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TEACHING OF VALUES IN SCHOOLS by Charles L. Glenn

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Introduction

Every school, whether intentionally or not, teaches more than academic subjects. Simply participating in the daily life of a school, its routines and how it justifies and enforces them, its norms for relationships among pupils (or the same age and of different ages) and between youth and adults, the ways in which adults relate to one another (closely observed by their pupils), and a thousand other aspects of schooling teach lessons for life. Those lessons may be very positive, may be life-transforming for youth who come to school from difficult backgrounds, or they may be negative, teaching cynicism, manipulation, even cruelty.

Good schools in every country, it is fair to say, are characterized by a clear sense of mission and a well-defined understanding of the nature of human flourishing which shapes a distinctive culture, a *caractère propre*, that affects not only the overt curriculum and teaching methods but also those habits and mores which teach so

much. One of the best books about American schools, *The Shopping Mall High School*, points out that

students of all kinds usually thrive by participation in institutions with distinctive purposes and common expectations. Magnet schools, examination schools, and schools-within-schools are expressions of the desire for communities of focused educational and often moral purpose. Because they are special places to begin with, teachers and students feel more special in them. Both are more likely to be committed to a purpose and the expectations that flow from it if they choose — and are chosen by — schools or sub-schools than if they are simply assigned to them. The existence of a common purpose has an educational force of its own, quite independent of the skills of individual teachers. It also helps good teachers do a better job and may soften the impact of less able teachers.¹

The effect of clarity of educational purpose upon how well pupils do on academic outcomes has been confirmed again and again by school effectiveness research. A major study of schools in London found that those “which were chosen for very specific reasons . . . had the advantages of greater parental support for their educational aims and, because of such support, were helped to be more effective” on both cognitive and non-cognitive measures—kids learned more and they felt more positive about learning. Schools which are chosen for religious or other reasons, the researchers found, “may also elicit a greater commitment from both parents and pupils, which may act as a strong cohesive force.”²

Researchers in New York City found the same effect of school focus and voluntary attendance. They found a strong contrast between what they called “focus schools,” which included magnet public schools and Catholic schools, on the one hand, and public schools which pupils attended simply because of where they lived, on the other.

First, focus schools have clear uncomplicated missions centered on the experiences the school intends to provide its students and on the ways it intends to influence its students’ performance, attitudes, and behavior. Second, focus schools are strong organizations with a capacity to initiate action in pursuit of their missions, to sustain themselves over time, to solve their own problems, and to manage their external relationships. Focus schools need not be distinctive or highly innovative. Their organizational independence means, however, that students and staff in each focus school consider their school special, a unique creation that reflects their efforts and meets their needs. Zoned public schools, in contrast, have diffuse missions defined by the demands of external funders and regulators. . . . Focus schools concentrate on *student outcomes* before all other matters. Zoned schools focus primarily on delivering programs and following procedures. . . . Focus schools have a *strong commitment to parenting* and aggressively mold student attitudes and values

... Zoned schools see themselves primarily as transmitters of information and imparters of skills.³

It is because of the importance of school mission that the selection of teachers who can and do support that mission is of such crucial importance, as discussed by Bruce Cooper in his essay in this volume.

Governments that seek to use popular schooling to promote common loyalties and desired behaviors – and every government, whether totalitarian or democratic or somewhere in between does so to a greater or lesser extent – find themselves in tension with educators and parents who desire distinctive schools with clearly-articulated missions. This tension may lead to the suppression of such schools, it may lead to regulation and oversight (in themselves of course and within limits appropriate government activities), and it may lead to the prescription of curriculum elements that are not so much concerned with knowledge and skills as with attitudes and loyalties.

That such efforts can provoke strong resistance is evident from the current unrest in Hong Kong, which brought tens of thousands of parents into the street in protest. According to the *New York Times* of July 29, 2012,

The new curriculum is similar to the so-called patriotic education taught in mainland China. The materials, including a handbook titled “The China Model,” describe the Communist Party as “progressive, selfless and united” and criticize multiparty systems, even though Hong Kong has multiple political parties. Critics liken the curriculum to brainwashing and say that it glosses over major events like the Cultural Revolution and the Tiananmen Square crackdown. It will be introduced in some elementary schools in September and be mandatory for all public schools by 2016. . . . One demonstrator, Elaine Yau, who was there with her 7-year-old daughter, said that people wanted a say in what was taught in the schools. “We feel like we have no choice,” she said.

Similar controversy erupted in Spain several years earlier over state-imposed “Citizenship Education” which was seen by many Catholic parents to counter their moral convictions.

In order to explore how different countries engage with this tension between common purposes and distinctive school mission, the authors of the country reports in volumes 2, 3, and 4 were asked to include information in response to the following question:

Teaching of values

[does the government prescribe what sorts of values are taught in state (public) schools? In non-state (private) schools? Or does it leave such decisions up to the schools? Examples might include respect for human rights, civic education, etc. Does it forbid certain forms of teaching as harmful to children and to society? Provide the necessary detail, please.]

The responses were extremely varied. Before turning to a sample of these responses, a few reflections on why this is a significant issue but at the same time one that can cause bitter conflict.

The need and the dangers

The concern of national and regional governments with promoting and regulating popular schooling, until well into the twentieth century, had far more to do with creating an obedient and loyal population than it did with promoting economically-useful skills. This was particularly the case when the nation-state was patched together from disparate elements, as in eighteenth century Prussia, when an expanding frontier threatened to carry much of the population beyond the reach of civilization, as in nineteenth century North America, or when national morale had received a crippling blow, as in France after defeat in 1870-71, or when floods of culturally-disparate immigrants needed to be introduced to the cultural and civic expectations of the host society, as in many countries.

