



Deliberative democratic decision making, universal values, and cultural pluralism: A proposed contribution to the prevention of violent extremism through education

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Abstract Fostering cohesion and acceptance amidst a plurality of cultures and values is a clear context for quality education and also for PVE. This article proposes that deliberative democratic decision making (DDD) can result in agreements on (quasi-universal) values that accommodate both the claims of universal values – including human rights – and cultural pluralism and particularism. The article suggests that any agreed upon values framework itself becomes generative of curriculum and teaching and learning processes that will foster quality education, with conditions that also contribute to the prevention of violent extremism. An explicit treatment of values across the whole school as a subject of inquiry and agreement by all members of the school community can contribute to a healthy school environment and praxis for learners that serve the aims of PVE. Following an exploration of these arguments, the article presents concrete strategies for critical values clarification within the schooling system that recognize how universality and pluralism co-exist.

Keywords Values education · Deliberative democracy · Preventing violent extremism · Human rights

Introduction

According to the United Nations (UN), quality education is one means to prevent violent extremism (PVE) and this education should prepare youth for constructive engagement in society (United Nations 2015, para 12). UNICEF and UNESCO promote the human

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rights-based approach to emphasize the many dimensions of school life that impact the child's experience of quality education (UNICEF/UNESCO 2007). Quality education includes learning about the values of human rights, further reaffirmed through the UN and the world community in Sustainable Development Goal 4.7.

Fostering cohesion and acceptance amidst a plurality of cultures and values is a clear context for quality education and for PVE. Yet, values are complex and even contested. How can values be agreed upon and used to foster cohesion? How can we accommodate universal values and particularism at the same time? And how can such values directly influence curriculum and teaching practices?

This article proposes that deliberative democratic decision making (DDD) can result in agreements on (quasi-universal) values that accommodate both the claims of universal values – including human rights – and cultural pluralism and particularism. A bottom-up/top-down consensus on these values can ultimately influence curriculum and teaching and learning processes.

Within schools, DDD for values can be one strategy for foster pro-social values and skills of inquiry and participation, which can also contribute to PVE. Multiple strategies for PVE through education have been explored in theory and practice. Most notably from the UNESCO side is the cultivation of teachers' skills to promote critical thinking and to address sensitive and controversial topics in the classroom (UNESCO 2016). Within individual school environments, this DDD approach is readily supportive of other PVE strategies.

Involving a school community or national environment in such a values discussion is admittedly not a straightforward endeavor. While the ultimate aim is to come up with common and shared values to influence actions, such deliberations would take place in environments that are culturally pluralistic. A deliberative democracy process will need to be a genuine one in order to influence the ethos and practices of a school community.

These endeavors are not merely one of process – as important as such participatory processes are – but also of substance. I argue that a good starting point for discussion is human rights values. The human rights value system can be broken down into its component parts, including common values that are both recognizable and aspirational. This article addresses the UN claims of universal values, particularly those linked with human rights, and proposes a hybrid approach that is both philosophically based and educationally pragmatic in recognizing the universality as well as the particularities of values; such a hybrid position may be referred to as “qualified universalism”.

I then recommend dynamic processes for deliberation on how such qualified universalism can take place at multiple levels of education—from the national to the school. I offer some practical suggestions for how such critical, values clarification processes might be organized in the school environment.

Finally, I suggest that any agreed upon values framework itself then becomes generative of curriculum and teaching and learning processes that will foster quality education, along with conditions that also contribute to the prevention of violent extremism. Of course, values are a naturally occurring part of learners' experiences in school, both through intended curriculum (including content and teaching and learning processes) and the socializing effects of the “hidden curriculum” (including classroom climate, relationships within the school, opportunities for participation, and other noncurricular features of the classroom and school that influence learners' values, attitudes, and behaviors). An explicit treatment of values across the whole school as a subject of inquiry and agreement by all members of the school community can contribute to a healthy school environment and praxis for learners that may also serve the aims of PVE.

This article does not address other valuable education-centered PVE strategies, such as putting segregated groups of youth in closer contact with one another and promoting diversity in teaching and learning. However, such worthwhile approaches are facilitated in schools that promote a deliberative democracy approach around values and have come to a consensus about school-wide norms ultimately reflective of human rights.

