Moral Education and the Teacher Training Programme[1]

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— PROLOGUE —

Because education is a human activity, it requires human agents to plan and carry out a complex series of programmes which constitute the total process of formal education. The key human agents are the teachers, whose role includes the transmission as well as the transformation of the inherited culture and value system. Consciously or unconsciously, for better or for worse, they exert a powerful influence on the shaping of the future by virtue of their role as conservators and as change agents in the educational process. For this reason, the education of teachers constitutes the heart of the problem in social, economic and political development.[2]

Kertas ini cuba menimbangkan rationale untuk memperkenalkan Pendidikan Akhlak dalam kurikulum sekolah-sekolah di Malaysia dan kesannya untuk latihan guru. Kurikulum latihan guru akan dikaji dan cadangan-cadangan berhubung dengan pengajaran kandungan dan kaedah dalam rancangan kurikulum yang ada sekarang akan dikemukakan.

Introduction

This paper will begin with a rationale for the inclusion of a moral education programme for schools (without discussing the specifics of such a programme). Next, I shall discuss the notion of moral education that this paper will use throughout, seeing it within the context of the existing Malaysian school curriculum. I shall then concern myself, not with the school syllabus since that is not the focus of this seminar, but with the syllabus at college level. Content and methodology both will be examined as well as their organizational implications for the Integrated Teacher Training Curriculum. It should be pointed out at the outset that I have given attention to responses of college lecturers to questionnaires concerning moral education recently. I have involved them because I subscribe to the belief that the success of any curriculum change rests very squarely on the support of its implementers. Their input is as important as that of the curriculum planning specialists. I would like to record here my thanks to those college principals and staff members who co-operated so willingly on this score.[3]

Why moral education

The rationale for the inclusion of a moral education programme in school seems to be clear from the prologue.[4] Teachers, consciously or unconsciously, influence the values of their pupils via a wide repertoire of strategies, most of which reside within the domain of the 'hidden curriculum'.[5] *Just as every teacher, whatever he teaches, is a teacher of language, so is every teacher a teacher of values.* When a teacher praises a pupil, he is rewarding a particular behaviour or action. When a teacher punishes a child, he is punishing a specific behaviour. Even when a teacher ignores a child, the child may construe this as a subtle expression of disapproval.

The position of the teacher as protagonist in the domain of moral values is not limited to direct teacher-pupil interaction in the classroom. The teacher who never marks written exercises is characterizing the notions of duty and responsibility in certain ways. The teacher who openly shows disrespect to some colleagues or the principal is sending across messages, unaware about authority and the notions of respect for human beings.

It becomes more than apparent, then, that the teacher's involvement with moral values is part and parcel of his role as a teacher who is continually called upon to make choices. In order to encourage, we must also discourage; in order to foster we must also hinder; in order to emphasize the significant, we must identify the non-significant; and finally, in order to select and focus attention on certain subject-matters of life, we have to reject and ignore other subject-matters. Were our values different, our selections and rejections would also be different. No matter what we *say*, we are *showing* in our responses to our pupils that certain actions are *good* and *right,* and other are *bad* and *wrong.* In short, we are trafficking within the moral sphere.

What is said about the making of choices about teaching is equally true for the study of education. By planning programmes of teacher education which omit a systematic consideration of moral values, we are proclaiming its insignificance in the life of the school and its pupils.

Once we have accepted the premise that all teachers are, by necessity inculcators and shapers of moral values, we have no option but to accept its corollary — that a systematized plan for moral education is unavoidable. Within the context of our schools, *a moral education programme refers to those planned experiences, formal and informal, the school will provide for the moral development of its pupils.* These experiences are underscored by the attempt to identify and clarify moral principles that our society as a whole cherishes. The overall, long-term objective of the programme is to help pupils internalize these principles to the extent that they govern their actions.

Apart from this the programme has the goal of training pupils in rational decision — making skills within the moral sphere in order to equip them for situations where tradition, custom and society have no blue-print to offer. Its final projected outcome is the development of the morally mature individual who is committed to and is able to make rational moral judgements.

Moral Education and Teacher Training

Teachers need to study the disciplines upon which their teaching subjects rest as well as the pedagogical skills required in imparting knowledge about their subject matter. Similarly, teachers need to understand the meaning of morality, its conceptual bases and its distinctive features. Together with this, they need to develop sets of teaching strategies that are consonant with the goals of the school moral education syllabus. The implication here is that the Integrated Teacher Training Syllabus must make room for *content* and *methodology* which are both necessary for the teaching of moral education in schools.

