

Value Related Practices Used by Teacher Educators at a Public University, Islamabad

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Abstract

Values play a vital role in any teacher-training program. The value practices, used by teacher educators affect students' understanding and practicing of values. This study aimed to explore the value related practices of teacher educators and to rank the value practices of education programs at a public sector university. Survey method was used for the study and the population comprised prospective teachers of education program at the university. 100 prospective teachers were selected through simple random sampling technique. Data were collected through questionnaire and analyzed by using mean. It was found that there were several value related practices used by teacher educators such as realness, prizing, empathic understanding, fully functioning person, humility, lovingness,

courage – overcoming one’s own fears, tolerance, decisiveness, living the tension between patience and impatience and the joy of living. With reference to ranking, realness stood above all other values. It is recommended that there may be more focus on different value related practices and that these are introduced in contents of teacher education program.

Keywords: practices, prospective teachers, teacher educators, values.

Introduction

Education plays a vital role in the development of a country. Educational institutes are the center of teaching-learning process where teachers carry the responsibilities of students’ learning and values development; therefore, introducing values in education is a challenge, for not only teachers but researchers also. Unfortunately, in our institutions, the focus is on grades and not on the development and sustainment of values, thus resulting in the degeneration of values at all levels of education. Considering this background, there is dire need to research the values in education as a topic of the present study.

The phrase value education can be defined through two approaches: in the wider sense, it refers to almost everything that institutes might make an effort to present outside of academic, particularly when the intention is to nurture students into effective citizens, whereas in the narrow sense, it represents a particular style of moral and ethical training, one that replicates particular values and morals as well as particular suppositions regarding the personality of students and how they learn (Kohn, 1997). Howard (2005) in his

study found the students better disciplined if the teachers treated them with love and respect. On the other hand, Lavot (2006) argued that the quality of a school or institution's production depends on a single contribution, specifically the characteristics of the incoming students.

University students need special care and attention to keep them on the right track, as they are able to, critically analyze the worth of any concept. It is the moral obligation of teachers to keep them on track by identifying and clarifying their ideas and by making them think in the right direction; therefore, at the university level, establishment of positive teacher-student relationship is much more important than anything else. This association is a vibrant procedure which is acquainted by the values and morals of both students and teachers (Brady, 2011). Values related practices play a very significant and decisive role in the establishment of positive student-teacher relationship.

Educational institution is a social center and place of learning and character building. The society gives educational institutes a great responsibility to build the future generation according to the social demands for which value education plays a vital role to bring this vision to reality. Therefore, there is a need to investigate the practices used by university teachers. The problem investigated for this research study was 'what were the value related practices used by teacher educators of education program at a public university in Pakistan?'

Research question

What are the general value related practices of teacher educators for student character building?

Significance of the study

Values Based Education (VBE) creates such climate for teaching and learning that fosters the development of academic standards. Teaching about positive human values improves the quality of education in all educational institutions. The results of this study would inform teachers about the types of strategies they would prefer to foster values in. The study results would be helpful for the administration to take positive steps and incorporate relevant objectives in the courses make them responsible citizens. The results would also be helpful for future researchers to explore the issues and challenges of value education in higher educational institutions of Pakistan.

Literature Review

Values are socially or culturally accepted standards and rules of behaviour. They are defined in literature as everlasting thoughts to behavioural measures. As used here, values refer to criteria to determine level of integrity, worth or beauty. Values are effectively laden beliefs about things and thoughts that guide behaviour, but do not essentially necessitate it (Rokeach, 1973). Values require standards that are applied to evaluate the significance of any thought. It has been described as the criteria based on which it is decided whether something is superior or dreadful, correct or incorrect. Values are the preferences of persons and society to connect to positive viewpoints, understandings and objects in ascertaining how they shall live and what they shall treasure (Hill, 1960). This definition is best suited in educational settings. Stedje (2010) believes that value education is now considered as an important issue for researches.

Values education

Values Education is an overt attempt to teach about values and valuing. It emphasises on the promotion of educational philosophy of valuing self, others and the environment (Wringe, 1998). Values education, broadly defined, may include anything from value clarification to citizen and moral guidance, while defining it narrowly, it refers to a specific style of moral teaching.

Three conditions of values acquisition in educational institutes

Silock and Duncan (2001) stated that there are three conditions for values acquisition.

