THE CONCEPT OF EDUCATION

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Accepted, 10 October 2004

Education itself is a concept that has a standard or a norm that provides education with its purpose. In education, judgments of value are necessarily implied. Most disputes about the aims of education refer to the distinction between two terms: educere (to lead out), and educare (to train). To lead out requires that a student be treated as a person and with respect, whereas to become educated is to learn to be a person. Training, on the other hand, views students as »materials« to be poured into an adult mould. The concept of training, unlike that of education, has no logical connection with values. The paper examines the various procedures required to attain the virtue of knowledge. The use of authority, as a principle of the education procedure, implies inducing students to arrive at conclusions which teachers themselves intend students to make, but which are not necessarily demanded by the subject matter itself. Education does not only reflect the social changes that have already occurred, but must also play an active role in directing social changes. Hence, indoctrination and other rationalisations should be regarded as immoral ways of treating students.

Key words: education, extrinsic and intrinsic values, learning, indoctrination, moral justification

Introduction

The role of education is not only to reflect social values, but also to develop rationality, and avoid irrational and hence repressive social influences. The philosophy of education must, therefore, highlight the distinction between the coercive and the moral aspects of education. Obviously, good or serious learners must learn certain things that are permanently and universally applicable to man as such. In other words, any student's intellectual integrity and capacity for independent judgment springs from the intrinsic meaning of education. Extensive knowledge does not refer only to facts; it predominantly refers to the evaluative aspects of knowledge and, therefore, must involve personality as a whole. Autonomous judgments become the precondition of the moral aspect of education.
since they do not aim at utility, but rather at what is good and therefore right. Both the purpose and content of education depend on the political view on the role of individuals in a particular society, and their readiness to challenge indoctrination, propaganda and rationalisations.

Where does Education Stem from?

It is not uncommon that some philosophers of education strive to provide a more or less static definition of education. Yet, any definition that leaves out the social and political perspective of education, and that matches only the scope of understanding and enhancing values of the inherited culture must be ideological! In other words, authoritarian regimes have a very strong political interest in maintaining »static« moral ideals generated by particularistic worldviews, and in giving priority to the goals of specific groups. This is the reason why instrumental (extrinsic) values are not clearly distinguished from profound (intrinsic) values. John Wilson from the Department of Educational Studies at Oxford University also disagrees with those who claim that education has nothing to do with politics! He claims that »such a definition of education is conservative, and thus political.«

Some modern philosophers of education – due to their obscure definition of educational goals – confuse the concept of upbringing (trophé), child rearing and training with the concept of education (paideia). Obviously, an unclear perspective on the ultimate end of education lowers one’s understanding of the above issue. Have we improved much on what Plato and Aristotle said about departing from whatever is not virtuous in education?

Both Plato and Aristotle overtly emphasise that the quest for character-building and intellectual maturity must presuppose a certain moral or political ideal. Plato identifies this ideal by clearly defining the term education as follows:

»When we say that one of us is educated and the other uneducated, we sometimes use this latter term of men who have in fact had a thorough education – one directed towards petty trade or the merchant-shipping business, or something like that. But I take it for the purpose of the present discussion we are not going to treat this sort of thing as 'education'; what we have in mind is education from childhood in virtue, which produces a keen desire to become a perfect citizen who knows how to rule and be ruled as justice demands. I suppose we should want to mark off this sort of upbringing (trophé)

1 Wilson, J. Preface to the Philosophy of Education, p. 48.
from others and reserve the title ‘education’ for it alone. An upbringing directed to acquiring money or a robust physique, or even to some intellectual facility not guided by reason and justice, we should want to call coarse and illiberal, and say that it had no claim whatever to be called education. Still, let’s not quibble over a name; let’s stick to the proposition we agreed on just now: as a rule, men with a correct education become good.«2

Aristotle defines education in normative or moral terms by assuming that education does not aim at utility whereas training does. In other words, Aristotle’s moral ideal of education is rooted in the quest for deliberate autonomous choices, and has nothing to do with the non-moral uses of value words (right, wrong, ought, must not, etc.). The difference between the moral and the non-moral uses of value words occurs not between right and wrong, but between (instrumental) right and (moral) right! Hence, instrumental right does not equal moral right, but moral right does equal both instrumental and moral right! Moral reasons are not something we find in the world; we rather impose them upon the world through the construction of our knowledge3 and through our actions. For Aristotle, education is a moral concept because it goes beyond instrumental right.