Content

When teachers are considered successful in terms of selected teaching-learning criteria, their success can be accounted for in many ways: a well-organized lesson plan, a variety of activities, the relevance of audio-visual aids used and so on. But a whole plethora of technical skills can fall flat if a sense of commitment and enthusiasm is lacking. Moral education is involved in developing a moral attitude, seeking to modify ways in which we perceive the world. We are dealing equally with the cognitive and affective domains. The outcomes of a school moral education programme are not easily evaluated. But difficulty of evaluation should not preclude the inclusion of the programme. What it suggests, however, is that the teacher training syllabus makes available to trainees opportunities to understand and master the relevant content. The special nature of morality, its cruciality to the life of human beings makes this essential if we are to secure the commitment and enthusiasm of teachers to the moral education programme.

I am reminded here of a workshop for teachers of moral education I observed about 4 years ago.[6] The workshop was based on Kohlberg's 6-page theory of moral development.[7] The teacher is given a handbook which has detailed procedural instructions with sample sets of hypothetical moral dilemmas and probing questions. The objective of the method is to raise the level of moral reasoning of pupils to the next higher stage. But teachers were not given anything more beyond the procedural formulae. They were not given any philosophical justification for teaching of moral education; no discussion had been planned to examine the sources of morality nor different con-

ceptualizations of morality. After a couple of weeks, teachers made it very clear that they resented being treated as facilitators in a conveyor belt without understanding the core of what they were involved in. A bag of tricks alone was insufficient. Teachers interviewed felt unanimously that an in-depth understanding of moral education was required if teaching was to be meaningful and if methods taught during the training sessions had to be modified and adapted to particular groups. (Malaysian College Lecturers interviewed voiced similar opinions).

It was this group of teachers who made a fundamental criticism of Kohlberg's approach to moral education, a criticism that is widely shared. In the programme they were handling, they pointed out that its cognitive aspect completely swamped the affective. This is not an uncommon weakness in an educational programme where those elements which are easily identified and evaluated seem to provide a natural focus. But where a sense of commitment and a fundamental question of attitudes is concerned, the affective must travel alongside the cognitive. We are cautioned

"...........that under some conditions the development of cognitive behaviours may actually destroy certain desired affective behaviours and that, instead of a positive relation between growth in cognitive and affective behaviour, it is conceivable that there may be an inverse relation between growth in the two domains." (Krathwohl, *et.al.*, 1956, p.20)

Philosophy

In order to examine the concepts of morality as distinct from other domains of knowledge, teacher trainees need to be exposed to the philosophical bases of morality. For instance, they need to study different interpretations of the term 'morality' in different contexts. By morality are we referring to a set code of societal norms? Are we subscribing to a relativistic view — i.e. that what is true of one society cannot be true of another? Are we thinking in terms of universal moral principles that hold good across space and time? These are some of the issues they have to come to grips with. A study of connected issues in philosophy such as notions of indoctrination, authority, responsibility, the ethics of punishment and reward, to name a few, are essential if the practising teacher is to understand his content and teach it meaningfully.

The Teacher Training Syllabus, as it stands, includes several items within the Philosophical Foundations component that lend themselves well to the teaching of moral philosophy. For example, the item in 2^8, on axiology could be expanded and become the study of ethics. Let me try to illustrate this. Axiology is the study of value, i.e., it is the study of what *ought* to be and this can be described in terms such as 'good' or 'right' which brings the whole area within the province of ethics or moral philosophy.

This section of the syllabus should also concern itself with the specific groups of values that will form the core of the school moral education syllabus so that every aspect of particular values is thoroughly understood.

But some may persist: does a study of ethics or moral philosophy make any difference to us as teachers? How relevant is it to us who are going into class to make others moral? In response to these questions, I have another question. How could you teach chemistry or geography in a class without understanding both the concepts and facts these disciplines are based upon? A teacher may not be convinced by certain conclusions in chemistry or mathematics. This teacher can, depending on the class level he is dealing with, convey reasons for disagreement with these conclusions substantiating them with factual proof. But to be able to agree or disagree he has first to understand the fundamentals of chemistry. We have already noted that overt and covert references to moral values form a large proportion of school and classroom verbal and non-verbal interaction. 'Knowledge should be furthered for its own sake'. 'It is the duty of every class to keep the classroom clean'. Moral philosophy offers a close scrutiny of the values that we unthinkingly propagate and perpetuate in the classroom. For this reason alone, if one disagrees with others, an examination of first principles should form a crucial part of a teacher preparation programme.