Violent extremism

There is no internationally agreed-upon definition of violent extremism. The most common understanding of the term – which is used by UNESCO – is that it refers to the beliefs and actions of people who support or use violence to achieve ideological, religious or political goals. Typically, “violent extremism” also identifies an enemy, or enemies, who are the object of hatred and violence (UNESCO 2017, p. 19).

The term radicalization, also contested, has come to be used in the context of PVE specifically to “describe the processes by which a person adopts extreme views or practices to the point of legitimizing the use of violence (UNESCO 2017, p. 20).

The primary causes of violent extremism (VE) can lie anywhere from social context to political situation or lack of quality education which have made it a complex phenomenon and difficult to prevent. In order to understand the causes, UNESCO has differentiated the factors leading to VE into two categories: “push” and “pull”. While push factors are known as wider socio-economic, cultural and political conditions that are conducive to VE, pull factors are those of psychological and emotional appeal to individuals (UNESCO 2017, p. 21).

The role of education in preventing violent extremism and de-radicalizing young people has only recently gained global acceptance. An important step in this direction was the adoption of UN Security Council Resolution 2178 that underscores the importance of “addressing the conditions conducive to the spread of violent extremism, [...], including by empowering youth, families, women, religious, cultural and education leaders, and all other concerned groups of civil society” (United Nations 2014, para 16). The adoption of UN Security Council Resolution 2250 in December 2015 also highlighted the need for “quality education for peace that equips youth with the ability *to engage constructively in civic structures and inclusive political processes*” [ital added] and called on “all relevant actors to consider instituting mechanisms to promote a culture of peace, tolerance, intercultural and interreligious dialogue that involve youth and discourage their participation in acts of violence, terrorism, xenophobia, and all forms of discrimination” (United Nations 2015, paras 12–13).

Another important signal from the international community was the adoption by UNESCO’s Executive Board of a landmark decision that unequivocally affirms the importance of education as a tool to help prevent terrorism and violent extremism, as well as racial and religious intolerance, genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity worldwide (UNESCO 2015). Whether provided through schools, clubs and community associations or at home, education is undeniably an important component of a societal commitment to curb and prevent the rise in violent extremism.

Education can:

- “Help young people develop the communication and interpersonal skills they need to dialogue, face disagreement and learn peaceful approaches to change;

- Help learners develop their critical thinking to investigate claims, verify rumors and question the legitimacy and appeal of extremist beliefs;
- Help learners develop the resilience to resist extremist narratives and acquire the social-emotional skills they need to overcome their doubts and engage constructively in society without having to resort to violence” (UNESCO 2016, p. 15).

DDD on school-wide values involves many of the skills identified above by the UNESCO Executive Board: dialogue, critical thinking and values oriented towards peace and human rights.

Definition of values

Definitions of “values” have highlighted different facets and generally have not contradicted one another. Across various definitions, “values” are viewed as standards that apply to beliefs and actions, with implications for the well-being of the individual, especially in regard to relations with others. Elaborations by Halsted and Taylor (1996) and Schwartz (1994) are particularly relevant. Halstead and Taylor (1996) recognized the following definition of values:

Things that are considered “good” in themselves, such as love, and are considered personal and social preferences;
 Beliefs, attitudes or feelings that have been chosen thoughtfully from alternatives and is acted upon;
 Emotional commitments and ideas about worth;
 Things (objects, activities, experiences, etc.) which on balance promote human well-being (p. 5).

Schwartz (1994), who studied values in cross-cultural contexts, noted that the literature shows widespread agreement on five features of the conceptual definition of values: “A value is a (1) belief (2) pertaining to desirable end states or modes of conduct, that (3) transcends specific situations, (4) guides selection or evaluation of behavior, people, and events, and (5) is ordered by importance relative to other values to form a system of values priorities” (p. 20).

Human rights have both normative and legal dimensions. Human rights norms can also be seen as moral, or ethical, values (which I will treat as synonymous). We can view moral values as principles to help people develop, live their lives, relate to one another, and organize their societies. Clusters of values associated with one another, such as human rights, can be considered a “values framework”.

