Values/Moral Education: Current Conceptions and Practices in Philippines Schools

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Introduction

"Values/Moral Education," unlike "Science" and "Mathematics," is an extremely ambiguous expression. Attempts to stabilize or clarify it proved difficult as it continues to admit conflicting, if not inconsistent, conceptions about its place in education. A non-sectarian organization, for instance, may take Values/Moral Education as a tool for transmitting a certain set of "transcultural" values to the students. A sectarian institution, on the other hand, may require that values that are central to its faith must likewise be inculcated in the students.[1] There are also those organizations that maintain that Values/Moral Education should aim at getting the students to learn how, rather than what, to think, choose, and value. These are some of the conceptions of Values/Moral Education that contribute to the difficult disagreements on its purpose and content in the Philippine schools. It may be said further that it is unfortunate that some of the remedies from such conceptions appear to be a problem in themselves.

In this work, the name "Values/ Moral Education" is used to include both the idea of moral valuing and non-moral choice making. The said expression refers to "evaluative discourse" alone, and therefore is confined to the argumentative language of non-moral and moral valuing.

Despite the differences of various institutions as regards the meaning of Values/Moral Education, all of them seem to agree that it is a necessary element of education for the individual and the citizen. Often values organizations turn to the moral aspect of schooling when they strongly feel that society is facing a moral crisis.

For instance, in the Philippines, opinion makers agree that the country is afflicted with social diseases that gnaw at the moral fabric of the society. Like old pestering wounds, they continue to inflict damages on many aspects of social and individual life of the people. In the face of this perceived cultural malaise, it may be said that Values/ Moral Education seems to have become an impotent drug against the agents of social and moral ailments. Hence, not a few observers agree that Values/Moral Education has failed to achieve its most important goal: to help produce moral individuals and productive citizens.

Values/Moral Education and critical thinking

In this work, Values/Moral Education refers to one's learning how to think critically in addressing evaluative, especially moral, issues/dilemmas/controversies (e.g., abortion, death penalty, cloning, animal rights, and divorce). Teaching the students the rational approach to evaluative problems is getting them to learn the habit of clear thinking, gauging and revising arguments, and using principles of good reasoning. Students must learn how to question—theirs and others—a position, theory, conviction, view, attitude, or belief that may either be grounded in faulty or cogent reasoning. Also, having the ability to think logically and independently paves the way to becoming a person who values accountability.

The conception of Values/Moral Education as a subject on evaluative reasoning entails a different style and content of teaching. It requires a teaching method that promotes rational, liberal, and independent thinking about evaluative issues. The teaching materials should introduce the principles of logic and rules of good reasoning that must be applied in tackling practical issues.[2] Values/Moral Education, in this form, could effectively change its notoriety as a simple instrument of values transmission/inculcation, where, traditionally, a set of values is promoted by an authority figure—the teacher or school authorities—and imbibed by the students.

It could be true, however, that a doctrinal value may, at the outset, be subjected to rigorous examination; but then again, what appears to be a conceptual probe, upon closer inspection, is just a case of introductory endorsement under the guise of analysis. In this exercise, the student's possible rejection of that which is endorsed, even upon his/her own reasoned conviction, is not usually viewed by the teacher of values as an acceptable option.

Values/Moral Education, as a subject on evaluative reasoning, welcomes criticism, dissent, and eventual rejection of an object of inquiry (e.g., alleged guilt or claimed innocence of someone accused of misbehavior). This is consistent with the advise of Lipman (2003) that it is wrong to tell children what is right and wrong. Free, independent, and cooperative thinking play a central role in the mental and behavioral development of the human being. Hence, it is not a value or a set of values alone that should be questioned but also the reasons upon which it is thought to be worthy or more important than other things.

This is not to suggest that Values/ Moral Education, in this form, does not recognize the notions of right and wrong or acceptable and unacceptable such that the students of Values/Moral Education could say: "There is no such thing as good or bad, only things that we do or do not do." Good or bad may be used to express one's personal taste or distaste for certain things. But there are situations in which the use of good or bad or such-like evaluative concepts is grounded in reasoned thinking and warranted by the rules of good reasoning. That is to say, a thing in question can be determined definitely desirable or not. For instance, cheating during the exam cannot be said to be both good and bad, that its moral status depends on who is viewing it. It is of course bad even for the one who cheats in that cheating is self-destructive.

