

Nurturing democratic virtues: educators' practices

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One aspect of the role of educators in preparing learners for citizenship of a democracy, namely, the nurturing of appropriate virtues, is explored. In previous work I identified educators' priorities in this respect. This article reports on what educators say that they do. Certain virtues are frequently identified in the literature as important if a democracy is to flourish, and their presence in individuals is taken as an indicator of the values they hold. It is widely asserted that schools and educators have an important role to play in promoting the development of virtues. For the purposes of this paper, an important aspect of this role is conceived of as the fostering of personal dispositions (consistent tendencies to behave in a particular way), referred to as cognitive and moral virtues. Previous research indicates that educators are aware of a responsibility to engage with the moral development of the learners in their care but suggests a number of concerns related to their capacity and to their understanding of their role. The study reported here was a quantitative survey of the strategies employed by a sample of 350 Western Cape educators to nurture the dispositions (both cognitive and moral) they considered to be important. Responses to a checklist of thirteen possible strategies indicated that the two most frequently used strategies were those associated with traditional discipline, suggesting that moral education tends to be perceived as a response to negative behaviour rather than as the active encouragement of virtues. This was to an extent belied by the fact that almost 70% of educators believed that they had an important role as models. Less than half of the respondents claimed to encourage reasoned discussion, careful thinking and judgement and educators generally made surprisingly little use of real life or literary role models. Open ended additional responses suggested that educators understand the importance of broader factors that influence development and that training in Outcomes Based Education is filtering through into classroom practice. It appears, however, that while educators accept a role that goes beyond the mere provision of information, they tend not to conceptualize what they do in terms of nurturing virtues, or as 'moral education' or as 'education for democracy'. They do not call upon a wide range of strategies for the active mediation of virtues, and appear not to have reflected on these issues. The article concludes with some recommendations that might nurture and support educators in their complex task of nurturing and mediating virtues.

Introduction

As indicated in the Manifesto on Values, Education and Democracy (Department of Education, 2001), educators in South Africa are expected to share the responsibility for the development of the values and virtues considered appropriate for citizens of a democracy. This article follows on a previous publication (Green, 2004) which defined the concepts of values and virtues and explained the notion of civic virtues as desirable cognitive and moral dispositions before reporting on educators' priorities with regard to desirable dispositions and their perceptions of their role. The present work describes what educators said they did in order to nurture the dispositions they considered to be important.

It is important to acknowledge that there are different forms of democracy with somewhat different implications for citizenship and for education, but it is beyond the scope of this study to make a detailed analysis. Its aim is to highlight and explore one particular aspect of the development of a community of citizens, namely, the nurturance, within the context of schooling, of certain virtues. Although citizenship is a complex concept, there is considerable agreement regarding both the virtues desirable in citizens of a democracy (Borba, 2001; Inman & Buck, 1995; Lickona, 1991) and the importance of formal education in their nurturance (Fine, 1995; Gutmann, 1987, 1995; Marcus and Fritzer, 1999; McLaughlin, 2000). This implies the active and informed involvement of schools and educators in some form of moral, or values, education. As Marcus and Fritzer (1999:44) point out, "moral education meshes with the goals of a democratic society", presumably because it is also concerned with values often perceived to be of importance in a democracy. Berkowitz (1998) notes that moral education and education for democracy are of particular interest in countries which are newly democratic or are attempting to increase their democratic nature. The Manifesto on Values, Education and Democracy aligns itself with international thinking in assigning a moral dimension to citizenship but, as Enslin (2003) points out, in practice the issue is further complicated by differing concepts of citizenship in South Africa's emerging democracy. Education for citizenship undoubtedly also has informational and political dimensions, but this article focuses on desirable personal qualities or "traits of private and public character essential to the maintenance and improvement of constitutional democracy" (Schoeman, 2000:182). If

Schoeman is correct, then education for citizenship must take into account the development of character traits.

Approaches to moral education

Moral education initiatives are variously described, for example, as education for world citizenship (Friedman, 2000), education for democracy (Lipman, 1998), character education (Lickona, 1991), value education (Veugelers, 2000), citizenship education (McLaughlin, 2000) and the development of moral intelligence (Coles, 1998; Borba, 2001). Despite differing emphases, they share the following common aims: to foster the active personal ownership of values and the development of reasoned judgement (Broadbent, 1995). As Campbell, Chambers and Bickhard (2002) point out, this does not, and cannot, take place independently of the sense of self. Undoubtedly the instilling of values includes all the dimensions of any developing human being and this is well recognized by Zhu and Thagard (2002:20), who point out that reason and emotion may well be "integral and supportive of each other, rather than antagonistic and conflicting as widely conceived".

