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The Role of the Teacher in Moral Education: Neutrality and Emotional Involvement

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Abstract: Whether teachers should remain neutral or engage in emotional communication in moral education has become widely discussed in modern education. Moral education is about students' cognitive development and understanding of social norms and personal values. Some scholars argue that teachers' emotional engagement helps stimulate students to think deeply about and internalize moral issues, while others emphasize the importance of neutrality to avoid the imposition of values. However, complete neutrality is difficult to achieve and may undermine the effectiveness of moral education. By combining the views of different scholars and analyzing the roles of neutrality and affective engagement in moral education, this study finds that the teacher's role in moral education lies not only in imparting cognitive principles but also in facilitating meaningful value-based interactions between students and teachers. Teachers should moderately display emotions and values while maintaining rational thinking, thus encouraging students to develop deeper cognitive and emotional engagement. Ultimately, the study concludes that moral education is about teaching moral theories and stimulating authentic reflection and internalization of moral issues through teacher-student interactions to achieve all-around moral growth.

Keywords: Teacher ethics, Educational Neutrality, Moral Neutrality in the Classroom

1. Introduction

In the contemporary field of education, the question of whether the role of teachers in moral education should be neutral or emotionally involved has aroused a wide discussion. As one of the core contents of education, moral education involves students' cognitive development and concerns their understanding of social norms and personal values. This paper focuses on teachers' emotional participation and neutrality in moral education. With the help of Lawrence Kohlberg's moral development theory and many scholars' views, this paper analyses whether teachers should maintain neutrality in moral education or actively participate in emotional communication to promote students' all-round moral growth.

2. Should Be Morally Neutral

The article *Moral Education and Teacher Neutrality* by David C. Bricker discusses the role of the teacher in the moral education of students, focusing on whether or not teachers should remain neutral or show emotional engagement in moral discussions [1]. The article cites Lawrence Kohlberg's theory

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of moral development and critiques the idea of teacher neutrality in moral education. Kohlberg advocates that teachers should develop students' moral reasoning skills by guiding them through the stages of moral thinking, from pre-customary to post-customary levels. He suggests that teachers can facilitate students' cognitive development by posing moral dilemmas without having to reveal or influence students' moral values. The goal is to stimulate students' cognitive development, not to impose the teacher's moral values. Bricker criticises that teachers can remain neutral when guiding students through moral dilemmas. He argues that complete emotional detachment diminishes the emotional engagement students need when confronted with moral issues. Moral dilemmas inherently involve emotions, and teachers must be emotionally invested in order to expect students to do the same. If teachers remain aloof, students may become detached and view moral dilemmas as intellectual exercises. Moral education requires the emotional involvement of both teacher and student. Teachers need to not only present moral dilemmas but also show empathy and share their values in order to encourage students to become personally involved in the moral issues they face. Emotional engagement is essential for students to internalise moral principles and apply them to their lives. Bricker acknowledges that teachers may impose their values on students' moral development. However, he believes this risk is necessary for meaningful moral education. Teachers' values should not be seen as a distraction but as an integral part of the moral education process, and teachers and students need to grow with each other through the exchange of values and ideas. In conclusion, Bricker questions the emotional neutrality of moral education and advocates that teachers should be actively involved in the moral development of their students, promoting growth through emotional engagement and the demonstration of personal values. He emphasises that moral education is not just about teaching cognitive principles but also about facilitating teacher-student interactions that are meaningful in terms of values [1].