1. *A process condition*: Best circumstances for the incorporation of morals and values into learners' lives.
2. *A conceptual condition*: Values learning must lead to individually transformed interactions between learners and themes considered worthwhile.
3. *A contextual condition*: There must be some stability between what is learned from the socio-political scene.

Values education practices

Values education practices of teachers are the strategies, which a teacher uses for the character building of the students and is the base of learning areas. All subjects focus on values information as per the difference of age and grade level. A teacher may adopt different strategies and approaches to facilitate learning and to foster values in students. Some of them are as under:

Story telling

A teacher may adopt this strategy at any age level; however, the strategies and techniques may vary. A teacher may share orally about real incidents or imaged events to inculcate special values and lessons (Kroll 1987). These stories may be part of the literacy curriculum; furthermore, such stories help students to prepare themselves to step in real life as good human beings and responsible citizens (Turner, 2004).

Skits and discussions

This strategy is mostly used at school level, but it may also be used at the university level. This is an exaggerated form of dialogue, in which the students are allocated positions in a context, allowing them to investigate values held by themselves and others, as well as the way these values manipulate resolutions and measures (NSW, 2008). This could be followed by structured and unstructured discussions in which the role of the teacher could be as the facilitator.

Teacher direct discussion

Teacher's direct discussions include activities, which offer the chance to illuminate and investigate values. During such negotiations, learners talk and listen to each other without interruption and the teacher as a facilitator encourages students to contribute ideas. The teacher plays an optimistic part in inspiring, allocating, understanding and modelling excellent listening (Brady, 2008).

Completing activity

This is a strategy in which a starting statement or situation will be given to the students and based on their own ideas they reflect and discuss until they arrive at a conclusion (Dale, 1994).

Reinforcing diligent work

The teachers must expect to give proper feedback as a strategy of developing values to reinforce diligent work and righteous behavior of learners with praise, appreciation and admiration (Hawkes, 2011). Appropriate feedback brings positive effect on students' performance and values development, but the teachers must be aware to maintain a balance while rewarding the students on being good.

Reflection interpretation

A teacher may use this strategy in which the students will interpret their reflection on a given topic, which may be in writing or any other form (Howard 2005).

Create a classroom constitution

According to Huitt (2005), classroom constitution refers to students coming up with rules on how to behave. Teachers motivate students to set rules and codes for themselves, which are agreed upon by the class and signed for verification.

Values survey, questionnaires and interviews

These methods may endorse improved understanding of the values of other people, and detection of how peoples' values differ (Federspiel, 1998).

Simulation

Simulation presents information concerning a particular matter and necessitates the contributors to make decisions based on verification and their values. It ought to be as practically as probable based on an actual life condition (NSW, 2008).

The affective and cognitive experiences for self-direction (ACES) approach

The ACES teaching approach is based on the interaction of cognitive and affective elements in learners. It is based on the values caught rather than taught. The ACES approach is based on the concept that the teacher is the facilitator of values learning (Lovat, 2006). Affective elements are related to the individual's feelings or emotional aspects of experiences and learning. Cognitive refers to the activity of the mind toward knowing an object. It is related to the intellectual functioning in the full grasp of reality (Silock, 2001). Kroll (1987) states that the aim of education is to give meaning and direction to all we do including 'what', 'how and 'why' we might learn any information related to different approaches to values.

Approaches to values education

Following are the approaches to values education:

Kohlberg approach

Kohlberg developed an approach for developing values. In this approach teachers assist students in resolving moral conflicts by facilitating students' reasoning. The teacher confirms that discussions take place in an environmental condition conducive to stage growth in moral reasoning (Kohlberg, 1969 & Lovat, 2006).

Trait approach

Kohlberg called this approach as "the bag of virtues approach". The main concept of this approach is the value absolutism, as positive approved values are considered more valuable than others (Brady, 2011). This approach believes that values education should consist of determined qualities that can be educated. Sincerity, reliability, acceptance, service and trustworthiness are included in desirable values (Lovat, 2006). This approach focuses on the question what the values are and by whom are these determined? The indirect appearance that utilizes ethical biography is the distinctive appearance of the trait approach (Brady, 2011). Here teachers get help of the biography, as it provides raw data for discussion and values induction. If learners are impressed by the values of these renowned people, they will accept and adopt them (Gulati n.d; Holliday, 1996)

The cognitive development approach

This approach is based on the values or morals of education based on the dynamic thoughts of learners regarding morals. According to Kohlberg (1969), it is developmental because its vision of values education goes through various phases. In this stage, a person defines the value, its importance and the rationale for valuing it (Brady, 2011).