(Universal) human rights and responsibilities

Constantinides (2008) highlighted the lack of conceptual clarity regarding the term of “universality”, noting that scholars have defined the term on the basis of “all-inclusiveness, formal acceptance and adherence, historical origin, formal origin and norm creation, to anthropological and philosophical acceptance, uniformity, indivisibility and legitimacy” (p. 51).

One can define “universal” as applying to all persons, regardless of time, location and personal characteristics and background. The term “universal values” therefore refers to values that are—or ought to be—common to all people. Another way of viewing universal values, then, is as “common values”.

Differences between West and East in relation to human rights have evolved over time, with neither camp being monolithic. The original dichotomy between the East’s emphasis on the rights of society as a whole versus the West’s emphasis on individual rights has given way to some recognition of duties toward society along with individual rights (African Charter on Human Rights and People’s Rights), as well as to the recognition of group rights (Declaration on the Rights of Peoples of Indigenous Descent). In Western countries, views about certain economic and social rights continue to evolve. In the meantime, UN pronouncements still reaffirm the mantra of shared values. In the Millennium Declaration, “all States reaffirmed fundamental values as being ‘essential to international relations in the twenty-first century’: freedom, equality, solidarity, tolerance, respect for nature, and shared responsibility” (United Nations 2000).

Supporters of the universality of human rights point to evidence that at least certain human rights have gained universal acceptance. All governments condemn systematic and gross violations of human rights, such as genocide, torture, and involuntary disappearances (Baehr 2000). Such condemnations, though not necessarily reflected in governments’ own behaviors, speak to the currency of appearing “human rights–friendly” among members of the international community.

Martha Nussbaum’s (1999) argument for intrinsic “human capabilities” allows her to claim that there are concurrent social goals to ensure that these capacities come about. Nussbaum’s “capabilities” approach to human development—which some have linked with arguments for universalism—begins “with a sense of the worth and dignity of basic human powers, thinking of them as claims to a chance for functioning, claims that give rise to correlated social and political duties” (1999, p. 44).

Interestingly enough, defenders of the human rights system against its historical particularism in relation to the European Enlightenment can end up linking human rights values with particularist religious traditions in different parts of the world. (Nussbaum 1999, p. 57). Concepts such as tolerance and freedom, and values such as non-discrimination and equality, are also found within religious creeds. These creeds often shape wider national and even regional cultures.

Qualified universalism

Recent scholarship has pointed toward a potential solution to this complex debate by accepting the tenets of both universalism and particularism. Philosophical arguments exist for the desirability of common values (based on humanism), as does some evidence that such values can be found across key religious, secular, and political texts. These are normative arguments, validated in part by empirical psycho-social research, about the values cherished by individuals in cross-national studies. Opponents of universalism point to the variations within and across cultures, reflecting particularities and suggesting that the basis for values will inevitably be subjective (relativistic).

The bridge between absolutist and particularist positions is the coexistence of universalism and diversity, also known as “qualified universalism” (Enslin and Tjiattas 2009, p. 3). Qualified universalists are found among moral philosophers, sociologists, and pragmatists. They hold that there are common values, also known as universals, but that these are not

absolute. These universal values manifest as minor variations across cultures. For this reason, we also label them as “variform universals” (Segal, Lonner, and Berry 1998, p. 4).

Decades ago scholars and religious leaders made an attempt to develop global ethics, based on the universal values espoused by the United Nations. The result was the Universal Declaration Toward a Global Ethic (Parliament of the World’s Religions 1993), which built on the UDHR and the Golden Rule. An excerpt from this declaration provides a refreshing presentation of quasi-universalism:

Our position in the values education controversy is that we oppose the authoritarian promulgation of any one group’s values as being above all others, but we also oppose the presentation of all values as equally valid. A short list of universal moral values may offer a bridge between the absolutist and relativistic positions, as well as between the character education and values education perspectives. Diversity and universality can coexist. (Kinnier, Kernes, and Dautheribes 2000, p. 7)

This reassuring proposition nevertheless raises two new questions. The first is how one can judge whether a value in question is a variation on a universal value or an entirely different kind of value. However, we may be able to relegate this question to categorization. Perhaps the more pressing question is how to appraise whether we might consider any such variation unacceptable, and by whom. In principle, if a variation were considered “minor”, would we then understand it to be a matter of the local group’s acceptance and therefore not subject to interrogation? Or might there be certain variations that would be ethically unacceptable? Where does variation end and a violation against human dignity begin?

