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What Pre-service Teachers Need to Know to be Effective at Values-based Education

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Abstract: Evidence is mounting that values education is providing positive outcomes for students, teachers and schools (Benninga, Berkowitz, Kuehn, & Smith, 2006; DEST, 2008; Hattie, 2003; Lovat, Clement, Dally, & Toomey, 2010). Despite this, Australian pre-service teacher education does not appear to be changing in ways necessary to support skilling teachers to teach with a values focus (Lovat, Dally, Clement, and Toomey, 2011). This article presents findings from a case study that explored current teachers' perceptions of the skills pre-service teachers need to teach values education effectively. Teachers who currently teach with a values focus highlighted that pre-service teacher education degrees need to encourage an ongoing commitment to continual learning, critical reflection and growth in pre-service teachers, along with excellent questioning and listening skills. Further, they argued that pre-service teachers need to be skilled in recognising and responding to student diversity. This article ends by arguing for some changes that need to occur in pre-service teacher education in order for teachers to teach effectively with a values focus, including the need for stronger connections between pre-service and experienced teachers.

Pre-service teacher education programmes aim to prepare graduates to become quality teachers equipped with pedagogical practices that will serve to meet the increasing demands associated with the teaching profession (Bransford, Darling-Hammond, & LePage, 2005). Over the last decade, the focus on developing quality teachers has received increased attention in education (Barber & Mourshed, 2009; Bransford et al., 2005; Hattie, 2004). In Australia, a key objective of the Commonwealth Government has been to raise the quality of teaching in order to increase the effectiveness of schooling and to improve student outcomes. There has been greater interest in using pedagogical teaching practices that enhance intellectual thinking and problem solving as well as foster student belonging and connectedness. There is strong evidence in the literature to suggest that teachers that take a values-based pedagogical approach make a positive difference in students' learning and their lives (Lovat, 2007a). A case study design was employed to investigate experienced teachers' perceptions of the knowledge and skills pre-service teachers need in order to be effective in using a values-based pedagogical approach in the classroom.

Values Education

The 21st century saw the role of the teacher move from one who is all-knowing and unquestionable to one who is continually learning, self-aware and reflective. Further, teachers are now expected to encourage their students to engage in thoughtful reflection, critical thinking and increased self-awareness and responsibility (Crebbin, 2004; Lunenberg, Korthagen, & Swennen, 2007). In Australia, one way in which teaching has been reshaped is through values education. There are different terms used for values education in the literature – moral education, character education, personal and social education, citizenship education, civic education and religious education. In Australia, values education has been defined as any explicit and/or implicit school-based activity to promote student understanding and knowledge of values, and to inculcate the skills and dispositions of students so they can enact particular values as individuals and as members of the wider community. (Zbar, Brown, Bereznicki, & Hooper, 2003, p. 2)

While values education can be implemented in both implicit and explicit ways, the explicit consideration, discussion, and/or debating of values such as respect, inclusion, responsibility and perseverance in the classroom and/or the school community enables teachers and students to explore, and potentially change, their values.

In 2002, the Australian Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA) highlighted the need for schools to teach values education *explicitly*. MCEETYA argued that education must concern itself with building character, and that doing so could increase students' self-esteem, generate in them a positive outlook on life, assist them in making ethical judgements, and enhance their sense of social responsibility (MCEETYA, 2002). To support this, the Australian Government in 2004 generated a National Framework of Values Education and offered grants to schools to engage in the practice of explicit values education.

Teacher and Student Benefits

The Australian Governments Values Education Good Practice Schools Project (VEGPSP) Stage 2 Final Report (DEST, 2008), which examined the findings of 316 schools who had engaged in explicit values education, highlighted that the process of undertaking values education in schools led to positive outcomes for teachers and students. For teachers, values education enabled them to make positive changes in their professional practice, particularly in the way they related to and communicated with students, and resulted in increased teacher confidence and sense of fulfilment in teaching. For students, engaging in values education led to increased ability in self-management, greater capacity for reflection, and improved relationships with other students and with teachers. A growing body of research is demonstrating that teaching focused on developing values and undertaken with respect, warmth and acceptance is resulting in positive educational outcomes for students (Benninga et al., 2006; Brooks & McCarthy, 2001; Ferguson, 1999; Weinberger, 1996).

Values Education and Quality Teaching

The role of the teacher in the classroom has been found to be the single most important factor in student learning (Australian Council of Deans of Education, 2005; Carnegie Corporation, 1994; Hattie, 2003; Lovat, 2007(b); Willms, 2000). The vast majority of teachers strive to teach effectively in order to enhance student learning outcomes, and they draw upon the knowledge and skills acquired throughout their pre-service teacher degree. However, our understanding of what constitutes effective, or quality teaching (Lovat, 2007(b)), has changed over time. The Carnegie Corporation's Task Force on Learning (Carnegie Corporation, 1996) broadened the definition of quality teaching to include practice that focused on students' social, moral, emotional and spiritual development. Further, the task force outlined that quality teaching must engage the whole person in learning, and can only do so through the provision of a stimulating environment and practical experience. This wider definition of quality teaching has been embraced by those supportive of values education as teaching with a values focus is inherently focused on teaching the whole child in active and meaningful ways (Lovat, Clement, Dally, & Toomey, 2010).