Popular schooling was expected, under those circumstances, to inculcate a common language, common social mores, common symbols of national identity, common stories (often apocryphal) about the national past, a common vision of the shared future. To take one example, the schools of France's Third Republic were to teach a *moralité laïque*, a set of beliefs and behaviors which government officials did not hesitate to call a "secular faith." It was "the supreme task of the school" to create "elevated sentiments, a single thought, a common faith" among the French people. "This is the religion of the Fatherland, it is with this cult and this love, at once ardent and reasonable, that we wish to penetrate the heart and mind of the child, to impregnate him to the marrow; it is that which will constitute civic education."⁴ Like Louis XIV two centuries before, they could not conceive of a stable society and political order without shared convictions. As the director of elementary schooling told the Radical Congress in 1903, "the first duty of a Republic is to make republicans."⁵

A few years later, in what would be a fundamental text for the training of French teachers, sociologist Emile Durkheim would leave them with the conviction that they had a more significant role than did parents in the formation of future citizens. "The

center of gravity of moral life, formerly in the family, tends increasingly to shift away from it. The family is now becoming an agency secondary to the state.” Teachers in public schools saw themselves, and were seen, as being on the front lines of this struggle with clericalism and religious obscurantism. After all, Durkheim assured them that “the teacher . . . must believe, not perhaps in himself or in the superior quality of his intelligence or will, but in his task and the greatness of that task. . . . Just as the priest is the interpreter of God, he is the interpreter of the great moral ideas of his time and country.”⁶

It is, in fact, during times of social stress that there may be the most determined efforts to bring all of schooling – or at least schooling of the common people – under direct government control, often to the extent of seeking to eliminate alternative sources of schooling. Only in the “common school,” the “*école de la République*,” it seems to those concerned with national unity and social cohesion, can children learn to be loyal citizens. By contrast, societies enjoying internal and external security seem more inclined to accept that parents and a diversity of educational approaches can, between them, shape a generation able to live and work together peaceably. These issues are traced at some length in my historical study of four European countries,⁷ and in my recent study of the development of the “American model of State and School.”⁸

As we review the reports on how different government prescribe—or do not prescribe – specific values to be taught in schools, and often in non-public as well as public schools – we will see echoes of this concern for national and social unity, and often for promoting an idea of what is distinctive in the identity of the particular nation-state. We will also find, however, an increasing concern to promote universal values through schooling, and indeed to lessen the emphasis on what was formerly an unapologetic patriotism and even ethno-centrism.

Why is this dimension of educational policy one of the issues explored in this series of country reports? Because, as with the other issues covered, it represents a difficult policy choice in which the correct course is by no means evident. It is commonly accepted today that societies are pluralistic along a number of dimensions, and that this pluralism should be respected and even encouraged in the name of freedom and basic human rights. At the same time, there is increasing concern (based in part upon immigration, in part also on the weakening of religious, familial, and other ties) about how these complex societies are to avoid conflict and find sufficient common purpose to address pressing challenges.

The twentieth century saw a steady increase in the role of government in taking over functions that traditionally had been met by families, religious associations, and other civil-society institutions, and also in addressing needs that had previously been ignored. While the benefits of this expanded state role are manifest, there has also been a weakening of what could be called the muscle or fibers of society. While in

many respects individuals are free as never in human history to shape their lives and even their identities as they will, in important ways they are subject to a manipulation that can be harder to resist than outright authoritarianism. One of the primary spheres of this manipulation is the education of children and youth,

Isaiah Berlin, in his famous essay on “Two Concepts of Liberty,” pointed out that “to manipulate men, to propel them towards goals which you – the social reformer – see, but they may not, is to deny their human essence, to treat them as objects without wills of their own, and therefore to degrade them.”⁹

Schooling should be a matter of acquiring competency, not an obligatory worldview. So talk about ‘skills of deliberation’, or knowledge of ‘human rights principles’ and ‘equality legislation’ can be defended, but if the moulding of citizens boils down to ‘opposition to racist beliefs’ . . . then it quickly crosses a line, especially in combination with a multicultural view of society. The boundary between stimulating critical citizenship and intellectual paternalism is all too easily crossed.¹⁰

The effort to impose government-defined beliefs and values upon all schools and thus an entire rising generation is therefore a task of great delicacy. Olivier Roy and others have argued that “Democracy is neither an ideology nor a creed. It is a system of rules that can be recognized by people who adhere to an inclusive concept of society. In brief, democracy can function without democrats (or at least with relatively few of them).”¹¹ From this perspective, what is essential is that youth acquire the habits of citizenship, among which we might include a respect for the rule of law, a willingness to use procedures and to compromise in the resolution of differences, and an acceptance that others – even if believed to be completely misguided – have a right both to express and to live by their own perspectives, provided that they, too, exhibit these habits of citizenship and avoid violating the rights of others. This pluralistic position accepts that individuals may choose to orient their lives and their thinking to communities of conviction. It is, in William Galston’s terms,

an understanding of social life that comprises multiple sources of authority—individuals, parents, civil associations, faith-based institutions, and the state, among others—no one of which is dominant in all spheres, for all purposes, on all occasions. . . . In a liberal pluralist regime, a key end is the creation of social space within which individuals and groups can freely pursue their distinctive visions of what gives meaning and worth to human existence.¹²

There is, however, a more demanding view of citizenship, one which insists that it requires individuals who have become thoroughly autonomous, what David Bentley Hart has called

Modernity’s highest ideal – its special understanding of personal autonomy –

requires us to place our trust in an original absence underlying all of reality. A fertile void in which all things are possible, from which arises no impediment to our wills, and before which we may consequently choose to make of ourselves what we choose. We trust, that is to say, that there is no substantial criterion by which to judge our choices that stands higher than the unquestioned good of free choice itself, and that therefore all judgment, divine no less than human, is in some sense an infringement upon our freedom.¹³

