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# **Moral development of Dutch high school students**

Exploring a virtue-based moral development approach

Graduation thesis

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Exploring a virtue-based moral development approach

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## ABSTRACT

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Over the last few decades, the Dutch high school program concerning moral education changed. In a society which became increasingly pluralistic, the way high schools approached the moral development of their pupils changed. The emphasis of moral education shifted to value clarification and Socratic dialogue skills. According to the Onderwijsraad this needs to change. In their advice 'Onderwijs vormt' they propose some educational changes. Assuming that every moral education approach is based on at least some normative assumption which could provide guidance in developing an educational approach, I explore the advice in the hope to uncover these implicit assumptions. In order to effectively discuss the different elements of the advice, I will start by showing the differences between character education and cognitive moral education. It turns out that a possible candidate for the implicit normative assumptions of the Onderwijsraad is the virtue theory of Aristotle. In order to show how this can be implemented, I will inquire two educational visions on moral education which both are founded in Aristotle's normative theory and which can be used to achieve the changes the Onderwijsraad advises. The first approach I will inquire, which I will call the 'Voorbeeldig Onderwijs' approach, can be classified as strict Aristotelian. The second, the 'Integrative ethics education' approach represents a combination of an Aristotelian approach and the most common educational approaches present in today's schools.

KEYWORDS: moral education, virtue ethics, moral development, Aristotle

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# INTRODUCTION

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## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 The role of education in the Netherlands

In 1992 Mr. Jo Ritzen, then Minister of Education, requested Dutch schools to take responsibility for the pedagogical task of teaching how to become competent moral agents<sup>1</sup> through his nota *De pedagogische opdracht van het onderwijs; Een uitnodiging tot gezamenlijke actie*.<sup>2</sup> Since then the discussion about the scope of the pedagogical task of schools has continued. In 2009 the Upper Chamber asked the Onderwijsraad<sup>3</sup> to advise about the role of schools concerning the *Bildung* of pupils. The Upper Chamber referred to *Bildung* in a dual way. On the one hand they interpret *Bildung* as development of cognitive capacities such as analytical thinking and debating skills. On the other hand they refer to the development of social moral elements like active citizenship, the development of sympathy and empathy and developing the capacity to deal with the appearance of different world views and arguments.<sup>4</sup> It seems that if these elements are combined, we can presuppose that the Upper Chamber actually wants pupils to develop moral behaviour.

In March 2011 the Onderwijsraad responded by publishing the advice "Onderwijs vormt"<sup>5</sup> In this advise the Onderwijsraad acknowledged the responsibility of secondary schools to develop moral behaviour in pupils. This should be done, they said, not by teaching the required competencies in a separate course, but by integrating examples and values in the school programme. Because of it's proven functionality<sup>6</sup> to develop moral behaviour, ethics classes or ethical subjects, seem an obvious choice to meet the advice of the Onderwijsraad.

### 1.2 The aim of this thesis

In Great Britain and the United States of America, high school education already contains a large proportion of moral development. This is done by independent ethics courses, or by incorporating moral content in regular classes. One of the most popular approaches in the United States is the Integrated Ethics Education, which is a form of character education, developed by Narvaez and Lapsley. In the Netherlands a virtue ethical approach is developed by Van Tongeren and Sanderse.

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<sup>1</sup> Imelman (2003), Bronneman-Helmerts R & Zeijl E. (2008)

<sup>2</sup> Translated: The pedagogical task of education. A invitation for joint action

<sup>3</sup> The Onderwijsraad is a semi-governmental institution which advises the government about policies concerning education

<sup>4</sup> Onderwijsraad (2011b), p 49

<sup>5</sup> Translated: Education stimulates personal formation

<sup>6</sup> Birz ea, C. (2000) p. 45, 68, Narvaez & Gleason (2007) p. 254, p. 266-268

This educational approach which I will call 'Voorbeeldig Onderwijs'<sup>7</sup> emphasises the exemplary role of teachers and pleas for a complete reformation of the current educational approach

In the traditional Dutch high school curriculum, there already are courses which integrate the development of certain moral competences. Often this is done in social science and theology classes, but also language classes make room for debating and developing argumentation skills. These alpha and gamma classes do integrate the teaching of, at least some, moral competencies. But, as the Onderwijsraad recognises, opportunities are overlooked. Education inherently teaches students about values and ideals. For this reason the Onderwijsraad pleas for a raised awareness and more efficient use of opportunities in classes, in order to teach students about values and ideals.

In this thesis I will try to answer the question how Bildung or moral development of Dutch high school students should be pursued according to the Onderwijsraad. In order to answer this question, I will split this thesis in three parts. The first part of this thesis, **Virtue ethics and cognitive development**, will provide the necessary theoretical background to constructively discuss the aims of the Onderwijsraad. I will show the differences between cognitive moral education and traditional character education, two recurrent moral development approaches. To clarify the essential differences between these two, I will provide some theoretical background about cognitive development theories and about Aristotle's view on education. The first mainly focuses on capacity development, while the second emphasises the development of the individual. With this knowledge in mind, it will become easier to interpret the aims of the Onderwijsraad.

In the second part, **Modern version of Bildung in the Netherlands**, I will explore what exactly the Onderwijsraad advises. What do they mean when they speak of Bildung? What do they mean when they speak of a modern version of Bildung? Assuming that every theory about moral education should be founded in a moral theory, I try to uncover which moral theory the Onderwijsraad implicitly used as justification for their advice.

The third part of my thesis, **To implement the advice of the Onderwijsraad**, will focus on the question how can the advice of the Onderwijsraad best be implemented in the current high school curriculum. I will start by showing that the Onderwijsraad implicitly advocates in favour of a moral attitude change in students and they justify this goal from a virtue ethics point of view. In order to provide some suggestions how this is best implemented I will explore the "Voorbeeldig Onderwijs" approach by van Tongeren en Sanderse and the Integrative Ethics Education by Narvaez. Both founded in virtue ethics, they seem good candidates to implement the wishes of the Onderwijsraad.

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<sup>7</sup> Translated : Exemplar education

# PART I

## VIRTUE ETHICS AND COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT

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### 2. Moral education

Education is a practice as old as mankind. It is a way to transfer specific knowledge and skills, but above all, it is a way to prepare children, adolescents and young adults to become a full member of society and to lead a fulfilling life. It is a well established theory that humans are social creatures by nature. To live with others means that social rules need to be established. These social rules are designed to live in, and enjoy the company of others. Most of these social rules are moral in nature, every contact between individuals therefore is morally saturated. Education most times is associated with letting children, adolescents and young adults become acquainted with these social rules. As such, it is impossible to view education as being value free.<sup>8</sup> However, any values taught, explicitly but also implicitly, must be defended. Why does the teacher believe it is necessary to teach these values and ideas about moral behaviour? Perspectives on moral education are logically rooted in a philosophical account of the good life and good conduct. The social norms explicitly or implicitly taught, reflect the values and ideals, and hence the moral norms common in society. Over time two recurrent approaches can be recognised. The first being traditional character education, the second cognitive moral education.

#### 2.1 Character education

Traditional character development is founded in virtue ethics of which Aristotle is believed to be the founding father. It is associated with the development of the individual to become a virtuous person. The central question is, *who should I become?* In order to reach this goal the formation of the character of the individual is central and trumps moral rules. Moral rules are not deemed unnecessary in virtue ethics, but will only function to guide those whose character is not fully developed in order to naturally display moral behaviour. Becoming a virtuous individual not only benefits the individual but also society. Aristotle argued that the community, considered as family, friends as well as the society one is part of, is of great importance in the development of the character of the individual. Although the individual is held responsible for the actualisation of virtues and good character, it is a goal believed impossible without the help of others.<sup>9</sup> Hence, the environment a child is brought up in, is considered of at least equal importance for the moral development as the knowledge taught.

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<sup>8</sup> Narvaez (2006)

<sup>9</sup> Narvaez (2006)



In medieval time this vision on education was adopted by the church, especially by St. Thomas of Aquinas who gave it a Christian twist<sup>10</sup>. Its focus shifted from development of the virtuous individual as citizen towards the development of a virtuous individual as believer. The cardinal virtues were taken central and education was all about teaching the rules and virtues of the bible.

## 2.2 Cognitive moral education

Cognitive moral education on the other hand focuses on cognitive development and rationality. Concerned with the question, *what should I do*, this approach emphasises the capability to judge a situation in a rational manner and to weigh the pro and cons in order to make a just decision. In the way Narvaez understands this type of moral education rule ethics is used to determine what behaviour is moral. She states that according to rule ethics moral behaviour is that behaviour which conforms with the moral rules. These obligatory rules should then be rationally pursued.<sup>11</sup> Narvaez states that the formation of character of the individual is only considered necessary in this type of moral education when it helps the individual to live up to the rules. Character formation is then considered as a means to the goal of rationally following the rules. Because rule ethics thinks of the individual as being a bearer of rights and duties, the other, individuals as well as the community as a whole, are conceived as limitations in the end of human flourishing.<sup>12</sup> However, this is a limited view presented by a moral psychologist with limited philosophical background. Although deontological ethics often are displayed in this manner, the presented vision of Narvaez fails to explicate the strengths of these theories and approaches.

Deontological theories, like the normative theory of Kant, do emphasise the rational capacity of the individual. However, they also emphasise the motivation of the actor. Without the right motivation, an act can only be good. It becomes right when the motivation is also right. For instance, a cashier who is not stealing the money from his boss because he does not want to lose his job is acting good. A cashier who is not stealing the money because he knows stealing is wrong and he wants to do right, is acting truly right. The formation of character, of which motivation is part of, thus is of importance to cognitive moral education.<sup>13</sup> However, it does not take a central place in the curriculum like in character education approaches. Cognitive moral education takes the development of rational capacities central. To develop these capacities, e.g. analytical thinking, Socratic dialogue skills, they often refer to.

But cognitive moral education is not only inspired by deontological theories, Utilitarianism and justice theories, which emphasize reason and intent. Cognitive moral education is also influenced by the

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<sup>10</sup> Pellegrino (1995), Vos (2006)

<sup>11</sup> Narvaez (2006)

<sup>12</sup> Narvaez (2006)

<sup>13</sup> Steutel & Carr (1999)

cognitive development approach founded in the psychological findings of Piaget and the approach designed by Kohlberg. Their educational approach focused on the development of cognitive skills and is supported by psychological findings. Piaget and Kohlberg recognised six stages of moral development which, they thought are universal and which can be developed in a hierarchical order. The stages are based on differences in rational capabilities which reflect the level of reasoning from a justice perspective. In general it can be said that cognitive moral education stimulates rational decision making. This rational view on moral decision making is stimulated by moral dilemma discussions.<sup>14</sup> Pupils are taught to consider the point of view of all who are involved and to consider the welfare of all alike in order to come to a just decision. The aim is to change the way students think instead of changing what students think. Because it stimulates reasoning from a justice perspective, considerations about the justification about values are deemed unnecessary.

The problem with this approach concerns the moral commitment to act morally. To know what you should do, does not necessarily mean that you will act accordingly. Training of moral reasoning alone does not seem to be sufficient in stimulating moral behaviour. Another problem of this approach concerns the relation between the actor and others. Because a decision is only considered right when it views all involved as equal, it ignores the relationship between the actor and his acquaintances. On top of that, this method is not sensitive towards other, relevant particulars of the situation as well. On the other hand, pupils who are trained to consider every aspect of a moral situation often recognise moral dilemmas earlier and are better in resolving difficult dilemmas.

