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Introduction

The leitmotiv of this year's last issue of EETP is values in education. Education is a social process in which reference is made both to philosophical concepts of man as a student and teacher, and to the theory of values which significantly contribute to the process of upbringing and education, and are constantly present in it in their many forms (Cichoń 1996:113). This fact makes it impossible to carry out the process of education without taking into account the issue of values.

Referring to the axiological views of Max Scheler (1874–1928), Józef Tischner argued that values are objective and constitute a natural, objective hierarchy which is the basis of ethics (hedonistic: pleasure and pain; utilitarian: useful and useless; vital, e. g. power and weakness, nobility and wickedness; spiritual, e. g. beauty and ugliness, truth; religious: sanctity and happiness) (Tischner, Kłoczowski 2001: 22, 31). However, two opposing theories of values can be found in educational theory and practice: the objectivist and the subjectivist one (Mariański 2007: 81). The first one, represented by the currents of realistic pedagogy, assumes that the value of an object is immutable and independent of human judgment. The second one, i. e. subjectivist, proclaimed by the supporters of postmodern pedagogy, perceives values as individual and relative – being the object of personal preferences (Świtała 2019: 163). Such diversity in the perception of the issue of values in education results from different axiological foundations of the upbringing process. However, irrespective of the declared ideological assumptions, we always deal with education and upbringing for some values. Education does not take place in an axiological void. It is the values that determine, on the one hand, the aims of upbringing (constituting their sources and justification) and, on the other hand, the criteria for the assessment of educational activities (Olbrycht 2012: 91).

Education for values includes activities within two scopes. The first, the broader and more neutral one, concerns preparing a person to function independently and consciously in the world of values (perceiving, choosing, ordering, upgrading, fulfilling, and creating them). Within this scope, which could be defined as axiological education, the objective is axiological competence and maturity. The second scope, which is narrower, involves the formation in a person of an understanding of and readiness to accept the values desirable from the perspective of the educational programme being introduced and the motivation to live these values. The objective of this scope of education for values is to prepare and motivate the pupil to consciously and voluntarily choose the values considered desirable, as well as to hierarchize, fulfil and create them in the spirit of the adopted ideal of upbringing (the concept of a human being, the direction of his or her development, the features that constitute him/her and condition their development) (Olbrycht 2012: 91–92).

Observation of the practice of broadly understood education shows that today we are dealing with upbringing mainly for pragmatic, useful, material, and pleasure values, i. e. according to the traditional hierarchy, for lower values. Concentration on lower values causes the marginalisation of ethical-spiritual values and leads to intellectual impoverishment. Also, it hinders the development of moral sensitivity and, as a consequence, teaches, first of all, the adaptation to the current reality (Rutkowiak, Potulicka 2010: 239).

The remedy for such a reductionist approach to values is axiological education which takes place in several stages. They include: discovering values, experiencing them, interiorization and internalisation. The discovery of values is the stage of their cognition and understanding (Olbrycht 2012: 97). Therefore, the essence of axiological education is, first of all, the training of the ability to make choices and accept their consequences in a responsible manner (Zalewska-Bujak 2018: 60).

The articles presented in this issue are to encourage the readers to reflect on values in the process of education within the social context characterized by the axionormative chaos (Królikiewicz 2019). We hope that these texts will inspire you to carry out further research on the issue of values in upbringing and education.

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