Innovation in Teaching: The Relativity of Educational Values in Vocational Training

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In the socio-professional environment, the existence of values proves to be essential to the individual in order to live in harmony. It is by the search of oneself that you discover the world around you. Under this aspect, the philosophy of education can contribute to the conveyance of a decisive reflection on the impact of the educator’s mission on the people who are taught. On the one hand, the relativity of values puts into question their universal dimension, since they diversify in place and time according to different eras but also to different customs of each country. In this case, what is the finality of education and learning in relation to cultural diversification with regard to innovation in teaching? On the other hand, the educator’s personality plays a considerable and effective role in motivating his/her target group to seek out the higher and universal values and disseminate the principles of citizenship. Lastly, with regard to vocational training, the introduction of diversified pedagogical approaches as well as the adoption of learning strategies will enable the Educator to act in full knowledge and awareness of his action while being preoccupied in the management of the pedagogical process. His/her effective intervention will offer the opportunity to the group members to create synergies, in order to develop their unexploited potential and achieve a high level of awareness through the development of their personality.

Keywords: relativity of educational values, hierarchy of values, innovation in teaching, promote teaching/learning strategies, vocational training

Introduction

“Man is not born a man, he becomes one...” Erasmus indicates in order to highlight the major role of education in human moulding. The human condition involves fundamental values, which determine the meaning of existence and lead to his development. According to Socrates, the Greek philosopher, the purpose of education is to direct oneself towards the truth of Virtue and values aimed at the intellectual and moral excellence of a person. The educator’s contribution proves to play a determining role in moulding the personality of each participant in the group and achieving his/her educational mission. However, values vary through time and place according to different eras and cultures. Under this aspect, instability results from the relativity of values, which gives a reflection of their universal dimension. If we accept the idea that values are considered to be relative or even limited and invalid, which is the finality of education and teaching? On the one hand, what is the
contribution of the educator to the transmission of values in relation to cultural diversification in the field of innovation in teaching? On the other hand, up to what point could the respect of the hierarchy of values make the person worthy and virtuously educated and sharing the existence of universal values? Finally, what are the effects of the arbitrary nature of educational values resulting from their relativity for vocational training?

**The Educator’s Contribution to the Dissemination of Fluctuating Values in Teaching Innovation**

It is certain that values differ in temporality and that cultures propagate them in different places. The responsibility of the educator is decisive regarding the values to be transmitted in the social but especially in the pedagogical framework.

At the social level, the universality of values is questioned and varies from country to country, because the diversity and variability of human opinions corresponds to the diversity of customs and manners that they reflect. This variability relates to all fields of life and extends to education above all. Indeed, teachers and educators experience the influence of the environment in which they live, since the context can play a decisive role and influence the effectiveness of multi-culturally-referenced educational functioning. It is important to underline “the work carried out to draw up maps of cognitive systems and perceptions according to cultural mussels as well as the ethnic profiles of students—cf. work by W. Longstreet—are based on a deterministic design and causalist behaviors” (Le Français dans le monde, 1990, p. 26).

Certainly, relativity existing in the sociocultural life highlights the fluctuating nature of values and reinforces the gap between generations. In addition, the shift of values is strengthened among teachers and is spread by the massive displacement of immigrants abroad. It is the educator who will be led to play a regulatory role and to find a medium-term between the values which he/she conveys and those that he/she accepts. There is a dilemma indeed: on the one hand, up to which point can one resign himself and make concessions in the pedagogical context or, on the other hand, up to what point is it necessary to adopt a flexible attitude based on interference of values?

In the current world, societies are in the midst of a mutation, seeking for new values. In this sense, the teacher’s value lies in the possibility of creating the best learning conditions at the service of teaching. According to Reboul, in his book *The Values of Education* (1992), “learning is finally about exchanging, imitating, learning to be.” Those stakes of his reflection on the values of education are conceived as learning for mankind. The values of education are ranked into three categories. First, those values that can be viewed as the goals of education and greatly vary within societies and cultures. Among those, there are traditional values opting for integration in the middle and fidelity to the past. Some other values support autonomy, critical spirit, judgement and sense of responsibility. Those are the indispensable ones to the education itself. A modern type of education would rather focus on initiative, creativity and free cooperation. Finally, there are values that serve education on the criterion of judgement, in accordance to which the individual is capable of initiative, of team Spirit (Reboul, 1992, p. 4).
The Existence of Universal Values: Why the Hierarchy of Values Should Be Respected and Be Put at the Service of Teaching?