Psychology

Those who subscribe to the notion that psychology is a scientific, value-free discipline may question the relevance it has in the training of teachers of moral education. If we remind our-

selves, however, of psychological studies that have given us insights into the moral development of the child, its relevance cannot be overlooked. Through psychological studies we discover, for instance, that the normal child is born amoral i.e. he is neither moral nor immoral. The moral dimension, even without a planned moral education programme, is subconsciously developed through several processes such as imitation, suggestion and identification. We have evidence of this from contrastive studies made of the influences of heredity and environment on the individual personality. The feral child brought up among animals away from the influence of human beings becomes bestialized. Environment creates the climate that allows morality to take root and grow. To leave this growth to chance is to shirk our responsibilities. We plan for the intellectual and physical needs of the child, much of it based on the findings of modern psychology. Why should we ignore that need which distinguishes us so distinctively from other forms of life?

Modern psychology has awakened us to the sequential stages of a child's development. Teachers need to understand the conclusions made by such studies. If conditioning is taught as a general principle, it must be assessed not only in terms of intellectual growth but also in terms of the moral dimension. Teachers must understand and evaluate the implications of the active, self-directive potential of the human mind, as demonstrated by the developmental psychology of Piaget in the same way.

In fact, the title of this session (Character and Personality Training in Teacher Education) bears explicit testimony to the fact that there is widespread acceptance of psychology as an integral component of any teacher preparation programme in the teaching of moral education. Character and personality development are within the framework of moral education and rightly so. The justification for this marriage is a psychological one. Without going into involved explanations one can point out that personality and character are central themes in psychological investigations. However scientifically carried out, one comes up with findings that development towards a certain personality or character type, for example, a psychopath or a schizophrenic, is less desirable than some other type. The claim for psychology as a value-free science breaks down here as it does in so many other areas. This should not be seen as a weakness since 'The formation of schemata of values is surely the supremely characteristic activity of the human personality' (Bull, 1969, p.9). The personality is expressed in terms of values and one is unable to discuss these without putting a premium upon one value or class of values rather than another. Similarly studies of character development and character types have traditionally examined moral traits such as honesty, tolerance, compassion, etc. as the most important manifestations of character.[9] As in the case of philosophy, some sections of the Psychological Foundations component of the existing syllabus can be overhauled to include principles of moral development. I am thinking particularly of the sections on Basic Concepts of Child Growth and Development, Characteristics of Development and Needs and Developmental Tasks. (p.9)

Sociology

The third component in the theory section of the existing syllabus is sociology. Here, too, powerful insights are obtained. One cannot discuss character and personality development, relating them to moral values, merely in terms of the individual in isolation. The development of personality is a function of inter-personal relationship. It grows out of an individual's interaction with the society within which he lives. Society's mores, its pattern of values, inevitably shape and regulate the growing child's scheme of values so that the social and moral are inextricably woven together. In Malaysia we have a plurality of socio-cultural patterns that overlap in some areas and remain distinctive in others. An organized and informed consideration of these patterns is crucial in terms of yielding information as well as in terms of inter-group understanding of our unique socio-cultural environment. Teachers need to understand this in order to be able to adapt and apply their methodological tools with effect. Again, items in the Sociological Foundations component of the existing syllabus can be modified to include this dimension and others added where required.

Methodology

The next major issue to consider is that of practice. As for any other teaching subject, teachers must be equipped with teaching skills that are suited to the teaching of moral education. Without the school's moral education syllabus it is not possible to speak in specific details. We can, however, discuss some general approaches.

As in many other subject areas, it is not possible to state categorically that one approach is superior to another. It is particularly true of moral education where hard empirical data are scare and where outcomes, in the usual sense, are difficult to evaluate. Teachers, therefore, should be led to examine several approaches, trying them out on their own.

We have, for instance, the traditional approach, where moral education is viewed in prescriptive terms with exhortation and model — giving as its major features. An added dimension was contributed by behaviourists who popularized the *stimulus — response method* of 'stamping in' certain moral traits. In this approach, a system of reward and punishment is worked out so that desirable traits can be rewarded and undesirable punished. Investigations[10] have shown, however, that specific traits taught in this manner did not hold good over time i.e. there was no discernible attitudinal change that would indicate a subscription to a particular trait over space and time.

