MORAL VALUES IN TEACHER EDUCATION

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Abstract: Moral values are interwoven in all aspects of teaching: in the curriculum, in the school culture, and as moral examples in teachers’ behavior. Working with values is an essential part of teaching. Educating students to become teachers requires to learn how values are embedded in education, how they themselves, as reflective practitioners, can consciously create moral-based practices in education and what different philosophical, pedagogical and political theories and religious and cultural traditions say about moral development and the role of education. We distinguish the following perspectives on moral values in teacher education: value transfer, reflective practitioner, moral sensitivity, participation and dialogue, and moral politics.

INTRODUCTION

Values are embedded in the curriculum, the school culture and the behaviour of the teacher. The question is not whether teachers display values in education, but rather which values they display, and how the teachers work with values in their teaching. Values are embedded in educational practices, in curriculum materials and in discourses in school. Values are the ideological flavor of teaching. Values can be taught explicitly, but values are always interwoven in regular teaching practices. Sometimes these hidden values become consciously when teachers reflect on their educational practice. But generally, the values remain hidden and do their work and influence the identity development of students.

Moral values are values that express ideas about the good life. There is constant debate about which values constitute the good life. Aristotle introduced the idea in his Nicomachean Ethics, and there is continuous debate in philosophy and social science about which values are important, and about what exactly is meant by a certain value. Based on their ideas about living together in society, Rawls and Kohlberg advocated the value of ‘justice’. Gilligan and Noddings criticized the cognitive emphasis in justice, and stressed the affective side of living together and argued for the value of ‘care’. From a multicultural perspective, Banks espoused the value of ‘diversity’ - the appreciation of difference. Moral values are quite abstract but become meaningful in concrete practices and narratives. Stressing the same abstract moral value can still result in different concrete interpretations of the value and in distinct practices. Moral values should therefore be studied in their context.

The development of peoples’ values is conceptualized in different ways in both academic work and in practice, and is embedded in more extended concepts about human development. For example, the development of values is part of personal and social development, moral development, identity development, and citizenship development. What these concepts have in common is that the focus is on the development of the individual. Values are expressed in attitudes that become visible in opinions and concrete behavior. Attitudes based on moral values refer to being in society, being with others, and the reflective view on one’s own identity.
Adding value to development implies that human development is seen not as a natural biological process, but as a process of giving meaning to the world. It is a process of growing into cultural practices and positioning oneself by articulating what is valuable, it is a personal reconstruction of cultural practices and narratives. It is making sense of your life.

**DIFFERENT CONCEPTS OF MORAL DEVELOPMENT**

People differ on the pedagogical and moral goals of education, on how educational institutes can work with values. In educational policy, both in research and in practice, there are different ideas about the desired outcomes of education in the personal, social and moral domains, about how to work with values in education, and about the role of schools. As in the Character Education Movement, the focus can be on teaching the right values, or as in the Kohlberg tradition of moral development, the focus can be on developing skills to reflect on values and behavior. Youngsters are in the Kohlberg tradition supported in developing the cognitive skills to articulate their own values. In this tradition, analyzing and communicating values are important tools for moral judgment. Despite Kohlberg's emphasis on the value of 'justice', and on the educational concept of 'Just Community Schools', Kohlberg has been criticized by the Character Education Movement for stimulating value relativism. According to these critics, Kohlberg and his followers were not clear about the moral goals they wanted to attain.

In its turn, the Character Education Movement stressed the importance of good behavior and virtues. They were criticized by the 'Kohlbergians' because the Character Education Movement disregards the critical autonomy people as human beings can have in making moral judgments. A second criticism was that they saw moral values not as situated but as fixed values. For the Character Education Movement, living the good values is more important than reflective and communicative competences in the moral domain. There was strong polarization in the early nineties between the proponents of a value approach and a more developmental approach. Nowadays many scholars are aware of the importance of both values and competences to reflect and communicate, and they attempt to integrate both values and competences (Solomon, Watson & Battistisch 2001, Veugelers & Vedder 2003). Values are not seen as purely abstract and fixed, but as situated, and analytical and communicative skills are necessary in order to work reflectively. Because displaying the values you find important is unavoidable, you may, as an educator, express your values. However, what is important is the room you leave for others to articulate their own values.

