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Value Systems of Prospective Teachers

M. W. Boyce
State College of Victoria, Toorak

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State College of Victoria, Toorak.

Introduction

The teacher in the primary school classroom provides for the children in her care a variety of experiences in number, in the language arts, and in all the other concomitants of the formal curriculum of the school. But she also provides other experiences: a set of socializing experiences arising from her behaviour in the classroom. This includes the types of interpersonal relationships she has with the children, the demands she makes, the expectations she has of individuals and groups and the priorities she sets.

Whilst it is difficult to isolate the effects of these socializing experiences on the individual from those of the family, the peer group, the mass media, and the other potential agents of socialization, and whilst it is difficult to determine how the various socializing influences interact, it is probable that these experiences do make a definite impact on the developing child. It is also true that these experiences are occurring at a time when the young child has a reasonably fluid concept of self, is psychologically vulnerable and thus prone to uncritically absorb the reactions of "significant others" in his life.

In this context an examination of factors lying behind the behaviours the teacher exhibits in the classroom is important. One factor seen as being of major relevance is the teacher's value system.

In recent years there has been an increasing volume of research in the area of values, stemming from the work of Rokeach (1968a, 1968b). Rokeach claims:

> To say that a person "has a value" is to say that he has an enduring belief that a specific mode of conduct or end-state of existence is personally and socially preferable to alternative modes of conduct or end-states of existence. Once a value is internalized it becomes, consciously or unconsciously, a standard or criterion for guiding action, for developing and maintaining attitudes toward relevant objects and situations, for justifying one's own and other's actions and attitudes, for morally judging self and others, and for comparing self with others. Finally, a value is a standard employed to influence the values, attitudes and actions of at least some others . . . .
> (Rokeach, 1968a, p. 16).

Within this definition there is the recognition of two kinds of values: (i) instrumental values or beliefs that " . . . such-and-such a mode of conduct (for example, honesty, courage) is personally and socially preferable in all situations with respect to all objects" (p. 17), and (ii) terminal values, or beliefs that " . . . such-and-such an end-state of

1

existence (for example, salvation, a world at peace) is personally and socially worth striving for" (p. 17).

In Rokeach's conception these two kinds of values underpin the attitudes a person has towards specific objects and situations. Thus, he suggests, attitudes are "in the service of" and cognitively connected with instrumental values, and these latter are in turn cognitively and functionally connected with terminal values. It is assumed that the whole value-attitude system is internally consistent and determines behaviour.

If we accept the model proposed by Rokeach, the instrumental and terminal values held by teachers are of importance in understanding the non-formal curriculum socializing experiences provided for the children in the classroom.

The purpose of this present study was to measure the relative importance of certain instrumental and terminal values to a group of prospective primary school teachers, to examine the individual differences that occur, and to measure the group's concept of the relative importance of certain instrumental values to the "ideal" primary school teacher.

Procedure

Subjects: Subjects in the study were 60 first year female students at a State College (teachers' college) enrolled in the Diploma of Teaching course. The age range was 18 – 45, with a mean age of 20.3 years. The subjects were members of three tutorial groups chosen at random from all first year tutor groups in a compulsory unit of the Professional Studies program.

Measure: The measure used was Form E of the Rokeach Value Survey (Rokeach 1971) which consists of 18 instrumental and 18 terminal values. Subjects are instructed to rank them in their order of importance to the subject by placing a 1 next to the value considered to be the most important, a 2 next to the value which is second most important down to 18 next to the value they consider least important relative to the others in each list. The resulting hierarchy defines the individual's terminal and instrumental value systems. Normal practice is for subject to complete the ranking of the terminal values before ranking the instrumental values. There is no time limit: subjects are told to go back and check their answers and to take as much time as they need to ensure that the end results are a true representation of their values.

In order to lessen social desirability and subjects' tendencies to respond in the way they think they are expected to respond, they were not asked to place their names on the response sheet, thus ensuring anonymity of response.

The Form E ranking method was used despite the disadvantage of its ipsative quality – if some values are ranked high then other values, of necessity, have to be ranked low. A second disadvantage is that the procedure becomes increasingly difficult as the number of stimuli increases in size.