Nussbaum (2002) argues, for example, that we need to analyze evidence of intolerance within cultures on the basis of principles. Perhaps we also need principles upon which to assess the contributions of culture against the harm that they do to individuals and their human dignity? On the one hand is the need to resist the tyranny of the universals; but there is a concurrent need to reject the tyranny of relativism. This answer is partly, though not entirely, provided by looking at the specifics of each situation and by the principle of flexibility.

The next section takes up, in an applied manner, a hybrid approach between the treatment of some values as universal and shared and some as particularistic.

Values, culture, and schooling

Moral values and value systems are passed along through a wide-ranging array of formal and nonformal mechanisms. These include codified texts and doctrine—laws, religious creeds, codes of ethics—as well as symbolic art, language, history, and a multitude of socialization practices found in families and schools. Values are internalized and personal and also shared with others, thus serving as a basis for group identity.

Those subscribing to a particularist value system sometimes base their arguments on cultural pluralism: the idea that culture has infinite variations. This is not only because culture (like personal identity) can be diverse and multifaceted but also because culture is received, interpreted, and acted upon by individuals.

Notwithstanding the intrinsic variations within and across cultures, those responsible for organizing social spaces and desiring a certain degree of homogeneity of behavior—including forms of governance and political participation, forms of worship, and

professional practices—have elaborated moral value systems. These values systems are then reproduced, contributing to what we call “culture”.

Schools clearly have a central role to play in the inculcation of values. As Lee put it: “If values and culture are interactive and intertwined with each other, so is the relationship between values, culture and education” (2001, p. 29). Questions about the role of the schools initially include the *what* and *how* of values education: which values should schools emphasize and what means will they use to carry this out? Can consistency be assured between the school’s espoused values (e.g., “core values”) and its culture and practices? To what degree will the school make such values explicit and normative? Will the school use such values to reproduce already-accepted values (whose?) or will it encourage critical reflection?

One obvious area of investigation in this arena is education policy, including education laws and curriculum policy. Schools may introduce values directly through curricular content (required and optional subjects) chosen by the teacher, the school, the government, or all of the above—and also through pedagogy that may promote discussion, critical reflection, and so on. Values are also transmitted through the “hidden curriculum” features of the classroom and school environment including relationships, extracurricular activities, signals from leadership, opportunities for students to participate and shape their school environment, etc.

Frequently, school does not fully explain or articulate its values. Even where it has a values statement, the school community may not share an understanding of what it means (for example, “treating others with respect”), and what is expressed in the values statement may differ from the school’s practices (Halstead 1996, p. 4). Implemented curriculum is only one ingredient in students’ experience regarding values of the school—an environment where incongruence and inconsistency often exist within and across expressed and practiced values.

The transmission of values in education takes place within culturally-complex school environments. These environments are complex because they are themselves a microcosm of culture and society:

Schools and individual teachers within schools are a major influence, alongside the family, the media and the peer group, on the developing of values and young people; schools reflect and embody the values of society; the values of society are not uniform and unchanging (Halstead and Taylor 1996, p. 3).

It is also the case that many groups may want to influence the values transmitted in educational processes, including teachers, students, parents, community leaders, and also employers and politicians. Within and across these groups, there is potentially a wide diversity of political, social, economic, religious, ideological, and cultural values (Halstead and Taylor 1996, p. 3).

The values highlighted by UNESCO as relevant for PVE are: solidarity, respect for diversity, human rights and learning to live together (UNESCO 2015, 2016, 2017). Thus, the question of which values—within an education system or individual schools—will be identified as common ones and which values will be recognized as variform universals speaks to the need for inclusive processes of deliberation.

Moral education versus values education

The matter of which values are promoted within education is a longstanding one. Education traditions and scholarship that have tackled this topic include the areas of “moral education”, “values education”, “values clarification”, and “character education”. According to Lee (2001), “[T]he focus of values in education covers a range of areas, including religious values, character building, cultural heritage, societal norms, political values, mode of behavior, attitudes, affection towards the nation and the community, ideologies, etc.” (p. 36). Moral education is associated with prescriptive values education, including religious education, character education, and subjects promoting national ideologies and philosophies (pp. 36–37).

