

2014

Using Assessment Tasks to Develop a Greater Sense of Values Literacy in Pre-Service Teachers

Beverly J. Christian

Avondale College of Higher Education, bev.christian@avondale.edu.au

Follow this and additional works at: https://research.avondale.edu.au/edu_papers



Part of the [Educational Assessment, Evaluation, and Research Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Christian, B. (2014). Using assessment tasks to develop a greater sense of values literacy in pre-service teachers. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education*, 39(2), 33-44.

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Faculty of Education at ResearchOnline@Avondale. It has been accepted for inclusion in Education Papers and Journal Articles by an authorized administrator of ResearchOnline@Avondale. For more information, please contact alicia.starr@avondale.edu.au.

Using Assessment Tasks to Develop a Greater Sense of Values Literacy in Pre-service Teachers

Beverly Christian
Avondale College of Higher Education

Abstract: Although much emphasis is given to teaching values in schools, there appears to be less evidence that teacher education courses are explicitly preparing pre-service teachers for this responsibility. In this study, the Values for Australian Schools were integrated into two assessment tasks in the second year of a Bachelor of Education (Primary) Degree. Pre-service teachers interacted with the concept of values literacy through reflective readings and planning a unit of work. Results of the pre- and post-surveys and assessment tasks indicated that the pre-service teachers became more values-literate through engaging in the assessment tasks. Results also revealed a shift in their perceptions of the role that teachers play in developing the values literacy of students.

Study, Aims and Relevance

This case study in one Bachelor of Education (BEd) course addressed one facet of moral education in a tertiary setting; the teaching of values literacy. The renewed interest in moral education, and calls for education courses to include ethics and/or values education in their programs prompted this study. The study aimed to investigate the impact of integrating the nine values for Australian schooling into existing assessment tasks in a BEd (Primary) degree, and the effect this had on the values literacy and attitudes of the pre-service teachers in regards to their perceptions of themselves as values educators. The following question informed this research.

What impact does inclusion of a values component in assessment tasks have on the knowledge and perceptions of pre-service teachers regarding values education?

Australian Context of Values Education

Ethics and values education are topics that have found a permanent place within the global education scene. A variety of programs, designed to encourage ethical thinking, promote positive values and build a morally sound foundation in students are being adopted by schools worldwide. Australia officially became a part of this global trend in education in 2003 with a Values Education pilot study. Consequently, the Values for Australian Schooling kit was distributed to all Australian schools in Term 2, 2006. Nine values that undergird Australia's democratic society were adopted. These values are: Care & Compassion, Doing Your Best, Fair Go, Freedom, Honesty and Trustworthiness, Integrity, Respect, Responsibility, and Understanding Tolerance and Inclusion, (Australian Government, 2005).

While these values received a mixed response (Webster, 2010), they were used as a neutral starting point for this investigation due to their wide acceptance in Australian schools, and pre-service teachers were encouraged to use them positively in their assessment task.

In 2011, with the introduction of the Australian Curriculum, seven general capabilities were included, three of which relate to moral/ethical/values education. These are

1. Personal and social competence;
2. Ethical behaviour; and
3. Intercultural understanding (Australian curriculum, assessment and reporting authority, 2011).

Also in 2011, the Australian Institute for Teaching and School leadership published its National Professional Standards for Teachers (AITSL, 2011). Within Standard Seven, Focus area 7.1 relates to meeting professional ethics and responsibilities. The expectations for teachers range from “understand and apply the key principles described in codes of ethics” at the ‘graduate’ level to “maintain high ethical standards” and “model exemplary ethical behaviour” at the ‘highly accomplished’ and ‘lead’ levels (p.19).

The developments described here all point to a heightened awareness and expectation of moral/ethical behaviour in the learning and teaching domain. In response to these developments, an expanding number of schools have involved themselves in action to intentionally address the teaching of moral behaviour. This has been concerned mainly with values education programs, although the ethics debate of the last three years has seen the idea of an ethics curriculum gaining traction.

While much time and effort has been devoted to moral education through values programs in schools, there is a mounting body of evidence to support the notion that values education is most effective when those who teach are aware of the complex nature of values, and their role in modelling positive values. This raises the question of how pre-service teachers view values education? What do they perceive to be their role as future teachers and how can they be prepared to meet the requirements of both curriculum and society?