Aristotle’s view unfolds as follows: »The animals other than man live by appearances and memories and have but little of connected experience; but the human race lives also by art4 and reasoning … yet we think that knowledge and understanding belong to art rather than to experience, and we suppose artists to be wiser than men of experience; and this because the former know the cause, but the latter do not. And in general it is a sign of the man who knows and of the man who does not know, that the former can teach, and therefore we think art more truly knowledge than experience is; for artists can teach, and men of mere experience cannot. … But as more arts were invented, and some were directed to the necessities of life, others to recreation, the inventors of the latter were naturally always regarded as wiser than the inventors of the former, because their branches of knowledge did not aim at utility.«5

3 In Kantian theory, if a judgment were analytically true, experience would not be needed to justify its truth. Morality is concerned with practical questions – not with the ways things are, but with the way things ought to be done! Since experience tells us only about the way things are, experience does not provide answers to our practical questions!
4 Art should here be read as the expression of human creative talent.
Education is not a Fact but a Process

If human personality were defined in biological terms, people would grow automatically! However, if human personality is defined in cultural terms, people need education. Nevertheless, there are many disagreements on the content that people as autonomous and rational creatures are logically required to obtain, should they wish to become educated. Wilson\(^6\) maintains that knowledge and understanding should be favoured because it is hardly possible not to be concerned with learning and the objectives of learning while advocating what ought to be taught and learned. Obviously, education must be a practical social activity, since it presupposes two parties: educators and those who aim to get educated. As a social activity, education is likely to reflect the ideology of the society or group using it. It is, therefore, always required that its own values be justified!

In transitional countries, the political and economic systems still play a significant role in determining the ideological goal of their respective societies. The question is not whether education should take part in this process, but whether the contribution of education would be irresponsible, or would it be concerned with maximum intelligence in re-examining the systems’ values and their implications.

Since learning requires time, becoming a person appears to be a matter of degree and a process. Each teaching and learning situation is the personal creation of those who experience it; thus, if Howard Gardner’s theory of multiple intelligences (published in 1983) were recognised, education could change its format extensively. (Gardner outlines seven intelligences:\(^7\) linguistic, logical-mathematical, spatial, musical, bodily-kinesthetic, interpersonal and intrapersonal). Dearden\(^8\) proposes that the distinction between information and judgment is, in fact, a distinction between different manners of communication rather than a dichotomy between what is known. It springs from our reflection upon teaching and learning, rather than from our reflection upon the nature of knowledge. In other words, education has an instrumental potential to cause change because its role is not only to reflect the values of society, but also to help modify inappropriate practices! And as Sternberg\(^9\) rightfully admits, what counts as a morally right action depends on the objectives!

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\(^6\) Wilson, J. Preface to the Philosophy of Education, p. 53.

\(^7\) Silverman, S. L., Casazza & Martha, E. Learning & Development – Making Connections to Enhance Teaching, p. 34.

\(^8\) Dearden, R. F. Instruction and Learning by Discovery, p. 170.

In spite of the fact that values are the result of both a socio-economic background and education, values are never simple, biologically given and indubitable entities. In his Introduction to the *Aims in Education* Hollins\(^\text{10}\) assumes that values do not exist in vacuum waiting for an object. What we desire depends entirely on what objects of desire have been presented to us. We learn to want things. Our desires have a history – not just a biological, but also a rational, social history of intelligible responses to what we have been offered. However, those who want to give the public what they want the public to want fail to admit that unethical behaviour arises from the internalisation of the values of the executives. »What is lost in this is the *concept of the criterion* of autonomous critical taste, of people who can defend themselves both, the advertisers and the educators.«

**Intrinsic and Extrinsic Aspects of Education**

Throughout the entire history of education educators have been concerned with the formulation of the aims in education. If those aims were determined implicitly, if they consisted of ambiguous and abstract terms, then no empirical procedure could either falsify or confirm them!

As Richard S. Peters\(^\text{11}\) states, the conviction that educators must have aims is generated by the concept of *education* itself, because to speak about education is to commit oneself to a *judgment of value*. In this respect, education is commonly considered valuable *in extrinsic terms* for both individuals (they will get better jobs) and society (good citizens will be developed).

However, education can also be conceived in *intrinsic terms*. In other words, as Langford\(^\text{12}\) forges, in formal education two parties may be distinguished, one of whom, the teacher, accepts responsibility for the education of the other. Informal education is defined negatively as education that does not meet this condition. In such definitions the word education itself is left undefined.