In order to fully grasp the difference between traditional character education and cognitive moral development and their vision on education, we will explore the basic theories of both approaches. We will start by exploring Aristotle's vision on education and some of the basic concepts of his theories which are important in character education. Secondly we will explore the leading neuro-cognitive development theory of James Rest. Inspired by Kohlberg, Rest developed a vision on moral behaviour and the way it develops. His psychological theory is used in recent cognitive moral approaches which emphasise the development of cognitive skills.

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<sup>14</sup> Althof and Berkowitz (2006)

### 3. Virtue ethics

A virtue ethical approach logically focuses on the development of virtues. But what is a virtue? George Sher's (1992)<sup>15</sup> characterises of virtue as a 'character trait that is for some important reason desirable or worth having'. A virtue approach to moral education should thus at least include the promotion of desirable character traits, justified by a moral virtue theory. In order to uncover the Aristotelian virtue ethics view on moral education I will first explain some central concepts important in Aristotle's theory about virtuous behaviour and moral education, the relationship between emotions and moral virtues and show how Aristotle solved the problem of moral motivation.

#### 3.1 Aristotle's assumptions

##### 3.1.1 *Eudaimonia*, or human flourishing

Aristotle saw human beings as part of nature. This entails that humans, as animals and plants have a goal, *telos*, namely to be a reasonable creature, theoretically as well as practically, as best as possible. This leads towards human flourishing, or *eudaimonia*, and can only be pursued when the individual is cared for, supported from the beginning. When individuals are provided with the proper exemplars, are taught the proper skills and knowledge, a human can truly flourish. But when a proper basis is missing or children are heavily traumatised or lacking certain skills necessary, for instance by being emotionally handicapped, it will become difficult, if not impossible to reach *eudaimonia*. Education from an early age, thus is of great importance to Aristotle.<sup>16</sup> Virtues are necessary to pursue *eudaimonia*. Because our *telos* requires us to become a reasonable creature, we are required, from our human nature, to develop certain cognitive and social skills. When we strive to excel in these skills, they become virtues and leads toward *eudaimonia*.<sup>17</sup> How exactly Aristotle believes virtues should be developed will be explore in section **3.4 Aristotle's educational approach**

##### 3.1.2 *Phronesis*, or practical wisdom

As we have seen in the previous section, to strive towards *eudaimonia* implicates that we act in accordance with the virtues. To judge if an act is virtuously, we should first have a notion about what is considered an act in accordance with the virtues. According to Aristotle, a virtues act is an act a person who possesses practical wisdom or *phronesis* would choose to do.<sup>18</sup> Possessing *phronesis* concerns knowing which virtues a situation requires. A person with *phronesis* recognises the morally relevant particulars of a situation and is able to judge what is the appropriate response should be.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Quoted by Steutel & Carr (1999), p 4

<sup>16</sup> Spiecker (1999)

<sup>17</sup> Curren (2010) p.544

<sup>18</sup> Sherman (1999)

<sup>19</sup> Curren (2010), Shaw (2005)

*Phronesis* assigns an important role to the particulars of a situation, however it does not exclude the use of rules or existing norms. It emphasises the importance of knowing and understanding the particulars of a situation so the existing rules, which reflect earlier experiences and social norms, can be provided with the right relevance. This way of exploring a situation uses a top down as well as a bottom-up approach. Judging a situation requires the bottom-up approach of understanding the context of the situation. Deciding what to do, makes use of the bottom-down approach of applying the right rules.<sup>20</sup>

In order to develop a sense of *phronesis*, exemplars or role models are of crucial importance<sup>21</sup>. According to Aristotle, *phronesis* is learned by listening to the narratives and real-life situations the exemplar has been in, learning from their decisions and their responses.<sup>22</sup> For this reason, our relationship with others, is of crucial importance. Every contact we are engaged in, sparks the development of certain traits. The formation of our character, i.e. our developed virtues, can thus be envisioned as an accumulation of the relationships we had in the past.

### **3.1.3 *Paideia*, or education towards excellence**

*Paideia* refers to a form of education which concerns the development of the individual towards excellence, *arête*. Originally *paideia* was meant for the aristocrats only, and it included excellence in rhetoric, grammar, mathematics, philosophy, geography, natural history and gymnastics. It served as a tool to let the individual desire what is desirable, and developing the right kind of 'appetite' for activities to spent leisure time. This was of great importance because according to Aristotle, during leisure time the individual was free to get involved in activities which promoted *phronesis* and thus *eudaimonia*.<sup>23</sup>

Although education served to develop the individual, this did not implicate that the government was no part of the educational process. In ancient Greek times, the role of the society differed from ours. They were more compact, and hierarchal ordered. Aristotle stated that in the same sense society is build on the presence of men, a man can only exist in the society he is part of. Therefore the society could not be excluded in the search for individual perfection. For this reason *paideia* is neither private, in a sense of the formation of the individual, nor is it about public utility. It is in the interest of society to help (future) citizens to develop as individual and at the same time stimulate them to endorse and act according to values and ideals which are in line with the values and ideals endorsed by society.<sup>24</sup> Education therefore must reflect the values and traditions of society.

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<sup>20</sup> Sherman (1999)

<sup>21</sup> Dunne (1999), Sherman (1999)

<sup>22</sup> Sherman (1999)

<sup>23</sup> Shaw (2005)

<sup>24</sup> Curren R. (2010), Shaw (2005), Götz (2003)

In the Renaissance this idea re-emerged in Humanism. Supporters of this theory stated that "*genuine education is a Bildung that includes a number of subjects, develops the individual in accordance with his or her own nature, and is also in harmony with the universal principles of the world and society*"<sup>25</sup>

### **3.2 Virtues and emotions**

Aristotle was convinced that emotions play an important role in moral behaviour. He argued that virtues are rooted in our emotions, or passions. They reflect our beliefs about objects of value, what we believe is important. In this sense they act as motivators, but emotions also play additional roles in moral behaviour. They put attention to certain situations, signalling particulars and raising awareness at some points.<sup>26</sup>

Another important role for emotions can be recognised in the statement that acquiring virtues is done by consolidation, harmonisation and sorting of emotions. In order to achieve this, emotions should go through this process of regulation and redirection. In this process the individual becomes more aware of his emotions and initial responses. Aristotle made a distinction between intellectual virtues, which he defined as rational virtues like understanding, judgement and reasoning and on the other hand, moral virtues which he conceived as the ability to control our emotions.<sup>27</sup> Education which focuses on the development of moral virtues, i.e. controlling emotions, stimulates habituation, which in his turn leads to the development of moral virtues.<sup>28</sup> All too often this is misinterpreted. Moral virtues, because they are the result of good habit, are believed to develop by endless repetition, by 'engraving' moral behaviour, i.e. one becomes brave by acting brave often. Habituation is a powerful tool because individuals not only like doing what they please, but more often they like doing what they are accustomed to.<sup>29</sup>

However, this is not the complete story, for mindless repetition of the desired behaviour does not lead towards development of moral virtues. The conduct which should become habit, should be constantly refined in order to become a true virtue. At the start, conduct should be supervised and controlled by another person who already masters the virtue. This person, or exemplar, shows direction and assists the individual in analysing specific situations, pointing to particulars overlooked by the apprentice and providing the language needed to evaluate the situation. Through this process of guidance, the individual is able to progress and eventually is able to maintain self-control.

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<sup>25</sup> Nordenbo (2002), p 346

<sup>26</sup> Dent (1999)

<sup>27</sup> Curren (2010)

<sup>28</sup> Sherman (1999)

<sup>29</sup> Shaw (2005)

In order to fully develop moral virtues, the intellectual virtues are also necessary. This "Unity of Virtues thesis"<sup>30</sup> states that without good judgement, which is an intellectual virtue, the individual is not able to further develop his moral virtues, but without a conception of what is the right response, which is a moral virtue, no wise judgement can be made. The two virtues are intertwined, hence the development of the one stimulates the development of the other.

### 3.3 Aristotle's educational approach

In childhood and early adolescence the foundations for virtuous behaviour must be laid. Children must develop good habits in order to develop virtues at a later age. The development of good behaviour can be stimulated by consequently rewarding and disapproving certain types of action. Dinning of the moral rules which are present in society, e.g. do not kill, do not steal, would also be considered necessary. Not because these moral rules are true without exception, but because they offer guidance in split-second decisions. But the development of good behaviour is not enough.

As we have seen, in order to be able to pursue *eudaimonia*, individuals should develop intellectual virtues, moral virtues and *phronesis*. Intellectual as well as moral virtues must be nurtured, because they require rationality. In order to reach this, an individual should develop a sense of intelligence, moral imagination and moral sensitivity. The development of moral imagination is important because in order to pursue *phronesis* an individual should be aware of the needs of others, even when he is not face to face confronted with them. Moral imagination as well as moral sensitivity and intelligence should be trained and developed, for we are not born with these capacities.

Another component which should be nurtured according to Aristotle is an account of what is good or admirable (*kalon*). *Kalon* shows what should be pursued as an end in itself. For instance becoming rich cannot be *kalon* because, at least for most people, it is not the fact that you have the money which brings happiness, but what you can do with it. It is thus important to show children what in society is considered good and admirable for its own sake.<sup>31</sup> The moment children are confronted with *kalon*, and they learn to appreciate it for its own sake, children become susceptible to a certain type of moral arguments which help them develop practical reason of the highest order.<sup>32</sup>

A third element central in education is the development of consistency of the self. In other words, in order to become virtuous it is important to develop a coherent personal morality. Without coherence, it almost becomes impossible to act consistent. The best way to develop consistency of the self is by reflecting on personal views and compare them with the views of an exemplar. The exemplar should be a person we feel acquainted with because we best learn from persons in which we recognise similarities with our own life.

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<sup>30</sup> Curren (2010), p.548

<sup>31</sup> Shaw (2005)

<sup>32</sup> Curren (1999)

A fourth aspect concerns the strengthening of character. By overcoming obstacles and facing failure, an individual learns how to deal with misfortune. This does not entail that educational practice should be designed to make success an impossible enterprise, but the opposite of designing for success does not stimulate character strength. The most optimal will be found in the mean.

### **3.3.1 Educational implications**

Moral education based on an Aristotelian ethics, serves as a means to help individuals to become virtuous, to perfect their typical human qualities so they are able to live a happy and successful life. In order to pursue *eudaimonia*, pupils should be guided by exemplars. These 'masters of virtue' should help the student to uncover all the relevant aspects and guide him in appropriate reactions. By being confronted with exemplars, students will experience an internal thrive, a kind of positive envy<sup>33</sup>, *zèlos*, which makes them want to be like their role model, possess the same qualities they admire.<sup>34</sup>

Aristotelian character education is not a quick way to solve problems, but should be envisioned as a constant process. An individual striving for *arête*, will never be finished, improvement is always an option. It is a process which should be initiated early in life and will continue till death. Only when we strive towards excellence, we can truly experience *eudaimonia*. Connected to education, this entails that during education, the student should be guided till the moment of habituation is completed and the student is able to reflect, adjust and control his moral and intellectual virtues. The time it takes depends on the individual and the outcome is thus uncertain.

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<sup>33</sup> See Kristjánsson (2006) for a more elaborate discussion about the precise meaning of *zèlos*.