Despite the interest in ethics/values programs, and increasing discussion addressing the role that ethics and values should hold in teacher education courses (Boon, 2011, Bullough, 2011), there is to this point in time, scant evidence of published research that evaluates practical approaches to facilitating ethical, moral or values-based learning in teacher education courses (Lovat, Daly, Clement and Toomey, 2011; Mergler & Spooner-Lane, 2012). The perception of some is that for most universities, moral education is the elephant in the room.

The Place of Values and Valuing in Education

This investigation focuses on values, which with morals and ethics form a very multifarious and sensitive area of education. While the connectivity between values, ethics and moral education is patently obvious, the complexity of their interrelationship and the differences between them are more challenging to define. For the purpose of this investigation, three definitions have been adopted. Values can be described as the mortar that holds the bricks of society together, the expressions of behaviour that a given society or culture esteems. Ethics are standards of behaviour which are internally and often professionally defined while morals tend to be externally imposed and used to judge an individual’s behaviour in terms of what is perceived as right and wrong. In reality, the definitions are more complex, but whatever definitions one accepts; values, ethics and morals all provide behavioural boundaries or standards for society.

Because the nature of moral education is challenging, there is a possibility that it may be reduced just to the teaching of core values. There is further risk that values may be integrated into the content of the curriculum rather than the process of valuing developed. As Fisher (2000) points out, children will all face moral conflicts and they need skills to help

them negotiate ethical issues. Although there are varying opinions as to what moral education should look like in schools, there is consensus that supports the inclusion of values and/or ethics into the school curriculum.

Teachers as Moral Guides

Not only is moral education on the agenda, but teachers are once more coming under scrutiny as models for ethical behaviour. The idea of the teacher as a moral guide is not new. Representing eastern cultures, Huang (2011, p.149) posits that Confucius aimed to teach his students to be “virtuous and authentic human beings.” In the west, Aesop and Aristotle provide just two examples of teachers who perceived their role to extend beyond knowledge to moral behaviour. The word guide rather than educator in relation to moral education is an interesting one. It suggests an undertaken journey which enables the teacher; not to lead students on exactly the same journey, but to empathise with them as they make their own choices as to how they shall live.

In the 21st Century, however, the nature of teaching has increasingly become a political issue. Bates and Townsend (2010, p. 727) summarise the main goals of bodies governing education as “raising student achievement across the board” and making quality education accessible to all. What Bates and Townsend overlook, in this summary, is the growing body of evidence (Forster, 2012; , 2010; Carr, 2011; Bullough, 2011; Claxton, 2008; Tomlinson & Little, 2000) that supports the idea that teaching should extend beyond meeting prescribed standards of achievement. Claxton (2008), although diverging somewhat from the traditional view of values education, places high importance on helping students develop skills that will allow them to become informed, responsible and compassionate citizens, while Gardner (2008) builds a case for professional responsibility in a number of areas, including citizenship and values education. The call for values-based education is gaining strong support from a number of areas.

What are the expectations placed on this paragon of virtue; the teacher? Carr (2011, p.172) calls for teachers “who are capable not just of principled preferences but of principled commitments.” This stance is supported by Mahoney (2009) who offers three reasons why teaching is a moral enterprise. Firstly, education is an activity that strives to involve individuals in thinking and acting in ways that are acceptable to society. Secondly, moral constraints operate over how education is transmitted (e.g. Even if electric shocks produced greater speed and accuracy in knowledge of number facts, it is highly unlikely that this method would ever be endorsed for ethical reasons). Thirdly, schools, to a certain extent, are held responsible for the moral behaviour of their students. Each of these reasons calls for teachers who themselves think and behave in a morally acceptable manner. Tomlinson and Little (2000, p.148) go so far as to say that “the values that teachers display in teaching and in managing pupils, other staff and resources are part of the values curriculum of schools.” Carr (2011) builds this case further, citing courage, patience, wisdom, honesty, integrity and justice as values that are required for effectively relating to students in a learning environment. He further posits that good professional practice involves accountability to display moral values regardless of the situation.

The changing face of learning in the 21st Century also places extra demands on teachers to be moral agents. Although productive pedagogies still form the basis of good teaching, increasing access to new technologies brings new responsibilities for teachers. “Because teachers will stand as gatekeepers to increasingly powerful forms of knowledge and to the powers of discrimination required to use them wisely and for the good of others, many foresee an increasing emphasis on ethics in the teacher’s role”(2000. p.127). Social media

networks are one example of the way technology has challenged how individuals relate to one another, resulting in ethical issues previously not encountered in education.