Values/Moral Education in the Philippines

With the vision of curing what is believed to be a socially ill Philippine society, former Philippine senator Leticia Ramos Shahani launched in 1987 a values training project called Moral Recovery Program (MRP). Shahani, however, admitted later that the program failed in its mission to change the Philippine society. In her work titled *A Values Handbook Of The Moral Recovery Program*, she exhorted the teachers of Values/Moral Education to emphasize the promotion of harmony and social change. One of her aims is to lessen, if not entirely eliminate, the many enduring social problems (e.g., corruption in the government, colonial mentality) that beset the Filipino people. Wanting to effect and begin with a heightened self-awareness among different classes of people, Shahani started with the enumeration of perceived strengths and weaknesses of the Filipino. Family orientation, hard work and industry, and faith and religiosity were among those counted as Filipino assets. Extreme personalism, lack of discipline, and colonialism were cited as examples of their shared liabilities.

Shahani said that some of the factors that explain the Filipino people's strengths and weaknesses are their home environment, history, religion, and mass media. She said that Filipinos should lay emphasis on the importance of valuing their country, collective interest, moral uprightness, discipline and so on. Shahani suggested, too, that every Filipino must aim to turn out students who are "*maka-Diyos*, *makabansa, maka-kalikasan, at makatao*" (roughly, they respectively mean: godly or devoted to one's accepted god, patriotic, pro-environment or environmentalist, and humanistic). To mold every student into a person the MRP wants him/her to be, Shahani recommended the use of the so-called experiential approach to learning values. Values/Moral Education here is aimed at endorsing certain values that must be imbibed by every student so that they behave according to the demands of the same.

In another work titled *The Basic Education Curriculum in 17 Easy Lessons*, Values/Moral Education for the author, Isagani R. Cruz, former Philippine

Department of Education Undersecretary, is also a case of values transmission/ inculcation. Cruz (2003) reminds the stake-holders in education that Filipino, English, Mathematics and Science are simple linguistic instruments for advancing one's learning in different areas of interest. Mastering all these tool subjects will not suffice in order to count as an educated person.

The expression "Values Across the Curriculum" (Cruz, 2003, p. 19) in BEC is an advice in itself that the teaching of tool subjects includes Values/Moral Education. This leads to the question, "What exactly are the values that students should be learning in school?" "Exactly the same values that they are learning now. Nothing has been lost. Something that is already there, however, has been brought to the fore-ground patriotism" (Cruz, 2003, p. 19). Clearly now, Values/Moral Education as conceived here is likewise an instrument whose purpose is to get the students to imbibe pre-selected values. The slogan of the DepEd says it all: "'*Bawat graduate, bayani at marangal.* [Every graduate, a hero and is honorable]." Broken down into specific values taught in Values Education, this slogan means that every product of the public school system will be "*makabayan, makatao, makakalikasan, at maka-Diyos*." (Cruz, 2003, p. 20).

In a book titled *Values Education*, aside from teaching personal development, Bacungan, et al. (1996) attempt to pass on to the students certain values. Inculcation and conditioning are among the forms of teaching that were considered by the authors. They were not highly critical, however, about such non-reflective ways of effecting values acquisition. The discussion on Filipino spirituality and religiosity is basically inspired by Christian faith. Though other religions were mentioned, only a meager space was allotted for the discussion of their potential contributions to one's values or moral education. In sum, while the authors find the role of reflective thinking in Values/Moral Education honorable, the latter part of their work seems to show that Values/Moral Education is likewise a case of values transmission/inculcation.

The research of De Leon (1995) is another work that reflects the view that Values/Moral Education is a case of values transmission/inculcation. De Leon was particularly concerned with the relationship between the values of first and fourth year high school students in selected Christian schools in the Philippines and the values of family, school, and society. To answer his other problems, he included teachers, school administrators, parents, and other members of society in his survey. De Leon found that there were significant differences in the values of all respondents with respect to seven (7) value areas, namely: (1) *unity and order*; (2) *knowledge and truth*; (3) *sense of others/fellowship*; (4) *justice*; (5) *art and beauty*; (6) *freedom*; and (7) *sense of God*. Evidence further led De Leon (1995) to the observation that family, school, and societal values have significant separate influences on the values of the student.

De Leon (1995) suggested that educational endeavors can only be meaningful if they are pursued with the vision of attaining and cultivating certain universal values such as the ones enumerated above. Again, the purported universality of these values, however, is difficult to defend when they are considered in certain real-life situations. For instance, freedom could be a disvalued thing when thought in the context of a toddler who wants to be left alone to play beside a busy street. In sum, De Leon did not offer a thorough answer to the possible objections to the universality view. No illustrative situation was given to show that the seven values are indeed perennially desirable. De Leon, instead, proceeded to recommend the integration of the seven values in academic situation. "Values must be taught systematically" and "contained in the 'hidden curriculum' as exemplified by the teachers, staff, administrators and personnel of the schools" (De Leon, 1995, pp. 127-128).

