In the past two decades there has been a growing concern in politics and schools to pay more attention to norms and values. Teachers and schools are confronted with normative problems, school violence and students who sometimes seem to have lost their way when it comes to norms and values. Teachers play a crucial and exemplary role in the process of developing students’ awareness of norms and values in school and in society as a whole. This is a complex process that requires a great deal of moral courage of teachers. Confronted with an increase in the number of pedagogical duties the question arises what the teachers’ view is on their normative professionalism. The concept of teaching as a moral endeavour is a fundamental element in the series of studies presented in this book. One of the aims of this book is to be of importance for educational practice, educational policy and teacher education. It can be used in courses of pedagogy, curriculum studies and teacher education to stimulate the reflection about the practical consequences of the societal and educational policy debate about moral and democratic education for the daily work of the teacher. The common focus of this book is on the role of teachers, the moral courage which is demanded of them and the joint commitment with moral and democratic education.
Moral Courage and the Normative Professionalism of Teachers
Moral Development and Citizenship Education
Volume 3

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Moral Courage and the Normative Professionalism of Teachers

Edited By

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This book is an outgrowth of research activities and presentations of members and affiliates of the Special Interest Group (SIG 13) Moral and Democratic Education of the European Association of Learning and Instruction (EARLI).

The various research projects that are reported in this book give a profound insight into the professional, ethical and personal qualities which teachers need to possess in order to meet the social and moral expectations they are confronted with in present society, along with the cognitive aspects of the core business of education. In many countries teachers are expected to contribute to the development of moral and citizenship competencies of their students. Changes in society and in family structures and cultures have affected and broadened the tasks and responsibilities of teachers. Teachers are constantly reminded of their tasks in the field of norms and moral values and in relation to the family and other socializing agents. Being a teacher nowadays means that one needs the courage to keep to certain professional and moral standards, and to promote the development of moral norms and values in their students. Besides the braveness to do this, moral courage also points to the perseverance to stick to the goals that are oriented to the well being of the student who is in need of daily help and the power of the teacher to reach the cognitive, social and moral goals in the school place. A third and important aspect of the moral courage of teachers concerns the will and competence to function as a moral exemplar. Combining these three aspects, moral courage can be considered as an important element in the plea for a new professionalism in education.

In this volume we bring together both theoretical and empirical studies of leading researchers in the field of moral and democratic education. However, this book is not only aimed at scholars in the field of moral education. The book can also be used for other purposes. The book can also be considered as a guide for teachers who are trying to examine critically their own thinking as well as their own teaching practice in the field of moral and democratic education. The concept of teaching as a moral endeavour is a fundamental element in the series of studies presented in this book. One of the aims of this book is to be of importance for educational practice, educational policy and teacher education. It can be used in courses of pedagogy, curriculum studies and teacher education to stimulate the reflection about the practical consequences of the societal and educational policy debate about moral and democratic education for the daily work of the teacher. The common focus of this book is on the role of teachers, the moral courage which is demanded of them and the joint commitment with moral and democratic education.

Cees Klaassen
Nava Maslovaty
PREFACE

During the construction of this book my colleague and co-editor of this book, Nava Maslovaty, passed away in October 2009. Despite of her illness and suffering in the last period of her life, she has been a great collaborator and promoter of the present book. Nava really was a researcher. ‘She was expert in quantitative methods and her studies were always methodologically sound’, as professor Dr. Kirsi Tirri has stated in one of the ‘In Memoriam’ articles in the Sig 13 Newsletter on the Earli website. Indeed she was an intelligent, concerned, resolute and friendly colleague. I am grateful for the effective collaboration with her in publishing this book and I will remember the élan and diligence that were so characteristic of her.

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Cees Klaassen
In the past two decades there has been a growing concern in politics and schools to pay more attention to norms and values. Teachers and schools are confronted with normative problems, school violence and students who sometimes seem to have lost their way when it comes to norms and values. Teachers play a crucial and exemplary role in the process of developing students’ awareness of norms and values in school and in society as a whole. This is a complex process that requires a great deal of moral courage of teachers. Confronted with an increase in the number of pedagogical duties the question arises what the teachers’ view is on their pedagogical professionalism. There are teachers who believe that pedagogical duties in general and moral courage in particular should not be part of their identity. However, empirical research has also revealed that a number of teachers do believe that this specific task is important for them to be able to function competently (Klaassen, 2007). Other teachers point to the necessary moral courage and their psychological and pedagogical problems to act as a moral agent (Klaassen, 2002). Providing education is a highly normative activity, in the sense that education is always related to values (Buzelli & Johnston, 2002). Values can be interpreted as the principles that give meaning to human action. Values in general and norms in particular are always present in education (Jackson, et al. 1993, Fallona, 2000). Education is never value-free. The official curriculum contains many value-related aspects. In many cases it is the teacher who interprets these aspects and sets certain priorities. Research shows that a lot of teachers are becoming well aware of the influence they have when it comes to value formation. They see teaching also as ‘pedagogical’ or ‘moral’ teaching. They know that in their day-to-day work they are sending out a lot of morally-charged messages (Campbell, 2003; Hansen, 1995). Yet not all teachers are equally aware of that. In this regard, it is important to make a distinction between two types of professionalism. Stimulating the moral development of students, as intended above, requires a type of teacher who focuses on – in Hoyle’s words – ‘extended professionality’ (Hoyle, 1975). Contrary to ‘restricted’ professionals, teachers with an extended level of professionality are also involved in the organisation of the school, school policies and the overall school culture. Teacher with a restricted interpretation of professionalism predominantly focus on subject content and didactics. They also show low commitment to non-teaching related activities.
Teachers who only view their professionalism in terms of subject content often fail their pedagogical task. One teacher, interviewed for the research presented in the next chapter, made the following remark in this regard: “Many of my colleagues are hack teachers who avoid sensitive topics”. It is clear that value-focused education and teachers’ conduct in pedagogically difficult situations or so-called ‘critical incidents’ requires a certain amount of moral courage (Maas, Klaassen & Denessen, 2007). Not all teachers will be prepared for that. Teachers with a limited interpretation of professionalism also tend to cherish the traditional form of professional autonomy.

For some teachers, education’s first and only role is cognitive. They see subject content as the highest priority. Another category of teachers, who are more pupil-oriented than subject matter-oriented, focus on the connection between didactic and pedagogical professionalism. This category is aware of the changing role of teachers and the fact that teachers are increasingly expected to act as coaches of learning processes and as a moral educator in the best interests of the child/student. Research in this regard shows that a lot of these teachers are aware of their potential influence on norm and value formation of their students, on their socio-emotional development and citizenship formation. They believe that school education always involves teaching values (see e.g. Veugelers & de Kat, 2003). They believe that if teachers set the example this can have an important impact on teaching values. They claim to spend quite a lot of time on the stimulation of norms and values, discipline and behavioural corrections. In one of our qualitative surveys a secondary school teacher said that: “It is almost my main task”. Many teachers believe that they can fulfil their pedagogical task by: organising special value-committed or value-focused activities; by stimulating reflection on and, systematic discussions about norms and values during lessons, in the light of current affairs or, as a number of honest teachers admitted during in-depth interviews, by ‘simply’ transferring norms and values about respect, decent manners and similar, to their students. In this regard a number of teachers are also very aware of how to contribute to the moral formation of students by setting the example in terms of norms and values (Hansen, 2001). In addition, teachers can contribute to moral formation by addressing current social affairs at macro level in society or to value-charged problems closer at home. Then there is of course the ongoing occurrence of ‘critical incidents’ in the classroom and in and around the school, including discrimination, bullying, theft or vandalism, drug use and other forms of norm-transgressive behaviour.

