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Respect in Education

This paper discusses the educational significance of the moral demand for respect. In 'Ethics and Education', Richard Peters presents a conception of educational respect that was recently taken up by Krassimir Stojanov. This paper responds to both Peters' and Stojanov's contributions and proposes another understanding of educational respect: to respect children is to treat them in a way that enables them to see themselves as persons endowed with dignity, that is, as having the equal standing to make claims on others.

The idea that persons should be *respected* is common in contemporary moral philosophy, but in educational theory the concept of respect is rarely used. Richard Peters (1966) is one of the few philosophers of education who discusses the educational significance of this concept. Recently, Krassimir Stojanov (2009) took up some of Peters' basic ideas and developed his own account of educational respect. In this paper, I explore the meaning of respect in education, referencing the accounts of Peters in the first section and Stojanov in the second section. I sketch my own view of educational respect in the third section.

Richard Peters: Respect and Initiation

In *Ethics and Education*, Peters introduces the notion of respect within a specific context. He uses the term to describe the 'child-centered' or 'growth-theoretical' critique of traditional practices of education: growth-theorists, he says, 'were morally indignant at the lack of respect shown for children as individuals and appalled by the lack of psychological understanding evident in the ways in which they were treated' (Peters 1966, p. 43, see also p. 35). As Peters further explains, to respect children means, according to the child-centered view, not to indoctrinate and coerce them, not to order them around, but to allow them to learn by experience and choose by themselves.

This reference to the notion of respect is embedded in Peters' analysis of the concept of education. Peters argues, against the view defended by some adherents of the child-centered account, that the demand to respect the child's individuality or autonomy should *not* be seen as constitutive for 'education' (ibid., p. 42). In other words, he refuses the idea to justify the child-centered view by means of a conceptual analysis of 'education'.

At this point, Peters refers to his distinction between education as a *task word* and an *achievement word*. Understood as an achievement word, 'education' expresses what it means to be an 'educated man'. Being educated, says Peters, involves deeper knowledge and understanding of what is worthwhile. But according to Peters, we should not apply this crite-

tion to the 'task' or the manner of educating: a person can become educated (in the achievement sense of the word), even though his individual interests or his autonomy are neglected during the education process: A 'scientist may have been forced, while he was a boy, to do experiments in which he had not the slightest interest. But by being trained to do them repeatedly under rigorous supervision he may eventually come to develop an interest in doing scientific experiments' (ibid, p. 38). Though we might hold the view that this person's individuality was *disrespected*, in the process of education, we can nevertheless say that he was being 'educated'. Thus, for Peters, the demand for respect is an additional *moral* consideration that should not be built into the *conceptual* analysis of 'education'.

Note however that Peters' conceptual analysis does not fully neglect the question of how desirable states of mind are achieved. According to the third of his criteria for the appropriate use of 'education', those educational procedures that 'lack wittingness and voluntariness on the part of the learner' (ibid., p. 45) should not be considered as 'educational'. Thus, the claim to see them as persons who are – in rudimentary sense – 'autonomous' or sensitive to reasons (ibid., p. 41) – is an important element of Peters' understanding of the term 'education'. But this is not tantamount to a moral demand for respect.¹

Let us now consider a second aspect of Peters' critique of child-centered views: these, he says, give too much weight to the demand for respect and thereby neglect the 'matter' or content of education. This is partly a conceptual point, as Peters thinks that the child-centered position underestimates the first of his conceptual criteria: education 'implies the transmission of what is worth-while' (ibid., p. 45). On the other hand, he does not deny that the demand for respect has a role to play in educational thought. For him, the demand for respect is a moral consideration that goes beyond purely conceptual questions.

Peters' third objection to the growth-theoretical approaches concerns their picture of the human mind. After having stated his conceptual criteria for the use of 'education', Peters outlines his idea that education should be seen as an 'initiation' into worth-while activities. This idea is based on his insight that the human mind is intersubjectively – socially and culturally – constituted. According to the child-centered model, Peters explains, 'the child is encouraged to 'grow' according to the laws of his own development' (ibid., p. 52). This model presupposes that the child 'becomes himself' by deploying his individual potential, and social or cultural influences merely distort the process of self-realization. This leads to the moral demand to not intervene and to respect the child in his individuality and autonomy.

