The students are alive, and the purpose of education is to stimulate and guide their self-development. It follows as a corollary from this premise, that the teachers also should be alive with living thoughts

(Whitehead, 1929, Preface)

Abstract
Greater governmental control over the curriculum, an increasing emphasis only on formalized and decontextualized knowledge and on education as instruction towards pre-determined outcomes, have revitalized the interest in the question whether schools should only instruct or also have a pedagogical task. In this contribution we argue that schools do have a pedagogical task. A transformative conception of education is presented in order to show that the pedagogical task, conceived as a concern for the whole person of the student, is the proper and all-encompassing task of education in all schools including religiously affiliated schools, and for all teachers. Finally, we articulate our contention that it is the teacher’s task not to restrict the students’ potentialities, but to create openings for them to encounter and receive the gift of personal (religious) identity formation.

Keywords:
Instruction, pedagogy, dualism, transformative education, moral and religious education, identity formation

1. Introduction

What does it mean when we proclaim that teachers matter? Should schools be mainly places for training or should they educate as well? Should teachers simply be instructors or is there more to their task? One could argue that the issue as to whether the purpose of schools is the cultivation of the person or training for external purposes is one of the perennial questions of education (see, e.g., Oelkers, 1985). One indication for this prevailing concern is the fact that some languages even have different words for making the distinction. The German distinction between “erziehen”
and “unterrichten” is, for example, reflected in the Dutch distinction between “opvoeden” and “onderwijzen”, while a similar distinction can also be found in the Nordic languages (see Rosengren & Öhngren, 1997, p. 11). In the English context the situation is slightly more complicated. While the terms “education” and “schooling” can be used to differentiate between the two approaches, the word “education” also has a more general, more encompassing and more neutral meaning. This is one reason why some authors use the phrase “liberal education” to denote the idea of education as the cultivation of the person (see, e.g., Hirst, 1974, chapter 3). More recently educators in the Anglo-American world have begun to use the word “pedagogy” to denote the dimension of education that is different from mere training or schooling (see Hamilton, 1999).

There are at least two reasons why the discussion about the aim of education has recently become prominent again. The first reason has to do with fundamental changes that have taken place in the educational system of many countries over the past ten to twenty years. During this period there has been a shift towards far greater external (governmental) control over the curriculum and a far greater emphasis on measurable output and accountability, often related to tight systems of inspection. In this process the purpose of schooling has become increasingly defined in terms of the effective production of a pre-determined output, often measured in terms of exam-scores on so-called “core subjects” such as mathematics and (first) language. At the same time many parents who are looking for high quality schools for their children use these output scores of schools as the most important indication for school quality. This shift towards a narrow, one-sided conception of the purpose of schooling has made the question as to whether there (still) is or should be a place for “education” or “pedagogy” in the school an urgent one – not only for those who are in general concerned about the purpose of schooling, but even more for the teachers in the schools who quite often feel that these developments miss the very point of what they think that their profession is about (see Biesta, Korthagen & Verkuyl, 2002).

While in many countries the discourse about education has rapidly moved towards a narrow schooling-agenda, there has at the very same time – and often in the very same countries – been an increased attention to the teaching of values and norms, such as in the context of education for citizenship (see, e.g., Ichilov, 1998). Among the reasons behind such initiatives are concerns about the cohesion and integration of society, the idea that there is a basic lack of (social) morality, and sometimes even simply a nationalistic or patriotic agenda. In many countries politicians