Another aspect that is important in this respect is that in general the teaching profession is suffering from loss of status and is marred by a rise in the number of problems, which points to a deprofessionalising trend. Teachers have more and more become executives of externally defined regulations, demands and expectations. Furthermore, they are faced with an increase in curriculum pressure and internal and external demands. Paying more attention to the pedagogical duties is not an easy job in this professional climate and asks for moral courage more than once. The available empirical data show that many teachers in the Netherlands believe that pedagogical tasks are part of their professionalism (Klaassen, 2007).
But we should immediately add that they are also apprehensive. Also, many teachers believe it’s a difficult task. In-depth interviews have revealed that in secondary education, educational collaboration projects about value formation often fail because colleagues who teach other subjects and even pedagogy-oriented counsellors find it too hard to challenge students to deal with (moral) values and give up. They often claim that it should be part of pedagogical subjects such as religion, citizenship education, civics or social studies. Their apprehensions are also partly related to their belief that ‘many parents are not involved in their children’s education’. Many parents are too cautious when it comes to putting limits and making demands, they believe. That is why teachers are reticent about the reach of the school’s pedagogical task. They believe that the primacy of (moral) education lies at home. Developments like these have an important influence on the willingness of teachers to dedicate themselves to norm and values, to produce the required moral courage and willingness to acquire the competences that are needed.

To become aware of the moral aspects of their work requires a certain level of moral courage. Focussing on the moral courage of teachers it’s possible to identify three relevant viewpoints on this issue: 1. Moral courage and braveness in school. 2. Moral courage and perseverance and 3. Moral courage and will to set the example for norms and values. Moral courage is also necessary for discussing the behaviour and practices of others in and around the school. In this regard we should also analyse another aspect that strongly influences the pedagogical part of the professional identity of teachers in the context of today’s school and society: the phenomenon of school violence. Today’s education also frequently puts teachers’ physical courage to the test. Schools are faced with various forms of (overt) violence and anti-social behaviour, and with students who, in some cases, seem to have lost their way completely in respect of values and norms. Teachers try to avoid conflicts, to ensure safety and to train students in values and norms. In many cases, moral courage is necessary for the execution of these complex tasks. In an educational context, courage usually refers to fear, uncertainty and intimidation. In addition, there is a rise in the number of situations of violence and danger in schools. Those cases not only require teachers to have moral courage, but even physical courage. For example, between 2005 and 2006 the number of reports of sexual abuse, physical and psychological violence in Dutch schools has more than tripled, the available empirical figures show. And in the 2006 school year schools, students and parents have lodged 1400 complaints at specialised official ‘confidential grievance inspectors’ appointed by the central government. According to the central education inspectorate, the number of complaints about physical violence rose by almost 40 percent to 443 incidents in 2006. That year there were 168 reports of sexual abuse, a 13-percent increase. In 252 cases victims filed a report. This resulted in 35 convictions, 54 dismissals and 45 pupil dismissals. These figures underline that the pedagogical task of teachers cannot be detached from certain developments in society and that the performance of teachers, who prefer to identify themselves with the profile of a pure ‘subject teacher’, has also come under empiric pressure in this regard.
As we have seen there is a rise in the number of problems related to norms and values in schools, which has enforced the cry for more value-oriented education and specific behaviours and competences of teachers. In this book a series of research projects in the field of moral and democratic education are discussed that shed light on diverse aspects of value-oriented curriculum and education and moral courageous aspects of the daily work of teachers.

‘Teachers’ views and the need for moral courage’ is the title of a chapter written by Cees Klaassen in which he analyses the meaning of moral courage for normative professionalism as part of teachers’ professional identity. In this chapter he also presents the results of one of the first explorative studies on the different aspects of moral courage of teachers. This qualitative study focuses on the “teachers’ voice”. Almost all teachers interviewed for this study agreed that it takes moral courage to enforce school rules and to stimulate value formation by teachers. The moral courage visions of teachers are presented in different thematic categories like ‘moral courage and responsibility’, the ‘refusal of moral courage’ and the ‘moral courage relationships’ with students, teachers, parents and management. Attention is also paid to the theoretical aspects of moral courage as part of teachers’ pedagogical or normative professionalism. Moral courage does not only involve bravery and strength, but also persistence and perseverance in day-to-day teaching practices. A specific aspect of the moral courage of teachers in present society concerns the courage to function as a moral example to the students in the school and classrooms. More insight in the pedagogical tasks and experiences is needed to articulate moral courage into the day-to-day school practices, in word and in deed.

In the chapter ‘Human dignity – a multifaceted discourse in teacher education’, Anna Tappola addresses the concept of human dignity which can be considered to be of fundamental importance in moral education. Because this concept is full of alternative distinctions and controversies it can be helpful to stimulate moral reflection and to discuss principles of democratic educational systems. In the eyes of Anna Tappola, during their initial education, preservice teachers can develop insights and practical skills that address the concept of human dignity. The study that Tappola presents, consists of a discourse analysis; where discourse is understood as a phenomenon that lies between communicating actors, i.e., the preservice teachers that contributed to this study. A discourse is defined as a discursive construction that is built by the actors’ inter-subjective constituents (utterances). Consequently, the study is not an analysis of individual preservice teachers’ views. Rather, it is an analysis of a particular discourse, in this case the discourse of human dignity. The data consisted of letters (a 17,500 word corpus) where preservice teachers described and discussed their views on human dignity. In order to get a broad picture, the preservice teachers were asked to discuss the concept in relation to three stages: life before birth, life between birth and death, and human dignity after death. The data was analysed by Hallidayan Systemic Functional Linguistics and interpreted by key elements from Habermas’s Theory of Communicative Action. The findings show that at least five different sub-discourses are chosen by the preservice teachers to inform the Discourse of Human Dignity.
In the most prominent sub-discourse, human dignity appears to be closely linked to the status of the (problematic) human body. In the weakest sub-discourse, human dignity is an immanent property of all human beings, which represents an imperative and unconditional value that must be maintained, no matter the consequences. The last sub-discourse was the only alternative that explicitly relates to the UN’s ‘Universal Declaration of Human Rights’ as a motive or rationality of this sub-discourse. The study shows that a major part of the discourse under scrutiny was grounded on strategic rationality instead of Habermasian communicative rationality. At the end of the chapter Tappola discusses some significant implications of her study for teacher education.