Moral development is linked with many aspects of the individual, such as the social being and citizenship. Moral development can be seen as more fundamental, as driving the concrete attitudes and behavior. Moral values tend to be rather abstract, but they become concrete in narratives and practices. Because moral values are so abstract and fundamental, they are difficult to teach and to change. Given the fact that moral values are important for human development, education cannot fail to pay attention to them. Even if education does not wish to give explicit attention to moral values, the values do their work through the hidden curriculum. In, for example, the work of Durkheim, Bourdieu and Willis, the sociology of education has shown that values always do their work. If a teacher opts to keep the values hidden in educational practice, the teacher is, in fact, also making a moral choice. When values remain hidden and are not the subject of reflection, the emphasis is more on adaptation than on a critical moral judgment, and students are not then challenged towards a more self-regulated personal moral development.

**MORAL EDUCATION IN CONTEMPORARY EDUCATION**

The task of moral education has, in recent years, been reinvented in many countries. Currently, the most used concept is that of citizenship development. The concept of citizenship has moved beyond the political level to the social, the interpersonal level and even the intrapersonal level. It is about how you live
Citizenship development is linked to identity development. Processes of nation building and citizens’ identification with civil society and political structures are arguments in favor of citizenship education on the political level. Social cohesion and public behavior are arguments on the social level. Self-regulation on the interpersonal and intrapersonal level is a necessary condition for both the social and the political level. The political, the social, the interpersonal and the intrapersonal levels are linked by values, narratives, competences and practices. Education could choose to say that we only work on the political level, and that we leave the social and the interpersonal level to the private world of the students, but this would then mean that the linkage of the four levels remains unreflective. The political level then continues to influence the social and interpersonal levels, but only in a hidden way.

Citizenship development can aim at different social, cultural and political practices: at adapting to society by emphasizing obedience and social behavior in an unreflective way, on a more individualistic type of citizenship that stresses autonomy and disregards social concern, or on a more critical-democratic type of citizenship that considers both autonomy and social concern to be important (Veugelers 2007). The idea of educating for democracy has been strongly advocated by Dewey. He spoke of a ‘democratic way of life’, democracy as lifestyle. Citizenship development is about knowledge, skills and attitudes (values), and the combination of these elements is often referred to as competences. Knowledge and skills are important. For a democratic society to flourish, it is necessary to know about democracy, to have the competences to act democratically. However, what is crucial are the values, the will to behave democratically. Willing to live a democratic way of life is seen as the pedagogical aim of contemporary citizenship education in democratic societies (Banks 2004). A link between citizenship development and moral development is necessary to give citizenship a moral foundation, in order to make the linkage of the political, the social and the interpersonal meaningful.

Values are interwoven in all aspects of teaching: in the curriculum, in the school culture, and as moral examples in teachers’ behavior. Working with values is an essential part of teaching. Educating students to become teachers requires to learn how values are embedded in education, how they themselves, as reflective practitioners, can consciously create moral-based practices in education and what different philosophical, pedagogical and political theories and religious and cultural traditions say about moral development and the role of education.

THE MORAL IN TEACHER EDUCATION

Many scholars mention the important role teachers play in moral education, and there is a growing body of work that focuses on the education and professional development of teachers themselves. There are publications about the moral task of education that extends the research to the field of teacher education (see for example Buzzelli and Johnston 2002), and there is also research on teacher education that now includes a moral perspective (for example Russell and Loughran 2007). In their book ‘The moral dimensions of teaching’, Buzzelli and Johnston (2002, p. 132) present a moral perspective on teacher education. It includes redefining the teacher-student relationship, examining the personal beliefs and philosophies of students, recontextualizing course methods and content knowledge, and ensuring authentic field experience and student activities. For them ‘morality constitutes that set of a person’s beliefs and understanding which are evaluative in nature: that is, which distinguish, whether consciously or unconsciously, between what is right or wrong, good and bad.’ (Buzzelli & Johnston, 2002, p. 3) Redefining the teacher-student perspective means sharing power and authority and becoming co-learners and inquirers with students. It is moral reflection because it entails the careful observation of, thinking about, and criticism of how we build relationships with our students. This requires moral courage and moral imagination.

Students should according to Buzzelli and Johnston be invited into an apprenticeship in these moral sensibilities and to examine, test, and reformulate their beliefs and personal philosophies. When it comes to methods, students should learn how methods and content influence the growth and development of individuals in a moral sense, in what they learn about themselves and their relationship with the world, and
in the differences between learners in this process of meaning making. When students enter classrooms during their field experience or student teaching practice, they become moral agents in the lives of the children in those classrooms. They need to develop an awareness of the moral significance and moral meanings of policies, practices, routines, and of the rituals of the classroom and the school.

