

## **Teacher Education in Values Education in Kenya: Insights from Socrates and Dewey**

Johnstone B. Musungu (Corresponding author)

Department of Educational Foundations, Moi University, PO Box 3900 – 30100, Eldoret, Kenya.

Email: johnstonemusungu@yahoo.com

Kefa L. Simwa (PhD)

Department of Educational Foundations, Moi University, PO Box 3900 – 30100, Eldoret, Kenya.

John K. Chang'ach (Prof)

Department of Educational Foundations, Moi University, PO Box 3900 – 30100, Eldoret, Kenya.

**Abstract:** *Various policy documents indicate that the Government of Kenya's official position is that pedagogy of values education does not differ fundamentally from that of other subjects. This paper interrogates the assumption through the lens of Socrates' deliberations on virtue and its aspects, values, as well as Dewey's concept of appreciation. The paper submits that teacher education in values education differs significantly from that of other subjects. Close reference is made to the secondary school Life Skills Education (LSE) course because it is currently a value-based programme in the country. The inquiry outlines key competencies prospective teachers of values education ought to acquire in order to effectively implement the course. They should acquire both first-order and second-order subject matter proficiency, as well as competence in values education pedagogy. Besides acquisition of these competencies, they should display appropriate personal and professional dispositions. Individuals who have been prepared to teach other subjects lack these competencies and dispositions that are prerequisite for effective practice of values education. The deliberations in the paper should inform teacher education reforms anticipated by the Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development.*

**Keywords:** *values education, subject matter proficiency, pedagogical competence, personal and professional disposition*

### **1.0 Introduction**

Values Education (VE) is the process of becoming a virtuous person by acquiring and appreciating fundamental human values as well as developing a disposition to not only distinguish what is good from the bad, right from wrong but also abide by the judgement for the well-being of the self and others. Since independence in 1963, the Kenyan government has sought to mainstream value-based education in the school curriculum through various policy documents as part of the response to problems such as corruption, insensitive alcohol, drug and substance consumption, examination malpractice and general indiscipline among students that

seem to have hit alarming proportions in the country (Transparency International, 2014; WHO, 2014; NACADA, 2012; Matiangi, 2016). This situation in the country is attributed to non-adherence to 'our national values and ethics' (Kenyatta, 2015) and 'moral decay in today's society' (Kaimenyi, 2014).

Various policy documents such as The Kenya Education Commission report, 1964 – 1965; Report of the National Committee on Educational Objectives and Policies (NCEOP), 1976; and The Task Force on Re-Alignment of the Education Sector to the Constitution of Kenya 2010, 2012 provide legal framework for values education in the country. They identify fostering values in learners as a goal of education and training in the country. On the basis of this goal, the education ministry through its agencies such as Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development - KICD (formerly Kenya Institute of Education - KIE) has severally introduced value-based subjects in the school curriculum. The notable ones are Social Education and Ethics (SEE) introduced at secondary level in 1986 (and phased out in 2002), and Life Skills Education (LSE) introduced at basic education level in 2008. Earlier, the government assumed that value-based education could be effectively practised mainly through religious education (Republic of Kenya, 1976). Recently, there have been calls to introduce even more value-based studies in education and training in the country. For instance, as part of the response to the conundrum that is corruption in the country, the president of Kenya in an address to the nation on 23<sup>rd</sup> November, 2015, directed the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST) to mainstream ethics and integrity 'awareness' in the curriculum with a view to ensuring that it is 'taught at every level of our education system' (Kenyatta, 2015). Accordingly, KICD has identified values as one of the pillars of the proposed basic education curriculum in the 2:6:3:3:3 education structure (KICD, 2017) currently a pilot scheme in the country.

Apparently, the government is keen on according VE a place of prominence across the curriculum. But it is silent, both in policy and deed, on the issue of teacher education in values education. Policy documents which mention value-based education indicate that the programme can be implemented by teachers prepared to teach other subjects such as religious education (Republic of Kenya, 1976; Mbae, 1990). A recent draft framework for teacher education in the country identifies the ability to foster values in learners as one of the competencies teachers should have (KICD, 2016). However, the framework falls short of prescribing how teachers can acquire this kind of competence. The underlying assumption is that there is no fundamental difference between the pedagogy of VE and that of other school subjects. The paper challenges this assumption by outlining the dispositions and competencies that a values education teacher ought to have. The deliberations in the paper are informed by Socrates' insights as brought out in the *Protagoras* and *Meno* as well as Dewey's concept of appreciation. Stephenson, King, Burman, & Cooper (1998) support the Socratic VE model the inquiry has adopted. They contend that Socrates seem to be an acceptable starting point for considering a theoretical perspective on values. This implies that Socrates' ideas have a bearing on teacher education in VE as it will become apparent in the sequel.

