

## *Part 4*

### ***Selected issues***

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# *Values education*

## **Introduction**

Values and their transmission through education could certainly be classified as an issue, and one which is world-wide. Most societies see the need to have a value system in order to give meaning to peoples' lives, and to ensure some measure of stability and predictability in their relationship with other persons and the environment. A problem, however, is that values and their transmission have often been used by those in authority such as governments, heads of industry and commerce, or religious leaders as a means of controlling the lives of others.

It might be better to consider the subject of values and their transmission through education, as encompassing a series of dilemmas, which if not checked might sow the seeds for future conflict. A contemporary dilemma in many developing countries is the perception that traditionally-held values are being eroded as a result of rapid modernisation. Another dilemma is fear of losing ones national and cultural identity, and with it one's value system, which is often the case in pluralistic societies. In some countries the dilemma tends to centre around the question: what role, if any, should school have in the transmission of values and if so should it be more covert than overt? As countries join into economic and political union, changes in or even erosion of previously held cultural values could also emerge as a serious issue if not a dilemma. It might be pointed out, however, that dilemmas should not only be seen in a negative light as they may generate action to promote positive outcomes some of which will be mentioned later in the paper.

The proximity of values with culture and the commonality which both have with education as an agent of transmission provides a valid basis for considering values education in the present conference. It might be useful to think of values education as part of a larger process of intercultural transmission, and that formal schooling and the ways teachers are trained have a necessary but not sufficient role to play in the personal development of both learners and teachers.

As a working statement, values may be considered to be centrally held sets of enduring pre-dispositions which can determine both deep seated and peripheral attitudes which have the propensity to motivate a person's behaviour. However, there are other notions of the meaning of values which cross philosophical, cultural, religious and other boundaries. These will be briefly discussed below.

## ***Values, values education and interculturalism***

### **1 What are values?**

In addressing the case for values education and the question about the nature of the subject, as far as the school curriculum is concerned, it is worth reminding ourselves that in the first place there are different approaches to the study of human values. Secondly, there are differences in approach to the place of human values in the educational process. There is considerable variation in the way different authors interpret what they mean by values.

To social psychologists, the nature of values is a central core of generalised attitudes which have a salient role in motivating and thereby directing a person's behaviour. Peripheral to centrally held values would be one's specific attitudes to more contemporary and less enduring events and situations. Human values can be perceived at a series of levels. At the highest level we have value orientations which guide behaviour, (Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck, 1961). At the next level we have the construct of attitude, as an expression of our value systems and sometimes called attitudinal syndromes, (Yang, 1986). At the third level, we have the extent to which an individual perceives he is able to control his environment, believing either he can be mainly responsible (internality), or that factors such as luck and people power are the determinants (externality). This level psychologists call locus of control (Rotter, 1966).

Milton Rokeach (1960, 1967) whose seminal work on the nature and understanding of human values has provided a classification which distinguishes between terminal values such as love of freedom and instrumental values like trust and obedience. For a more detailed account of the nature of values the reader is referred to the work of authors cited above and to Thomas (1994). The developmental approach to the study of values by Dewey (1963), Piaget (1932) and Kohlberg (1976), suggests that our understanding of values and the decisions we take which involve judgements about values, go through a sequence of phases from childhood to adulthood.

A more philosophical approach to the study of values and values education is that of McPhail (1972, 1982) who focuses on moral values in the context of others and how they interact with one another. McPhail sees moral education solely in terms of consideration for others. The essence of moral behaviour is consideration, care and mutual respect. McPhail works on the assumption that moral behaviour is a direct consequence of what we take from our environment and the people that make up this environment.

The work of Wilson (1967, 1977) also provides an interesting philosophical framework for introducing moral values into school. Rather than using indoctrination to teach a particular set of values or moral code, he uses a problem-solving approach to the inculcation of values. For Wilson there are four basic components to moral education: consideration of others in the light of valued moral principles; awareness of people's emotions as well as one's own; knowledge of facts relevant to moral education; and an ability to make moral decisions and act upon them.

### **2 Why values education?**

There have been many attempts to introduce values into the formal educational process in most countries and in the main, the results have not been

very successful. Moral values have been the most targeted values, due to the fact that moral values are sometimes identified with national goals and where applicable to the aims and objectives of an established national religion as in the United Kingdom.