De Leon added the following in his list of recommendations: (1) the academic school personnel should be guided by the idea that teachers are also value inculcators, hence their credentials and background should be in keeping with such role; (2) school administrators should model good values by actively interacting more with students; (3) parents should have an active participation in formulating policies for character development; and (4) school administrators should fine tune the function of Theology in order to get the students to confer a positively higher value judgment on their faith.

Research problems

This study takes off from the assumption that unlike Science and Math education, Values/Moral Education does not have a single meaning, hence, the purposes and contents of which vary from one teacher or school to another.

Here thus are the problems that had been addressed in this work: (1) What are some of the current conceptions of Values/ Moral Education in the Philippines? (2) What is the prevailing conception, if any, of Values/Moral Education among the teachers of Science, Mathematics, and other similar subjects (e.g., Physics, Chemistry, Trigonometry, Geometry)? (3) What is the prevailing conception, if any, of Values/Moral Education among the teachers of social science and other subjects? (4) Is there a significant relationship between the subject taught by the teacher and his/her valuation of Values/Moral Education? (5) What is the level of awareness of the teachers of formal and natural sciences on the lack of consensus on the concept of Values/Moral Education? (6) What is the level of awareness of the teachers of social sciences and other subjects on the lack of consensus on the concept of Values/Moral Education? (7) And, is there a significant relationship between the subject taught by the teacher and the level of his/her awareness on the lack of consensus on the concept of Values/ Moral Education?

Methodology

Participants

Two hundred sixty-one (261) Master of Arts students who majored or are still majoring in different areas of study in the University of the Philippines, Diliman, College of Education participated in the study. All of them are either basic or tertiary education teachers. The classes in which they belonged were selected by availability. This method of sampling did not jeopardize the objectivity of this work as no one controls the distribution of students (according to their majors) in any subject in the UP College of Education.

All the respondents were Filipinos. Two hundred four (204) were female heterosexuals, 41 are male heterosexuals, 11 are gays, and 5 are gay lesbians. One hundred nine (109) are teaching in private non-sectarian schools, 78 in private sectarian schools, and 68 in public schools. One hundred two (102) are teaching in primary schools, 61 in preschools, 65 in secondary schools, and 33 in tertiary schools. Except for Region X, all regions in the Philippines are represented: 174 are teaching in the National Capital Region (NCR); 29 in Region IV; 18 in Region III; 7 in Region V; 6 in Region XI; 5 in Region VI; 4 in Region VII; 4 in Region XII; 3 in Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM); 2 for each of Regions I, VIII, IX, and XIII; 2 in Cordillera Administrative Region (CAR); and 1 in Region II. It must be understood that a big number of the respondents are teaching in the NCR because the place of study is located in this region.

Instrument

Before the survey, the researcher developed a multiple-choice survey questionnaire. The survey instrument was designed to allow the respondents to discuss, justify, or qualify their choice answers in case they wish to do so. The questionnaire draft was then submitted for validation to a jury of experts in the area of Values/Moral Education in the Philippines. The draft was revised and finalized according to the critical comments and suggestions of the experts.

The survey was conducted within a period of nine months from November 2006 to July 2007. Answers were collected from 118 respondents in the second semester of Academic Year (AY) 2006-2007, from 20 respondents in the summer term of the same AY, and from 123 respondents in the first semester of AY 2007-2008. Answers to research questions 1 to 8 are based on the data from the survey of schoolteachers.

Results

Conceptions of Values/Moral Education in the Philippines

In the survey, the following concepts of Values/Moral Education were presented to the respondents:

Religious values transmission/inculcation. This concept of Values/Moral Education means the cultivation of a set of values endorsed by a particular religious faith. The doctrine of depravity, belief in God, Four Pillars of Islam, and Ten Commandments are some examples of religious values.

Non-religious values transmission/inculcation. This concept of Values/Moral Education means the teacher's transmission and the student's acquisition of values such as honesty, trustworthiness, courage, and kindness.

Critical thinking about evaluative issues. This concept of Values/Moral Education means learning how to think critically in addressing evaluative, especially moral, issues/ dilemmas/ controversies (e.g., abortion, same sex marriage, cloning, and animal rights).