However, Feather (1973) in a study in which he used a ranking method (as in Form E), a rating method (allocating an eight point scale from "Not important at all" to "Very important" for each value) and a pair-comparison method (presenting in random order the 153 possible pairs of values from each set of 18 values) found that the average value system obtained by the different assessment procedures turned out to be very similar, i.e. the end result was *"an average order of values that was relatively unaffected by the assessment procedure".* (p. 227).

In this present study subjects first ranked the 18 terminal values in terms of their relative importance to them, then ranked the 28 instrumental values in terms of their relative importance to them, and finally ranked the 18 instrumental values in terms of their conception of the relative importance of these values to the "ideal" teacher.

Results:

1. Terminal Values

Table 1 indicates mean ranking for the terminal values (a low mean ranking indicates high relative values). Whilst the mean rankings clearly indicate that the subjects as a group ranked *happiness, true friendship, inner harmony* and *self-respect* as relatively the most important of these terminal values and *national security, social recognition* and *salvation* as relatively the least important, it should be noted that there were considerable individual differences among the subjects in their relative rankings. For example, every rank from 1 to 10 was used at least by one student for *happiness,* from 1 – 14 for *true friendship* and 1 – 17 for *inner harmony,* and whilst on average *salvation* was the relatively least important terminal value, four subjects ranked it first. For seven of the values 17 of the 18 possible rankings were used at least once, and for another six, 16 of the possible rankings were used.

Table 1. Mean Ranking of Terminal Values.

Terminal Value	Mean Ranking	S.D.
Happiness (contentedness)	3.27	2.69
True Friendship (close companionship)	5.58	3.58
Inner Harmony (freedom from inner conflict)	5.76	4.16
Self-Respect (self-esteem)	6.28	3.83
Freedom (independence, free-choice)	7.44	4.15
Family Security (taking care of loved ones)	7.49	4.40
Mature Love (sexual and spiritual intimacy)	8.06	3.99
A Sense of Accomplishment (lasting contribution)	8.35	3.68
A World at Peace (free of war and conflict)	8.95	4.75
Wisdom (a mature understanding of life)	10.68	4.36
A Comfortable Life (a prosperous life)	10.83	4.70
Equality (brotherhood, equal opportunity for all)	11.11	4.37

Pleasure (an enjoyable, leisurely life)	11.36	3.96
An Exciting Life (a stimulating, active life)	11.71	4.67
A World of Beauty (beauty of nature and the arts)	11.75	3.72
National Security (protection from attack)	13.67	3.92
Social Recognition (respect, admiration)	15.01	4.03
Salvation (saved, eternal life)	15.06	5.92

Table 2 shows, for comparative purposes, the relative rankings given to the terminal values by the subjects in this study, by subjects enrolled in first year Humanities and Social Sciences courses at Flinders University (Feather, 1970a) and by South Australian Methodist ministers (Feather, 1970b). It should be noted that the Flinders samples include both male and female students and there is some evidence to suggest a sex difference in value systems (Feather, 1973), that the Methodist ministers are all male, and that these studies used for comparative purposes were carried out in 1969 and there is a possibility of a change in community values in that time.

Table 2. Ranking of Terminal Values.

Terminal Value	Toorak	Flinders Humanities	Flinders Social Science	Methodist Ministers
	N = 60	N = 103	N = 162	N = 113
Happiness	1	10	4	14
True Friendship	2	2	1	8
Inner Harmony	3	5	5	4
Self Respect	4	7	9	11
Freedom	5	3	3	5
Family Security	6	11	11	9
Mature Love	7	4	7	7
A Sense of Accomplishment	8	8	6	6
A World at Peace	9	6	8	10
Wisdom	10	1	2	1
A Comfortable life	11	17	14	18
Equality	12	9	10	3
Pleasure	13	16	15	17
An Exciting Life	14	12	12	12
A World of Beauty	15	13	13	13
National Security	16	14	16	15
Social Recognition	17	15	17	16
Salvation	18	18	18	2

Whilst there is little difference between the four groups regarding the relatively least important values, with the predictable exception of *salvation* for the Methodist ministers, there are important differences in the relatively most important values. *Happiness* was clearly, on average, the most important terminal value for the Toorak student group, with an average ranking of 3.27 and with 28 of the subjects ranking it first. However apart from one of the Flinders' student groups, the others place it much lower in their value systems. On the other hand whilst the other three groups value *wisdom* very highly (either first or second) it is ranked only tenth by the Toorak student sample. The Toorak subjects also on average rank a *comfortable life* and *self respect* higher in their value systems.

