

>> "THE ACTUAL MEANING OF IMPROVING THE WORLD IS OF IMPROVING EDUCATION"
(YANUSH KORCHEK)

Developing the Awareness of Values – As a Standard in the Educational Process of Teacher Training

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Introduction

The background for the article is recent changes in curriculum and educational policy stemming from the publishing of *The National Education Plan in Israel* in January of 2005 by the Dovrat Committee. The Committee was appointed in 2003 by the Government on the initiative of the Minister of Education. Furthermore, it is the outcome of a project the author was commissioned to undertake in 2003 by the Ministry of Education Pedagogical Center and the Center for the Development of Curriculum Programs. The work includes a curriculum whose purpose is to promote the Awareness of Values – as a standard in the educational Process used by the pedagogical staff in the non religious elementary schools. Both demonstrate the thesis that learning within Israel is typically goal directed and attains specific standards. These standards should include the internal school and external national and universal factors in order to achieve specific goals or ends.

"Teaching values is an integral part of every educational process. There is no educational act that does not carry within itself some value" (Leah Kramer,1983). She stated that originally values were taught in education "in terms of family and religion. With the development of various kinds of educational institutions, educators widened their horizons to include the teaching of values, ultimately institutionalizing it."

Adar (1974) and Lam (1999) formulated the position that the essence of a school is defined by its basic purposes, which are teaching, education, and, most emphatically, orienting student values in order to shape personalities as individuals and as a basic element in society in terms of education.

Still, Israeli society keeps returning to the basic question as defined by Josef Avinun (1999): Is it important or even desirable to teach values, is it possible?

Purpose of the article

Consequently, the purpose of this article is to examine this issue, relying in part on previously articulated answers. In doing so, the article will cast light on the two directions of development in defining and realizing value standards, both in terms of Israeli teacher training institutions and the Israeli educational system according to the Rainbow Coalition system, which is appropriate for a multicultural society like Israel, and in connection to developments in the western world.

Research questions

- A. What are the values included in the standards defining the educational quality of future teachers in Israel?
- B. Who participates in the process of determining value standards in the educational process?
- C. What is the role of standards in schools and teacher education in Israel?
- D. What is the connection between the level of formal statements concerning value standards and the level of application in the education process in Israel?

Terminology - definitions

Educational standards range between two extremes, from the general to the specific. Ben Peretz (2001) defines the range as between social/political ideologies and overly strict obedience to external aspects of standards and achievements, adding that anybody who wishes to educate the whole human being must relate to ideological trends, values, and the holistic nature of the planning of studies. Similarly, Goodled (1998) perceived a relationship between ideology and education. He warned against being overly tied to the external aspects of standards. Marsh (1997) distinguished between kinds of

purposes and criteria in terms of defining standards for the training of teachers, identifying three elements of purposes: aims, goals, and objectives.

He also notes that "the feedback received from the particular assessments lets them know whether they are achieving the required standards." Accordingly, Marsh concludes that standards in education must combine the three following criteria: evidence of achievement, conditions of performance, and acceptable level of performance leading to three kinds of standards: content, performance, and learning opportunity. According to Avinun (1999), the word "value" in Hebrew derives from the verb *to estimate*. We can define it in two ways: To assess or judge the importance of a given matter, as in a teacher's answer to a student's question, and to appreciate or to make important. In other words, to value is to relate to a given matter as important or meaningful. Drawn from these two definitions, "values" are used to assess an attribute or acting principles according to which we measure the value of various experiences or deeds. Our criteria for assessment and preference are many and varied. However, most can be categorized into five groups: ethical, religious, esthetics, rational/scientific, and civic/social. Furthermore, values are also kinds of objects or aspirations that are worthy of striving for, to appreciate, to make important, even to revere, *i.e.* equality, justice, freedom, peace, tradition etc. From these definitions, Avinun continues, it is possible to reach two conclusions. First, it is possible that a value could be negative if the meaning "value" is to assess. However, according to the second definition, "to appreciate", value is always positive. Secondly, the first evaluation is done on the conscious level while, in the positive evaluation, the emphasis is on the emotional dimension, evoking feeling and desire. As such, it is simultaneously difficult to be formulated in terms of standards.

