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## Ethics and evaluation processes at school as a part of education

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## ETHICS AND EVALUATION PROCESSES AT SCHOOL AS A PART OF EDUCATION

### Introduction

Every major philosophical direction characterizes its ideals of education, the education objectives are evident in religious systems, pedagogy and education conceptions and theories, they are dealt with in the Declaration of Human Rights, Children's Bill of Rights... „In course of history, people formed not a few ideals and projects of a more perfect life. The questions like what kind of life to live, what is the most important in life, what is the spirit of life, belong to the eternal questions of the humankind. They have been accompanying a man since he started taking a think over himself.”<sup>1</sup>

The problem is not probably to define the objective of education, to describe the idea of what we would like to be like (although the ideas may vary), the persisting problem is the realistic possibility and opportunity of the human beings to know how and want to be such. This article aims to highlight the need of introduction the subject „Ethics” at school.

### 1. Selected Definitions

**Ethics** is defined in the psychological dictionary as „science of a man's morality, origin and development of his moral consciousness, conscience and conduct”<sup>2</sup>.

**Professional ethics** is, according to the same source, a set of rules for conduct of a member of certain profession, including his rights and responsibilities.

**Pedagogical ethics** „deals with ethical aspects of pedagogy, education and training of people. The experience shows that not all teachers apply ethically acceptable procedures or arrive at ethically acceptable results.”

**Axiologization** means education of values<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> B. Blížkovský, *Systémová pedagogika*. Ostrava: Amosium servis, 1992. ISBN 80-85498-18-9.

<sup>2</sup> P. Hartl, H. Hartlová, *Psychologický slovník*. Praha: Portál, 2000. ISBN 80-7178-303-X.

<sup>3</sup> M. Zelina, *Strategie a metody rozvoja osobnosti*. Praha: Iris, 1996. ISBN 80-967013-4-7.

## 2. Pedagogy and Education

„Acting and conduct of a certain person is assessed as moral or immoral according to relation to other people, groups and society, according to moral principles which define relation of the person to people, society, world. The individual acts and conducts are morally evaluated in the individual situations, whether everyday or highly significant, load-sensitive, such as the social and historical events or natural disasters, exposures of various kind.”<sup>4</sup>

For a number of experts, pedagogy was and is a term that includes education. Despite this fact, the traditional school promoted education to its primary objective. However, maximization thereof did not bring the results which were expected with conviction. The school intelligence and excellent grades are far from being a guarantee of intelligent conduct. Intelligence is mostly a tool to be used, or misused. In order to utilize and prudently apply his knowledge and attainments, one needs a „comprehensive mature, active and creative relation” to the world, nature, society and himself<sup>5</sup>. He cannot get along without wisdom. Wisdom cannot be misused in evaluation and decision-making, as it helps a man to get oriented in the „good and evil” issues.

„Pedagogy is more important than education”, says Zelina<sup>6</sup>, emphasizing that the world develops in a different direction than school – at school, one is punished for things which are praised and appreciated in life, pupils and students at school mainly learn to memorize, remember and think logically, while outside of school, they are requested to master creativity, fantasy and evaluation skills. In the author’s opinion, it is required to reduce inefficient education (content and information), while strengthening the pedagogical methods (focus more on experience, systems of values, motivation, emotions, creativity...). Inconsistent opinions of values are often confronted in a democratic society, with an issue urgently coming forth, as for whether some universal values still exist, and if they do, what these values are.

A man does not come to the world with a ready system of values, he forms it during his development by adapting to a hierarchy of values defined by somebody else to various extent (both knowingly and unknowingly) in his effort to keep love and recognition of his environment. Thus he later has a system of values available that he considers his own, but he actually adopted a majority thereof from individuals or groups – from an external environment. This is the reason why the place of evaluation often lies outside the individual and he often feels uncertain when making decisions. Zelina<sup>3</sup> calls this a major conflict. Adopting opinions of others one loses contact with one’s own wisdom, loses contact with himself, does not understand the evaluation process running in himself, becomes estranged to himself.

The child’s moral development research was largely influenced by Piaget<sup>7</sup> in the past who emphasized the nearness of intellectual and moral development and referred to the major significance of his relation to other people in this respect.

<sup>4</sup> J. Čáp, J. Mareš, *Psychologie pro učitele*. Praha: Portál, 2001. ISBN 80-7178-463-X.

<sup>5</sup> B. Blížkovský, *Systémová pedagogika*. Ostrava: Amosiun servis, 1992. ISBN 80-85498-18-9.

