how do we teach values to children?

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Abstract

In the current trends in education, we can notice that the emphasis of development remains to be Science and Technology. The aged argument that we educate in order to make our students ready for employment still prevails. What the system fails to address is the need to make the students adept to critical thinking and rationalization.

This paper aims to present the ideas of Matthew Lipman's Community of Inquiry and Max Scheler's theory of value as alternative ways of teaching children values. In so doing, we hope to arrive at a practical pedagogy that can be helpful for teaching philosophy for children in our modern technological times.

Keywords
Matthew Lipman. Max Scheler, community of inquiry, hierarchy of values, pedagogy

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Introduction

In the current trends in education, we can notice that the emphasis of development remains to be Science and Technology. The aged argument that we educate in order to make our students ready for employment still prevails. What the system fails to address is the need to make the students adept to critical thinking and rationalization. While it is true that schools which cater to students' critical thinking are growing in number in countries like Canada and Australia, its development in the Philippines, however, is still hindered by the society's attachment to traditionalism. In the 1970's Matthew Lipman developed Philosophy for Children which aims to "demonstrate how philosophical thinking can be used in teaching children." It does not intend to be a course or a class but a method of thinking that is to be introduced and taught to children by creating a community of inquiry.[1] In a society that we live in now, one can notice that there is an increasing sense of entitlement among the youth, wherein their sense of valuation is no longer aimed at the value of virtues but the value of material possession. This paper aims to present Lipman's Community of Inquiry, Max Scheler's theory of values and how these could be helpful in teaching children values. This paper, however, will not try to locate the cause of such devaluation of values among the youth, but just to present an alternative way to teach them values.

Community of Inquiry

An initial glance at Lipman's Philosophy for Children, one would immediately notice his subtle critique of the traditional pedagogy of teaching where children are taught to memorize but not to understand, let alone to critically assess what was being learned. In an interview with Lipman done by Ron Brandt, Lipman narrates that he believes that Philosophy must become part of the regular school curriculum. His founding of Philosophy for Children started when he realized in the 1970's that his children's school did not give them instruction in reasoning. At that time, he was teaching logic in the collegiate level and felt that he was not doing much because it was rather late to teach students at the collegiate level how to reason. Since then, he believed that Philosophy should be brought down to middle school where children could be taught at an earlier stage.[2]

[1] See Matthew Lipman, Ann Margaret Sharp and Frederick S. Oscanyan, *Philosophy in the Classroom* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1980).

[2] Ron Brandt, "On Philosophy in the Curriculum: A Conversation with Matthew Lipman," in *Educational Leadership* (Virginia: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 1988).

Ekkehard Martens mentions that children needs to learn that orientations are varied, and that there is no particular orientation that is correct and valid. Philosophical inquiry is essential to teach them how to think beyond categories.[3]

The problem raised by Lipman is that schools fail to teach children how to think. In his book *Thinking in Education*, he introduces the idea of making children be familiar with Philosophy. He notes that when Philosophy is properly taught, it could bring a significant improvement in students' thinking. This can be done by using community of inquiry as a pedagogy.[4]

According to Lipman there are "two contrasting paradigms of educational practice—the standard paradigm and the reflective paradigm of critical practice.[5] The standard paradigm perceives the teacher as a transmitter of knowledge. "The teacher plays an authoritative role in educational process. Students learn from them. Students acquire knowledge by absorbing information,"[6] while the critical paradigm is the "outcome of participation of teacher-guided community of inquiry."[7]

Lipman's community of inquiry is rooted in Charles Sanders Pierce's scientific inquiry. The term was "broadened to include any kind of inquiry whether scientific or non-scientific."[8] It aims to convert the classroom into a community of inquiry where students listen to one another with a certain level of respect toward each other's ideas, Lipman wants to transform education into a laboratory for rationality where students learn to be reasonable so that they can grow up to be reasonable citizens, reasonable companions, reasonable parents.[9] Following Hirst, he notes that all scientific knowledge is contingent and must be justified by means of evidence and reasons.[10] He argues that "knowledge should be a finished product of the inquiry process which is logically organized in such a way that facts supported with evidence, and opinions are accompanied by reason and judgments are made with relevant criteria." Lipman also uses Hirst's theory of thinking in the discipline where when a student is taught history, he must be able to think historically.[11] Community of inquiry is also a process which has sense of direction, it moves

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[3] D. Kennedy and N. Vansieleghem, "What is Philosophy for Children, What is Philosophy with Children-After Matthew Lipman," *Journal of Philosophy of Education* 45, no. 2 (2011): 176.