A number of different disciplines are concerned with moral education. This study located the issue within the broad framework proposed by Fisher (1998) and makes links to current thinking in developmental psychology. Fisher (1998:73) identifies the following forms of moral education: indoctrination, an appeal to religious authority, an appeal to commonsense, explicit values clarification, the discussion of moral dilemmas and philosophical/ethical inquiry. From the perspective of psychology the first three of the above may be justified in terms of a behaviourist theory of human learning. The remaining three are consistent with the ideas of Piaget (1970; 1971) and Kohlberg (1968; 1981) with regard to the development of moral reasoning.

However, given current challenges to Piagetian thinking, it may be wise to consider how the ideas of Vygotsky (1962; 1978) concerning intellectual development may give rise to an alternative approach to moral education. From this perspective development is conceived to be as much a transitive as an intransitive process. As Sutton (2000) explains, children do not possess a potential that is somehow fulfilled adults work with them to create new potentials within each individual's zone of proximal development, within the context of traditional

and evolving socio culturally constructed meanings. A Vygotskian understanding of intellectual development suggests that the skills, dispositions and habits of thought that promote effective learning, fruitful discussion and reasoned judgement have to be acquired over time through the mediation of more knowledgeable and/or experienced others. A holistic approach to human development suggests that mediation may play a role in the development of every aspect of personhood.

Some implications for moral education are the need for adult mediation, the importance of conversations and the possibility of ongoing mediation of morality from an early age in contrast to the emphasis placed by both Piaget and Kohlberg on adolescence. Mediation is more than facilitation, yet differs from instruction and from indoctrination. It is not simply a matter of initiating young people into the use of 'tools' and patterns of thinking already constructed by human communities. Of equal importance is the capacity that such 'tools' confer to generate new meanings and new tools. Newman and Holzman (1993:40) refer to the "self and species transforming effect" of mastery of the practical, social and cultural tools that a society has in place. Musschenga (2001) makes a similar point when he maintains that a person of moral integrity has internalized the moral values and principles accepted as authoritative by a particular community, and, in addition, is capable of criticising and transforming these values. Current beliefs about the importance of holistic intervention suggest that schools might do well to consider the integrated mediation of values and thinking, particularly if, as is frequently maintained, citizenship involves both desirable values and the ability to reason critically.

Practices of moral education in schools

It is widely recognized that, if it is to develop the virtues of democratic citizens, the school environment must be consistent with democratic core values. School culture and learning climate are crucial elements in promoting democracy and ethical behaviour (Apple & Bean, 1999; Inman & Buck, 1995; NCSS Task Force, 1997; Veugelers, 2000). In addition, Veugelers (2000:40) notes that "teachers cannot directly transfer values to their students" but that they can try to influence their students. Mediation is bound to involve attention to both the context and the individual and these two interactive dimensions of moral and citizenship education require the informed commitment of educators. Wringe (2000:670) warns, however, that "we should not expect tidy and definitive solutions to moral questions", which implies that educators themselves may at times need to debate, negotiate and modify their own positions. They may also need to acquire the mediational skills to find a balance between explaining different perspectives and being true to their own, since they act as both participants and coaches in moral discussions. Veugelers (2000:39) claims that more note should be taken of the values educators themselves find important for their students and on the ways these socio cultural values are expressed in their work. This is particularly important when the task of mediating values is complicated by a context that is not morally homogeneous (Carlin, 1996:8), as is certainly the case in South Africa.

Musschenga (2001:219) notes that little has been written about "what it takes to educate persons for integrity" and, as Marcus and Fritzer (1999:45) point out, it is difficult to measure the success of such efforts. Nevertheless there are a number of recommendations in the literature on moral education. They include the following: direct modelling by educators, who should be adult models of good character and "attractive models of civic virtue" (NCSS Task Force, 1997:226); educator openness about personal values (while recognizing the existence of other value orientations) (Veugelers, 2000); the construction of imaginary models and scenarios (Coles, 1998); and opportunities for discussion of controversial and difficult issues, including morality itself, (Fine, 1995; Fisher, 1998; Lipman, 1998; Musschenga, 2001). These discussions are to be carried out in a critical and reflective manner, thus emphasizing the need for practice in the skills of respectful and reasoned argument. Wringe (2000:662) maintains that "reflection,

discrimination and the making of judicious choices" are central to the development of virtues. Moral education cannot be based purely on reason, but it is equally impossible to rely only on training in morality, or on the natural emergence of moral judgement, because in the modern world the practice of virtues requires ongoing critical scrutiny.