This becomes reinforced especially where national goals are closely associated with a religion or national philosophy that predominates in a particular country. For example, Islam in Malaysia and Pakistan, Christianity in many western countries, Pancasila in Indonesia, Buddhism in Thailand and Myanmar and Confucianism for overseas ethnic Chinese, as in Singapore and Taiwan, are all instances where national governments have identified the school curriculum as the place for the learning and inculcation of values.

In many countries, the school curriculum embraces not just moral values but a whole spectrum of secular values, for example, thrift, obedience and the hard work ethic which are systematically taught, not only for the purpose of inculcation, but to reinforce national aims and a national identity. In the case of multi-cultural and multi-religious societies, the introduction of programmes of values education or values learning have often been planned with the aim of promoting national cohesion. These programmes make a selection from different cultural values and belief systems represented in a population, this selection then becomes part of a moral education or values education curriculum.

An example of a particular response by government to the awareness of values erosion and what role education might play, is exemplified by the case of Singapore. The Singapore Government introduced Confucian Ethics into Moral Education for ethnic Chinese students in the secondary schools of the Republic in the mid 1980s (Tu, 1984). This is an example of an injection of traditional values into the school curriculum. The Confucian approach to values recognises that, though cognitive structures shape the kind of feelings an individual has, the factors that eventually determine moral conduct are fundamentally affective not cognitive. Confucian morality is not just about sentiments but about carrying out life in terms of good conduct. To promote Confucian values, the role of education is seen as providing an atmosphere of learning through example and providing ample opportunities for teachers and pupils to reflect upon.

Moral education programmes that therefore make pupils and teachers think and talk about issues of right and wrong, and are concerned with how people behave in real situations, is what the Confucian Values Programme in Singapore attempted to deliver. It tried to provide an answer to the erosion of traditional values by putting education in the forefront to reinforce an ethnic Chinese value system which was perceived to be under threat by the secular and intensely materialistic effects of modernisation. The jury is still out on the matter. However, the example from Singapore does show that attempts are being made to emphasise how education could play its part as a broker in the transmission of values, especially values that are held to be part of a greater cultural identity and which are in danger of being eroded.

It is clear from the various approaches to the study of values discussed above, that a distinction is made between a general value system and morality. This is because values tend to be an individual's preference from a spectrum of human goals and described as secular, while morality relates mostly to an *a priori* human view and is in many cases strongly linked to a religion like Christianity, Islam or a humanistic philosophy like Buddhism.

### 3 Values education and interculturalism

The values dichotomy discussed above should be seen to be part of a dynamic intercultural matrix, of which language, religion, customs and traditions are also a part. One may need to add to this matrix, cultures of entrepreneurship, economic success, empowerment and greening (environmental awareness). Education has an important role in intercultural transmission of values, in not only maintaining a balance between the retention of desirable traditional values, but promoting conditions for acceptance of new and alternative ones. The task of embedding values education into an intercultural system which allows for a straddling of different cultural, linguistic and religious influences will not be an easy one. A totally new way of thinking about values education will be required by the architects of this approach and by its users. This applies especially to those responsible for implementing any intercultural values programmes. Recent attention given to the process of teacher development and research on teaching as a culture or constellation of cultures, point to ways in which both balance and transmission of values may be achieved. This is discussed below.

#### **Values education and cultures of teaching**

A discussion about values education is really about cultural transmission, which is closely related to the act of teaching. Teaching is increasingly being perceived as a culture or set of subcultures in which values transmission is part and parcel of a wider pedagogical cultural process. Teaching does not only involve teachers and their pupils in a one way process, transmission invariably involves interaction between teachers, between pupils, teachers and administrators and frequently between teachers and parents and other members of the community. To date, there has been little research which focuses on all these intercultural relationships. It is, however, necessary to bear in mind that any policy concerned with improving values education must take into consideration the complex matrix of intercultural links described above.

It is interesting to note that in the third and most recent edition of the *American Educational Research Association Handbook on Research on Teaching* (Wittrock, 1986) space was given to the culture of teaching. Since then, although not necessarily related to this event, interest has intensified in the subject and there has been a considerable amount of research generated on teaching as a culture or set of subcultures.