Koen Raes, in his article *Neutrality of What? Public Morality and the Ethics of Equal Respect* emphasises that political neutrality should be based on equal justice and respect for the individual rather than promoting particular moral or cultural ideals. The role of the State is to promote the conditions of freedom and justice, not to enforce a particular idea of the good life [2]. A and John F. A. Taylor's article, *Politics and the Neutrality of the University* states that universities have traditionally been neutral institutions, prioritising freedom of thought, rational enquiry, and exchanging ideas. This neutrality is essential to ensure that universities are free from political or ideological bias, enabling them to fulfil their role as places of critical enquiry. At the same time, the article explores the difficulties of maintaining neutrality in a politically charged environment. Universities are often under pressure to take positions on public issues, and Taylor questions whether they can be truly neutral while engaging with the pressing social issues of the day, citing Richard Hofstadter's commencement address, in which Hofstadter argued that the modern university should remain neutral and avoid adopting uniform positions on public issues. Hofstadter viewed the university as a "bastion of intellectual individualism" where all qualified voices should be heard, and the university itself should not support any particular viewpoint. In sum, Taylor argues that universities should endeavour to remain politically neutral, which does not mean avoiding difficult issues but rather fostering an open, critical enquiry environment. This allows the university to fulfil its public functions without becoming partisan or politically compromised [3].

In his article *Why Liberal Neutralists Should Embrace Educational Neutrality*, Matt Sensat Waldren suggests that proponents of liberal-neutralist political theory should also embrace educational neutrality. Waldren examines the relationship between the two concepts and defends educational neutrality in response to common criticisms. Extending the argument for liberal neutrality to the field of education, it is argued that decisions about school curricula should also avoid promoting any particular comprehensive doctrine. This ensures that public education remains neutral in a pluralistic society. The article argues that neutrality is needed in political decision-making to ensure

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legitimacy, and so is neutrality in education policy. Schools play a key role in shaping the beliefs and values of their students. If they favour certain doctrines, they undermine the principle of maintaining equity in a pluralistic society. At the same time, critics argue that educational neutrality is either impossible to achieve or not worth pursuing. Some argue that teaching inevitably involves value judgements and that complete neutrality cannot be achieved. Others argue that neutrality leads to relativism and prevents students from forming strong moral convictions. Waldren responds to these criticisms by clarifying the different types of neutrality- reason neutrality versus effect neutrality. He argues that while complete neutrality (effect neutrality) may be impossible to achieve in practice, reason neutrality can still be pursued by policy to ensure that the reasoning behind educational decisions is fair. Waldren argues in favour of educational neutrality as a necessary extension of liberal-neutral political theory. He responds to various objections by emphasising that neutrality is essential to ensure fairness and legitimacy in a pluralistic society [4].

3. Neutral

The article *State Responsibility in education* highlights the role of the State in shaping the values of the next generation through education. While the State must respect the right of parents to impart their values, it also has a responsibility to promote civic virtues such as human rights, equality and tolerance in a democratic society. The authors explore how the State should deal with the issue of moral controversy in schools. Two possible solutions are suggested: (1) avoiding teaching these issues altogether in order to maintain neutrality, or (2) presenting multiple perspectives on these issues in order to promote critical thinking and open discussion among students. While it is difficult to achieve complete ethical neutrality in areas of major social controversy, the State must carefully balance its role in promoting shared democratic values and respect for multiculturalism. Ethics education is an important tool for achieving this balance, but it needs to be sensitive to the diversity of beliefs in society. The article stresses that ongoing dialogue and research on this area is necessary as modern pluralistic societies continue to be contentious over values issues [5].

This article *Moral Skepticism and Moral Education*, by Emmett Barcalow, explores the balance between scepticism and dogmatism in moral education. Barcalow argues that while it is important to avoid dogmatism (i.e., rigid and unquestioning adherence to moral concepts), excessive scepticism leads to the denial of any objective moral truths, thus undermining the effectiveness of moral education. Barcalow cites Aristotle's notion that "virtue is the middle ground between extremes". In moral scepticism, the balance is between avoiding too little scepticism (dogmatism) and too much scepticism (radical subjectivism). Dogmatists rarely question their moral views and are prone to extremes and fanaticism, while extreme sceptics struggle to take action because of their scepticism about moral beliefs. Educators often seek neutrality and fear accusations of indoctrination. Barcalow notes, however, that this overcautiousness may lead students to believe that all moral views are equally valid. He argues that scepticism about morality should not prevent teachers from guiding students on certain moral truths. Barcalow emphasises that morality is a human invention that promotes healthy social functioning. Moral codes must protect all community members by giving everyone a reasonable chance at a good life. Therefore, the teacher is responsible for imparting moral education when the family fails to provide adequate moral education. In summary, Barcalow advocates a balanced approach to moral education that encourages scepticism but does not fall too far into moral relativism; at the same time, teachers have an important role in teaching those core moral principles that are essential to the well-being of society [6].