## 2.0 Preparation of Teachers of Values Education

### 2.1 Introduction

Like formal school education, formal teacher education was introduced in Kenya by the European missionaries (Kafu, 2011). At that time, values education was regarded as an aspect of religious education. This remained the case more than a decade after independence in 1963. The NCEOP decried the infusion of value-based education into religious education categorically stating that ‘the teaching of religion and social ethics should not continue to be mixed up’ (Republic of Kenya, 1976: 7). Following the committee’s recommendation, SEE was introduced in the secondary school curriculum in 1986. It was later replaced by Life skills education as an alternative value-based subject in the primary and secondary tiers of education. Interestingly, the NCEOP did not make any recommendation regarding teacher education in ethics. Hitherto, the assumption was that an individual prepared to teach religion could effectively handle a value-based subject (social ethics). The report stated: ‘It may, however, continue to be true that the teachers of religion are among the most competent and credible to implement social ethics course (Republic of Kenya, 1976: 7). Mbae (1990) confirms that the use of religious education teachers to teach value-based subjects is the official position of the Kenya government. What is the net effect of this position? A recent study on the status of values education in the country indicates that teachers who implement the programmes are ill-prepared to undertake the task (Wamahiu, 2015). The survey corroborates Ryan & Bohlin, (1999) observation that teachers in most education systems are not adequately prepared to take on values education. This is a sorry state of affairs because teacher education is an integral component of education (Kafu, 2011).

Insights from both Socrates and Dewey intimate that teachers of VE ought to be subjected to specialised education. Robb (1998) underlines the same point when he submits that to effectively teach VE, one should be subjected to a specialised teacher education in VE. In consonance, Lovat & Clement (2008) contend that teachers cannot deliver a VE programme without adequate preparation. Consequently, the inquiry proposes two levels of teacher education with regard to values: general and specialised. All individuals undergoing initial teacher education should have a general orientation in the subject matter and pedagogy of VE. Such a course will empower them to help students acquire values that are inherent in their teaching subjects as well as other values included in the subjects and the non-formal curriculum. Students who intend to implement value-based courses should undergo a specialised teacher education in VE as suggested by Robb (1998).

What should a specialised teacher education in VE consist in? We turn to Socrates for guidance. Plato’s dialogue, *Meno*, begins rather abruptly with Meno asking Socrates: ‘Can you tell me, Socrates, whether virtue is acquired by teaching or by practice; or if neither by teaching nor by practice, then whether it comes to man by nature, or in what other way?’ (Plato, 1891a: 898). Socrates tells Meno that it is not logical to respond to the questions before they have an understanding of what virtue itself is. From this we can deduce that what teacher education in values, which according to Socrates are aspects of virtue, ought to be like. Reflecting on the texts at the beginning of *Meno* and Socrates’ discourse on virtue and values, prospective teachers

of VE should undergo rigorous teacher education that lays emphasis on proficiency in the subject matter, pedagogical competence and display of personal and professional ethical dispositions.

## 2.2 Personal and Professional Dispositions

The student teachers should strive to be virtuous persons. Like Socrates, they should practice what they themselves teach. This way, they will have the moral authority to teach their students to become ethical individuals who perform right actions because they are right, not because of external compulsion. Being moral exemplars, it follows with logical necessity that teachers should be themselves ethical. Role modelling is part of Kevin Ryan's six-way approach to value-based education (Ryan, 2002). It is also a component of Nel Noddings' moral education from an ethic of care perspective. The import of this is that there should be no incongruence between teachers' actions and the values they seek to inculcate in learners. The practice of VE is not for amorous individuals.