<sup>34</sup> Sanderse (2009)

## 4. Moral behaviour

In the previous chapter we have explored Aristotle's virtue ethics and especially how this effects moral education. Besides looking at the formation of character or the development of virtues there is an opposite view on how moral behaviour should be developed. Many moral theories do not focus on the individual and his development but state that moral behaviour is the result from an accumulation of rational skills which determine how an individual acts. Many of these rational skills, i.e. autonomy, will power, conscience, agency and personhood are not only central to moral theories but are also part of Behavioural sciences, in particular moral psychology.<sup>35</sup> The research outcomes and the theories resulting, are of great importance when cognitive moral approaches are developed. In this chapter we will therefore explore what moral behaviour consists of and how it develops from a moral psychology point of view. The third section will then focus on the implications these moral psychological theories have on moral education.

### 4.1 The Four Component Model of Morality

In the early nineteen eighties, J.R. Rest developed a view on how moral behaviour comes around, which is influential still today. Rest based his ideas on the findings of Kohlberg who early in the cognitive development research program had stated that not only moral judgement leads to the emergence of moral behaviour.<sup>36</sup>

In his moral behaviour model, which he called the Four Component Model of Morality, Rest suggests that there are four components which should all come forward for moral behaviour to arise. These four components are moral sensitivity, moral reasoning, moral commitment and moral courage.<sup>37</sup>

Moral sensitivity is best understood as the ability to recognise the moral dimension of a situation. An individual who is morally sensitive recognises potential moral dilemmas in a situation. In order to recognise these dilemmas the individual must also take others in to account, apart from his own interests. Affection plays an important role in this component. Before moral sensitivity can develop, the individual should display moral emotions like empathy, guilt and compassion. Moral emotions, therefore, are of great influence on the eventual moral behaviour.<sup>38</sup>

Moral reasoning is the most rational component of the four. An individual who displays moral reasoning is able to judge which of the options is the most ethically justified one, why option A is more justified than option B. This means that the individual should develop critical thinking skills to succeed at this component.

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<sup>35</sup> Althof and Berkowitz (2006)

<sup>36</sup> Bebeau and Thoma (1999), p 344

<sup>37</sup> Bebeau and Thoma (1999), Fowler *et.al.* (2009), Meyhew and King (2008)

<sup>38</sup> Fowler *et.al.* (2009), p 281-282



Because of the emphasis on rational thinking and cognitive processes this component shows parallels to Kohlberg's moral stages. Instead of rejecting Kohlberg's moral development scheme, Rest has incorporated and adapted it to serve his own account of moral development.

Moral commitment is the capacity to know what should be done, weighing it against other, non-moral interests and prioritising the morally right behaviour over other courses of action. Developing moral commitment equals developing conscience. It concerns the question *why should I behave moral?* An individual whose moral commitment is well developed, commits himself to displaying morally right behaviour.

Moral courage is closely related to moral commitment. Even if the individual knows what should be done and is willing to do the right thing, there might be situations when external factors withhold the individual from acting morally right. Moral courage entails the will power to display the right behaviour even when external factors, be it other people, personal fears or material obstacles, are pressing to behave differently.

Rest argues that each of his components is characterised by affective as well as cognitive processes.<sup>39</sup> Another feature of Rest's model concerns the relations between the different components. He argues that each component is acquired and developed individually, but since all components are needed to display moral behaviour, the interaction between the four components is of great importance. The weakest link determines the relative strength of the moral behaviour displayed. When, for instance, the moral motivation is underdeveloped, the behaviour suffers from this underdevelopment. It is therefore of great importance to develop each of the moral components. We should keep in mind that each of the above mentioned components is developed in a similar way, but separately from each other.

## 4.2 Moral development

Rest *et.al.* also proposed a theory about moral development. According to this theory, moral development is characterised by acquiring new moral schemas.<sup>40</sup> Schemas can be understood as *general knowledge structures residing in long term memory*<sup>41</sup> and are formed when individuals are confronted with recurrent behavioural patterns or situations.<sup>42</sup> Besides knowledge about previous behavioural patterns, schemas also contain factual knowledge about this particular type of situation, making it easier to recognise similar situations. Schemas help individuals to structure everyday situations, providing guidance in their search for additional information and help processing new

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<sup>39</sup> Bebeau and Thoma (1999),

<sup>40</sup> Rest J. *et.al.* (1999) p. 304, the term "moral\_schemas" is adopted from this article and can be understood as a moral framework, the basis from which behaviour emerges.

<sup>41</sup> Rest J. *et.al.* (1999) p. 297

<sup>42</sup> When confronted with a similar situation, individuals will remember how they reacted the first time and what the effects were of these actions. If that particular action or decision turned out to produce positive effects, individuals are likely to act in a similar way. The schema for this type of situations has started to take form.

situations. Schemas use knowledge already present to interpret new situations. *In short, schemas facilitate information processing.*<sup>43</sup> According to Rest *et.al.* there are three different gradations in moral schemas, the Personal Interest, Maintaining Norms and the Post conventional schema. These schemas are developmentally ordered. Hence, an individual must first incorporate the Maintaining Norms schema before he can incorporate the Post conventional schema. Presumably, these moral schemas structure and guide the moral behaviour of the individual.<sup>44</sup>

The Personal Interest schema is the first schema to develop in (early) childhood. Actions are considered right when they do not conflict with the interests of the actor or those acquainted with the actor.

The Maintaining Norms schema, the second schema to develop, typically develops in late childhood and early adolescence when individuals realise that norms and laws are necessary to maintain a society. These laws may be reflected in civil law, but also in 'laws' related to religion or other society-related groups. When moral development stops here, the individual prefers simplistic social norms and is willing to give unlimited power to authorities. A society where the majority of the population endorses the Maintaining Norms schema, might become overly authoritarian and oppressive.

The Post conventional schema is the third and final moral schema. This schema typically develops in late adolescence and adulthood. In contrast with the Maintaining norms schema, norms are considered to be justified because of the arguments they are based on instead of being justified because 'rules are rules'. The argumentation itself is also open to criticism and rational argumentation. Individuals start to form ideals which the norms should appeal to. And they realise that norms and laws might be biased and therefore questionable. Individuals become open minded and are willing to deliberate their point of view.

Individuals may hold different moral schemas at the same time, gradually shifting from a more primitive moral schema towards a more developed one. Moral schemas only facilitate information processing when one of the moral schemas is dominant. When an individual is in a transitional stage, moral decision making becomes harder.<sup>45</sup> A mix of existing schemas causes an individual to potentially respond to moral issues from different moral schemas. Different reactions may occur in similar situations. The capability to make an honest decision deteriorates and the individual might shift in decision or opinion more often. Once a more developed moral scheme is incorporated and has become dominant, decisions are made with more self-esteem. Individuals show a more coherent opinion.

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<sup>43</sup> Rest J. *et.al.* (1999) p. 297

<sup>44</sup> Rest J. *et.al.* (1999) p. 302

<sup>45</sup> Rest J. *et.al.* (1999) p. 315-317

### 4.3 Developing moral behaviour

In the previous sections I have highlighted different aspects of the development of moral behaviour. Moral psychologists state that education aims at improving or encouraging moral behaviour, should stimulate the development of all four components and acquiring new moral schemas. The transition to a more sophisticated moral schema is stimulated by practice. This entails that the more often individuals are confronted with moral dilemmas the quicker they transfer to a more sophisticated moral schema. This closely resembles Aristotle's point about habituation, however a cognitive development approach envisions the development of new moral schemas as primary goal, while Aristotle aimed at the development of moral virtues in order to reach *eudaimonia*. Developing virtues is a means to reach the primary goal.

The most common used method to stimulate the transition to a more sophisticated moral schema is the decision matrix approach. The focus of method is on making a practical judgement with the help of argumentation schemes. These ethical frameworks can be applied in various fields and yield a seemingly instant answer for the question 'what to do?'. It combines philosophical views with scientific views and is best practised by those with knowledge of both strands.

Often facets of the most common philosophical theories, Kantianism, Utilitarianism and social contract theories, are all represented in the same matrix although an explicit reference to any of these theories is rare. Utilitarianism often is represented by the respect for well-being. Kantianism or deontological theories are represented by the respect for autonomy and the social contract theories are represented by the respect for fairness. For each agent affected the principles should be determined. In other words, how are the principles of well being, autonomy and justice for agent X affected in this particular situation? And how is this for agent B? Of course these principles should be valued and analysed before an ethical decision can be made. The use of ethical matrix systems suggests that when the matrix is used in the proper way, i.e. it is unbiased and each point of view is represented equally, a right decision can be made.<sup>46</sup>

Another similar approach is the deliberation scheme designed by Bolt, Verweij and van Delden. This method is often used in the Dutch higher education courses and focuses on clarifying a moral situation before taking the decision what to do. According to the authors, this method should be used as an instrument to reflect and discuss a moral problem in a structured way. Their decision model is divided in five stages. Each of the stages represents a set of questions which should help the individual to make a considered judgement. The quality of the definite decision depends on the quality

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<sup>46</sup> Mephram (2005)

of the moral arguments used in the process. The 'better' the participants are in solving moral problems, the 'better' the final decision will be.<sup>47</sup>

By using these approaches, the ethical matrix approach as well as the argumentation scheme from Bolt *et.al.*, the dilemma becomes more concrete, values are clarified and the arguments used by the different parties are spelled out. If we analyze the decision matrix approach, we can recognize the aim of training different competences. A practical starting point aims at developing moral sensitivity because it focuses on clarifying the scope of the problem. Because these types of ethical frameworks emphasize the importance of clarifying the different opinions and help to structure arguments, they also aim at developing moral knowledge. Besides the advantage of being able to make correct split-second decisions, being experienced in weighing and balancing of moral dilemmas has another advantage. The more individuals are confronted with moral dilemmas, the quicker they will progress to a more sophisticated moral schema due to better developed moral components and vice versa. This entails that we can expect moral education to be most successful when it contains dilemmas, debates, peer-to-peer discussions and other dilemma solving situations. This is supported by evidence which shows that education which focuses on experimental learning, is the best way to develop these type of social skills<sup>48</sup>

This approach is popular, especially in the science related courses because it is close to a scientific way of thinking and working. The steps are often remembered by pupils not because they necessarily follow logically but because teachers are smart in finding reminders. Pupils like this approach, because it seems that this approach offers concrete solutions to a variety of real problems.<sup>49</sup> Especially science students hold this belief due to the nature of scientific research. In our current scientific model, experimental data only counts when the results can be validated and repeated. Due to this scientific judging system, scientists are used to work with protocols which determine which step should be taken next.

And precisely this point is the biggest trap this approach possesses. When pupils are primarily taught this perspective on ethics, they are falsely let to belief that ethics is like a puzzle. It might seem that every ethical question has one 'right' answer. Pupils who are taught ethics as a method of inquiry treat ethics like any another skill they are taught in class. When ethical concepts are stored, as Cowley puts it, and used to make a test and afterwards are *left behind in the examination room*<sup>50</sup>, pupils have not integrated ethical thinking. As a result, when pupils start working with these decision matrix approaches, they will find out that real life situations seldom are as clear cut as the cases they were offered in class. When they cannot find the 'right' answer or they see that there are multiple outcomes which all can be argued for, they think of ethics as difficult and unsolvable. In response, students

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<sup>47</sup> For a complete overview of all the steps needed, I suggest to read the book by Bolt, Verweij and van Delden.