Nevertheless, universal values do exist and are treated on a hierarchical basis. In this way, the individual discovers his dignity, presenting himself as a reason-bearer or conscious of a revelation that constitutes values. Accordingly, Scheler (1955) classifies values on a hierarchical basis ranking them, but by omitting the value of utility. Then the value of pleasure (versus the disvalue of pain) comes, after that the value of life, the value of the spirit and next, the value of the holy (opposed to the disvalue of the unholy). The rise in the scale of hierarchy is possible depending on the willingness to access a qualitatively higher value. In this case, the value is defined as rare and requires a personal sacrifice as well as a permanent will to stimulate that desire.

The values vary according to the way in which they are interpreted. The diversity of values makes them more or less compatible. Specifically, in the field of education, intellectual, moral and aesthetic values are essential. In addition, each value separately includes levels to be reached. In this aspect, any teaching conveys knowledge, know-how and aims at a purpose. In this way the man’s value becomes an end in itself.

However, the access to the hierarchy of values is declared as free and voluntary and requires acceptance of each value as a personal choice. In this way, the role of the educator is paramount, because he/she does not transmit crude and sterile knowledge on the contrary he/she focuses on the transmission of the values of citizenship to the students in order to live in harmony in the social context. The teacher assumes a dual mission: (a) to cultivate to students the skills necessary to perform successful tasks; (b) to develop the intellectual, cultural and moral perception of the peopletaught. For that reason, the personality of the educator plays a considerable and effective role in motivating his/her target group towards the quest for higher values.

Moreover, we must not neglect the fact that man preserves eternal values in him, values which have sustained a deep meaning in all civilizations of the world. Specifically, for Rousseau, natural morality is based on consciousness, directing the human choice towards virtue, deterring man from falling into the trap of passions. At the same time, Kant (1966) stresses the role of consciousness, this moral existence in us which he calls “Cogito”. In this context, the educator intends to transmit universal values to make each member of the group “fully aware of the value of his life, as an individual, as a citizen, as a man” (Kant, 1966, p. 65).

In a socially wider sense, it is essential to recognize the sense of solidarity among the members of a society and to define that solidarity in temporality. For Alain, a value is linked to the notion of immortality of the soul and universality: “Soul” means what is universal and eternal in man, so that individuals separated in space and time, distinct from one another by language or by color, belong nevertheless to the same species (Pascal, 1969, p. 72). In this way, man discovers his dignity by the full knowledge of the past and that is the reason why the sense of value awakens.

Ways to Search the Educational Values in Vocational Training

As far as vocational training is concerned, it is up to the educator to act in full knowledge and awareness of his acts while being preoccupied with the management of the pedagogical process aiming at dealing with diversity and heterogeneity. In this way, the interest carried to the diversification of the educational practices results in wondering about the compatibility of values. In Education and Sociology, Durkheim (1973) explains the evolution of the extreme variety of education through time and place by the fact that “each type of people has
its own education and that can be used to define it in the same way as its social, political and religious organization” (Durkheim, 1973, p. 98). Moreover, the variation of values is not absolute but differs by the manner in which each individual internalizes and evaluates it. Moreover, a value is relative according to the customs and habits of each country.

In addition, a moral value comprises by standards, which may be associated with higher requirements such as modesty, purity, honesty and above all sacrifice of self-esteem. Moreover, its adoption consists of a voluntary act taking on a fruitful and fulfilling endeavor. The value is qualified as freewill; therefore, it requires a purely personal effort. In fact, personal initiative is considered the basis of the education’s goal, because it relies on the student’s free choice, who according to Alain, is perceived as a freethinking human being. Virtue being a voluntary cultivated attempt raises man at a higher scale of values. At this point, it is important to learn how to look and listen, in order to exercise intuitiveness. Thus, it is essential that skills based on human experience being in accordance to the nature and freedom of the human beings are cultivated.

