PEACE EDUCATION: UNIVERSAL HUMAN VALUES

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Overview

Something is of universal value if it has the same value or worth for all, or almost all, people. This claim could mean two importantly different things. First, it could be that something has a universal value when everybody *finds* it valuable. This was Isaiah Berlin's understanding of the term. According to Berlin, "...universal values....are values that a great many human beings in the vast majority of places and situations, at almost all times, do in fact hold in common, whether consciously and explicitly or as expressed in their behaviour..." Second, something could have universal value when all people have *reason* to believe it has value. Amartya Sen interprets the term in this way, pointing out that when Mahatma Gandhi argued that non-violence is a universal value, he was arguing that all people have *reason* to value non-violence, not that all people *currently* value non-violence. Many different things have been claimed to be of universal value, for example, fertility,[3] pleasure, and democracy. The issue of whether anything is of universal value, and, if so, what that thing or those things are is relevant to psychology, political science, and philosophy, among other fields.

Universal Human Values

Keeping in mind that each one of the five universal values in the Educare system of education is regarded as having endless depth and breath, we can give a synopsis of each Value as understood and applied by Too goolawa. These few words act as guidelines for the teachers as they attempt to integrate the Human Values into all aspects of the curriculum. These brief definitions are also helpful for parents wishing to apply the Human Values in the home situation.

With both teachers and parents working together to provide the boys with a human values framework for a sound moral philosophy, the opportunities for healing and personal growth are greatly enhanced.

In seeking to practice the human values in everyday life, students will be guided by the following aims:

Love

· To love everybody unconditionally

· To develop compassion, kindness, generosity and greatness of spirit

· To care for our environment, each other and ourselves

Truth

· To speak and act truthfully and confidently with a clean and clear conscience

· To develop wisdom, the power of reason, intuition and a sense of inquiry.

· To understand the oneness of all creation and the truth behind all faiths

Peace

· To develop self respect, concentration, inner contentment and calmness

· To cooperate with and value the contributions of others, including their constructive feedback concerning our behaviour

· To develop forgiveness, patience, forbearance and self-control

Right Conduct

· To practice acceptance of good and rejection of the bad according the law and one's own conscience.

· To develop respect for parents, teachers and elders and to accept responsibility for one's own actions

· To develop self-reliance, exercise initiative and to do one's best at everything one attempts

Non-violence

· To avoid harming others in thought, word and deed

· To develop reverence and concern for all living beings, all of nature and to engage in acts of selfless service

· To practice forbearance and tolerance towards others

Ethics and universal value

Universal value plays a different role in virtue ethics, deontological and teleological or consequentialist moral theories. Consequentialist theories are based on the idea that right actions are those that lead to a result that has universal value.[6] Some utilitarians, Jeremy Bentham for example, have argued that pleasure and pain are the only things that are of universal intrinsic value; that is, that pleasure and pain are the only things that are valued for themselves, and other things are of value only because they produce pleasure or pain. Because utilitarians are consequentialists, this means that utilitarians who hold pleasure and pain to be the only things of universal value then argue that actions are right when they maximize pleasure and minimize pain, when everyone is considered equally.

Psychology and the search for universal values

S. H. Schwartz, along with a number of psychology colleagues, has carried out empirical research investigating whether there are universal values, and what those values are. Schwartz defined 'values' as "conceptions of the desirable that influence the way people select action and evaluate events".[7] He hypothesised that universal values would relate to three different types of human need: biological needs, social co-ordination needs, and needs related to the welfare and survival of groups. Schwartz's results from a series of studies that included surveys of more than 25,000 people in 44 countries with a wide range of different cultural types suggest that there are fifty-six specific universal values and ten types of universal value.[8] Schwartz's ten types of universal value are: power, achievement, hedonism, stimulation, self-direction, universalism, benevolence, tradition, conformity, and security.

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