

## CAN VALUES BE TAUGHT? THE MYTH OF VALUE-FREE EDUCATION

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**Abstract.** The vocation of a teacher entails a multitude of high expectations. In addition to skills specific to the taught subject area and didactic methods, a teacher's professionalism includes being a values educator. It is in the power of teachers to spur students to become conscious of their values and give them skills to reflect on them. In order to urge students to reflect on and discuss their values, the teacher must first acquire the same skills. The main aim of this article is to show that values permeate every aspect of education and that value-free education is impossible. I shall first argue that in teacher education more emphasis should be placed on preparing teachers for their role as values educators. Secondly I shall show how a practical tool – the Teachers' Values Game – based on group discussions of moral dilemmas inherent in practical examples collected from real life can help teachers to recognize what their values are, to acquire skills of moral deliberation, to learn to argue and reach consensus.

**Keywords:** ethics, moral dilemma, values, values education, teacher education, values game, aims of education, educational goals

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### 1. Introduction

Many of the choices we make in education depend on what we consider to be its goals. The British philosopher Harry Brighouse divides accounts of educational goals into four categories. According to the theory of human autonomy, the goal of education is to increase a person's freedom, options, and right to self-determination. The theory of human capital, by contrast, takes the goal of education to be providing a guarantee for economic growth: the more educated the work force, the greater the productivity. The theory of human development considers it important to use education as a way to create the conditions for the good life and the development of personality. Finally, the theory of civic education

claims that the goal of education is to prepare the individual for living together with others in society (Brighouse 2006).

For the last few decades the human capital theory of education has prevailed. We have been inclined to believe that economic growth will help to solve all our problems. If we have difficulties with productivity, or we find ourselves lacking a highly skilled work force, we conclude that we should definitely make improvements in the area of human capital! Granted, the greater people's knowledge and skills, and the more fully developed their values, the better work they will do, and the more they will contribute to economic growth. However, there is also a danger that talking about 'human capital' will turn out to be dehumanizing. If a human being is regarded only as a medium for achieving economic growth, things are turned upside down. Surely we desire economic growth not as an end in itself, but as a means for people to be able to live a better life. Thus it seems most reasonable to take the theory of human development as a starting point, since it focuses on the importance of using education to facilitate the conditions for a good life and the development of the individual. Then again, it is important to shape a person's ability to find the model of the good life that suits them best. This illustrates the crucial point made by the theory of human self-determination: the goal of education is to increase human freedom and the ability to make reasonable choices. And since it is clear that one cannot live the good life without other people, we also have to agree to the theory of civic education, according to which it is essential that education prepare individuals to live together. As we can see, the educational goals articulated by the four theories are densely interwoven. Education has personal, cultural as well as social value.

To my mind the nature of education is deeply ethical, since it is founded on an understanding of what a human being is and how he or she should live. According to the humanistic understanding of education, an educated person is someone who strives to understand the surrounding world as completely as possible, and to make as close a connection to it as possible.

Let us try to interpret this claim. How can education help us to establish contact with the surrounding world? Obviously, we must not only gain knowledge about the surrounding physical, social, and cultural world, but also about oneself. Education should provide road signs as well as the ability of self-orientation; it should equip people to make conscious choices. Further, self-actualization is not limited to the realm of work, but more adequately refers to managing three different but simultaneous roles in the working world, public life, and personal life. Our present school curricula are content-based, aimed at developing students' knowledge of different aspects of the world: biological, cultural, social, and technological realms. The school provides far less support for students to become aware of themselves, their abilities, wishes, values, and emotions. Marks may give students some idea of how their knowledge measures up to a predetermined standard. However, in order to establish a connection with the world, students must also understand what kinds of activities give them pleasure, their strengths and weaknesses, and what they need to do to achieve their desired goals. It is

crucial for a student to discover what he or she enjoys doing and what his or her abilities are. Getting to know oneself, building an appropriate self-concept, and developing skills in self-motivation should be the starting point for career planning.