Bullough (2011) reviewed twenty-two articles dealing with ethical and moral matters in education and his survey concluded that there is wide acceptance of the idea that moral action is embedded in teaching and teachers are therefore implicated in the transmission of values. Like it or not, teachers are increasingly being held responsible for both behaving morally and facilitating robust engagement in activities that develop sound ethical reasoning.

Values and Teacher Education

With the growing emphasis on teachers as moral guides, one would expect to find an increased emphasis on this aspect of pedagogy in teacher education courses. The evidence, however, suggests that on the whole, teacher education has not embraced “values pedagogy” (Lovat, Daly, Clement & Toomey, 2011) although recent literature indicates that this component of teacher education programs is increasingly coming under scrutiny (Boon, 2011; Campbell, 2008; Mergler, 2008; Lovat et al., 2011). Totterdell (2000) acknowledges that the structure of teacher education courses is problematic and emphasises that the introduction of moral issues has the potential to create moralising environments. Despite this perceived risk, he stands in support of Forster (2012), Carr (2011) and Mahoney (2009) in claiming that teaching as a profession needs a common ethical stance, rather than just a professional structure based on national standards. In order to achieve this he calls for ethical principles and values to be embedded into course design, and then takes the argument one step further, and argues for the inclusion of “pedagogical strategies that will facilitate the curricular integration of ethics and so encourage commitment to pertinent expressions of the profession’s ideals” (Totterdell, 2000, p.137). Those writing on the topic indicate a need to encourage pre-service teachers to embrace authentic and valid strategies for teaching values literacy throughout the curriculum.

Concurring with Totterdell (2002), Sanger & Osguthorpe (2011) argue that allowing pre-service teachers to critically examine their own teacher beliefs is essential in preparing them to be educators. This examination of beliefs is crucial for both clarification and internalisation and is emerging as an important step in the process of preparing pre-service teachers. This places responsibility on universities for as Tomlinson and Little (2002, p. 156) express it, “Those teachers who seek to educate teachers must make explicit the values and encourage adherence to the principles both in precept and by example”. The concept of making values and ethics explicit in teacher education is also supported by Mergler (2008) who calls for the embedding of values and morals in education courses.

Sanger and Osguthorpe (2011) introduce a cautionary note to the discussion of a moral agenda in teacher education courses. They raise the dangers of pre-service teachers aligning their beliefs merely to be politically correct. Therefore, they too encourage practice that focuses on the ability of pre-service teachers to think, plan and teach effectively and in a morally responsible manner.

Values Education: A Closer Examination

Values education is just one facet of the moral agenda. Educators agree that values education must do more than impart knowledge if it is to have any lasting impact on students. Lovat, Toomey, Clement, Crotty and Nielsen (2009) have identified three components of the internalisation process. The first of these is becoming “values literate” or having “head

knowledge.” The second is improving social awareness or having “heart knowledge” and the final component relates to facilitating experiences or providing “hand knowledge.” This concept of educating for head, heart and hands is also evident in other values related literature. Gleeson (1991) also speaks of the head, heart and hands; Paul (1988) proposes knowledge, insights and skills as a three part process; and Hill (1991) parallels this with the terms cognitive, affective and volitional. While this use of parallel terms demonstrates some agreement as to the nature of values education, it should be recognised that this is a somewhat arbitrary division of what is a complex process. It does; however, provide a pragmatic platform for this investigation.

In an attempt to provide experiential learning that allows students to engage the “hands” aspect of values education, some universities have introduced service learning components to their courses (Hinze & Fitzsimmons, 2013; Chambers & Lavery, 2012; Carrington, 2011). This demonstrates a willingness to engage with the issue of living out one’s values. What are less evident are practical approaches to developing values literacy and explicit opportunities for discussion and reflection on the role of teachers in this sensitive yet important area.

In summary, the literature connecting values education to teacher education courses suggests four possible actions; that pre-service teachers:

1. be given ample opportunity to examine their own values in an open and non-judgemental environment;
2. be taught appropriate strategies for helping students to examine their own values and make choices how they will live;
3. be encouraged to explore possibilities for integrating values literacy, social awareness and experiential learning across the curriculum; and
4. be prepared for society’s perception that teachers are role models.