In the chapter ‘Teacher perspectives on cultural diversity and citizenship education’ Dana Moree, Cees Klaassen and Wiel Veugelers discuss a research project that investigates education for citizenship and living with diversity in a so-called new democracy. In this chapter, the authors analyse and explain how in the Czech Republic political and educational changes have influenced and still influence teachers’ frameworks and practices in the field of cultural diversity and citizenship education. The Czech case is especially interesting because after the communist period in the Czech Republic, ‘multicultural education’ was chosen as a central and promising concept for preparing students for living in a diverse and global world. This remarkable educational policy initiative leads to the interesting question of how such a change process is actually realized in the specific political and historical context of the Czech Republic. Education for citizenship and living with diversity is one of the main aims of educational policy today, in many old and new democracies. Schools are expected to pay attention to citizenship education, which should not only be oriented to the formal aspects of national citizenship but also to cultural diversity and the world outside of the country. The currently required citizenship competencies are not purely political in nature, but are closely related to the social and moral development of students. Citizenship is concerned with the local personal surroundings of the citizen as well as the global world in which it is embedded. The development of citizenship in education needs to take these recent changes in the conception of citizenship into account, in the sense that the relation between morality and politics, cultural diversity and orientation on the global dimension are high on the agenda. In the so-called “new democracies,” where there was no open and democratic tradition regarding the goals and methods of citizenship education, the task of the teacher who is expected to stimulate citizenship is especially difficult. In these countries, educational aims such as trying to develop a moral conscience in their students and to stimulate students to contribute to social cohesion and cultural diversity is much more complex.). The authors show that in the Czech case, the different generations of teachers had very different life experiences, especially from the perspective of diversity, caused by the turbulent political changes of the last fifty years. That is why in the chapter the Czech context is analysed from the perspective of teachers’ generations. Different generations of teachers have different concepts of and different identifications with diversity. Their role is especially crucial, for they were and are expected to interpret the new elements of the revised curricula and to reformulate large parts of
the old curricula. In various qualitative research steps, the authors have tried to gain a deeper insight into the ways teachers from different generations cope with the new aims and methods in this important moral and political field of educational practice.

‘The relationship between media literacy studies and democratic and moral orientations among Israeli adolescents’. This research by Dorit Alt, Nava Maslovaty and Arie Cohen points to a very important and interesting field of study in the sphere of moral and democratic education. Media literacy pertains to the ability to access information via new technologies, analyse, evaluate and communicate messages using a wide variety of technologies in the information era. Researchers point to an organic connection between constructing media literacy skills and consolidating civic-democratic society. Due to scarcity of research regarding this connection, the aim of this study is to examine the relationship between media literacy skills as reflected in a high school Mass Media curriculum and democratic citizenship among adolescents. Participants were 182 high school students from Mass Media study track and other study tracks. The methodology employed in the study includes a combination of quantitative and qualitative instruments. One of the interesting and practically relevant findings of this study is that students in the Mass Media track perceived the classroom climate as more open to discussion about political issues. The students in this specific track perceived the curriculum as promoting democratic values to a significantly greater extent than students in the other study tracks. Mass Media students also participated significantly more in volunteer organizations inside and outside of school than students in the other tracks. The set of connections between media literacy and civic orientations suggests that the implementation of media literacy teaching methods increases a classroom climate that is open to discussion about political and social issues; this perception of school democracy contributes to increased political involvement.

In the chapter with the title ‘Moral education in school: Teachers’ authority and students’ autonomy’ Brigitte Latzko from Universität Leipzig in Germany aims to introduce a teacher training for moral education in classrooms. Based on the findings of various research projects on moral emotions, emotional autonomy and teachers’ authority she draws a theoretical framework of how teachers can foster moral development in their classroom. Latzko starts her chapter with a description of the influence of Lawrence Kohlberg on the German work on moral education. In Germany most of the interventions focus on cognitive aspects, which according to Latzko is overly narrow and fails to take account of the bold changes in modern western societies in the course of globalization. In the eyes of Latzko it therefore is necessary to adapt the goals and purpose of moral education to the demands of multicultural societies and to pay more attention to different aspects of the moral self. Within this perspective she introduces a theoretical framework of a teacher training which addresses several dimensions of moral development: moral judgment, moral emotions, emotional autonomy and students’ conceptions of teachers’ authority. Besides that Latzko want to sensitize teachers for the fact that the profession of teaching is moral in its nature and education is not an additional task. The theoretical framework of the educational program that Latzko presents is based
on the findings of her research projects on moral emotions, emotional autonomy and teachers’ authority. In her chapter she reports the main results of three research studies and she derives implications for her teacher training on moral education in classrooms.

‘Teaching religions and world views in a plural society. Teachers in-between society and students’ is the title of a chapter in which Wiel Veugelers presents an explorative study of the pedagogical and didactical position of teachers of the subject area ‘religion and world view’ in the dynamic environment of present society. His study includes a review of the available literature and interviews with teachers and experts. On the basis of the literature he shows that this school subject is confronted with several different influences. Veugelers refers to the expression of denominational and pedagogical views by the school; the cultural and religious characteristics and views of students and their parents, and the requirements of society, for young people to become democratic citizens. The complex relations between these various influences may cause complex tensions for the teachers of this subject. In the theoretical part of his study Veugelers presents an overview of four interesting models of the relations between religion (or broader concept of ‘world view’) and education: a) Educating for a world view; b) Learning about different world views; c) Personal development of a world view within a tradition; d) Personal development of a world view within a democratic framework. In the research part of the chapter Veugelers focuses on the views, experiences and practical solutions that teachers have gathered to cope with this complex school subject. One of his conclusions is that present teaching conditions are not in favour of reflective and dialogical learning processes. A lot of work still has to be done to bridge the gap between world view, pluralism and identity development.

Schools are important socialization agents for developing identities and transmitting culture in pluriform or heterogeneous societies. In the next chapter this function of education is illustrated by a research project which was carried out in Israel which is a well known example of such a heterogeneous society. This study by Eli Shitreet, Yaakov Iram, Nava Maslovaty of Bar Ilan University, Israel is titled: ‘Acculturation processes in school and their contribution to scholastic, social and behavioural adaptation of immigrant youth’. The aim of this research was to examine the relationship between the different absorption approaches used in Israel’s education system to absorb Ethiopian immigrant students, and the immigrants’ degree of scholastic, social and behavioural adaptation. Schools in Israel operate based on two educational models with respect to immigrant students: the “assimilation” model and the “integration” model. The authors found that the greater a school’s commitment to an integrative approach, the higher the degree of student adaptation; and conversely, in schools that utilized an assimilation approach, students showed lower levels of adaptation. Studies like these can illuminate the effectivity of different models or strategies of immigrant absorption and adaptation on different levels. Theoretically guided empirical information on these matters has a very practical significance for student development, schools and societies at large.
The relation between values education and knowledge acquisition is the central theme of the next chapter of Jean-Luc Patry, Sieglinde Weyringer and Alfred Weinberger. They are doing research in the context of the so-called VaKE approach which is about Values and Knowledge Education (VaKE). This approach consists of a constructivist method for learning and teaching in which values education and knowledge acquisition are combined. In their research they investigated native vs non-native speakers who participated in VaKE in European summer camps for gifted students. As the authors clearly explain in their chapter VaKE has been applied to stimulate the value aspects in decision making processes in different learning situations from Kindergarten through different school levels and types to university. One issue that repeatedly proved to be critical was the use of language because VaKE means to present arguments in favor or against issues; to do so in a foreign language is very difficult and may hinder the process of deliberation. The authors discuss these problems from the perspective of the theory of social adaption of language. In the first part of their chapter the researchers present the theoretical base of VaKE and their experiences with structured value discussions in international summer camps for gifted students. In the second part the research hypotheses, and the special methodological approach is discussed. The research question focuses on the question how the competence in speaking the main language of the camps influences the cognitive, social, emotional and moral aspects of the VaKE process; for this, native and non-native speakers participating in VaKE summer camps are compared. The chapter gives a good impression of the way in which value discussions can be initiated and researched in a sophisticated way.

