

## VALUES EDUCATION CURRICULUM FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT IN VIETNAM: A BRIEF OVERVIEW

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### Abstract

Currently, there have been no separate values education subject taught in Vietnam educational settings. The values are normally integrated with other science majors and instructed as moral education at primary school, citizenship education and out-of-class activities at secondary and high school. At primary school level, the goal of moral education is helping the students know about moral behaviour standards and the laws that harmony with the relationship between the learners and their families, schools, community and environment. In high schools, the values syllabus is represented the notion developing a socialist citizen including the knowledge of philosophy, political economy, science socialism, ethics, laws and Vietnamese Communist Party's policies. However, it is a fact that the program is overloaded and focused on theory thoughts thereby creating many challenges for teaching and learning. Furthermore, the overemphasis of political and laws education take much time of living skills practise and moral lessons. It is not mentioned to the shortage of many update values that meet the modern social development's requirements.

**Keywords:** *education, curriculum, values education, values education curriculum in Vietnam*

### INTRODUCTION

Priority of Vietnam school uses “Tien hoc le, hau hoc van” as a primary slogan understood that before learning knowledge and skills, children have to learn about civility at first. No one can deny that values education plays the important role in teaching and learning in Vietnam high school. The definition of “value” in Vietnam Dictionary is interpreted that: “Something that makes useful, meaningful; effective and validity; social labor is transferred to products; measurement unit” (Lan, 1993). Values education in Vietnam has not been specific subject in compulsory education curriculum but those aim, mission and demand are performed in every activities of school and considered as syllabus of personality education (Uan, 1995).

According to the national education goal in Education Laws 2005, Vietnam education aim is: “To train the perfect Vietnamese who are good at physical health, knowledge, aesthetics and their career; loyalty with national independent ideal and socialism; shaping and cherishing personality characters and skills for citizens who can satisfy the building and protection's mission of the country” (SRV, 2005). Toward the high school training mission, article 27 of Education Laws shows that: “To help students fully develop moral, knowledge, physics,

aesthetics and basic skills; develop personal skills, creativity and dynamic; create socialist Vietnamese personality; build citizens conduct and responsibility; prepare well for students' further study or work to build and protect the country". With the obvious goal for adjusting with fast-changing economic development, but at the present Vietnam educational settings has still not developed a national values education programs for high school students except for learning values through other lessons, citizenship education and out-of-class education activities. That is why values education has been becoming extremely abstract, unclear, difficulty in understanding, practicing and assessing lead to many challenges for teachers and students.

### The citizenship education program: Political thoughts and obligations

In article 29, chapter 1, Vietnam Education laws: "The high school education curriculum stipulate for knowledge and skills standard, structure, content, teaching method and assessment and testing for every subject of each grade".

Textbooks concretize knowledge and skills shown in each major syllabus and meet the teaching method. (Hieu, 2013). The citizenship education depends on its aims and functions to build curriculum. On the top of national education and high school education goals, the citizenship education subject was made with the momentous aims as followings:

- + Well prepared for citizens with political, moral, economic, laws knowledge
- + Training resident rights and obligation
- + Practicing moral love, behaviors and awareness that suitable with social regulations; training critical thinking and practices

The resident education is divided into five main chapters, including:

- + Chapter 1: Citizens with the creation of the world outlook and science methodology (Grade 10)
- + Chapter 2: Citizens with moral issues (Grade 10)
- + Chapter 3: Citizens with economy (Grade 11)
- + Chapter 4: Citizens with social-political matters (Grade 11)
- + Chapter 5: Citizens with the Laws (Grade 12)

Table 1. The Citizens education syllabus

Grade/Age	Chapter	Lesson	Credit	%
Grade 10 Age 16	1 Citizens with the creation of the world outlook and science methodology	Materialistic world outlook	2	18,3%
		The objective existence of material world	2	
		The changes and developments of material world	1	
		The origin of things and phenomenon's developments and changes	2	
		The way of things and phenomenon's	1	

Grade 11 Age 17		developments and changes			
		The developing tendency of things and phenomenon	1		
		The reality and its affect to awareness	1		
		The social existence and social perception	3		
		Human beings is subject of history and goal of social development	2		
	Citizens with moral issues	2	The moral conception	2	15,8%
			The basic categories of ethnics	2	
			Citizens with love, marriage and family	2	
			Citizens with community	2	
			Citizens with the building and protecting nation	2	
			Citizens with human beings emergency problems	2	
	Citizens with economy	3	Citizens with economic development	2	15,8%
			Goods-Money-Market	3	
			The value law of goods producing and traffic	2	
			The law of goods competition and production	1	
			The supply-demand rule of goods producing and traffic	1	
			The industrialization and modernization	2	
			Carrying out the market economy and strengthening economic management role of government	2	
			The Socialism	2	
	Citizens with social-political matters	4	The socialist country	3	17,1%
		The socialist democracy	2		
		The population and work policies	1		
		The resources and environment protection policies	1		

Grade 12 Age 18	5 Citizens with the Laws	The culture, technology-scientific, education policies	3	33%
		The national defence and security policies	1	
		The foreign affair policies	1	
		The laws and life	3	
		Performing the laws	3	
		In Laws everyone is equal	1	
		The equal right of citizens in life	3	
		The equal right of ethic people and religious	2	
		The citizens with basic freedom rights	4	
		The citizens with democratic rights	3	
		The laws with citizens development	2	
		The laws with sustainable development of country	4	
		The laws with peace and advanced development of human beings	2	

As can be seen from the table, almost of time is used for educating the knowledge of the laws with 33%. Come in the second place with 18.3% is the general knowledge of philosophy that is too much abstract and out of attention of the sixteen age people. The social-political lessons are at the third position with 17.1% of time trained about the different country policies and socialism that are so concrete, macroscopic. The remaining percentages are split equally to moral matters and economy items with 15.8% for each.