The article *Teaching Morality and Teaching Morality* by Gary D. Fenstermacher, Richard D. Osguthorpe, and Matthew N. Sanger discusses the difference between "teaching morally" and "teaching morality" in education and the implications of both for the teaching profession. "teaching morality" in education and the implications of both for the teaching profession. Through this

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distinction, the article examines how teachers can directly or indirectly influence the moral development of their students through their behaviour and the content of their lessons. Even if teachers do not intentionally teach morality, they still impact their students through behavioural patterns. This means that the teacher's behaviour in the classroom (i.e. teaching morality) is a form of invisible moral education. Students not only learn morality through the content of the course but also form their moral judgements by observing the teacher's behaviour and attitudes. Therefore, teachers must balance the morals of different cultures and social groups when teaching ethics. At the same time, the article raises problems that may arise from ethics curricula, particularly when certain moral concepts are taught in preference to others, which may ignore or suppress the moral values of other cultural or religious groups. This unbalanced moral education may lead to discrimination or unfair treatment of certain groups of students. In conclusion, the article highlights teachers' key role in students' moral development by distinguishing between "teaching ethics" and "teaching morality". Whether or not there is an explicit ethics curriculum, teachers' ethical behaviour can profoundly impact students. Teachers should pay more attention to their ethical approach to teaching and recognise that moral education is not just about delivering curriculum content but is a practice embedded in teaching [7].

Ben Kotzee explores character education in schools in his article *On Intellectual Perfectionism in Schools*, focusing on the debate between liberal neutrality and liberal perfectionism [8]. Kotzee argues that a focus on intellectual growth not only honours liberal ideals of personal autonomy but also contributes to a more rational and reflective society. In summary, Kotzee supports a model of education that promotes intellectual perfectionism, in which schools should foster the intellectual virtues of their students and help them develop autonomy, rationality, and wise judgement while remaining neutral on morality and religion [8].

Lawrence Kohlberg's article *Moral Education in Schools: A Developmental Perspective*, explores the role of moral education in schools through his theory of moral development [9]. Kohlberg emphasises that traditional approaches to moral education, such as character education or didactic teaching, are ineffective in promoting genuine moral growth. He advocates a research-based developmental approach based on the development of children's moral reasoning with age. Criticism of traditional moral education: Kohlberg criticised traditional methods of moral education, such as character education and religious education, which were primarily concerned with teaching fixed moral rules. He argues that these methods do not significantly impact students' moral behaviour because they fail to promote deeper moral reasoning and understanding. In summary, Kohlberg advocated that moral education should move away from teaching fixed moral rules to promoting students' moral development through complex moral issues and dilemmas. His developmental approach emphasises the importance of cognitive growth in achieving moral maturity [9].

G. R. G. Durrant's article *Moral Neutrality and Moral Analysis* critically examines whether it can analyse morality without moral bias [10]. R.G. Durrant's article 'Moral Neutrality and Moral Analysis' critically examines the possibility of analysing morality without moral bias. R.G. Durrant's article "Moral Neutrality and Moral Analysis" critically examines the possibility of moral analysis without moral bias. Durrant explores whether moral philosophy can provide a universal framework that applies to all moral systems without reflecting individual values. He argues that any attempt to define morality inevitably involves personal choices, even if those values are not explicitly endorsed. Durrant questions the feasibility of universal moral judgements, pointing out that they often depend on circumstances and personal values. Finally, he concludes that achieving complete moral neutrality is difficult because any analysis reflects the analyst's moral commitments. In summary, Durrant argues that whilst striving for neutrality in ethical analyses is possible, it is difficult to achieve complete moral neutrality. Any analysis of morality is likely to reflect the moral commitments of the analyst, making true impartiality an elusive goal [10].