The three student groups rank *true friendship* very high (either first or second). Feather (1970a) suggests that some commentators (e.g. Ward, 1958) have pointed to "mateship" as a basic value in Australian culture and that if *true friendship* can be taken to be equivalent to "mateship" then these results seem to support this. But on the other hand the results indicate that if "mateship" and true friendship are equated, then "mateship" should not be confused with egalitarianism as all three student groups rank *equality* relatively low (12, 9, 10). The Methodist ministers however rank *equality* much higher (3) than *true friendship* (8).

2. *Instrumental Values*

Table 3 indicates the mean ranking for the instrumental values for *self* and *ideal teacher*. Again a low mean ranking indicates a high relative value.

Table 3. Mean Rankings of Instrumental Values for "Self" and "Ideal Teacher".

Instrumental Value	Self Mean		S.D.	Ideal Teacher Mean		S.D.
Honest (sincere, truthful)	5.27	(1)	3.75	8.23	(7)	4.82
Loving (affectionate, tender)	6.58	(2)	4.45	10.73	(12)	5.35
Broadminded (open minded)	6.83	(3)	4.68	7.17	(4)	4.80
Responsible (dependable, reliable)	6.98	(4)	3.87	6.16	(2)	3.78
Helpful (working for the welfare of others)	7.27	(5)	3.81	6.62	(3)	3.59
Cheerful (lighthearted, joyful)	7.42	(6)	4.99	9.83	(11)	4.76
Forgiving (willing to pardon others)	7.92	(7)	4.48	9.82	(10)	4.19
Capable (competent, effective)	8.02	(8)	4.16	4.83	(1)	3.97
Self-Controlled (restrained, self-disciplined)	9.50	(9)	4.13	7.91	(6)	4.35

Imaginative (daring, creative)	9.73	(10)	4.72	7.68	(5)	4.29
Independent (self-reliant, self-sufficient)	10.06	(11)	5.27	11.26	(14)	4.29
Courageous (standing up for beliefs)	10.10	(12)	4.91	12.45	(17)	4.46
Logical (consistent, rational)	10.95	(13)	4.96	8.26	(8)	4.57
Polite (courteous, well-mannered)	11.46	(14)	4.62	12.28	(15)	4.37
Ambitious (hard-working, aspiring)	12.30	(15)	5.27	8.30	(9)	5.88
Intellectual (intelligent, reflective)	12.92	(16)	4.31	11.13	(13)	4.74
Clean (neat, tidy)	13.25	(17)	4.29	12.36	(16)	4.09
Obedient (dutiful, respectful)	14.36	(18)	4.08	15.46	(18)	3.12

Whilst it is recognised that first year students tested in September may not have a very clear conception of the "ideal teacher" it is true that their course is intended to continually develop a conceptualization of their role and responsibilities as effective classroom teachers.

Clearly, for themselves, being *honest, loving, broadminded* and *responsible* are relatively the most important instrumental values, and being *ambitious, intellectual, clean* and *obedient* the least important.

For the *"ideal teacher"* the subjects assign being *capable, responsible, helpful* and *broadminded* as being the most important and *polite, clean, courageous* and *obedient* as the least important.

There are some interesting differences between self and "ideal teacher". Whereas being *capable* is clearly ranked first on average for "ideal teacher" is is only eighth for self, whilst *honest,* ranked first for self is only seventh for "ideal teacher". *Imaginative, logical* and *ambitious* are seen as more important values for "ideal teacher" than for self. By far the largest difference is for *loving* (affectionate, tender) which is very high for self (2nd) but quite low (12th) for "ideal teacher". Does this mean that the students do not see primary teachers as being affectionate and tender and that many feel they have to act "unnaturally" in the classroom?

As with the terminal values there were marked individual differences in the rankings of the instrumental values. For self, *ambitious, cheerful, courageous, imaginative, independent, intellectual* and *logical* all had at least one subject who ranked it first and one or more who ranked it eighteenth. There is ample evidence in the responses to clearly suggest that individual teachers may have widely varying value systems, and that the subject's concept (at this stage) of the value system of the ideal teacher varies very widely.