Of the 261 respondents, 242 (92.7%) chose from the given concepts. The remaining 19 (7.2 %) respondents claimed that their ideas of Values/Moral Education do not accurately match any of the given definitions. It is common among those who said that their conception of Values/Moral Education is not accurately reflected by anyone of the given definitions to say that their notion is a combination of two or all of the given definitions.

Values/Moral Education for the teachers of Science, Mathematics and other similar subjects (e.g., Physics, Chemistry, Geometry, Trigonometry)

Table 1 shows that of the 261 respondents, 118 (45.2 %) believe that Values/Moral Education is critical thinking about values. Eighty-one (81) or 31 % of the respondents think that Values/Moral Education is transmission and acquisition of values such as honesty, trustworthiness, courage, kindness, etc. Forty-three (43) or 16.5% believed that it is the cultivation of a set of religious values.

Table 1. Values/Moral Education for the Teachers of Various Subjects

Subjects taught	Frequency & %	Teachers' idea of Values/Moral Education				Total
		Religious values transmission	Non-religious values transmission	Critical thinking about values	Does not match 2, 3, or 4	
Science, Math, & other similar subjects	Frequency	16	15	24	4	**59**
	% w/in subjects taught	27.1	25.4	40.7	6.8	**100**
English/ Reading/ Language	Frequency	17	45	62	10	**134**
	% w/in subjects taught	12.7	33.6	46.3	7.5	**100**
History / Social Studies/ Religion/etc.	Frequency	9	18	21	3	**51**
	% w/in subjects taught	17.6	36.3	41.2	5.9	**100**
Physical Educ./ Practical Arts	Frequency	1	3	11	2	**17**
	% w/in subjects taught	5.9	17.6	64.7	11.8	**100**
Total	Frequency	**43**	**81**	**118**	**19**	**261**
	% w/in subjects taught	**16.5**	**31**	**45.2**	**7.3**	**100**

This researcher wanted to know whether there is a dominant notion of Values/Moral Education among teachers of formal and natural sciences in order to give a partial explanation as to why Values/Moral Education does not have the kind of status that Mathematics and Science enjoy. Of the 59 teacher respondents who teach formal or natural sciences or both, 24 (40.7 %) have an idea of Values/Moral Education in which critical thinking plays the most vital role, 31 (52.5 %) maintain that it should be a case of values transmission in religion or outside religion, and 4 (6.8 %) claimed that their notions do not match any of the given definitions.

While there seems to be no significant difference between the numbers of formal and natural science teachers who have different conceptions of Values/Moral Education, Table 1 shows that many Science and Mathematics teachers believe that Values/Moral Education is primarily values transmission, an approach that is entirely different from the form of teaching and learning in Science and Mathematics education. More will be said about this finding later.

Values/Moral Education for the schoolteachers

It is difficult to understand why it has become doubly difficult to justify the view that Values/Moral Education should be an independent subject like Science and Mathematics. It is obvious that the educationists and other stakeholders in education agree as to what Science and Mathematics are as elements of formal education. Science is an area of study where students are afforded the opportunity to sharpen their inductive thinking abilities and advance their understanding of the physical world. Mathematics is another area of learning where students are afforded the opportunity to hone their deductive thinking abilities. What should Values/Moral Education be is a question for which various answers were offered by schoolteachers.

Table 2. Values/Moral Education for the Two Groups of Teachers

Group of subjects taught	**Frequency & %**	**Teacher's idea of Values/Moral Education**				**Total**
		Does not match 2,3, & 4	Critical thinking about values	Non-religious values transmis-sion	Religious values transmis-sion	
Science, Math, & other similar subjects	Frequency	4	24	15	16	59
	% within subjects taught	6.8	40.7	25.4	27.1	100
Social Science, etc.	Frequency	15	94	66	27	202
	% within subjects taught	7.4	46.5	32.7	13.4	100
Total	Frequency	19	118	81	43	261
	% within subjects taught	7.3	45.2	31	16.5	100

Table 2 shows that close to 50 % of the 202 teachers of social science and other subjects take Values/Moral Education as a case of values transmission. Ninety-three (93) or 46.1% of this 202 respondents viewed Values/Moral Education as either a case of non-religious or religious values transmission, 94 (46.5 %) thought that it is critical thinking about values, and 15 (7.4 %) thought that their ideas do not match any of the given definition.

It may be noticed now, however, that with only 118 (45.2 %) of the 260 respondents who claimed to have an idea of Values/Moral Education as critical thinking about values, it is difficult to maintain that there is, indeed, a dominant view of Values/Moral Education among the Filipino teachers. For the combined number of those who think that it is religious and non-religious values transmission is 124 or 47.5 of the 260 respondents.