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John J. Furlong and William J. Carroll's article, *Teacher Neutrality and the Teaching of Ethical Issues,* explores teachers' complexities in maintaining neutrality when teaching ethical issues [11]. The authors encourage teachers to adopt the Socratic method of guiding students' moral reasoning through neutrality without imposing personal views. However, the article also acknowledges the difficulty of maintaining complete neutrality. Teachers can state their position after students have fully explored an issue, but only if this does not end further discussion. Neutrality versus indoctrination: The article Neutrality versus indoctrination distinguishes between neutrality, indoctrination and education. Indoctrination is the imposition of particular beliefs on students, whereas education (especially at the high school and college level) should focus on developing reasoning skills rather than prescribing moral conclusions. The article concludes that if used properly, neutrality can develop students' fair thinking and critical reflection skills. However, teachers must be trained and learn to balance their responsibility to maintain neutrality with their responsibility to lead ethical discussions, respecting various viewpoints without avoiding important ethical issues. Overall, this paper provides insight into how teachers can use neutrality in ethical discussions, arguing for a balanced approach that promotes critical thinking while recognising the challenges of remaining completely neutral [11].

In the article *Values Education: Revisited* explores the evolving role of values education in the modern school. The authors review the historical context of values education and its current status and propose a fresh approach consistent with contemporary society's changes and challenges. The authors argue that values education is more important than ever in today's complex and diverse society. Students not only need guidance in academic knowledge but also need to develop skills in dealing with ethical dilemmas, interpersonal relationships and civic responsibilities. One of the main challenges for PD is providing students with a clear sense of right and wrong while remaining neutral. Teachers often face the dilemma of teaching values without imposing personal beliefs and providing meaningful moral guidance. The article suggests that values education should be flexible, considering the diversity of students' backgrounds and societal changes. Instead of promoting a fixed curriculum, the authors advocate an open-ended framework that encourages students to think critically, develop empathy, and reflect on personal and societal values. Teachers play a key role in values education, not only by imparting knowledge but also by leading by example and facilitating discussion. The article emphasises the importance of training teachers to deal with values education with sensitivity to guide their students to develop their ethical views. To summarise, the article calls for a re-examination of values education that requires it to adapt to the dynamics of modern society while maintaining the core objective of fostering morality and responsibility. It emphasises that values education should move beyond traditional approaches to become a more integrated and reflective part of the educational experience [12].

4. Should Not Be Morally Neutral

This article by David Barnhizer, *Freedom to Do What? Institutional Neutrality, Academic Freedom, and Academic Responsibility*, explores the role of law schools in society, focusing on the concepts of academic freedom, institutional neutrality, and academic responsibility [13]. Barnhizer explores the tension between academic institutions' neutrality and their ability to address social and political issues through education and scholarship. He argues that true neutrality is an illusion because universities and law schools inevitably influence society through teaching and research. He argued that academic institutions should be actively involved in social issues rather than pretending to stay out of them. The importance of academic freedom, which allows scholars to pursue and communicate truth without fear of reprisal, was emphasised. However, Barnhizer warned that academic freedom should not be an excuse to push one's agenda unchecked or to rest on one's laurels. Academic freedom must be consistent with a sense of responsibility to make meaningful contributions to society. In the article

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Academic Responsibility: , Barnhizer argued that the privilege of enjoying academic freedom comes with the responsibility to pursue truth, challenge injustice, and meet the needs of society. He criticised law schools for being too preoccupied with abstract legal doctrines without engaging with the practical and moral implications of the law, ignoring real-world issues such as justice and power. In the article The Role of Law Schools in Social Change: Barnhizer discusses the transformation of legal scholarship over the past few decades, noting that it has become more politicised and associated with social justice movements [13]. He describes "angry academics," scholars who use their academic work as social activism based on their experiences with injustice. The article questions the political neutrality of law schools, arguing that neutrality is impossible in a context where the pursuit of truth intersects with justice and power. Barnhizer advocates for intellectual honesty, openness, and fairness in solving social problems rather than pursuing unrealistic neutrality. In summary, Barnhizer emphasises that law schools and their faculty should actively address social injustice while maintaining rigorous academic standards. He called for a redefinition of academic freedom and responsibility, urging law schools to balance intellectual pursuits with meaningful contributions to society [13].

