

Images of the teacher-child interaction. An exploration of the interaction of the images of the good teacher and child in four European educational models

Mark C. Noort

Abstract

This study explores the interaction of the images of the “good teacher” and the “image of the child” by comparing standard, Montessori, Waldorf and Reggio Emilia educational models. The images of the child vary among these educational models (Kramer, this volume). Cruickshank and Haefele (2001) defined ten images of the good teacher. Different images of the good teacher were found in the educational models, but not all aspects reflecting the images of the good teacher in the educational models were covered by the framework utilized and some images partially overlapped one another. Because the images of the good teacher and child are related, they should be defined together as images of the teacher-child interaction. Implications for future research are discussed.

Keywords: Images of the good teacher; images of the child; educational models; images of the teacher-child interaction

Introduction

What the essential qualities of a “good teacher” are, is probably a question that all teachers ask themselves. The practice of teaching is a topic of discussion in educational psychology, pedagogy, policy-making, and philosophy (Shim, 2008). The discussion about the prerequisites of a good teacher therefore has had some interesting input from different angles, most recently focussing on the evaluation of teachers (Sweeney, 1994; Darling-Hammond, 1999; Wright, Horn, & Sanders, 1997).

The evaluation of teachers however, is for the most part based on the dominant image of what makes a good teacher and on the image of the child which is related to that judgement (Malaguzzi, 1993). The images of a good teacher and child therefore change over time as the subjective standards of education change. For instance, in recent decades there has been a paradigm shift from a cognitive view of education (i.e., on emphasizing control, clarity, distance, competence management by the teacher, interaction, etc.) to a social-constructive view (i.e., in which qualities like empathy, adaptation, proximity, students responsibility, transaction and integration are emphasized; Sipman, 2009). Differences in the view of education are also reflected in different educational models, since each model reflects its own particular image of the child (Kramer, this volume). Education which

emphasizes students’ self-learning, for one, might have totally different images of the good teacher and child than education with a focus on teacher-initiated activities.

However, research has not yet addressed differences in the images of the good teacher and child among different educational models, since most educational research is done within the context of standard education. It is therefore useful to explore the differences between educational models by looking at both the image of the child and the image of the good teacher.

Cruickshank and Haefele (2001) have provided a framework of the images of the good teacher which does not focus on the images as seen by a specific group (for the images of the good teacher as seen by teachers only, see: Beijaard, Verloop, & Vermunt, 2000). Their framework is the most extensive one available to date. In the first part of this exploration, this framework will be used and then expanded in order to include the images of the child related to the various types they propose. In the second part of this exploration, the framework will be applied to four European educational models: standard, Montessori, Waldorf and Reggio Emilia. In each instance, the usefulness of the framework will be assessed. The images of the child within each of the four educational models are discussed by Kramer (this issue).

Variations in the good teacher

In order to provide a framework for teacher evaluation and to support the development of teacher training, Cruickshank and Haefele (2001) identified ten images of the good teacher: the ideal; analytic; reflective; effective; dutiful; competent; expert; satisfying; diversity-responsive and respected teachers. Although, according to some researchers, we should primarily look at the effectiveness of teachers (Strong, 2006), Cruickshank and Haefele argue that it is useful to accept as many as ten images because, first, such multiplicity promotes the notion of a wide range of views of the good teacher instead of just one kind of good teacher, and, secondly, because such a schema gives teachers the opportunity (and freedom) to be a particular kind of good teacher in a way that has research support. Two additional reasons Cruickshank and Haefele provide for the usefulness of their proposed model are that it provides a direction for development and training and that it affords educational administrators the possibility to terminate the employment of teachers who do not meet the criteria of “goodness” according to any of the images. As noted previously, the images of the good teacher are complemented by corresponding images of the child.

The ideal teacher is the good teacher as defined by normative, subjective standards (e.g. of the adult society; ten Brinke & Kanters, this volume) and is in essence the same concept as “good teacher although the terms are interchangeable, “good teacher” will be used throughout this article). In a given instance, the analytic teacher might be the good teacher, but in another instance, it might very well be the respected or dutiful teacher who is defined as “good”. These differences reflect changes and differences in the image of the child and good teacher.

