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Values in Teaching

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ABSTRACT *As in many other Western countries, in The Netherlands in recent years a discussion has started about the possibilities and necessity of teachers paying more attention to values in schools. In this article we will give a review of research regarding values and education, and make a conceptual clarification. We will analyse how values and communicative skills to reflect on values can be part of education, and will discuss school culture as part of a moral education. We argue for a more integrative approach. This implies at the same time the stimulation of certain values by the teacher, teaching and learning of skills to better communicate on values, and increasing the active participation of students. Throughout the article we focus on the pedagogical and didactic approach of the teacher, the way teachers are confronted with values, and how teachers' own values are part of their teaching practice.*

Introduction

Teachers have been dealing with values in education in quite different ways in the course of the second half of the twentieth century. During the 1950s, the main emphasis with regard to values, also in the educational system, was placed on conformity, at adaptation to society. The 1960s offered an impulse for self-fulfilment, social commitment and democracy in society as a whole and in education. In the 1980s, technical and instrumental thinking, with little attention for values, dominated education. The pedagogical mission had almost completely vanished from the thinking on education as well as from the teachers' discourse on their educational practice. This change concerned more the discourse itself than the actual practices of teachers. In the 1990s, the Dutch Minister of Education (Ritzen, 1992) could point out that teachers did not have enough attention in education for its pedagogical mission (Spiecker & Steutel, 1995).

The 1990s were characterised by, on the one hand, further decline of formerly coherent value systems in society and, on the other, the desire, as part of an ongoing process of emancipation, for further developing one's own value orientations. In modern society, more people have more opportunities to make their own

choices with regard to values (Beck *et al.*, 1994). This does not mean that older structures and institutions like schools have completely lost their socialisation function, but the possibilities for choice have expanded. Furthermore, through the tendency for globalisation, the cultural spectrum of many people has broadened. Because of greater mobility, people meet more different cultures, abroad as well as in their own countries, and in virtual as well as real forms; for example, in school. The multicultural character of our society also offers more opportunities for experience, but demands that all participants can work with and accept different values.

At the same time, the context for the development of values by young people has grown more complex, and demands are placed on them for greater self-regulation with respect to the development of values. The late modern society expects of its members autonomy in learning about values and making choices in an increasingly complicated social environment, and at the same time society wants social commitment, great tolerance and accepting diversity. Policy-makers expect of teachers that they support youngsters more in this process of moral development.

Values and Education: an international development

The interest for values and education is by no means a typical Dutch treat. We see it being discussed throughout the Western world, but also in Asia and Latin America (Stevenson *et al.*, 1998). Various terms are being used, each with its own tradition and theoretical position (Veugelers, 2000). For instance, in English literature: 'values education', 'character education', 'moral education', 'personal and social education', 'citizenship education', 'civic education', 'religious education', 'moralogy', and 'democratic education'. In scientific publications, the term 'moral education' is often employed. In the debate about the task of the educational system in the US there are many references to 'character education', and in Scotland and England to 'value education' (Munn, 1995; Halstead & Taylor, 1996). In the European context it is usually 'civic education' (Starkey, 1991; Edwards *et al.*, 1994), and in The Netherlands the 'pedagogical mission of education'.

The concept 'value education' refers to teaching social, political, cultural, and aesthetic values. 'Moral education' refers to a more universal notion of justice, but this justice becomes meaningful in a social and political context. We prefer to use the concept 'value forming education'. This is in line with the international usage of the term 'value education'. By adding the word 'forming', we stress the pedagogical dimension in it that values are being developed and that the education can play an active role in it (Oser, 1994). Although all values are based on moral values, we prefer the term 'values' instead of 'moral values' because political, work-oriented and cultural values can be seen as context situated moral values. Political, work-oriented and cultural values are part of many educational practices. Before speaking about teachers and values, we need to say more about what values are and how teachers get confronted with values.

Which Values?

Values are judgements based on a notion of what is good and what is bad; they refer to concepts of a 'just life'. Values are not personal preferences based on taste; they are judgements based on more or less explicit and systematic ideas about how a person relates to his/her environment. Both teachers and students have their own values, which interact in education. Teachers want to influence the values of the students: as part of their moral task or as part of the functioning of school as a learning organisation.