The prospective teacher should also develop a positive inner disposition towards VE. Socrates himself spent much of his lifetime attempting to teach Athenians to be virtuous people; for him it was a vocation. Protagoras also loves his work as a sophist. He says that unlike other sophists who do their work disguised as poets, musicians or prophets, he acknowledges himself 'to be a Sophist and instructor of mankind' (Plato, 1891b: 1211). In other words, he regards his work as a calling. Carr (1993) avers that teachers ought to exhibit professional fitness for their roles. Loving what one teaches is also an aspect of Noddings' ethic of care. Having the right disposition towards VE also entails practising what one teaches. This enhances learning effectiveness as well as the teacher's role as an exemplar. If a teacher does not love what he teaches, he may not have the moral authority to arouse learners' enthusiasm for the subject. This disposition also helps to keep impostors who may want to masquerade as teachers of values education at bay. There should be a structured way of identifying individuals who have the right disposition to be prepared to teach VE.

Besides personal moral excellence and passion for VE, student teachers should consistently display a genuine friendly disposition as a personal professional quality as well as for learning effectiveness. Protagoras assures Hippocrates that if he comes to him, '...he will not experience the sort of drudgery with which other Sophists are in the habit of insulting their pupils...' (Plato, 1891b: 1212). In *The Pedagogy of Love*, Freire sees education as an act of love. He argues that it is not possible for someone to effectively teach another person he does not genuinely love. The friendly disposition on the part of the teacher is also explicit in Freire's insistence on dialogical relations in a teaching-learning process where both the teacher and the learner are co-enquirers. They meet around the object of inquiry as subjects (Freire, 1970). The friendly disposition is in accord with the fact that students are the principal efficient cause of the learning that takes place in them. Socrates makes this clear when he says that students light upon virtue of their own accord (Plato, 1891b). As an instrumental cause, the teacher cannot exteriorly cause a student to become virtuous; a friendly disposition helps him to penetrate the depth of the student's being thereby cause him to become a virtuous person. Hence, a teacher education programme in values

should have mechanisms of ensuring that individuals who seek to become teachers of VE develop appropriate personal and professional disposition.

### 2.3 Proficiency in the Subject Matter

The prospective VE teachers should be prepared in the subject matter. We have noted that in *Meno* Socrates insists that questions pertaining to the pedagogy of values should be considered after gaining an understanding of what virtue itself is. Why is preparation of teachers in VE subject-matter important? According to Conant (1963), a teacher's mastery of subject-matter influences the way he teaches it to students. A teacher who is largely ignorant and uninformed is likely to do a lot of disservice to his students. For instance, a teacher who mistakes simulacra for knowledge of values is likely to expend a great deal of energy trying to help students acquire the former. Peters (1977: 151) also underscores the need for prospective teachers to be 'given to a thorough grounding in something to teach.' Socrates' treatment of the subject of virtue in the *Protagoras* and *Meno* suggests that student teachers should acquire knowledge of values at two levels: first-order and second-order knowledge of values. This is implied in his discourse on what virtue and specific values such as prudence and courage are as well as their nature.

**First-order subject matter competence:** The prospective teacher should acquire an understanding of the essentials/substance of virtue and its parts, values. A teacher can effectively guide learners to understand what he himself understands. That is why Socrates takes the trouble to discuss the subject of virtue and values at length in the *Protagoras* and *Meno* as well as in a number of other dialogues. This aspect of subject matter competence is what may be called the teacher's first-order proficiency in the subject. It is akin to what Shulman calls content knowledge (Shulman, 1986).

The subject matter of VE programme is excellence (virtue) of which values are constitutive parts. In consonance with Socrates, students who behave negatively do so because they have defective knowledge of the good and that this knowledge is of two kinds: knowledge of values and knowledge or craft of mensuration (Plato, 1891b). The latter refers to the ability to distinguish between what is good and bad or right and wrong in given situations through critical reflection. Socrates says of those who perform wrong action: '...they err, not only from defect of knowledge in general, but of that particular knowledge which is called measuring' (Plato, 1891b: 1239). Hence, prospective teachers should not only acquire general knowledge of values but also that of measurement. The teacher should have a passionate understanding of both kinds of knowledge as a guard against akratic tendencies in both professional and personal life.

Which values should be taught in a VE teacher education programme? Following Socrates, prospective teacher should have knowledge of values that enhance personal excellence and mutual coexistence. These are values the practice of which enhances the quality of human life by making it meaningful. Such values promote the human essence. They are human values. Since they are human values, they are universal in their appeal. Studies in the discipline of Psychology attest to the universality of some human values (Schwartz, 1994). As such, they should transcend religious, cultural or any other creed.