Mager (1984) expresses this position in the strongest language. He points out "if you are teaching things that cannot be evaluated, you are in the awkward position of being unable to demonstrate that you are teaching anything at all." Following the major reforms of education in the USA in the 1970's, standards have become the measure that enables the planning and managing the learning and the conducting of assessment objectively on an approved base. Yet, too tightly focused objectives upon a low level of insignificant facts or processes are of limited use. The reason is that they are inappropriate for certain content which cannot be specifically evaluated, such as values (Eissner 1970).

Sears and Marshall (2000) emphasize that any theory is understandable in the context of the spirit of the time from which it emerged. Every generation is characterized by a unique and common mentality and intellectual identity. Thus, the political and social events of the 1960's in the United States influenced the practical theories concerning the development of consciousness of values as a factor in teacher training plans and learning also in Israel. Aloni (2005) also suggested a similar approach: There is a connection between teaching values and human identity. Education and the development of human psyche are influenced both by social and cultural variables as well as goals and values educators intend to transmit "The thesis behind the question is how to be as much of a human being as possible; the human image is not only a question of quality but also of quantity: "What" and "How much" (Zemach 2005).

Green (2005) clarifies the connection between the terms *values* and *educational activities*. According to him, to educate values has two meaning. In one sense, it is a process by which young people are given the behavior and ways of thinking that the society to which they belong find suitable and worthy. In another sense, value education is the development of young people's personality as a functional process: society guarantees

its physical continuation through it and preserves its identity as a cultural community among the historical spectrum of peoples, nations, and cultures.

To summarize the definitions presented here, the standards, intended to unite and to offer a basis and a structure of common criteria for the construction of the educational endeavor,

have turned out to be factors which puzzle and confuse the issue among educators.

However, the concepts are characterized by three elements: the quantitative, the qualitative, and the physio-cultural derived from the chronological factor.

Values in Israel – as a standard in educational process of teacher training

Observation of the general public education system in Israel shows a struggle over many years with the problematic issue of defining values as a standard in education according to its varied elements as described above. The roots of this debate are in the first decade of the country's existence (1960's / 1970's), have continued to the present, and are still unresolved even as this article is being written. If anything, the debate has become even more vocal due to the publishing of *The National Education Plan in Israel* in January of 2005 by the Dovrat Committee.

This longstanding dilemma has caused Israeli schools and educational institutions to move gradually in the opposite direction concerning the teaching of the values and the goals framed by the educational system. A double gap was thus created, one between elements of the educational systems in their official policy and the actual implementation and behavior, and the other between the two principle positions of for and against the implementation of values in education.

In trying to explain the double gap as well as the changes, the major cause seems to be the sweeping change in Israeli education policy as a result of setting different priorities for both inside and outside the country. In order to understand this dynamic it is important to know the Israeli philosophy of education and its reality. It is a substance combining three major layers: the first relates to the Jewish traditional heritage. It still influences the daily rhythm of life regardless of level of religiosity. The second relates to the historic heritage of the Zionist ideology and the resulting events since the founding of the State of Israel, meaning the political and military events which only made the dilemmas more extreme and challenged the value system. The third refers to the philosophic orientation concerning the modern education subscribing the principle of progress and high achievement according to the universal, western up-dated rules and curriculums.

On this basis this article will enlighten the subject of developing values as a standard in the educational process of teacher training in Israel on a chronological basis:

- a. The period of the founders, which began in the 19th century with the founding of the Zionist movement and the formation of the educational ideology of a dream of the State of Israel until the 1960's and 1970's
- b. From the 1960's till the 1980's
- c. From the 1980's till the present

a. Zionism appeared as a social and cultural revolution with leaders who transformed education from a retroactive system transmitting an agreed upon tradition to the next generation to a system that was progressive and that created new frameworks and new myths. So, reality required the enlisting of the past, with redefined borders, as a path which serves the

present by creating a new and different connection between past and future.

During this period the national and general ethos flourished. The leading standards in the education system were of the collective kind and in the interest of the community good, even at the expense of the development of one's individualism, private achievements, and even life. "It is worthy to die for our land" was the heroic slogan.