On this view, the person who submits to the authority of a faith-tradition or an ethnic culture is not capable of functioning as a citizen, and it is thus the responsibility of the school to liberate its students from the shackles of received opinion. The State, in its concern for the freedom of its citizens, should ensure that the schooling they receive has this liberating effect, since

the function of the state is to guarantee the conditions in which its citizens can try to make good lives for themselves These conditions, at a minimum, will concern the citizens' familiarity with a sufficient range of values from which they may select some as constituents of their conception of a good life and the citizens' capacity to be alive to the inevitable conflicts among the available values. . . . These conditions could be guaranteed only by the state's support of the institutions that the guaranteeing of the conditions presupposes. These institutions would include an educational system that teaches students about the plurality of values.¹⁴

Along the same lines, James Dwyer has argued that the State would be justified in concluding that the long-range religious liberty of children would be better served by a temporary violation of their short-term religious liberty to attend a faith-based school. "Even students who are not presently inclined to question the religious beliefs they have been taught . . . would have a greater total liberty if given the freedom to change their minds about religion." Thus public authorities would be fully justified in ignoring "a child's expressed preference for a kind of schooling that includes the practices" of indoctrination and crippling of personality which the author claims characterize religious schools. Overriding the child's decision (not to mention that of her parents) "would be appropriate and even morally requisite." This is especially the case with female students, who are routinely taught by religious schools in ways which deprive them of opportunities in life, not only for careers but also for reproductive freedom. Young people who have received such an education are condemned to a lifetime of "severe anxiety and anger." Schools must be required to "actively encourage free self-expression and a positive attitude toward one's body and mind," including sex education to that end.¹⁵

This is not the place to enter more deeply into this debate, but it helps to indicate what is at stake as government defines requirements in areas of the curriculum that seek to shape the habits, the loyalties, and even the worldviews of children. This tension

is also one of the most important reasons why non-state schools are often opposed as a threat to democratic citizenship, and why governments seek to extend their oversight over the content of teaching in such schools. It is this distrust of schools that are not directly operated by government that led political philosopher Amy Gutmann, after conceding that “private schools may on average do better than public schools in bringing all their students up to a relatively high level of learning, in teaching American history and civics in an intellectually challenging manner, and even in racially integrating classrooms,” to go on to insist that “public, not private, schooling is an essential welfare good for children as well as the primary means by which citizens can morally educate future citizens.”¹⁶

Meira Levinson reminds us, in her important new book, that government control or intrusive oversight can work against its intended purpose, by cultivating a passivity on the part of teachers and students alike that is anything but a model of engaged citizenship:

standards and assessment systems that apply across schools and districts work against good civic education . . . by removing the locus of control from those who want and need to model civic action—teachers—and those who want and need to practice civic action—students. When teachers are working in a system that denies them the opportunity to exercise professional judgment or democratic voice or participation, they cannot model the “arts of democratic life.” Even more to the point, they can’t model empowerment if they feel totally disempowered. Similarly, students can’t practice democracy, or experience empowerment, if they have no voice and no power in determining what they learn, why, how, or when.¹⁷

Thus, while not sharing her irrational preference for government-operated schools, we can agree with Gutmann that “political education’ – the cultivation of the virtues, knowledge, and skills necessary for political participation – has moral primacy over other purposes of public education in a democratic society” and, further, that the “moral primacy of political education also supports a presumption in favor of more participatory over more disciplinary methods of teaching.”¹⁸ As we will see, an international study of civic and citizenship education has concluded that classroom practices may be more important than prescribed content in cultivating the habits of citizenship.

Themes illustrated from the country reports

Loyalty to country . . . national unity

As we might expect, we find this theme prominent in large and very diverse

countries, such as India, Indonesia, and Russia, as well as in countries with recent histories of foreign control, such as Belarus, Lithuania, and Poland. To take one example, the Indian National Policy of Education, 1986, insisted that “in our culturally plural society, education should foster universal values, oriented towards the unity and integration of our people. Such value education should help eliminate obscurantism, religious fanaticism, violence, superstition and fatalism.” However, besides this “combative role” the Policy advocated that “value education has a profound positive content, based on our heritage, national and universal goals and perceptions. It should lay primary emphasis on this aspect.”

A somewhat different example is Colombia, which is recovering from several decades of armed insurgency; the government has urged schools to focus learning how to relate with each other in peaceful ways (*convivencia*, that is, coexistence). The same theme is stressed in Kosovo, Northern Ireland, and South Africa, for obvious reasons, and is also an expressed concern for Singapore, Austria, and Malta.

The remarkably honest chapter on Bosnia and Herzegovina points out that, despite an expressed concern that schools develop an awareness of belonging to the state of Bosnia and Herzegovina, its own national and cultural identity, language and tradition, while introducing the values of others, respecting diversity and fostering mutual understanding, tolerance and solidarity among all peoples, nations and communities in BiH, But, the author reports, “these goals very often remain neglected and unfulfilled.” See the chapter (in volume 4) for evidence of this failure.

On the other hand, these themes are not so much stressed in long-secure nation states though we may expect to see them becoming more prominent in response to new concerns about the effects of immigration. In the case of Japan, there is in fact a sensitivity to the possibility of patriotism being promoted to an inappropriate degree, as occurred during the 1930s. Amy Gutmann’s view about patriotic education is no doubt shared by many intellectuals in Western Europe as well as North America:

A public educational system that employed great rhetoric, as republicans recommend, to convince students that “we owe our country our life” would be teaching in a way that violates one of the deliberative aims of democratic education, to subject politically relevant claims to careful public scrutiny.... Republican patriotism is prone to claims of exclusivity that conflict with the openness of democratic education.¹⁹

Education for citizenship

This more general curriculum theme is often listed, though given different meaning in different countries. The International Civic and Citizenship Education study, carried out for the International Association for the

Evaluation of Educational Achievement, reports that

[t]wenty-one of the 38 participating countries included a specific subject concerned with civic and citizenship education in their respective curriculums; only minorities of ICCS students were attending schools where principals reported no specific approach to delivering civic and citizenship education in the school curriculum.²⁰