It is noted that literature (novels, poems and drama) and art can provide many opportunities to introduce and motivate discussion. In addition, classroom vignettes may be specifically designed to incorporate important questions and at the same time resonate with learners' own experience (Lipman, 1993; Green, 2001). Robertson (2002) mentions the possible use of popular culture such as the animated television series, *The Simpsons*, as a medium for moral education. Other recommendations include the study of biographies of lives of moral integrity (Musschenga 2001), the active creation of opportunities to make positive contributions to the wellbeing of fellow students (NCSS Task Force, 1997), the excitement of the moral imagination (Ryan & Bohlin, 1999), the discussion of real life moral moments (Coles, 1997), and directed practice (Stenson, 1999). Reference is also made to the establishment of personal and interpersonal habits such as civility, respect and self control, through modelling and rewards. Coles (1997:92) describes the role of a parent as that of "a tender and devoted and attentive coach ... willing and determined enough to withstand the child's impulsive and egoistic side, in order to bring the child into the world, so to speak" This might well apply to mediational educators, particularly in the early years of schooling. To be held in creative tension with the above is the fact that "the participatory nature of a democracy implies a non authoritarian form of moral education, since it implies that citizens must be self regulating." (Haynes, 2002: 47).

Research on moral education initiatives in schools

There appears to be little formal empirical evidence for the success of any particular form of intervention. Reasons for this may include the importance of context and the difficulty of specifying or measuring meaningful criteria for success. Research with educators tends to focus on the values they endorse, and the concerns they have about their role (Green 2004). Veugelers and De Kat (2003) compared the perspectives of students, parents and teachers regarding the moral task of the teacher. Brooks and Kann (1992), however, report that behaviour improved in both elementary and middle schools after a value education programme, but comment that success depends on the support of the entire school community and a substantial agreement about the values to be taught. Adler and Foster (1997) review a few anecdotal studies of the effectiveness of a literature based approach but in their own experimental study found only partial support for the hypothesis that a reading project that emphasized care for others would positively influence values. They point out some methodological concerns and add that the research highlights the fact that values are not quickly or easily changed. In a study by Veugelers and Zylstra (1996), cited in Veugelers (2000), students reported that they liked teachers to review different value orientations and also to express their own values, on condition that the latter were not overemphasized.

The Manifesto on Values Education and Democracy (Department of Education, 2001) highlights ten values derived from the Constitution and recommends a number of the above strategies as well as some not mentioned above. It also lists more fundamental strategies such as the creation of safe non sexist and non racist school communities with a culture of sexual and social responsibility and the promotion of basic literacy. Enslin (2003) suggests that the document tends to neglect the personal and the private. It might be more accurate to say that the document implies the personal and the private but says little about how they are to be nurtured. The Manifesto is a commendable introductory document but it fails to recognize the complexity of what is being proposed and, like many other admirable initiatives, may founder on lack of attention to the perspectives and practices of educators themselves.

Aim of the study

The aim of this study was to describe the practices currently employed by educators in one province of South Africa to nurture the moral and/or cognitive dispositions they consider to be desirable.

Research methodology

Sampling procedure

This was a quantitative survey aimed at identifying broad trends within one province. It was intentionally relatively impersonal to take into account possible reservations on the part of educators. With the permission of the Western Cape Education Department, a random stratified sample of 108 schools was drawn, six secondary and six primary, from each region in the province, representing different education communities. The final sample was not truly random since not all schools selected, and not all educators in any one school, agreed to take part. Moreover it did not represent a random selection of individual educators.

Participants and data collection

Each school selected received a letter explaining the research, with a copy of the questionnaire attached. Questionnaires were mailed or delivered to schools that agreed to participate and personally collected when completed.