For Peters, this demand for respect relies on an inappropriate picture of the self. According to Peters' view, a human being cannot 'become himself' without being introduced into a public form of life and the activities that are considered as worth-while within this form of life. Normative social standards of pre-given social practices do not hinder the human being

from developing his individuality, rather they enable him to do so. Thus the claim that the educator should not interfere with the 'original individuality' of the child is senseless.

Against this background, Peters begins to develop his own view of educational respect by responding to a possible objection against his idea of education as initiation. One could think, Peters writes, that his account 'ignores matters to do with the individual differences of the pupil' (1966, p. 55). But Peters denies that his account is insensitive to individual differences or incompatible with the idea that children's individual traits should be respected. But what weight has the principle of respect within his theoretical framework? Consider the following statement:

'It is salutary to stress the aim of individual self-realization when an educational system is either geared to the demands of the state, such as for more scientists or technicians, or when individuals are being relentlessly moulded in accordance with some doctrinaire pattern. There is point, under such conditions, in stressing the differences between people and the ethical principle of respect for each individuals viewpoint on the world, together with the aspirations, abilities, and inclinations that are peculiar to him' (ibid., p. 55).

The educational demand for respect thus prevents illegitimate claims of the state or the economy. But, as Peters continues, respect for individual points of view cannot be the sole consideration in education. Individual self-realization, he says, should ultimately be subordinated to the bringing about of desirable modes of conduct. Children should not be raised fully in accordance with their individuality: the educator's 'plea for self-realization is a plea for the principle of options within a range of activities and modes of conduct that are thought to be desirable' (ibid., p. 55).

Rather than establishing the demand for respect as a general educational principle, Peters states that the teacher's main task is to initiate children into pre-existing social practices. However, he does not say that this is required by the principle of respect. The teacher has to take care of two things: he has to make students acquainted with the normative standards of certain practices, and at the same time respect their points of view. 'Both concerns are obligatory. Respect for persons must not be pursued with a cavalier disregard for standards' (ibid. p. 59). And on the other hand, highlighting pre-existing standards should not amount to a neglect for individual points of view.

Thus the principle of respect has only a limited function within Peters' educational thought, in line with what he takes to be its function within the child-centered framework: it works as a normative protection for the child's individuality. In contrast to the child-centered view, Peters claims that concern for individual points of view should be balanced

with – and ultimately subordinated to – other educational considerations. But this does not mean that children should only be partly respected, because Peters thinks that respecting children is fully compatible with their initiation into social practices.

The view that respect only has a limited function within Peters' educational philosophy might be called into question. After all, Peters considers respect for persons to be a basic moral principle. It is not always easy to see how his general and justificatory remarks on respect are related to educational issues. Certainly Peters' general account of respect highlights the core aspect of his educational deliberations on respect: to respect someone is to see and treat him as a person, that is, as a being capable of having and expressing an *individual* point of view: 'In general respect for persons is the feeling awakened when another is regarded as a distinctive centre of consciousness, with peculiar feelings and purposes that criss-cross his institutional roles. It is connected with the awareness one has that each man has his own aspirations, his own viewpoint on the world' (p. 59, see also pp. 209-215). Thus, to respect children as persons means to take their distinctive points of view seriously.

Let me now point to two features of Peters' general account of respect that are – in my view – educationally salient, but whose educational relevance is not spelled out by Peters. First, Peters says that people 'only begin to see themselves as persons', insofar as this 'is taken as a matter of importance in society' (ibid., p. 211). In other words, we learn to see ourselves as persons who ought to be respected when we are initiated into moral practices that give weight to the individual points of view of persons. Thus, fostering the development of the corresponding self-conception in children could be seen as an educational task.