Among the contemporary scholars who advocate for the teaching of human values is Thomas Lickona. He argues that: Such values affirm our human dignity, promote the good of the individual and the common good, and protect our human rights. They meet the classic ethical tests of reversibility and universality, they define our responsibilities in a democracy and they are recognised by all civilised people and are taught by all enlightened creeds. Not to teach children these core ethical values is a grave moral failure (Lickona, 1991: 9).

Since an inventory of all the human values schools should nurture in learners may be open to debate, for practical purposes the inquiry recommends that prospective teachers of VE should have knowledge of human values that are core to the cultivation of an individual's virtue and the common good. The four fundamental human values identified by the ancient Greeks: prudence, justice, temperance and courage. These values are discussed in Platonic dialogues such as the *Protagoras*, *Meno* and the *Republic*. Other values can be identified through reflection on the individual's as well as societal needs. It should be noted that other values, such as the moral, religious and national values KICD seeks to mainstream in the curriculum, are subsumed in the four cardinal human values.

**Second-order subject matter competence:** Having a general knowledge of values and what Socrates' calls the craft of measurement is not enough for a teacher to acquire proficiency in the subject matter of values.. The student teacher should also gain an understanding of the nature of values. In the *Protagoras*, Socrates deems it necessary to inquire into the nature of values like wisdom, justice, courage and temperance which he regards as parts of virtue (Plato, 1891b). This kind of inquiry entails learning the philosophy of the discipline as suggested by Israel Scheffler. As Scheffler argues, learning the philosophy of a subject enables a prospective teacher to do second-order reflections on the subject (Scheffler, 1971). The Philosophy of Values Education course would help deepen prospective VE teachers' understanding of the subject. The subject matter of the course would spring from the theory and practice of VE and its ultimate aim is to improve both the theory and practice. The critical-analytical reflection is also useful in curriculum development of VE. This kind of reflection cannot be gained by chance but through deliberate and systematic efforts in initial teacher education programmes.

Philosophy of Values Education would also enable teachers to employ the most effective teaching strategies. Socrates himself takes the trouble to interrogate some of these virtues with his interlocutors. The dialogues, the *Protagoras* and *Meno* are about the subject of virtue, its nature and teachability. In *Meno* Socrates tells Meno that before they discuss whether virtue can be taught or not, they must have an understanding of what it is and its nature. The book seems to be a continuation of the *Protagoras* where Socrates discusses the subject with Protagoras, the sophist. By discoursing at length on the meaning and nature of virtue in both dialogues, Socrates underscores the need to have a thorough understanding of the nature of the subject matter by both the teacher and the student. The underlying assumption is that one cannot teach what one does not understand, for the nature of the subject matter presupposes the pedagogical techniques of imparting it. Dewey corroborates this observation when he observes that the subject matter and method are not separate (Dewey, 2001).

In the light of these deliberations, the paper submits that teacher education programmes in Kenya should not focus on only first-order subject matter competence (and pedagogical knowledge which is dispositional in nature). A good mastery of subject matter consists in having proficiency in both first-order and second-order knowledge of the subject. An in-depth understanding of the subject, as we have already noted, enhances the teacher's pedagogical knowledge.

## 2.4 Pedagogical Competence

Having acquired first and second-order competence in values, the prospective teacher needs a thorough grounding in the pedagogy of VE. Winch and Gengell (2004) construe a teacher's pedagogy to mean the method or methods the teacher employ in order to facilitate learning. This implies that the teacher should employ a pedagogical strategy or a combination of strategies that are most likely to result in learning. However, this is rendered difficult by the nature of the relationship between teaching and learning which is complex rather than linear. Determining teaching strategies that are pedagogically effective for VE, as can be deduced from Socrates' insights, is even much more difficult.