Historically, societies have linked values in education with religious values. One can find, in most countries, schools organized explicitly around religion-based values and culture. These values may, in practice, be more prevalent in societies that emphasize traditional values, as identified in the World Values Survey. In some countries, religious education is part of the national curriculum, though it varies as to whether it is required or optional and as to which religions are covered. (For example, typologies of religion have included religions of difference, religions of humanity, and spiritualities of life; Woodhead and Heelas 2000, as quoted in Cairns et al. 2001, p. 64).

Lee (2001) asks whether schools consciously transmit societal values (a “prescriptive” approach) or actively encourage critical reflection and learners’ agency to determine their own values (“descriptive”) (p. 33). The prescriptive approach—linked with moral education—emphasizes shared or approved values and aims to produce behavior and attitudes seen as morally good. The descriptive approach—which can be called “values education”—defines the role of education as describing “the moral area”, allowing learners to distinguish for themselves what is moral and non-moral. This approach is typically implemented through what is known as the “values-clarification approach”, a pedagogy that provides learners with opportunities to explore and develop their own value system (Lee 2001, p. 33). Interactive methods, a critical analysis, and perspective-taking is possible for both approaches, as I present later in this section.

The values-clarification approach opposes the imposition of values and promotes the principle that learners should explore and develop their own value systems. It has also been linked with the moral-reasoning approach and the just-community approach (see Blatt and Kohlberg 1975; Kohlberg 1976; Kohlberg 1984; and Power, Higgins, and Kohlberg 1989). This approach takes into account the multiple influences on values in a young person—including those outside of the school—though it overlooks the need to learn basic values, particularly before tackling controversial ones (Halstead 1996, p. 10).

Within this debate regarding descriptive versus prescriptive approaches to values in education, we find other questions. For example, how does the curriculum treat issues such as diversity and inclusion, dominant/minority cultures, and the autonomy of the individual? Answers to these questions are influenced concurrently by educational philosophy and the historical context of the environment in question. It is an oversimplification to say that schools reflect the culture and views of the majority groups in society, as countries and communities reflect varying degrees of homogeneous and shared cultures. Education systems, schools, and even educators themselves may have differing points of view about the role and transmission of values in schools.

Nussbaum is concerned about learning about “the other” in education through categories that are stereotypical representations. Adami (2014) says that the problem is the

narrative itself—how narratives “are told, listened to and shared in education” (p. 301). A potential danger of both the universalist and particularist approaches is the lack of critical reflection on one’s identity and culture.

Another important feature of the values debate in education concerns the students’ age and maturity. Society sees schools as playing an important role in the socialization of students, whom it views as requiring guidance in developing their initial ethical framework. This framework might contain several elements mentioned earlier: how learners see themselves, how they ought to treat others, how to treat the environment, etc.

On the other hand, older students will already have some foundational ethical values in place. Thus, the role of the education system might be one that encourages reflection, revision, and addition to this cluster of values—though the pressing question becomes: on what basis?

This aspect of the debate shows that the distinction between prescriptive and descriptive approaches to values in education is a bit muddled in practice. Values education (descriptive) is presented as choice-centered but invariably takes place with learners already been exposed to and socialized toward certain values. Learners’ values don’t emerge in a vacuum but are influenced by multiple forces, inside and outside of the school setting, and in an ongoing manner (Halstead 1996, p. 10). Thus, a “solution” to the question of how values are treated within education will need to take into account learner age, as well as other features of the local environment.

A hybrid approach to values in education

As with the philosophical debate between universalism and relativism, there is room to develop strategies that address the roles of schools both as socializing agents and liberating ones. It is possible to consider offering more prescriptive forms of values education when learners are young, providing moral guidance and helping them to solidify their identities within groups. Values offered within this frame provide young learners with the moral basis upon which to ground their understanding of their role in society. This approach recognizes the plurality of values but does not subscribe to absolute relativism. Moreover, the prescriptive role of values education acknowledges that schools play a socializing role in the values formation of young people—through both explicit and hidden curricula. However, this particular role of the schools in relation to values would need to be seen in the context of a broader role for schooling.