Another approach is the *cognitive-developmental approach* based on Lawrence Kohlberg's theory of the development of moral reasoning (Kohlberg, 1969). In many ways it both takes off from and parallels Piaget's theory of general cognitive development (1966). Fundamental to Kohlberg's theory is the development of the child as he actively constructs a moral world view, using the same structure or form of reasoning to analyse different moral situations.[11] A child's reasoning becomes more mature and adequate as he grows older because in interacting with others and in trying to solve moral problems, inconsistencies will force him to reorganize his thinking. The claim here is that growth in cognitive terms seems to occur in the same sequence of stages for all people across cultures. The major teaching strategy in this approach is the discussion of hypothetical moral dilemmas, the content of which changes at different levels.

The values clarification approach is another popular strategy. The purpose of this approach is to get pupils to clarify their own values without advocating any one set of values. The individual pupil is given opportunities in the classroom to force his own values into the open by consciously thinking about and discussing them. No attempt is made by the teacher to influence pupils' own values or to prompt them into action. The focus is on the process, means rather than ends. As the major exponents of this approach point out 'We shall be less concerned with the particular value outcomes of any one person's experiences than we will with the process that he uses to obtain his values' (Simon and Kirschenbaum, 1973). Unlike the cognitive — developmental approach, the teaching strategies of this approach do not possess an underlying theoretical structure. It focuses on a discussion of values and a deep, affective commitment to those values.

There are other viable approaches to the teaching of moral education which have resulted with different degrees of success. I have only discussed some of them[12]. In terms of teacher preparation, the recommendation is for a working knowledge of several approaches in order to provide the teacher with a wide repertoire of strategies.

A word of caution seems to be in order here. Moral education, unlike say, mathematics, is not only concerned with teaching your pupils how to master a body of content or a particular set of skills. We are dealing with fundamental values that are, at their best, complex and difficult to come by. We are not merely interested to see that the concept of honesty can be intellectually analysed. Rather they must be committed to honesty to the extent that tthey will want to act honestly. As Scheffler puts it: "To teach Y that one ought to be honest is thus not merely to try to get Y to be honest; it is also to try to get Y to be honest out of conviction". (1960, p.94).

These difficult twin objectives of commitment and action need to be tackled from multiple angles. Since a fundamental change in attitude is the long-term goal so that the moral point of view pervades all actions, teachers need to be trained to handle activities within as wide a spectrum as possible. Any school subject, project, curricular or co-curricular activity may yield the potential of enriching moral experiences and these should be capitalized upon. Co-curricular activities, for

instance, lend themselves to experiences in cooperation; notions of fairness can be discussed and acted upon. Then a project in Civics could focus on the development of compassion and sensitivity to the plight of the less fortunate in our society. The point being made here is that the teaching and learning of moral education should not be conceived in isolation from the other school activities. It should be seen as continuous with them as well as with life outside the school. Further, the activities planned should train teachers to provide pupils with the opportunity to participate actively in moral experiences and the development of moral judgement and not to receive moral prescriptions passively. The implications for the organization of methodology courses are many.

Every methodology course should, with the assistance of moral education consultants, build into its basic programme a component based on its specific subject content. Every teacher, then, no matter what his specialization is, would have been exposed to some methodological skills. Even if some teachers do not get involved eventually in the school's formal moral education curriculum, the necessity of undergoing training is imperative since his interaction with pupils and colleagues will form part of the moral climate that supports and reinforces the formal curriculum.

Some implications for the existing Teacher Training Syllabus

As indicated earlier in this paper, radical changes are not called for in syllabus organization in order to include the content and theory of moral education. The Philosophical, Psychological and Sociological Foundations provide logical and comfortable home-bases for the theory and content discussed under *Content* earlier. The items and their emphases in the current syllabus, the numbers of hours allocated for each item as well as the follow-up activities and reading lists need to be reviewed with the assistance of consultants. This is by no means a simple task, as all of us here are aware, and we should be prepared to step with great care and consideration.

Equally problematic but not unsurmountable is the question of methlogy courses. Working on the principle that every teacher be involved, no matter what his area of specialisation, it would appear that every methods lecturer needs to be trained to handle the moral education component. This could well be a long-term goal. In the short term, however, individuals may be identified whether according to their own interest or through their association with Civics methods (whose content lends itself admirably as a take-off point for the teaching of moral education). This core of moral education methodology personnel can then work with methods lecturers and formulate course components, possibly on a team-teaching basis.