The second feature concerns Peters' justification of the principle of respect and other moral principles. Referring to Kant, Peters develops a transcendental justification of moral principles. He intends to make *explicit* what people *implicitly* presuppose (ibid., p. 114). Peters undertakes an intersubjectivist transformation of Kant's approach; that is, he does not ask what presuppositions a solitary agent necessarily makes, but focuses on the idea of a rational discourse. Habermas later took up this idea, referring explicitly to Peters (Habermas 1983, pp. 94-95). The essential question is what persons presuppose as they enter a practical discourse – a rational discussion of what ought to be done. Peters claims that participants in such a discourse necessarily presuppose the principle of respect for persons. He closely connects the concepts of a person, respect and rational discourse. He says that his justificatory argument is implicit in what it means to be a person (Peters 1966, p. 213). Moreover, he claims that to see someone 'as a person' is to consider him as someone who ought to be respected: he says that '[r]espect for persons is [...] a principle which summarizes the attitude which we must adopt towards others with whom we are prepared seriously to discuss what

ought to be done' (ibid., p. 215). Peters goes on to write: 'To have the concept of a person is to see an individual as an object of respect in a form of life which is conducted on the basis of those principles which are presuppositions of the use of practical reason' (ibid.).

Thus, are we not to say that children ought to be initiated into this form of life? To become a person, it seems, means nothing else than to become capable of being a full-fledged member of the discourse community and to articulate one's point of view within this community. It means that one learns to see oneself and others as persons who ought to be respected as members of a discursive form of life. Thus, children – as '*developing* centres of consciousness' (ibid, p. 59) – should be educated to see themselves and others as persons and to develop the capacities of practical reason that are necessary to participate in a discourse.

Peters does not draw these educational conclusions himself. He makes a clear distinction between his educational deliberations and his justificatory account. In a recent paper, Krassimir Stojanov (2009) proposes an account of educational respect that is similar to the one just outlined.

Krassimir Stojanov: Respect as Discursive Initiation

Stojanov reads Peters' account of respect on the background of Axel Honneth's recognition theory, which includes respect as one of three forms of recognition (see especially Honneth 1992). Honneth's basic idea is that human self-realization depends on the development of a positive relationship towards oneself. This kind of self-relationship, he writes, can only arise if one grows up and lives in social relationships that are characterized by patterns of mutual recognition. Thus, one must experience recognition to develop a positive self-conception.

Human beings, Honneth writes, are not only in need of respect: they also have to be loved and cared for, and they need to be appreciated for their abilities and achievements. They need love to build up a basic form of self-confidence, social esteem to develop their self-esteem, and respect to be able to respect themselves.

Stojanov takes all three forms of recognition to be educationally salient (see also Stojanov 2006), but in his current paper he restricts his attention to the notion of respect. He assumes that there are some important ethical aspects of the educational relationship that cannot be fully grasped by taking into account the two other forms of recognition (Stojanov 2009, p. 165). Focusing on respect, he comes to the conclusion that Honneth's understanding of this idea is of limited use within the educational context. Honneth thinks of respect mainly as a form of recognition belonging in the legal and political sphere. To respect someone means to recognise him as a fully-fledged member of the legal and political community. This Kan-

tian use of the concept connects it with notions like autonomy, responsibility, dignity, and rights: persons, as responsible and autonomous agents, should be respected in their dignity or their rights.

Stojanov's critique is twofold. First, it is doubtful whether children, who are not fully rational and responsible agents, can be considered as addressees of respect. Second, Honneth's concept of respect does not demand to take into account the individual needs and capacities of children.

Stojanov thinks that these two problems can be avoided by turning to Peters' view of respect: First, Peters takes into account that children are developing persons. Furthermore, his view of what it means to be a person seems less focused on the capacity for autonomy. Peters writes: 'The notion is much more that of an assertive point of view; of judgements, appraisals, and decisions that shape events' (Peters 1966, p. 210). While children cannot count as autonomous in the full sense of the word, it seems clear that they can have 'an assertive point of view' or that they are able to judge and decide. This is why Stojanov takes Peters' account to be 'much broader and much less exclusive' than the classical Kantian view (Stojanov 2009, p. 166). But it should be noted that this account, like the Kantian view, concentrates on the practical and rational capacities of human beings. Most of the features that are mentioned are related to the capacity for autonomy.