The chapter of Anna Tapola and Lena Fritzén is devoted to teacher education and the problematic separation between (i) traditional subject matter instruction, and (ii) traditional learning and instruction of general core competences for teachers. The chapter is titled: ‘On the Integration of Moral and Democratic Education and Subject Matter Instruction’. The separation between the two areas of subject matter instruction and general core competencies is problematic because of its biased consequences. In order to counteract this unfortunate separation, the authors suggest an integrative approach. According to them an integrative approach can have benefits, for example, for the contextualisation of moral and democratic aspects in subject matter education. Their version of an integrative approach involves three key factors, namely ‘Bildung’, ‘emancipatory knowledge interest’, and ‘the school’s double assignment’ (i.e., to communicate knowledge about subject matter and to contribute to the democratic upbringing of the learners). In their chapter the authors clarify their own positions with regard to these imperative concepts. Their aim is to discuss whether a certain subject matter contains an intrinsic democratic potential that also addresses moral aspects, and to ascertain whether an integrative approach can facilitate the realisation of this potential. In order to explore the integrative approach they provide an empirical example which emanates from an educational sequence in a teacher education programme in Sweden in which 257 preservice teachers carried out a dilemma exercise. The exercise involved biology subject matter as well as moral and democratic aspects. The data in their survey consists of a sample of the questionnaires that the preservice
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teachers used for evaluating the exercise. The data was subject to quantitative analysis. The results of the survey suggest that within the subject of biology there is a democratic potential that can advance moral and democratic education.

In the following chapter on ‘The effects of personal background on civic concepts, attitudes and activities among high school students’ the Israeli researchers Dorit Alt, Nava Maslovaty and Arie Cohen discuss the results of their investigation on the relation of the personal background (gender and ethnic origin) of high school students to the system of civic-democratic concepts, attitudes and activities. Empirical information about these relationships is very important in multicultural societies that cope with the problem of decreasing social cohesion in these societies. This particularly applies to environments with many socially and culturally different population groups. These societies face the problem of integrating groups from highly varied cultures into a civil society with well defined behavioural norms, a common language and a clear conception of political rights and obligations, without coercing these groups to give up their own sense of cultural identity. Indeed, one of the core problems of moral and democratic education in multicultural societies concerns the question how to cope with the diversity of their citizens and yet have or construct an overarching set of shared values, ideals and goals to which all of their citizens are committed. The research project that is presented in this chapter aims to explore the relationships among gender, ethnic origin, and social cohesion and diversity, using the questionnaire of the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA) Civic Study. Studies like these show that schools play and can play an important role in the process of integrating young people into democratic society. Ethnic origin differences were found with relation to social cohesion and diversity. Students of western and mixed origins were found to be more supportive of equal opportunities for immigrants and women. Although no significant ethnic origin differences were found in concepts of government integrity, freedom of choice and social equality, the results showed that students of western and mixed origins supported freedom of expression, liberal and pluralistic values more than the Oriental origin group. The authors try to explain these kind of differences by reference to a lot of important theoretical and policy notions and empirical evidence. So according to them the just mentioned differences may be explained by the lack of a democratic tradition in the countries from which the Oriental students’ families immigrated, and by competition for resources among lower socio-economic groups. The study discussed in this interesting chapter only focused on two background variables; however, other variables, such as expected further education and home literacy resources, were found by the IEA study as positively connected to future civic participation. Therefore, the authors plea for a comprehensive model that reflects the relationship between background variables and civic knowledge and engagement among adolescents. The study also suggests examining ways to encourage civic engagement among adolescent women, emphasizing the role of school in this process. Regarding ethnicity, school can also motivate toward more positive, multicultural attitudes among ethnic groups. This could be achieved by cultivating positive concepts of democratic citizenship in the school and the classroom while integrating citizenship education into the regular curriculum.
In the chapter that is written by Dimitris Pnevmatikos of the University of Western Macedonia in Greece, the concept of social justice is investigated in a moral developmental perspective. The title of his chapter refers to a question: ‘Do children account their personal relevance on social justice inferences?’ Starting point of this research is the idea that the concept of ‘social justice’ can be perceived and interpreted in different ways. Most of the people imagine and expect a world which affords individuals and groups fair treatment and an impartial share of the benefits and the advantages or the disadvantages within the society. There is a different interpretation, however, for what constitutes fair treatment and an impartial share, while there is great scepticism for the possibility to find an objective standard of social justice. Research has revealed different factors that influence people’s perception of justice when making decisions to allocate resources. In this chapter Pnevmatikos wants to investigate the possible different interpretations and how they are influenced by egocentric biases. People assess aspects of the environment that are relevant for them personally and judge in a different way the events, considering their subjective advantage. The aim of his quantitative research is to investigate how children do consider their personal relevance of the event when they have to decide about the distribution of justice in a usual school event. Children were asked to propose a way for sharing an amount of money to a group of students who were not equally working for a task in their class. Then children were asked to propose the fairness way to share the money. From the results of the study it becomes clear that, even young children have a sophisticated framework on which they base their social inferences. Another remarkable result is that, contrary to many other investigations in this sphere, this study shows that there is not such a developmental progression in which the recipients’ needs are the end point of the distributed justice development.

In the chapter with the title ‘The ideal affective extended domain traits as perceived by education students’ the Israel scholars Nava Maslovaty, Mordechai Miron & Arie Cohen direct attention to the affective aims of education. The purpose of this study is to investigate how students of education and prospective teachers perceived traits of the ideal affective domain. The taxonomies of Bloom, Krathwohl and Masia were the basis and inspiration for defining the traits of the ideal high school student. In spite of worldwide awareness of the taxonomies, the taxonomy of the affective domain (Krathwohl, Bloom & Masia, did not gain the same success as the taxonomy of the cognitive domain (Bloom, Krathwohl and Masia, 1956), in defining educational aims, as an orientation for teaching strategies, and as a basis for the structure of test questions. This research examines the perception of ideal high school student traits in the affective domain, following, and expanding on, the taxonomy of Krathwohl, Bloom and Masia. The definition of teachers’ beliefs with regard to pedagogical concepts can be conceived as a way to understand teachers’ professional development. The assumption underlying this chapter is that the “ideal student” trait system, as perceived by undergraduate education students, prospective teachers and practicing teachers, is an operational definition of their educational goals. In this chapter, the authors examine the theory of the affective domain through Facet Theory (Guttman), in order to confirm and expand it to include additional aspects.
In the last chapter of the book, Cees Klaassen addressed and analysed ‘The professional ethos of teachers’ and presents an instrument – the so-called ethos procedure – which can stimulate the reflection on the ethical aspects of teachers actions. The pedagogical assignment of the school concerns the general personality development of students, their socio-emotional development, citizenship education and the moral development of students. These aims and claims form an integral part of the professional profile of teachers. In this chapter an instrument is presented that can help teachers to reflect upon the ethical dimensions of their daily activities. Information on the ethical component in the professional profile of the teacher closes a gap in the basis of knowledge about teachers (Campbell, 1996). According to Strike (1996) schools should be communities that propagate ethical discussions. He gives ‘trust’, ‘caring,’ and ‘integrity’ as important principles. According to Oser and Althof (1993) three aspects are essential in the professional identity of teachers: ‘effectiveness, thoughtfulness and responsibility’. In the instrument especially the theme of responsibility is elaborated. This responsibility comes to the fore in the various ethical questions that the teacher is confronted with. Which ethical principles does the teacher follow? In what way does the teacher try to justify ethically his or her own actions? How does the teacher tackle the ethical side of his or her work? The instrument consists of different activities which teachers can apply to think and act in a systematic way about the ethical dimension of their own work situation and professional experiences. The ‘ethos-procedure’ instrument can also assist teachers in their reflection and dialogue with colleagues about the ethical factor in their day-to-day activities and decisions.