Wesley Cragg's article *Moral Education in the Schools* evaluates the policy of introducing formal moral education in Ontario's public schools, analysing the recommendations of the Mackay Commission (1969) and their implementation in the Ontario education system [14]. The Commission recommended eliminating religious education in schools and introducing a formal moral education programme based on moral reasoning. The core idea was to promote the moral development of students by teaching them how to reason morally rather than directly instilling specific moral conclusions. In addition, Cragg suggests that schools can significantly impact students' moral development through day-to-day modelling of behaviour and community organisations without having to rely on formal moral education programmes. Overall, Cragg is critical of the implementation of formal moral education in public schools, arguing that existing moral education programmes are problematic in both theory and practice. He calls for a rethinking of the role of the school in the moral development of students, arguing that education through role models and informality may be a more effective way to go [14].

The article *Fairness is Dead: Confronting the Cult of Neutrality in the Teacher Education Classroom*, written by Faith Agostinone-Wilson, discusses the issue of so-called "neutrality" in teacher education [15]. The author argues that neutrality is often used as a means of disguising an unwillingness to delve into sensitive topics such as race, social class and gender in the teacher education classroom, particularly in the context of the prevailing conservative discourse. The authors argue that teachers often feel pressured to confront students with values such as "neutrality," "personal responsibility," and "equal time." These values are seen as tools to maintain the status quo and become a measure of "balance" in classroom discussions. The teacher's task is to make students aware of the political nature of these notions of 'neutrality' and actively expose and respond to them in the classroom; Agostinone-Wilson emphasises that neutrality is unworkable and even dangerous. She argues that educators cannot just passively accept the views of their students but must proactively question and expose the ideology behind "neutrality" and directly confront it. Teachers, she argues, should go to great lengths to dispel the myth of neutrality and stimulate critical thinking in students. Too often, students mask their discomfort with discussing issues such as race or social injustice by saying that "all points of view are equal" and "non-interference". The authors argue that this "centrist" tendency is a form of escapism that prevents in-depth exploration of social injustice. The chapter points out that teachers should not merely act as neutral bystanders but actively participate in classroom discussions and challenge students' perspectives to advance their thinking about social justice. Through teaching, teachers should help students recognise the injustices of the current social situation and encourage them to engage in actions to change it. The authors advocate that teachers

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should break this neutrality in the classroom by encouraging students to delve into issues such as race and social class to promote critical thinking and social change [15].

This article, *Troubled Neutrality: Towards a Philosophy of Teacher Ambiguity*, by Jessica A. Heybach, discusses the issue of "neutrality" in teacher education [16]. Questioning the notion that teachers should remain neutral when confronted with controversial topics in the classroom and exploring how the role of the teacher can be re-examined through a philosophical lens, Heybach uses this as an introduction to the discussion of teacher neutrality, arguing that teacher neutrality is a dangerous practice that can mask injustices in society. The author criticises the notion of 'educational neutrality' proposed by some scholars (e.g. Nel Noddings), arguing that such neutrality may not be true neutrality but rather an ambiguous attitude. This ambiguity allows teachers to avoid ostensibly authoritative positions but may also inhibit the free exchange of ideas in the classroom. Heybach analyses the etymology and social function of neutrality and suggests that teacher neutrality is, in fact, an act of self-censorship. This neutrality allows teachers to avoid confronting the social, political and ethical issues behind controversial topics in the classroom, which may lead to unconscious oppression or thought control. Heybach advocates that teachers should recognise their freedoms and responsibilities and avoid losing initiative in the classroom by pursuing neutrality. She argues that teachers should question existing educational structures and take responsibility for promoting critical thinking in their students rather than simply maintaining the status.