Literature indicates a widespread support for some form of values education that acknowledges the role of teachers. It also highlights the need to engage pre-service teachers in substantive communication about ethics/values/moral education issues and provide them with opportunities to enact their values in tangible ways. Despite increasing discourse in this area, there is limited evidence of practical strategies to include ethics/values/moral education in teacher education programs.

Method

Data was collected through a voluntary and anonymous in-class survey (S1) at the commencement of the semester to determine the respondents’ knowledge and perceptions about values education. A post-survey (S2) was administered after 12 weeks to determine any changes in knowledge and perception. The post-survey also included additional open-ended questions, such as “What do you believe is the most important thing you could do to encourage the development of positive values in your students lives?” to allow further insights into the perceptions of the respondents. Although conducted during timetabled classes, students were free to hand in a blank survey if they chose not to participate. Data was also gathered from written reflections on mandatory readings and from the unit plan assessment task. This data was analysed after grades were determined.

Site and Respondents

The participants in this action research were sixty-eight second year primary pre-service teachers enrolled in a Bachelor of Education degree program at one tertiary institution in Australia. All students were enrolled in a second year professional development subject. For this project, the researcher took into consideration time constraints, course stage of respondents and the nature of the subject being taught. Therefore the focus of this study was values education, in particular the Values for Australian Schools, as the assessment tasks were appropriate for the integration of valuing strategies. Because this research was conducted as part of regular timetabled classes, a mixed methodology that allowed triangulation was employed. In line with the literature findings, the assessment tasks were structured to develop “values literacy” and enhance social awareness of values education. The unit writing assessment task also allowed pre-service teachers to apply their knowledge in a practical activity.

Description of Assessment Tasks Readings and Reflective Reports

Two readings on values education were included early in the semester to provide a contextual background to the unit writing task. The first, by Rowan (2007), set the scene for teaching the Values for Australian Schools in an Australian context. The second article by Boyatt (1998) related to the importance of values education in the culture of the school. Pre-service teachers were required to write a short reflective response to both articles.

Unit Writing Assessment Task

One of the outcomes for this subject was for students to successfully write a unit of work, with the assessment task requiring a nine week integrated unit. For this research project, pre-service teachers were asked to focus on the Values for Australian schools matched to the lives of significant Australians for the content of the learning sequence. This aspect of the assessment task was intentionally crafted to ensure that the assessment was also an authentic learning experience, matched to the curriculum. The task itself could not be completed without some knowledge and understanding of the Values for Australian Schools. The assessment also involved knowledge, understanding, synthesis, analysis and application. Workshops were conducted to assist pre-service teachers in writing a coherent sequence of lessons. In addition to standard pedagogical practices, some valuing strategies were introduced to the class. Valuing strategies are student-centred activities that encourage students to define, clarify and prioritise their values. The first set of strategies was drawn from the writing of Purpel and Ryan (1976) and included: choosing freely, choosing from alternatives, choosing thoughtfully and reflectively, prizing and cherishing, affirming, acting upon choices and repeating. The second set of strategies introduced came from Larsen and Larsen (1992) and included voting, ranking, continuum, either/or, listening, dilemma and interviewing. The pre-service teachers were encouraged to include these strategies explicitly in the learning sequences of their unit plan.

Results and discussion

Survey

A mostly qualitative survey was designed to determine the perceptions of the pre-service teachers at the commencement (S1) and end (S2) of the semester. S2 contained a further three open ended questions. The idea of using statistical reliability coefficients for the small portion of the survey that was quantitative was not considered before the surveys were administered. The resultant Cronbach Alpha coefficients are therefore very small (S1=0.108; S2=0.209) due to the nature of the research instrument and the small number of items that could be used.

Survey 1 (S1) revealed that all but two of the pre-service teachers were aware of the nine values for Australian schools although one person commented, “*only through lectures last semester.*” The range of responses to writing down the nine values is evident in Fig. 1. While S1 indicated that only four pre-service teachers out of sixty-eight were able to list all nine core values, most could list some. The results from S2 indicate an increased level of knowledge, with thirty-two respondents listing all nine core values. Pre-service teachers had not been asked at any point to memorise the core values so it can be safely assumed that an increased level of ‘values literacy’ regarding these nine values was gained during the assessment process. This was a profoundly satisfying result and affirmed the efficacy of the assessment tasks as learning experiences.