As indicated earlier,\(^\text{13}\) Aristotle forges the view that Wisdom emerges from the knowledge of artists who seek the truth and meaning in a

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\(^{12}\) Langford, G. & O’Connor, D. J. (eds.) *New Essays in the Philosophy of Education*, pp. 3-4.

\(^{13}\) See footnote number 4.
creative fashion, and thus the pressures of the necessities of life do not influence their activity primarily. In other words, Aristotle’s scope of education most certainly refers to the term *educere* (to lead out) because it enhances one’s expertise and results in both self-development and the realisation of one’s potentials – the goal of education is to learn to be a person. Accordingly, good society will be a society of fully developed persons with unique freedoms and responsibilities.

However, if we were to view education as if it stemmed solely from the term *educare* (to train), then it would be, more or less, equivalent to upbringing. Wilson\(^\text{14}\) exposes his idea of the difference between trained teachers and educated teachers. In his view, both types of learning may benefit both teachers and their pupils. The difference is rather that the notion of education covers more ground, or takes more things into consideration than the notion of training.

As Natale\(^\text{15}\) emphasises, theory and practice are never far apart or separated – one is the corrective of the other. If a system’s values and their implications were constantly re-examined, then the protests against treating children as materials to be poured into an adult mould should be the source of the permanent revision of the educational principles and procedures. Regardless of which teaching and learning procedure (i.e., training, conditioning, rational explanation, etc.) is debated, one thing is for sure – children should be treated with respect and as persons. If an educator is not concerned with the growth of a child’s personality but deliberately instils his/her own beliefs in the child, (s)he behaves unacceptably! In other words, if educators use children as a means rather than treat them as an end, their behaviour is unacceptable! Regardless of whether such educators are or are not aware of their unethical practices, they communicate incomplete and thus false and misleading information; hence, they bear responsibility for contributing to a very serious social problem!

**Descriptive and Prescriptive Elements of Education**

The only possible way that education can escape the misconception of its purpose is by allowing its core assumptions to be challenged. Thus, the ability to access, analyse, evaluate and communicate information in

\(^{14}\) Wilson, J. *Preface to the Philosophy of Education*, p. 23.

all its forms requires the educated to recognise whether half-truths have been taught – instead of the whole truth – by having been given only one point of view or by all the other possible points of view having been suppressed. Such extensive knowledge goes beyond facts, and is the reason why the acquisition of extensive knowledge cannot be the result of training alone! This idea is emphasised by Cornford, who asserts that *Theaetetus* is led to see that knowledge must be sought above the realm of mere sensation or perception, somewhere in the field of thinking or judging described as an activity of the mind by itself. Extensive knowledge is the type of experience that has a profound evaluative character; it refers to one’s understanding of the very nature of education itself, which is considered valuable in and for itself!

According to the fact that experience tells us only about the way things are and not about the way things ought to be, extensive knowledge must be the exclusive result of education! Or as Daveney states in his paper on education, the fact that one is being trained for something does not imply that one is being educated, the implication of which is that the concept of training, unlike that of education, has no logical connection with values. The difference between the two lies in the difference between empirical facts and moral evaluations. Training is an empirical concept divorced from moral values.

Educational aims cannot remain static; in order to facilitate the development of rationality in children, the contents and methods of education must be critically reappraised. According to Harris, education involves personality as a whole, whereas training touches only the surface of the mind. The danger of thinking about education in terms of static content is that the content of education could easily be confused with education itself. Accordingly, teachers who concentrate on content rather than education instruct rather than educate.

Value judgments differ from all other kinds of judgment. Their validity depends on whether they are significant for the diverse range of profound human interests, and not on whether they are well accepted in and by a particular community. We cannot infer values. We can only discover how people define them. Values are enduring and resistant to change because they are tied to fundamental human needs. If ethical judgments

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17 Langford, G. & O’Connor, D. J. (eds.) *New Essays in the Philosophy of Education*, p. 84.
18 Harris, A. *Thinking about Education*, pp. 6–7.
were simply conformity statements about particularistic worldviews, then values would be *arbitrarily invented*, and it would be impossible to argue about questions of value!

The job of evaluative statements is not only to express an agent’s approval, but also to present his/her appraisal! Thomas E. Hill\(^{19}\) maintains that sensory and observational truth conditions shed little light on the meanings of *evaluative statements*. Evaluative statements must rely on a priori judgments, and are appropriate without reference to experience. Moreover, according to Searle,\(^{20}\) evaluative statements must differ from descriptive statements; otherwise, they could no longer function to evaluate. Normative concepts are irreducible to empirical concepts, they simply constitute the way we conceive and justify our ethical appraisals. The debate about what kinds of differences are *ethically relevant*, and which values and principles are fundamental depends on the right decision.