Values are expressed through subjective judgements (attitudes) and through behaviour (Berkowitz, 1995; Oser, 1996). There is a difference between values and norms: norms are social conventions that are ultimately based on values, but are strongly defined within a certain context. Moral values are enduring tendencies in the belief in moral justness or badness of a certain type of behaviour. Moral values also get their real meaning within a context. It is this combination of the abstractness of values and the context of values that makes thinking about values so complex. At the abstract level people may agree on the importance of a value, but in concrete practice they can differ on what is just. Research indicates that agreement at an abstract level between teachers often coincides with different interpretations at the level of the concrete actions of those teachers (Veugelers & de Kat, 1998).

Many educationalists and politicians draw up lists of values that are, according to them, relevant to education. They make a moral agenda for teachers. Sometimes these lists are long, but they often mention only a handful of central values. According to Berkowitz (1996), we do not need a pile of values to develop moral judgements and the actions that stem from them, but merely some central values like justice and human well-being. Berkowitz gives as an example the SCCS project in Scotland, in which a few central values are being used: respect and care for yourself, respect and care for others, a feeling of belonging and social responsibility. In the 'Just Community Schools' approach, the central values are care, trust, collective responsibility, and participation (Power *et al.*, 1989). In the Dutch debate on which values can be educational goals, the former chair of the Dutch Educational Council (Leune, 1997) mentions the basic human rights and values that are being justified by the importance of (national) health and the natural environment.

Lists of values for education can include moral values like justice and solidarity, and more regulative values like order and structure in work and behaviour, the development of self-discipline and autonomy, empathy, and learning to deal with criticism. Berkowitz (1997) calls these regulative values 'meta-moral' characteristics: they are the characteristics of the individual that support its moral functioning but that are not moral in themselves.

Lists of values often differ in the dimensions: 'person oriented—social oriented'; 'conformation—independence'; 'accepting values—critical reflection on values'. The sets of values that are embedded in the curriculum and in the pedagogical mission of the schools are prescriptions for teachers. Teachers have to include them in their pedagogical practice.

Citizenship

Teachers are supposed to prepare students to function in a democratic society: to educate them for citizenship (Goodman, 1992; Edwards *et al.*, 1994; Klaassen, 1996). Citizenship in the view of Dutch researchers not only relates to the public domain, but also to the areas of work (Veugelers, 1995), care (ten Dam & Volman, 1998) and international orientation (Karsten, 1997). Moral values are relevant to defining 'good' citizenship; in citizenship, moral values become concrete. Various types of citizenship are being distinguished in the literature; for instance, the adapting, the calculating citizen and the critical-democratic citizen (van Gunsteren, 1992). In this last view, citizens are not mere participants; they also take responsibility for the functioning of the community. Critical-democratic citizens have a critical social attitude in which a critical disposition is combined with solidarity with others (Veugelers, 2001). A multicultural society places specific demands on this critical-democratic citizenship. Modern society in all its complexity demands from young people that they develop their own identities and at the same time that they are prepared to actively participate in society and respect differences in identities. Teachers have to articulate the type of citizenship they want to develop in students and they have to find a pedagogical method for it.

Teachers and Assessing Values

In the discussion about the pedagogical function of education in The Netherlands, there are many references to the problem of assessing values. Apart from the question of how values could be assessed, the question is being raised whether a government, a school and a teacher should be allowed to assess students on values that they 'ought' to have developed. Or, to what extent may the teacher check the values that a student has acquired in assessing the opinions and the behaviour of students? Students are indeed assessed by the teacher with regards to their behaviour in school, but not with regard to the values they formulate concerning subject matter. Policy, school and teachers often want to develop specific values but teachers in The Netherlands do not assess students with regard to the values they formulate in the school subject matter.

The government, schools and teachers, however, want students to develop certain values also with regard to school subject matter—for instance, where it concerns the natural environment—but neither government nor schools want to assess the individual student on this. Teachers can, for example, assess the mess students made in school, but not the attitude regarding making mess outside school. This contradiction stems from the tension between the cultural policy of education and the human right of freedom of expressing own values.

To make the discussion about the assessment of values clear it is important to distinguish between measuring the effect of teachers' activities and judging an individual student. Teachers' activities in teaching values can be evaluated by measuring the effects of their programmes and efforts at the level of the class, not

of the individual students. This assessment of programmes at the level of the class can be more acceptable than assessing individuals, and can give information about the effects of educational programmes and teachers' methodology in value-laden education.