REFERENCES


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2. TEACHERS’ VIEWS AND THE NEED FOR MORAL COURAGE

INTRODUCTION

This chapter focuses on the meaning of ‘moral’ courage from a first theoretical and empirical perspective, making use of ‘the teachers’ voice’. Courage in itself is not an intrinsic moral category. Hence, the addition of the adjective ‘moral’ is not required. Courage is a specific behavioural human expression and/or disposition. But as such, courage can also be oriented towards or used for moral issues, which affects the well-being of others. Focussing on the moral courage of teachers we believe it’s possible to identify four relevant viewpoints on this issue: 1. Moral courage and normative professionalism. 2. Moral courage and the courage and will to set the example for norms and values. 3. Moral courage and perseverance and 4. Moral courage and braveness in school. The article analyses the meaning of moral courage for normative professionalism as part of teachers’ professional identity.

THE PHENOMENON OF COURAGE

The phenomenon courage and the notion of courageous behaviour will be familiar themes for those who study history and/or literature. Descriptions of other cultures also frequently refer to the phenomenon of courage. Courage appears to be a universal value that is common to and appreciated by all cultures. Courage is a mental attitude used to tackle the dangers along the road, fearlessly, persistently and fully prepared. Courageous people are not cowardly and they refuse to be intimidated. They dare to acknowledge and tackle difficulties. Courageous people also don’t flee. On the contrary, they are prepared to take big risks, without being reckless. It is interesting to point out that courage is not always required in every situation. Courage only comes in when things get really difficult. Finally, courageous behaviour is characterised by a refusal to give in to popularity.

In earlier times courage (and particularly heroic courage) was considered very important. Many museums have paintings with scenes centred on courage. There are numerous literary descriptions of the heroic endeavours of all sorts of warriors. They confronted danger and were honoured afterwards and given due recognition. Martyrdom then came within reach. We all know the famous ancient Greek sagas and stories in which courage and the courageous behaviour of, for example,
Odysseus play a prominent role. But we also have the medieval knight courageously defending his beloved. Children’s books are also a good source for courageous and brave heroes. There are many famous stories about the equally courageous and proud Indians in North and South America. Courage and daring are also important recurring themes in both romanticised and cruelly realistic war movies. TV reports from current war zones and military interventions repeatedly refer to the phenomenon of courage. Having physical courage means being willing and daring to tackle physical challenges. In many of the above mentioned cases courage is presented as the character trait of a heroic person. Courage as a character trait refers to an easier acceptance of one’s fears to face pain or setbacks. In some publications courage is expressly interpreted as a psychological trait. In the research publications of psychologists Peterson and Martin Seligman (2004), for example, moral courage is identified as one of the most important elements on a list of ‘character strengths’ they found in almost all cultures. Here ‘courage’ refers to notions such as ‘bravery’, ‘persistence’, ‘integrity’ and ‘vitality’. Traditionally, philosophy has always regarded courage as a remarkable ‘virtue’. See the expositions of Greek philosophers such as Aristotle and Plato and early-Christian thinkers like Augustine and Thomas Aquinas. Roman-catholic religious studies see courage as one of the four ‘cardinal virtues’. These four classical virtues are: Prudence, Justice, Temperance and Fortitude (sometimes referred to as ‘Strength’).

Courage is also considered one of the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit. In the 4th century BC the Greek philosopher Aristotle already describes the concept of moral courage. According to Aristotle (English translation, Rackham, 2000) cowardice and recklessness are the two opposite ends of the courage spectrum. The search for a golden middle road, for the right balance, is not just a matter of measurement and calculation. It is not good to decide beforehand where the good middle lies… but it is important to know what is too little and what is too much. Courage is a sensible attitude combined with a preparedness to take risks. Recklessness points to a lack of reflection (headless chicken) and cowardice refers to a lack of willingness to take risks (going on the run). One can find the middle of the road in a sensible way by using reason to judge situations, i.e. by using the required prudence. Aristotle believes that only people who have the ‘intellectual virtue’ of maturity can be morally virtuous. Prudent people are capable of adopting the right approach located between these two thoughtless extremes. Courage, however, goes beyond maturity and the willingness and capacity to take risks is equally important. Courage or braveness is the ability to handle fear, pain, danger, uncertainty or intimidation. Physical courage involves tackling violent or dangerous situations. In addition to physical courage there is moral courage, which is related to an attitude of being involved with other people. It is this involvement with the well being of others (e.g. the best interests of the child/student) that turns courage into more than a socially desirable characteristic, i.e. into moral virtue.

The role of courage in today’s society has somewhat changed. Today, the average day-to-day life requires less physical courage than in the past. It may still be required exceptionally, but only in extreme situations, e.g. at times of war. Still,
even today, for example in certain subcultures, courageous behaviour is appreciated, like in some criminal groups. Physical courage involves having the will and daring to tackle physical challenges. Physical courage involves a preparedness to risk your life. Nowadays, courage is displayed by accepting all sorts of sports challenges or, for example, by taking part in survival trips or acting dangerously. Here courage involves the will to tackle extreme difficulties and the daring to face dangers. You are prepared to overcome your fears, to fight for something and refuse to withdraw like a coward. You want to intervene and have the daring to do so.

MORAL COURAGE OF TEACHERS

We can make a distinction between physical and moral courage. Unlike physical courage, moral courage does not involve facing physical challenges that could hurt the body. Moral courage refers to mental challenges that could harm someone’s reputation, emotional well-being, integrity or self-image. The challenges lie in the moral domain and they involve our most important moral values. Values are the principles that shape our lives. Values can refer to different domains, such as politics (with its authoritative division of power) or economics (division of various types of goods). In addition to moral values, we can also identify aesthetic values. Moral values refer to good and bad, acting right and wrong and related intentions and/or effects. The moral domain these values refer to is based on a conception of ‘a good life’ as a guiding principle to act in a morally justified way. In other words, moral courage refers to a form of courage focused on the domain of good and bad, of acting right and wrong. Its benchmarks are a conception of a good life and the well-being of others and yourself.

