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Teacher Notions, Goals and Methods in Values Education

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Abstract

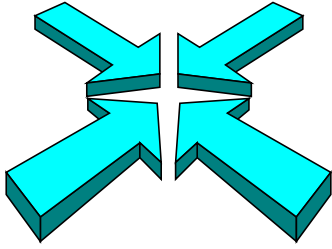
The aim of the study is to investigate teachers' autonomy orientation regarding the teaching of values through the formal curriculum. Particularly, we focus on: (1) Teachers' notions about (a) the legitimacy of values teaching, (b) the nature of values, (c) students as holders and learners of values and (2) the relation of teacher notions to (a) choice of goals and (b) choice of teaching methodology regarding the teaching of values.

Ideally, as far as value issues are concerned, autonomy oriented teachers, i.e. those teachers that view values more as brain constructed tools for conceptualising or categorising social phenomena than as externally imposed frames of behaviour, tend to encourage higher order emotions and thinking through their choice of goals and teaching methodology.

Nevertheless, the usual discrepancy between teachers' explicit and implicit beliefs, and what they actually do into their classroom, raises questions about the way explicit notions about autonomy are filtered through implicit notions about teaching goals and methods, ending into teaching practice.

To shed some light to the question, we developed a likert - type questionnaire designed to tap teachers' explicit and implicit notions about values education.

Findings indicate that there is not always a consistency between teacher notions about autonomy orientation on one hand, and teacher choice of goals and teaching method on the other. This means that while a certain part of teachers seem to be autonomy oriented (explicit notion). their teaching goals and methods are usually conducive to value eteronomy (implicit notion).



AIM OF THE STUDY

To investigate teachers' autonomy orientation regarding the teaching of values through the formal curriculum. Particularly, we focused on how teachers:

- (a) accept the legitimacy of values teaching,**
 - (b) realise the nature of values,**
 - (c) face student learning of values**
- (2) Choose and prioritise educational aims regarding values education**
- (3) Choose and implement teaching methodology of values**



THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

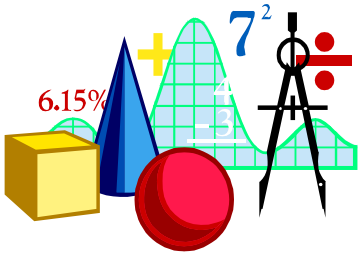
Drawn from the work on both human motivation in educational settings and educational theory, we discern two general teaching orientations for values education:

1. Eteronomy orientation: According to this, teachers treat values as an end in themselves, since they are imposed by external authority. Therefore, they leave little or no ground for dispute and use indoctrinative means in values education.



2. *Autonomy orientation*: According this, teachers view values more as mind constructed tools for conceptualising or categorising social phenomena than as externally imposed frames of behaviour. Therefore, they tend to encourage the development of higher order socio-cognitive skills and attitudes, such as social empathy and reflectivity.

Nevertheless, the usual discrepancy between teachers' beliefs, and what they actually do into their classroom, raises questions about the way explicit statements about autonomy coincide with their beliefs about the way of teaching values.



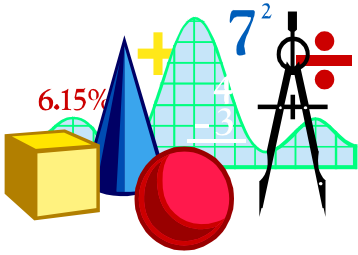
M E T H O D O L O G Y

We developed a teacher questionnaire designed to tap:

- (1) teachers' explicit notions about values education and
- (2) teacher practices regarding the teaching of values.

Each major construct consists of several subscales:

- Explicit notions include items tapping teachers' view of values *nature*, the *legitimacy* of values education, and the *autonomy* of the learner regarding values.
- Teacher practices include items tapping teachers' choice of *goals* and *methods*.



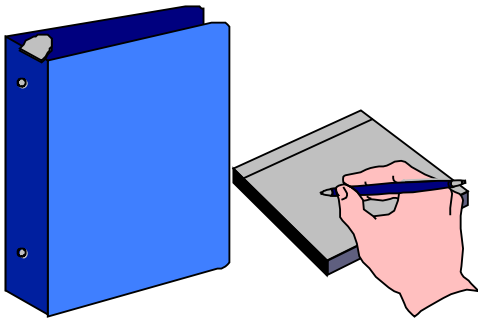
Goals are divided into contrasting items corresponding to affective and cognitive domain: (a) *social empathy* vs. *fear of punishment* and (b) *induction* vs. *indoctrination*.

Methods were checked through a continuum according to the teacher willingness to use the dialogue as a process of resolving value dilemmas.