As the student matures, the school may introduce a more “descriptive” and exploratory orientation to values. This approach reflects both the evolving capacity of young people to comprehend complex concepts and practice multi-perspectivity, and the adolescent need to differentiate her/himself from adults. Benhabib observed that students “negotiate their inter-dependency by re-situating or reiterating the universal in concrete contexts” (2007, p. 19, as quoted in Enslin and Tjiattas 2009, p. 5). One could postulate that regardless of the degree of traditionalism in a culture, a predisposition of the maturing learner will be to experience some degree of increased freedom, including that related to choice of values. This position is consistent with the liberal notion of individual autonomy, choice, and freedom, though it is made from a human development rather than a political stance.

A hybrid approach to values in education therefore takes into account not only the universal and particularistic nature of cultures but also the evolving age and maturity of learners. Below are some specific strategies to accommodate this hybrid approach, which might be incorporated within the content and teaching strategies of curricula. These strategies

and processes might also be reinforced through schoolwide processes and the “hidden curriculum” of classrooms and schools.

Schoolwide values

A plurality of cultures does not necessarily mean a contradictory plurality of values. Respect for different cultures does not mean that schools do not promote certain moral values related to right and wrong. Some might be recognized as cross-cultural values (War-nock 1996, p. 49), the “common values” that are sometimes viewed as universal values, as discussed earlier. Other values might be culture-specific variations.

As societies have become more pluralistic, national school curricula have often included a mixture of universalistic and relativistic values. In Asia, Thomas (2000) observed that this is a “pick and mix” process, drawing from both “Asian values” and “Western values”. Globalization, and specifically Westernization, appear to have played a role in these changing curricula.

Schools can be encouraged to develop a values statement that includes common values consistent with those recognized cross-culturally in promoting human well-being (including those recognized as core human rights values and proposed as universal). These core common values include respect for others, fairness, and equality. These specific values might be associated with a wider ethical system, whether secular (such as human rights) or faith-based. However, this will depend upon the school identity and choices of the school community. It is important that any schoolwide values statement be inclusive and accommodating toward the multiple identities and cultures one can find in a school environment.

Schools and educational systems that develop a values statement may need to review, discuss, and potentially revise current practices. A “values audit” might take place, involving different members of the school community. Questions like the ones below might be adapted for teachers, parents and pupils; the answers would influence not only the development of the values statement but also the strategies for implementing them. Depending on the degree of centralization in the education system, schools will have more or fewer opportunities to develop their own curricular responses consistent with their values statement.

Below are some questions that might be used in a values audit:

Do particular values (whether political, moral, or religious) have validity only within particular cultures or traditions?

Is there a sufficient basis of shared values to support a common framework of education? (Should parents be free to choose between schools with different sets of values?)

Do the values that are currently taught in school reinforce (intentionally or otherwise) the privileged position of certain social classes or religious or cultural groups?

Are there any absolute values or merely changing and relative ones?

Should schools reflect traditional values or seek to transform these?

Should schools instill values in pupils (character education) or teach them to explore and develop their own values (values clarification or moral reasoning)?

Should teachers aim for a neutral or value-free approach to their subject matter? (Halstead 1996, p. 5).

In addition to considering the explicit treatment of values within a curriculum and within teaching and learning processes, the “hidden curriculum” of schools must be kept in mind. There is implicit values education through the behavior of teachers and other adults in the school community, opportunities for students to influence the school and all the other dimensions of school culture.

Content and pedagogy

For younger children, the introduction of values can be seen as part of the socializing role of schools. Thus, educational systems, curricula, and school experiences will ideally consistently reinforce values that are considered important and necessary for the individual to participate in their local community and be a successful member of society.

This socialization process will take place both explicitly and implicitly in the young person’s experiences in the classroom and school. In this respect, it doesn’t matter whether educators view the values involved as “universal” or “particularistic”.

A hybrid approach suggests that it should be possible to present a more “global” presentation of values for young students. For example, once pupils have internalized core values for living and learning in the school environment (for example, linked with the “values statement”), curricula might present to young learners the fact that different value systems exist, including those found in legal systems and in different religions.