Tables 1 and 2 show that the conceptions of Values/Moral Education are different even within the same group of teachers. And again, this uncertainty is a problem that could not be raised on Mathematics and Science education.

Relationship between the subject taught and the teachers' valuation of Values/ Moral Education

This part of the research is aimed at getting evidence on how teachers view the role of Values/Moral Education in formal schooling. This is to get an idea on the level of value that teachers confer on Values/Moral Education.

Table 3. Relation Between Subject Taught and the Teacher's Valuation of Values/Moral Education

Group of subjects Taught	**Frequency & %**	**Values/Moral Education, regardless of its form, is as important as Mathematics and Science**					**Level of signifi-cance**
		None of the fore-going choices	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	**Total**	
Science, Math, & other similar subjects	Frequency	1	2	28	28	59	.1
	%	1.7	3.4	47.5	47.5	100	
Social Science, etc.	Frequency	1	5	65	131	202	
	%	.5	2.5	32.2	64.9	100	
Total	Frequency	**2**	**7**	**68**	**124**	**201**	
	%	**.8**	**2.7**	**35.5**	**60.9**	**100**	

*p≤.05

The table shows that there is no significant difference between the teachers of social sciences and other subjects and the teachers of formal (e.g., Arithmetic, Trigonometry, Geometry) and natural (e.g., Biology, Chemistry, Physics) sciences with reference to their valuation of Values/Moral Education, *regardless of what it may be for them.* Chi-square test says that the level of significance of difference is at .1.

In both groups the lowest number of respondents said that their answer to the question on the importance of Values/Moral Education could not be found in any of the given choices, so they answered, *None of the foregoing choices*. From both groups, the number of those who said they *Disagree* comes next to the lowest. Then it is followed by the number of those who said they *Agree*. The greatest number of respondents from the Social Science, etc.

group said they *Strongly agree*. In Science, Mathematics, & other similar subjects group, the number of those who said they *Strongly agree* is equal to the number of those who said they *Agree*. In sum, the teachers from both groups either agreed or strongly agreed that Values/Moral Education, *regardless of its form*, is a valuable subject.

Level of awareness of the teachers of formal and natural sciences on the lack of consensus on the concept of Values/ Moral Education

It is important to know if the Filipino schoolteachers' conceptions of Values/Moral Education are a result of their rational consideration of its other conceptions.

In Table 3**,** 192 (96.4 %) out of 261 respondents either *Agree* or *Strongly agree* that Values/Moral Education, regardless of its form, is as important as Science and Mathematics. Meaning, whether or not Values/Moral Education will be reduced into pure indoctrination, such schoolteachers will maintain that Values/Moral Education is not a lesser subject when compared to Science and Mathematics.

It is reported in Table 4 (see p. 91) that 162 or 62.1 % of the 261 respondents claimed that their awareness as regards the lack of consensus on the concept of Values/ Moral Education is at an average level. This requires attention because while the majority of the respondents think that Values/Moral Education is as important as Science and Mathematics, this entails one very important question that remains to be solved: Should Values/Moral Education be taken as an aspect of formal schooling whose meaning (i.e., content, purpose, and pedagogy) varies from one teacher or school to another?

Here, it should be noted again that the lack of consensus as regards the content and purpose of the subject is not the type of problem that haunts Science and Mathematics education.

Only two (2) or 3.4 % of the 59 respondents from the Science, Mathematics, and other similar subjects group claimed to have a *comprehensive and deep* knowledge on the lack of consensus on the concept of Values/Moral Education. This answer, as defined in the questionnaire, means the respondent has a broad and thorough knowledge regarding the different conceptions of Values/Moral Education, and if asked to discuss, he/she can articulate in general and technical terms three or more conceptions of Values/Moral Education. Two (2) or 3.4 % of the 59 teachers of the said subjects said they have *No idea* at all about the disagreement, 33 (55.9 %) rated their awareness at an *Average* level, and 22 (37.3 %) at a *Narrow and shallow* level.

Level of awareness of the teachers of social sciences and other subjects on the lack of consensus on the concept of Values/ Moral Education

In Table 4, 13 or 6.4 % of 202 teachers of Social Science and other subjects claimed to have a *Comprehensive and deep* awareness as regards the lack of consensus on the concept of Values/Moral Education. One hundred twenty-nine (129) or 63.9 % of the same group rated their awareness at an *Average* level and 60 (29.7 %) at either *No idea* or *Narrow and shallow* levels.

