for them (Holt, 2009, p. 1):

In the case of the Slow School, we have to solve complex, practical problems of a moral nature. So, at the heart of the Slow School is the idea of bringing together, when new proposals are to be discussed, the responses of its students, parents, teachers, and other stakeholders. In this way the school renders a continuous account of what it is doing to those with a real interest in its work. Accountability is built into the process of curriculum – it's part of a continuing narrative that has real meaning for pupils and parents.

The second principle is 'time for curiosity, passion, and reflection to be at the heart of learning experiences' (Slow education, 2022), which can be described in the following Holt's words (2004, pp. 127–128):

Slowing down shifts the emphasis from outcome to method and favours the profound over the shallow. The pace will vary, to sustain engagement and allow for different responses, and certain kinds of learning may need a brisker approach – mastering the syntax of language, for example. The context of speed and efficiency, on the other hand, can rarely promote social enrichment and philosophical reflection.

(...) a slow school aims to promote understanding (...) it is necessary to see the learning encounter not as a set of procedures but as a practical experience, illuminated by theory and itself capable of creating theory.

The third principle is 'time for dynamic, collaborative, democratic and supportive relationships for learning' (Slow education, 2022). This principle can be explained also by citing Holt (2009, p. 1):

Since education is essentially about equipping our children with the ability to act responsibly in a complex society, the idea of a Slow School follows very readily from the metaphor of Slow. It brings to mind an institution where students have time to discuss, argue, and reflect upon knowledge and ideas, and so come to understand themselves and the culture they will inherit. It would be a school that esteems the professional judgment of teachers, that recognizes the differing interests and talents of its pupils and works with its community to provide a rich variety of learning experiences.

These three principles are further considered in this paper as favourable conditions for moral education, character education and the process of moral competence development to achieve holistic development of a moral individual.

### 3.2 Moral and character development in the context of slow pedagogy

If principles of slow pedagogy are put in the context of moral and character development, it can be seen that they point to several pedagogical conditions applicable to moral and character education and the process of moral competence development. *The first principle* of slow pedagogy – time for deep learning experiences with real outcomes – can be associated with criticism of modern superficial knowledge and an intellectualistic approach to education (Vukasović, 2010), and the arising need to find time for those things that matter (Simmonds, 2020), including a reflection on moral issues and virtues, the aspects not tested in standardized tests, although they are of most importance to a child. Furthermore, this principle points to the arising need to find time to encourage different aspects of upbringing since they are insufficiently represented and neglected in the modern curriculum (Jukić, 2010, 2022), especially having in mind Aristotle's notion on the importance of upbringing for an individual's achievement of a virtuous life (Vučetić, 2007). By slowing down, learning at one's own tempo, and having deep learning experiences with real outcomes, one's development and learning process are highlighted, and, as Paolitto noticed (1977, p. 75), any "development takes time." Also, 'real outcomes' that matter to that individual in the context of morality and virtues are highlighted, as Sanderse (2013) pointed out to the need to explain students why certain virtues are important for them and how they can acquire them.

*The second principle* of slow pedagogy – time for curiosity, passion, and reflection to be at the heart of learning experiences – can also be associated with conditions favourable for educational process aimed at one's moral and character development, as well as one's moral competence development. If curiosity, passion, and reflection are at the heart of moral education, character education and process of moral competence development, then one can wonder, ask questions, and reflect, gain relevant moral knowledge, develop moral judgement and plan own moral actions at his/her own pace. In this context, a teacher who reflects on own behaviour is also needed, as Ćurko et al. (2015) state, but, in cases when teacher role is mostly focused on him/her being a role model or moral exemplar, it is very important to consider the notion held by Hobljaj (2005, p. 403–404) who states that teachers (and parents) should *witness*, not *model* values. According to Hobljaj (2005), a teacher as a witness of values is not a manipulator but a motivator, a person faithful to his/her chosen values that direct his/her life. Having that said, it can be concluded that teachers should not be role models in a way that they show children how it *must* be, they should be role models in a way that they show how it *can* be, i.e., they should be witnesses of values. By witnessing own values, the teacher lives according to those values and represents an accountable person, a person of integrity, and his/her students can reflect on his/her behaviour and plan their own moral actions. In that way, the teacher is not morally superior to a child, and instrumental in his/her nature to a child. Instead, it can be said that he/she is, in a certain way, closer to being a morally equal character friend to which Kristjánsson (2020) refers.

*The third principle* of slow pedagogy – time for dynamic, collaborative, democratic, and supportive relationships for learning – can be associated with teacher-student



interactions in afore-cited three different approaches to moral and character education. If there is enough time for one to be engaged in the educational process, be mindful and fully immersed in meaningful relationships with their colleagues, professors, family, and friends, then one has conditions favourable for his/her moral and character development and moral competence development. If there is enough time in the educational process for dynamic, collaborative, democratic, and supportive relationships for learning, it is of great importance for moral education, character education, and the process of moral competence development to enhance learning *in relationship for relationship*. In the context of slow pedagogy, the quality of teacher-student interaction (engagement, dialogue) is one of key elements of the slow school (Holt, 2012), while quality teacher-student interaction is also emphasized in moral education (Oser, 1994), character education (Lickona, 1997), and the process of moral competence development (Milat, 2005).