The questionnaire was completed by 350 educators from 36 schools. Approximately 55% of educators worked in schools in the four Cape Town metropolitan regions and the remainder in the other three regions of the Western Cape. Both primary (57%) and secondary (43%) educators took part, with 66% of the sample being female. Educators with ten or more years of experience made up approximately 63% of the sample.

Questionnaire

The questionnaire consisted of two parts, of which only the second is relevant to this study. Educators were asked to indicate the frequency with which they used each of thirteen strategies (identified in the literature) to nurture the dispositions (moral and/or cognitive virtues) they considered important. Disposition was defined in the questionnaire as 'tendency to behave like this most of the time'. Educators were also asked to mention any additional strategies that they employed.

Data analysis

The quantitative data were analysed using SPSS software which generated descriptive and inferential statistics, using *t* tests, Pearson's Chi Square test and Cramer's *V* Test as appropriate. The non numerical data were analysed according to themes using the constant comparative method as recommended by Merriam (2001).

Validity of the data

The constructs behind the questionnaire were based on the literature and it was piloted and revised to promote its validity. However, the data themselves came only from educators sufficiently interested to provide the information, which does suggest a need for caution in their interpretation. Nevertheless, and although the sample was not truly random, it was considered sufficiently large to justify generalization of at least the more robust quantitative findings (*p* values of 0.01 or less) to educators within the province. The validity of the descriptive data is subject to the inevitable limitations of thematic analysis. The validity of all the data is currently under further investigation by means of case studies of a number of individual schools.

Research ethics

All educators participated voluntarily and were assured of confidentiality. A feedback summary was sent to every participating school as the data analysis became available.

Research findings

Table 1 reports on the rank ordering of the 13 possible intervention strategies, showing the percentages of educators who claimed to em

ploy each of them.

By far the most frequently employed intervention strategies to develop the dispositions considered desirable were to insist that rules were obeyed and to warn learners of negative consequences. In the case of Strategy 4 (Warn learners of negative consequences) both female (80%) and male (84%) educators claimed to employ it frequently, while a significantly greater proportion of female educators (21%) than male educators (12%) reported that they sometimes used it. Almost all educators claimed to employ each of the 13 strategies 'sometimes', which accounts for the low percentages reported for 'seldom/never'. It is noteworthy that almost half (44%) of the respondents indicated that they seldom or never invited role models into their classrooms and almost one fifth (17%) maintained that they seldom or never punished consistently. This finding may reflect sensitivity to the word 'punish' rather than an acknowledgement of inconsistency.

Table 1 Percentages of educators who claimed to use each strategy

Strategy	Used		
	Frequently %	Sometimes %	Seldom/Never %
1. Negotiate rules with learners	54	40	5
2. Model the qualities you wish to encourage	67	29	2
3. Develop a school ethos that values these qualities	53	34	9
4. Warn learners about negative consequences	79	18	2
5. Discuss different qualities with learners	50	45	4
6. Reward evidence of careful thinking and judgement	40	49	9
7. Invite role models to share ideas with learners	16	38	44
8. Read/tell stories that illustrate various qualities	38	48	12
9. Insist that rules are obeyed	83	14	2
10. Give learners regular practice in reasoned discussion	43	50	6
11. Punish offenders consistently	38	42	17
12. Develop learner strategies for being careful and systematic	56	37	5
13. Reward evidence of responsible behaviour	55	40	5

Table 2 reports on gender based differences in the use of intervention strategies.

The proportion of female educators that claimed to make frequent use of Strategy 5 (Discuss different qualities with learners) was significantly greater than the proportion of male educators. Similarly, female educators reported that they were more inclined to make frequent use of Strategy 8 (Read/tell stories that illustrate various qualities), Strategy 12 (Develop learner strategies for being careful & systematic), and Strategy 13 (Reward evidence of responsible behaviour).

For the majority of strategies there were no observed differences between female and male educators. In the case of the above four strategies, educators differed only in the extent to which they claimed to employ them, with female educators consistently more inclined to report using them frequently and male educators consistently more inclined to report using them sometimes. This may simply reflect differences in the teaching styles of female and male educators but it could also signal greater ingenuity on the part of female educators with regard to the integration of these strategies into the curriculum.