Again, for comparative purposes rankings of instrumental values for self together with those from Feather's (1970a, 1970b) studies are given.

Table 4. Rankings of Instrumental Values

Instrumental Value	Toorak	Flinders Humanities	Flinders Social Sciences	Methodist Ministers
	N = 60	N = 103	N = 162	N = 113
Honest	1	1	1	4
Loving	2	3	4	3
Broadminded	3	2	2	11
Responsible	4	4	3	2
Helpful	5	11	12	5
Cheerful	6	8	5	12
Forgiving	7	6	9	1
Capable	8	12	11	10
Self-controlled	9	13	8	6
Imaginative	10	7	16	8
Independent	11	9	7	14
Courageous	12	5	10	7
Logical	13	16	13	9
Polite	14	15	15	16
Ambitious	15	14	6	17
Intellectual	16	10	14	13
Clean	17	17	17	18
Obedient	18	18	18	15

Probably the most apparent difference that occurs (apart from the differences within the Flinders' group themselves) is that those directly or prospectively involved in the helping professions (Toorak and the Methodist ministers) value *helping* much higher (ranking it 5, and in fact 3 for "ideal teacher".)

There is very close agreement within the three student groups as to the most important *instrumental* values — *honest, loving, broadminded* and *responsible.* It is possibly predictable that the Methodist ministers rank *broadminded* relatively low and *forgiving* as first.

There is also close agreement between all four groups as to the relative unimportance of *clean* and *obedient* as instrumental values. *Ambitious* and *intellectual* are each ranked relatively low by three of the four groups. This is interesting in terms of Lipset's (1963) argument that Australia differs from the United States in being less achievement-oriented.

Conclusion

The purpose of this small study was to investigate the value systems held by a sample of prospective primary school teachers. The results suggest that there may be some value in further research with the students, especially to see if their concepts of the value system of the "ideal teacher" has changed by the time they reach the end of their third-year of training. One thing is abundantly clear — there are marked individual differences in the value systems held by this sample of students, and if as Rokeach suggests their value systems are standards for guiding action, one can expect a wide variation in the type of non-curriculum socializing experiences they will provide for the children in their classrooms.

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English Literature as a Liberal Study in Primary Teachers' Colleges:

by

D. Molly Murison,

School of Education

La Trobe University

When anthropologists set forth into unknown wildernesses amid primitive tribes, they are sometimes astonished and delighted to find small pockets of high culture where none would be expected in that hostile and unsympathetic environment. Teachers of adult literature in the primary teachers' colleges sometimes have this air. They are not exactly besieged but their numbers are dwindling, while other college courses sprout with a rank lushness.

In 1972, in a survey of literature teaching in Victorian primary teachers' colleges (Murison, 1973), all but one had a year of compulsory adult literature run rather on the same lines as the Form VI Literature course, with at least some of the classics included for close study. At the time, most English lecturers considered this to be essential, and gave the reasons one has come to expect — educating the whole person, a knowledge of life and thought, vicarious experience, cultural necessity, even literature. But now much has changed, and literature lecturers, faced with offering courses which are no longer compulsory, have thought again.

Some brief commentary on the changes in the Victorian primary teachers' college curricula is necessary here. In 1973, teachers' colleges, which had been entirely controlled by the Victorian Education Department, became autonomous bodies under the central control of the State College of Victoria. Almost immediately, they, along with the Institutes of Technology, sought to up-grade their offerings — and status — by introducing a four year degree course. Some courses were written with undue ambition and undue haste, exactly as had happened in Britain in the same circumstances ten years earlier. In fact, the following paragraph from a British journal might almost have been written about the Victorian State Colleges, with the 60s and 70s concertinaed into one:

> Now that the fight for status in the 1960s has been transformed into the fight for survival in the 1970s . . . (and) as the external threat has increased, the time available for planning and consultation has decreased. The need to get as many new courses approved as rapidly as possible has forced colleges either to stick to easily recognisable paradigms and frameworks which require little detailed explanation to validating agencies, or else to submit ill-considered and half-understood proposals for fashionable innovations that they think the validating agency will accept . . . Certainly it is arguable that the massive