From the perspective of character education and moral virtue, building a genuine, responsible relationship, and true friendship (Kristjánsson, 2020; Rajskey and Wiesenganger, 2021) also takes time. From Aristotle's point of view, an individual is a being who is realized in friendly fellowship with others, and thus, a being who achieves virtues through friendship. At the same time, friendship is realized in togetherness, it is tested in action, and it is manifested in righteousness (Vučetić, 2007). Rajskey and Wiesenganger (2021, p. 18) are emphasizing the importance of 'the other' and 'authentic, responsible relationality' for one's formation of virtue and point out that "love of friendship is a constitutive characteristic feature of every virtue." Furthermore, Lévinas (as cited in Rajskey & Wiesenganger, 2021, pp. 28–29) understands the nature of the relationship with the other within the importance of '*relational dialogue*' which "cannot be explorative, revealing, or even didactic and instructional, but purely relational (...)." This idea can further be connected to Freire's point of view. Freire (2002), a representative of critical pedagogy, sees dialogue as the essence of communication and true education, as well as the essence of critical thinking. For Freire, dialogue is an act of creation, courage, faith in people, modesty, hope, and love. That kind of dialogue seeks time, focus, and commitment, the same conditions suggested by slow pedagogy for a quality learning experience.

All these three principles of slow pedagogy can be realized through the project and problem-based learning, cooperative learning, and service learning since they enhance critical and reflective thinking and one's introspection (Shaw et al., 2013), and, therefore, enrich the learning process (Holt, 2012). It can be said that those teaching strategies bring students together with common aims, in a way they can learn *with* each other and *from* each other. In that way, in moral and character education, students develop morality and cultivate character in (inter)action, in mutual acceptance and support, through friendship and collaboration. Cooperative learning was also seen as an effective strategy both in moral education (Schuitema et al., 2008) and character education (Berkowitz & Bier, 2005; Lickona, 1997), while the development of cooperative skills is a prerequisite for moral competence development (Milat, 2005).

Lastly, the importance of community is unquestionable in character and moral development, and the process of moral competence development as well as in slow pedagogy because the child belongs to the community, the child needs to be recognized as a part of a community, he/she learns *in* community and *for* community. Namely, the child is virtuous in interactions with the community. Lies, Bronk and Mariano (2008) point to the importance of community contribution to moral and character development and conclude that teachers, parents, and a wider community should cooperate in children's moral and character development and foster meaningful relationships. From the point of the process of moral competence development, morality is seen as the basis of one's behaviour and interpersonal relationships, and ethics is practically expressed by moral relation to oneself, the other, and the community, as well as civilisation values (Milat, 2005). So, it can be concluded that community has an important role in all three approaches to moral and character development. Equally, in slow pedagogy, a supportive environment and collaborative relationships are of great importance for an effective learning process as well (Harrison-Greaves, 2016; Holt, 2002), and without community "learning becomes a solitary, sterile affair, of isolated students (...)" (Holt, 2004, p. 128). Having that said, it can be concluded that moral and character education, as well as the process of moral competence development, all point to the need for a stimulating, respectful, and cooperative pedagogical environment that encourages and enables moral action, and the afore-cited principles of slow pedagogy are one possible pedagogical framework which enables creating conditions favourable for one's moral action and holistic development.

#### **4 Conclusion**

When pedagogy was established as a science, it focused on virtue and the process of upbringing. Yet today the process of upbringing is neglected in relation to education. When it comes to the debate on the topic of moral and character development, neither is upbringing itself enough nor is education. A holistic approach to moral and character development is needed to create favourable conditions for moral and character development of an individual who will be competent to plan his/her moral actions and act humanely and with respect towards the other. One possible pedagogical approach which can be a pedagogical framework that enables creating favourable conditions for one's holistic moral development is the so-called 'slow pedagogy.' In this paper, the principles of slow pedagogy were discussed in relation to moral and character development. The conclusion the paper offers is that moral and character education, as well as the process of moral competence development, point to the need for a stimulating, respectful, and cooperative pedagogical environment (family, school, community) that encourages and enables moral action. From the point of slow pedagogy, those conditions can be realized if one has enough time to explore, investigate, learn, discuss, and reflect on moral issues as well as enough time to establish and maintain meaningful and supportive relationships with peers, teachers, friends, family, and community through

cooperative learning strategies that enhance character cultivation, moral judgement, and moral action.

**Conflicts of Interest Statement** – *The author certifies that she has NO affiliations with or involvement in any organization or entity with any financial interest, or non-financial interest in the subject matter or materials discussed in this manuscript.*

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## Bio

As of 2006, Tonća Jukić has been employed at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in Split, where she has been working as an associate professor since 2019. She teaches courses in the field of systematic pedagogy and research methodology within undergraduate and graduate study programs and lifelong learning programs at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in Split. She continuously conducts workshops for teachers, pedagogues, and members from other professions and regularly popularizes pedagogy as a science. Moreover, she constantly improves the teaching process using various teaching strategies and methods such as e-learning, strategies encouraging critical and creative thinking, and collaborative and research approaches to learning and teaching. She regularly participates in Croatian and international scientific conferences, and she has published about thirty scientific and professional papers so far.

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