POSITION OF A PUPIL AND A STUDENT IN THE PROCESS OF VALUE ORIENTATION FORMATION

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Abstract: Value orientation of children and adolescents is a significant phenomenon of upbringing as well as of the target of an educational activity. This article focuses on the position of a pupil and a student in the process of value orientation formation in a school environment. It points out certain practical activities aimed at the development of social habits and at forming of a pupil´s character which can be applied during an educational process or outside of it.

Key words: pupil, teacher, values, value orientation, education, classes

Introduction

Position of a pupil or a student in the formation of a value orientation is determined by a value orientation of the parents. It is projected into their attitude toward children, into the way they educate them. Melvin Kohn performed an analysis of the effect of the value orientation of parents based on the type of parents´ occupation on their behavior toward children and how the values linked to the conformity to outside authority and values linked to the decision process itself project into the parent´s approach to children. According to M. Kohn (In. Katrňák, 2004) different working conditions form values and influence the parents´ approach to children. People working in conditions permitting independent decision making are more likely to put greater emphasis on values linked to this type of decision making when educating their children. People working in conditions where independent decision making is impossible or limited are much more likely to accentuate values linked to the conformity. Children thus acquire different values and ways of behavior, adopt different approach toward school, education and occupation and react differently to problems and new situations.

Behavior of a pupil or a student and all his/her acts are, in fact, fulfilled and internalized values. At an early age we are still recipients of values either through family or education, sometimes unconsciously, but not explicitly through our attitude or behavior, at other times intentionally through a curriculum. When talking about a transmission and education of values through a curriculum, we point out a systematic work via key topics of an educational process which should penetrate all the school subjects. Key topics of an educational process and values are closely connected when practical topics of school subjects can be connected with the content of values. When trying to influence the formation of value orientation we shouldn´t forget our role of educators, which involves not only our continual thinking about values we want to pass on children, but also about the character of these values and about the way by which we want to transfer them.

The formation of value orientation of pupils in a school environment

Values education, definition of the values that should be transferred, eliminated or converted are all processes that take place in schools. In the last few decades there have been some worries connected with the value orientation formation and value preferences. Educational objectives contained in The Act No. 245/2008 Coll. on Education (the school act) are a testimony to the fact that our society continuously cares about values education. These objectives include areas like reinforcing respect of parents and others, of cultural and national values and traditions of a state, refusing race, age, religious and social status discrimination or learning to control one´s own behavior, taking care of one´s own health (including healthy diet) and the environment and respecting universal ethical values.

The process of value orientation formation occurs at schools in three levels.

1. During classes. The content of learning always pertains to values and norms which should be required and learned. Previous norms that the students had learned from their family, through their peers or media and which they apply in their own lives are being confronted with new ones arising from the teaching process and are being accentuated.

2. Through the school´s standards. In order to make teaching possible and to ensure social coexistence it is necessary to be mindful of the basic rules of behavior. They enable individual activity and they must be obeyed otherwise there will be sanctions. These rules must not only be clearly formulated and known from the start, but also applied in everyday life. However, the issues of transparency and substantiation of the rules and the sanctions should not be omitted mainly because it pertains to the questions of power and self-assertion. Commonly created agreements seem to be good solutions here. Conflict management can help to adequately solve the breach of rules.

3. Through a school´s culture. Pupils don´t learn values only at school (for example during teaching process), but at school they also live in their own value connections. The formation of social environment (cooperation, co-decision, participation) can contribute to the creation of a culture which is perceived as satisfactory and with which all the participants identify, through which they achieve a feeling of community. It is however not a process of accommodation, but a process of accepting the differences and tolerance (Giesecke, 2005).

The task of education in schools is to create a room for pupils and students to form their own personalities. As a result of this students become competent, able to assert their own rights and duties and to perform their roles of citizens. Schools must support the overall education of children and young people. It is not enough to provide them only with knowledge at the processional and conceptual level. It is necessary to work on the formation of value orientation of students also outside the classes and thus educate people who are able to live and co-exist in a society. „Value orientation determines how the human will live, how will work, what kind of relationships will create, what kind his family and his descendants, who are called the next generation, will be" (Sirotová, M. 2014).

To realize activities in schools which help to develop social habits and character building means to encourage pupils´ critical thinking about moral and ethical issues. Through these types of activities pupils receive an opportunity to learn to behave morally and ethically. Some of these activities are:

- Teaching of values as part of the curriculum. This approach means to implement value and ethical issues into common school subjects (e.g. history, natural sciences, literature etc.). To ask about personal qualities of the main characters, about moral issues etc.

- Games as methodical procedures and strategies. Games encourage children´s pleasure from playing and induce a feeling of contentment, freedom, satisfaction and self-realization. Through games we can support values like friendship, cooperation, respect and help.

- Talking about an ethical topic. Stories offer us an opportunity to introduce children to a different reality and to teach them emphatic approach. They also offer a chance to ponder a situation or an idea. Experience gained through this form of the experiential learning becomes a new part of a continually formed individual personality (Krátká, 2010).

- Role playing. The content of roles concentrates on interpersonal relationships. Through these games pupils put themselves into position of others and empathize with them and thus acquire social skills and experiences in various situations which they might be able to encounter in real life (cf. Krátká, 2012).

- Debate. To enable proper interaction between participants, it is necessary to try to create an adequate climate and to steer the debate in a direction in which responses of each and every student are being respected and all expressed emotions and open ideas are being supported.