Still, Peters' account justifies a demand for respect towards the child's point of view, even though the child might not be fully competent or autonomous. Peters, however, does not claim that the child's point of view should have the same normative weight as the autonomous decision of an adult. As discussed in the first section, Peters considers the demand for respect to be compatible with paternalistic educational interferences. Such a limited demand to respect the child's point of view might also be justified on the background of the common Kantian view.

Consider the second point: Stojanov claims that Peters' account of respect demands to take the individuality of persons – including children – seriously. As Stojanov states, the language of rights and dignity does not bring individuality into view. Moral rights, as well as human dignity, are ascribed to persons *as persons*, not as particular individuals. The language of rights has been criticized as inappropriate to regulate personal relations, such as the parent-child-relationship (see e.g. Shoeman 1980). But Stojanov does not reject the language of rights because he takes it to be inimical to the emotional aspects of relationships. He does not intend to describe the educational relationship between teacher and student as based on love or friendship.

Indeed, the teacher does not have to love his students in an emotional way, but – Stojanov claims – he has to respect them *as individuals*. How does this differ from respecting their

dignity or rights? To ascribe the same rights to all students does not imply that the teacher should treat them all alike and ignore their differences. Similarly, to ascribe a right to food to all human beings does not imply that all should eat the same, regardless of their tastes and physical condition. Rather, it means that all humans should receive a kind of nourishment that is adequate to them as individuals. And so declaring a right to education does not allow teachers or administrators to ignore individual differences between children. Moreover, there is one right that is especially sensitive to individuality – the right to autonomy. To respect a person's autonomy means, according to the contemporary view, to respect him in his *individual* decisions and courses of action. Thus, the person has this right as a person, but this right provides him with the opportunity for individual self-realization (see also Honneth 1992, p. 283).

Although the language of rights and dignity is not at odds with the demand to respect individual differences, it does not seem to be fully appropriate when dealing with the relationship between teachers and students. Peters calls this a 'special relationship' (Peters 1966, p. 59) and he distinguishes educational respect from a general form of respect. He states that 'there is no one form of love or respect' (*ibid.*, pp. 59-60).

This is an idea, I think, that should be further elaborated. The educational relationship is special because children are developing persons. This requires a specific form of respect. But there is more to be said: the teacher has obligations or responsibilities towards the students that he does not have towards other children. The teacher-student-relationship is special in the sense that it is constituted by special duties and rights. Against this background, we could say that teachers have an obligation to take a special interest in their students' individual characteristics. The teacher must find out about the particular needs, points of view, capacities and potentials of the students, and organize the processes of teaching and learning in accordance with these insights. This attitude of respect for the students' individuality must not only be distinguished from love, but also from social esteem. Social esteem is grounded in the individual capacities and achievements of persons – persons are esteemed for their individual traits. This is why persons cannot all be esteemed in the same way. Respect, by contrast, makes no differences among persons. Thus, for the teacher, to respect students means to be specially concerned about their individual traits, independently of whether these traits give rise for social esteem.

So, in contrast to Stojanov, I deny that Peters' general account of respect is significantly different from the common Kantian view. However, I think that Peters gives us an important hint by emphasizing the special character of the educational relationship.