It appears from our country profiles, however, that the weight given to this subject depends in part on the circumstances in different countries. Indonesia has existed as an independent nation-state for little more than a half-century, and in that time has experienced many threats to its unity. Benedict Anderson (writing in the early 1980s) pointed out that “[t]hirty years ago, almost no Indonesian spoke *bahasa Indonesia* as his or her mother-tongue; virtually everyone had their own ‘ethnic’ language.... Today there are perhaps millions of young Indonesians, from dozens of ethnolinguistic backgrounds, who speak Indonesian as their mother-tongue.”²¹ It is not surprising, then, that civic education is at the heart of Indonesian schooling:

Civic education, religious education and *Bahasa Indonesia* (the national language) are three subjects taught from basic to higher education level. Civic education emphasizes educating students to be democratic citizens. The core values are democracy, tolerance, *gotong royong* (mutual assistance), justice, responsibility, human rights, and patriotism. *Bahasa Indonesia* is a tool to unite the nation. Indonesia has over 500 ethnic groups. Many Indonesians speak their ethnic language as their mother tongue.

The ICCS results suggest that, in at least one important respect, the Indonesian efforts have been successful: “On average, the students in Indonesia and Thailand gained low scores on the civic knowledge scale but high scores on several affective measures, notably attitudes toward institutions, self-beliefs, and expected participation.” Comparing the responses of Indonesian eighth graders with the ICCS average of 36 countries: trust in national government (96 percent vs 62 percent), trust in political parties (66 percent versus 41 percent), and so for other items.²²

Singapore, on a much smaller scale, exhibits similar ethnic diversity and concern for education in citizenship, as does its neighbor Malaysia. In Latvia and Estonia, with strong Russian minorities not altogether reconciled to the separation from Russia, patriotism is a strong element in citizenship education. It is not irrelevant that the ICCS research found unusually large differences between majority and minority attitudes toward their country among eighth graders in Estonia and Latvia.²³

We find the theme of citizenship education in the programs for Peru, Kosovo, and Israel, all societies subject to conflict, as well as in those for Hungary, Wales, and Canada, where this may be less of an issue.

Interesting data is available on the effects of civic education on adolescent students in half of our countries (and others that we do not cover) in the ICCS study. Some of the results, indeed, are rather disconcerting, such as the “finding that civic knowledge is a negative predictor of expected active political participation” and the “absence of strong associations between civic knowledge and school factors other than socioeconomic context may disappoint readers who expect schools to influence the civic learning process of adolescents.”²⁴

The study offers the tentative conclusion that the desired outcomes in terms of commitment to active citizenship depend more upon the pedagogy employed and the school climate than on the officially-prescribed content: “average perception of openness in classroom discussions still featured as a positive predictor in a number of countries. School principals’ perceptions of students’ sense of belonging showed some independent effects on civic knowledge in a smaller number of countries.”²⁵

As the reader may have noticed, throughout these volumes we have generally discouraged evaluative language, aware that only general conclusions can be drawn from the outcomes of various educational systems, as illustrated brilliantly by West and Woessmann in their essay in volume 4. The results of educational policies and practices cannot be assessed based upon single tests or surveys, but require perspective on long-term effects upon those who were educated and also upon their societies. The authors of the ICCS report “acknowledge that the effects of civic and citizenship education on student engagement can only be truly assessed through longitudinal studies that follow individuals from school through to adult life.”²⁶

Such a study has in fact been conducted recently in North America by David Sikkink and others, under the auspices of the Cardus Foundation. Two random samples totally nearly three thousand adults aged between 23 and 49 completed an on-line survey about a range of attitudes and activities, and, controlling for the education, religious tradition, religious service attendance, and volunteering habits of the respondents mothers and fathers, these responses were used to gauge the effects of different forms of secondary schooling: public, Catholic, Protestant, independent, and homeschooling. Respondents were asked, for example, whether over the past twelve months they had (1) made political donations, (2) actively campaigned for a political party, or (3) participated in a political protest, march, or demonstration, and more generally whether (4) they had an interest in politics and public affairs. The responses of graduates of the different types of schools varied in ways that were often significant. This data was then correlated with interviews conducted with leaders of different types of schools to assess how these long-term outcomes matched what the schools were seeking to accomplish.²⁷

The specific results of the Cardus study are not relevant here (though the reader is encouraged to consult them), but it provides an example of how education for

citizenship and other personal qualities might be assessed in the long term.

Human rights

A number of countries require that schools give attention to internationally-recognized human rights in their instruction; see, for example, Uruguay, Peru, South Africa, Israel, New Zealand, Belarus, Sweden, Spain, Slovenia, Malta, and Estonia. In the Czech Republic, “at secondary school considerable attention may be given to topics such as citizenship, European citizenship, globalization, environmentalism and multiculturalism.” Malta has unusually extensive curriculum requirements, insisting that “schools should serve as a testing ground for democracy in keeping with the declarations and treaties signed by Malta in the past, and with the constitutional obligations of the country. As key institutions within civil society, schools should foster among their students respect for others, and for the right of other people to enjoy freedom, peace, security and the benefits of a society governed by law and order. In a society that is increasingly becoming multi-cultural, the educational system should enable students to develop a sense of respect, co-operation, and solidarity among cultures.” Schools in Latvia are expected to foster “the development of a responsible, tolerant and democratic citizen of the state and Europe, as well as instilling the opinion that human life is the highest value.”