Accordingly, the standards in the educational process of teacher training till the 1990's for the kindergarten and the elementary schools were restricted to the "college for teacher education"; without demanding an academic degree of at least B.A/Sc. Furthermore, in the so called agricultural settlements (i.e. Kibbuzim), the standards of teacher education gave priority to the agricultural practice and to the humanities. The consensus opinion believed there is no such thing as education without values. Every society needs them in order to ensure that the new generation will act accordingly to these values. (Koifmann 2005).

b.

However, in parallel with a certain conformism toward assumptions of their elders and their culture (Koifmann 2005) there existed a dissenting opinion. Its principle was that "educators don't have the right to teach mandatory values, but the internal psychological security needs of those being educated make it difficult to avoid teaching any values" (Kleinberger 1961). This approach was posited in the most unapologetic form by the writer S. Izhar, who said that it is impossible to teach values, especially in the educational system (1974, 1982). These ideas gained in popularity in the early sixties shortly after the launching of the Sputnik satellite (1957) and simultaneous to the appearance of the movement for reform of the curriculum in the USA. The reform expressed unquestioning reverence to the rational and its gods. The United States was shocked to see the inferiority of its education system. The irrelevant system of education and its curriculum had to be rapidly changed. Science became a paradigm whose hallmark is "Knowledge, Methods, and Standards" in the meaning of evaluating and assessing quality by quantitative tools (Helbowitsh 1996). The proponents of science and the scientific method defined the modern world using the formula of professionalism and specialized knowledge, in the same way skill in crafts characterized the ancient world.

As a result, Israeli public schools changed direction quickly and decisively, moving away from humanistic values and goals, both general and Jewish (Shveid 2000). In this process, the system created a distinction between "education" and "teaching"; Teaching was expected to advance the students in techniques of gathering and assimilating knowledge, as up to date and advanced as possible, while the educator, of lower status, was expected to transmit human/personal, cultural/community and universal values.

The social-cultural ethos on both a general and personal level in Israel society and in the institutions of education has been replaced by the individualistic ethos, which is competitive and aggressive and whose main goals are personal achievement and excellence. This purpose and manner of education reflect the influence of modern philosophical viewpoints such as self-actualization and the realization of personal goals, personal autonomy, and the idea that every individual is unique and special, and is entitled to develop according to his or her special needs (Kramer, as mentioned). Looking back, one can see that this division in the identity of the practice of teaching is artificial and even untenable considering how an educational institution should function.

It has certainly been a factor in the loss of humanistic and Jewish/ Israeli identity, not to mention the collapse of teacher

prestige. This collapse has had negative implications for the whole educational system in terms of the attitudes of society and students (Aharoni 2004).

Thus, the process of modern education evolved into a dualism of the purpose to develop the individualism in young people, meaning the development of their personality in conformance with their special talents, and of the purpose to prepare them for adult life in the sense of the ability to cope with the existing social conditions around them in order to obtain a standard of living, honor, and status (Shveid as mentioned).

Another implication of educational priorities of that period, which is still observed in today's education, was that, in the balance between science and humanistic subjects, the former is clearly dominant. Another result of the different standards of values during this second period in Israel was implemented directly at the institutions for teacher education. Most of the colleges as mentioned above, which were till the 1990's only under the supervision of the Ministry of Education, were obliged to upgrade and to adjust to the higher academic status of the B.A/Sc as required by the Committee for High Education.

c.

Thus, these multivalued messages caused the young generation to become obsessed with questions about its identity and link to the community inside and outside of the country (Diaspora) and, yes, with its Israeli identity. One should keep in mind that during this second period, there was almost a complete regression to the consensus on the values of the conservative society of the past. After all, "in a conservative society, the educational policy makers determine the goals of teaching values, leaving the teachers with very little latitude for choices, initiative, and autonomy ... as opposed to a modern society in which the principle guiding values is a free choice among alternatives through a process of struggle, consideration, and predicting possible consequences" (Kremer, as mentioned above). Because of the changes and the deterioration of values teaching both in general society and especially among educators, there developed a growing consciousness of the crisis.