[4] Matthew Lipman, *Thinking in Education* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 3-4. Henceforth TIE.

[5] Ibid., 18.

[6] Ibid.

[7] Ibid.

[8] Ibid., 20.

[9] Ibid., 22.

[10] Ibid.

[11] Ibid., 24.

where the argument takes it, it is dialogical.[12] In such situations, we must see the teacher as the one who mediates and not the one who dominates the discussions.[13] We do not run the risk of indoctrinating students because the students are the ones who deliver the discussions based on their experiences and perspectives.

He observed that children in kindergarten are curious, lively, imaginative, and inquisitive. But such qualities dwindle as they age. Children eventually perceive only the social aspect of the school and forget about the educational aspect.[14] Their enthusiasm for learning is not sustained because of the rigidity of the structured learning process. In the current system, we see how classroom discussions are focused on factual details. Students are being numerically graded through their scores in the examination which does not actually speak of how much students have learned but of how much students remember. Van der Leeuw suggests that "reflection and reasoning cannot be realized when we only reserve separate hours a week for collective exploration of philosophical questions."[15] In the collegiate level, where logic and ethics are finally introduced to students, one may conclude that our students do not fully grasp its meaning and usefulness because it is taken as a separate course and is not manifested and used in their other classes. In English for example, students are only expected to write grammatically correct papers but not to produce logically sound arguments. In their business courses where they are expected to come up with business strategies which may, at times, have total disregard of its ethical implication. Van der Leeuw notes that "every generation has to find answers because the world is changing and widening. This, however, cannot be achieved as long as our students' judgments are impaired."[16]

We must understand that in a community of inquiry the dialogue is bent towards the logical plausibility of an argument rather than the personal note of individuals. The student should engage in a mutual exchange of thought not a one-sided debate where the focus of argumentation is on the protagonists. The community of inquiry is learning together, and is therefore an example of the value of shared experiences. Lipman notes that there are two types of communities, reflective and corrective; and unreflective and non-corrective. The community that he wants to create is the former. He then presents the features of communities of inquiry. It should involve questioning, quest for truth and meaning. It should also be inclusive, requires participation, shared cognition, face-to-face relationships, quest for meaning, feeling of social solidarity, deliberation, impartiality,

[12] Ibid., 83.

[13] Ibid., 84.

[14] TIE 12.

[15] Kennedy and Vansieleghem, "What is Philosophy for Children, What is Philosophy with Children-After Matthew Lipman," 178.

[16] Ibid.

modeling, thinking for oneself, challenging as a procedure, reasonableness, reading, questioning and discussion. Generally what it advocates among its members is to search for truth and meaning in a community which has shared cognition and is inclusive where one values the opinion of others. The teacher, at this phase becomes a mediator rather than a bearer of enlightenment.[17]

The process of the community is as follows:

1. The teacher should then offer the text to the students. It could be a story form. The text should reflect values and achievements of past generations, it should also portray cultural human relations, and should have ethical implication.

2. The teacher should help students construct the agenda. Here, the teacher should recognize the students and map their interest, and eventually be able to decide as a group where to begin to discuss.

3. Creating solidarity through dialogical inquiry. It fosters cognitive skills of the group, oversees disagreements and quests for understanding.

4. Working on exercises and discussion plans. This needs guidance of the teachers. It appropriates methodology of the discipline, opens student to other philosophical alternatives and focuses on other problems to be able to create practical judgments.