Countries that articulate such standards are not necessarily those in which human rights are most consistently respected, and it is interesting to compare this emphasis with the ICCS survey results, which finds that eighth graders in the Czech Republic, Latvia, and Malta were considerably less likely than the average to express support for equal rights for ethnic and racial groups.²⁸

Denominational religious education

In a few countries, instruction is provided in a single religious tradition as part of the regular curriculum: Islam in Saudi Arabia and Jordan, Orthodox Christianity in Greece and Romania, Catholicism in Italy, Poland, and Ireland (with an option for excusal on grounds of conscience). In Austria, religious instruction is compulsory in the religion of the family, and optional if there is none. In Ireland, teachers are expected to “constantly inculcate” Catholic values in all areas of the curriculum, except in the few schools with a Protestant or other character. In Poland the religious education curriculum is developed by the central government in consultation with Catholic authorities, and the teachers are mostly priests. Taking secular ethics instead is theoretically possible but rare, as is religious education in Lutheran and other traditions. “The parents who request classes of ethics for their children struggle with various difficulties: there is not a sufficient number of

prepared teachers—priests do not want to teach ethics, nor do the parents want them to do so, there are no textbooks, children wanting to attend ethics are perceived as ‘different’.”

Commonly, students and their families are given a choice between instruction in a religious tradition (sometimes more than one) and a secular course on ethics, as in Belgium, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Germany, and other countries. Each student in Indonesia, “is entitled to receive religious education in accordance with his/her religion, imparted by an educator who has the same religion,” though of course as in other countries there are practical limitations. In New Zealand, “some state schools . . . have optional religious teaching from which parents can withdraw their children.” The option to teach religion has been reintroduced into schools in the Czech Republic as well. The arrangements differ somewhat, and the reader is encouraged to consult the individual country profiles.

Religious education in Finnish schools is a compulsory core subject, provided on a denominational basis with Lutheranism as the default option, but by all reports offered in a quite undogmatic form. As a result,

religious education or ethics is not necessarily the most controversial subject, as diverse religious communities officially registered under Finnish jurisdiction can have their own specific curricula in religious education. Instead, some other core subjects may be difficult to accept for parents with strong religious convictions. As examples can be mentioned: health education (incl. sex education); physical education (incl. swimming and dance, dress requirements, communal shower after classes); music (incl. religious, heavy, rock, metal) and art (incl. representational art). Likewise, for creationists from any religious group it may be difficult to accept that evolution theory rules in biology and geography classes.

The assumption is that everyone belongs to a religious group unless declaring otherwise, in which case a non-theistic ethics course is provided.

In Portugal, the Constitutional Court decisions have found that teaching Catholic beliefs in public schools is consistent with the Constitution. The decisive argument adopted by the Constitutional Court was that non-Catholic parents were free to choose another discipline within the school curricula. It was also declared that elementary state school teachers may be held responsible for the teaching of the Catholic religion, though this may be replaced with the teaching of another religion or another form of Christianity. There are, however, no reports of the existence of such cases.

Other countries have provisions that religious instruction in a particular tradition will be offered in response to parental demand within school hours (Indonesia, Estonia,

Brazil) or after regular school hours (Ukraine, Russia). Commonly, this is simply part of the curriculum, as in Latvia, where the “state standard for basic education stipulates that in grades 1- 3 children study ethics or the basics of Christian faith, subject to parents’ choice. It is obvious that the subject standard of ‘Basics of Christian Faith’ contains references to Christian values; the aim of this subject is to gain knowledge and understanding of the order of the world created by the God, the genesis of the world and man as the labour of God, etc.”

Teaching about religion

Other countries place an emphasis on teaching about religion in a manner intended to convey information rather than to promote belief (or disbelief). Perhaps the most interesting is England, and it is worth quoting extensively from the country report:

in the case of . . . schools which have not been designated as being of a religious character, religious education is given in accordance with an ‘agreed syllabus’ for the area drawn up by a local conference of representatives, including faith groups and the local authority. The agreed syllabus is also used in those foundation and voluntary controlled schools which are designated as faith schools, though parents may opt for religious education in accordance with the school’s trust deed. The drawing up of agreed syllabuses by conferences comprising local representatives is clearly designed to accommodate diversity and distinctiveness, but the Thatcher Conservative government included within the Education Reform Act 1988 a provision of considerable controversy designed to guarantee an element of centrality for Christianity, as a gesture towards some who were troubled by trends towards multi-faith approaches to religious education. This provided that ‘every agreed syllabus shall reflect the fact that the religious traditions in Great Britain are in the main Christian whilst taking account of the teaching and practices of the other principal religions represented in Great Britain.’ . . . It should be noted that parents have an absolute right to withdraw their children from religious education, and are under no obligation to give any reason for this. This applies even in designated faith schools: indeed, such schools are encouraged by the government to admit pupils of other faiths or of none, and therefore the right of withdrawal from religious education may have a particular significance in such schools. The right here is vested in the parent and not in the child . . .

Collective worship is also a legal requirement in all maintained schools, though there is widespread evidence of only partial compliance. In the case of community schools and foundation schools which are not designated as faith schools, the collective worship is required to be ‘wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character.’ . . . Importantly, this requirement may be modified in the

light of the family backgrounds of the pupils. . . . As with religious education, parents have a right of withdrawal, but in relation to collective worship this applies only up to the sixth form. Sixth form pupils themselves have an absolute right to withdraw from collective worship. In practice, the exercise of the right of withdrawal is exceptional, and the nature and content of the collective act of worship, if carried out at all, is highly variable.

Thus the “agreed syllabus” is the product at the local level of discussion among representatives of the different faith communities, which seems a better solution than a curriculum about world religions developed by government officials or textbook authors. On the other hand, it could fall short of giving students a comprehensive view of religious traditions not represented locally, a problem also with Finland and other countries that tailor religious education to the religious traditions of students. In addition, families with strong religious convictions may not be satisfied with such a comparative approach. It was reported, in the late 1980s, that “Muslims share with many other communities, including many Christians, a good deal of hesitation over apparent implications of the new concepts. They seem to imply that all religions are equally open to questioning, that the absolute of the deity is actually only relative. The approach seems subversive of traditional religious teaching authority.”²⁹

In Colombia, the Constitutional Court ruled in 1994 that pupils were free to choose the religious education of their preference or refuse. A national decree in 2006, however, introduced further regulations in this matter, and established religious education as mandatory for all pupils, to be evaluated like any other academic subject. Religious education addressed in this decree is not bound to any particular set of beliefs.