The analytic teacher is a teacher who has developed the habit of self-correction and is investigative, using observational techniques in order to become a better teacher (Cruickshank and Haefele, 2001). It is very much the same as the reflective image of the good teacher, an image also proposed by Cruickshank and Haefele (2001), and it appears that there is no substantive difference between these two types. Other definitions of the analytic teacher are possible too, as Tobias (1994) has shown by defining the analytic teacher as being highly organized and working structurally in class

as opposed to the global teacher who is more loosely structured and, in the eyes of the analytic teacher, disorganized. The child is seen as part of the community of inquiry to which the child has very little to contribute (Gardner, 1996). The child therefore is seen as context-dependent, with very little means of improving the learning process.

The effective teacher is the teacher who leads his students to achievement, irrespective of the method the teacher uses. The effective teacher is close to, supportive of, and involved with students’ progress while at the same time challenging them to do their best (Cruickshank and Haefele, 2001). But there is opposition to using students’ achievement as the criterion for evaluating teachers. Berk (1988), for instance, names fifty factors effecting students’ achievement that are outside of the influence of the teacher, thus highlighting the implausibility of making student achievement the sole or primary criterion for the evaluation of teachers’ performance. Nevertheless, other researchers (e.g., Darling-Hammond, 1999) have shown that an effective teacher contributes to the achievement of students to a far greater extent than factors such as class size or class heterogeneity. In addition, Reynolds and Teddlie (2000) argue that effective teaching depends on time management, classroom organization, the use of effective teaching practices, and the adaptation of teaching methods to students. Graham and colleagues (2001) provide seven principles of effective teaching. In these principles, the student is seen as able to be motivated on an emotional level by the teacher, but also as already possessing cognitive skills which are further reinforced by his or her own continued practice.

The dutiful teacher performs his duties and is evaluated according to how well he understands and performs his duties (Cruickshank and Haefele, 2001). His or her focus is on the performance of the duty, and he has a deep sense of the importance of his teaching vocation. Dutiful teachers know a good deal about the subject(s) they teach and they also possess classroom skills. It does not matter what style of teaching such a teacher applies, only that the style employed fit the particular context of the students being taught (Scriven, 1990). The child therefore is seen as being in need of a motivated teacher who is also able to customize teaching style to meet the needs of students. In addition, Scriven contends that, when taught by a dutiful teacher, the

student is able to effectively monitor his or her own learning process by using grades as a criterion.

The competent teacher (Cruickshank & Haefele, 2001) is similar to the dutiful teacher in that he is seen as needing to meet a measurable standard of performance. The difference is that the competent teacher has some outstanding competencies and does not necessarily perform his duties with a deep sense of commitment. The competent teacher is also similar to the effective teacher in possessing certain skills. The competencies listed by Cruickshank and Haefele (2001) are: lesson planning, implementing instruction, assessing and evaluating students, communicating, and administrative duties. Chaddock (1998) adds reading, writing, math and the ability to teach courses. The child is seen as learning best from a teacher who is very competent in guiding the learning process (Darling-Hammond, 1996). The child is enabled by the teacher to learn. The child therefore is seen as to a great extent capable of being influenced by the teachers' professional and relational skills and to a lesser extent by the teachers' knowledge.

The expert teacher is held to have an exceptional knowledge of his or her field, or the material of their year at primary school, as well as knowledge that is organized and ready to be used for educational purposes (Cruickshank & Haefele, 2001). With this knowledge, the expert teacher can "change programmes, develop elective tasks, explain [learning material] at an advanced level and diagnose students' understanding and misconceptions adequately" (Beijaard, Verloop, & Vermunt, 2000, p. 751). In addition, the expert teacher tends to work more efficiently and creatively than the other types of good teachers (Sternberg & Horvath, 1995), but exceptionally good interpersonal skills are not necessary because the focus is on transmitting and getting the student to apply the knowledge. Literature on the image of the child in relation to the expert teacher is lacking but, in general, the child is seen as both an active agent who attempts to understand what he or she is being taught, as well as intelligent and creative in the way he or she applies the received knowledge. Otherwise, the teacher would have to be a more active agent in the learning process.