The focus of this approach is to improve reasoning. Kohlberg (1969) declares that the means of encouraging development (moment through stages) is throughout the stipulation of disagreement, so the classroom approach engages the presentation of an ethical problem story, sometimes called ‘unfinished’ or ‘open ended’ story. It is ‘unfinished’ because it presents a learner-centered problem, and asks how the protagonist should resolve the disagreement and therefore possess a capability to connect thoughts and values through discussions and negotiations (Brady, 2011). The teachers present a conflict story that is ‘open-ended’, so that the students may find solutions by reasoning. Teachers do not impose their ideas on students, rather they guide the discussion and while finding the solutions, the students think about reasons regarding ‘why’ and ‘how’ of the problem.

Values clarification approach

This approach refers to the students’ clarification of their personal values in which the stance of the teachers is to be non-judgmental of students values (Argandon, 2003). It is based on the concept that learners are optimistic to implement their personal

values, as long as they are individually significant. This approach does not depend on the obligation of a set of approved values. According to Brady (2011), the strategies may comprise ranking or grading values declarations in particular parts (students ranking or rating on a five-point scale); producing a values shield (students representing what is significant to them by sketching signs and symbols on a cardboard family crest).

Teacher qualities / values

Realness. This reflects teacher's extensive personality; he/she can be excited, uninterested, involved, irritated, perceptive and considerate because the teacher admits these thoughts as his / her own.

Prizing, Accepting, Trust. This engages the educator recognizing learners, and considering them in that way that thoughts and attitudes are acknowledged. It consists of accommodating the learner's 'intermittent apathy', 'inconsistent aspirations' and restricted labors.

Empathic Understanding. This engages the instructor indicating a perceptive consideration of learners imagine and believes regarding education and knowledge.

The Fully Functioning Person. This occupies instructors in 'the development of being and becoming themselves' by being open to their thoughts and verification from all resources, and by determining that they are 'practically social'. These teachers expressively protected and have no need to be self-protective

Humility – perceptive our own restrictions, and implementing an

autonomous rather than dictatorial classroom.

Lovingness – affectionate both learners and teaching, and practicing ‘armed love’

Courage – defeating the uncertainties.

Tolerance – regarding divergence but not ‘accepting to the unbearable.’

Decisiveness – create frequently complicated preferences for the paramount, however being vigilant not to ‘nullify oneself in the name of being democratic.’

Living the tension between patience and impatience – protecting the pressure between the two up until now, not at all conceding to either.

Joy of living – focusing not only on training but also in real life in broad-spectrum.

Values like humility, tolerance, courage, sympathy and others to introduce morals and values education may be included in the curriculum of prospective teachers through specialized readings in all subjects that entail endorsing considerate approaches obligatory to values education (Brady, 2011).

The literature review focused on the definition of values and its application in education. In sum, it was clear from the review that values play an important part in educational settings and there are different approaches that may be considered to include in

values education. It depends upon institution climate and classroom dynamics regarding which approach is best applicable for any situation and institution. Teachers use various practices through different strategies and approaches like storytelling, skit and discussion, reflection, interpretation and simulations.

Research Methodology

The present study followed a descriptive approach. Quantitative survey was carried out to find out the opinions of prospective teachers about values education.

Sample

Hundred prospective teachers selected from a public sector university in Islamabad using simple random sampling technique.

Research instrument

A tailor made questionnaire was used to explore the values education practices of teachers for students' character building. The questionnaire was based on five point Likert scale consisted of close ended questions related to nine items; namely: Living the tension between patience and impatience and joy of learning, decisiveness, empathic understanding, courage, humility, fully functioning person, accepting and trust, prizing as well as realness.

The instrument was pilot tested and twenty-five (25) prospective teachers selected for pilot testing. After pilot testing, reliability of the instrument was verified by using Cronbach alpha,

which was found to be 0.84.

Data collection and analysis

Data were collected by the researchers personally by visiting the prospective teachers and analyzed through descriptive statistics. The prospective teachers were asked to rate the strategies (1-5) and on the basis of scores, mean scores were calculated as shown in Table-1 (each value has a rating of 1-5 and the maximum rating for each questionnaire is 100). The mean of each practice is calculated and shown as under:

Table 1

Value Related Practices Used by the Teachers as Indicated by Students

Practice	Rank	Mean
Realness	1	93
Prizing	2	88
Accepting, Trust	3	87
Fully Functioning Person	4	84
Humility	5	79
Lovingness ,Courage	6	76
Empathic Understanding	7	75
Decisiveness	8	73
Living the tension between patience and Impatience and joy of living	9	71

Findings

The first objective was related to exploration of value related practices of teachers for student character building. In this regard, it was found that teachers adopt different practices, which were realness, prizing, accepting, trust, empathic understanding, fully functioning person, humility, lovingness, courage, tolerance, decisiveness, living the tension between patience and impatience and joy of living.