Although Indonesia is a predominantly-Muslim nation (indeed, with more Muslims than any other), it is official policy to promote a general respect for religion. The Constitution provides that the “government organizes and implements a national education system, to be regulated by law, that aims at enhancing religious and pious feelings as well as moral excellence with a view to upgrading national life.” Thus, it is against the law to teach atheism.

In Russia, in addition to optional classes, there has been some effort to strengthen the role of Russian Orthodoxy as a source of national unity and ethical grounding, with an experimental subject called Russian Orthodox Culture.

In light of the common practice of providing instruction in a particular religious tradition in state-operated schools, it is interesting to note the results of the ICCS survey on the religious attitudes and practices of eighth graders in the various countries. As with citizenship education, the results are not

encouraging for those who advocate for such instruction, although they vary widely among countries with very similar policies.

In Austria, for example, 96 percent of the eighth graders reported that they belonged to a religion, and 42 percent that they had attended services within the past month, contrasted with 64 percent and 12 percent in Belgium or 56 and 24 percent in England. The Czech Republic was the most secularized, with only 25 percent claiming a religious identity and eight percent having attended services, while in Poland 97 percent had a religious identity and 73 percent had attended services.³⁰ Although the United States is not included in this ICCS survey, it is common knowledge that its rate of religious identification and practice is much higher than in Western Europe, while there is no religious education, even on a voluntary basis, during or after school hours in American public schools, and very little teaching about religion in other subjects.³¹ As with citizenship education, it may be that religious education *as a subject* is less effective than many hope (or fear). The experience in England suggests that “Religious education . . . is seen to encourage a secular and aridly skeptical view of life and to devalue all faiths other than that of secular humanism.”³²

At the same time, there is ample evidence from both Western European and North American research, that schools with a religious *character* may have a profoundly positive effect on academic and character growth as well as on faith development. Once again, it is well to focus on what a school *does*, rather than on a prescribed curriculum.

The final comment in the profile of the Czech Republic, arguably the most secularized country in the world, is interesting in this regard: “In many cases, alternative and church schools have thus become a solution for families who do not believe that the common school can fulfill social and supreme human values in a world full of risk factors such as violence and intolerance.”

Religious neutrality

A number of countries make a point of the religious (and, often, the political) neutrality of public schools. France is perhaps the most insistent, and this has led to conflict over whether students have a freedom-of-conscience right of religious expression, particularly with respect to what they wear. Religious neutrality is also the official policy in Georgia, Hungary, India, Chile, Sweden, Slovenia, Colombia, and other countries, though consult the individual country profiles for the details, which in some cases have striking inconsistencies.

The Philippines requires the public school system to teach the subject, Good Manners and Right Conduct, now generally called Values Education. At the secondary (grades 7-10) “in the current school curriculum, the teaching of values

is embedded in the subject, *Makabayan*, where values are integrated in areas such as social studies, art education, music and physical education. Values integration is also encouraged in other subjects, namely, Science, Mathematics, English and Filipino, wherever appropriate.” Along the same lines, the Australian government, concerned “to address what it saw as a values vacuum in public school education issued in the Schools Values Poster designed to articulate a list of ‘Australian values’.”³³

Korea is an interesting case, and demonstrates how the freedom of schools established to teach from a specific religious perspective can be radically limited if they come to serve a public that does not share that perspective.

Although instruction in a specific religion is prohibited in public schools, general or comparative religious instruction is permitted. At present, religious instruction is a very contentious issue in Korean education. . . . Unlike the teaching of religious values in public schools, religious instruction at non-public schools is not controversial; indeed, it was critical to the authorization of the Revised Private School Act, . . . which allows for denominational private schools to implement mandatory religious education. Because students are often assigned to private schools by lottery, however, those in favor of religious neutrality contend that teaching particular religious values impinges upon students’ freedom of religion. In this respect, one can say that private schools are private but not independently functioning. On the other hand, denominational schools claim that, as private schools, they should have greater autonomy and that they should be able to fulfill their purpose and mission, even if these are in conflict with the religious neutrality principal. Generally speaking, the Revised Private School Act does not allow for the active promotion of religious values at private schools, although the issue is currently being debated. Given this, it is accurate to say that religious education at private schools is provided in a very limited fashion. These schools do not have any discretion in choosing their students. This implies that there are some limitations when it comes to the abilities of private schools to provide appropriate religious instruction for students who are assigned by lottery. Therefore, there exist two possibilities for religious education in private schools. One is to teach general and comparative knowledge about various religions rather than directly professing a particular religion. The other is to establish alternative schools or independent private high schools for the teaching of particular religious values, as these schools can discriminate as to whom they admit and are therefore comparatively free to profess religious values without impinging upon student rights. At this stage, no denominational schools have been designated as independent private high schools, although some alternative schools based on specific denominations do exist.

Forbidden teaching

As noted above, it is forbidden to teach atheism (of communism) in Indonesian schools, in large part because of the costly internal conflict with a communist insurgency in the 1960s, in which an estimated half million people were killed.

The Netherlands, otherwise the model of educational freedom, “while non-government schools are free to determine their teaching methods and to choose the textbooks that best support their distinctive character, they would be considered to offend against public order if they chose books that called for overthrowing the government or encouraged unlawful behavior.” Schools in Alberta (Canada), another of the jurisdictions most committed to educational diversity and choice, “must not promote or foster doctrines of racial or ethnic superiority or persecution, religious intolerance or persecution, social change through violent action or disobedience of laws.” It may be that it is precisely the strong commitment to educational diversity in these cases that has made it necessary to indicate what its limits must be, in a way that would not be necessary in a more uniform system.