Recent research funded by the Department of Education, Science and Training and the Australian Council of Deans of Education has examined the relationship between values education and quality teaching (Lovat & Toomey, 2007). Lovat and Toomey argue that values education and quality teaching create what they term a 'double-helix' relationship, explained as the two factors coalescing to produce desired learning outcomes. Through critiquing the main approaches to values education adopted in Australian schools, Brady (2011) developed a list of eight teacher qualities or values that are needed to implement all approaches. These eight qualities are: challenging egocentricism, demonstrating sensitivity, practising tolerance, observing neutrality, scaffolding learning, encouraging student expression, promoting a supportive context for learning, and sustaining relationship. Brady argues that these eight teacher values are essential for teaching values education.

Values Education and Pre-service Teacher Training

Lovat et al. (2011) argue that, despite the overwhelming evidence that values education is reaping rewards for schools, students and teachers, current teacher education in Australia is not reshaping to reflect this. They argue that a reason for this may be that teacher education in Australia has been founded on theories and research that highlight rationalism and the belief that cognition is separate to emotion and values-based notions. Lovat et al. maintain that teacher education must move away from such outdated understandings of teaching and learning and work to adopt a more holistic view of teaching, learning and students in order to be relevant in the 21st century and allow teachers to gain the skills needed for effective values education.

Similarly, Day (2000) reasons that teacher education must concern itself with developing future teachers in an holistic way, allowing the pre-service teacher to reflect on their whole selves. As professional behaviour appears influenced by core values (Carr, 2004; Lunenberg, Korthagen & Willemse, 2007), pre-service teachers must be encouraged to explore their personal values and how these may or may not align with their professional ones. One way in which this exploration could occur is by creating what Gellel (2010) has termed 'communities of practice', connecting pre-service teachers with practising teachers, students and wider school communities. Gellel argues that the

practicum's currently offered to teachers during their degrees are not enough, and that pre-service teacher education should enable the creation of communities of practice through "short residential periods, social activities and discussion groups" (p.173). Further, pre-service teachers must be allowed space within these communities to reflect, acquire stories and develop concepts that echo the everyday realities of teachers and schools. For these communities to be successful, Gellel stipulates that they must be led by teachers working within the school reality and must have concrete links with schools and practicing teachers.

The Values Education Good Practice Schools Project (VEGPSP) Final Reports (1 & 2) (DEST, 2006; DEST, 2008) also identified professional networks as essential for teachers who wish to engage in values education. The VEGPSP Stage 1 Final Report highlights that

teachers require and respond positively to explicit professional learning in values education. Some of the best professional learning comes from the sharing that teachers, schools and clusters are able to promote. If there is one consistent message from all 26 projects that are the subject of this report, it is the value of teachers sharing experiences, perceptions, issues and ideas about values education and the fact that such sharing is a powerful agent in promoting change in professional practice. (p.3)

As engaging in values education led practicing teachers to work collaboratively to reflect on, and enhance, their teaching practice, it can be assumed that they have insight into what pre-service teachers need to know to engage in effective values education.

The Current Study

The current study, therefore, sought to harness the experience of teachers' currently teaching values education in schools by using their knowledge to inform pre-service teacher education programmes. As these teachers have supervised pre-service teachers themselves, they also have some insight into the ways in which pre-service teacher education programmes prepare pre-service teachers to teach with a values focus. Perhaps most importantly, the fact that these teachers are currently teaching with a values focus in their classroom every day means that they are aware of the skills needed, the challenges that arise, and the benefits that come from teaching with a values focus. As such, they are one very important source of knowledge when considering how to adapt pre-service teaching degrees in order to skill our future teachers in values education. By listening to the stories of current teachers teaching with a values focus, and applying the findings to pre-service teaching degrees, they may be powerful agents for promoting change in pre-service teacher education.

Method

Using a qualitative case study design, the study investigated primary school teachers' perceptions of teaching values education in Australia and the skills pre-service teachers require to implement a values-based pedagogy effectively. Case study is an exploration of a complex phenomenon from multiple perspectives (Simons, 2009). One of the strengths of the case study design is its foundation in real-life situations which results in a rich and holistic account that can often play a vital role in advancing a field's knowledge base (Merriam, 1998; Simons, 2009). While a small number of teachers contributed to the current study, they

were actively engaged in the phenomenon under discussion (values education) and provided front line insight into this area. The richness of qualitative data allows for an intricate exploration of this data to delve into issues and identify themes.

Participants

Seven teachers (6 female; 1 male) with 3 to 28 years of teaching experience were drawn from three local primary schools in the Brisbane Metropolitan area. Teachers employed in a primary school setting teach students from Grades 1 to 7, with children aged between 4 and 13 years of age.