The combined numbers of teachers who *Agree* and *Strongly agree* that Values/ Moral Education, regardless of its form, is as important as Science and Mathematics is 252, which is 96.5 % of 261 respondents (Table 3). This is quite a big number, but this does not solve the identity problem of Values/Moral Education as the respondents do not have one and the same concept of Values/Moral Education.

Relation between the subject taught and the teacher's level of awareness on the lack of consensus on the concept of Values/Moral Education

Attempting to address this issue may help in identifying which group of teachers, if any, needs to be informed more as

regards the differing views of educationists on Values/Moral Education. This is a good starting point if Values/Moral Education is to be considered an unequivocal equal of Science and Mathematics.

Table 4. Relation Between Subject Taught and Level of Awareness as Regards the Lack of Consensus on the Concept of Values/Moral Education

Categories of predictor variables	Frequency & %	Teacher's level of awareness on lack of consensus on the concept of Values/Moral Education				Total	Level of significance
		No idea	Narrow & Shallow	Average	Compre-hensive & deep		
Science, Math, & other similar sub-jects	Frequency	2	22	33	2	59	
	% within subjects taught	3.4	37.3	55.9	3.4	100	
Social Science, etc.	Frequency	1	59	129	13	202	**.13**
	% within subjects taught	.5	29.2	63.9	6.4	100	
Total	Frequency	**3**	**81**	**162**	**15**	**261**	
	% within subjects taught	**1.1**	**31**	**62.1**	**5.7**	**100**	

*p≤.05

Chi-square test shows that there is no significant difference between the teachers of social sciences and other subjects and the teachers of formal and natural sciences with reference to the level of their awareness on the lack of consensus on the concept of Values/ Moral Education. The level of significance of difference is at .13. There is a similarity in the trend of the responses from both groups of schoolteachers (*Science, Mathematics, and other similar subjects* and *Social Science, etc.*). In both groups the lowest number of respondents said that they have no idea as to the level of their awareness on the lack of consensus on the concept of Values/Moral Education. Also, in both groups, the number of those who said they have *Comprehensive and deep awareness* comes next to the lowest. Then it is followed by the number of those who said their awareness is *Narrow & shallow* and, then the greatest number of respondents said that their awareness is at an *Average* level. This trend, again is, true in both groups of teachers.

Discussion

On the conceptions of Values/Moral Education

The results of the survey indicate that the Filipino schoolteachers have different conceptions of Values/Moral Education. As to what it is and what it should be are issues that remain unresolved, assuming that the adoption of a general conception of Values/Moral Education for all types of schools in the Philippines is a real problem. Though it is possible that many valid objections could be leveled on the various conceptions of Values/Moral Education for their respective inadequacies, it seems urgently important to decide whether it is reasonable

to give the school administrators and/or schoolteachers a considerable amount of freedom to interpret Values/Moral Education and let them decide on what to teach and how to teach it.

On the prevailing conception of Values/Moral Education among schoolteachers

During the time of the Department of Education, Culture and Sports, values education in secondary school was a separate subject which was equal in value as other separate subjects in the curriculum (Floresca-Cawagas & Hepworth, 1987).

Today's Basic Education Curriculum (BEC) for Philippine public schools requires the integration of Values/Moral Education with Language, Mathematics, and Science education (Cruz, 2003). Values/Moral Education is no longer viewed as an independent subject; it is now a part of Filipino, English, Mathematics, and Science, which are instruments of learning certain values or doctrines (e.g., *makatao, makakalikasan*). Teachers of such tool subjects are, at the same time, Values/Moral Education teacher. With this new role of the tool subjects, it is no longer apt for students in teacher education institutions in the Philippines to specialize in just one area of study, say, Science or Mathematics education (Cruz, 2003). In fact, Cruz (2003) suggests that all schoolteachers in the Philippine public schools should become well-trained generalists.[3]

The findings in this research indicate that there is no solid consensus, one that is similar to Science and Mathematics education, as to what Values/Moral Education is and should be among schoolteachers. This problem is compounded by problematic conceptions—if not misconceptions—of Values/Moral Education and its language.

Evaluative discourse, the language of Values/Moral Education, in its rational form, is as meaningful as the language of Mathematics and Science. It is not enough to say that Values/Moral Education has it own unique form of language in the same way that Science and Mathematics have, as this is true of other activities that do not deserve to be included in the list of educational activities that are vital to higher learning.