In her article, Heybach criticises teachers' neutrality in controversial topics, arguing that such neutrality is not a truly objective position but a form of escapism. She advocates that teachers should recognise their subjectivity and freedom to inspire students to think through ambiguity and uncertainty to achieve real educational goals [16].

The challenges of neutrality in education, especially in the context of multicultural and anti-racist education, are discussed in R. Singh's article *Neutrality and Education in a Pluralistic Society*, which argues against the traditional concept of neutrality in teaching controversial issues, arguing that in situations of unequal power dynamics, neutrality may inadvertently favour the dominant group, thus perpetuating inequality [17]. Singh questions the idea that teachers should be neutral when dealing with controversial issues, especially in multicultural or anti-racist education. He argued that neutrality would allow the more powerful forces in society to dominate while weaker groups would remain in an unequal situation. Multicultural and anti-racist education: In a diverse society, Singh emphasises that neutrality in dealing with racism or cultural prejudice is harmful. Teachers are responsible for actively combating discrimination and promoting justice rather than merely passively leading the discussion. Neutrality vs. Impartiality: Singh distinguishes between neutrality and impartiality. Neutrality implies non-involvement, while impartiality implies fairness to all points of view. He argues that in some cases, such as when dealing with racism, impartiality requires teachers to intervene in favour of the underprivileged rather than remain neutral. Open-mindedness and critical thinking: The article explores the relationship between neutrality and the development of open-mindedness in students. Singh argues that promoting open-mindedness does not require neutrality but encourages critical examination of different viewpoints while recognising and challenging harmful ideologies. The author argues that teachers should not avoid controversial topics or hide their values. Instead, teachers should guide their students to understand and evaluate different perspectives, fostering critical thinking while promoting justice and peace. In conclusion, the article argues that in a pluralistic society, teachers should not adhere strictly to the principle of neutrality, especially when dealing with issues of racism and inequality. Instead, teachers should promote equity and social justice through education and actively address social imbalances.

John Kleinig's article *Neutrality in Moral Education* explores the concept of achieving neutrality in moral education and examines the possibilities and desirability of implementing a morally neutral educational programme [18]. Kleinig discusses the historical role of moral education in the school,

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the process of moving towards moral neutrality, and the philosophical background that has influenced this approach. Kleinig explains the unquestionable role of the school in character development in early compulsory education. Kleinig explains that in the early years of compulsory education, the role of the school in character development was unquestionable, with a focus on inculcating traditional values. However, with social change and pluralism, moral education became less visible, although schools still implicitly conveyed moral messages through the curriculum. Moral neutrality in a pluralistic society: With the increasing diversity of values in contemporary societies, there has been a trend towards promoting neutrality in moral education, i.e. not promoting particular moral or cultural values. This approach responds to ethical pluralism by avoiding favouring any particular belief system in education.

In the article *Philosophical foundations of neutrality*, Kleinig discusses the distinction between 'facts' and 'values', an idea influenced by logical positivism, which views ethical claims as expressions of emotion rather than statements of fact [18]. Philosophers like A.J. Ayer and R.M. Hare supported that moral philosophy should concentrate on analysing moral language rather than prescribing moral values, leading to a neutral moral education. Kleinig criticised the feasibility of moral neutrality, arguing that even attempts to provide a neutral framework for moral education are inevitably affected by the moral point of view. He points out that defining morality and moral education cannot be completely divorced from the moral commitments of society or educators. Kleinig analyses John Wilson's theory of moral education, where Wilson attempts to construct a neutral moral education by basing it on second-order (meta-ethical) principles rather than first-order (normative ethical) principles. He suggests that moral education should focus on teaching rationality, consistency and fairness rather than specific moral values (e.g. "stealing is wrong"). However, Kleinig argues that this approach is also not completely free from underlying moral assumptions. In summary, a completely morally neutral education is an unattainable goal. He points out that even seemingly neutral frameworks for moral education are influenced by moral perspectives, and educators must recognise the theoretical and moral commitments behind their approach to moral education. In summary, Kleinig questions the ideal of neutrality in moral education, arguing that moral education inevitably involves value judgements and cannot be completely neutral.