Unfortunately, this kind of holistic approach is not prevalent in today's discussions on education. For the most part, educational tasks are interpreted quite narrowly, emphasizing only the transmission of knowledge, not the development of a whole personality or the creation of the conditions for a happy life.

This narrow understanding of education is also reflected in teacher training today, which is mainly focused on giving future teachers in-depth knowledge of the subject matter they are going to teach, with far less emphasis on acquiring and imparting ethical and moral knowledge, that is, the values education aspect of a teacher's work (Campbell 2003:X1). Teachers from different countries around the world have reported that they feel ill-prepared to deal with conflicting values identified in school life (Willemse, Lunenberg, and Korthagen 2005, Sanger 2008, Pantic and Wubbels 2012). Although it is well known that decisions are shaped by internalized values, empirical research indicates that teachers are not always fully aware of the moral and ethical impact of their own values (Jackson, Boostrom, and Hansen 1993, Tirri 2010). As pointed out by Karl Hostetler, this is a serious problem: "If conditions for ethical dialogue and action do not exist for teachers, it is likely that they do not exist for students and others either" (Hostetler 1997: 205). Thus it is of utmost importance that more time and attention be given in teacher training to reflection on values.

In the first part of my paper I shall endeavor to show that a systematic preparation for the role of values educator should be an essential part of teachers' professional education. More specifically, I shall try to address the question of what is involved in the teaching of values. In the second part of my paper, as a case study, I will show how a practical tool – the Teachers' Values Game – which is based on group discussions of real life cases enables student teachers and practicing teachers to reflect critically on their own values. The aim of this game is to help teachers to recognize what their values are, to acquire skills of moral deliberation, and to learn to argue and reach consensus (Sutrop 2014).

## **2. Why can education not be value-free?**

It seems that teacher training today begins with the assumption that education merely means knowledge acquisition. Such a belief emerged in the 1970s, when many education scholars began supporting so-called 'value-free' education. They regarded the teaching of values as inappropriate in an increasingly secularized pluralistic society, and in view of the paradigm of postmodernism. Clearly, value-free education was opposed to humanistic understanding, according to which values are inherent to teaching as a moral activity, and that this in turn shapes students' personal development. In the industrial age this humanistic understand-

ing of education has yielded to the business model of education, to the attempt to teach the greatest number of people with the least possible expense.

As I see it, this kind of skepticism with respect to values and the place of values in education is in no way defensible. In the first place, a value-free school is an impossibility. As we demonstrated previously, our understanding of the aims of education is already value-laden. The selection of subjects to be taught in school also depends on value judgements – making decisions about what we deem to be priorities for society and/or for our children. The way teachers instruct and assess learning outcomes, the reasons we praise and punish students are based on the virtues and principles they themselves appreciate. The values of schools are apparent in their organization, curriculum, and disciplinary procedures; they underlie all classroom interactions (Halstead 1996:3). Teachers' values are reflected in the curricular content on which they focus, the conduct they choose to allow or encourage in the classroom, the way they address pupils and each other, the way they dress, the language they use, even where they stand while talking with students (Pantic and Wubbels 2012:451).

Also, the kind of education we strive to give mirrors our understanding of desirable virtues. As Bertrand Russell put it, “We must have some concept of the kind of person we wish to produce, before we can have any definite opinion as to the education which we consider best” (Russell 1926/1973:28). I agree with Russell in this respect. If we want to raise obedient, loyal, hardworking people who follow orders without argument, then schools that use rote methods and authoritarian teachers are in every sense justifiable. If we seek to establish a state based on the rule of law, a participatory democracy rich in dialogue and interchange, and a rapidly growing, innovative economy, we must strive to raise our youth to be enterprising, creative, critical thinkers who are active participants in their own learning.

For example, the European Union agreement – key competencies for lifelong learning<sup>1</sup> is based on a joint understanding of the kind of human being we should be raising. Behind this lies a sense of what the challenges are for personal fulfilment and development, social inclusion, active citizenship and employment. Key competencies involve a mobilization of cognitive and practical skills, creative abilities, and other psychosocial resources such as attitudes, motivation, and contextually appropriate values.