More details about the moral dimension in teacher education can be found in the work of Johnson and Reiman (2007). In their research with students in teacher education they developed a matrix of indicators for the moral/ethical domain by using a ‘neo-Kohlbergian’ framework. The ‘post conventional’ schema includes the following indicators:

- Realizes the curriculum can be viewed from multiple perspectives;
- Considers the benefits and consequences of instructional choices;
- Takes into account a variety of learning styles when planning activities;
- Holds a humanistic-democratic view of learner discipline;
- Views rules as being designed to safeguard certain rights;
- Considers rules as alterable and relative;
- Is sensitive to students’ rights;
- Makes decisions based on the context of situations;
- Self-concept is organized around moral principles.

There is no strong empirical base for moral education in teacher education. Most of the work that has been conducted has focused on pedagogical goals and on formulating the consequences of research for educating prospective teachers in teacher education. We think it is necessary to develop a multiperspective view on moral values in teacher education. It can help to make both the theory and the practice more suitable to support students in their transition towards becoming teachers.

**DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES ON MORAL VALUES IN TEACHER EDUCATION**

This part of the chapter presents an overview of research and practices of different perspectives on working with moral values in teacher education. We speak of perspectives because the various approaches differ in philosophical background, pedagogical goals and in suggested methodology. It is important to articulate different ways of thinking about moral education, not to decide what is really moral but to stimulate dialogues about possible pedagogical goals and practices. The distinction made between the different perspectives is inspired by the work on teacher education of Liston and Zeichner, Aloni’s philosophical foundations of humanistic education and on our own work on different ways of teaching values.

The five perspectives are presented in a sequence that can be seen as different stages in the educating of teachers. Each stage adds a new element to its predecessor. The various perspectives are embedded in different ideas about the teaching and learning of moral values, the kind of citizenship society needs and the very task of education. The perspectives articulate different educational practices that assume different types of methodology and goals of teachers, and therefore of teacher education. When presenting the five perspectives, we articulate what makes this approach unique.

We distinguish the following perspectives:

- Value transfer
- Reflective practitioner
- Moral sensitivity
- Participation and dialogue
• Moral politics

In describing and analyzing these perspectives we refer to the way these perspectives work with values, skills, praxis, and social action

VALUE TRANSFER

This approach focuses on the transfer of moral values in education. In this view, morality consists of virtues, of traits that support good behavior. As a teacher, being a good moral example, and teaching students about good moral people are important methods in this approach. Student reflectivity is not really strengthened. The value transfer method is part of a pedagogical vision that has well-defined ideas about the good life and about important cultural traditions. The focus is more on getting youngsters involved in existing cultural practices rather than on challenging them to position themselves in an open, multicultural and changing society. This approach can be situated in a national educational system that is concerned about its cultural heritage, or in a tradition that is based on a religious world view that perceives its world view to be more static than dynamic.

The emphasis in teacher education based on this perspective is on creating strong moral characters in student teachers, on learning about good people in the national and one's own cultural history, on telling stories in which the good moral life of concrete historical or contemporary examples are expressed, and on methods for correcting anti-social and anti-moral behavior (Sockett 1992). The main focus is behavior, not reflection or action.

REFLECTIVE PRACTITIONER

According to many sociological analyses, modern society needs citizens who are flexible and reflective. Many professions require professionalism based on what Schön referred to as reflection-in-action. In education this calls for a practice in which youngsters reflect on their behavior, take responsibility for their actions, and try out new behavior in an experimental and reflective manner. The reflective paradigm has had considerable influence on the thinking about teacher education. Prospective teachers in reflective-oriented teacher education practice are continuously challenged to inquiry their beliefs and their teaching behavior. The emphasis in the reflective practitioner approach to teacher education is on reflection on one's own professional behavior (Korthagen 2004). The assumption is that one's personal beliefs influence one's pedagogical-didactic behavior.

Teachers should learn to consciously handle their methods and actions. Trying to make teachers and prospective teachers aware of their hidden beliefs, to further develops their pedagogical identity, and to expand their competences are part of this paradigm. Moral values can be part of the reflection process. Research shows that it is not easy to reach the moral level in reflection-oriented teacher education (Lunenberg, Korthagen and Willems 2006).

MORAL SENSITIVITY

Moral values are abstract and are normative because they say something about the good life, about good and bad. Moral values are embedded in all narratives and practices, but how to detect them? Following the reflection perspective we can ask questions about why you choose for a certain alternative. We can do it critically and ask on which values the statement or behavior is based; we can ask what drives the action. In dialogues we can challenge students to explain why they choose for these ideas and practices. For moral
reasoning you must not only know cognitively that moral values are involved, you must also have the
sensitivity to feel and be aware of when moral values are at stake. The third perspective is therefore moral
sensitivity (Campbell 2003, Tirri 1999). Knowing about moral values and moral dilemmas is not enough.
Teachers should have the awareness to detect when moral values are involved.