Cognitive and Communicative Skills to Reflect on Values

Many situations in society but also in school require that an individual reflects on what is right and what is wrong; he/she has to make a considered judgement, a judgement that is partly based on values. Cognitive skills are needed to make this judgement, and communicative skills to discuss values with others. Piaget and Kohlberg use for this process the term 'moral reasoning'; Habermas uses 'moral communication and value communication'; Oser uses 'moral discourse'. 'Moral discourse', for instance, is an interactive discussion model about problems of justice (Oser, 1986, 1996). It aims at teaching a child to develop its own opinion and at the same time considering the opinions of others. Research shows that the active participation of students in learning processes is important. Students must actively engage in contacts with others, inside and outside the school. This view of learning processes with regard to values fits in with insights from social constructivism in cognitive psychology (Prawat, 1998)—there too, emphasis in the production of knowledge is being placed on an active participation of students and interaction with other students and the teacher. Production of knowledge is seen as a process of personal signification. When knowledge is strongly related to values, a personal signification is even more important.

Acquiring skills to reflect on values is necessary for keeping a critical distance with regard to values, observing different perspectives, and making judgements on one's own behaviour and others' behaviour. 'Critical thinking' aims at learning to reason logically, as well as on being able to develop and substantiate one's own opinion (Kennedy *et al.*, 1991; Paul, 1992; Walters 1994; Veugelers, 2001). In Dutch education, and especially in secondary education, more goals are nowadays being included that aim at the development of skills for providing one's own opinion (Veugelers & Zijlstra, 1998). When we compare the results of research among teachers in primary education (Klaassen & Leeferink, 1998) with the results in secondary education (Veugelers & de Kat, 1998), we see that teachers in secondary education pay more attention to the development of skills to reflect on values than teachers in primary education. Therefore it is necessary, as Nucci (1997) argues, to include the perspective of different age groups when specifying which values and value-relating skills teachers should include in their pedagogical praxis.

Teaching Skills for Value Communication

The interpretation of values and the self-regulation of reasoning, communication and one's own behaviour become more refined when the moral development grows. Research into the effects of training in moral reasoning also shows that the abilities of students to give a meaning to complex social situations can be

enhanced (Oser, 1994). Teachers can make a difference. In order to teach skills for value communication, it is therefore, according to Nucci (1997), necessary to:

- develop a longitudinal learning route that takes the developmental stage of the student into account;
- stimulate the transfer of skills between various domains of subject matter;
- practice skills in different real contexts; and
- reflect on the application of the skills.

Students employ these cognitive skills during the interpretation, analysis and evaluation of values, and in communicating about values. These skills can be developed by discussion and by co-operation. It is not sufficient to individually develop skills for reasoning; students must learn to reflect on moral problems and to discuss within a community (Power *et al.*, 1989). This way, students acquire cognitive and social skills, and a broader perspective that encourages them to see themselves as part of a wider democratic moral community (Duncan, 1997). With value-bound subject matters, students may, as we have shown, not be individually assessed with regard to the values they develop. However, teachers can assess their skills to reflect on and communicate about values. In The Netherlands, skills with regard to the development of opinions have been recently formulated as educational goals in secondary education. Research into making these cognitive, communicative and social skills operational and measuring them therefore has considerable priority for teachers' work.

School Culture

Values are not only expressed in subject matter and in the pedagogical and didactic actions of teachers, but also in the school culture. In the school practice, students have to conform to the values that are interwoven in the school culture; rules and regulations must be respected. Researchers, experts and teachers agree on the importance of the school culture for the development of values and norms (Higgins-d'Allessandro & Sath, 1997; Lang *et al.*, 1999). Initially, school culture was mainly studied as a hidden curriculum (Giroux & Purpel, 1983). By conforming to the school practices, students are considered to acquire values and norms. But participation in the school culture can also be discussed in a more dynamic fashion: as jointly and actively shaping that culture.

In school culture, research shows, the model role of teachers, the relationship between teachers and students, and the relationships among students are important. Especially, the interaction among students and between teachers and students strongly determines how students experience the school culture (Berkowitz, 1997; Høst *et al.*, 1998). An often-used instrument to measure the experienced school culture is the Higgins' School Culture Scale (Higgins-d'Allessandro & Sath, 1997). Klaassen and Leeferink (1998) and Veugelers and de Kat (1998) have adapted this scale for the educational system in The Netherlands. The instrument contains four subscales: relations among students, normative behaviours, relations between teachers and students, and relations among teachers. In primary education as well

as in secondary education, differences were found in the judgement about the school culture. There are differences between schools, and sometimes between groups in a school; for example, between teachers and parents. In secondary education the students differ from teachers and parents in valuing school culture. Students are, in particular, less positive about their relations with other students than parents and teachers judge them. An interesting example of American ethnographic research into school culture is Jackson *et al.* (1993). This study gives a detailed picture of pedagogical professionalism, social conventions in the school, and the school culture in all its aspects. In their study Jackson *et al.* also focused on the model role of the teacher. Relevant questions are: Which values does the teacher communicate? How does the teacher communicate on values? and Which identification processes take place between teacher and students?