Z. Phillips' article *Is Moral Education Necessary?* explores the need for moral education in schools and whether it should be made an explicit part of the curriculum [19]. Phillips critically examines the role of moral education, questioning common assumptions about its necessity and how it has traditionally been incorporated into educational practice. Phillips points out that historically, moral education has usually been taught through religious instruction or wider character development, which is implicitly integrated into the curriculum. However, in recent years, people have begun to question the explicit role of moral education in schools. The article discusses the hidden curriculum concept, referring to the indirect transmission of moral values through school practices, rules and teacher expectations. Phillips questions the need to make these hidden values explicit, arguing that they are already internalised in the educational process and understood by teachers and pupils. Phillips criticises the practice of making moral education explicit and formalised. He argues that efforts to link moral values to the maintenance of social order or the promotion of social solidarity tend to distort the purpose of education. Instead of promoting genuine moral reasoning, such an approach may lead to confusion and misrepresenting values. In the article Difference between Moral Education and Moral Philosophy: Phillips distinguished between moral education and moral philosophy. He argues that so-called moral education is more about teaching specific moral judgements, whereas true moral philosophy involves more in-depth discussions about the nature of morality [19]. He suggested that schools should encourage philosophical thinking more than inculcating fixed moral conclusions. Phillips emphasised the importance of teachers demonstrating moral integrity through their behaviour rather than directly teaching a moral curriculum. He argues that teachers who demonstrate a

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commitment to truth, integrity and respect for their students through their teaching practices can convey moral values more effectively without needing a formal moral education programme. Phillips ultimately questions the need for formal moral education. He argues that the values inherent in good educational practice - such as intellectual rigour, respect for truth and integrity - can promote moral development without additional moral education programmes. In summary, Phillips questioned the need for explicit moral education in schools, arguing that moral values are already embedded in educational practice. He advocates that schools should concentrate on developing critical thinking and philosophical enquiry rather than formalised moral education.

Deborah R. E. Cotton's article, *Teaching Controversial Environmental Issues: Neutrality and Balance in Classroom Reality,* explores teachers' challenges when teaching students controversial environmental issues [20]. The study examines whether teachers can maintain a neutral or balanced stance in practice, an approach often recommended in the education literature. Controversial nature of environmental issues: Environmental topics often involve conflicting interests and divergent values and are inherently controversial. Much of the literature encourages teachers to foster pro-environmental attitudes among their students; however, teacher support for this approach is unclear. This study investigated how three experienced geography teachers taught controversial environmental issues in UK secondary schools. The study examined their beliefs about neutrality and balanced teaching and compared them with classroom behaviour. Neutrality and balance in the classroom: The study *Neutrality and balance in the classroom* found that the teachers who participated generally believed they should adopt a neutral or balanced stance when discussing controversial environmental issues [20]. However, the study showed that maintaining this neutrality in practice was difficult. Teachers' attitudes affected classroom discussions more deeply than they realised or intended. Analyses of classroom interactions show that teachers often unconsciously express their views through how they control the discussion and the types of questions they ask. This suggests that achieving true neutrality in the classroom is much more difficult than expected. The study points out that teachers, whether consciously or not, are conveying personal attitudes to their students, which form part of the 'hidden curriculum'. The hidden curriculum refers to the lessons and values that students unintentionally learn through their educational experiences. This article highlights the tension between ideal neutrality and pedagogical reality when teaching controversial topics. Teachers often struggle to balance, and their personal views inevitably influence the learning environment [20].

5. Conclusion

By analyzing different scholars' views on the role of teachers in moral education, we can see that complete neutrality is not only difficult to achieve, but may even weaken the effect of moral education. Teachers' emotional participation and value transmission play an important role in the process of students' moral development. Teachers should show emotions and values appropriately while maintaining rational thinking, so as to encourage students to have deeper cognitive and emotional input in the face of moral problems. Finally, moral education should not only stay at the theoretical level, but should stimulate students' real reflection and internalization of moral issues through the interaction between teachers and students.

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