Political indoctrination

It is not always clear how to make the distinction between citizenship education and political indoctrination; indeed, the difference may largely be in the eye of the beholder. The chapter on Belarus reports that

the main components of teaching of values comprise... civic and patriotic education, ideological education, aimed at developing students’ knowledge of the ideology practiced by the Belarusian State.... The educational system in Belarus is extremely centralized and is characterised by strict administrative and ideological control by the state. School is also seen as one of the most important propaganda venues. Non-state actors in education (private schools, independent universities, educational NGOs, business education) are comparatively small in number, and are not influential. Academic freedom is not a given thing in Belarus and it comes as no surprise that the recent years have witnessed the return to classrooms of such activity as ‘political information’ (a feature of the Soviet-time school) used primarily to ‘brain-wash’ students and ‘enlighten’ them on the ‘positive’ developments in the Belarusian state.

Similarly, developing a commitment to communism is a primary obligation of schools in China, though the experience in Eastern Europe suggests that this may lead to cynicism rather than to wholehearted engagement.³⁴

Schools able to promote distinctive values

At the opposite extreme from state indoctrination are policies that encourage schools – especially non-state schools – to develop educational programs based upon distinctive values. Each of the country profiles seeks to define the margin that exists for autonomous schools under varied sponsorship, and there is no reason to repeat that analysis here. A particularly thoughtful discussion is that about Hungary, deserving extensive citation:

Research has . . . shown that although the central element of the public sector's ideology is value neutrality, different sectors of the school system convey different values to their circles of users. Surveys reveal that public and denominational school users hold significantly different views on educational values at home and at school. An important measure of educational values is the relationship of the individual to the community. Pupils in the denominational sector more often identify themselves as part of a community, while public sector pupils value individual freedom more than solidarity with the community. Among the values schools are supposed to teach, church school users give highest priority to the importance of teaching honesty, morals, cooperation and the protection of the environment, and they cite the loving treatment that prevails in the school as paramount

Socialist education looked upon teachers, beyond their role of instructor-educator, as the mouthpieces of the one and only ideology. This contrasts with the liberal view that teachers are neutral and unbiased experts and organizers of information. Meanwhile, a lot of research has proved that in our Hungary, a country still struggling with the political change, one of the most important keys to schools achievement is the security of norms. Not only is the concept of the value-neutral teacher not present in denominational institutions, the provision of education in such institutions is rooted in the idea that all agents in the schools and surrounding the schools hold the same values. This is evident in parent-teacher relationships and among teaching staff. Not surprisingly, teaching staff show a much more uniform attitude in denominational as opposed to public schools, especially with respect to norms of behaviour at school, studying, communication with partners at school, and norms of teacher behaviour.

As for the intersectoral comparison of pupil-teacher relationships, our information from pupils reveals clearly that in denominational schools and some private schools that employ alternative pedagogies, one of the most remarkable features of teachers' pedagogical practice is the more varied nature of keeping in contact with the pupils. Public and non-public schools differ even in the opinions of their respective users about the teaching profession. A larger number of denominational school users consider that a value-oriented

upbringing requires expertise; they are satisfied with teachers and do not tend to blame them for pupils' failures. This same population also tends to believe that teachers in Hungary deserve to be better paid. In contrast to the public-sector, where the role of the teacher can be described as limited, in denominational schools a much greater appreciation for teacher work is evident.

While this is one researcher's assessment and may over-state the advantage enjoyed by those schools that are able to cultivate their distinctive character in the manifold details of school life, it seems consistent with the in-depth research in other countries. Of course, an autonomous school can be uniquely bad as well as uniquely good, as the American experience with charter schools demonstrates. West and Woessmann's essay in volume 4 points out convincingly that school autonomy should be balanced and disciplined by with strong external accountability to produce the best results.

Conflict over the content of values education

Our first example is Spain, where this controversy is very recent history. During the period 2006-2011, under the Socialist government, there was a nationwide controversy over moral education in schools. The government included in the official curriculum for elementary and secondary schools a new required subject, "Education for Citizenship and Human Rights" (*Educación para la Ciudadanía y los Derechos Humanos*). The content of this subject aroused alarm, especially in Catholic schools, on the part of those who considered that the State was interjecting itself into the moral education of pupils, the responsibility of parents according to article 27 of the Constitution and a fundamental aspect of educational freedom. A fierce debate ensued about the presumed intention of the new subject to indoctrinate pupils into a "politically-correct" position on lifestyle issues like gay marriage and abortion, thus imposing upon the Spanish people a whole vision of the world in such aspects as the nature of humanity, the family, sexuality, or life itself. This material began to be taught during the school year 2007-2008 in several regions, and in Andalucía some parents brought suit before the Tribunal Superior de Justicia, charging that the subject "wounded their rights of free choice, education, and religion." There were protests across the country, with 55,000 families joining in. Demonstrations took place against what some considered an invasion of their freedom on the part of the public authorities. The Tribunal Supremo ruled, in January 2009, that the examples presented did not support an objection of conscience, while leaving the door open for parents to object to the manuals implementing the subject or to the form which it took in a particular school. It specified also that neither the educational authorities nor teachers might impose upon pupils moral or ethical criteria that are the subject of discussion in society. The content of the subject must be focused on education in constitutional principles and values.

There was also the serious problem that this involved a subject which is graded and in which the “correct” answers could be in conflict with the principles and beliefs of pupils and their families. With the change of government at the end of 2011, the new Minister of Education announced that the subject “Education for Citizenship and Human Rights” would be replaced by another called “Civic and Constitutional Education” which—he affirmed—would be “free from controversial questions and ideological indoctrination.”