Creativity and innovation are developed to deal with learning difficulties. Teaching objectives need to be clear to enable each member of the group to actively participate in creating effective synergies. Collaborating with the other participants opens up the prospects for teaching to become more effective through the possibility of exploring the diversified pathways that open to solve a problem or even to answer a simple question.

To enable a project-based learning process to work properly it is important that the learning objectives are clear, supporting the broader curriculum, and that the teacher plays an active role in supporting the development of students’ understanding. This may involve the teacher standing back for long periods, allowing students to explore and experiment and think through the problem, but they need to be active in challenging student thinking and bringing learning to a productive conclusion. (Cambridge Assessment International Education, March 2018, p. 61, http://www.cambridgeinternational.org/images/426483-chapter-4-innovation-and-creativity.pdf)

The values of education which teachers transmit determine the class environment. For this reason, it is important to focus attention on educational approaches, which promote teaching/learning strategies, in order to create a balanced training environment aimed at maximizing public expectations. As Brady points out,

One prima facie solution to the challenge of teaching values education is to focus on the need for teachers to create warm and supportive classroom environments in which students feel free to express their thoughts and feelings or even experience catharsis, and to be tolerant of different student opinions. A more exacting method of determining whether certain values are more important in values education than other areas of learning, is to examine the teaching/learning strategies that teachers must adopt in facilitating each of the major contemporary approaches to values education, and to infer the teacher values that are needed to inform practice. (Brady, 2011, p. 59)

In the completion of tasks, it is necessary for students to be taught to cultivate the interiority of a person while respecting otherness. Thus, the purpose of vocational training is not limited to the acquisition of pure knowledge but is mainly aimed at cultivating intellectual, emotional and behavioral values. As Efthimiadou points out, to establish communication, it is necessary to use transactional strategies integrating sensory channels into the reception of information, reflection through analysis, analogy and emotionality in the processing of the transmitted message and verbal expression but also the action and emotion in the emission of the collected data (Efthimiadou, 2018, pp. 101-102). It is through the development of experiential strategic training that the teacher is interested not only in paying attention to the characteristics of the public but also in cultivating the plural interpretations of learners while focusing on the adoption of emotional and behavioral values. Undoubtedly, the
moderator knows how to manage the members of his team but also his teaching material to highlight the potential of each learner. Under this aspect, he becomes a good pedagogue and consultant who knows how to work well and to offer his necessary contribution, thus ensuring the balance of the class (Efthimiadou, 2017, p. 184).

Finally, far from dissociating values it is better to cultivate qualitatively superior ones, which lead to the development and harmony of the student’s personality. Since the ultimate goal of any learning is to conduct to the pursuit of human wisdom—as Aristotle defines practical Wisdom (phronésis)—, which is a capacity acquired through a long experience - provided that the subjects take advantage of their experience.

**Conclusion**

The hierarchy of values decisively influences the vocational training field. Initially, the relativity of values in a spatial-temporal dimension gives rise to pluralistic and diversified interpretations in a socio-professional context, owing to the fact that the same value is differently interpreted and estimated by the agents of human training. The relativity of values in a spatial-temporal dimension gives rise to pluralistic and diversified interpretations in a socio-professional context, because the same value is differently interpreted and estimated by the members of the group-target. Moreover, values become incompatible among them and it is up to the educator to be innovative and react with flexibility to promote the interference of values. Secondly, the contribution of universal values aiming at cultivating intellectual skills, moral virtues and aesthetic judgement should not be neglected by those who educate. A voluntary and free choice basis remains decisive for acquiring any value.

Thirdly, it is up to the teacher to transfer educational values and create conducive conditions to allow each participant to reach the awakening of his/her consciousness. Far from being directed towards crude knowledge, it is of prime interest to cultivate wisdomin people growing up, that higher human virtue, which is divided into progressive stages, in a rank of values. Finally, it is important to underline the fact that each value is differently internalized and, subsequently, interpreted by each participant. Therefore, the group’s management is essential to enhance experiential strategic teaching by the facilitator. Finally, the ultimate goal of learning is to cultivate the sense of responsibility and achieve a high level of consciousness through the development of personality while maintaining mental health and balance.

**References**