Moral courage requires a preparedness and ability to defend your own principles in public. Expressing your own moral judgment requires conscious efforts and courage. When asked about your morality you should also express your own norms and values. This mental attitude, this perseverance and willingness to step forward and accept challenges, are at the heart of moral courage. Moral courage involves daring to present and ‘fight for’ your own principles. Unsurprisingly, the term moral courage is often used in connection with, for example, people who dare to intervene in cases of senseless violence. The notion of moral courage is also used in discussions about the protection of Jews during World War II. Other famous examples of people with moral courage are Martin Luther King and Rosa Park, who opposed racial discrimination in public transport in the Southern US (Kidder, 2006).

Bonhoeffer and Tillich (1962) belong to the interesting tradition of a few remarkable ‘contemporary’ theologians who have studied the phenomenon of moral courage and can be fruitful for further research on the moral courage of teachers. In recent years, the term moral courage has also been associated with so-called ‘whistleblowers’ who became famous after they had dared to expose malpractices and secret illegal practices. The ethical implications of these developments might also be of use for the further exploration of moral courage of teachers.
In this explorative study we verify to what extent teachers dare to start moral discussions with their students and what the school’s influence on this is. The research question is, as described above: Are teachers willing and capable of talking to students/participants and to address norms and values? To what extent can this be related to the identity/core values of the school, taking into account the background of the student/participant?

This study is based on the idea that teachers should be willing and able to address value-related issues in morally relevant situations and to make students aware of the rules of social interaction.

The objective of this research project is to gain more insight into moral courage among teachers. To that purpose, we have conducted an explorative and qualitative survey among teachers and other experts in the ROC-sector (regional training centre). The results of this preliminary study of moral courage among teachers (the teachers’ voice) have been used to try and gain more insight into a number of aspects related to moral courage in their daily professional activities. Through a number of panel discussions attempts have been made to let teachers reflect on moral courage at work. This includes both the classroom context and the school as a whole. The moral role of teachers has been revealed in various interactive situations. Probably the most important aspect is the way teachers approach students. Interaction with parents also plays an important role together with moral courage issues involving other colleagues and school management. Teacher-management interaction often involves the ethical aspects of the own organisation.

The panel discussions with selected experts in the area of van moral and general education were held in three different locations in the Netherlands, i.e. Zwolle, Amsterdam and Ede. The discussions were preceded by a number of one-to-one interviews with ROC teachers (vocational training for students aged 16 and older). A number of discussions involved researchers specialised in the area of norms and values and the pedagogical assignment of schools. A total of 26 people participated in the data collection process for this new research area. The experts and the panel discussion participants were selected using various criteria, including knowledge and experience in the area of denominative, ethical and philosophical issues. We also approached members of an existing platform that deals with identity issues within the ROC sector. By using these methods of individual in-depth interviews and panel discussions, we obtained a large number of statements about aspects of the phenomenon of moral courage in the school environment. The discussions have all been recorded and protocolled. On the basis of this recorded information an analysis was made, using the theoretical hypothesis and operationalizations of the research question. The analysis of the research data produced a number of new indicators and aspects of moral courage. It should be mentioned here that this study focuses a preliminary exploration of the phenomenon moral courage and that it is, by no means, an attempt to give a complete and definitive picture of moral courage. We should also point out that the statements selected for the analysis do not give a representative view of what the average teacher thinks about moral courage. Our aim was not to contact the broadest possible representation of
teachers of different subjects working in the ROC sector. The intention of our explorative study was merely to get a first impression of ‘possibly’ available opinions on this research theme and its relevant aspects. This diversity in opinions and practices may be relevant for policy making and further research in this field.

This presentation of different aspects of moral courage starts with an analysis of the importance teachers give to moral courage in connection with their normative professionalism. This is followed by an analysis of the theme moral courage and responsibility. We then address the relationship between moral courage and teachers’ autonomy. After that we give an exposition of moral courage towards colleagues and the meaning of teamwork. Finally, we discuss the relationship between the moral courage of teachers and school management and the importance of school policy in this regard.

THE IMPORTANCE OF MORAL COURAGE

One of the panel discussions revealed a number of important aspects of the issue ‘moral courage of teachers’. The participating experts are part of a platform which, during the last few years, has frequently discussed moral dilemmas encountered by schools and teachers, such as images and content of certain programmes on MTV and TMF or the lyrics of a rap song deemed inappropriate by some. These kinds of situations obviously lead to the question ‘how should teachers handle that?’

Therefore, the people concerned are very interested in the theme ‘moral courage’. Some participants had very clear ideas about the meaning of moral courage: “For me, moral courage means having clear principles and daring to express them in front of students and colleagues”. Another discussion participant gave a more elaborate description: “The word moral courage means daring to stand up for your own norms and values and showing in front of the class what you think it is all about. But there is another layer: just letting others know what you stand for is only part of the story. Courage shows that you are brave and that you have guts. You are running a risk. If you say you think red is a nice colour then that’s an opinion, but there are no risks involved. You also need to dare and make it an issue”.

The discussions clearly showed that moral courage is an important contributor to students’ moral development and that moral courage is required to introduce youths to society’s system of norms and values: “with moral courage you stand up for society”. One teacher said that moral courage in school is needed to fight against the general degradation of society. This includes bicycle theft, bad language and bad habits. Another teacher commented: “When a student crosses a red light or is spitting all the time, then this sends out a bad signal. It becomes a negative example for others and his fellow students. You must make students aware of the things that are really not acceptable. You have to make it clear to them that if they also want a better society, they need to set a good example”.

The question if this was not a form of patronising of students produced a number of intriguing answers: “Morality is not the sole propriety of preachers or the Pope” and “That left-wing church has always pretended not to be moralistic”. With the phrase ‘the left-wing church’ this teacher refers to the socialist and social-democratic
parties in the Dutch parliament). The following statement can certainly give rise to further definitions and reflection: “Each form of education is moralistic and paternalistic.”.

**MORAL COURAGE AND RESPONSIBILITY**

The in-depth interviews and panel-discussions that were held for this study also clearly reveal the opinion that it’s the teacher’s responsibility to provide moral formation for students and to draw attention to norms and values: “You also have a moral duty” and “if you don’t try, it’s a missed opportunity”. Furthermore, some teachers point out that they stimulate citizenship competences among students in secondary vocational schools: “some students have a different morality which they defend. This causes clashes in school because they stick to their viewpoint and morality and do not adjust to the school’s morality”.

One of the teachers described the pedagogical role of teachers in the field of moral reflection and norms and values as follows: “you must be prepared to act like a rubbing post”. In other words, teachers must start a debate with students to make a contribution to their moral formation. This can be organised in a systematic and structured way by initiating value-centred discussions about lesson content. It can also be done by correcting students in ‘critical incident’ situations. In other words, teachers should not shy away from being educationalists, according to a number of panel members: “You must act pedagogically”, they say. By doing so, you are also unintentionally setting an example for many students. Reflection on the potential educational effects of displaying virtuous behaviour is important for the moral formation of students (Campbell, 2006).