The emphasis might remain primarily on common values but show how these are found in different cultures and systems. This approach could affirm cross-cultural, core human values related to human dignity, equality, and freedom of choice, as well as membership in valued groups in society. Such content would ideally be presented in the curriculum and by the teacher in a way that fosters awareness without denigrating the value systems and cultures of others. Thus, the “prescriptive” approach to values in education might still accommodate a plurality of origins in regard to core values.

With older children, a more complex, “descriptive” approach to values in education is possible. Through values-clarification activities, critical analysis, and investigations, students may develop a critical perspective on the values that have thus far been affirmed inside and outside of the school environment, as well as in her or his society. In the process of becoming aware of these values, mature learners might then exercise some degree of autonomy and choice in regard to these values. What values do they cherish? Which might they have some question or disagreement about?

A hybrid approach to universalism and particularism could influence curriculum and classroom processes for older learners in several ways. Curriculum might:

- Explain in a neutral manner the nature and origins of values, including examples of both particularist and universal value systems.
- Show the links between cross-cultural values and particularist (including religious) traditions, local and elsewhere. This does not deny the local traditions or even present them as equivalent to others but still establishes commonality.
- Recognize the importance of seeking commonality around human dignity while recognizing particularities. Such insights would come from students’ owned lived experiences rather than from existential concepts.
- Introduce the principle that cultures change and that the same general values can sometimes be applied in new ways. The values themselves may even evolve.

- Introduce the tensions between arguments of universality and relativity in regard to human rights values but note that there is a compromise through the principle of shared common values.
- Discuss that human rights values have been codified in international human rights law, which continues to evolve. Human rights laws come alive within national protection systems, which can vary. However, local variations are never supposed to violate foundational human rights, such as the freedom from torture and slavery.
- Enable students to explore their own values and beliefs—their content, their origins, their meaningfulness, their applications—recognizing that these can change over time in their own lifetime.
- Present universal values and have students reflect on how their own values reinforce or conflict with universal values.
- Recognize the coexistence of different value systems within societies, even conflicting ones, and discuss the terms upon which they can be debated. Insert critical reflection on the implications of certain value systems (“who might get harmed?”).
- Promote awareness of the sources and reproduction of values, introducing the problematics of reproduction of hate, nationalism, and exclusionary patriotism in closed value systems.

Even an ambitious educational policymaker or curriculum developer may be challenged to find ways to address most of these suggestions. It is possible that many might be addressed within a subject dedicated to promoting values in education, including a world religions course or another religion course. Other school subjects also address values and society, whether explicitly or not. These subjects include citizenship education, history, sociology, literature, and the arts. The diffuse ways that values may be addressed across the various subjects offered in a school once again reinforce the principle of having educators collaborate and coordinate a schoolwide approach to values in education, one that is not superficial. Educators themselves may benefit from engaging in critical reflection on their personal values and views on universalism-particularism. In fact, this might be considered mandatory as part of teacher preparation.

Any values framework adopted by schools as part of curriculum will entail careful choices in relation not only to content but also to teaching and learning processes. We can view the following general processes as providing an umbrella for the methodologies that schools might employ for addressing values in education over a student’s school lifecycle:

- Modeling and imitation
- Training and habituation
- Enquiry and clarification (Carr and Landon 1993, as quoted in Halstead 1996, p. 11).

The methodologies applied for specific activities will be as varied as those used in other subjects and classes. Educators can foster engagement, reflection, and critical analysis through a range of discussion-based approaches and student-centered active-learning approaches that can be found in educational resources.

Democratic deliberation

This article presented scholarship on diverse approaches to values in education, showing how these reflect, in part, the debate between universalism and relativism, with the added consideration of schools' role in promoting values in differing national and local contexts and across age groups. This section concluded with a proposal for a hybrid approach to values education that incorporates elements of both universal and particularist positions, moving from a socializing influence with younger students to increasingly critical and reflective approaches with older students, reflecting the approach of critical pedagogy affirmed by many within human rights education.

It is worth noting that within this educational frame the primary change in dynamic is one of pedagogy. Secular and religious values are both eligible to be identified as the core common values when socializing young children. The question is, then, whether common values across different cultures can also be addressed at this stage. Eventually, a more reflective and critical pedagogy with older students will naturally raise questions of the origin of the values, according to the proposed hybrid approach.