<sup>48</sup> Bîrzéa, C. (2000) p. 39 Narvaez & Gleason (2007) p. 254, p. 266-268

<sup>49</sup> Cowley (2005)

<sup>50</sup> Cowley (2005) p. 741

often adopt a relativistic worldview<sup>51</sup> which instantly stops the discussion about the justification of an act. Of course this does not imply that the decision matrix model is useless. Pupils benefit from rational inquiry. It helps them to understand that good reasons should be provided to back up a decision. They learn to take the other in account and will be able to quicker recognise moral dilemmas. But, as Cowley emphasises, it is necessary to keep close to the personal experiences of the pupils and use the ethical concepts used in the ordinary language in order to stimulate incorporation instead of concept storage.<sup>52</sup>

## 5. Teaching approaches in (moral) education

Apart from *what* we teach pupils, it is also important to think about *how* we want to teach them to become moral adults. Lapsley and Narvaez (2006), as moral psychologists and moral educators, recognised two central approaches in (moral) education, which in their turn are founded in several traditions.

### 5.1 A direct or an indirect approach

Traditionally, educational goals are pursued by a *direct approach*. Knowledge is literally transferred to the student. It entails a didactic instruction and direct transmission of the (moral) knowledge. There is little room for the student's personal contribution. Knowledge transfer is typically on the initiative of the teacher, the starting point for education, and ends with the student being tested for his knowledge. Opposed to this is the *indirect approach*. Advocated by Dewey (1938), this approach places the influence of the (school)community central. It starts from the premise that students better incorporate moral knowledge when they experience norms and values first hand. Instead of telling students how to behave, what to value and how to make judgements, this approach let students experience what the values and ideals taught, entail. It stimulates interaction between students and (moral) knowledge, and places teachers between their students instead of above. When considered from a practical point of view, it is almost impossible to solely use one of the above mentioned approaches. In almost every teaching situation both approaches will be used, perhaps not in 50-50 division but elements of each will be present.

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<sup>51</sup> The philosophical theory which states that every (sub)culture holds his own moral values. When adopting this view, you implicitly adopt the conviction that the moral behaviour of an individual cannot be judged by others who are not part of the same (sub)culture. The statement 'torture of children is justified' for instance, can be defended by the relativistic argument 'in our culture it simply is justified/tradition/part of our culture'

<sup>52</sup> Cowley (2005)

## **5.2 Educational traditions**

Which choice is made, direct or indirect, often depends on four types of educational traditions. Each presents a view on the role and nature of education.

### **5.2.1 A mimetic or a transformative tradition**

According to Lapsley and Narvaez (2006), the first two traditions represent a vision on the aim of education, what should be central. The *mimetic tradition* sees knowledge transmission as the main task for educators. In order to reach this aim, knowledge as a concept is envisioned as something that can be transferred to the student like a gift. Knowledge is something the teacher has and the student should receive, it thus is detachable, second-hand and reproducible. And because knowledge is non-personal, e.g. it stands on its own, not influenced by the giver or the receiver, it can be judged right or wrong, correct or incorrect. Opposed to this tradition Lapsley and Narvaez place the *transformative tradition*. This tradition does not take knowledge transmission central, but it takes the development of the student central. Knowledge is only used to transform students, to help them flourish, become the best they could possibly be. The aim is not to become the most skilful or to obtain the most knowledge, but to make the most of your personal opportunities.

### **5.2.2 A philosophical or an oratorical tradition**

The last two traditions which Lapsley and Narvaez recognise concern the manner of knowledge transfer and the way knowledge is interpreted. The *philosophical tradition* interprets knowledge about truth and goodness as something elusive which can only be grasped by discussion and critical examination. In order to be able to do this, students should acquire philosophical dispositions. That is, be open minded, judge fairly and reason critically. The philosophical tradition tries to prepare students to confidently face an uncertain future. The weak point of this tradition concerns the content. It is not clear what exactly should be taught in order to reach the educational goals. The method, how it should be taught on the other hand is an element strongly developed in the philosophical tradition. The *oratorical tradition* as described by Lapsley and Narvaez (2006) on the other hand is very strong on the content. It envisions knowledge as something that can be learned by looking to the past. By exploring important texts and social tradition, the truth and goodness can be revealed. It teaches students how to uncover truth and goodness, by teaching them how to read and interpret information from past generations. Instead of providing them with tools to solve problems for which no straightforward answer is ready, students are provided with tools to find answers in the past. A weak point of the oratorical tradition however concerns the methods used to reach the educational aim. It is not very clear which teaching methods are best to teach students how to uncover the truth.

### 5.3 Moral education

When we compare these four visions as described by Lapsley and Narvaez (2006) on education and knowledge, it is not hard to imagine that direct approaches often are grounded in mimetic and oratorical traditions, while indirect approaches often find their foundations in transformative and philosophical traditions. But as with direct and indirect approaches, this is not a hard division. Indirect approaches do not exempt oratorical or mimetic elements, nor do direct methods exempt philosophical or transformative elements. Emphasizing the differences however is important because teaching students about values and ideals often is done by either of two starting points, moral education or character education.

When we follow the distinction made by Lapsley and Narvaez (2006), we see that traditional moral education<sup>53</sup> often is linked to Kantianism, Utilitarianism and social contract theories. It traditionally uses a direct method, teaching students about moral theories, their strengths and weaknesses and the role these theories play in public policies. Cognitive moral development theories teach the student to investigate what the options are and how these options can be put in practice. Moral education traditionally aims at teaching how to respond, how to act and teaching students competencies in order to critically, systematically and logically assesses problems and search for a solution.

Character education on the other hand is often linked to virtue ethics and particularly Aristotelian virtue ethics.<sup>54</sup> It aims at stimulating students to become the best possible individual which is part of a particular society. In order to reach this goal, the indirect method founded in a philosophical and transformative tradition is the most logically approach. Instead of knowledge, it is the student which is central in the learning process. Because it concerns the development of an individual with al his personal strengths and weaknesses, the outcome of the educational process is uncertain.

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<sup>53</sup> A cognitive moral development approach

<sup>54</sup> Lapsley an Narvaez (2006)

## PART II

# MODERN VERSION OF BILDUNG IN THE NETHERLANDS

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## 6. Bildung, an educational approach

In their report, the Onderwijsraad often refers to a “modern concept of Bildung”. In this Chapter I will inquire the concept of Bildung. I will start by exploring von Humboldt’s interpretation of Bildung, which has been highly influential in debates on Bildung. I will try to give an overview of its most important features and the relation with the ancient Greek concept of *Pandēia* which inspired von Humboldt. In chapter 7, I will explore the advice of the Onderwijsraad and try to uncover what exactly they mean when they plea for a “modern concept of Bildung”.

### 6.1 The concept of Bildung

Before we start with the neo-humanistic Bildungstheory of von Humboldt, I would like to stress some important features. The word ‘Bildung’ is German in origin and emerged late 17<sup>th</sup> century. It refers to the development of the individual in accordance with an ideal by means of an act, process or occurrence.<sup>55</sup> Although the word itself is relatively new, the idea of personal development of the individual in accordance of an ideal is not and can be traced back to the ancient Greeks, i.e. Aristotle. Bildung can be translated as personal development or formation, but most often the German word Bildung is used because it is thought to best reflect the educational ideal behind the word. As many others, I will therefore use the word Bildung instead of trying to translate.

An important feature of Bildung in general is that it reflects the ideal the individual should strive for. This ideal consists of certain cognitive, social and moral capacities. Because ideals often believed to be relative to time and society, it is not hard to imagine that, from that perspective, “Bildungsideals” are also subject to change. After all, which ideal to strive for, depends on the ideals a society at any given time endorses.<sup>56</sup> To summarise, when I speak of Bildung, I will speak about striving to personal perfection in accordance to an ideal by means of means of an act, process or occurrence. I will accept the premise that over time various “Bildungstheories” have emerged and disappeared due to the fact that “Bildungsideals” are under influence of time, context and society.

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<sup>55</sup> Nordenbo (2002)

<sup>56</sup> Nordenbo (2002)



## 6.2 von Humboldt's Bildungstheory

The concept of Bildung often is associated with the Bildungstheory of von Humboldt (1767 – 1835) also known as the Enlightenment ideal. At the same time, another Bildungstheory was present and rivalling with von Humboldts theory. Ausbildung, or realistic Bildung, emphasised socialisation, vocational education and behaving in accordance with the social norms present in society. As a neo-humanist von Humboldt however believed education should aim at the development and perfection of the individual. He believed that development of students should concentrate on developing cognitive capacities, like rationality. Ancient Greek traditions inspired von Humboldt in a sense that both emphasised the development and perfection of the individual. They also have in common that according to both theories, education should aim at cultivating the higher cognitive capacities by the means of higher culture like arts and science.

But, as Nordenbo (2002) emphasises, von Humboldt excluded the society as being responsible or necessary for individual development. Using the argument that Bildung can only take place in the individual himself, he argued for limited state interference in the educational process. Because the state is not in a position to determine how an individual should develop himself, the state should not interfere with the educational package an individual should follow. Interestingly, his treatise concerning this subject would later function as one of the inspiration sources for Mill's *On Liberty*.

## 7. A modern day Bildungsideal

The Upper Chamber asked the Onderwijsraad to formulate an advice concerning the pedagogical task of educational institutions in the light of personal development, or Bildung. Both are convinced that Bildung, as representing personal and moral development, "*should not be considered an extra task*"<sup>57</sup> but that it "*makes the difference between education and excellent education*"<sup>58</sup> What can be considered perfect education? Because 'perfect' is a value-laden concept, using this word presupposes that there is some foundation in a moral theory. However, the Onderwijsraad does not make this explicit. In the next sections I will inquire the advice the Onderwijsraad gives, in the hope to uncover evidence which will give a clue about the ethical theory which is implicitly used to ground their advise. I will start by exploring the reasons *why* the Onderwijsraad believes it is necessary to pay attention to the Bildung of students. Secondly I will investigate *what* a modern day conception of Bildung should consist of according to the Onderwijsraad. What elements they believe are essential to a successful Bildungstraject. In other words, what features of personal development should be emphasised. Thirdly, I will explore the ways *how* the Onderwijsraad believes their advise should be implemented. With this 'list' in hand we might unravel which moral theory the Onderwijsraad implicitly pursues.

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<sup>57</sup> Translated "[Morele vorming is] bovendien geen extra taak", Onderwijsraad (2011b), p 21

<sup>58</sup> Translated "Het maakt het verschil tussen onderwijs en voortreffelijk onderwijs", Onderwijsraad (2011b), p 21

## 7.1 The need for Bildung

In the Netherlands, educational institutes have the legal task to educate and stimulate their students to develop personal, moral and professional aspects of their life. Apart from this official task, the Onderwijsraad, as well as The Upper Chamber, recognises a need to pay special attention to the Bildung of students, with an emphasis on stimulating the moral aspects, due to the changed Dutch social-cultural context. The Dutch society became more pluralistic and offers individuals more and more personal chances. Due to this change, children, adolescents and young adults are most of the time personally held responsible for finding a meaning in life and deciding for their life choices. This causes pressure and insecurity. Their enhanced freedom becomes a burden. Educational institutes should be aware of their responsibilities in the light of Bildung because they are one of the last social institutions which remained unchanged and presents a stable factor in the life of most children, adolescents, and young adults.