<sup>6</sup> M. Zelina, *Stratégie a metody rozvoja osobnosti*. Praha: Iris, 1996. ISBN 80-967013-4-7.

<sup>7</sup> J. Piaget, *The Moral Judgment of the Child*. New York: Harcourt Brace, 1932. P. 418.

The Piaget's concept was expanded by Kohlberg<sup>8</sup> who distinguished three stages of evaluation thinking development:

1. anomie – inability of evaluation (a small child),
2. heteronomy – evaluation determined from outside (a child assumes it from society, leaders),
3. autonomy – independent evaluation based on interiorization of external stimuli and own internal evaluation.

Kohlberg also emphasizes that it is necessary to systematically and thoughtfully develop the ability to evaluate since an individual's babyhood and for his entire life not by preaching, but by exposing to various situations which require evaluation and decision-making. According to the author, less than 20% of adults achieve the maximum level of evaluation skills, whereas the universal values represent somewhat „higher” than only Ten Commandments, Communism Builder Code or mere compliance with law.

In Rogers's<sup>9</sup> opinion, instead of values presented by certain groups of people (philosophers, lawyers, psychologists...), a man has certain universal human values available which rise from his experience. He assumes that a modern person can discover an ability to evaluate inside himself, although he does not believe anymore that the evaluation system could be provided to him by religion, philosophy or knowledge. This ability will show the man an access to universal sources of values, provided he learns to be in contact with it.

According to Zelina<sup>3</sup>, the basic paradox of the traditional school is that teachers do not lead the pupils and students to the evaluation processes, which can have negative impacts on their future acting and conduct. Developing of the evaluation skill relates to three of its forms:

1. rational evaluation (whether formulation or solution is objectively correct),
2. ethical evaluation (whether decision or solution is correct in terms of moral aspects),
3. aesthetical evaluation (whether processes and products are aesthetical).

Within the pedagogical and educational process, it is desirable to develop all of the above-mentioned kinds of evaluation.

We do not share the frequently declared opinion that a college is a place where the students should mainly receive information, knowledge and skills, as they are already adult and education about values and ethical conduct is faint. The academic environment is a place where social interactions occur, attitudes to other people are strengthened and reformed. Having been asked whether they are satisfied with ethical conduct of students and teachers in the academic environment, the students themselves say that they are satisfied only on an average; in their opinion, the deficiencies in this area are caused by the character of the present society, family crisis, individualism, influence of mass media and internet, communication barriers among people. Teaching of ethics would also be welcome at the college, whereas they are convinced that no rules or orders would resolve eventual problems in this area, because „examples lead” and there is „precious little of ethical conduct” all around. In the students' opinion, the ethical conduct cannot be memorized like the multiplication table and it is not a question of only cognitive proces-

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<sup>8</sup> I. Kohlberg, The Claim to Moral Adequacy of a Highest Stage of Moral Judgment. *Journal of Philosophy*, Vol. 70, No. 18) 70 (18), 1973. P. 630–646.

<sup>9</sup> C.G. Rogers, *Způsob bytí*. Praha: Portál, 1998. ISBN 80-7178-233-5.

ses. Here, the personal experience from everyday life, emotional intelligence, as well as incidental impacts acting on an individual since the beginning of his life's career, applies.

### **Conclusion**

Discussions with students confirmed the need for the course „Ethics” in teaching at universities. „A good school can prepare for both work and life, it can and should continuously cultivate life, however, it cannot (and it should not) substitute the life practice. A full harmonic life is both reproduction and production, it is a dialectic unity of transformation of a man, society and world, it cannot be limited either to school or to purposeless improvement of the people themselves”<sup>10</sup>.

*Translation: Jiří Svoboda*

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<sup>10</sup> B. Blížkovský, *Systémová pedagogika*. Ostrava: Amosium servis, 1992. ISBN 80-85498-18-9.

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#### **Ethics and evaluation processes at school as a part of education**

Education belongs to the most complicated procedures, which illustrates various strategies of education both in history and nowadays. Ethics is part of education.

*Translated by Jiri Svoboda*

#### **Etyka i proces oceniania w szkole jako część edukacji**

Edukacja należy do najbardziej skomplikowanych procesów, co odzwierciedlają strategie edukacyjne funkcjonujące zarówno w przeszłości, jak i obecnie. Etyka jest częścią edukacji.

*Tłumaczyła Dorota Ciechanowska*