It appears that teaching is a suspension of subcultures having a common matrix of pervasive features like individualism, a need to have pedagogical space and the development of collaboration with peers to meet the needs of collegiality. This profile of teaching could be seen as part of a process of intercultural transmission, which is characterised by the existence of active interfaces. Values which make up so much of peoples' cultural identity become the obvious interfaces during intercultural transmission. Teaching, and for that matter learning which usually accompanies it, are essentially part of an intercultural process. Values education alongside the various cultures of teaching enables a rich cultural exchange to take place between teachers and learners. This is likely to result in individuals being exposed to new values, the reinforcement of traditional values which they may wish to preserve but also their replacement. This, however, inevitably leads to a series of dilemmas, some of which will be outlined below.

The literature worldwide in the field of values and moral education over the last ten years indicates a number of issues exist for educators when governments draw up a blueprint for a values education policy. Four principal issues are identified below taking examples from a number of programmes of values education.

### **1 Values old and new**

In Singapore, Confucian Ethics was introduced into the secondary school curriculum. The introduction of such a value system is part of a number of attempts by the Singapore Government since independence, to provide its pupils with a programme of values education (Eng, 1989). The economic success of the country, while enabling it to flourish and achieve full employment and an improved standard of living for its citizens, was perceived by the government to have attendant detrimental effects which could lead to the erosion of family values, less filiality and lack of consideration for others. Programmes of values education entitled *Being and Becoming* and *The Good Citizen* were meant to counteract the more undesirable effects of modernisation for all ethnic and religious groups in the Republic. They also pre-dated the introduction of Confucian Ethics.

For the Singapore Government, values, be they old or new, western or eastern, should have a place in the school curriculum. The move towards including Confucian Ethics and the introduction of the religious teaching of Christianity, Islam and Hinduism aimed specifically at targeting cultural and religious diversity in a way which *Being and Becoming* and *The Good Citizen* did not and were not meant to do.

### **2 Values public and private**

An issue that does not emerge very often in the rhetoric and print associated with programmes of values education, is that of one's own personal values and how they relate to a public system of values which are reflected in the curriculum of the school or college. One usually comes across this issue in discussion with teachers and pupils, for they are at the interface of a values education programme. There are a number of problems which are associated with this issue. One problem is that teachers and pupils may agree with much of what a programme of values education is trying to achieve, but find the subject difficult and its presentation boring. This was certainly the case for most of the Singapore programmes. The teaching of, and the teacher training for most programmes were inadequate and unimaginative.

However, a more disturbing scenario is one where a values education programme contains political motives dressed up as moral values. This causes an inner conflict within the person between the official line and the individual's private beliefs. Observations by a number of educators from the Republic of China have commented on how values education in schools and colleges, since 1977, still have strong political overtones. The message, it seems, is that values education in China in the 1990s is really for the benefit of the government. Until this situation is changed, both teachers and pupils will have considerable problems of cognitive dissonance reconciling their private values with those dictated by government.

### 3 Consensus and diversity

The introduction of the Integrated Curriculum for Secondary School (ICSS) in 1989 in Malaysia reflects the issue of consensus and diversity. Malaysia has its National Philosophy which is further elaborated as a statement of National Education Philosophy. Of the seven principles of ICSS, two specifically mention the word 'values' and one the word 'spiritual'. One reference to values is to the word 'inculcation', and another reference is linked to the phrase 'emphasis through incorporation'. The word 'integration' is linked with the word 'spiritual'. It is clear after reading the ICSS that there is a concerted effort to produce a consensus, not only in the form of a programme which specifically deals with values, but as values incorporation into the teaching of other subjects in the curriculum like science and languages.

The issue of consensus and diversity is not only about values, it is also about identity and identity does not necessarily mean national identity. Identity can also refer to one's ethnicity, to one's religion, one's heritage, cultural roots and language. The issue of consensus and diversity is also about empowerment of one group by another. The inability of societies to tackle satisfactorily this issue is probably the single most influential factor in the failure of many programmes of values education. Education if it has an answer to these problems only has a partial one, for there are many other factors at play, for example, political and religious factors.