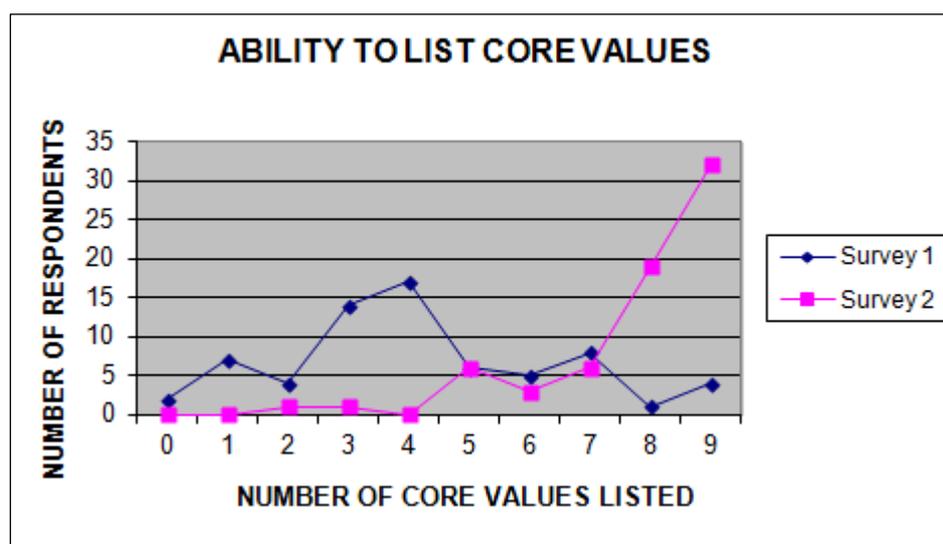


Figure 1: Ability to list Core Values for Australian Schools

One question in S1 asked the students to write their own definition of a value. Almost everyone was successful to some degree at this task. Sample answers included:

“A value is something which a person considers of worth which governs how they approach life in a positive way.”

“A characteristic that is seen as important or as worth having.”

“A value is something that guides and shapes our behaviours.”

“something that you hold close to you that affects the way you act and treat others around you.”

“something that you live by.”

“ ‘value’ is a moral standard that is seen by the community to be of importance within the functioning of our society.”

One hundred per cent of participating respondents in both S1 and S2 believed that “teaching values to children is an important function of the education system.” The variety of strategies suggested for teaching values in the pre-survey and the post-survey results were similar, except for the inclusion of teaching them through units of work. This result was expected, considering one of the assessment tasks was to integrate values in a unit of work.

In response to the question, “Who is primarily responsible for teaching values to children?” there was a slight shift from “parents only” to a “combination of parents and teachers”. While this shift is not statistically significant (>0.0001), it is indicative that during the semester some of the pre-service teachers may have begun to see themselves as an integral part of the values education process, a notion strongly supported by Mahoney (2009) and Carr (2011).

The question “Do you believe teachers can impart values to children, without holding those values themselves?” indicated a strong correlation between S1 and S2. At the end of the semester, the distribution of responses was similar although the difference in ratings was not considered significant with the number of responses in the ‘yes’ and ‘somewhat agree’ categories indicating a measure of ambivalence. This result supports the call for pre-service teachers to be given opportunities to explore their perceptions of values, ethics and moral education (Bullough, 2011).

Using the Wilcoxon signed-rank test of paired non-parametric data, no statistically significant differences ($p < 0.05$) were identified between S1 and S2 on items that related to persons responsible for teaching values, and the place of values education in schools.

Overall, the comparison in responses to the questions in S1 and S2 indicate the following. Pre-service teachers’ knowledge of the nine Values for Australian Schools increased throughout the semester, but the statistical test showing no significant difference indicates that this could have come about by chance factors alone. Pre-service teachers maintained their position on who was responsible for teaching values while there was some evidence that engagement in the assessment task had encouraged pre-service teachers to think about their role. A larger cohort may have produced a clearer picture. This indicates that further exposure to examining beliefs in an open and non-judgemental environment as suggested by Sanger and Osguthorpe (2011) would be beneficial.