School Culture and Cultural Diversity

In most Dutch schools nowadays, the diversity in ethnic cultures is increasing. This gives students theoretically more opportunities to practice their social and communicative skills, and to develop values like respect, justice and solidarity. These new opportunities do, however, place higher demands on students. Research will have to show whether these demands might be too high for certain groups of students; for instance, for students with a cultural background that differs a lot from the Dutch school culture, or for students whose cognitive or communicative skills are weak. Research by Veugelers and de Kat (1998) indicates that students and teachers judge the school culture in schools with a homogeneous student population more positively than in schools with a high cultural diversity. Students, and perhaps not only students, prefer when asking about friendship in classroom to be together with youngsters of their own cultural group. Improving the positive judgement about school culture might therefore be at odds with preserving a cultural diversity among students. Teachers should be aware of this tension between homogeneity and diversity.

Active Participation of Students

An active participation of students in schools compared with a passive participation not only calls upon values that are oriented towards conformity, but also on critical thinking and social commitment. With an active participation of students norms will no longer be values that are enforced, but agreements that have been reached together by teachers and students. Power *et al.* (1989) describe a process of democratisation of schools with an explicit emphasis on the encouragement of justice and community spirit. These schools stimulate moral growth by participation, open discussion of moral issues, contact with differing perspectives and ideas, and living in a moral community (Power & Power, 1992). Here, cultures are regarded to be systems of integrated norms where rules are not decreed, but are created and legitimised through dialogue and meetings (Oser,

1994). Teachers can, within the given organisational conditions, influence this construction of the school culture.

Attention for school culture and active participation of students might also prevent value-forming education getting too cognitive or knowledge oriented. Students ought to be enabled to show moral behaviour in a social context; the learning environment should be powerful enough to incite moral behaviour. In particular, Bauman (1993) warns against too strong an emphasis on cognition in moral education. Moral phenomena, says Bauman, should not be presented as being controlled by rules; this would replace the moral self with an acquirable knowledge of rules instead of constituted by values. Teachers should therefore really be aware of personal signification processes of students and the subjective, value-oriented, underpinning of these processes.

Learning by participation, however, needs a better theoretical and pedagogical underpinning. Interesting in this respect is the work by Tappan (1998), who points out the similarities between the views of Vygotsky on education and the four components of Noddings' (1992) model for moral education: modelling, dialogue, application, and confirmation. The four components of Noddings' model can create an education that challenges students to develop their personal identity. This active participation is deemed necessary for their preparation for critical-democratic citizenship. For teachers this implies that their classroom practice is not constituted by individual learning processes, but by the social interplay of personal learning processes. Teachers have to orchestrate this social learning culture.

Towards an Integrative Approach of Values in Teaching

It appears that a more integrative approach is gaining ground in research and reform projects because it does justice to the complexity of pedagogical acting and the development of values and norms. For teachers this means that they stimulate students to develop skills needed for understanding and discussing the meaning of values. They also stimulate the adoption of values that are part of the kind of citizenship that teachers find important. In order to achieve this they may create a school culture that allows for the active participation of students in developing skills and adopting values required for the desired citizenship. This integrated approach has consequences for the cultural policy of teachers and for their pedagogical and didactic approach.

Cultural Policy of Teachers

Kohlbergians like Oser (1996), Berkowitz (1997) and Watson *et al.* (1997) argue for a more comprehensive approach of teachers based on values such as respect, responsibility and care, and students should acquire the skills to learn to reflect on values and to give their own interpretation of them. The school culture should, according to them, develop in the direction of a Just Community approach. Within the American 'critical pedagogy', authors like Giroux (1989), Goodman (1992),

McLaren (1994a) and Purpel (1989) search for connections between stimulating values and learning to reflect on values—in which they base themselves, among others, on the work of Freire and Dewey. Central values for them are: equality, the right to diversity, and increasing self-determination. In ‘critical pedagogy’ there is an interesting view about teachers and moral values: not only students, but also teachers are urged to employ the communicative skills for analysing their own values (Veugelers, 2001). Teachers should continuously learn about their own values and they should show students how to reflect on their own values and value development.