### 4 Dreams and realities

In reading through the numerous statements on what values should be included in a programme of values education, one is struck by the long lists that have been compiled and the meticulous way that the values have been categorised. Some categories relate values to national goals, some include values that are thought to be universal, other values may be more culture- or religion- specific. One gets the impression that educators genuinely want to play a useful role in making values education part of a student's personal development. The results, however, after more than a quarter of a century, have been generally disappointing. Perhaps the most imponderable factor which is related to this disappointment, is that educators who have spent much time designing and teaching values education have never been sure of the outcomes of their efforts.

Another factor is that listing, identifying, selecting and classifying values is the easy part. When it comes to values teaching not only is this the most difficult part but it is often the most controversial. This is especially the case when moral values (often linked to a religion) are emphasised as part of a values education programme. These difficulties become especially acute when it comes to training teachers. The curricula for most teacher preparation programmes give little or no place for training in values education, and where training is given, the subject is presented and taught with a strong emphasis on inculcation which invariably means large doses of didacticism.

The issues identified above have not gone unnoticed. Recently, representatives from over 40 countries in Asia examined alternatives to programmes in values education already in existence in their own and other countries, under the auspices of UNESCO. It was clear from the collaboration between these countries that an alternative in the form of affective development education might be an answer. In producing a *Guidebook on Programmes and Practices*

for *Affective Development Education* (UNESCO, 1992), an attempt was made to make a dream come true. Reference to the guidebook, which is the result of a workshop on affective development held in Japan in 1989, shows what a difficult task it is to develop a viable programme of values education and how much more difficult to provide an alternative. Apart from finding great difficulty in arriving at a meaningful definition of affective development, the authors of the guidebook sketch out a conceptual map which includes domains such as intellectual, aesthetic and social. The social domain is further divided into seven sub-domains including family, school and the individual.

If affective development were to replace existing programmes of values education in these countries, the strongly eclectic nature of affective development, coupled with the problem of training and educating teachers to teach it, would be a more formidable task than at present.

## ***The way forward for values education in the Caribbean***

The issue of values education was discussed by four groups whose deliberations ranged over most of the ground covered in the lead discussion paper. However, there were other issues raised as well and these are covered in the following distillation of the discussions which took place in the four groups. Two main issues emerged in the course of the discussion about values education and these are examined below.

### **1 The need to explore the nature and meaning of values for the Caribbean school context**

All the discussion groups spent some time attempting to define the nature of values in terms of the Caribbean, and generally the feeling was that while the various notions put forward in the lead paper provided a useful framework which could act as a basis, more time needs to be spent by teachers and other educators to explore the extent to which specific values systems exist within Caribbean culture.

The discussions showed that there was a considerable degree of common agreement that a values education programme should include religious, civic values as well as so called terminal values such as freedom and world peace. As expected, most participants were keen to put forward their list of values, for example, being honest and hard working. In some instances group participants put forward various classifications and categories of values. A well thought out classification, it was thought, would enable the study of values to be part of curriculum planning and provide appropriate designs for values teaching. One classification put forward the possibility of examining values in terms of moral, ethical, and social categories.

It was clear from the discussion that the whole subject of what constitutes values and values education needed to be thought out more thoroughly than had hitherto been the case. There was clearly a need for greater consultation between governments and the educational community, including parents, to be involved with this issue.



## 2 Approaching values education in schools and colleges

While much time was spent on discussing the nature of values from a universal and specific cultural viewpoint, a substantial amount of the discussion centred around how values could be taught. The general consensus was that 'values are caught rather than taught' and this thread wove its way through most of the discussions. It was accepted by most participants that values would have to be located somewhere in the curriculum and that subjects like social studies, moral education or citizenship might be useful repositories. There was a lot of support for values education to be presented either overtly or in some hidden fashion across the curriculum. This means, presumably, that values would appear in several subjects of the curriculum, not only those mentioned above. The teaching of values was hotly debated in all four groups but no consensus was arrived at as to how teaching was to be carried out. However, it was suggested that the role of INSET and, to some extent, PRESET should be exploited in this area. It was argued by some that values education should either be a subject in its own right or part of philosophy in any teacher education curriculum. Some group members thought that values could also fit well into a sociology course. However, whatever and wherever values education might finally end up there was a strong feeling by all participants that values education should be taken seriously as a school curriculum issue and that training teachers in presenting values in as informal and meaningful a way as possible would be essential for the success of any values education programme.