Subjects: 109 primary school teachers

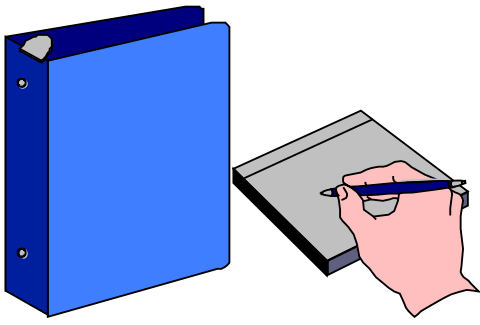
Period of data gathering: Spring 1997





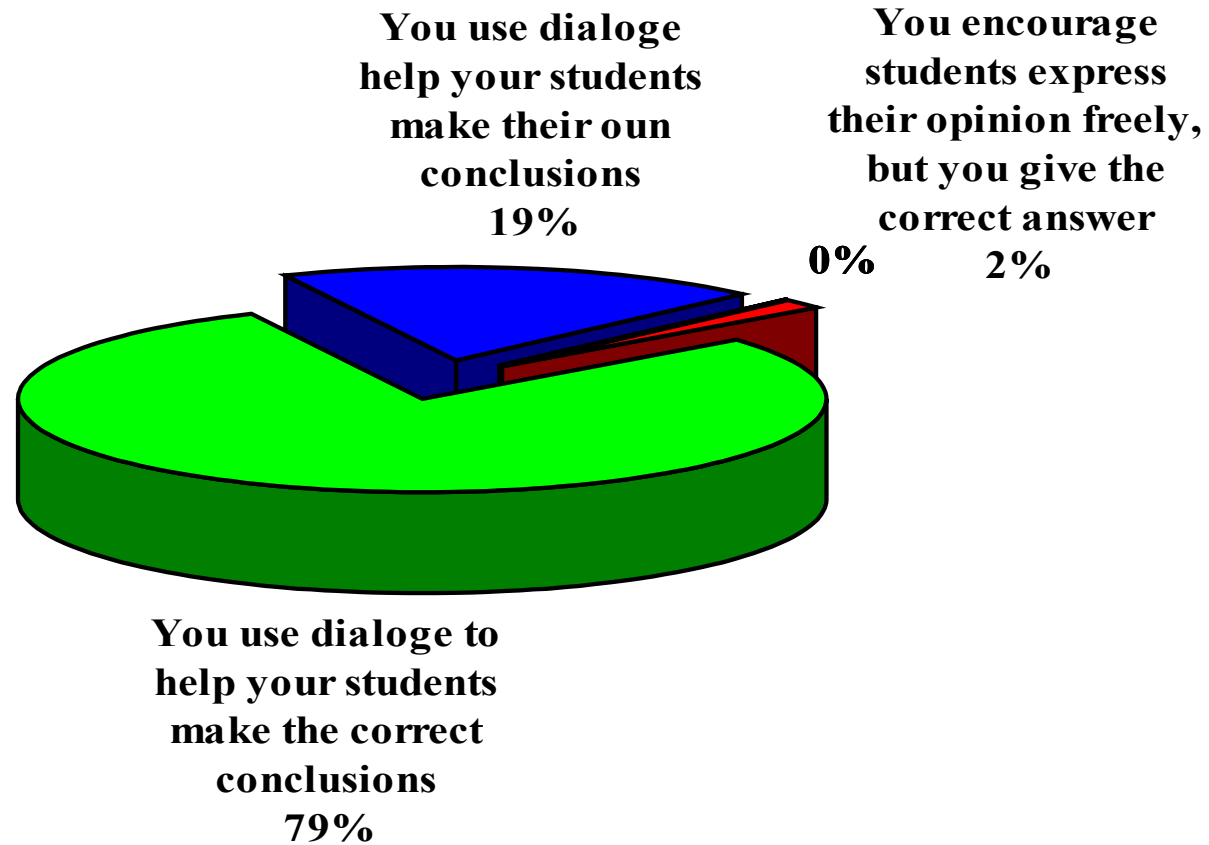
R E S U L T S

- ✓ According to statements about values education, the majority of teachers seem to be autonomy oriented:
 - They accept the presence into primary school curriculum of value laden topics that separate modern society ($\chi^2= 42, 4112$, d.f.=2, $p<.0001$).
 - They believe school must teach students alter their value system under certain circumstances ($\chi^2=18,9252$, d.f.=1, $p,,.0001$).
 - They leave students make their own value choices ($\chi^2=59,2593$, d.f.=1, $p<.0001$) and help them reflect over these choices ($\chi^2=29,0370$, d.f.=1, $p.<0001$).



- Nevertheless, 51% of our subjects ($\chi^2=29,0556$, d.f.=2, $p<.0001$) would prefer the exclusion from primary school curriculum, of values alien to those generally accepted by Greek society.
- ✓ Setting educational goals for the teaching of values, teachers state that they encourage:
 - (a) social empathy over fear of punishment, and
 - (b) induction over indoctrination.
- ✓ Teachers' statements about preferable teaching method of teaching values, seem to inverse the autonomous image: Throuout the teaching episodes, the majority of teachers is reluctant to use dialoge as a mean of eliciting free conclusions; they prefer using dialoge as a ean of «helping» students come into the «correct» conclusion (see charts).

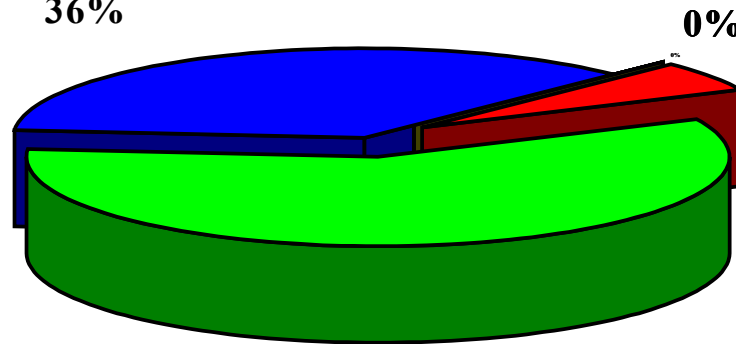
Teaching episode I. You teach the democratic decision making in your classroom. Tasos, a pupil with a high I.Q., asserts that monarchy is a better political system than democracy. His opinion seems to dominate within classroom. Which of the following teaching methods would you use in this situation?



Teaching episode IV. You teach the importance of prayer within religion. John, a student with behaviour problems, doubts the value of prayer because, as he says, it didn't help his sick brother recover. Which of the following teaching methods would you use in this situation?

**You use dialoge
help your students
make their own
conclusions
36%**

**You encourage
students express
their opinion freely,
but you give the
correct answer
6%**



**You use dialoge to
help your students
make the correct
conclusions
58%**