Stojanov agrees with Peters that to respect children means to take their individuality seriously. But in contrast to Peters, he intends to establish the principle of respect as a general

educational principle. According to Stojanov, this principle has two aspects: First, it requires the teacher to respect the child's present point of view; second, it requires that the child's ability to articulate his views in a rational discourse be developed. Stojanov integrates these aspects in the notion of 'discursive initiation' (Stojanov 2009, p. 170). He assumes that children cannot be initiated into the practice of rational argument – 'the game of giving and asking for reasons' (ibid., p. 169) – when their individuality is neglected. Respect for their individuality has thus 'extrinsic' value – it works as a 'tool for the fostering of human development' (ibid., p. 167). Because respect for the child's point of view is necessary for the development of discursive capacities, there can be no conflict between these two aspects of respect, says Stojanov: 'Along such lines, the content aspect of education would not stand in tension or in competition with the principle of respect' (ibid., p. 170). Recall that there is this kind of tension in Peters' account – a tension between the initiation into cultural practices and the principle of respect. For Peters, this latter principle functions as a corrective in the process of initiation. In contrast, Stojanov thinks that the principle of respect demands the initiation into a certain kind of social practice – the practice of rational discourse.

The idea of a discursive initiation correlates with some aspects of Peters' educational thought.² But Stojanov notes that it sometimes seems that Peters endorses a conservative understanding of his conception of education as initiation (ibid., p. 169). According to this conservative reading, children are not initiated into discursive practices, but into the pre-given form of life of a cultural community. Stojanov considers this to be expression of educational disrespect.

Here is the heart of Stojanov's argument. Peters develops his account of educational respect in dialogue with child-centered and traditional authoritarian views of education. Stojanov situates his notion of respect in a different environment, developing a theoretical framework that helps uncover certain forms of injustice in current educational systems. The main forms of educational injustice, he assumes, are not distributive inequalities, but a lack of recognition or respect. He says that introducing students from working-class and immigrant families into the mainstream culture tends to neglect their unique points of view. A possible alternative would be to initiate these students into the form of life of 'their own' cultural or social group. But to do so, Stojanov claims, is to see them as part of a collective, instead of respecting them as individuals. Respecting students means, according to Stojanov, to take their present views seriously *and* to support them in overcoming the limitations of their particular cultural form of life.

I am surprised that Stojanov does not recognize any relevant conflicts or tensions between these two aspects in his view of educational respect. These possible conflicts can be described in at least three different ways: as a tension between individual points of view

and cultural norms; as a tension between the child's present and his future concerns; and as a tension between the educational situation and the aims of education.

For Stojanov, educational respect is both directed at the child's present individuality and his future-oriented concerns. The aim of education – being able to participate in a rational discourse – is situated in the future, and can only be achieved, according to Stojanov, by respecting the child's individuality in the present.

Rational discourse is constituted by complex rules. Although even small children have a basic ability to understand and articulate reasons, a full-blooded capacity for discursive autonomy can only be developed through long processes of learning. According to philosophers like Habermas and Brandom, this practice is 'context-transcending' (ibid., p. 169). However, from the child's point of view, being initiated into this practice might not seem eminently attractive. Stojanov says that 'respect is none other than that Socratic teaching which aims at the cultivation of reason' (ibid., p. 167). But not all students want to be taught Socratically; not all want to cultivate their reason. That is why discursive initiation will not work without constraints on the individual's present autonomy and a partial neglect of his present point of view.

Especially students from working-class or immigrant families might not understand the need for discursive initiation because the capacity for rational argument may not correspond to the values of their family culture. These students or their parents might even be explicitly opposed to the value of discursive autonomy. By contrast, many children of well-educated middle-class parents are initiated into discursive practices within their families. They may feel fully 'at home' in a school system that establishes a discursive educational culture, and are likely to be more successful under these conditions than students from immigrant or working-class families.

Clearly this does not mean that discursive initiation is not a sensible educational aim. It is also clear that any attempt to initiate children from disadvantaged backgrounds into discursive practices must start by taking their individual points of view seriously. But it is a long process from spontaneously expressing an opinion to mastering the rules of discursive practice. So it would be naïve to think that there can be no tensions between the present opinions and desires of students and the future aim.

Respect, Self-Respect, and Future Autonomy

What function does the concept of respect have in educational thought? For Peters, this notion functions as a protection for the child's individuality in the present educational situation. For Stojanov, respect also has a future-oriented dimension, and it is thus an expression of disrespect to neglect the development of the child's capacity for discursive autonomy.