In his article, "The Forgetting of the Purpose" (1998), Amos Oz expressed this concern, "We are in serious danger of forgetting the purpose amidst the heat of doing, amidst the fog of battle, amidst the distress, amidst the disappointment, amidst an understandable and human yearning, to some swallowing up of our privacy amidst the Israeli experience, we are in danger of forgetting the purpose." (1988).

Due to the misinterpreted idea of individualism, the blurred boundaries of "what is right and wrong" concerning also the civil humanistic values caused the outburst of violence in all its forms, followed by the erosion of the elder's authority in family and especially in school. The need for an urgent reorientation is reverberating through the education system. The desire is for the practical application of curriculums for the assimilation of Israeli values with general human and multicultural content as well as the Jewish identity component.

Because of this situation, the Ministry of Education has over the years during the third period established numerous committees who have created countless plans to update the implementation of values teaching. For example, *the Committee for Educational Planning in the 1980's*, whose work was continued by *Kremnizer-Shenhar Committee* in 1996, posted recommendations that today are being recycled and applied. The application of these recommendations and plans has more often than not been either assigned marginal importance by the school in terms of school activity or passed to a secondary body outside the school itself, indicating the attitude towards the subject.

Professor Ruth Butler (2000), principal of the School of Education at Hebrew University, makes it clear that questions on the subject of Jewish and multicultural values in Israel are much discussed by academic, educational, and social commentators. Miriam Barlev's position (2000) is that we are currently facing problems connected to conflicts resulting from cultural pluralism and the development of technology and science in a world without sufficient values. After all, "what goes in the curriculum is perceived as approved standards by Israeli society," as formulated by Professor Yuli Tamir (2002). She adds that, accordingly, the onus of responsibility is on teachers and principals. There is an equal need to develop their awareness as education leaders after the importance of teaching values, to be a source of information, and to act as educators who influence the child as a human being and a citizen in society. Moreover, educators should influence the content and direction in the various roles in life. There is also a need for them to understand their responsibility as a defining element in a child's life in order to widen their personal professional aspect of identity, to regain the great respect of the students as well as of their parents, especially in view of its devaluation (Koifmann 2005, The Dovrat Committee 2005).

The teaching of values is pulled in two opposite directions by the past and present. There is a need to translate the world of new values into concepts, slogans, and incorporated myths with an emphasis on the future, while still maintaining connection with the past using different interpretations. This creates the source of a new consensus.

This approach is anchored in the basic assumption that most fields in education are influencing factors in our ever changing lives, appropriate to both conservative frameworks and dynamic or uncertain frameworks in the education system (Avinun 1999).

Beginning in 2001, on the initiative of the Minister of Education Limor Livnat and with the help of Ministry of Education General-Director Ronit Tirush and the current chairperson of the Pedagogical Council Professor Yaakov Katz, a four year plan for schools had been formulated and ratified. The main idea is *The Educational Vision* or, in the exact phrasing of the title of the plan, *The Core Curriculum on the Issue of Values*.

The underlying rationale for the program is that the educational system and the Israeli society has gone in a wrong direction, misinterpreting the concepts of emphasis on knowledge in terms of academic achievements, and not enough on human social and cultural values.

Thus, education is in the midst of a crisis of uncertainty and double loss, according to Ronit Tirosh (2002). Consequently, in September 2003, *The National Education Plan in Israel*, published in January of 2005, by the Dovrat Committee was begun. The plan's standards of values were intended to cause the assimilation and crystallization of core values, both human and academic, ensuring that all graduating students absorb these values and will carry them to life outside the various academic frameworks.

Conclusion

The primary goals of developing the awareness of values as a standard in education were defined by the committee (2005):

To ensure a basis of foundational ideas having potential commonality with both the pluralistic and democratic society within Israel and the connections between it and the Jewish Diaspora as well as with the international community.

The Dovrat plan will ensure operatively that teacher trainees and practicing teachers will be equipped with rich knowledge in the context of the policy requirements in Israel and international educational trends. Thus teachers will regain

their professional prestige. Furthermore, in the didactic sense of teaching values, every proposed plan should have a flexible character which allows the pedagogical staff of the institution to decide the scale and manner of its application within the school according to the population of students according to their background and cultural heritage.

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