

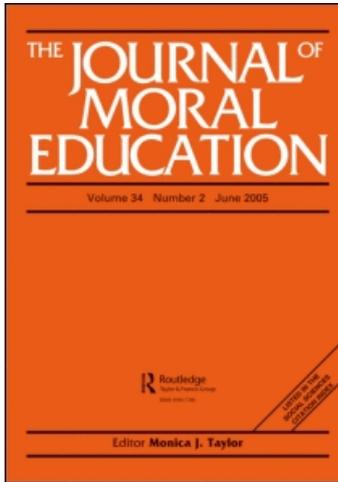
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Journal of Moral Education

Publication details, including instructions for authors and subscription information:

<http://www.informaworld.com/smpp/title-content=t713432411>

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Online Publication Date: 01 March 2009

To cite this Article (2009) 'Values education and lifelong learning: principles, policies and programmes', *Journal of Moral Education*, 38:1, 111 — 114

To link to this Article: DOI: 10.1080/03057240802636827

URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/03057240802636827>

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Values education and lifelong learning: principles, policies and programmes

David Aspin & Judith Chapman, 2007

Dordrecht, Germany, Springer

€101.60 (hbk), 446 pp.

ISBN 978-1-4020-6183-7

In view of the ascendant market-oriented, human-capital interpretation of lifelong learning promoted in recent Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) reports, a book dedicated to lifelong learning and values education may seem a strange creature. The standard case for lifelong learning asserts that in emergent knowledge economies production technologies are rapidly changing. An economic environment where occupational niches are born, evolve and die out over the course of a human working life puts pressure on workers to constantly upgrade their skills in order to maintain their employability. On the macro level, lifelong learning is an important instrument for economic growth. National economies that fail to implement initiatives to encourage and maintain 'learning societies' risk losing a competitive advantage in the global marketplace. Yet all the talk of performativity and supple national qualifications systems sits somewhat uneasily with Edgar Fauré's original ideal of *éducation permanente* and more recent United Nations Economic, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) elaborations. Most notably, Jacques Delors, in his 1996 report, *Learning: the treasure within*, advances a conception of lifelong learning that has it resting on four pillars of education: 'learning to know' and 'learning to do' are the ostensible concerns of the human-development understanding of lifelong learning. But there are also the pillars of 'learning to live together' and 'learning to be' which together make more than ample room for values education on the lifelong learning agenda.

The book in question comprises 21 original essays held together, the editors claim, by a common interest in advancing a specific notion of values education that is well suited to learning and teaching about values across the lifespan. Aspin and Chapman observe that social life is impregnated with normativity. Comprehending social life, from the level of individual behaviour right up to international relations, presupposes some mastery of its governing normative principles. They suggest that value education's primary vocation should be to engage learners with social issues in such a way that they come to see them as being underwritten by evaluative disagreements. The educational project they describe as 'the growth and extension of intelligibility in values and the realm of values' (p. 5) is squarely located within the good Enlightenment tradition. It aims to guide learners from a tacit, inarticulate understanding of values to one which is explicit and articulated and, the operative principles having been so exposed, to provide counsel on how to subject these values—and the social institutions and practices on which they rest—to critical appraisal.

It is both intimidating and impractical that the editors elected not to group the contributions under section headings. And so readers are left to sort out on their own which sub-themes the collection addresses. Four are discernible: foundations, teaching and learning, policy analysis, and administration and institutional climate.

The chapters towards the beginning of the volume tackle foundational issues in values education. David Aspin's opening essay reflects on how education can be brought to bear on the question of 'What can we do to achieve a good life and establish regard for and the practice of the virtues of peace and concord?' (p. 28). In Chapter 2, Gerhard Zecha observes that moral subjectivism impedes adequate forms of values education in schools and advances a set of arguments against it. For his part, Richard Bagnall, in Chapter 3, puts forward the view that the ideal of lifelong learning entails a learning ethic centred on the cardinal virtues of self-reflectiveness, self-criticism and the duty to be ethically informed. Going against the grain, in Chapter 4, Ivan Snook challenges the influential idea that values education should strive to instil in the young a set of commonly shared community values. The following chapter presents Jim Mackenzie's reassertion of the importance of rational autonomy as a central educational aim in the face of threats from the rising influence of, precisely, the human capital approach to educational policy. In Chapter 8 Duck-joo Kwak considers this compelling hypothesis: that the 'moral basics' and 'democratic citizenship' conceptions of character education are better considered complementary to one another rather than as alternative approaches to values education. In a different register altogether, Darcia Narváez takes Chapter 7 to present and elaborate a new set of theoretical foundations for values education, 'Triune Ethics', which is supposed to reflect recent advances in evolutionary psychology and the neurosciences.