When formulating the eight key competencies, many scholars and experts agreed that coping with today's challenges calls for moving beyond the

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<sup>1</sup> “Key competencies for lifelong learning are a combination of knowledge, skills, and attitudes appropriate to the context. They are particularly necessary for personal fulfilment and development, social inclusion, active citizenship, and employment.” (Recommendation 2006/962/EC of the European Parliament and the Council of 18 December 2006 on key competencies for lifelong learning (Official Journal L 394 of 30.12.2006) See: *Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2006 on key competences for lifelong learning*: Available online at <<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex:32006H0962>>. Accessed on 25.05.2015.

reproduction of accumulated knowledge and skills. Instead, value is placed on flexibility, entrepreneurship, and personal responsibility. Not only are individuals expected to be adaptive, but also innovative, creative, self-directed, and self-motivated. At the crux of the framework of key competencies is reflectiveness, individuals' ability to think for themselves, taking a critical stance, and taking responsibility for their learning and their actions. As reflectiveness is the heart of the key competencies, one of the teacher's roles is to develop the social competencies of their students. For example, to interact in heterogeneous groups one needs to relate well to others, to co-operate, to work in teams, to manage and resolve conflicts. The background paper states: "Today's diverse and complex world demands that we do not necessarily rush to a single answer, to an either-or solution, but rather handle tensions – between, for instance, autonomy and solidarity, diversity and universality, and innovation and continuity – by integrating seemingly contradictory or incompatible goals as aspects of the same reality. Thus, individuals have to learn to think and act in a more integrated way, taking into account the manifold interconnections and interrelations between positions or ideas that may appear contradictory, but that may sometimes only superficially be so."<sup>2</sup>

This explanation of the ideology behind key competencies illustrates that by expressing the need to go beyond knowledge and skills one does not mean a kind of compulsory admittance of values, but rather, acquiring the ability to reflect on them, and to cope with potential values conflicts. We live in a pluralistic world, where different understandings of values exist side by side. Even the values of an individual can come into conflict, and we find ourselves facing values dilemmas that we do not know how to resolve.

It is in the power of teachers as values educators to spur students to become conscious of their values, to give them skills to reflect upon them, and to discuss and support students' moral development, toward the emergence of their own personal code of values. However, as a values educator the teacher has to be aware of a time shift. The teacher should not attempt to transfer his or her own values directly as such; by doing so one transmits *today* those values acquired *yesterday* to those young people who will step into their own lives *tomorrow*. Instead the teacher should motivate students to seek clarity about their own values and direct students in reflecting upon values of themselves and others. In a pluralistic society young people should acquire the skills to make values choices, and to provide rational justification for them. Instead of seeing the teacher's task as transmitting a pre-decided set of values to the students, the teacher has to promote the students' understanding of values and to cultivate students' ability to reflect and discuss values (Haydon 2006:178).

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<sup>2</sup> *The definition and selection of key competencies. Executive Summary.* Available online at <<http://www.oecd.org/pisa/35070367.pdf>>. Accessed on 25.05.2015.

It is expected of teachers that they should help shape students' competencies in the form of knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values appropriate to each context.<sup>3</sup> Since values constitute one component of these competencies, the teacher is necessarily a values educator. It therefore also follows that teacher training should prepare teachers for their future role in values education. What has to be taught to future teachers depends on what we think the teacher as values educator should be doing. Different theoretical approaches to values education regard the task of the teacher differently, thereby also making use of different concepts of values.