The rationality of argumentative evaluative or moral discourse is the cement that ties it with Science and Mathematics. Values/Moral Education, fundamentally conceived as a case of values transmission/ inculcation/indoctrination, will never earn the respect that Science and Mathematics have earned from the stakeholders in education. And this will remain true for as long as values, doctrines, and their uncritical application are not subjected to rational doubting or scrutiny prior to deciding whether they should be *freely* accepted or rejected by the values. Susan T. Garder (1998) thoughts further strengthens the pedagogical point contemplated here when she said:

> *We must teach our children that, if they wish to be moral, though they can never be absolutely sure that the decision that they come to is the right one, as in science, if they follow the process as rigorously and as objectively as possible, they decrease the risk that they may be wrong. And we must teach them that the extent to which they are willing to rigorously and objectively employ the truth-seeking process with regard to the myriad of ethical issues that they will inevitably encounter in their everyday lives, to that extent they can be defined as ethical individuals, just as a good scientist is defined by the process that s/he rigorously pursues. (p. 86)*

It is not, therefore, difficult to see the point of insisting that the pedagogy of Values/Moral education should *always* require the students to engage themselves and/or other students in reasoned and deliberations when facing a moral issue (Freakley & Burgh, 1998).

On the subject taught and the teacher's valuation of Values/Moral Education

The schoolteachers tend to think of Values/Moral Education as an important subject, regardless of its form. Now, this is not without a problem as obviously, teachers do not have uniform conceptions of Values/ Moral Education. Indeed, evidence shows that Values/Moral Education is as revered as Science and Mathematics by many school-teachers. But should educationists take Values/Moral Education as an element of formal schooling whose content, purpose, and pedagogy will depend on the philosophy of the teacher or school? If yes, could educationists then say that Values/Moral Education, even if its concept is not as stable as the concepts of Science and Mathematics in the domain of schooling, is as important as Science and Mathematics education? If the answer is yes, what exactly then are the justifications?

Values/Moral Education should be aimed at getting the students to master the correct manner of making reasoned value/ moral choices. Time and again, however, it has been objected that such form of Values/ Moral Education is not particularly concerned with behavior, particularly with getting the students to behave "properly." But proper behavior here means behavior that is perceived to be morally laudable by the society. To be good, accordingly, is to meet the value/moral expectations of the society. Non-conformity could be anything but good. Or being different could mean a case of moral deviance, which is usually regarded as an instance of "deficiency" in morals or good values. This view of what is moral, however, is highly questionable.

It is not unusual for morals and values to be imposed on people by certain, often dominant, entity or interest groups whose attitude, more often than not, seems to lean, if not border on, dogmatism. Such groups could be a political or religious institution/organization. Despite the strength of moral dominance of an individual or group of individuals over the members of a certain community, it does not follow, however, that conformity to the expectations and cherished values of the dominant entity will necessarily make the conformist a good person. There simply is nothing good about the simple act of following or submitting to the standards of value of a certain institution or organization. For instance, getting the students to believe that honesty is good does not mean that if they will tell the truth without thinking about or due regard to its consequences, they will turn out to be a good person.

Likewise, it does not necessarily follow that an interest group has made the student a good person once he/she is fully persuaded that respect for elders is of value at all times, regardless of whether the elders' conduct merits respect or not.

Values/Moral Education in the form of persuading students to accept a collection of questionable moral values is always dangerous in that it does not promote a high level of intellectual thinking about values that they are asked to imbibe. Values/Moral Education in this form is both anti-intellectual and anti-education. The use of intellect in the context of education refers to a human activity or encounter where the student and/ or the teacher is/are free to doubt or question and reject any claim or value that do not satisfy the student's and/or the teacher's standards of acceptability. So, if Values/Moral Education is basically an instrument of manipulation, indoctrination with problematic content, and conditioning, it seems not difficult to see why it violates the kind of principle of freedom (i.e., to question or doubt before one accepts or rejects a value or belief) that defines the concept of "education" and "intellectualism."

On the level of teachers' awareness on the lack of consensus on the concept of Values/ Moral Education

Although most of the schoolteacher respondents think that Values/Moral Education is as important as Science and Mathematics, they admit that they are not fully familiar with the strengths and

weaknesses of other possible conceptions of Values/Moral Education. With this, it is highly possible that the respondents had also skipped the necessity of addressing some important problems. Should we adopt a single conception of Values/Moral Education? If yes, does the proposed conception, if any, have the potential to command the same respect that Science and Mathematics education have earned? Or should we allow Values/Moral Education to vary in content, purpose, and pedagogy from one teacher or school to another? Again the lack of agreement as regards the conception of the Values/Moral Education is not the type of problem that haunts Science and Mathematics education.