Another group of chapters deals with the pedagogy of values education. Janis Ozolins (Chapter 6) argues for an abstract conception of education that centres on forming citizens by drawing them into 'moral communities' committed to the pursuit of virtue. Chapter 15 by Joanna Swann and Chapter 16 by Neville Carr and Julie Mitchell advocate, respectively, the use of a student-initiated curriculum and the study of what they call 'worldviews' as tools for values education. Two chapters report on values education intervention research. The Values and Knowledge Education (VaKE) model of values education of Jean-Luc Patry and colleagues is presented in Chapter 9 and in Chapter 17 Judith Chapman and co-authors trace the progress of using collaborative clusters and networks as a means of implementing Australia's national values education curricular guidelines.

As for the on policy issues in values education, in Chapter 13 Shirley Pendlebury and Penny Enslin examine some recent South African policy documents on values education post-Apartheid and, finding them rich in inchoate assumptions about character education, propose a set of criteria for assessing policy on character-focused values education. Lifelong learning as a reference point for educational policy reform in Asia is the subject of Wing On Lee's piece and two further chapters by David Brown (Chapter 12) and Susan Pascoe (Chapter 18) tell of Australia's difficult road towards introducing national curricular guidelines for values education.

As if heeding Pascoe's warning not to overlook the inexorability of school organisation and teachers' attitudes in values education, several chapters deal with values education and school climate, institutional structure and educational leadership. Inspired by writings in critical theory on the dissolution of personal identity, something of a *genre de désespoir*, Johannes van der Walt questions whether an

institutional identity is still a workable idea. The surprising conclusion of Chapter 10 is that it is. Taking his cue from a set of recent studies suggesting that such teacher qualities as respectfulness, caring, fairness and integrity are also crucial to quality teaching, Terence Lovat's argument in Chapter 11 is that 'values education has the potential to complement and possibly complete the goals implicit in Quality Teaching' (p. 203). Walker and Sackney take up the theme of educational leadership (Chapter 14). They make the case that the emergent knowledge societies of the twenty-first century need to break with careerist leadership styles and embrace 'ecological' leadership wherein 'power-as-command [is] replaced with an ethic of care, concern, connectedness' (p. 276). In similar vein, Libby Tudball (Chapter 21) presents a valuable review of various whole-school approaches to values education practice against the background of the recent efforts to introduce values education in Australian schools.

Part foundational and part pedagogical, Chapter 20, by Peter Willis, is the most difficult contribution to categorise. Concerned with the way that imagination can be thought to mediate the values of social democracy, Willis sketches out two pedagogically-led processes—'Visioning' and 'Grounding'—that he believes can foster more inclusive, compassionate democratic understandings.

In conclusion, Aspin and Chapman's volume situates itself in a line of thinking on lifelong learning that strenuously resists being co-opted by the human-capital education agenda. The book's almost complete absence of frontal attacks on the market-oriented view of lifelong learning may disappoint. Or it may be seen as reflecting a bit of wisdom often associated with John Dewey's critique of educational traditionalism: by elaborating an educational programme *negatively* the critic inadvertently allows the inadequate educational programme to control the terms and direction of debate. That said, within this genre there is significant scope for imagining lifelong values education. On the cautious end of the spectrum is the notion described by Mark Halstead in the preface of the book and endorsed by the editors. Lifelong values learning, as they conceive it, should stress the public nature of values and be concerned with providing developmentally-sensitive opportunities for students 'to reflect rationally on the variety of factors that impinge on their experience, so that they can construct their own developing framework of values and learn how to make rational, informed moral decisions', as Halstead expresses it (p. xiv). On the other end of the spectrum, there is a more imaginative conception of lifelong values education which, I hazard, is more in the spirit of *éducation permanente*. Lifelong values learning in this sense embraces the full range of opportunities for 'the growth and extension of the notion of intelligibility in values and the realm of values' (p. 5) that societies which are responsibly-managed, materially stable and, above all, genuinely concerned with human development, can offer themselves: in museums and galleries, through religious and professional affiliations and political involvement, by participation in, among other things, sports, volunteering and trade. In the introduction, the editors seem to concede that the book is limited by its reluctance to venture out of the classroom and the schoolyard (p. 25). As always, confession may inspire forgiveness for the sinner but it cannot mitigate the sinner's offence.

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DOI: 10.1080/03057240802636827