Traditional, an important part of the individual moral development occurred 'automatically' in the community, or in other words the social network the individual was part of. Most often this meant individuals learned how to be moral in their religious community or by the contact with their direct neighbours, friends and family. How to be moral, which life decisions should be made, was taught by listening and discussing the 'big stories' often apparent at faith. These 'big stories' contained examples of possible reactions to various moral dilemmas and showed direction. In these close communities values and ideals were learned by example. But with the regression of faith, these 'big stories' disappeared, and religious communities became less important to the individual. The Dutch society 'detraditionalised'<sup>59</sup>, many traditions lost their meaning or disappeared with the regression of faith. Another issue concerns the development of internet. Today's social communities are not longer so called Institutional Communities but consists of various, small and often temporarily communities, referred to as Netwerkkommunities.<sup>60</sup> This often means that an individual no longer is part of one influential community which shows direction. On the contrary, an individual today, often is part of various communities who all hold, when present, their own code of conduct. Another recent change is the extended diversity of cultures and believes. Due to the increased possibilities, children, adolescents and young adults often feel insecure which values should be endorsed.

Another aspect of today's society the Dutch government recognises, is the value which is given to authenticity and personal experiences. Especially adolescents and young adults often believe that their life only has value when there is something unique about them personally. The only recognise their own value when they experience unique situations and are able to make their own authentic decisions which are not influenced by others. This leads to an individual world view where the meaning of life

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<sup>59</sup> In Dutch; detraditionalisatie, concept by Elchardus (2007), quoted in Onderwijsraad (2011b)

<sup>60</sup> Onderwijsraad (2011b), p 17

can only be found within the individual. According to the Onderwijsraad and others, this is a false world view, because every individual is influenced and formed by the people they are surrounded by. As a result of endorsing this false world view, individuals are faced with a load of decisions which they believe they should all have to decide for on their own. This creates a sense of insecurity. In the end they might not make any decision at all, which leads to passivity. This problem is especially emerging at groups of young people in lower social positions which are offered less affective, social and cultural baggage. This group develops *"big, but insecure ego's who are potentially explosive because they lack the skills to control themselves"*.<sup>61</sup>

To summarise, the Onderwijsraad believe that educational institutes should pay extra attention to the Bildung of their students due to a changed society. Due to detraditionalisation and fragmented social networks, individuals are no longer automatically confronted with norms, values and moral guidance. Another aspect is the value given to authenticity and personal experiences. Because a large portion of the (future) citizens believe these are genuine objects of value, they are also forced to believe that every life choice must be authentic. They feel that the only right choice is a choice which is made without influence by others. These aspects lead to an enormous pressure on every decision and eventually to moral passivity and insecurity.

Because the Onderwijsraad notices these changes in society and emphasises the above-mentioned aspects, we can safely assume the Onderwijsraad believes individuals are better off without moral passivity and insecurity about decision-making. In the same line of argumentation, we can assume that the Onderwijsraad believes it is better for all to be aware of the value of community. They state that it is *"in communities that values and ideals are brought in to practice and are exemplified"*.<sup>62</sup> Based on these observations, we can make a preliminary conclusion about the set of premises of the Onderwijsraad. They believe it is valuable to educate children, adolescents and young adults in order to reduce moral passivity and insecurity towards personal life decisions as well as to emphasise the value of the community we are all part of.

## **7.2 What should be taught**

Besides the societal necessity, both the Onderwijsraad as well as the Upper Chamber recognise the legal task of educational institutes. Especially primary and secondary education should pay attention to the Bildung of their students because the core task of these types of education already entails the cognitive as well as the social development of children.

But what should be taught depends on the main task of the education program. If we listen carefully, the main task of modern Bildung should be to *"broaden the world of students by the means of a wide*

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<sup>61</sup> Onderwijsraad (2011b), p 19

<sup>62</sup> Translated "binnen gemeenschappen worden namelijk waarden en idealen gepraktiseerd en voorgeleefd", Onderwijsraad (2011b), p 17

*cultural education, to provide orientation*".<sup>63</sup> Another aspect of modern Bildung should be to *"provide students with notions which show direction or show objects of value"*<sup>64</sup> The minister of education, in the official response to the advice of the Onderwijsraad, however rephrased it as follows. The main task of modern Bildung is to *"activate the thinking process of students in order to teach them to include moral values in the formation of their opinion"*<sup>65</sup>, leading to a different interpretation. This interpretation is biased in a sense that the Onderwijsraad never explicitly states that students should learn to include moral values in forming their opinion. Learning about values, and forming an attitude towards these values does not necessarily leads to using these values in personal decisions as we have seen in **chapter 4, moral behaviour**. In order to reach that goal, education should include an additional 'step'. Although the Onderwijsraad does not intend to develop a new Bildungstheory, they only stress the need for the development of a new theory, they do point to two aspects they think are important for a modern conception of Bildung.

The first aspect concerns the content. The Onderwijsraad believes it is important the content should provide orientation. That is, students should not only be taught the theoretical aspects of knowledge but should also be taught the social aspects of knowledge. These social aspects consist of knowledge about tradition, moral visions and ideals concerning truth, value, rights and wrongs. The content of a modern Bildungstheory should aim at providing students with social knowledge and skills so they can reflect judgemental and wise on theoretical knowledge and opinions presented. At the first glance this aim shows parallels with traditional moral education. It emphasises the development of cognitive skills, judgemental reflection and wise decision-making, and seemingly aims at developing skills over personal development. However the primary aim is to provide students with orientation. This is a typical aim of character education. It concerns an attitude change through raising awareness and stimulating thinking about values and ideals. From a virtue ethics point of view, endorsing a coherent view on values and ideals, automatically leads to judgemental and wise reflection on the knowledge presented.

Besides the content, how the educational goals are pursued influences the outcome. With this second aspect the Onderwijsraad does not dictate a complete educational programme, but they do describe three premises on which a successful Bildungstraject should be based. The first premise is the uncertain character concerning the outcome of the educational process. The Onderwijsraad stresses the individual character of the process. This does not entail that a student should find out for himself or is personally responsible for determining what he wants to learn. They emphasises that the outcome depends on the individual capacities and interests when they speak of the individual character of education. A second premise concerns the relation between the student and the

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<sup>63</sup> Translated "[Aandacht voor vorming houdt in] *de wereld van leerlingen/studenten verbreden door middel van brede cultuuroverdracht, wat hen oriëntatie geeft.*" Onderwijsraad (2011b) p 7

<sup>64</sup> Translated "[Vorming houdt ook in leerlingen/studenten] *meegeven die richting wijzen of aangeven wat van waarde is*" Onderwijsraad (2011b) p 7

<sup>65</sup> Translated "[het is kort gezegd,] *het op gang brengen van het denkproces bij leerlingen, zodat zij leren om bij hun meningsvorming morele waarden te betrekken.*" Tweede kamer der Staten Generaal (2011) p 3

knowledge presented. When the students are able to, and stimulated to start a dialogue about the presented knowledge, they will develop a personal attitude towards this knowledge. In this manner, students will develop a relationship with the world around them. This typically reflects a philosophical tradition. Students are stimulated to incorporate knowledge by discussing and critically reflect on the knowledge. The third premise concerns the development of a moral attitude. The Onderwijsraad states that a moral attitude forms when students feel a connection with values, goals and ideals. Only when students incorporate certain values, goals or ideals, they will act accordingly. This refers to a transformative tradition. The central aim of Bildung should be to cause a transformation in students. They should be stimulated to act according the values and ideals they endorse. Combined with the first premise that puts the development of the individual central, it is not hard to see that the Onderwijsraad, again seems to implicitly refer to a form of character education.

The previous concerns the individual student and the process he or she is going through. But the Onderwijsraad also recognises a societal aspect in a modern Bildungstheory. Although a Bildungstheory concerns the developmental process of an individual, this process is only complete when the individual recognises the worth of the society he is part of, and accepts the influence society has on his life. Let me explain this claim. The second premise, states that when a individual is not confronted with notions about values, ideals and possible goals in life, or is limited in the reflection about these values, ideals and goals it is almost impossible to develop an personal attitude concerning these issues. The third premise states that without this personal attitude, an individual can not wholeheartedly pursue these values, ideals and goals in life, resulting in a lack of moral commitment. The individual will not connect its acts with moral considerations, due to a limited personal attitude concerning these values and ideals. The values, ideals and possible goals necessary for students to develop a moral attitude must come from somewhere. It is at this point that the role of the community becomes clear. The values and ideals offered to the student come from the society he is part of. The Onderwijsraad stresses the need to show students, by transferring knowledge as well as by example, how they should act according the social norms and traditions. Not to indoctrinate but to open the discussion about these social norms and traditions. Or as the Onderwijsraad states *"A child or young adult can only become a person with the help of notions of others, the society, history an traditions. They become a person through the dialogue about these notions of value. Through these means they are able to discover what they believe is important and morally relevant. They will create their own attitude towards these values and ideals."*<sup>66</sup>

Besides this uncertain, individual aspect of Bildung, the Upper Chamber as well as the Onderwijsraad is convinced certain capacities should be taught. These capacities include moral judgement, critical thinking skills, analytical and conceptual thinking skills, debating skills, acquiring communicative

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<sup>66</sup> Translated *Een kind of jongere kan pas iemand worden met behulp van noties van anderen, de samenleving, de geschiedenis, de tradities hem aanreiken. Kinderen worden een persoon door met aangereikte inhoud een dialoog aan te gaan. Op deze manier kunnen zij ontdekken wat zij van waarde en moreel richtinggevend vinden. Zij gaan zich hiertoe op een eigen manier verhouden.* Onderwijsraad (2011b) p20

capacities, attention for democratic citizenship, ability to handle multiform convictions and cultural baggage and learning to learn. All these capacities seem to suggest that the Onderwijsraad would like to empower students. Individuals possessing these capacities are better able to cope with social dilemmas because they have the skills to analyse the problem and systematically look for an answer. Another advantage of possessing these capacities reflects the traditional role the government sees for Bildung of students, namely preparation toward active citizenship. The capacities the Upper Chamber has in mind when referring to Bildung of students are technical and supposedly value free. This approach typically reflects a mimetic tradition, providing students with knowledge how to act, how to reason and how to respond. It places the transmission of knowledge and skills over the development of the individual.

To summarise this section, the Onderwijsraad seems to adopt two different strategies concerning what should be taught. On the one hand they want student to be taught cognitive capacities like reasoning skills and analytical thinking skills. These cognitive skills are supposedly value free and are best taught by direct teaching methods. This aim shows many similarities with the traditional moral education which focuses on the question "What should I do". On the other hand, the Onderwijsraad wants to stimulate the personal development of the individual, where the emphasis seems to lie more on the question "Who should I become". A question central to character education.

By inquiring the aims of the content of a modern Bildungstheory, we also have seen that the Onderwijsraad emphasises the role of the society. Without the knowledge already present in the community, it seems impossible to help students construct a personal attitude. This seems to refer to the *paideia* of Aristotle. To recall, we have seen the incorporation of *paideia*, besides the ancient Greeks<sup>67</sup>, also in the Humanistic Bildungsideal.

### **7.3 Methods and secondary conditions**

Another aspect which potentially sheds light on the implicit notion of ethics is *how* the Onderwijsraad thinks a modern Bildungstheory should come to expression in the educational process. Although the Onderwijsraad is not very clear exactly what should be taught, they are very clear about how Bildung should be taught and which secondary conditions should be present to reach the Bildungsaim.

Central in the advice by the Onderwijsraad is the use of examples. Due to the detraditionalisation of the Dutch society and the resulting individual perspective of most students, the Onderwijsraad repeatedly emphasised the necessity of exemplars. The use of exemplars is argued to be the best method due to the high valuation of authenticity and personal experiences in the Dutch society. The importance of examples is stressed by the fact that the use of examples emerges in almost every

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<sup>67</sup> See chapter 3, Virtue ethics

point of concern mentioned by the Onderwijsraad. As will we see, the use of examples is not only limited to the teacher-student interaction but is also reflected in the school environment.