According to the 1231 announcement of MOET (The Vietnam Ministry of Education and Training) after organizing the national conference of moral-citizenship education at high school, they admitted that the present curriculum and textbooks set too high goal is not suitable to the high school students' perception and ability. The knowledge of political and laws knowledge outweigh those of moral, values and living skills education. They strengthen theory and belittle practices; not take self-study guidance and skills practices into consideration; not shape the essential character and ability of residents in society; the structure of moral-citizenship education program is still inflexible and concrete causing difficult in updating the fast changing of country and choosing open knowledge of real situation to teaching and learning. The knowledge of laws, philosophy, political economy, science socialism in textbooks is too dry and difficulty to understand. The integration of this subject is inflexible, unsystematic and unnatural (MOET, 2013a).

***Out-of-class education activities and values education***

From the school year of 2006-2007, out-of-class activities were introduced into high school. They include social-political, scientific-technology, cultural, art, entertainment and vocational guidance activities organised out of school time and become the bridge between theory and practices. The curriculum of out-of-class education activities divide into two parts: compulsory and optional ones and one of the most important aim is educating believes of values. The former is designed to 10 historical topics during every month with 2 credits/1 topic.

Table 2. The topics of out-of-class education activities

<b>Month</b>	<b>Topic</b>
<b>September</b>	The youth learns and practises for the country modernization and industrialization
<b>October</b>	The youth with friendship, love and family
<b>November</b>	The youth with studious tradition
<b>December</b>	The youth with the building and protecting the country
<b>January</b>	The youth with national culture protection
<b>February</b>	The youth with the revolution ideal
<b>March</b>	The youth with career
<b>April</b>	The youth with peace, cooperation, friendship
<b>May</b>	The youth with President Ho Chi Minh
<b>June- August</b>	The green summer volunteer of community

Since the out-of-class education activities were taught at the high school, the students prove to be exciting with interesting topics. But we can discern that the time organisation is quite limited (90 minutes of each month) and the content is stick closely with historical events or in other words, they are focus on political matters would rather than train the values for students. Besides, many teachers and schools consider it as unimportant majors and the shortcoming of teaching method is the weakness that we have to deal with.

***Another values education channels in Vietnam***

In Vietnam families, we still tie all the members sticky with family-oriented traditional education meant that children must respect the older and family rules teaching many good values for young generation. And family is one of the most effective mean of teaching values education for kids. However, some educators hold the view that some youngsters are choosing insipid and

irresponsible lives and do not pay any attention to their families and societies (The University of Police, 2014). In family, both parents work outside the house, family bonds become less solid. This situation is more obvious in nuclear families as children are sent to school and spend most of their time at school from a very young age. The education of children is put completely in the hands of teachers. The opportunity for family members to get together at family meals and engage in family education has also become rare in modern life. This raises widespread concern that the family structure is in danger of falling apart, and preserving traditional principles and values becomes more and more difficult in the present day (Dung Hue Doan, 2005).

Another effective channel of teaching values is LEVP (Living value education programs of UNICEF) being introduced to Vietnam in 2000 and are carrying out many missions related to this field like holding training courses for teachers and parents to help them teach children and young adults to develop twelve critical social values: cooperation, freedom, happiness, honesty, humility, love, peace, respects, responsibility, simplicity, tolerance and unity. However, this program is considered informal values education form and still has not popular influence on people, especially Youth in Vietnam.

## DISCUSSION

It is a fact that values and values orientation play a momentous role in Vietnam schools and society. That is shown in our education goal and ideal citizens of society with two characters: “Hong” and “Chuyen”. “Hong” means “red mind” and “Chuyen” stands for “expertise”. These are considered a pair of key qualities of social human beings that the socialist educational system aims to produce. ‘Red mind’ symbolises socialist ideology and values. Similarly, ‘talent and virtue’, ‘intellect and morality’ are other common combinations at all times associated with qualities of scholars, intellectuals and public administrators (Dung, 2005). Nevertheless the absence of values education subject or values teaching is combination with others subjects in high school make the career of training values for youth more difficult and unobvious. One of the most important play of citizenship education and out-of-class education is values and values educating, but the almost of time and content concentrated on political and philosophy theory lead to the boringness, ignorance and belittlement of both teaching and studying people.

On the way of modernization and integration, Vietnam have been dealing with many new social problems like corrupted governance, drug addiction, school violence, juvenile offenders and so forth. A recent investigation of Assoc. Dr. Pham Hong Tung indicated that covering the period of 5 years since 2005, there was a remarkable increase on pessimistic situation of Vietnam Youth. (Mien Thao, 2011). He held the opinion that there are four negative attitudes of some Vietnam youngsters:

- Self-indulgent, violent, being a law unto themselves.
- Egoistic, insensitive, irresponsible, unenthusiastic
- Insipid, imitating “modern” movement
- Learning anything without choosing

Obviously, all above issues, to some certain extent, relate closely to values orientation and values education. It is time for us to build a separated values syllabus for high school students as well as other members of Vietnam society that can unity from the goal, aims, curriculum, textbooks, teaching method, means of organization values education to students, teachers and parents.

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