For Cornel and Daniels\(^{21}\) *education* is also a *normative* concept because, implicitly, education is conceptually connected with what is valuable. This means that the purpose of formal education is always directed towards the shaping of values recognised by a particular political system. Hence, education institutionalises social values and makes the socio-political aspects of a particular culture known. Unfortunately, in every society education is sometimes dominated by irrational or repressive factors, such as popular opinion, local prejudices and national demands. Authoritarian\(^{22}\) systems of education very commonly produce pupils who are extremely critical, but only of those who do not fully adhere to the accepted beliefs, rules and modes of action.

**Education and Indoctrination**

Education covers a much wider area than indoctrination not simply because education does *not exclude* other opinions from the evidence at hand. Education implies the willingness "to detect nonsense, employ lin-

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guistic clarity as a defence against their own and other people’s fantasies, grasp what a conceptual question was and what sort of treatment it required, identify such questions in practice.«  

According to Patricia Smart, indoctrination occurs when evidence is absent or insufficient for the degree of belief accredited to it – educators are concerned with offering reasons, whereas indoctrinators with offering rationalisations. She concludes that if we are to avoid indoctrination, the beliefs we teach must be rational. Yet, rationality must imply other possible alternatives so that the accepted beliefs can be subjected to criticism and replaced by moral reasons and moral arguments. In other words, whether propositions indoctrinate or not depends upon how far we are prepared to allow their refutability.

The fundamental difference between educators and indoctrinators is that the latter treat all rules as »inherent in the nature of things« and deny the same as if rules preside beyond the reach of rational criticism. On the other hand, however, educators welcome criticism and are clear about what they are doing and – even more importantly – about what they are not doing.

In all authoritarian schools, regardless of whether they are secular or ecclesiastical, teachers believe themselves to be successful when their pupils leave school holding certain beliefs so powerful that no future experience could shake them, so committed to certain behavioural habits that any modification of them would induce overwhelming feelings of guilt. (Their unquestioning obedience can be counted on.)

Wilson rightfully emphasises just how heavy the weight of responsibility not to indoctrinate is on the teaching profession! According to him, the teaching profession does not have the right to transfer its irrationality to children since good teachers are not only the instruments of society, but are also its leaders in some sense. Wilson proposes that although the teaching of science or modern language can plainly be useful, they do not develop and expand the pupils’ personality in the same way that the teaching and discussion of the issues which people are intimately concerned with – such as, discussions of their feelings, moral behaviours, religious aspirations, practical choices, etc. – does.

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Richard Hare\textsuperscript{26} indicates that indoctrination begins when we try to prevent the growth of our children’s capacity to think about moral questions for themselves. If the methods employed by education are used to generate attitudes not open to argumentation – thus labelling the students’ emergent thoughts as \textit{dangerous} a priori – the methods are bad.

\textbf{Why Education and Ethics must Interfere}

Any given social order, including laws and customs, comprises social rules, which represent the coercive aspect of what is regarded »as a good life of the best possible life.« By contrast, the moral order of a society is an order that, in fact, accomplishes the purpose of education by helping people to self-develop. Every human being is capable of becoming morally autonomous. However, without formal education it is very difficult to obtain an objective perspective for the judgement of events. Yet, philosophers\textsuperscript{27} agree that one of the most important goals of education should be the liberation of students from uncritical mental habits. They cannot be expected to respect themselves as persons unless they have learned to fully utilise the intellectual and creative powers with which they are equipped.

In order to develop any firm stand against indoctrination or to become aware of the distinction between ultimate morality and utilitarian morality, everybody should aim at self-development. Consequently, what emerges is the distinction between the coercive and the moral aspects of education. \textit{Moral education} can be established exclusively through encouraging analytical attitudes that distinguish descriptive from prescriptive assertions. Moral \textit{autonomy} is the fundamental criterion for the identification of what is good and thus right.