The first point emphasised by the Onderwijsraad is the place of Bildung in the curriculum. Instead of creating a separate course, the Onderwijsraad stresses the opportunities of integrating Bildung in the traditional knowledge courses. Bildung can be stimulated by teachers which function as an example. Instead of time consuming, integrating Bildung in the traditional curriculum is time saving. The Onderwijsraad stresses the value of Bildung because it facilitates the learning of content knowledge. By showing context and social relevance of the knowledge offered, students find it easier to understand and to memorise theoretical knowledge.

The second point concerns the methods. The two aspects the Onderwijsraad thinks should be central in modern Bildung, orientation and moral attitude formation (section 7.2) each asks for a different approach. Orientation is best pursued by letting students experience real-life dilemma's in situations outside school and in the professional situations. Orientation is necessary in order to reach a moral attitude formation is best accomplished, according to the Onderwijsraad, by reflective methods like group discussion or during individual mentor meetings. This recommendation seems to reflect a philosophical tradition. However, many of the authors who, requested by the Onderwijsraad, have written an essay<sup>68</sup> about the place of Bildung in modern education, place the reading and discussion of the "great stories" and the tradition central, referring to an oratorical tradition. The Onderwijsraad partly adopts these advices by stating that classes concerning literature and culture offer opportunities to integrate Bildung<sup>69</sup>.

A third point mentioned by the Onderwijsraad concerns the attitude of the teacher towards the student. Teachers should be more aware of their influence, how they make contact and how they respond in different situations, teaches the student important lessons. Showing how to behave in a social manner, and thereby showing the norms and values adopted by the society, by opening up, showing interest in the student personally and by keeping up-to-date of the prevailing youth culture, the teacher sets an example. It asks teachers for personal commitment but also to open up about their personal story and thus asking the teacher to show some vulnerability.

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<sup>68</sup> Onderwijsraad, (2011a)

<sup>69</sup> Onderwijsraad (2011b), p 28

The first three points emphasised the role of the teacher, how he should incorporate Bildung and how he should act as teacher, but also schools as educational institutes should systematically pay more attention to Bildung. Therefore the fourth point refers to the role of the institute as part of the Bildungsprozess. The atmosphere in class should be safe and open in order to stimulate Bildung. Primarily this seems a task of the individual teacher. But schools can contribute by clearly envisioning the norms and values a school wants to teach, and by organising school activities which reflect these norms and values. A safe and open atmosphere in class becomes the norm, and reaching this ideal in class no longer depends on the efforts of the individual teacher but of the entire school community. The relation between staff and management also functions as an example to the students and to the staff. *“How the management wants teachers to treat students should be leading in how they treat their staff.”<sup>70</sup>*

If we analyse this section, we see that the use of examples is a recurrent theme. The same holds for the use of an indirect method. By creating a mini version of the ideal society where everyone is respected, listened to and safe to be who he or she want to be, pupils indirectly learn about values and ideals. The Onderwijsraad stresses the importance of the school environment in the Bildungsprozess.

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<sup>70</sup> Translated: *Wat van leraren en docenten wordt verwacht in hun omgang met leerlingen en studenten [...] zou leidend moeten zijn voor de manier waarop leidinggevenden met leraren en docenten omgaan.* Onderwijsraad (2011b) p 34



## **PART III**

# **TO IMPLEMENT THE ADVICE OF THE ONDERWIJSRAAD**

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### **8. The implicit notion of the Onderwijsraad**

The 'ontzuijing' and regression of faith which started in the sixties and seventies, affected the role of moral education at Dutch high schools. Teachers became hesitant in teaching about norms and values, because "whose values should be taught?" Because educational institutions still saw the value of teaching ethics, a value free variant emerged. Emphasising the clarification of values and development of rational capacities like argumentation and justice principles, moral education was still accepted.<sup>71</sup> However, this approach leads to a relativistic worldview, resulting in the social issues recognised by the Dutch government.<sup>72</sup>

The last few decades the emphasis was on the utility of education. It should be effective and cost-efficient.<sup>73</sup> As an effect, education nowadays aims at teaching competences and is job-orientated. The Onderwijsraad believes it is time to change the current view on education and stresses the fact that the influence of psychology and developmental psychology has a negative influence on the Bildung of children.<sup>74</sup> It causes a subjectivist worldview in which it is almost impossible to critically assess the values endorsed by the individual. When we look at what the Onderwijsraad pleads for, it seems clear that they would favour some major changes.

But why is a moral underpinning of moral education necessary? Welch (2011) offered some important reasons why. When we look at the capability to judge which particulars of a situation are relevant in determining how to react. At the first sight, it seems that knowledge about a moral theory is not necessary because the capability to judge a situation is not theory depended. However, in order to determine the relevant particulars, a sense of morality, i.e. what is good, what is bad should be present. Without knowing what is good or bad, it is impossible to determine which particulars are relevant and which relevant particulars trump other particulars.

Another reason why educational theory should be grounded in a moral theory concerns the basic aim of moral education, namely to rebut moral relativism. Welch argues that anyone who denies that moral education should be founded in a moral theory, for example by stating that what ever moral

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<sup>71</sup> Sanderse (forthcoming)

<sup>72</sup> See for an overview, chapter 8.1

<sup>73</sup> Derkse (2011), Götz (2003)

<sup>74</sup> Onderwijsraad (2011b), p 19

theory is chosen, does not alter the moral education strategy, implies that no moral theory can be judged superior. This implicates a relativistic notion and is thus contrary to the central aim of prohibiting moral relativism at students.

A third reason for a moral underpinning concerns the intrinsically moral nature of education. Every act of education reflects some notion of morality. The only thing ethics education seems to do is to maximise the effect of this moral transmission. However, not every moral idea present in education is morally justified. Mere stimulating the ethical component is not sufficient. The moral message must be grounded in a moral theory which is coherent and justified, again to rebut moral relativism.

The fourth reason concerns the dispositional coherence claim. According to Welch, advocates for character education state that their approach is the best form of moral education because it stimulates dispositional coherence at students. In order to make this claim, it should be clear what 'dispositional coherence' entails before it can be used as a moral criterion. Mere coherence can not be a moral criterion to determine behaviour on morality. One can adopt a series of acting schemas which are coherent but immoral. To determine which adopted schemas can be judged moral, one needs a moral theory.

The next few reasons concern education approaches founded in moral psychology research. Moral psychologists, like Kohlberg, endorse an empiricist claim. In other words, only what can be empirically proven is right. However Welch states that determining what is actually moral cannot be justified by the presence of a (moral) feature at the majority of the individuals. Even in an ideal world where moral criteria can be empirically determined, the criterion to categorise and justify empirical findings must be derived from non-empirical statements, i.e. a moral theory.

Kohlberg stated that moral psychology shows that the form, structure and mode of moral thought can be considered universal. The content of moral thought however is relative to the individual. In other words, how a decision is made is universal, while what decision is made appears to be relativistic. However, according to Kohlberg this relativistic difference actually reflects a difference in developmental stages among cultures and individuals. However, referring solely to moral stage development as a justification for moral education, still does not determine which maxims should be considered right.

Another reason why a moral underpinning is necessary concerns moral traits. It is a commonplace among moral psychologists that moral traits cannot be recognised by solely looking at the outside behaviour, a notion about what *is* moral behaviour in the light of different contexts, should be present. For the actor as well as the other who is examining the behaviour. When this other is a moral psychologist, it becomes even of greater importance to subscribe to a consistent moral theory. Without a well-established and coherent notion of moral behaviour, a moral psychologist is not able to

value and judge behaviour of others. It is tantamount to state that the moral psychology cannot be value free.

When we accept the claim that moral behaviour is the result of moral schemas displayed, see chapter **4.2 Moral development**, it is tantamount to state that moral schemas and action scripts are stimulated and developed by reviewing, structuring and consolidating experiences. In order to help students develop the appropriate moral schemas educators and parents need to reach consensus about what is an appropriate action. Because determining what is an appropriate action reflects the values endorsed, moral schema development cannot be value free.

When we consider these reasons we can state that any educational program concerning moral development needs a moral underpinning. Even when a moral education program seems to be justified by 'empirical findings' it is still necessary to show some insights in the moral assumptions made by the researchers. This implicates that the advice of the Onderwijsraad probably most likely is written with at least a vision on morality in the back of their mind. However, it does *not* implicate that the writers were aware of their moral assumptions.

## **8.1 Cognitive moral development or character development?**

When we look at the advice of the Onderwijsraad, we can recognise a cognitive development approach but in a greater degree a character education approach. The list of competences students must acquire seems to plea in favour of a cognitive development approach. However, this list came from the Upper Chamber and was supported by the authors who wrote an essay about Bildung in the Netherlands. It is possible that this list of competences which can be taught and the progress be tested, actually is a reflection from the educational approach we are accustomed to. At this moment, education must yield testable results. Educational institutions in the Netherlands must answer the Onderwijsinspectie for their educational approach, resulting in a culture where only those topics which can be tested for are justified. Because individual moral development is hard to test, educators might be hesitant to advocate in favour of such an approach. When a list of competences is included, and the net result of the topics taught, are able to be tested, this can be comforting.

When we analyse the rest of the advice, it seems that the Onderwijsraad pleads in favour of an approach which stimulates the moral development of the individual. This is reflected in the comment of the Upper Chamber as quoted in chapter **7.2 What should be taught**<sup>75</sup> They seem not only to envision a moral decision making capability but they would like to develop a moral attitude. Students are not only expected to know what is good behaviour, but students must be encouraged to behave good themselves and to develop an attitude towards the ideals and values present in the Dutch

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<sup>75</sup> The main task of modern Bildung is to "activate the thinking process of students in order to teach them to include moral values in the formation of their opinion"

society. When we combine this with the recurrent role of exemplars in the advice, we can find an easy fit with the Aristotelian virtue ethics as explored in section I. On the other hand, we can think of other moral theories which can fit the advice, for example a Kantian approach can fit when we only consider the development of intrinsic motivation. However, apart from the character formation and exemplar features which closely resemble the aims of the advice, there are additional reasons to assume that the Onderwijsraad wrote their advice from a virtue ethics point of view. An additional clue might be found in the list of authors. The expert on moral development who contributed to the advice is dr. P. Vos, who advocates in favour of a virtue ethical approach in high school education and published several books<sup>76</sup> about this topic. Another clue does not directly follow from the advice, but has to do with another goal the government has set for high schools and the attitude of the government towards moral development.

## 8.2 Moral development and citizenship

Since February 2006<sup>77</sup>, Dutch high schools are obliged to educate their students in “active citizenship and social integration”.<sup>78</sup> At that time the government recognized that in the pluralistic Dutch society, not all citizens are used to being part of a liberal democratic society, thus lacking the skills to actively participate. Another problem recognized is that the relationship among citizens and the relationship between citizens and government deteriorated. On top of that, citizens seemed to forget that being citizen is not only rewarded with rights but that citizenship also involves having duties toward the society one lives in.<sup>79</sup> In order to overcome these problems, the government decided education must make sure that the education they offer stimulates active citizenship and social integration.