During the panel discussions the teachers put a remarkable focus on this role-model concept: “role-models are extremely important” they believe. The role-model of teachers, parents, school leaders etcetera can, in principle, have both a positive and negative socialising influence. Our orientation interviews and panel-discussions did not produce many examples of positive influence. This is quite remarkable, because moral courage is often put in connection with striking example situations. One of the panel participants did give a clear illustration of a ‘negative’ variant: “There was one school party when the teachers were all drinking and having a good time, while inside there was mayhem”. The discussions did show the importance of being consistent toward students for pedagogical reasons: “If the school has decided that students cannot eat or drink in the classroom teachers should also respect this rule. If mobiles have to be switched off teachers should leave theirs switched off as well etc. that is what teachers’ exemplary behaviour is about”. Another teacher added that: “If you take students seriously, they will also take you seriously. My son has explained to me that lectures doesn’t have any effect.” The attitude and actions of teachers must set an example for students. This is something the discussion partners all agreed on. But the question that kept hovering over the discussion was whether teachers who do not stick their neck out in certain ‘critical situations’ because of a lack of moral courage set a negative example.
As mentioned above, moral courage can be seen as an aspect of teachers’ extended professionalism (Hoyle, 1975). In the case of restricted professionalism, the focus is on the direct performance of subject-oriented teachers in their own classes. The latter teachers describe their interpretation in a very clear statement: “I am a subject teacher and nothing more”. They have a restricted interpretation of their pedagogical responsibility and it does not extend beyond their classroom into the school as a whole: “these are my four walls”.

Teachers with a restricted interpretation want to obtain and maintain the highest possible level of autonomy. This is the traditional interpretation of professional autonomy. This form of individualistic autonomy has been extensively described in sociological studies about the teaching profession. From a sociological viewpoint, the most important characteristic of this profession is its autonomy. In the Netherlands, the teaching profession has been dominated over the years by a segmented autonomy at the primary process level. Outside the classroom this autonomy has never been that big. That is why sociologists often describe the teaching profession as a ‘semi-profession’. During the last decennia we have seen two developments, which have put pressure on the traditional autonomy of teachers. Due to numerous educational reforms the urge (or pressure) for teachers to work together has increased over the years. Collaboration makes it possible to achieve certain desired educational targets, but it can also increase the professional expertise of teachers. Because of this the individualistic form of autonomy of some teachers has become or is becoming a new form of autonomy which points to a ‘collaborative’ school culture, as described by Andy Hargreaves (1994). It may be important to work on such a collaborative culture to promote the pedagogical professionalism of teachers and to stimulate their moral courage.

The restricted autonomy model is not shared by most of the purposively selected experts and discussion participants, but they do clearly notice it among colleagues. They mentioned a number of wide-ranging reasons behind a restricted interpretation of professionalism:

Some teachers find it hard to work on this issue with colleagues. This may have to do with the way in which they wish to handle in case of pedagogical issues: “That’s fine, but I will do it my way”.

It may also be that teachers do not really see the benefits of working together with their colleagues on the pedagogical aspects of their duty: “If teachers correct each other with regard to issues related to norms and values, it is often seen as ‘moaning’ and that is not what they want”.

There are also teachers who have reflected on the issue and deliberately opt for a solo and more autonomous form of pedagogical functioning. In this connection we find statements like: “The school’s morality is not my morality”.

The discussions also clearly showed that some colleagues believe that: “This is not my responsibility”. In this regard, some participants pointed out that a commitment to your pedagogical duty also requires a certain level of moral courage: “If teachers
are willing to put their views on certain issues on the table, it will be easier to have discussions about moral norms and values. Therefore, this willingness is also a form of moral courage”.

If teachers’ professional views are characterised by a solo interpretation of autonomy there will limited willingness to call colleagues to account to discuss pedagogical or moral cases. This is even more the case when the school’s culture supports this attitude: “In what position are you then, to correct the behaviour of another teacher! Some teachers say bad things about other teachers behind their backs. You feel you need to call them to account. But it is a very difficult thing to do”.

MORAL COURAGE TOWARDS COLLEAGUES

As we have seen, moral courage also plays a role in the interaction with colleagues. Some respondents in this study said that “it is very difficult to call your colleagues to account on these kinds of issues”. One teacher gave an example of this. She believes that teachers should also set the example for students in terms of clothing. She thinks that it should also be accepted to call colleagues to account on the clothes they wear. She has never dared to say to female colleagues with a low cleavage “Shouldn’t you be wearing something warmer”. This example clearly shows that the professional opinions of teachers are strongly connected to their personal identity. In some schools teachers find it often difficult to confront each other with their pedagogical behaviour and with norms and values in general. “If you call your colleagues to account on a personal title certain colleagues may do the same with you. They will feel threatened and will start steering clear of certain issues”. One teacher made a distinction between moralising behaviour inside and outside the classroom. “I do have the courage to address certain issues inside the classroom. But I dare not say anything if I see a colleague throw a plastic coffee cup out of his car window”.

Another teacher came up with a pregnant example of moral courage towards fellow teachers: “A colleague of mine was appointed as project coordinator and spent lots of money on things that were completely irrelevant or that were going to be used for completely different purposes. On the one hand you can understand why he does that, but it is public money that should be spent on reform projects. Money is also needed for that”.

In the discussion about concrete examples of moral courage one of the teachers said she once heard one of her colleagues tell students: “If you haven’t been raised as a Christian then you never had a real upbringing”. It requires moral courage to then tell that colleague “What you are saying is not true”. This example shows that some teachers feel very strongly about their own values en that they also think these values are important for their students. For many teachers of ROC schools religion is part of their personal identity. For them it is also part of their credibility towards others. “But that does not mean that you can just impose your own religion on your students”. Another teacher remarked that: “Moralising does not achieve anything”.

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THE NEED FOR MORAL COURAGE

MORAL COURAGE AND TEAMWORK

According to this study, moral courage should not be seen as an individual matter, but it should be supported by school management as part of a systematic and well-considered pedagogical school policy: "It is important that moral courage can be placed in a community". We have already addressed the meaning of a school’s identity and other aspects of a school’s culture. Before we have a closer look at the important role of school policies and school management as a form of inspiration and legitimisation for moral courage among teachers, we will first discuss the importance of collaboration in ‘morally critical situations’ in school and in the classroom. In this study, the participating teachers repeatedly stressed the importance of teamwork for the displaying of moral courage and for the formation of norms and values in students: "what is your influence if the environment is non collaborative". The pedagogical duty is not an individual affair: "Courageous teachers can go under if there is lack of support from the school team". They explicitly advocate broad support, otherwise teachers who act as educationalists are ‘bowling alone’: "It is difficult to enforce norms and values in school when not all the teachers apply the rules to students with equal rigour".

The need for conscious and well-prepared school policies is supported by almost all the teachers we interviewed for this study. To that purpose, it is important to reflect together on the guiding values and the joint rules in and outside the school: "Teachers should share the same norms and values and feel comfortable with the school rules. That way there will be no conflicts between teachers about rules that are not being applied because the whole team supports these rules". We believe that this reflection also needs to take into account what the teachers have said about the need for a certain level of individual autonomy. Think about teachers who have a completely personal interaction style with students which, although it differs from the common factor, is effective and does not obstruct other colleagues: "I am already doing it, but very differently than my colleagues".