The satisfying teacher is defined as a teacher who is pleasing to students, parents, colleagues and their employers (Cruickshank & Haefele, 2001). He or she communicates in clear

and pleasant ways what is to be expected, and is responsive to the needs of students. Contrary to the expert teacher, the focus of the satisfying teacher is not so much on the expertise of the teacher but more on the teacher's own interpersonal skills and emotions. "Effectiveness" is a dimension that is irrelevant to the concept of the satisfying teacher because a teacher can be satisfying but not effective and vice versa. Choy and Delahaye (2002) point out that students mostly like teachers who are friendly and caring, treat them like adults and show concern for them as individuals. To conceptualize the notion of the satisfying teacher, Choy and Delahaye propose an androgogy model that focuses on the child. In androgogy, the child is seen as having a need to learn, having a clear self-concept, learning to experience, ready to learn, and motivated to learn.

The diversity-responsive teacher sees the different needs of every single student as a factor that should influence the way he teaches (Cruickshank & Haefele, 2001). In doing this, the teacher instructs with authority and is sensitive to cultural, economic, intellectual, mental or emotional differences among students. Such teachers are tender, patient and tactful. Teachers in multi-ethnic or diverse socioeconomic Status (SES) educational models are probably teachers of this kind, although the image of the good teacher in these educational models does not necessarily have to be the diversity-responsive teacher. The image of the diversity-responsive teacher is very similar to the satisfying teacher and therefore, as with the satisfying teacher, the child is seen according to the androgogy model (Choy & Delahaye, 2002).

The last type of good teacher Cruickshank and Haefele (2001) identified is the respected teacher. Research has shown that most teachers are respected for the following qualities, in addition to those listed above for effective teaching: the persons they are, their classroom management and organization, planning and organizing instruction, implementing instruction, and monitoring student progress and potential (Stronge, 2007; Stronge & Hindemane, 2003). In addition, they are respected for good teacher ethics, excellent professional skills, continuous professional development, and great teaching (Liu & Meng, 2009). Remarkably, there were no cultural differences in the respected qualities, in spite of the cultural differences in the concepts of the interdependent and independent self. The child is seen as the customer who decides

whether a teacher is good and, in making such a determination, he or she evaluates the skills of the teacher.

The foregoing images clearly show that the images of the good teacher and the image of the child are related and inseparable. Different images of the child almost always result in a different image of the good teacher and vice versa. Let's now turn to these combined images in different educational models.

The good teacher in different educational models

There are a lot of different educational models. Standard (also known as regular or traditional), Montessori, Waldorf and Reggio Emilia education are a few of the better known models. The latter three are "seen as strong educational alternatives to standard education and as sources of inspiration for progressive educational reform" (Edwards, 2002, p.2). As noted earlier, the images of the child are discussed separately by Kramer in another article in this issue.

Standard education

Standard education refers to the mainstream school system. It is the educational model that is most frequently explored in educational research, and therefore most research on the good teacher readily applies to standard education. The main differences between this educational model and the latter three are the degree of control and the way of measuring progress: namely, the reliance on exams to measure performance (Edwards, 2002). The primary focus of standard education is on student achievement.

The qualities of a good teacher in standard education are, in addition to those previously listed for effective teaching: the teacher as a person, classroom management and organization, organizing for instruction, implementing instruction and monitoring student progress and potential (Stronge, Tucker and Hindman (2004). Three features characterize the teacher (Reichel & Arnon, 2009): academic knowledge (expert knowledge of one's field and the qualification to teach it); ethics (a sense of public mission) and professionalism (being part of an autonomous organizational structure of professional teachers). The teacher has to have suitable personal qualities and a suitable personality: being empathetic and attentive to the students (Reichel & Arnon, 2007) and being able to

influence students in knowledge, ethics and relationships (Kutnick and Jules, 1993). Yet differences are found among the groups studied (students, teachers, employers, etc.; Arnon & Reichel, 2009). As noted earlier, research has shown that there are no differences in the way the good teacher is seen in different cultures (Liu & Meng, 2009).