### 3. Methods of values education

The word 'value' derives from the Latin word *valere*, which means 'to be worthy' (Becker and Becker 2001:1745). Although there are many theoretical and empirical studies of values, the concept of values is still quite vague and undifferentiated. Values have been variously defined as things considered 'good' in themselves (such as happiness, beauty, truth, love, honesty and loyalty) or good because they are in relation to a living being's well-being. In the literature on moral education and values education there is much disagreement about the term 'values' and a variety of definitions. Values are described as desirable objects or conditions, ideas about worth, emotional commitments, things which promote human well-being, virtues worth having, or principles, i.e. fundamental convictions which act as general guides to behavior. In the light of the diverse methods available for values education, one or the other of these meanings is taken to be primary. For example, the values clarification method regards values as beliefs, attitudes, or feelings that an individual is proud of, that he or she has chosen thoughtfully and without coercion from among alternatives, and that he or she is willing to affirm publicly. Those who support the character education program or the ethics of care line of thinking understand values to be virtues, character traits that for compelling reasons are desirable or worth having. For those who favor the cognitive approach, values are principles, the acquisition of which is connected with a person's cognitive development.

Furthermore, these approaches are undergirded by different understandings of the nature of values; absolutism, relativism or pluralism. According to values absolutism certain prescribed values are deemed to be important in all cases, while relativists and pluralists believe that values are context-dependent. It is important

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<sup>3</sup> In 1997 OECD member countries launched the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), with the aim of monitoring the extent to which students near the end of compulsory schooling have acquired the knowledge and skills essential for full participation in society. PISA assessments began with comparing students' knowledge and skills in the areas of reading, mathematics, science, and problem-solving. The assessment of student performance in selected school subjects took place with the understanding, though, that students' success in life depends on a much wider range of competencies. The OECD's Definition and Selection of Competencies (DeSeCo) Project provides a framework that can guide the longer-term extension of assessments into new competency domains.

to notice that as distinct from relativists, pluralists may agree that values are objective in nature but that they can be ranked or rated differently in particular contexts.

One example of an absolutist approach in values education is Lawrence Kohlberg's (1981) well-known **cognitive developmental approach**, which regards the aim of moral education as the promotion of justice as an absolute value. The other example of an absolutist approach is the **character education** program (Lickona 1996, Schwartz 2008). Both character education and **ethics of care** approaches (Noddings 1984, 2003) follow Aristotle's understanding of virtues as behavioral inclinations instilled through practice that have become habitual. The basic belief of these authors is that the cognitive, affective, and behavioral aspects of character work together. The character education program stresses that the main role of teachers is to create an environment ('a caring school community') which allows the students to develop certain behavioral inclinations or qualities of character (virtues) and perform morally required acts. It is believed that an ethically competent teacher knows how to help young people to acquire virtues, i.e. habits of directing their behavior, and consciousness of the moral principles on which to base their actions (Carr 2000:191–194).

The reason why a certain 'bag of virtues' should be promoted is because they contribute to the flourishing of human beings living together in community. Nel Noddings, for example, stresses that our basic orientation to moral education should be "a commitment to building a world in which it is both possible and desirable for children to be good – a world in which children are happy" (Noddings 2003:2). Character education takes place not only in school lessons; rather teachers can use all aspects of schooling as opportunities for character development.

In order to become a good character educator one does not only have to be a good person oneself, but one has to learn psychological theories on individual moral development, individual behavior, and classroom management. The future teacher must be able to discern values as they are expressed in school culture, and to learn consciously to mold the environment and relationships within it in order to facilitate the emergence of the desired virtues. It is also of utmost importance that the teacher be able to analyze whether the declared values of the school are expressed in everyday practice and whether the school actually promotes the behavioral inclinations one aims to develop. To this end, teachers should learn social science methods: how to conduct interviews, lead focus groups, carry out observational studies of behavior in classrooms, during recess and school ceremonies; and how to analyze the collected data and make actual changes upon the results of the analysis.

The **values clarification approach** (Raths, Harmin and Simon 1966; Kirschenbaum 1977, Simon and Olds 1976) is based on a pluralistic approach to values. In contrast to the virtue ethics approach, the values clarification account critically points out that there is a plethora of models of values in a pluralistic society. Instead of modelling concrete values, the inaugurators of values clarification

decided to model a process for clarifying and developing values (Kirschenbaum 1977:8). This method encourages people to reflect on their values through a variety of possible strategies which may include rating values statements in particular areas, completing unfinished sentences, utilizing discussion cards, and discussing cases in groups. The teacher does not intervene in the discussion but helps students to learn the valuing process, rating and ranking of different values in various contexts. However, this does not deny that the teacher directs the pupils' moral behavior. By promoting critical thinking and moral reasoning, by upholding free choice and advocating consensus-building, values clarification also develops certain specific values – autonomy, creativity, tolerance, and equality.