In both the *Protagoras* and *Meno*, Socrates raises doubts about the teachability of values. He asserts that values cannot be taught straightforwardly. For instance, when Protagoras assures Hippocrates that if he comes under his tutelage he would become virtuous, Socrates interjects that he doubts '...whether his art is capable of being taught...' (Plato, 1891b: 1213). Socrates builds up his argument by citing examples of eminent political figures in Athens such as Pericles who could not pass their political virtue to their own children and those under their guard. For instance, two of Pericles' sons, Paralus and Xanthippus, as well as Alcibiades and Cleinias to whom Pericles was guardian, are among those who come to see Protagoras in the hope that he teaches them excellence. Socrates also notes that even great teachers who claim to teach virtue are seldom successful. He gives the example of Pericles who once put Cleinias under the tutelage of Ariphron, but within half a year, he sent him back, 'not knowing what to do with him' (Plato, 1891b: 1213).

So if Socrates thinks that virtue, of which values are aspects, cannot be taught in a direct manner, what is his advice to young men like Hippocrates who yearn for it? The study infers that the solution lies in Socrates' avowal that such young men can 'light upon virtue of their own accord' (Plato, 1891b: 1213). The phrase 'own accord' in this context approximates to the principle of causality in Aristotelian-Thomistic tradition. Socrates implies that the student is the principal efficient cause of their own virtue. His preference for self-knowledge probably as a result of the Delphic Oracle's injunction that man should know himself lends further credence to this inference. Dewey reinforces this point when he says that schools cannot externally impose 'discipline' on students. He uses the word 'discipline' in quotation marks to underline the point that what schools attempt to impose is not and cannot be genuine discipline at all (Dewey, 2001).

However, this does not mean that there is no VE pedagogy we can acquaint prospective teachers with. Socrates himself doubted the teachability of virtue but in the *Apology* he tells Athenians

that he had spent most of his lifetime teaching them to be virtuous people and not without some success. The inquiry infers that the point Socrates belabours to make is that virtue cannot be easily taught.

The implication of this is that pedagogy of values has to be somewhat different from that of other subjects. (This is in contradistinction to the Kenyan government's position that teachers of subjects like CRE can teach VE). This becomes clear when we reflect on two questions posed by Paul Hirst: What then are we after in teaching a subject? What does learning it involve?' (Hirst, 2010: 90). The inquiry reckons that the object of education in values is intrinsic not extrinsic to the student, which is in consonance with the observation that the student is the principal efficient cause of his own becoming virtuous. What is meant by a virtuous individual the actualisation of whom should be the goal of VE in the country? A virtuous individual is one envisaged by Socrates in his discourse on *akrasia* and knowledge. Such a person has general knowledge of values and that of measurement (prudence or critical rationality) and the disposition to perform enkratic actions. In other words, a virtuous person is one whose character conflates the three elements of knowing, loving and doing what is good or right. This is in consonance with Curren's description of virtuous people:

*A virtuous state of character is an integrated package of perceptual, motivational, cognitive and affective attributes. People of good character generally notice what is ethically significant in situations, they generally experience appropriate emotions and desires in response to what they perceive (e.g. compassion and a desire to give comfort when they encounter suffering), they generally know instinctively or think through accurately what a situation calls for, they act appropriately, and they feel good about acting appropriately (Curren, 2017: 13).*

In this regard, the inquiry submits that pedagogy of values should be informed by Socrates' concept of knowledge, which as we have noted, conflates cognitive and affective elements of the human personality. This is explicit in his conception of knowledge as:

*...a noble and commanding thing, which cannot be overcome, and will not allow a man, if he only knows the difference of good and evil, to do anything which is contrary to knowledge, but that wisdom will have strength to help him? (Plato, 1891b: 1235).*

Dewey's concept of appreciation can be used to operationalize Socrates' concept of knowledge in an educational setting. Appreciation requires a student to 'really take in' what he experiences thereby become the principal efficient cause of his own becoming virtuous. In other words, the teacher who in this case is the instrumental cause should be acquainted with pedagogical strategies that seek to cause a student to become virtuous, as Socrates would have put it, 'of their own accord' (Plato, 1891b: 1213). Only then can students acquire knowledge, as opposed to simulacra of values which, according to Socrates, is responsible for akratic actions.

What does the inquiry mean by pedagogical strategies that can enable a student to appreciate values? The answer lies in Dewey's explanation of the meaning of appreciation in the context of



direct and indirect experience as ‘coming home to one’ or ‘really taking it in’ (Dewey, 2001: 240). The study interprets what Dewey means by the two phrases in the light of his organismic view of a person which is suspicious of psychological theories that divide a person into faculties such as cognitive, moral, social, and emotional. Dewey thinks that the distinction among them is not that sharp. His organismic view of a person approximates to Socrates’ concept of knowledge which encompasses not only cognitive but also moral, social and emotional elements.