The open-ended responses attached to the second survey were designed to elicit rich qualitative data which further explained the pre-service teachers’ perceptions. When asked if they had a better understanding of values education by taking the subject in which the study was based, 93% of pre-service teachers said yes and the remaining 7% somewhat agreed. Pre-service teachers commented on how their understanding had improved. The following themes emerged.

- Awareness of the importance of values education
- How to embed valuing strategies into teaching, inclusive of unit writing
- How to be sensitive to cultural and social differences
- The importance of modelling values

Each of these themes is evident in the literature, to some extent, with the concept of modelling values the strongest (Carr, 2011; Tomlinson & Little, 2000).

The final question asked students to reflect on the single most important thing they felt they could do to encourage the development of positive values in their students’ lives. An overwhelming 93% of respondents gave the same answer: model the values in your own life. This aspect of values education had obviously had a significant impact on the pre-service teachers and demonstrates their understanding of the perception that teachers are moral guides as highlighted in the literature (, 2010; Carr, 2011; Bullough, 2011; Claxton, 2008). It was interesting to note that this response did not entirely correlate with their beliefs on the importance of holding the values they teach. This inconsistency highlights a potential

area of tension in pre-service teachers and could be why the literature speaks strongly in support of reflective examination of one's own values (Totterdell, 2002; Sanger & Osguthorpe, 2011).

The survey results indicated an increase in knowledge about the Values for Australian Schools. While the overall survey results were somewhat inconclusive, the open-ended responses revealed an emerging awareness of values literacy, the complexity and sensitive nature of values education and the role of the teacher in developing values literacy.

Readings and Reflective Reports

Data from the reading reflections and unit writing assessment tasks were used to augment the survey findings and further explore the pre-service teachers' perceptions of themselves as values educators.

Reflective reading reports were analysed using open coding. Identification of key words and phrases yielded two focus areas: awareness of diversity in classrooms requiring sensitivity to values, and the influence of teachers as values educators. Both these concepts were also identified as themes on the open-ended responses of the survey. One typical comment highlighting the awareness that common values may be enacted in different ways stated, *"I never looked at how a value could be seen differently and that was a very big ignorance on my part."* This focus area mirrored ideas inherent in the first reading. A number of pre-service teachers observed that teachers need to be sensitive to the values of the children they teach, as well as teach appropriate values for the school system to which they belong. One pre-service teacher observed of the schools she had attended, *"This article has made me realise that these schools were reflecting what value they believed was most important. I realised that I can look at a school or classroom and know exactly what values are most important to its leader."* This and other related comments indicated that the pre-service teachers had thoughtfully reflected on the second article.

Linked closely to these themes was an emerging sense of personal responsibility, indicated by the frequent use of words such as *teaching, reflecting, demonstrating* and *integrating*. The use of first person in writing these reflections suggested that the students were beginning to clarify their role as teachers. One student wrote, *"I have realised that not only do teachers have a responsibility to mould positive values into our students, but we must also become aware how our own values impact on our interactions with students."* These and similar statements demonstrated an awareness in line with Carr (2011) and Tomlinson & Little (2000).

Although both articles were short, there was clearly enough material to challenge the students. The following comments are indicative of the degree of engagement with the readings. *"I was challenged to become purposeful in my teaching of values. I want to make certain of what I believe in; to be intentional about integrating the values I uphold throughout my life."* and, *"I also will try to incorporate values education in all of my subject matter and ensure that I, personally, try to demonstrate the values and beliefs I hold through my actions."*

In relationship to the literature summary actions, the reflective readings provided the pre-service teachers with the opportunity to examine their beliefs in an open and non-judgemental environment (Totterdell, 2000) as they engaged with the readings, and their written reflections indicated an emerging awareness of their responsibility as role models (Tomlinson & Little, 2000). Overall, the readings achieved the goal of stimulating thought about values education and the role of teachers in relation to it.

Unit writing

The unit writing exercise focused primarily on correct structure and layout using the Values for Australian schools and significant Australians as content material. All students managed to write teachable lessons that included references to, or activities based on the core values. While just over half of the pre-service teachers built very strong valuing activities into their learning sequences, others functioned at a relatively superficial level. As this was their first attempt at both unit writing and integrating valuing activities into lessons, this was not surprising and was a fair reflection of the ability of the class overall. It was also noted that the pre-service teachers tended to use a high proportion of 'discussion' as a teaching strategy in their unit plans, but in comparison few linked their 'discussion' effectively with the valuing strategies introduced in class, although they had been encouraged to explore these strategies as a means to help their students to examine their own values. From this it can be inferred that understanding of the valuing strategies was limited. One interesting observation from the unit plans was that no pre-service teachers in their planning allowed for situations where the values being taught may not be held by some students, even though this point was acknowledged widely in the reading reflections. How to approach the teaching of values sensitively is clearly an area that needs further exploration.