Table 2 Gender differences in strategy use

Strategy	Used						Statistics
	Frequently %		Sometimes %		Seldom/Never %		
	M	F	M	F	M	F	
5. Discuss different qualities with learners	42	56	55	39	4	5	χ^2 7.024; <i>p</i> 0.030 Cramer's <i>V</i> 0.149; <i>p</i> 0.030
8. Read/tell stories that illustrate various qualities	29	44	54	46	18	10	χ^2 8.257; <i>p</i> 0.016 Cramer's <i>V</i> 0.162; <i>p</i> 0.016
12. Develop learner strategies for being careful and systematic	49	62	43	35	8	3	χ^2 6.593; <i>p</i> 0.037 Cramer's <i>V</i> 0.145; <i>p</i> 0.037
13. Reward evidence of responsible behaviour	45	60	47	37	7	3	χ^2 7.079; <i>p</i> 0.029 Cramer's <i>V</i> 0.149; <i>p</i> 0.029

Table 3 Differences in strategy use between educators of older and younger learners (primary or secondary educators)

Strategy	Used						Statistics
	Frequently %		Sometimes %		Seldom/Never %		
	P	S	P	S	P	S	
1. Negotiate rules with learners	64	42	33	50	3	8	χ^2 16.537; <i>p</i> 0.000 Cramer's <i>V</i> 0.219; <i>p</i> 0.000
6. Reward evidence of careful thinking and judgement	49	30	43	58	8	12	χ^2 12.647; <i>p</i> 0.002 Cramer's <i>V</i> 0.192; <i>p</i> 0.002
7. Invite role models to share ideas with learners	21	10	42	35	37	56	χ^2 14.918; <i>p</i> 0.001 Cramer's <i>V</i> 0.209; <i>p</i> 0.001
8. Read/tell stories that illustrate various qualities	49	25	44	55	7	20	χ^2 24.430; <i>p</i> 0.000 Cramer's <i>V</i> 0.267; <i>p</i> 0.000
12. Develop learner strategies for being careful and systematic	69	41	28	52	3	7	χ^2 26.430; <i>p</i> 0.000 Cramer's <i>V</i> 0.278; <i>p</i> 0.000
13. Reward evidence of responsible behaviour	65	42	32	51	4	7	χ^2 18.144; <i>p</i> 0.000 Cramer's <i>V</i> 0.229; <i>p</i> 0.000

Table 3 reports on differences in strategy use between educators of older and younger learners.

In the case of the above six strategies there was a noticeable trend for educators of younger learners to report frequent use more often than did educators of older learners. The latter educators were more inclined to report their use occasionally ('sometimes'). These trends may reflect secondary educators' primary engagement with the content related demands of the curriculum and/or an assumption that such matters are, or should have been, dealt with earlier, or it may simply be related to the fact that female educators are more likely to be found in primary schools.

Secondary educators were significantly less likely than primary educators either to invite role models to share ideas with learners or to read or tell stories that illustrate various qualities. Whilst story telling may be perceived as inappropriate for older learners, the power of role models is recognized as particularly relevant during adolescence and it is surprising that educators did not make more use of this strategy. It may be that most secondary educators set fairly rigid boundaries around their own subject speciality, given the time available for teaching.

Additional strategies

Educators were asked to indicate any strategies they employed to encourage the dispositions they believed to be important, in addition to those listed on the questionnaire. Four hundred and thirty eight discrete responses were identified, of which approximately 5% were unclear and unclassifiable. The remaining responses were more or less evenly divided between indirect (approximately 50%) and direct (approximately 45%) strategies. The distinction was sometimes difficult

to make but strategies were considered indirect when they were activities likely to have a generally positive effect on learning and development. Since educators included them, it appears that in some sense they were perceived to contribute towards the development of desirable dispositions, possibly primarily via an enhanced sense of self. Strategies were considered direct when they appeared to have the specific intention of influencing morality and values. Illustrative quotations have been selected to indicate the range within individual categories.

Indirect strategies were assigned to the following 8 subcategories: promotion of learning ("diagnostic teaching", "use audio visual aids", "self assessment", "have spelling test every Friday"); enhancement of learner confidence and self concept ("empower learners", "tell learners to trust themselves", "build their self esteem" "remind them they are special"); attention to learning climate and relationship ("create an atmosphere for learners to speak out", "healthy culture of teaching and learning", "create rapport", "encourage communication" "provide a safe and fair environment that demonstrates the dispositions we foster", "work on an ethos that values these dispositions"); encouragement of collaboration ("require co operation", "help each other", "share what you have", "sharing and brotherhood"); involvement of parents ("written notices to parents", "regular contact with parents", "recognize parents as partners"); expansion of horizons ("school outings", "encourage to read papers", "involve in sport and recreation", "expose learners to nature"); encouragement of a future orientation ("prepare learners for the future", "remind learners about the future", "help learners to plan for the future"); and attention to lifestyle issues ("promoting healthy lifestyle", "teach them to acquire lifeskills", "cleanliness we won't be sick"). Table 4 shows the relative percentages.