In recent times studies in the field of neurobiological sciences have confirmed the organismic conception of the human personality. For instance, Immordino-Yang and Damasio (2007) carried out studies on cognition-affect-sociality nexus and found that all these aspects of a person’s personality, which are thought to be separate, work jointly. For instance, emotions are involved in all cognitive processes and jointly they impel a person to perform actions or exhibit behaviour, moral behaviour included. This means that a human being functions as a whole rather than as a purely rational, moral, social or emotional being. This lends credence to the pedagogical imperative that there should be no separation of the cognitive, affective and behavioural elements of VE implicit in both Socrates and Dewey.

In the light of these observations, what Dewey means by appreciation is that the entire person, not just his intellect which is a part of him that is not detached from other parts, accepts what he experiences. This is in accord with Paulo Freire’s warning that ‘We must dare so as never to dichotomize cognition and emotion’ (Freire, 1998: 3). The same point has been stressed by Lovat, Dally, Clement and Toomey (2011). Reflecting on neurobiological studies, they submit that we should construct pedagogy for the whole person, not just the cognitive person. In other words, pedagogical approaches that are informed by Dewey’s concept of appreciation are those that captivate a student’s whole being. Wringe (2006) alludes to this when he argues that to ignore the cognitive and affective elements is not moral education but socialisation into conformity.

Other than helping learners acquire knowledge rather simulacra of values, pedagogical strategies that are premised on Socratic concept of *akrasia* and Dewey’s concept of appreciation also help to develop a disposition to do the good both of which are necessary for the cultivation of virtue. However, the study employs the term ‘disposition’ in two senses: (i) having the ability to distinguish between good and bad, right and wrong and (ii) the psychological state of wanting or desiring to act in accordance with the judgement arrived at in (i) in varied existential situations. A disposition in the first sense is what Socrates calls the craft of measurement which, he argues, is what most people lack. The inquiry infers that this approximates to Dewey’s secondary experience which consists in reflection on primary experience (Dewey, 1929). It is a high order human ability. For Socrates, disposition in the second psychological sense is an aspect of knowledge which has not only cognitive but also affective bases; it has the power to motivate a person which greatly enhances the translation of values into actions. In Dewey, this is taken care of by the concept of appreciation, which like Socratic knowledge is both cognitive and affective in character. Hence, both appreciation and critical thinking that are explicit in the Socratic Method can greatly enhance the development of this disposition.

For the sake of brevity, this section has not discussed specific VE pedagogical strategies. Nevertheless, the insights herein can be used to assess the adequacy of VE teaching methods such as values clarification, Kohlberg's moral development approach and Nodding's caring approach to moral education. This way, the student teacher will be able to know how to judiciously employ specific teaching methods for learning effectiveness. This should be part of teacher education programme in VE. The section has also not discussed what Shulman (1986) calls general pedagogical knowledge – such as general principles of classroom management and organisation. Such knowledge cuts across the school subjects; student teachers can acquire it from their study of general teaching methods courses.

### 3.0 Conclusion

The Kenya government's initiatives to mainstream value-based education in the formal school curricula through various policy documents may be laudable. However, its assumption that values education has no special pedagogy is mistaken. It is this position that is partly to blame for the sorry state of value-based education through subjects like LSE in the country. The high incidence of societal ills such as corruption and general indiscipline among learners in schools attest to this observation. This situation needs to be changed. Currently, the country is in the process of reforming teacher education. The paper proffers a blueprint for the anticipated reforms especially regarding the preparation of VE teachers in the country. Other than general competencies all teachers should acquire, a teacher education programme in VE should seek to equip prospective teachers with competencies and dispositions that are prerequisite for effective implementation of value-based education courses in schools. These include first and second-order proficiency in fundamental human values; pedagogical competence in VE and display of appropriate personal and professional dispositions including passion for the subject. The dispositions and competencies that are prerequisite for the effective practice of VE are such that individuals prepared to implement other education courses cannot afford. Hence, the deliberations in the paper should inform the teacher education reforms anticipated by KICD.

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