National policymakers, curriculum developers, educators, and school communities have a quite complex challenge to work through. They must identify, model, and facilitate the internalization of shared values for their school communities that:

- Enable pupils to actively and respectfully participate in their school community and society.
- Cultivate a sense of belonging, while recognizing the diversity of identities and background among educators, students, and their families.
- Link the values of the school with wider, shared “universal” values across cultures and faiths.
- Promote awareness and critical reflection on the nature of values, including the particularities and changeableness of some over time.
- Encourage “common humanity”, interconnectedness, and empathy as a disposition (and not merely a value).
- Ultimately encourage students to experience choice in accepting the values that are consistent with their worldview and life experiences.

Such goals are relevant for quality schooling in general, but PVE in addition. Local curricula might include subject-specific frameworks, as well as a transversal integration of values. Curricula might also encourage specific teaching and learning practices, as well as schoolwide practices. General policies about curriculum development in decentralized school systems might include guidelines that require schools to use inclusive processes for developing a schoolwide values statement and ensuring that the school has a welcoming environment toward those whose values and choice may not be shared with all others in the school.

This article, further, gave specific suggestions for supporting quasi-universalism in values. These include conducting a values audit, developing a values statement, and implementing a curriculum across the students' school lifecycle that moves from a more socializing approach to one that promotes multi-perspectivity and critical reflection on values, accommodating students' evolving age and maturity.

All this is easier said than done, as school systems would have to align many people and policies at the national, subnational, and school levels in order to foster coherent

values-education policy and practices. Every system and school is already imbued with values. For this reason, some of the practical suggestions included involve a review of practices and inclusive discussions about which values the school system should embrace and how the system might promote them.

Here I return to a suggestion made by Fraser (2005) and Benhabib (2007) for democratic procedures and deliberation, which I refer to as DDD. Such processes might take place at multiple levels: the school, national education decision-makers, and perhaps even in international settings. Such an ambitious undertaking is perhaps easier to envision at the school level but is required for all levels.

Human rights values provide an initial basis for discussing the (positive) content of common values, such as equality and nondiscrimination; and international human rights standards codify certain freedoms that world cultures may see as sacrosanct, such as freedom from torture and freedom from slavery. However, (re)identifying and validating globally shared norms, values, and understandings through reference to empirical evidence, cultural analysis, and inclusive and genuinely democratic dialogical processes is a necessary exercise in a dynamic and globalizing world. Thinking specifically about values in education, such an exercise might take place at international, system, and school levels.

There will be many successful approaches for transmitting values in education that accommodate a world in which one may define human experiences as specific, universal, or both. This will involve a collaborative effort among educational policymakers, curriculum developers, intergovernmental organizations, civil society (including faith-based groups and human rights groups), teacher educators, and researchers, as well as the members of the school community themselves. Educators, who play a central role in promoting values in education, would need to be supported in acquiring the knowledge and skills necessary for fulfilling their tasks.

Education decision-makers might facilitate consultations with the many groups with interests and points of view relating to values in society. Such groups include youth and their families; cultural, political, and religious leaders; and those whose values and practices may have been invisible or even persecuted. Up for discussion in such a democratic deliberation would be many difficult questions:

What is the universe of our treasured values, across all groups?

Which of these can be considered to be shared values?

Which can be considered to be variations of the common values?

Are there any variations that can be considered to be in contradiction to common values?

How should and can schools and educational systems accommodate the answers to these questions?

These conversations may reveal differences of opinion. There may not be agreement concerning the core common values of the school, or on the strategies for promoting such values—for example, through religious education, citizenship education, and/or other means. Educational leaders—at the national and subnational levels—might have to provide guidance on how to accommodate such differences, consistent with the norms promoted by agencies such as UNESCO. Teachers will be part of these conversations and will also require a clear framework to work with. The role of the teacher is crucial and cannot be overemphasized.

As our understanding of globalization and its effects continue to evolve, it would be unwise to be sidetracked for too long in education by theoretical debates about the existence of universal values. Rather, we should move forward in DDD processes that identify common values across cultures, as well as variations, mindful of the boundaries on particularities suggested by the human rights standards. Authentic dialogue in a spirit of cooperation and tolerance carried out at the system level—and the school level—will then very likely reflect the promising results of the 1993 Declaration toward a Global Ethic, in which both universality and diversity coexist.

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