Evaluation

If the theory component is worked into the Foundations courses, this can be evaluated in the usual written examinations. The follow-up activities, however, should be based on project, either individual or group, that would prepare them for the classroom. Sample curriculum materials within areas of subject specialization, for instance, could be a typical assignment and evaluated accordingly.

Similarly, the methodology component can be evaluated in terms of the general teaching practice criteria used by the colleges and be considered as part of the final grade awarded for methodology.

Action suggested

1. In formulating the Teacher Training Syllabus for Moral Education, it is suggested that the curriculum planners work closely with Curriculum Development Centre (CDC) officers who are responsible for the development of the school syllabus. This is recommended for two reasons:

    (a) The rationale on which the school curriculum is based should be clear to teacher trainers. This is crucial since the teacher trainers themselves bear the responsibility of training the implementers of the programme, and also the task of interpreting the syllabus to trainees who need to grasp the conceptual framework of the syllabus in order to teach effectively.

(b)   Teacher Training colleges, whose job it is to train practitioners, need to have a greater input in school syllabus formation. The nature of their functions takes them constantly into the arena of practice — the school — and this experience would stand curriculum planners in good stead. Materials planned by CDC, for instance, can be used and evaluated by trainees. Feedback information can then be collated and given to CDC officers with suggestions.

(c)   By working closely together in a systematic fashion, CDC can keep the colleges abreast about changes in the school syllabus at every point. This is to take care of the communication breakdown that can occur even between two departments housed on the same floor under the same roof!

(d)   Apart from the important consideration of support that participation in curriculum formation brings about, colleges can confidently and with greater understanding evaluate their own curriculum in terms of the objectives of the school syllabus.

2.   The intensive training of a core of lecturers selected from each foundation group should be planned. It is suggested that these lecturers be involved in organizing seminars/workshops for colleagues who conduct methodology courses in their own colleges after they have undergone training.

3.   Running parallel to the training programme, the Teacher Training Division should appoint a panel of advisers drawn from our institutions of higher learning, CDC and the Teacher Training Division. Their duties will be to initiate and monitor:

(a)   the formulaton of the moral education programme for teacher training;

(b)   the organization and writing of curriculum materials for use in the colleges.

Note

[1] Cadangan Sukatan Pelajaran Ilmu Pendidikan untuk Maktab-Maktab Perguruan Rendah dan Menengah, Kementerian Pelajaran Malaysia, 1971, p.1.

[2] Paper presented at the seminar on 'Penilaian Kurikulum Maktab-Maktab Perguruan Kementerian Pelajaran' held on March 20, 1979, at RECSAM, Pulau Pinang.

[3] Colleges involved: Institiut Bahasa, Maktab Perguruan Lembah Pantai, Maktab Perguruan Ibu Kota.

[4] The actual organization of the school moral education programme is not the focus of this discussion. It is left to the curriculum planners whether they see it as a single subject; a subject with accompanying modules included in other subjects; or as providing a new dimension for the teaching of civics.

[5] 'hidden curriculum' — the unplanned outcomes of the school curriculum.

[6] The workshop was organized by Lawrence Kohlberg and his associates at the Harvard Graduate School of Education for teachers of Social Studies in Boston and Pittsburgh. The teachers were observed teaching in classrooms and their evaluation of the training programme was later secured in personal interviews.

[7] See L. Kohlberg. 'Education for Justice' in *Moral Education* by J.M. Gustafson et.al. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard U. Press, 1970 for a summary of the 6-stages.

[8] H. Hartshorne and M.A. May, *Character Education Enquiry 1928, 1929, 1930, Studies in the Nature of Character.* Appleton-Century-Crofts. See also the University of Chicago's *Studies of Value* (Science Edu., 1963) in R.J. Havighurst and H. Taba. *Adolescent Character and Personality.* New York: John Wiley and Sons Inc.. 1949.

[9] H. Hartshorne and M.A. May, *Character Education Enquiry*, p.14.

[10] See L. Kohlberg's explanation of stages of moral reasoning in 'Education for Justice' in *Moral Education* by J.M. Gustafson *et.al..* Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard U. Press, 1970.

[11] Readers might like to refer to the publications of the *Farmington Trust Project* led by John Wilson. *The British Schools Council Moral Education Curriculum Project,* headed by Peter McPhail, has also brought out a series of useful publications.

[12] See Section A, I, 2 of the Philosophical Foundation of Teaching Training Syllabus.

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