Dearden\textsuperscript{28} points out that in Kant the concept of autonomy is primarily applied to individual persons. However, Kant’s notion of personal autonomy also helps to combine personal autonomy with the logical autonomy of the moral discourse, which social dynamics, in fact, consists of. That is why the arguments about the purpose of education differ widely in respect of the views on the type of society that ought to exist. Harris\textsuperscript{29} presents an image of a primitive \textit{agricultural society}, which com-

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\bibitem{Hollins} Hollins, T. H. B. (ed.) \textit{Aims in Education – The Philosphic Approach}, p. 52.
\bibitem{Harris} Harris, A. \textit{Thinking About Education}, p. 16–17.
\end{thebibliography}
prises 70 per cent slaves and 30 per cent ruling class. Since they do no have careers to prepare for, what is necessary for them to learn, what type of curriculum would be appropriate beyond religious instruction and sport? Presumably, the priests of this society would need to exercise power over the slaves, who do not expect to have an after-life because they do not believe they have souls – life on earth is all they have. It is also assumed that all the priests are men, and that all the power lies in their hands. As with any class system, political power lies in the hands of the minority. Why is indoctrination (rather than education) necessary if such a society is to preserve its existing structure? Why would real education for the slaves be undesirable in the eyes of the priests?

As Daveney indicates, if one has a very clear notion of the function of a state, one will also have a pretty clear idea of the education the citizens of the state ought to have. This means that as much as the purpose of education varies, so does the content of education. For example, in regimes that claim to be democratic but are, in fact, authoritarian, in those who are ruled there is no need to create »cultural self-understanding consistent with principles underlying governmental authority.« In other words, rules do not aim to be accountable to the public! In such regimes, identities obtained within family, ethnic, class or religious life are considered to be sufficient for the production of identities consistent with the authority of the regime. Since authoritarianism hides relevant information and thus prevents citizens from carrying out their duty to make qualified choices, authoritarianism lowers the integrity of the public sphere! Hence, authoritarianism might be held accountable for, as Wilhelm von Humboldt notes, attacking the »inner life of the soul, in which the individuality of human beings essentially consists.« Daveney, therefore, asserts that the debate about education is, in fact, a debate about society, and that is why the question of »Education for what?« is virtually unanswerable.

According to Harris, education in not a subject in any simple sense, since there is a sharp contrast between the educational ideals of a democracy and those of a totalitarian state. The former – at least in principle – values freedom of political thinking, whereas the latter values uncer

33 Harris, A. Thinking about Education, p. 5.
loyalty and the *subservience* of individual desires to the welfare of the »State«.

**Conclusion**

The debate about the issues within the domain of education refers to the objectives of teaching and learning, rather than to specific content. Many contemporary philosophers of education have been confirming Plato and Aristotle, who claim that the purpose of education is to challenge students to acquire an independent mind. Only individuals who gain integrity will be capable of judging what is good and act accordingly without having to be extrinsically rewarded, or without having to be coerced into turning away from whatever is not virtuous. If moral equality for all persons is recognised (which is the basic moral assumption of democracy), then the instilment of values in children or students should also be considered morally unacceptable. Namely, treating humans as means instead of ends in themselves violates the moral autonomy of individuals. The aims in education should always be reconsidered, since in a civic cultural system extensive knowledge ought to be accessible to all humans. Although the concept of training might be valuable as it is an empirical concept, it seems to be insufficient for a person to become qualified to make assessments autonomously and analytically. In spite of the fact that the views on the purpose of education differ widely, the typical reason why every stratified or class system involves vast indoctrination is the need to preserve both the political and economic power of the system in the hands of the few.

**References**


**POJAM OBRAZOVANJA**

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Pojam obrazovanja podrazumijeva neki standard ili normu koja će obrazovanju dati svrhu. Vrijednosni sudovi su u obrazovanju konstitutivni. Većina rasprava o ciljevima obrazovanja se odnosi na razliku među pojmovima »educere« (izvoditi), i »educare« (uobičavati). Izvoditi, potražuje odnos prema studentu kao osobi, pri čemu se smatra kako postati obrazovan znači naučiti biti osoba. Uobičavanje ili izobrazba na studenta gleda kao na objekt koji se treba približiti stereotipu. Za razliku od obrazovanja, izobrazba nije logički povezana s moralnim vrijednostima. Referat preispituje raznovrsne procedure koje vode prema unutarnjoj vrijednosti samoga znanja. Ukoliko su u obrazovnoj proceduri autoriteti najvažniji, onda će studenti morati pri-
hvaćati one zaključke koje će im autoritet nametnuti i onda kad po naravi stvari takvi zaključci nisu opravdani. Obrazovanje ne odražava samo one promjene koje su se u društvu već dogodile, ono treba zauzetiti akтивну ulogu u pronalaženju pravaca društvenih promjena. Zbog toga, indoktrinaciju i ostale racionalizacije treba smatrati nemoralnim načinom odnosa prema studentima.

**Key words:** ekstrinzične i intrinzične vrijednosti, indoktrinacija, odgoj, učenje, moralno opravdanje