The criterion for deciding if the pre-service teachers understood the concept of values literacy was based on observation whether valuing strategies were explicitly built into the learning sequence or lesson concepts. For some students, the content (significant Australians) used to explain the values became the focus, with the values themselves barely evident. It was recognised that failure to include values explicitly did not necessarily mean that values literacy would be overlooked when teaching the unit, but as it was conjectured that explicitly including the values would raise the likelihood that values would form an integral part of teaching the unit of work. Overall, the results of the unit writing task indicated that pre-service teachers were able to demonstrate a varied degree of success in integrating valuing activities aimed at enhancing values literacy into teaching documents. It was also evident from the work samples that one semester's exposure to valuing strategies was inadequate if pre-service teachers were to become adept at making values explicit across the curriculum.

Conclusion

This focused action research demonstrated that intentionally embedding a values literacy component into existing assessment tasks assisted the pre-service teachers in becoming values-literate. It also increased their sense of personal responsibility to become values educators. Furthermore, it indicated a marked shift in perception towards the belief that teachers have a responsibility as moral guides and educators, and highlighted the complexity of what that might mean. The study results reveal that using assessment tasks as an avenue to expose pre-service teachers to issues in values education is something that deserves further exploration, and could be adapted to a wider spectrum of teacher education subjects. It is worth overtly considering how this activity should link with teaching controversial subject matter in the Social Science or English. It is recognised; however, that this project was limited, both by time and in methodology, and that pre-service teachers would benefit from continued opportunities for development in this area. Areas for further development could include social awareness and experiential learning as this investigation focused only on values literacy. Finally, it is important to concede that this was an intellectual and theoretical exercise, with no guarantee of classroom application.

Although this research has application to a specific course and place, it demonstrates the viability of facilitating changes in knowledge and perceptions regarding values education through authentic and carefully constructed assessment tasks in a tertiary setting. In so doing, it takes a positive step from a philosophical stance towards exploring practical and feasible strategies for the inclusion of values literacy in teacher education programs.

References

- Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority. (2011). General capabilities in the Australian curriculum. Retrieved from <http://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/GeneralCapabilities/General%20capabilities.pdf>
- Australian Government. Department of Education, Science and Training. (2005). Values education forums: Engaging your school community. Carlton, Vic: Curriculum Corporation.
- Australian Institute for Teaching and School leadership. (2011). National professional standards for teachers. Melbourne; Brisbane; Canberra: Australian Government.
- Bates, R. & Townsend, T. (2010). The future of teacher education: Challenges and opportunities. In R. Bates & T. Townsend (eds.). *Handbook of Teacher Education* (pp. 727-734). Dordrecht: Springer.
- Boon, H. J. (2011). Raising the bar: Ethics Education for Quality Teachers. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education*, 36 (7), Article 6. <http://dx.doi.org/10.14221/ajte.2011v36n7.2>
- Boyatt, E. (1998). Leading a character-driven school. *Journal of Adventist Education*, 61(1), 4-9.
- Bullough Jr., R.V. (2001). Ethical and moral matters in teaching and teacher education. *Teaching and Teacher Education*. 27. 21-28. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2010.09.007>
- Campbell, E. (2008). The ethics of teaching as a moral profession. *Curriculum Inquiry* 38(4), 357-385. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-873X.2008.00414.x>
- Carr, D. (2011). Values, virtues and professional development in education and teaching. *International Journal of Educational Research*. 50. 171-176. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.ijer.2011.07.004>
- Carrington, S. (2011). Service-learning within higher education: Rhizomatic interconnections between university and the real world. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education*. 36(6), Article 1. <http://dx.doi.org/10.14221/ajte.2011v36n6.3>
- Chambers, D. J., and Lavery, S. (2012). Service-Learning: A valuable component of pre-service teacher education. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education* 37(4), 128-137. <http://dx.doi.org/10.14221/ajte.2012v37n4.2>
- Claxton, G. (2008). *What's the point of school?: Rediscovering the heart of education*. Oxford, UK: Oneworld.
- Fisher, R. (2000). Philosophy for children: How philosophical inquiry can foster values education in schools. (pp. 50-66). In Gardiner, R., Cairns, J., & Lawton, D. (eds.), *Education for values: Morals, ethics and citizenship in contemporary teaching*. (pp. 50-66) London and Sterling VA: Kogan Page Limited.
- Forster, D.J. (2012). Codes of ethics in Australian education: Towards a national perspective. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education*. 37(9), Article 1. <http://dx.doi.org/10.14221/ajte.2012v37n9.4>