5. Encourage further responses calls for synthesis of the discussion.[18]

What Lipman wants us to learn is how to educate and not to indoctrinate our students. He is aware of the fact that the "family represents institutionalized private values, the state presents institutionalized public value, and the school epitomizes the fusion of the two."[19] Teachers must aid students in in understanding and practicing that which is virtuous. It should not be enough to just repeatedly remind the students about the good and the bad.[20]

[17] TIE, 83-98
[18] Ibid., 102-104
[19] TIE, 9
[20] Ibid., 105.

Max Scheler's Theory of Values

Scheler's *Theory of Values* is rooted in his idea of *oughtness*. What ought to be done in a specific situation through the act of preferring and not of willing. Ideal oughtness is experienced with an obligatory force, it is an oughtness of duty which results to the appearance of moral values.[21] He presents the preferring through what he identifies as the "call of the hour."[22] It is the direction towards values determined by conation and willing that is *a priori* in nature. *A priori* at this point does not pertain to any metaphysical concept, but rather, it pertains to a pre-rational preferring or willing. Call of the hour is value preferred even before there could be a rational cognition of values. *A priori* pertains to the emotional signification of values which is not dependent on any rational propositions. The value of friendship is preferred over the value of the physical presence of the friend, or could be over physical pleasure. Frings notes that the realization of these values is based on its intentionality which exhibits an *a priori* order.[23]

Scheler speaks of higher and lower values, higher values being positive and lower values being negative. We could come about this value cognition through the art of preferring. "The height of value is given by virtue of its essence, only in the act of its preferring. "[24] Preferring according to Scheler is done in the absence of conotation, choosing and willing. If one would prefer lower value over higher value, there arises the deception of preferring. The very act of preferring is dependent on what we feel; it is dependent on our drives at one particular moment, thus depicting the value of our intuition. Intuition here becomes the basis of one's preferring, it may be considered as non-cognitive, but the very *givenness* of this intuition means something, "nothing is given that is not meant, and nothing is meant that is not given." As Scheler would claim, this intuition could be a phenomenological experience which manifests through experience itself where its meaning could be comprehended through the meeting point of certain experiences.[25]

The relations between the heights of values and the pure bearers of values are as follows:

> (1) Value of the other, must be on equal ranking since both the self and the other experiences and apprehends the values of acts, functions and feeling states. (2)

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[21] Philip Blosser, "Moral and Non-Moral Values: A Problem in Scheler's Ethics," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 48, no.1 (September 1987): 139-143.

[22] Max Scheler, *Formalism in Ethics and Non–Formal Ethics of Values*, trans. Manfred S. Frings and Roger L. Funk (New York: Northwestern University Press, 1976), 49.

[23] Frings, "Max Scheler's Non-Formal Ethics in our Time," 88.

[24] Ibid., 87.

[25] Ibid., 51.

> Value of act, functions and values of reactions. All these are values of the person, containing *a priori* relations among their acts, making the value of act higher than function, and function being higher than responses. All three contain the feeling of men, the inkling towards a particular value. (3) Value of Basic Moral tenor, values of deeds and values of success- all these carry within them the arc of intention, resolve and performance. (4) Values of Intention and value of feeling state are both dependent to the heights of values as experienced. (5) Value of form of relation, form of relations and values of relations are basically dependent on the kind of relation and its value – a marriage being a bad marriage – relation of husband and wife. (6) Individual values and collective values speak the value of a member and the value of the organization. One would value a member and not the organization he belongs to or the one could value an organization and not a particular member. (7) Self-value and consecutive value – self values are value independent from other values, while consecutive values are values dependent on other values the thing it represents or the value facts connected into it.

Values must be taken differently from values of things as moral value pertains only to those qualities end actions, which the individual has acquired by his strength and labor.[26] These concepts make values subjective, drawing the way of the hierarchy to be subjective. The realization of moral values is, in itself, subjective but transvaluation has nothing to do with presumed realization that moral values, in contrast with others such as aesthetic values must be based on free acts.[27] Even with presumed subjectivity of values, its hierarchy must not be altered. This subjectivation of values is an effect of modern morality which is then based on the distrust of men.

