A HANDPRINT ETHICS OF CARE IN SUBJECT TEACHING

How do we integrate ethics of care in our teaching?

The term 'ethics' comes from the Greek word *ethos* which means habit or practice and is connected to values and virtues. Ethics asks what we should do in various types of situations, or what we should do as participants in different activities or professions – including tensions that can arise between persons discussing special questions and actions. Ethics are linked to our understanding of what is fair or just and which arise in our conscience as a sense of right and wrong in relation to being human. Thus, our actions and everyday life experiences are the subjects of ethics. This implies that, as humans, we have the capacity to think about our choices and so become responsible for our decisions and actions within the social and political framework in which we live.

Ethical values such as justice, truth, freedom, democracy, caring and solidarity are seen as fundamental values in many countries around the world and are documented in international declarations like the Earth Charter. The Earth Charter may be described as an ethical foundation for actions to build a more just, sustainable, and peaceful global society in the 21st century. It articulates a mindset of global interdependence and shared responsibility. The development of the Handprint CARE approach in India was also inspired by Gandhi's notion of 'truth-seeking experimentation' (1920) in which satya or truth has a wider sense than simply speaking truth; it encompasses truth in thought, speech and action.

Similar imperatives are embedded in cultural histories of other countries like *Ubuntu* in southern Africa, *Tapalewih* amongst the *Nahua* in Mexico and *Bildung* in the German discourse. An understanding of *Bildung* stresses the perspective of the subject shaping his or her learning process; it focuses on "individual reflexivity, individuality and long-term processes in building a global identity", it emphasises "readiness for self-reflection and thus minimising the negative consequences of individual behaviour. Bildung reflects learning as an open process to an open future" (Scheunpflug, 2020, p. 44).

Ethics in the Classroom

Inclusion and empathy were considered key ideas for the ethical dimensions of Handprint CARE. Education philosopher Nel Noddings (2005; 2010) has demonstrated the significance of caring and relationships both as an educational goal and as a fundamental aspect of education. She has represented an ethic of empathy as both cognitive and emotional, which has been interpreted as knowledge-derived emotions and emotion-based knowledge. Following Noddings (2010, pp. 147-148), education from the CARE perspective has four key components: modeling, dialogue, practice and confirmation (see Figure 4). They are all activated within, and depend for their success on the setting up of caring relations:
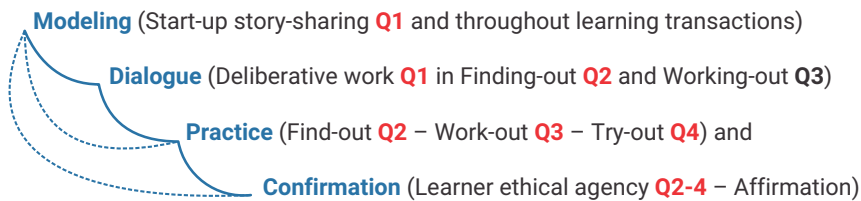
- *Modeling is a crucial factor in almost every form of moral education pointing out that a child may choose a teacher as a moral model (consciously or unconsciously). According to Noddings (2010, p. 147), the "effects of modeling depend heavily on the relations of care and trust in which the modeling occurs". Teachers who know that it is likely that they will be taken as models have a special responsibility.*

- *Dialogue means more than mere conversation; it refers to teacher-student (learning) situations in which both parties speak, and both parties listen. For dialogue to be genuine, a caring relationship is essential.*

- *Practice refers, among other things, to learning environments in which teachers provide opportunities for their students to practise caring. Noddings (2010, p. 148) explained that for the teacher, it is not simply a matter of correcting uncaring behaviour; she/he also "takes note of kind and helpful behaviours and compliments the child who demonstrates care."*

- *Confirmation "points a person towards a better self". For example, the teacher engages in dialogue to help a student "see that his act did not measure up to his motives". Confirmation cannot be done by recipe; it would be "meaningless without the personal knowledge acquired in caring relations" (ibid., p. 148).*

Working with Noddings' dimensions enables us to understand how caring relations and the restoration of intergenerational[2] cultural capital could become a central feature for restoring cognitive justice in the knowledge sharing processes of ESD.

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[2] *Intergenerational means including people from different generations – in short, young people working together with older people.*

Ethics and Cognition

Nel Noddings (2010) notes how **empathy** as an ethic of care is both cognitive (knowledge) and emotional (feelings) involving four intermeshed and developmental processes of mediation in teaching and learning settings.