Although there is much more to say about the characteristics of a good teacher in standard education, a cross-cultural pattern is clear: the good teacher has to promote achievement, make knowledge applicable in practice, have suitable professional classroom and relationship skills, and be ethical and deeply driven. This reflects multiple images of the good teacher as proposed by Cruickshank and Haefele (2001; i.e., the effective, expert, competent, respected, and dutiful types of good teachers).

Montessori

An anthropologist, and the first Italian female physician, in addition to being a teacher, Maria Montessori (1870 - 1952) started a housing project for children (age 4- 7) in the slums of Rome (Edwards, 2002). The primary goal of education, according to her, was to be "no longer (...) mostly to impart knowledge, but [to] take a new path, seeking the release of human potentialities (montessori-ami.org)".

In the Montessori model, development is seen as serial six-year periods in which different environmental sensitivities are present and, therefore, different things can be learned (Edwards, 2002; Montessori & Chattin-McNichols, 1995; see also: Claessen in this issue). The child is seen as active and curious and therefore eager to learn by interacting with the environment. The properties of both the environment and teacher are of great importance in accomplishing this goal. The environment must have the qualities of beauty, order, explorational freedom, prepared materials, and include multiple age-groups to promote intrinsic learning motivation (Edwards, 2006).

The teacher is an observer who provides an atmosphere of productive calm, and who tries to intervene to an increasingly lesser degree as the students learn to discover their environment on their own, cycling through stages of concentration and restructuring (montessori-ami.org; Edwards, 2002). The teacher interacts with students, school and parents to integrate the body, mind, emotions

and spirit, all of which together form the holistic being of the student. The teacher has to be aware of the amount of intervention needed and go through an intensive training program in order to acquire these skills.

The “good teacher” in the Montessori model is therefore a constructor of environments, observer of students’ needs and a skilled worker, reflecting the diversity-responsive, satisfying and competent images of the good teacher. The good teacher as constructor of environments does not easily fit within one of the images. It looks like the image of the effective teacher, but there is not that much of a focus on achievement. There is, however, a movement within Montessori Education that advocates an increased achievement focus (Edwards, 2002), so the image of the effective teacher might become more prominent within this model.

Waldorf

The founding father of Waldorf Education, Austrian-born Rudolf Steiner (1861-1925), sought to integrate spiritual and scientific knowledge, and the outgrowth of this synthesis was Anthroposophy (Edwards, 2002). Waldorf Schools had to educate students from all kinds of backgrounds to be constructive participants of society who promoted justice and peace. The primary goal of education, in the Waldorf view, is to bring the soul-spirit of the child into harmony with the temporal body (Freda, 1997) and to restore the balance among thinking, willing and feeling (Steiner, 1995) correcting the child’s incorrect understanding of the world (Schwartz, 1996). This is accomplished by bringing rhythm into the lives of children. Therefore, educational practice in this model is highly structured.

The teacher in Waldorf Education is responsible for fostering harmony in the lives of students, creating an environment where order and beauty are prevalent (Ruenzel, 2001; Edwards, 2002). The teacher is in a constant process of monitoring the harmony of his own behaviour and spiritual state, because learning takes place when the children imitate the teacher: children cannot learn on their own. Teachers are therefore like extensively trained performers who are aware of their audience (Edwards, 2002) devoted to their task, working out of the essence of their being and willing to set their own personal needs aside (Troostli, 1998). He provides beautiful, intrinsically

interesting material from all sensory modalities in order to engender a feeling of wonder, belief in goodness, love of beauty, and creativity in the child (Almon, 1992) because the child is seen as largely depending on such things. Materials are utilized that are suitable to the academic and cognitive level of the child, with Piaget’s developmental stages used as a frame of reference (Barnes, 1991; Pama, this issue; Claessen, this issue).

The good teacher in Waldorf Education is therefore best seen as a performer, provider of materials, restructurer of knowledge and a skilled worker. In the framework of Cruickshank and Haefele (2001), this reflects the competent, diversity-responsive, dutiful, analytic/reflective, and satisfying teachers, with the latter three most prominently emphasized.