Table 4 Indirect strategies to encourage the dispositions believed to be important

Category	N	Approximate %
Promotion of learning	73	33
Enhancement of learner confidence and self concept	58	27
Attention to learning climate and relationship	31	14
Encouragement of collaboration	20	9
Involvement of parents	15	7
Expansion of horizons	10	5
Encouragement of a future orientation	7	3
Attention to lifestyle	5	2
Total	219	100

Strategies categorized as direct were further classified as: personal modelling (clarified in the paragraph which follows); use of rewards and punishments, ("reward evidence of responsible behaviour", "reward all positive actions", "stars, stickers for good performance, manners", "house marks for good behaviour", "detention"); exhortation ("teach them how bad influence can affect them", "distinguishing right from wrong" "learners should know not to have love affair with educator" "advise them to stick to the rules", "trust God in everything", "tell them what the Bible tells us to do"); negotiation ("let learners set rules", "discuss ground rules", "negotiate rules with learners", "give learners the opportunity to decide things", "offer choices to learners"); discussion and debate ("consistent dialogue on current affairs, public issues, etc.", "discussion must be encouraged", "group discussion and open mindedness", "debate is very important", "provide a forum", "challenge their point of view", "ask for their views regarding these dispositions"); the practice of responsibility ("responsibility for own behaviour", "give leadership roles", "help learners take responsibility", "practice responsibilities", encourage learners to be responsible", "let them carry message"); development of empathy ("lots of role play", "speak about feelings", listening games", "talk about community cases", "news of incidents in our home", "give analogies" "accept learners' feelings", "group sharing of feelings and ideas"); alternative disciplinary practices ("get learners to write down what they did wrong", "self evaluation of behaviour", "letting the class discuss whether a fellow pupil's behaviour is conducive towards the learning of the class as a whole", "ask learners to separate behaviour from person and say if behaviour is appropriate"); use of role models ("dialogue on the values of role models in the entertainment industry", "invite role models to share ideas", "projects on heroes and their choices and outcomes"). service activities ("organize learners in cleaning operations", "community service"). Table 5 shows the relative percentages.

Table 5 Direct strategies to encourage the dispositions believed to be important

Category	N	Approximate %
Personal modelling	81	40
Use of rewards and punishments	25	13
Exhortation	20	10
Negotiation	19	10
Discussion and debate	16	8
The practice of responsibility	13	7
Development of empathy	12	6
Disciplinary practices	5	3
Use of role models	4	2
Service activities	3	1

The subcategory 'personal modelling' was by far the largest. It incorporates acceptance of this responsibility ("be a good role model", "try and set a good example", "be exemplary) and descriptions of qualities and actions considered appropriate ("thorough planning", "be

organized", "be caring and democratic", "respect others' cultures, customs and ideas", "be a responsible citizen", "involve yourself in important community service", "be aware of what is happening in your school environment", "be tolerant", "be fair", "be flexible", "be sensitive", "be polite to all other persons", "show sense of responsibility" "follow up decisions", "love yourself"). It was not always clear whether educators were making recommendations for their learners or emphasizing the need to display certain characteristics themselves. For purposes of this categorization, the latter interpretation was adopted. Educators also acknowledged that in order to be effective role models themselves, they would need to be personally involved and share their own experiences.

Discussion

Responses to the checklist suggested that educators engaged primarily in what might be called traditional disciplinary strategies (rules and threats) in order to nurture desirable dispositions. Approximately half of the educators also claimed to be frequently involved in negotiating rules with learners and working towards a desirable school ethos. This may reflect the transitional situation that currently exists in many schools. Approximately half of the educators claimed to reward evidence of responsibility and to discuss different qualities with learners. The latter item was intended to refer primarily to those listed in part one of the questionnaire but may have been misinterpreted by educators. Although educators acknowledged their own responsibility as role models, a finding consistent with other studies of educators, they made surprisingly little use of other role models, both real life and fictional. Regarding the use of literature, it is possible that the term 'stories' may have seemed childish and influenced the responses of those who work with older learners.