"Values are subjective phenomena in man's mind which has no independent meaning and existence."[28] This is so because values, being subjective, are a kind of desire for good and abhorrence for what is bad. Values being subjective has become the source of problem, where values seen as self-acquired, where strength and victory are gathered and triumph over suffering are given importance, thus giving no room for equality, because those who have already triumphed would demand dominion among others. *Ressentiment* becomes a moving force of those who are oppressed and tormented due to the objective hierarchy of values, one learns the act of transvaluation. For Hartmann, there is no transvaluation, but only a continuous re-evaluation of values. Hartmann

[26] ibid., 138.
[27] Ibid., 139.
[28] Ibid., 144.

stretches this point by claiming that values can only be apprehended intuitively by anyone who has developed value consciousness.[29]

Values are for preservation, expansion and adaptation, while preference is

> determined by the nature of each values, as pleasure is determined by the nature of the mind.[30] All three (values, preference and pleasure) are directed toward the achievement of the good, therefore perversion of any of these, destroys the order of values, and creates room for ressentiment. Values can never be dependent on the bearer of values, there can be interconnection, but there can never be dependency.
>
> Ethical values are not necessarily attached to bearer that are intuited pictorially. They can also pertain to bearers that are only thought.[31]

The value of friendship cannot be dependent on its bearer – the friend. We could later turn to hate the friend, but we can never despise friendship. The value of art cannot be dependent on the object of art. We could perceive of a 'bad' art, but the very essence of art's value would continue to be positive. Frings gives the values of color as an example. The red wall, being dependent on how one perceives of the color red, one could understand and value the color red, independent of the red wall.[32]

To understand Scheler's Theory of Value, one must probe into the hierarchy of values[33] that he has presented.

1. The values ranging from the agreeable and disagreeable uses the function of the sensible feeling, the sensations. The object of this value is that which springs from sensory feeling. The yielding towards that which is pleasurable, and the avoidance of that which causes pain.

2. Essence of values related to vital feelings deal with the value of life. It gives values to one's well-being, to good health, nobility and courage.

3. The realm of spiritual values deals with the values of beautiful and ugly (aesthetic values); the value of right and wrong, the value of truth. Adherence to these values uplifts one's spirits.

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[29] Samuel Hart, "Axiology-Theory of Values," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* Vol. 32 no. 1 (Sept. 1971) 33

[30] Ibid., 149.

[31] Ibid., 371.

[32] Frings, "Max Scheler Non-Formal Ethics in our Time," 88.

[33] Ibid., 105-160.

4. The value of the Holy and the Unholy - the objects of this value is faith and religion.

Lipman's Philosophy for Children and Scheler's Theory of Values

How then can these two theories merge to come up with a pedagogy to teach children values? Scheler is proposing that values are intentional acts which are done because of the call of the hour. Although he speaks of a certain hierarchy of values, it is not to say that we are to impose this on children. What is to be done is to make children realize the hierarchy and eventually they will respond to the call of the hour, albeit through preference but more rational.

Children may have learned a different sense of valuation at home, but what the school can do is to retrain them to realize that one value is higher than the other. This can be done again by evaluating the dialogue between the students as they present their own experiences and judgments. What the teacher can do is to help the students in evaluating their own concepts of good and evil. As mentioned earlier, values are subjective; however, there is a common ground in terms of man's desire for good and abhorrence of evil. We can always teach children to continuously re-evaluate their values rationally; it is through this that they are able to learn to prefer higher values over the lower values. Say, to value education as a tool for learning and not as a tool for financial gain in the future; or that sense of dignity is better than being financially superior over others; or simply, to value one's well-being over material/pleasurable objects.

Honing one's reasoning should start at an early stage, if teaching values to children is missed, then we are threatened of raising a generation with a lack, if not a distorted sense, of values. Again, Lipman cautions us not to indoctrinate but to teach. Following Lipman's lead, we can continuously offer texts to children, evaluate the characters of the story, locate themes of values and judgment, and finally to dialogue about their thoughts on values. If this is repeatedly done, children will eventually learn and realize that their own ways are not always correct, and that there are better ways of looking at things; and needless to say, that there are things of more importance over the other.

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