The values clarification method is well suited for values education in a pluralist society. As the minimum framework of common values may be rather thin, it is important that the teacher help students to build up their own set of values. But even this is insufficient, since values can be ranked differently and may often come into conflict. Thus people feel the need to understand how all their values hang together – they aim to reach some consistency among them.

If there is no absolute value, one has to weigh different values and decide what to do on the basis of one's own judgement. However, simply learning a set of abstract moral principles is insufficient: we must be able to apply them to concrete situations. As pointed out by Stan van Hoof (2006), a principle or norm is only a general guide or rule of thumb. The decision one makes will be expressive of one's judgement, experience, character, and virtue. Notice that if this is true, moral decision-making in a pluralist framework comes down to one's character and virtues. Thus the two approaches are not necessarily in conflict with each other but may instead be complementary.

Considering both theoretical accounts of values education, it is of utmost importance that future teachers be given the opportunity to reflect on their values and the ways in which these might affect their students; they should form the habit of analyzing practices from the point of view of ethics and think through their vocation as a role model. It would be useful to teach future teachers the Rawlsian method of 'reflective equilibrium' (Rawls 1972:20): in order to achieve consistency one moves back and forth between the particular and the general. If one discovers an inconsistency, one should modify one's ideas either at the general or particular level until one arrives at a point – reflective equilibrium – where all one's views hold together. In order to support the students in seeking consistency of their values, the teacher has to learn the method herself.

#### **4. Teachers' Values Game**

In order for teachers to understand that values are not abstract topics for discussion, but rather entities on which their everyday activities and decisions are based, a special values game for teachers was worked out by our working group

led by the Centre for Ethics at Tartu University.<sup>4</sup> The Values Game is an instrument of dialogue with serious content and entertaining form, modelled on a typical board game. In the course of the game a team composed of 5–6 persons tries to solve different dilemmas which contain values conflicts gathered from the real professional life of Estonian teachers. The authors of the game have proposed six possible solutions for each situation. In order to promote discussion, none of the solutions offered is ideal. The players can choose among 28 descriptions of situations which place the teacher in different roles and relationships, either with students, another teacher, the school principal, a parent, or family member.

Here is an example of one dilemma from the teachers' values game.

#### Teacher Salme's Big Secret

Money collected for school excursions has been stolen from a classroom at school, and the police are investigating. In a moment of openness, Anna tells the homeroom teacher that the thief is Bella from Grade 8, adding that if the teacher makes this public, there will be big trouble with Bella; Anna says that she was the only one who witnessed the theft. Anna is very afraid that the teacher will not succeed in keeping the secret and she does not even dare to come to school the next day. If you were Teacher Salme, what would you do?

1. I phone Anna and explain to her that she will have to go to the police and give testimony. I encourage her to do so and say that she does not need to be afraid of threats from the suspect.
2. I do not make the matter public. I phone Anna and tell her that she should come to school without fear; nobody would find out about the incident.
3. I ask Bella to come and see me and tell her that her theft has been discovered. I do not tell her who the witness is. I try to persuade her to confess.
4. I phone Anna and try to persuade her that the incident must be made public. I explain that she must be brave, and that this way she would help root out immoral behavior from our school environment.
5. I phone Anna's parents and try to involve them in persuading Anna to give her testimony. I also ask their help in protecting Anna and guarding her security.
6. I ask Bella to come and see me and ask whether she knows anything about the theft. I ask her to help me find the thief. I do not betray my secret.