- Learning through serving as a method of character development. Its target is to utilize children´s skills and abilities in favor of others. The core of learning through serving is a mutual mapping of needs and neglected issues in the surrounding area. Then comes critical weighing of possibilities, what could be done, what are we able to do. Then follows the planning, realization and final evaluation. Through this method children acquire a real experience of an ethical activity.

- Brainstorming. Significantly encourages creativity, each student can express his/her own ideas and thoughts, all opinions are taken into consideration

- Discussion. All students must participate in an open atmosphere dominated by respect of others, acceptance of other ideas, avoidance of discrimination or derogatory behavior. A teacher should provide each student with a fair chance of expressing his/her ideas in a friendly atmosphere, in which

students feel no fear of ridicule or verbal aggression. According to E. Komárik (2009) children yearn to talk about their ideas and the best way to encourage it is to establish a hypothetical situation and to use Socrates´ dialog method.

- Round table. Each student presents his/her opinion of a certain topic. Other students simultaneously interfere with his/her statements while keeping in mind the importance of respecting the opinion of all participants. The core principle of the round table method is the equality of all participants.
- Philips 66. Pupils in class are divided into groups of six. Each group chooses his/her spokesperson who, after six minutes of debate about a chosen subject, presents the group´s conclusions. This method encourages participation, listening to others, respect, consensus etc.
- Choice of topic and solving of moral dilemmas. The basis of moral dilemmas solving lies in an exchange of students´ opinions about a subject. Attitudes of all students are being respected, doubts about certain value changes are being established, new ideas and concepts leading to moral thinking are being suggested. Through these activities pupils become aware of their feelings, emotions and behavior.
- Supporting pupils´ moral reflections through reading, use of simulation games, panel discussions, news, advertising, commentaries and reviews from newspapers, free time activities, for example through films or music, through analysis of events, sport etc.
- Developing motivation and interest in outmatching oneself, prizing one´s own learning, effort and everyday work.
- Organizing activities and experiments with an aim of overcoming problems for instance conflict solving, through which children participate in the dilemmas of others (Cobos Pino; Komárik 2009).

It might be easier for pupils and students to form their value orientation and to internalize the values, if they are able to receive them in a practical way, for instance through the above mentioned activities. When trying to influence children´s value orientation formation parents and teachers must work in concert with each other, mainly by utilizing activities that might support and sustain these values.

However, many teachers´ activity in this area seems to be quite mechanical and rather formal. They put pressure on children to know and respect certain values, but through their approach they only achieve awareness of these values and they consequently become undesirable. Sometimes we can see a situation when under the influence of a school stereotype and certain laziness a teacher succumbs to a "value inertia" which results in the teacher´s loss of authenticity, he/she becomes unconvincing when presenting values or there is a discrepancy between his/her behavior and verbal statements (Gogová 2014). In this context it is important to point out that if we want a student to be authentic and autonomous, it is important for his/her teacher to possess the same qualities. Using the words of Soren Kierkegaard "a teacher teaches more by what he is than by what he says". The basis of a teacher´s educational influence is an interaction between the teacher and his/her students. The teacher´s approach to students, his/her everyday behavior, the way of life as well as his/her educational style are the determining factors of a value system formation. It is important for teachers to help develop students´ personalities in institutionalized conditions and to create educational situations which the students can apply inside as well as outside the class.

According to B. Kosová (2000) if a teacher wants to achieve optimal personality development of students he/she must choose strategies and methods with the aim of mediating cultural contents, norms and requirements, various types of activities and positive interpersonal relationships, satisfying student´s needs, leading them to understanding of norms and desired behavior through an experience of success, influencing their self-confidence and self-esteem and developing students´ future life orientation.

One of the targets of a teacher´s activity is to help form a type of personality that would be beneficial for the society. In this respect we can´t look at the values mediated by school or teachers as permanent because they change depending on life experiences as well as on the maturity level of each individual.

The values that are presented to a student by the immediate socio-cultural environment are not always accepted. According to A. Gogová (2004) this can often be explained by the fact that the student associates with other social groups or individuals who respect different values. The student gradually subscribes to these values and refuses the original ones presented to him/her by school or family. The student is influenced not only by cognitive forces of the environment but also by the emotional ones. When he finds a deeper emotional satisfaction in a social group that recognizes specific values despite the fact that these values might be undesirable, he/she subscribes to them.

Conclusion

Position of a pupil and a student in the process of value orientation formation is influenced not only by the internal and external factors, but also by the type of values that he/she had received functionally or intentionally. Many of them are missing from the hierarchy of values or are unattractive. Children and adolescents often encounter situations which make them realize that the values that were presented to them in school or in family are in contrast with success and progress in a professional and social life. As a result children may respect certain values, but will not apply them in real life.

This problem often applies to moral values which are transferred from a family environment. In these types of situations it is difficult to find out the real status of values. Many surveys concentrate on the detection of values, but not on the information whether these values score high in the value system of pupils and students only formally or are truly accepted, socially desirable and applied in a real life. Education should therefore lead to a creation of conditions in which students would manifest their true value orientation. Reaching this goal is not going to be easy because the road toward this goal requires the presence of an authentic educator (parent or a teacher) who would be a natural moral authority for the student and a real, practical value model, not just a formal one.

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