With regard to the mediation of thinking (cognitive dispositions or virtues), less than half of the sample frequently gave practice in reasoned discussion or rewarded evidence of careful thinking and judgement. The references to discussion in the descriptive responses suggest that it is valued as a means to knowledge and understanding (which it undoubtedly is) but not particularly as a means of developing the skills of reasoned judgement. This might explain why many educators do not perceive it to be a strategy that will nurture important moral or cognitive dispositions. Approximately 50% of educators did, however, frequently attempt to develop learner strategies for being careful and systematic, although this may have applied very concretely to school work tasks.

Gender differences, where present, were mainly in terms of frequency of usage, in favour of female educators. There appeared to be no important differences in educator style. A similar trend was apparent with regard to educators of older and younger learners.

The final open ended question invited educators to describe any strategies additional to those already appearing on the checklist and they produced a large number of responses. One major cluster ('indirect strategies') consisted of broad strategies to address the most common causes of difficulties in schools. They reflect an acknowledgement of Maslow's (1970) hierarchy of needs, and, although this was not the purpose of the study, suggest that principles and practices from training in Outcomes Based Education are filtering into classroom practice, or at least into educator awareness. They also reflect several of the broad strategies proposed by the Manifesto on Values Education and Democracy (Department of Education, 2001).

Among the grouping labelled 'direct' strategies, some were indeed additional but a number of responses echoed items on the checklist. Genuinely additional strategies included activities geared to the development of empathy in interpersonal relations, the creation of opportunities to practice responsibility (over and above simply rewarding evidence of its presence), the use of alternative modes of discipline and involvement in service activities. Together these made up approximately 17% of the direct responses. In terms of the suggestions made in the literature, there was remarkably little reported use of fiction, biographies, popular culture and imaginary scenarios.

It was not clear why the remaining 83% of the responses classified as 'direct' appeared to repeat the checklist items. It is possible that educators did not recognize their practice in the vocabulary of the checklist, or it might simply be the result of haste. The latter seems unlikely given the number and richness of responses. It is also possible that, although they are not directly comparable, the descriptive responses provide a more accurate reflection of classroom practice than do the checklist frequencies.

Generally, it appeared that educators were aware of a responsibility to promote moral development and of their own potential in fluence. It is encouraging that the educators in this study, despite difficult conditions, took seriously the fact that they can be role models for their students, and conceptualized their roles as having dimensions beyond the content of the curriculum. However they appeared not to conceptualize their practice in terms of the nurturing of the dispositions desirable in future citizens of a democracy and make only limited use of the range of possible interventions. Educators in this study gave the impression (similar to findings elsewhere, cited in Green, 2004) that the active mediation of the dispositions (moral and cognitive virtues) associated with citizenship of a democracy was not something to which they had given much thought. This is not to say, however, that they did not engage in practices the purpose of which was essentially the nurturing or instilling of certain virtues they considered desirable.

The findings also suggested that educators tend to think about nurturing desirable dispositions in the context of managing less desirable behaviour, rather than as a positive endeavour, and underestimate the role of the 'cognitive virtues', which they relate primarily to mastery of knowledge.

Education that nurtures the virtues considered desirable in citizens of a democracy is a complex concept requiring ongoing debate, in terms of both what should be encouraged and how this should be done. If this study is an accurate reflection of educators' practices, it appears that this debate is absent amongst those in a powerful position to influence children and young people. It would be helpful, therefore, for educators to be given supportive opportunities to reflect upon their personal values and virtues and those of the school and community. Secondly, they might identify and debate the means that they currently employ to influence the development of virtues, and expand their repertoire of possible strategies and mediational skills. If the literature is to be believed, a mediational approach that integrates the development of values and of thinking is most likely to be successful, and should appeal to educators since it is clearly possible to integrate this with existing elements in the curriculum. This would be a move towards enabling them to engage with the complex and demanding task of contributing to the nurturing of appropriate cognitive and moral virtues. "It is precisely because democracy is still a goal to be attained, is a work in progress, that what goes on in our public schools is so important." (Fine, 1995:191). Educators who play a part in this work in progress both need and deserve to be part of an ongoing conversation regarding the nature of the task and the means to achieve it.

Acknowledgement

The financial assistance of the National Research Foundation towards this research is acknowledged.

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