First, every participant at the table decides for herself what they would do in this situation. When everyone has made a decision, they show the cards indicating their choice of options from 1 to 6. Now the discussion begins. Each participant has to explain her choice. After everybody has given their explanation, the group begins discussing which options to take as a group. The task of the group is to reach consensus; otherwise the team will lose points. Once the group has made its decision, the worksheet is turned over, and the feedback is read out – explaining which values are implicit in their response. Giving points is important, since it

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<sup>4</sup> See the Acknowledgement section. For more information see: "*Values Game*" for teachers. Available online at <<http://www.eetika.ee/en/values-development/values-game-teachers>>. Accessed online at 25.05.2015.

focuses the participants' attention on how values are continuously ranked in pluralist settings – winning points for one value, one may lose points for some other value.

When the participants turn the page, they can read the feedback provided for each option and learn what values are at stake in each case.

1. I phone Anna and explain to her that she will have to go to the police and give testimony. I encourage her and say that she does not need to be afraid of threats from the suspect.  
*In a legal sense you are acting correctly, but you are making decisions for the student who confided in you about the secret. Before contacting the police, you might talk with the student and explain to her why the police need to be involved.*  
*Responsibility +200; honesty +200; security –100; caring (trust) –100; tolerance (freedom) –200.*
2. I do not make the matter public. I phone Anna and tell her that she should come to school without fear; nobody would find out about the incident.  
*You keep the secret that was entrusted to you, but by doing so you foster a way of thinking that the terror of the strongest should just be accepted, and you do nothing to deter crime. Anna remains afraid.*  
*Caring (trust) +200; responsibility –200; honesty (impeding crime) –200*
3. I ask Bella to come and see me and tell her that her theft has been discovered. I do not tell her who the witness is. I try to persuade her to confess.  
*You deal decisively with the problem, but you break the trust of the student who told you the secret and make decisions for her. You might ask Bella for her view of the situation. You also endanger the security of Anna, who witnessed the crime.*  
*Responsibility +200; caring (trust) –100; tolerance (freedom) –100; security –200.*
4. I phone Anna and try to persuade her that the incident must be made public. I explain that she must be brave, and that this way she would help root out immoral behavior from our school environment.  
*You act in a principled manner, and also call on the students to show their citizen's courage by blocking unjust activities. You might need to think through the possible risks and involve Anna's parents in the matter.*  
*Honesty +200; responsibility (courage) +100; tolerance (freedom) +100; cooperation –100.*
5. I phone Anna's parents and try to involve them in persuading Anna to give her testimony. I also ask their help in protecting Anna and guarding her security.  
*You seek cooperation toward guarding the child's security and also try to impede crime. However, you might have discussed with Anna that you plan to involve her parents.*  
*Cooperation +200; responsibility +100, security +100, respect –100.*
6. I ask Bella to come and see me and ask whether she knows anything about the theft. I ask her to help me find the thief. I do not betray my secret.

*You try to solve the situation yourself and thereby keep the secret with which you have been entrusted. You do not accuse Bella solely on the basis of what you heard from Anna, but pretending ignorance you manipulate Bella.*  
*Security +100; responsibility +100; caring (trust) +100; honesty -400*

## 5. Reception of the Values Game

We have used the teachers' values games since 2012 both in teacher training and in continuing education workshops for teachers in schools. We do not yet have a reliable scientific evaluation of this methodological tool. However, we have some clear indications as to how the Values Game has been received: after playing it, teachers fill out evaluation forms where they can write down their criticisms or point out what they gained from playing the game.

Here are some quotations from the evaluation forms:

- "This game is a very good way to clarify common values in an organization (a school). The game format reduces tensions, but maintains positive motivation. The usual discussions about values in school often become conflictual."
- "The game taught discussion, argumentation, listening skills, the courage to justify one's position, how to go deeper into situations, and the need for discussion when there are differing opinions."
- "The game helped me get to know my colleagues: we think and feel differently. A great deal depends on experience. People of different ages have different life experiences, which are influenced by values."
- "Through discussing the situations, attention is drawn to different details. If one talks things through, in the majority of cases the solution can be agreed upon easily, without damaging each other's important values. If you know how to justify your position, it is easy to come to an agreement."
- "A good tool for self-analysis. We might have our theoretical positions for how to behave, but the real situation can be quite different from our theoretical expectations."
- "The Values Game made me think about the fact that perhaps I should pay more attention to values in different situations, and not always behave as I see best."