Values/Moral Education, as was said, should lay strongest emphasis on critical thinking and problem solving rather than on simple values transmission/inculcation. But how should educators begin with such form of Values/Moral Education?[4]

It seems appropriate to be concerned first with the education of the students about the language of evaluative discourse and the required skills in performing the procedures of rational evaluative thinking. This is important in order to inform the students about the important contributions of Values/Moral Education to the development of their thoughts about different aspects of human life and the benefits of being able to subject dilemma situations to rigorous inquiry and analysis.

Also education about the language of evaluative discourse and, eventually, training in rational evaluative thinking will give the students an idea as to how Values/Moral Education differs from Science and Mathematics education. This again is not to suggest that they are not equal in meaning or value as all of them are supposed to be united by the value that they set on critical and reasoned thinking. It is likewise helpful for the students to understand the linguistic context in which the basic concepts in Values/Moral Education are imbedded. This is to enable the students to tell between the evaluative language of Values/Moral Education and the cognitive language of Science and Mathematics. Having knowledge about such fundamental difference will enable the students to figure out whether a problem is an issue in Values/Moral Education.

Another vital part of Values/Moral Education is the teaching of evaluative reasoning. In this part of the subject, students should be expected to learn, among other things, how to: (1) engage in clear thinking; (2) distinguish between factual and value judgments; (3) analyze moral principles and rules; (4) tell the differences between moral frameworks, like teleological and deontological morality, in clear and logical terms; (5) detect faulty reasoning; (5) construct and evaluate arguments; and (6) compose well-argued resolutions.

Formal Values/Moral Education, however, will not be comprehensive if the students will not be made to resolve evaluative issues from various areas of studies. Some of such issues are abortion, euthanasia, same-sex marriage, and morality of combat sports like boxing and mixed martial arts. If a teacher has good issues to present for resolution in Values/Moral Education, his/her subject will be well on its way to gaining the respect that Science and Mathematics have been enjoying since their inclusion in formal education.

On the subject taught and the teacher's level of awareness on the lack of consensus on the concept of Values/Moral Education

Evidence shows that the subject taught by the respondents is not an indicator of the level of their awareness. At the beginning of this research, this researcher thought that the teachers of the formal and natural sciences, compared to the teachers of social sciences and other subjects, are less aware of the conceptual issue on Values/ Moral Education.

Perhaps, the lack of significant difference between the two groups of teachers with reference to the level of their awareness on the lack of consensus on the concept of Values/Moral Education could be explained by the similar observations about them. It may be said now that the respondents need a comprehensive and thorough education on the conceptual issue on Values/Moral Education. If Values/Moral Education is to be revitalized by offering it as a separate subject in basic education curriculum, then it makes a lot of sense to offer an independent subject in which education students will be made to understand the conceptual issue on Values/ Moral Education before teaching them what and how to teach it as a public basic education subject.

At this point, that Values/Moral Education is a non-foundation subject in teacher education institutions show that it is not regarded as one of the essentials of basic education. "Essential" here means a separate subject just like Science and Mathematics whose independence is justified by their unique and exclusive sets of educational purposes and contents. It must be understood now that Science and Math are considered as equals because central to both areas of study are the concepts of critical thinking, reasoning, and evidence, which are dangerously absent in Values/Moral Education when conceived as a mere instrument of inculcating problematic doctrinal moral values in the students. And this, again, is an educational problem that remains to be solved.

Endnotes

[1] This does not mean that there is no place for religion in education. On the contrary, this researcher believes that religion, be it in the form of education *about* religions or *in* a certain religion, should come as a subject that is separate from Values/Moral Education.

[2] Some examples of these issues are euthanasia, suicide, human cloning, abortion, and animal rights.

[3] It remains to be seen whether the proponents of the Revitalized Basic Education Curriculum in the Philippines will succeed in convincing the teacher education institutions in the Philippines to revise their curricula in response to the new form of current basic education curriculum.

[4] This researcher is not saying that there is nothing whatsoever in his idea of Values/ Moral Education that may be called values transmission. In contrast to the idea of purely neutral form of Values/Moral Education, this researcher is endorsing some intellectual values (e.g., clarity and precision of thought and language, logical thinking, and consistency of reasoning) and the attitude of not accepting any claim, statement, or conviction upon insufficient and unexamined reason.

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