While I agree with Stojanov that respect is a general educational principle, I think that his account does not take the child's concerns in the present educational situation seriously enough. But what can it mean to respect the child *as a child*, in his 'dignity' as a child? If to respect a person means to account for his individual point of view, then it seems that children cannot be fully respected, in the present educational situation, because their present point of view cannot be given 'absolute' or 'unconditional' weight in educational practice. This raises the question whether the notions of respect and dignity can be applied to children at all; the idea of a partial respect for a person's dignity is at odds with the common uses of these terms.

To solve this problem we should reflect on possible meanings of 'respect' and 'dignity'. If we want to use these concepts in educational thought, we have to understand them in a way that 1) allows for a partial neglect of the child's present point of view, and 2) nevertheless grants the child absolute protection of his dignity.

Consider the following proposal³: To respect someone in his dignity as a person means to see him as someone who has the normative standing to make certain claims on us as a moral equal.

If we neglect these claims and thereby express disrespect, we have to expect that the other person *resents* our acting. This can be explained by the fact that the other person is endowed with *self-respect*, that is, he sees himself as having the normative standing to make claims. Self-respect, thus understood, is an empirical notion: it describes the psychological state of persons who ascribe a dignity to themselves. The corresponding conception of dignity has, by contrast, normative significance.

We can make an additional empirical assumption: self-respect, Honneth (1992) says, depends on experiences of respect. Note that an adult person who sees himself as endowed with dignity has the means to defend himself against singular experiences of disrespect. By resenting a violation of his claims, he actually rejects this attack on his dignity. Only if he is constantly and severely disrespected is he in danger of losing his self-respect. Should this happen, it does not mean that he is no longer entitled to make claims on others. Thus, the normative standing to make claims does not depend on the empirical fact of self-respect.

Still, to respect a person means to support him in establishing and sustaining a sense of self-respect. If we see persons as having the standing to make claims, we should care whether they see themselves in this way. In the ideal moral community, the normative status of persons is mirrored in their self-conception. Persons should both acknowledge their obligations and responsibilities and their rights.

Against this background, we can consider the case of developing persons. These, we might say, have the equal normative status to make claims, but they lack a fully-fledged ability for

self-respect. They are only beginning to see themselves as holders of legitimate claims. To develop their sense of self-respect, they need constant experiences of respect, and so educators should consider the support of this process to be an educational task. Peters states:

‘Individuals will only tend to assert their rights as individuals [...] if they are encouraged to do so. [...] Even in a society which, because of the importance which it attaches to individual points of view, is permeated by the concept of a person, an individual who was systematically discouraged and sat on might have such a low opinion of himself that we might be inclined to say of him that he simply had not got the concept of himself ‘as a person’ (Peters 1966, p. 211).

Peters does not spell out the educational consequences of this insight, but he would probably agree that children should be educated to see themselves as persons, that is, as having the standing to make claims. This could be seen as an educational aim that lies in the future. Recall, however, that I intend to formulate a view of educational respect that protects the child in the educational situation.

My basic idea is that the aim of fostering the development of the child’s self-respect should not be situated in the distant future, but in the educational situation itself. Educational situations should be designed in a way that encourages students to respect themselves *now*. Enabling them to see themselves as holders of claims is itself an educational aim. But this aim might conflict with future-oriented educational aims, such as fostering the development of discursive capacities. In normative conflicts of this kind, securing the child’s present self-respect should be prior to the achievement of future-oriented aims. In other words: However valuable a (future-oriented) educational aim may be, its achievement should not run contrary to the child’s present ability for self-respect. Thus understood, the notions of respect and dignity function as a normative constraint on future-oriented educational interferences. They restrict ‘intrapersonal trade-offs’ in education.

My proposal only makes sense if certain educational and paternalistic restrictions on the child’s present autonomy are compatible with his present ability to see himself as having the standing to make claims. It should be noted that this view of dignity is not focussed on the protection of autonomy. Indeed, the child’s dignity is also violated when his basic physical needs are neglected, or when he is humiliated in public. Thus, by respecting these and other of the child’s basic concerns that give rise to valid claims, we show the student that *he counts*, and thereby foster the development of his self-respect.