The main importance of pulling together is that it helps create a consistent student policy: "Think for example about how students should be received in the classroom when the lesson starts and how this is handled". Another teacher: "These rules, agreements and changes must be made by a team". But pulling together and jointly formulating and enforcing agreements is also important in connection with support for colleagues and the workload of individual teachers: "If a teacher has to decide each time how far a situation can or is allowed to go, it will only become more difficult for him to intervene". We believe that, from a policy viewpoint, this statement by one of the discussion panel members deserves a lot of attention. In the general discussion about the teaching profession certain issues, such as salaries, career prospects and, to a smaller degree, work pressure, rightly get a lot of attention. However, other issues that are existential for teachers’ pride about their profession, their satisfaction and security hardly get any attention. Think about, for example, issues such as what is ethically important for them to do, or their pedagogical relation to groups of students. The following is a relevant remark about this issue: "If there is no moral courage among teachers there can be no moral courage relationship between teachers and students". With regard to the
latter relationship it is interesting to present another thought-provoking statement made by one of the panel members: “There is moral courage, but there is also moral duty. If a teacher feels threatened and intimidated by certain students then the students probably won’t feel safe either. As a teacher you then have a duty to protect those students”.

MORAL COURAGE, SCHOOL POLICY AND SCHOOL MANAGEMENT

One of the most remarkable aspects of this study is that teachers who display moral courage feel they are not sufficiently supported in this by the school policy: “Yes, it’s always the same people who show moral courage, but nothing is done with it”. Another teacher with a similar experience said: “You get the impression that your colleagues or manager put your ‘complaint’ in the rubbish bin”. The attention-value of these kinds of statements made during this small-scale study of moral courage, is that it is an important point of interest for school policies. The discussions show that teachers want to be supported by the team and by the school policy: “It is very difficult to convince these colleagues to adopt a more pedagogical attitude. I think you still need to stick to your principles and discuss this vision with these specific colleagues and seek confrontation”. It has become clear that in some schools there is a lack of support from colleagues: “There is no such culture in schools. Everyone stays within their own 4 walls”. One teacher remarked, referring to this culture, that: “I have no discussion partner at my own level”. As we have seen, this lack of support from colleagues can be related to different interpretation about a restricted or autonomous interpretation of the teaching profession, but also with certain views of the school management, laid down in the school policy or practice: “I think that teachers are confronted with pedagogical individually, but not in a structured way”.

This underlines the importance of systematic and not an incidental pedagogical school policies as one of the panel-members said: “A lot of initiatives start off well in the beginning of the school year, but get neglected towards the end, so a renewed attempt is made in the following year”. The interviews, however, clearly show that school managements also encounter a number of problems, related to the stimulation of pedagogical school policies: “There are different ways to teach pedagogical skills, but if teachers don’t want to, then you cannot enforce it, because teachers are not assessed on those results”.

The panel discussions about moral courage in school also addressed the position and role of school managements. Both teachers and school managers agreed that school managements should set the example in terms of moral courage: “You must dare to stand up for your policy”. As we have seen, teachers need support from school managements: “If managers don’t stick his head out then it is difficult to expect teachers to do so”. Another teacher remarked that: “the moral skills of the management are quite essential”. School managers pointed out that they are well aware that there is a need among teachers to pour out their hearts about these issues: “There are quite a number of teachers with questions about mergers, expansions or new learning techniques. Teachers need a lot of courage to address these issues, but if they do address them they can expect a constructive discussion with their manager”.

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RESULTS AND CONCLUSIONS

– Almost all panel participants interviewed for this study agreed that it takes moral courage to enforce school rules and to stimulate value formation by teachers.

– Confronted with an increase in the number of pedagogical duties the question arises what the teachers’ view is on their pedagogical professionalism. Teachers do not only see themselves as professionals in the field of education but also in the field of upbringing. This study has shown that there surely are teachers who believe that the pedagogical duties are part of their job. This is not a well-known fact, but it has been demonstrated in a series of very sophisticated studies. Although the teachers in our research experience it as a very difficult aspect of their role, it is also a premise for the realisation of learning processes. More insight in the pedagogical tasks and experiences is needed to articulate moral courage into the day-to-day school practices, in word and in deed.

– At the same time, we have seen that the professionalism of teachers has come under pressure. The teaching profession is suffering from loss of status and is marred by a rise in the number of problems, which points to a deprofessionalising trend. Teachers have more and more become executives of externally defined regulations, demands and expectations. Furthermore, they are faced with an increase in curriculum pressure and internal and external demands. Paying more attention to the pedagogical duties is not an easy job in this professional climate. Other circumstances, such as more violence and anti-social behaviour in our schools will surely keep pedagogy high on the agenda.

– In all panel discussions the difference between norms and values or better between value education and norms stimulation and/or enforcement was a point of discussion. Stimulating value formation is considered a complicated process. Not just because of the lack of pedagogical competences, but also because of the multicultural character of society and because of a perceived confusion about the validity or truth of values.

– This explorative study revealed that teachers sometimes feel a lack of support due to the absence of shared moral principles. Teachers continuously have to make decisions with moral consequences. The teachers who were interviewed say they are fulfilling their pedagogical duty “by trial and error” but they often feel isolated.

– A part of the discussion partners would welcome steering at policy level. For them, this would mainly consist of ‘being listened to’ because of the importance of classroom and school experiences. The teachers believe that the focus should be on team support, so that teachers don’t get the impression that they are ‘bowling alone’. In this regard, they would also welcome clear policies and involvement at management and board level.

– There are also teachers who say that they can’t bring up the moral courage to react to moral challenges in all sorts of (difficult) situations. They give different reasons for this. It’s not just because of the work pressure, but also because of personal (positive or negative) motivation and the lack of required competences and personal characteristics (“I am not a hero”). School policy makers should use this relevant information in order to obtain, for example, certain desired effects in terms of pedagogy or identity.
With regard to moral courage it is also important to look at the way teachers reason concerning intimidations and violent situations in school. Our orientation panel discussions did not specifically focus on these situations. This important dimension of moral courage of teachers requires further analysis. Teachers may have clear, well-considered reasons not to intervene (Behre, et.al. 2001). Teachers rightly think about the potential danger of an intervention. Nobody in school is happy with excessive courage of teachers. This became very clear during the panel discussions we analysed.

The orientation discussions show that a small number of the teachers we interviewed gets inspired not just formally but also factually by the (religious or pedagogically) identity of the schools they work in. The discussions clearly show the meaning of philosophy of life and the importance of professional and personal values. Teachers act on the basis of a combination of their own specific world view or philosophy of life and/or personal values and/or professional values (Carr, 2006). For some of the teachers we interviewed the identity of the school also plays a role, if they truly endorse these values. They believe teachers need moral courage to define and present their own position.

Various teachers who participated in the panel studies have a clear view on moralising. Some teachers pointed out that moralising should not be the same as ‘preaching norms and values’. Other teachers rejected the idea of focusing on moral norms and values for principal, practical or personal reasons.

We believe that if teachers display moral courage it should not be interpreted as an individual affair by and for these teachers, but that it should be supported by the school culture and the school management as part of a systematic and well-considered pedagogical school policy. The traditional conception of the individualistic professional autonomy of teachers is a ‘hindrance’ for the development of pedagogical school policies. If schools want to start giving more attention to value-oriented education, with a view on school identity or the changed norms and values situation in school, they need to build on the existing opinions of the teachers and the pedagogical practices that are anchored in the school culture. It is important to make sure things fit in with the teachers’ interpretations of professionalism.

REFERENCES
THE NEED FOR MORAL COURAGE


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