Stimulating the moral development of children and young adults strengthens the democratic values and stimulates active citizenship.<sup>80</sup>

To achieve these goals, The government legally regulated the aims of primary and secondary education programs. Firstly, the offered education should promote social competences and should stimulate openness towards the society and its diversity. It should also stimulate participation and involvement in the society. Thirdly it should promote the basic values, the Dutch norms and values, as well as the knowledge and competences to participate in a democratic constitutional state. And last, the offered education must take place in a surrounding where students can see what it is to be part of a society and which stimulates students to practice citizenship themselves.<sup>81</sup>

The aims expressed in this newsletter closely resemble the aims the Onderwijsraad envisions in their advice about moral development. Again, these aims resemble a virtue ethical approach. As we have

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<sup>76</sup> *Dat doet deugd* by Vos, van der Meulen & van der Jagt and *Doe me een deugd* by van der Jagt & Vos

<sup>77</sup> Van Wieringen (2007)

<sup>78</sup> actief burgerschap en sociale integratie

<sup>79</sup> Inspectie voor het onderwijs, p.2

<sup>80</sup> Birzúa, C. (2000)

<sup>81</sup> OCW newsletter (2010)

seen in chapter **3.1.3 *Paideia***, Aristotle believed that development of the individual equals the development of the citizen. Hence, according to Aristotle moral education and citizenship education are two sides of the same coin. It is not unlikely that the Onderwijsraad recognised the common aims of moral development and citizenship development. A virtue ethical approach then seems a logical choice. It unites individual development and citizenship development, it strongly advocates in favour of educators as exemplars and it stimulates the incorporation of moral values, thus leading to a moral attitude change in high school pupils.

## 9. Educational approach

As we have seen in the previous chapter, the choice for a virtue ethical approach seems justified by various reasons. However, integrating virtue ethics effectively in the Dutch high school curriculum is easier said than done. Aristotle's normative theory is developed in a time when society, or *polis*, was much more influential than society today. Ancient Greek social norms, values and ideals differ from our modern social norms, values and ideals. This implicates that Aristotle's view on education cannot be translated one on one to the educational situation today. Aristotle's educational vision needs to be interpreted and choices about which elements should be represented must be made. Of course this interpretation and choices are open to discussion, but are beyond the scope of this thesis. In order to present at least some possibilities, I will inquire two approaches on moral education, both founded in Aristotelian virtue ethics. I will start with what I call<sup>82</sup> the 'Voorbeeldig Onderwijs' approach by Van Tongeren en Sanderse. Secondly I will explore the Integrative Ethics Education approach developed by Narvaez and Lapsley.

### 9.1 Voorbeeldig Onderwijs

In the nineteen nineties Paul van Tongeren started working on an educational view about good education. As a virtue ethicist, he based his ideas on Aristotle's virtue ethics. Over the years he refined his view and contributed to the rise of a virtue ethical approach in the Dutch education.<sup>83</sup> In 2007, Sanderse started his PhD, supervised by Van Tongeren, about moral education. Together they refined their view on what 'good' moral education entails. At this moment Sanderse is finishing his PhD. Meanwhile, he is giving seminars to teachers and educational management teams about their Voorbeeldig Onderwijs approach. During these seminars as well as in an article which will be

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<sup>82</sup> The name for this educational view is inspired by a seminar about the vision on good education developed by Van Tongeren and Sanderse which I visited. The seminar was called 'Voorbeeldig Onderwijs'. Through personal communication Wouter Sanderse notified me that although he did not disagree with the name, he himself never came up with a name to describe his vision on good education.

<sup>83</sup> Van Tongeren wrote quite a substantial amount of discussions about the role of virtue ethics in education mainly in the newspaper Trouw, given dozens of lectures and wrote some influential (Dutch) books about this subject.

published soon in the Journal of Moral Education, Sanderse emphasises the role of the teacher in the process of moral development.

The 'Voorbeeldig Onderwijs' view developed by van Tongeren and Sanderse represents a strict virtue approach towards education. Its starting point is a normative theory from which an educational approach is derived. In other words, the authors first agreed that virtue ethics should be the norm and from there they developed an approach to stimulate the development of these normative ideas in (high school) education. Their basic assumptions thus reflect the educational ideas, ideals and implications as we have explored in chapter **3. Virtue Ethics**. The reason for inquiring this educational approach is its connection with virtue ethics, in a way the Onderwijsraad potentially might agree upon. Another reason concerns the nationality of the authors. Because both are Dutch, we might expect the approach to fit the circumstances at Dutch high schools<sup>84</sup>. Instead of repeating Aristotle's educational view, I will highlight the most characteristic and well developed point of the educational approach of Van Tongeren and Sanderse, namely the role of teachers as moral role models.

Supported by psychological findings, Sanderse recognises the fact that Aristotle was right when he stated that the development of moral behaviour of children and (young) adults start with role models and exemplars.<sup>85</sup> But he also recognises that teachers are rarely mentioned by children as actually being a role model. Even in retrospective (young) adults rarely mention teachers as a role model. The only exceptions are those who are learning to become a teacher or those who already are a teacher. Because it is often considered the task of teachers to help pupils to prepare for an adult life, and this is best done by being a moral exemplar, it seems important for teachers to become more aware of their role as moral exemplar. Accepting the role as moral exemplar however have implications for the role teachers must be prepared to except, their relationship with students and their personal ideas about morality.

According to Sanderse, a distinction can be made between morally bad or good teachers. This distinction depends on how well a teacher represents a good role model. Being a good role model implicates that a teacher displays good character traits.<sup>86</sup> What exactly good character traits are, is justified from the Aristotelian notion of virtues. Good character traits can be envisioned as virtues, in a sense that they contribute to *eudaimonia*, or a flourishing life. For that same reason, these character traits should be modelled, because it is the role of the teacher to help pupils in the process of striving towards *eudaimonia*.

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<sup>84</sup> Of course there are other influential, Dutch virtue ethical ideas about education. For instance the educational view of dr. P. Vos or the view developed in the nineteen eighties by Spiecker and Steutel. However, the virtue ethical view by Vos is saturated with Christian ideologies which might limit the public support. The view developed by Steutel and Spiecker is about thirty years old. This does not necessarily mean that their theory must be considered worthless, however because a choice had to be made, I choose a more recent view to explore.

<sup>85</sup> Sanderse (in press)

<sup>86</sup> Sanderse (in press)

Knowing what character traits are desirable and knowing what being a good role model as a teacher entails, does not mean a lot when the pupil is not recognising the role model as such. In order to become a genuine role model, the relationship between the teacher and the pupil is of great importance. Another important aspect is the ability to evoke a sense of *zèlos* at pupils. Without *zèlos* pupils will not emulate their role model, in this case the teacher. In order to stimulate *zèlos*, it is important to realise that it consists not only of an emotive element but that it needs a cognitive element as well. Without understanding why the virtue which the teacher embodies is valuable, there is no need to emulate this virtue. Secondly, after the pupil recognises the virtue, he should be thinking about how he himself can embody this virtue. From an educational perspective this implicates that the teacher should not only live the virtues, but should embody these virtues and should function as a role model. The teacher should also discuss the value of the virtues and explain how these virtues can be acquired and how they are embodied in the life and context of the pupil. Only when the pupil recognises that it is not the teacher as a person but that the teacher represents a virtue which is worth emulating, *zèlos* is evoked by the teacher.

Sanderse emphasises the need for teachers to become more aware about their exemplary role. In order to stimulate moral development, teachers should first look at the (implicit) message they send to their pupils. Of course this process can be started by the individual teacher, but the effect is greater when the complete educational team embodies the same virtues. When this approach is integrated institution wide, it will have implications institution wide. In order to successfully evoke *zèlos*, teachers should alter their relationship with students. An important aspect concerns trust. In most educational settings, pupils are told what they should not do. Implicitly, this tells the pupil that the teacher believes that the pupil is most likely to perform this negative behaviour. However, teachers should expect pupils to do good. This implicates that only positive rules, which state what pupils should do, must be communicated. When teachers no longer have to control whether the negative rules are violated, they will more easily open up towards their pupils. Resulting in a good relationship which makes emulation possible.

As stated at the beginning of this section, the 'Voorbeeldig Onderwijs' approach represents a strict Aristotelian approach towards education. Although it is supported by recent (social) scientific findings, its starting point lies at the normative philosophy of Aristotle. Van Tongeren and Sanderse developed an educational view on what good moral education entails. They give lectures and train teachers to help them improve as a moral role model. However, although they have a well developed vision on education, Sanderse states<sup>87</sup> that they (not yet) have developed a full educational method. Narvaez and Lapsley on the other hand did develop an educational method. Their Integrative Ethics Education approach starts from (socio)scientific findings and is supported by virtue ethics.

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<sup>87</sup> Through personal communication.

## 9.2 Integrative Ethics Education

The Integrative Ethics Approach developed by Narvaez and Lapsley<sup>88</sup>, is a relatively recent approach to moral education. It combines knowledge from various fields which explains the “integrative” part. They combine Aristotelian theory with cognitive and developmental science, prevention science, developmental and positive psychology and educational research. The Integrative Ethics Education approach is, at this moment, quite influential in the United States of America. Essentially, it puts two separate premises central. First it states that character education should be founded in the best possible psychological theories about character, traits, habits and behaviour. Secondly it states that character education must be founded in the best possible theories about education.

Lapsley and Narvaez believe, following Aristotle, that a caring relation between teacher and student is the best guarantee to reach expertise. They envision the teacher-student relationship as a master-novice relationship and state that skills are best learned through *coached practice and guided autonomy*.<sup>89</sup> In the light of moral education, the teacher is considered a moral expert. He or she possesses moral know-how, they know what knowledge to access and how to apply this. His experience is visible in the way he reacts. According to Lapsley and Narvaez, the four components of moral behaviour Rest argues for, as discussed in chapter **4.1 The Four Component model of morality**, can each be envisioned as moral exemplars. An expert in moral sensitivity for example, is better able to judge a situation and recognises more quickly the relevant particulars. Each component is represented by the appearance of a set of skills.<sup>90</sup> For adults to flourish in a democratic society, a minimum level of competence in these skills is required.<sup>91</sup>

Lapsley and Narvaez argue that (moral) behaviour consists of moral schemas as we have seen in chapter **4.2 Moral development.**, hence they argue that behaviour can be altered and improved. They use the theory about moral schemas to support Aristotle’s notion about developing virtue. To recall, Aristotle states that virtues emerge from the cultivation of habits. By cultivating habits, we become determined to behave in a certain way, it becomes an automatism. Virtues emerge from this habituation because we, after the process of habituation, rationally determine which habit is appropriate in which situation. Lapsley and Narvaez place this in a psychological development theory and envision the moral habits as *social cognitive schemas whose chronic accessibility favours automatic activation*.<sup>92</sup> As a result they encourage the development of moral schema’s in order to incorporate moral behaviour and become a moral expert.

To stimulate the development of moral schemas, Lapsley and Narvaez adopt an educational view which argues that knowledge is learned through repetition and reflection. The most appropriate model

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<sup>88</sup> Narvaez (2006), Lapsley D.K. and Narvaez D. (2006)

<sup>89</sup> Lapsley D.K. and Narvaez D. (2006), p. 34

<sup>90</sup> A list of skills, corresponding with the four components of Rest is entered in the supplement.