These evaluations provide evidence that the Values Game helps teachers to get to know their values, compare them with their teammates' values, and learn how to deal with values dilemmas. By thinking through what they would do in a particular case, and by justifying their chosen action to their team members, teachers gain an understanding of how values influence their behavior. They learn to weigh and hierarchize their own values, to justify values choices, listen to the opinions of teammates and reach consensus. The game has been appreciated as a useful tool for building skills of self-analysis and teamwork.

However, there have also been some critical voices. Some people have said that they are confused as to how they should choose between the available options: should they vote for the option that they know is the 'right' behavior or should they be honest and tell their colleagues what they would do in real life? To my mind, this frequently-asked question shows that teachers themselves are aware that in real life they do not always behave as they ought to. My answer to this question has been that given the options, one should choose what one would do in real life. There must be a justification for choosing a particular way of action. If one has to explain to other players why one prefers this choice over that one, then one either has to convince others that this is the right thing to do or become self-aware of the discrepancy between one's declared and actual values.

Another critical question that is often asked is how one should choose if there is no option with which group members fully agree. Quite often one would like to mix two options and leave out some parts. The answer to this objection is that it is intentional that none of the options offered is ideal. If we would have provided an ideal option, everybody would choose this and there would be no discussion. But the whole idea of the Values Game is to make people argue for the choice they have made and work toward reaching consensus in the group. Thus the players are asked to choose what they would do in the case of the available non-ideal options, and then go on to think and discuss what might be the best course of action in the situation.

The third type of criticism concerns the scoring of points. Since we provide feedback to players in the form of assigning bonus points or minus points, it has been asked whether we are operating with a hidden script, that is that there really are 'right' answers. We usually address this criticism by arguing that the points reflect what the authors of the game find it best to do in the described situation. The players are free to disagree and write down their supporting arguments. However, if one compares the feedback provided to all six options, it is easy to see that no ideal option is articulated. One has to choose among a broad range of values. As these may all be equally important to us personally, one has to rank them on the basis of evaluating the specific situation; these choices may differ because of people's different experience, understanding of good life, etc. The dilemmas cause headaches because by prioritizing one value, we unavoidably have to underplay another one.

The Values Game helps teachers to learn the valuing process, and to practice rating and ranking of different values in various contexts. If there is no absolute value, one has to weigh different values and decide what to do on the basis of one's own judgement. Thus the Teachers' Values Game teaches the skills of moral deliberation.

Reflection on practical examples encourages teachers to consider whether there is a gap between their values and their behavior, either on an individual or organizational level. The Teachers' Values Game thereby provides the teachers with an opportunity to start living according to their real values while also becoming better values educators.

## **6. Conclusions**

In this article I have argued that values are inherent to education. I tried to show why teachers should be well prepared for their role as values educators. My argument was that since methods of teaching, assessment of learning, practices of praise and punishment and, significantly, the manner in which teachers and colleagues relate among themselves depend on teachers' own values, the teacher has to reflect on her values and see the ethical dimension of everything she does.

In order to become a good values educator the teacher must learn how to guide and oversee students' moral development: how to help young people acquire virtues, habits of directing their behavior, and consciousness of the moral principles on which to base their actions. In a pluralistic society, it is especially important to learn how to direct students to reflect on and discuss their values and to form their own set of values. As value conflicts and moral disagreements are pervasive features of our pluralistic world, young people should acquire the skills to discuss values, make values choices, and to give rational justification for them. In order to support pupils in their reflection and discussion of values, the future teacher has to learn the skills of self-analysis and moral deliberation.

Our experience with the Teachers' Values Game shows that teachers appreciate a practical opportunity to reflect on and discuss personal and professional values. Cooperation between teachers and conversation about ethical dilemmas creates a shared values space in the school and motivates the teachers to take seriously their role as values educators.

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