Modeling (Start-up story-sharing **Q1** and throughout learning transactions)

Dialogue (Deliberative work **Q1** in Finding-out **Q2** and Working-out **Q3**)

Practice (Find-out **Q2** – Work-out **Q3** – Try-out **Q4**) and

Confirmation (Learner ethical agency **Q2-4** – Affirmation)

Q1	Q2
MATTER OF CONCERN	
Q4	Q3

Adapted Edwards, 2014

Noddings points out that:

"They are all activated within, and depend for their success on, the establishment of caring relations."
(Noddings, 2010 p.147)

Figure : Tthe inclusion of an ethic of care in classroom settings

Ethics-led learning seeks to promote participation, appreciation and communication as part of the learning process. The activation of ethics-led learning in relation to matters of concern required a shift from the common practice of presenting learners with problems to be solved, to engaging participants in subject knowledge and matters of concern using true, real-world start-up stories (see Chapter 4). Working with teachers on real-world issues helped us to explore how cultural, historical stories could lead to story sharing as a start-up process. It also led to understanding how emerging matters of concern could be investigated to overcome colonial legacies of oppression and the exclusion of intergenerational knowledge practices. These intergenerational practices often have important heritage knowledge value and can be an inspiration for developing better ways of doing things together.

The ethical disjuncture in Europe during the expansive period of globalising imperialism was shaped by a contested sense of superiority that played out in processes of colonial oppression and cultural marginalisation that spanned many centuries and are still manifest today in the Global South. Fortunately, education is being enacted through plural and emancipatory imperatives for restoring intergenerational foundations of sustainable development. An emerging view in

the Global South is that decoloniality "de-centers the West and affirms the re-emergences, re-existences and liberation of people formerly dominated by the global westernising project. In this way, education can secure and re-link with memories, modes of existence and legacies that people have reason to value but which have been destituted by modernity" (Menon et al., 2021, p. 939). Alongside the emancipatory dimension of ESD in the Global North, a Global South perspective points to how "decolonial pedagogy is a dialogic and a reflexive learning process, in which students reflect not only on colonial histories and geographies, but also their own personal biographies'' (ibid., p. 940).

Through adopting different perspectives and practising self-reflection, including critically reflecting on one's own values, ESD is, in principle, aiming to overcome subjugated ways of thinking. In the context of ESD as an emancipatory process, however, a key question for us has been: How can ethics be included in ESD learning tasks within school and cultural settings. To clarify the inclusion of ethics in ESD, O'Donoghue, Chikamori and Sandoval Rivera (2020) worked with a cultural historical schema for learning-led lesson task sequences as a four-stage process. They found that one can work with this Vygotskian schema as a practical framework for ethics-led action learning.

In this Handbook, action learning is thus framed as a four-stage progression. It is, however, open-ended and can be undertaken in any order. Anne Edwards (2014) used a Vygotskian schema to develop a four-quadrant model for deliberative action learning. This (see Figure 5) has been used to structure Handprint CARE materials around true Start-up Stories (Quadrant 1).

These stories can be used to present learners with matters of concern that enable them to raise questions which will take them into local depth-inquiry (Quadrant 2).

Empathy and concern commonly emerge in the learners at this stage. This helps them to clarify their formative ideas through mediated conversations that can be carried into deliberative modelling. From this they become able to design sustainable solutions for emerging concerns (Quadrant 3).

Finally, with the rising purpose and compassion, learners can explore and report on the change challenges they might undertake to resolve the matters of concern. All this is at the nexus of local concerns and their change challenges which are often engaged with as "change projects" (Quadrant 4).

Handprint ethics-led learning in subject teaching

Figure 5: The initial framing of a Four Quadrant model of process for ESD (adapted from Edwards, 2014)

The Edwards-Vygotskian task sequencing progression offers teachers a wide range of teaching practices to support the activation of ethics-led learning around matters of concern that link to the subject they teach and the knowledge that they are entrusted with to convey to their students. In this way, the key tenet of a learner-led agency can develop around Handprint action-learning for the common good.

Throughout this work on ethics-led action learning, there was a need to take a critical look at the challenges of an ethics oriented, normative approach. Following the *Beutelsbach Consensus*, there are three central criteria to be considered (Schiele & Schneider, 1977):

- **No indoctrination or overwhelming of the learner**
  It is not permissible for teachers to hinder – by whatever means – learners from developing and forming an independent (political) judgement, by overpowering them with their own or a desired opinion. This ethical balance acts as the dividing line between education and indoctrination. Indoctrination is incompatible with the role of a teacher in a democratic society and the universally accepted objective of enabling independent judgement in our learners.

- **Treating controversial subjects as controversial**
  Matters which are discussed controversially on intellectual and political levels must also

be taught as controversial in educational settings. Differing points of view, conflicting interests of (global) actors and conflict lines have to be discussed with learners along with possible options or alternatives. This gives learners the opportunity to develop individual points of view and arguments, and to include them in their own assessment of an issue.

- **Giving weight to learner orientation and personal interests**
  Learners should be enabled to: a) analyse the political situation in society and their own position, b) actively participate in the political process, and c) find means and ways to influence the given political setting according to their own interests.

Concluding Insights

Ethics are linked to our understanding of what is fair or just. As humans, we have the capacity to think about our choices and so become responsible for our decisions and actions. Our classrooms can be sites of ethical deliberation and knowledge-led learning actions towards positive change and more hopeful futures. A four-quadrant model for deliberative action learning (based on Edwards, 2014) can support this process. It involves start-up stories (Q1), deepening knowledge (Q2), critical thinking (Q3) and actions for change (Q4).

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