Teachers should develop the sensitivity to see when moral values are at stake and how meaning is giving to
them. Not only is knowledge about teachers' behavior, as in the reflective practitioner perspective,
necessary, but what is even more important is an insight into the identity development of students. And
this implies seeing how students position themselves; give meaning to their experiences and the world
around them, and how they work with the values involved. Teachers should incorporate this moral
sensitivity in the art of their teaching. Analyzing processes of meaning making by students and teachers in
many situations and comparing different constructions for the same situation can stimulate the
development of moral sensitivity. Student should learn to speak in moral language. Engaging theories and
practices that focus on moral dilemmas and on moral concerns of participants can enhance the
development of moral sensitivity.

PARTICIPATION AND DIALOGUE

More culturally-oriented sociological analyses of society argue that youngsters need to develop dialogic
competences and an active action-oriented participation in society. Education should therefore pay more
attention to dialogical learning, learning by experience, and activity-oriented learning. Dewey’s pragmatism
and Vygotsky’s cultural activity theory have influenced the development of this perspective. From a
Deweyan perspective, participation is not enough; experiences should lead to the transformation of
knowledge and active processes of knowledge construction and competence development. A dialogic
approach, based on the discourse theory of Habermas, has always been an important element in Kohlberg-
oriented moral education (Oser, 1994). Students should be involved in communication actions that
challenge their ideas, deconstruct the values interwoven in their ideas, and this can help them reconstruct
their own personal beliefs.

Students in teacher education should learn to use these dialogic and action-oriented activities in a learning
environment that supports this kind of professional development. Gaining practical experience is a crucial
element in many teacher education programmes (Ten Dam and Blom, 2006). Action research and
networking should be added to this learning. A perspective aimed at participation and dialogue, as
mentioned above, can create dialogic learning and change. Teaching, for Dewey, is a moral endeavor
because its constituent acts have moral meanings in their own right and genuine intellectual work always
implies moral development (Hansen, 2003). Hansen shows how moral assumptions are manifest in rituals,
such as classroom beginnings, in teachers’ style and in the curriculum. Hansen argues for more attention
for moral knowledge and moral judgment in education and in teacher education. Participation, action and
reflection should include concern about moral values.

MORAL POLITICS

We refer to the fifth perspective as moral politics. Morality, in this view, is seen as embedded in a political
context, and the aim of education is formulated as political action for social change. Teacher education and
social action are linked in this perspective. Beyer (1996) speaks of democratic education, Oakes and Rogers
(2006) use the concepts teaching for changing the world, and teaching for social justice. Empowerment of
people and working on structural changes that enhance humanity and change at grassroots level are
considered to be pedagogical goals. The work of Dewey, Freire and Critical Theory and Critical Pedagogy
has influenced the development of this perspective.
Teacher education in this perspective is linked with social activist groups in and outside schools, and students learn by trying to bring about change in schools and in the community. In their teaching practice, prospective teachers attempt to create democratic classrooms, to include minorities’ perspectives in the curriculum, and organize participatory social inquiry in and outside the school. Teaching is seen as social and moral engagement and as creating a better and more just world. Reflection and action are linked and aimed at realizing these moral goals. Teacher educators are clear in their critical emancipatory view, and their particular choice for schools that serve disadvantaged children. They hope prospective teachers opt to enter this kind of education.

We can place the five perspectives in a table that shows the differences between the different perspectives.

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We can argue that the five perspectives all have their particular strengths depending on the goals one has with education and the corresponding teacher education method. If one wants to focus in education on character building and on making clear the values one finds important, then the value transfer perspective is the most useful perspective. When education is seen as very flexible in its content, structure and teaching methods, and education in which teachers are autonomous and considered to be professionals, then a more reflective perspective is necessary. If this kind of education considers the development of morality as crucial and important, then the moral sensitivity perspective is desired. If learning is seen as transforming practices and learning by doing and dialogue, then the participation and dialogue perspective is needed. And if this transforming practice is seen as part of a struggle for social justice and democracy, then the moral politics perspective is useful. We are aware of the fact that concrete practices will often show a unique combination of elements of these perspectives.

It is easy to say that teacher education should pay more attention to moral values. As we have shown in this chapter, moral values can be incorporated in numerous different ways in education in general, and in teacher education in particular. Teacher educators can choose how they include moral values in their teaching education programme.

**REFERENCES**


Mahwah NJ, Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.