The second objective was related to students' opinion about value related practices used by teachers of a university. In this regard, it was found that most teachers (67%) used different value related practices. These practices varied with reference to their usage and magnitude. Realness was practiced by most of the teachers (80%), although the ways were different but it was found to be most common value related practice. Prizing, accepting, trust and empathic understanding was also practiced by different teachers (74%). Most of the teachers understand the problems of students and react in an empathetic way. Humility, lovingness, courage, tolerance, decisiveness and living the tension between patience and impatience were some other positive value related practices that were practiced by different teachers. It was also found that the value of tolerance was at a minimum level in teachers.

The third objective was related to ranking of the value related practices. In this regard it was found that realness was followed by prizing, accepting trust, fully functioning person, humility, lovingness and courage, empathetic understanding, decisiveness, living the tension between patience and impatience and joy of living.

Discussion

The findings showed that the teachers used different value related practices. As there are many situations and working environment for teachers, it is not necessary that all teachers may use the same strategy. This is in consistence with the argument by Hill (1960), and Kohn (1997). Both authors argue for a broad range of values practices that may fit in different situations and paradigms.

Kohlberg (1969) stated that schooling is a moral endeavor. Values matter tremendously in the content and process of teaching. Whether given explicit time in the classroom or entirely incorporated into the curriculum, character education takes place throughout the teaching learning phase. Realness, prizing, accepting, trust, empathic understanding, fully functioning person were found as most used practices. This is also aligned with the findings of Kroll (1987), Cruz (2003) and Lipman, (2003). Basically these practices are most heart winning practices for students. Lovingness is one of the most important and effective technique. Values related practices also affect student motivation and their academic results.

It was also found that teachers' role was very important in the development of values; furthermore it was found that they used different practices to promote values in their schools. According to Thornberg (2008), it is necessary for teachers to go beyond the pedagogy of skills and quantitative objectives and promote value oriented learning for their students. Values are imparted when teachers reject procrastination, self-pity, laziness, or not have any sense of preference. Learners should be confident to make assessments about what is significant to them and there must be prearranged strategies

to make those assessments. Without surrendering the achievement attained through contemporary teaching plans, teachers have to attempt different methods to compel learners to carry out self-control and to acquire responsibility of their own knowledge. It is also necessary to understand that the values and attitudes affect how we communicate with other people and our behavior and actions in the environment. Values and feelings are similar in this regard as they fluctuate in numerous ways.

The goal is to educate and control learners to build up excellent personality and virtues, and to conform to the foremost values, justifiable regulations, and the power of society. Examples of virtues to indoctrinate in character education are those of being straightforward, diligent, kind, devoted and accountable; another important factor to consider in character education is that of following lawful authority (Jones, 2009). In disparity, the progressive or constructivist approach highlights learner's vigorous production of ethical sense and expansion of an individual's obligation to principles of equality and concern for the wellbeing of others throughout the development of societal relations and ethical communication (Solomon, Watson & Battistich, 2001). Beside this, reasoning and justification, planned conversation about ethical predicaments, and contribution in decision-making procedures are viewed as distinctive techniques for this approach (Power, Higgins & Kohlberg, 1989). The aim is to encourage ethical sovereignty, logical ideas, moral reasoning skills, autonomous values and proficiency among the learners. Regarding the field of values education, an approach or position that is noticeably significant is the practice of school discipline; hidden curriculum is another aspect; both these facets have refined and far-reaching comprehensive effects (Jones, 2009).

Conclusions and Recommendations

From the above findings it was concluded that the teachers used different value related practices that included realness, trust, empathy, acting as fully functioning person, humility, lovingness, courage, tolerance, decisiveness, living the tension between patience and impatience of learning and joy of living. The second objective was related to opinions of students about the usage of these practices. In this regard, it was concluded that realness were found to be most used value related practice practiced by teachers. On the basis of conclusions, it was recommended that teachers should continuously be involved in value related practices with further emphasis on values that were low in scores.

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