Reggio Emilia

Originating as a small post-World War II community-based pre-school and infant-toddler system in the Italian city Reggio Emilia (New, 1993), this model has, under the leadership of Loris Malaguzzi (1920-1994), expanded its operations to other parts of the world (New, 2000). The main characteristic of Reggio Emilia is the social-constructivist approach to education, emphasizing the importance of reciprocity in learning and social interaction between teacher and child and among children (Malaguzzi, 1993; Edwards, 2002).

The child (seen as full of potential and possibilities) interacts with and changes the environment and gets to understand it in a symbolic way. The learning environment is made as joyful as possible in order to stimulate children to interact with it (Giandini, 2005). It is for this reason that most Reggio Emilia schools employ an artist. Students explore the situation on their own terms, so the teachers (they work in pairs) do not regulate but provide resources (after negotiating with the students) and try to guide the learning process when a child is interacting with his or her environment.

The teacher plays “a role of artful balancing between engaging and attention” (Edwards, 2002, p.14; Edwards, 1998) and the child is therefore seen as manipulating his or her own environment. Some scientists suggest that the “teacher” is in the interaction itself (Hewett, 2001), and therefore the interaction is given the status of an entity and referred to as “the third teacher” (Giandini, 1998) or “amiable school” (Edwards, 2002). The teacher is therefore conceived as more

of a collaborator than a traditional teacher: there is not even a teacher training institute for Reggio Emilia teachers. Anyone who subscribes to the Reggio Emilia philosophy can become a teacher. Training of teachers is accomplished through documentation of the collaboration with colleagues and self-reflection (Gandini & Goldhaber, 2001). It might be argued that the teacher in this model needs to be social, motivational and aware of the possibilities inherent in the interaction. The good teacher in Reggio Emilia Education is, in terms of the Cruickshank and Haefele (2001) classification, a satisfying, diversity-responsive and analytic/reflective teacher.

The results of this inquiry show that various images of the good teacher can be found within these educational models. Let's now turn to a discussion of the results and their implications for the usefulness of the Cruickshank and Haefele (2001) framework.

Discussion

This essay explored the differences in the image of the good teacher and their related images of the child in the standard, Montessori, Waldorf, and Reggio Emilia educational models by means of ten images of the good teacher that Cruickshank and Haefele (2001) proposed. In this way, the usefulness of the framework was assessed. In standard education, the images of the good teacher equated to the types of the effective, expert, competent, respected, and dutiful teacher. In Montessori education, the most prevalent types were the diversity-responsive, satisfying, and competent teacher. In Waldorf Education the analytic/reflective, the dutiful and the satisfying types were most prominent, while in Reggio Emilia, the satisfying, diversity-responsive and analytic/reflective types prevailed.

Not all aspects reflecting the images of the good teacher in the educational models were covered by the framework utilized, and some types partially overlapped one another (i.e., analytic and reflective; satisfying and diversity-responsive; competent, expert and effective). This suggests that the ten images are indeed not mutually exclusive, as Cruickshank and Haefele (2001) proposed. Yet, it does seem to make sense to create a set of images that reflect mutually exclusive demands of the good teacher and the kinds of children that will be the result of the educational model because the interaction of the images of the teacher and child

engender the development of different kinds of children. The effective teacher tends to foster the development of children who give high value to achievement, whereas the satisfying teacher tends to foster the development of children who favour interpersonal skills and interaction. It might therefore be better to define images of the teacher and child together as *images of the teacher-child interaction*, a concept which would take into account both parties of the teacher-child interaction.

A factor analysis might be a good way to create a simple structure of these images. This method also would provide the opportunity to create a rank order of the images in different research populations, showing their primary focus and aiding the evaluation process. In addition, a factor analysis would show if results reported in the literature are replicated in the field.

More research also should be done on personality traits related to the images of the teacher-child interaction. Personality traits of the teacher (Larsen & Buss, 2008; not taken into account by Cruickshank & Haefele, 2001) and child are likely to be differently valued across the images of the teacher-child interaction.

In conclusion, the framework of Cruickshank and Haefele (2001) is promising in its multiple-image view, but more research on the interaction between the image of the teacher and the child being taught has to be conducted before the framework can be considered usable for teacher evaluation and teacher training.

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M.C.Noort@students.uu.nl.

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