<sup>91</sup> Narvaez (2006) p. 718

<sup>92</sup> Lapsley D.K. and Narvaez D. (2006), p. 20



of instruction therefore is a *coached apprenticeship*<sup>93</sup> approach. This approach makes use of a direct as well as an indirect instruction, mimesis as well as transformation. This entails that the student is shown how the skill must be performed but at the same time is told *why* it is done this way. For an optimal result, the learning environment must be designed to support good behaviour unconsciously. That is why Lapsley and Narvaez argue in favour of an infusion approach. In other words, they plea for a school atmosphere which is *absorbed by moral concern*<sup>94</sup>, a school which encourages student commitment, to the school as community but also social commitment towards the society. As Sanderse, they recognise the influence of the (school)society on the development of the student. By positively influencing the school atmosphere, indirectly the moral development of the student is improved.

In order to support students to become a 'moral expert', Lapsley and Narvaez make two basic assumptions which concern the pedagogy. First it must be constructivist and secondly it should support a conscious explicit understanding as well as an intuitive implicit understanding about the moral knowledge. This entails that education should aim at teaching moral reasoning as well as moral virtue.<sup>95</sup> We can thus assume that they favour a combination between the rational moral education approaches and virtue-based character education approaches.

Another feature important in the development of moral expertise is the ability to self regulation. Again, as Aristotle, Lapsley and Narvaez argue for the necessity of self regulation because the best students are those students who reflect on their improvements and if necessary change their strategy. This ability can be stimulated and used to improve moral behaviour. Through a coached process, students learn to critically reflect on behaviour and are provided with examples and tools how to self regulate their behaviour. When done often, it stimulates the development of a behavioural schema, causing it to become automatic behaviour.

As common in virtue ethics, Lapsley and Narvaez stress the importance of envisioning character education as an end in itself, instead of means to improve societal problems. According to them, this can be achieved by starting with a positive standpoint. Emphasising the development of the student, i.e. show students what it means to flourish, what skills, dispositions and excellences are necessary to live a fulfilling life in a democratic society. When it is envisioned as a solution to societal problems, character education becomes another form of 'positive youth development', short termed programs designed to solve a problem recognised in society. These programmes not necessarily contain an ethical dimension because they aim at competence development instead of character development.

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<sup>93</sup> Lapsley D.K. and Narvaez D. (2006), p. 34

<sup>94</sup> Lapsley D.K. and Narvaez D. (2006), p. 19

<sup>95</sup> Narvaez (2006)

### 9.3 Educational considerations

Although there are many similarities between the two approaches, for instance the emphasis on moral exemplars, there are some important differences as well. Narvaez and Lapsley for instance use the findings in moral psychology to develop a moral education approach. Because they recognise the fact that any substantial approach should be founded in a normative theory they refer to Aristotle's educational ideas. The foundation of the Integrative Ethics Education however comes from the moral psychology. Sanderse on the other hand seems to represent a strict virtue ethics approach. Although he has not published a lot of articles about his approach, we can assume, from personal correspondence and the seminars he presents, that his approach reflect Aristotle's ideas about moral education. Due to the lack of articles by Sanderse, I will compare the Integrative Ethics Education approach with the educational approach of Aristotle as I have explored in chapter **3. Virtue ethics**.

Apart from the difference in the starting point, there are some differences with respect to the content as well. Narvaez and Lapsley envision virtuous behaviour as the capability to choose one virtue over the other, while Aristotle argues for *phronesis*, knowing how to act in order to fulfil most virtues possible. Aristotle does not aim at trumping virtues over other virtues. The second difference concerns the nature of virtues. For Narvaez and Lapsley, virtues are the personal mean between two extremes. They emphasise the 'personal' aspect stating that virtues cannot be derived from first order principles because they depend on the context and the individual performing. Due to the 'personal' nature of virtues, Narvaez and Lapsley state that it is not necessary or even possible to come up with a list of virtues. After all, what exactly is a virtue depends on the individual. Perhaps that is why, as Welch (2001a) recognises, they do not refer to a notion of good and bad. This seems comfortable in a pluralistic society, where people hold different views on good, bad and the good life. However, when they classify virtues this way, it is no longer an Aristotelian virtue ethics they refer to. According to Aristotle, virtues are derived from first order principles. Virtues are not determined by the experience but can be described, in general terms, in a rational sense. Virtuous behaviour thus requires knowledge of the virtues as well as the rational capacity to apply them properly. To Aristotle only the virtuous behaviour is relative, not the content of the virtue itself. Moral personality in an Aristotelian sense can thus better be described as the capacity to apply virtues.

The approach proposed by Sanderse on the other hand probably is very idealistic. By emphasising the role of the teacher as role model, and the major changes necessary to achieve this, he might lose a connection with educators. According to his view teachers are used to negative rules to supervise their pupils, and this needs to change. Sanderse presumes that exactly these rules might be the cause of the turbulence in class. However an educational approach which discards a useful method to keep control, might cause doubt. Without being convinced that his positive approach can work, teachers might classify their role in the 'Voorbeeldig Onderwijs' view as exorbitant. Convincing the complete

teaching staff to switch, might be a hard task, which probably only a few management teams will even consider.

Another problem of the 'Voorbeeldig Onderwijs' approach concerns the uncertain outcome of the approach. Because Aristotle did not focus on teaching strict competencies which are easily tested, the learning outcome depends on the capacity and effort made by the individual pupil. However in the current educational setting, teachers are forced to design their program in such a way that the learning outcomes can be tested to justify their approach to the Onderwijsinspectie. However, the goal in Aristotelian approaches is to develop *phronesis* and moral virtues which are hard to test. Narvaez and Lapsley on the other hand strive to the development of moral competencies, disguised as moral virtues. These competencies as classified by James Rest can be tested, for instance by the often used DIT test<sup>96</sup>.

A third problem concerns the transformation from teacher to role model. According to Sanderse, a good teacher embodies good virtues in order to become a role model. Pupils recognise these virtues in their teacher, experience *zèlos* and emulate the virtues the teacher embodies. However, in order to recognise the moral virtues, pupils should have of notion of *kalon*. Someone should tell the pupil what exactly is a virtue, what is worth striving for. But pupils probably will only accept a notion of *kalon* from someone they accept as a role model. When it is the task of the teacher to explain *kalon* to pupils, it becomes a circular argument. When developing a notion of *kalon* is part of early habituation<sup>97</sup>, and thus of upbringing in stead of education, a problem emerges with pupils who lack this upbringing due to various reasons.

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<sup>96</sup> Rest *et.al.* (1999)

<sup>97</sup> Spiecker (1999)

# CONCLUSION

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## 10. Conclusion

I have started this thesis with the question how Bildung or moral development of Dutch high school students can best be pursued. In order to find an answer to this question, we started with exploring the views on education of virtue ethics and moral psychology. Because these two points of views often are associated with the two major approaches in moral education, namely character education and cognitive ethics education, it provided some basic knowledge in order to interpret the advice of the Onderwijsraad which we explored secondly.

In 2011 the Onderwijsraad came with an advice about the moral development of Dutch children, adolescents and (young) adults. I have shown that every moral education program necessarily is founded in a coherent normative theory. Hence, the advice of the Onderwijsraad should also refer to a normative theory. I have tried to uncover exactly which normative theory the Onderwijsraad refers to in their advice. But because they never explicitly refer to a normative theory it is impossible to give a determinate answer to this question. However, various clues suggest that it might be a virtue ethical approach which the Onderwijsraad implicitly refer to. Although each of these clues independently can be interpreted as representing a different approach, taken together, I believe I am justified to conclude that they probably refer to a virtue ethical approach.

To give an idea how virtue ethics can come to expression in an educational setting, I explored the 'Voorbeeldig Onderwijs' view of Van Tongeren and Sanderse and the Integrative Ethics Education approach developed by Narvaez and Lapsley. Both can be considered a character education approach from a virtue ethics point of view<sup>98</sup>. Both refer to Aristotle's ideas about education however, it is only the 'Voorbeeldig Onderwijs' view which can be classified as a truly Aristotelian virtue ethical approach. The Integrative Ethics education program of Narvaez and Lapsley starts from a moral psychology point of view while the 'Voorbeeldig Onderwijs' approach starts from Aristotle's normative theory.

Both have their strengths and their weaknesses. The 'Voorbeeldig Onderwijs' view is strong on method, i.e. what should be altered in order to reach the educational goal. However, it is weak on the feasibility aspect. Because the view differs so much from the current educational approach, it will be a hard case to convince teachers of the strengths of the view and the necessity of change. The

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<sup>98</sup> Character education can also be founded in an ethics of care, even deontological theories might be interpreted as representing a form of character education.

approach discards most methods used today, while you can argue that in order to improve (moral) education the best approach is not to replace but to complement the current method. For the Integrative Ethics Education Approach on the other hand, it probably is easier to find a connection with the current education programs. Because a large part of the approach is supported by recent moral development research and tested educational approaches, it will be easier to convince teachers. The aim of developing moral competencies which Narvaez and Lapsley envision as moral virtues, has an additional advantage. Moral competencies can be empirically tested, which might persuade teachers who are hesitant in embracing new approaches due to the supervision of the Onderwijsinspectie. On the other hand, the Integrative Ethics Education approach is weak on their justification from a normative theory. Narvaez and Lapsley claim that their approach is supported from an Aristotelian point of view. However, their interpretation of Aristotle's normative theory seems not correct on all points. Due to these misinterpretations, it might seem that Narvaez and Lapsley pinpointed those elements which they believed supported their claims, instead of altering their claims to fit Aristotle's ideas.

At this point, when we follow the advice of the Onderwijsraad and choose a virtue ethical approach and we would have to choose between the two approaches presented, a perfect choice seems impossible. However, in my opinion we should choose in favour of the Integrative Ethics Education approach. Not because it is the superior one, but because it is the best approach for now. By introducing the Integrative Ethics Education approach, the transition from the current educational approach which focuses on effectively and utility to a strict virtue ethics will become more gradual. Eventually it will open more possibilities for a true Aristotelian ethics approach as presented by Sanderson.

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# SUPPLEMENTS

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## Supplement 1

### Vocabulary

<i>Arête</i>	Excellence
<i>Eudaimonia</i>	Human flourishing
<i>Kalon</i>	The notion about what is good and desirable and what should be pursued as an end in itself
<i>Phronesis</i>	Practical wisdom
<i>Paideia</i>	A form of education which concerns the development of the individual towards excellence, <i>arête</i> .
<i>Polis</i>	The society, political community an individual is part of. The ancient Greek notion of <i>polis</i> is difficult to translate in a modern concept because how we live together nowadays, differs from how the ancient Greeks lived together. <sup>99</sup>
<i>Telos</i>	Ultimate life goal which is species specific.
<i>Zèlos</i>	A kind of positive envy which makes pupils to emulate their role model

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<sup>99</sup> Vos (2006)

## Supplement 2

### Ethical skills reflecting the four components of Rest

(Narvaez (2006), p. 717)

#### **Ethical sensitivity**

Understand emotional expression  
Take the perspective of others  
Connecting to others  
Responding to diversity  
Controlling social bias  
Interpreting situations  
Communicate effectively

#### **Ethical judgement (Ethical reasoning)**

Understanding ethical problems  
Using codes and identifying  
judgement criteria  
Reasoning generally  
Reasoning ethically  
Understand consequences  
Reflect on the process and  
outcome  
Coping and resiliency

#### **Ethical focus (Ethical motivation)**

Respecting others  
Cultivate conscience  
Act responsibly  
Help others  
Finding meaning in life  
Valuing traditions and institutions  
Developing ethical identity and  
integrity

#### **Ethical action (Ethical courage)**

Resolving conflicts and problems  
Assert respectfully  
Taking initiative as a leader  
Implementing as a leader  
Cultivate courage  
Persevering  
Work hard