Autonomy belongs to the child’s basic concerns. When the child’s autonomy is restricted for educational reasons, the child might come to feel that his desires or decisions *do not count*. This feeling is justified, I think, when 1) important decisions concerning the child’s life are taken without consulting the child, 2) the reasons for these decisions are not explained or justified to the child. Thus it is important to establish participatory decision-making

practices. This means, 1) that the child should be enabled and encouraged to articulate his own point of view and that his desires and opinions should be taken seriously, 2) it should be ensured, if ever possible, that the child comes to understand – and maybe accept – the reasons for educational measures that contradict his present desires.

Encouraging the child to see himself as a bearer of legitimate claims will, of course, also have effects on the child's *future* relationship towards himself. Stojanov's conception of education as discursive initiation is focussed on *cognitive* aspects of development. Surely, to engage in discursive activities of this kind, he must also have – and see himself as having – the corresponding abilities. The development of the ability to think for oneself and to participate in a discourse must therefore be educationally fostered. But I think that developing the cognitive capacities for critical (self)reflection is not enough to become a full-blooded, autonomous member of the discursive community. Self-respect, in the sense described above, is an empirical precondition for autonomous deliberation and agency.⁴ Only when the child learns to ascribe to himself a certain normative status will he feel entitled to enter into processes of critical self-evaluation, with the aim of developing his practical self-conception, and to articulate his points of view in public discourse.

Concluding Remarks

Educational respect has two aspects: the child should be respected *as a child*, in his present individuality; and the child should be respected as a future adult, that is, in his potential to develop valuable capacities, among them the capacity for (discursive) autonomy. This far, I concur with Stojanov.

But Stojanov neglects the fact that the two aspects of educational respect might conflict. We should not assume that these two aspects are easily reconciled or balanced, so I have proposed a view of educational respect that grants absolute protection to the child's present dignity, without neglecting his future concerns. According to my view, enabling the child, in the educational situation itself, to see himself as a holder of legitimate claims is a key educational task. I take this to be a moral obligation that is unique to the educational relationship. Educators should foster the students' self-respect by taking their individual needs, desires, capacities, potentials, opinions and decisions seriously – they should take a special interest in them. By recognising their individuality in this way, the educator enables the students to feel that they count, and that they are entitled to normative claims.

Thus, the demand to respect the child as a child functions as a normative constraint on future-oriented educational interferences. At the same time, fostering present self-respect is likely to have positive effects for the future development of self-respect and autonomy.

- 1 Stojanov (2009, p. 166) proposes a different reading of Peters' account: Peters' third conceptual criterion for 'education', Stojanov says, demands respect for the child. According to this understanding, respect is constitutive for the practice of education: any educator who disrespects children cannot claim to 'educate' them. I think that this is not Peters' view. However, Peters also states that 'education' 'implies that something worth while is being or has been intentionally transmitted in a morally acceptable manner' (Peters 1966, p. 25; emphasis added), leaving his meaning ambiguous.
- 2 He refers, in the first place, to the second of Peters' criteria for an adequate use of 'education'. According to this criterion, "education' must involve knowledge and understanding and some kind of cognitive perspective' (Peters 1966, p. 45). Stojanov also mentions Peters' justificatory account (Stojanov 2009, p. 168; see section 1 of this paper).
- 3 My view of dignity and respect is inspired by the positions of Joel Feinberg (1970/1980) and Stephen Darwall (2006).
- 4 In a paper written with Joel Anderson, Honneth expresses a similar view: 'Those with diminished self-respect – with less of a sense of their personal authority – thus are less in a position to see themselves as fully the authors of their lives. Without self-respect, then, autonomy is impaired' (Anderson/Honneth 2005, p. 132). These authors point out that self-respect, together with self-trust and self-esteem, are necessary preconditions of personal autonomy. These ideas are taken up by Catriona Mackenzie (2008).

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