A second example, from two decades ago, is the controversy over “outcome-based education” (OBE) in the United States, a controversy which did serious damage to the effort to shift the focus of accountability from the process to the results of schooling. Pennsylvania was the first battleground over OBE; in March 1992 the Pennsylvania Board of Education issued a list of more than 500 proposed outcomes in 51 categories, intended to replace course credits as the basis for high school graduation. Many of the outcomes were unexceptional, but critics zeroed in on those that seemed to go beyond what could be measured or that government should seek to prescribe, such as that “all students understand and appreciate their worth as unique and capable individuals and exhibit self-esteem” and that students “should act through a desire to succeed rather than a fear of failure while recognizing that failure is part of everyone’s experience.”³⁵ Desirable as it might be for every student to have such attitudes, it is difficult to see how they could be made the basis for educational standards or measured in an objective and reliable way.

Opponents of OBE were not opposed to high standards or to accountability for results, but they wanted to know who would set the standards and what they would seek to measure. They pointed to the work of William Spady, director of the High Success Network, an organization that provided services to school districts in designing “transformational outcome-based education” to change the attitudes and values of students in order, supposedly, to create a more just and tolerant generation than that of their parents.³⁶

While much of the anti-OBE rhetoric insisted that values are the exclusive concern of parents, in fact most parents want the school their children attend to make the development of character an important part of their mission. That does not mean that parents want government to dictate what forms that will take. Parents tend to make a distinction between their children’s school, even though it may be government-operated, and government itself. They want to trust the school – it would be hard to send their children off each morning if they did not – but that trust does not generally extend to the educational system of which it is a part. “New social movements of identity and lifestyle” have found it all too easy to influence centralized decision-making into adopting their agendas for education.

Paradoxically, the ability of school staff to form coherent communities expressing a shared understanding of education for life may be limited by efforts of government to require that they take on such agendas. It remains to be seen whether education officials can resist the temptation to set standards in such a form that they inhibit the distinctiveness which is a natural result of collaboration to shape the life of an individual school. Clear but limited outcome standards are what is needed.³⁷

More recent conflicts in the United States have been between religiously-conservative parents and local school authorities over programs about sexuality which seemed to call into question traditional mores and religious convictions. Conflicts are reported in Canada and in Finland as well.

Conclusion

As we have seen, most countries included in our survey prescribe some form of education for citizenship, whether conceived in political or in behavioral terms, or both, and most also make provisions for education in particular religious traditions; education about religious beliefs and customs is also often included in the curriculum in history and social studies. We have also seen that there are reasons to question whether curriculum content in either of these areas has a major effect upon beliefs and practices, though certainly such knowledge is an essential part of an adequate education. More significant, we have suggested, are the actual practices of schools. As political scientist Amy Gutman has pointed out,

[e]ffective education, which includes civic education cannot be pursued primarily through mechanisms of control, whether market or public control. To educate students effectively for citizenship, a democratic society needs to offer better choices, not only more choices, among less bureaucratic schools.³⁸

To put it in more concrete terms, children and youth learn to be responsible citizens (as Aristotle pointed out), not so much through the content of what they are taught as through the example of those they admire. Teachers who exemplify a dynamic balance of principled autonomy and loyalty to shared norms and purposes help their pupils to develop the same qualities. Nothing could be more important for educational policy than to encourage schools that allow their staff to exercise their professional judgment while aligning their efforts with those of their colleagues in service to a common mission, a mission based upon a shared understanding of the requirements of human flourishing. Whether this understanding has a secular or a religious basis is perhaps less important than that it be able to gain the trust of the families whose children are shaped by the school. Schools, and teachers, subjected to the prescriptions

of bureaucratic management are not free to develop these qualities, and thus are less capable of forming citizens.

Readers interested in the topic of education in character, values, and worldview may well, as a result, find more of interest in the section of each country profile concerned with the distinctiveness of schools than in the section on government prescription of teaching about values.

Endnotes

- ¹ Powell, Farrar & Cohen, 316
- ² Mortimore & others, 221, 273
- ³ Hill, Foster and Gendler, vii-viii
- ⁴ Bert, 48, 67, 107, 196-97.
- ⁵ Ferdinand Buisson, in Coq, 28.
- ⁶ Durkheim, 75, 155.
- ⁷ Glenn (2011).
- ⁸ Glenn (2012).
- ⁹ Berlin, 137.
- ¹⁰ Scheffer, 325.
- ¹¹ Roy, 183.
- ¹² Galston, 1-3.
- ¹³ Hart, 21.
- ¹⁴ Kekes, 215.
- ¹⁵ Dwyer, 164-5, 171.
- ¹⁶ Gutmann (1988), 65, 70.
- ¹⁷ Levinson (2012), 281.
- ¹⁸ Gutmann (1988), 287.
- ¹⁹ Gutmann (1988), 314.
- ²⁰ Schulz, Ainley, Fraillon, Kerr, and Losito, 251.
- ²¹ Anderson, 134.

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- ²² Schulz, Ainley, Fraillon, Kerr, and Losito, 253, 108.
- ²³ Schulz, Ainley, Fraillon, Kerr, and Losito, 103-4.
- ²⁴ Schulz, Ainley, Fraillon, Kerr, and Losito, 245, 256.
- ²⁵ Schulz, Ainley, Fraillon, Kerr, and Losito, 256.
- ²⁶ Schulz, Ainley, Fraillon, Kerr, and Losito, 245.
- ²⁷ Pennings, Sikkink, Wiens, Seel, and Van Pelt, 45, 28.
- ²⁸ Schulz, Ainley, Fraillon, Kerr, and Losito, 100.
- ²⁹ Nielsen, 69.
- ³⁰ Schulz, Ainley, Fraillon, Kerr, and Losito, 111.
- ³¹ See Vitz.
- ³² Walford, 147.
- ³³ Lamb, 93.
- ³⁴ See Glenn (1995).
- ³⁵ Chion-Kenney, 12.
- ³⁶ Manno, 5
- ³⁷ See Glenn (1998) for a fuller discussion of Outcome Based Education.
- ³⁸ Gutmann (2000), 88.

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