- Gardner, H. (2008). Creativity, wisdom and trusteeship. In A. Craft, H. Gardner, & G. Claxton (eds.), *Creativity, wisdom and trusteeship* (pp. 49-65). Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press. PMID:18078858 PMCID:PMC2254306
- Gleeson, N. (1991). Roots and wings: values and freedom for our young people today. In *Education and the care of youth into the 21st century conference*. Brisbane. (pp. 59-68)
- Hill, B. V. (1991). Values education in Australian schools. Hawthorn, VIC: The Australian Council for Educational Research.
- Hinze, J. and Fitzsimmons, P. (2013). Forms, foci and forces: The need for overseas pre-service teacher professional experiences. *Teach Journal of Christian Education*. 7(2), 42-49.
- Huang, H. (2001). Can virtue be taught and how? Confucius on the paradox of moral education. *Journal of Moral Education*. 40 (2). 41-154.
- Larson, R. & Larson, D. with Gillespie, V.B. (1992). *Project affirmation: Teaching values*. Riverside: LaSierra University Press.
- Lovat, T., Dally, K., Clement, N. & Toomey, R. (2011). Values pedagogy and teacher education: Re-conceiving the foundations. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education*. 36 (7), Article 4. <http://dx.doi.org/10.14221/ajte.2011v36n7.3>
- Lovat, T., Toomey, R., Clement, N., Crotty, R., & Nielsen, T. (2009). Values education, quality teaching and service learning: A troika for effective teaching and teacher education. Terrigal, NSW: David Barlow Publishing. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4020-9962-5>
- Mahony, P. (2009). Should "ought" be taught? *Teaching and Teacher Education* (25), 983-989. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2009.04.006>
- Mergler, A. (2008). Making the implicit explicit: Values and morals in Queensland teacher education. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education*. 33(4), Article 1. <http://dx.doi.org/10.14221/ajte.2008v33n4.1>
- Mergler, A.G. and Spooner-Lane, R. (2012). What pre-service teachers need to know to be effective at values-based education. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education*. 37(8), Article 5. <http://dx.doi.org/10.14221/ajte.2012v37n8.5>
- Paul, R. W. (1988). Ethics without indoctrination. *Educational leadership*, Vol. 45, no.8, 10-19.
- Purpel, D. & Ryan, K. (eds.). (1976). *Moral Education: It comes with the territory*. Berkeley: McCuthan Publishing Co.
- Rowan, L. (2007). An introduction to values. In L. Rowan, J. Gauld, J. Cole-Adams & A. Connolly, *Teaching values*. (pp. 9-13). Newtown: Primary English Teaching Association.
- Sanger, M.N. & Osguthorpe, R.D. (2011). Teacher education, pre-service teacher beliefs, and the moral work of teaching. *Teaching and Teacher Education*. 27. 569-578. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2010.10.011>
- Tomlinson, J. & Little, V. (2000). A code of the ethical principles underlying teaching as a professional activity. In Gardiner, R., Cairns, J., & Lawton, D. (eds.). *Education for values: Morals, ethics and citizenship in contemporary teaching*. (pp. 147-157). London and Sterling VA: Kogan Page Limited., M. (2000). The moralization of teaching: a relational approach as an ethical framework in the professional preparation and formation of teachers. In Gardiner, R., Cairns, J., & Lawton, D. (eds.). *Education for values: Morals, ethics and citizenship in contemporary teaching*. (pp.127-146). London and Sterling VA: Kogan Page Limited.
- Webster, S. (2010) Does the Australian National Framework for Values Education Stifle an Education for World Peace? *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, 42(4), 462-475. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1469-5812.2008.00485.x>