McLaren (1994b) has analysed the ‘critical thinking’ movement from this critical pedagogical perspective, and he distinguishes three trends. The first trend concentrates on logical analysis, and the second on the ideological position of the thinker, where thinking critically included analysing the context. McLaren promotes a third trend within ‘critical thinking’, a trend that sees reasoning as a social–political practice, as part of politics of social justice. A similar analysis can be made with regard to ‘value forming education’. In ‘value forming education’, values are analysed within their context when skills are employed during the communication on values. ‘Value forming education’ can also be part of a social–political practice; this teacher practice is, however, not necessarily aimed at social justice. On the contrary: it is often a conservative practice, aimed at conformity instead of transformation and democracy. Educational policy, however, is at all times cultural policy, and the school and each teacher also has a cultural policy itself. A cultural policy of schools and teachers can also be aiming at tradition and conformity, as well as at transformation and democracy. Teachers have to explore their own cultural policy and to make conscious decisions in it. They have to make their own cultural policy.

Balance between Value Stimulation of Teachers and Value Development of Students

In spite of differences between the various approaches just mentioned, we may conclude that they all seek to transcend the contradictions between value transmission by teachers and personal value development of the student by reflecting as teacher, together with the students, on values and the development of values, and that teachers try to stimulate the active participation of students. Values are then not regarded as abstract quantities, but as something that is expressed through ideas and behaviour. In education, teachers cannot withdraw from showing which values they believe to be important. The cultural policies of government and school even demand that teachers stimulate the development of specific values. The educational debate between teachers should also be on the balance between value stimulation by teachers and the development of skills by students in order to create their own value orientations (Veugelers, 2000).

A more integrative approach of moral or values education implies at the same time the stimulation of certain values by teachers, teaching skills to reflect and communicate on values, and increasing the active participation of students. This means that in education the teacher stimulates, for example, the development of

abstract values like solidarity, but that the students themselves, through a critical disposition, give their own concrete meanings. Of course, teachers do think differently about which values are important, how independent and critical students may become, and what the ideal ways of participation of students should be. The important question in this respect is how the connection between stimulation of values and promotion of value communication can be realised. A characteristic for the connection of value stimulation and learning to reflect on values ought to be that much attention is being paid to the social context of values and one's own position in that context. Changing perspectives also play an important role. The values that are being stimulated by the teachers have a relatively abstract character, which opens up possibilities for differentiation by teacher and students. The teacher, as a person who critically reflects on his/her own values, also has a clear model role.

The Pedagogical and Didactic Approach of the Teacher

Teachers can never be value free; their values are being reflected by their subject matters, their explanations and their behaviours (Goodlad *et al.*, 1990; Gudmundsdottir, 1990). Teachers stimulate the development of specific values. Teachers may limit themselves to values that they believe to be important, but they may also choose to show a variety of perspectives. Obviously, when one tries to develop a critical-democratic citizenship, this last approach is preferable. The forming of opinions as a form of value development does, of course, take place within social contexts in which several perspectives are possible. The study by Roegholt (1995) shows that, although teachers approve of multiple perspective teaching, the realisation of this kind of teaching is difficult because of inadequate teaching materials, inadequate organisational conditions, but mainly because of the lack of experience in teachers with this kind of teaching.

According to Berkowitz (1996), Kohlberg has acknowledged that in the Just Community approach teachers promote moral values and that this is not only acceptable, but also inevitable. The way for the moral dilemma discussion to maintain its traditional emphasis on an open reflection on moral themes is to explicitly acknowledge that the arguments of teachers do not exclude a counter-argument from students and that the discussion should not be stopped.

'Value forming education' is an essential element of the teaching practice of every teacher—not just for school subjects like religious education and philosophy (Veugelers & de Kat, 2001). Within the framework of their school subject, teachers—through their pedagogical and didactic actions—provide their own interpretation of 'value forming education'. Of special interest is the question of how the stimulation of values by the teacher can be coupled to teaching skills or, in other words, how the teacher's own values function within their pedagogical and didactic acting. Education is an interaction between the value-laden meaning constructions of teachers and the value-laden meaning constructions of students. The teacher is at the same time player and, to some extent, referee in the game of signification that we call education.

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