Interview Questions

The researchers developed a range of semi-structured questions focused around teaching values to students and undertaking values education. Particular focus was given to the skills teachers felt pre-service teachers required to undertake values education effectively. Example questions included, 'How important do you think the teachers role is in teaching values to students?', 'What skills must teachers acquire to be able to successfully teach values to students?' and 'If you were to give advice to pre-service teachers about what they need to know in order to be able to teach values to students, what advice would you give them?'

Procedure

The study investigated teachers from schools involved in the Values Education Good Practice Schools Project (VEGPSP) (DEST, 2006). The schools in the VEGPSP project took different approaches to teaching from a values based perspective, however, all schools indicated that they taught students explicitly about values. Ten schools were targeted in the Brisbane metropolitan area, Queensland and three responded that they would like to be involved. School principals were approached by the researchers via email. The principals provided the names and contact details of teachers who had expressed interest in being involved in the study. Interview times were then arranged via email between the teachers and the researchers. Each school underwent one interview as teachers at each school were interviewed together. Each interview took no more than one hour and occurred after school had finished for the day. Each interview was audio recorded and appropriate ethical clearances were obtained from the university.

The three schools that participated taught values education in slightly different ways. One school implemented values education through a weekly philosophy lesson where students engaged in discussions around stories with a philosophical foundation. Another school taught values education through the implementation of a values-focused program with a whole school approach that targeted wellbeing, positive relationships and good citizenship. The final school implemented values education via a whole school sustainability focus that encouraged students to respect the environment and their place within it. All teachers shared a desire to explicitly impart positive values to their students.

Analyses

Interview transcripts were analysed by the key researcher using Krueger's (1998) 'content analysis continuum model', allowing common notions to be grouped together to highlight key themes. Each transcript was systematically analysed to uncover words and concepts that were mentioned within each group and across groups (Krueger, 1998). All interview questions were listed and the answers provided by participants were recorded, tallied and grouped. This allowed for an emergence of the dominant themes within which to organise the data. Each theme was examined alongside the next to delete repetition and ensure all salient aspects of the discussions had been captured. Quotes from teachers were included as illustration examples of each theme extracted (Fine, Weis, Weseen, & Wong, 2000; Simons, 2009). Double coding by another researcher took place for all data analysis to ensure the credibility of the findings.

Findings

The following outlines the themes identified from the interviews, and provides some explicit recommendations made by the teachers for assisting pre-service teachers to acquire the skills necessary to teach from a values-based perspective.

Importance of Reflection

Based on what the teachers had witnessed of pre-service teachers during practicum experiences, the teachers reported that pre-service teachers needed to further develop their reflection skills. They noted that pre-service teachers often did not adequately reflect on their lessons and teaching practices, and were sometimes resistant to change their lesson plans in the face of observations and recommendations made by their supervising teacher. These beliefs are echoed in the following statements:

A lot of prac students, you have to really go where's your reflection? And realistically that should really guide their planning for the following week. Not those students that say I've done my four weeks of planning, and you're like, well that could change? (Teacher 1, School A)

I remember being a prac student and I'd be upset if I didn't follow my lesson plan. But it's about being reflective even continuously. The entire time through. I think that's a big part. They do all these assignments and things, but the reflection bit should be a really big part of it. Like the end of every week guides the next week and things like that. (Teacher 3, School A)

The teachers agreed that reflection was necessary in order to teach from a values-based perspective, and that the practice of reflection enhanced their teaching. The teachers argued that reflection is a fundamental part of values-based education and pre-service teachers must be taught how to reflect effectively. In addition, teachers noted that students must engage in reflection to develop their own values and it is therefore integral that teachers model engaging in this practice. The teachers suggested that reflection should be taught to pre-service teachers throughout their entire education program and should be a fundamental part of their assessment.

Reflecting on own values

The teachers felt that while pre-service teachers should reflect on aspects of their teaching, they must also be taught to reflect on their own values and the ways in which these impact on their teaching practices and pedagogy. One teacher noted, “*You’ve [pre-service teachers] got to start to become aware of your own values*” (Teacher 1, School B). The teachers felt that they had learnt more about their own values whilst engaging in values-based education, and that they had not done enough exploration in this area during their pre-service teacher education programmes.

I think teaching values has given me a chance to sit and talk and reflect about teaching which is not something I did throughout my teaching degree. (Teacher 2, School C)

The other thing that’s really important in values education is the teacher’s own personal values. Pre-service teachers need to be led through a process of figuring out what their values are. (Teacher 1, School B)

You have to show [the students] that you’re reflective yourself, and if you’re not terribly reflective, you will become more reflective if you do this [values-based teaching] properly. (Teacher 1, School C)

Modelling and guiding

The behaviours a teacher models to students in the classroom sends powerful messages about what is and is not acceptable ways of behaving. For example, “*everything you do in the classroom shows your values. I’m not sure what a classroom would look like if you weren’t doing it [values education] subtly all the time*” (Teacher 2, School B). Students learn a lot by watching how teachers behave, and teachers who expect students to demonstrate values that they themselves are not portraying (e.g., fairness, kindness, respect) will encounter resistance and misbehaviour in the classroom. An awareness of one’s own values allows teachers to consciously demonstrate desired behaviour to students, and articulate why certain ways of being may be more constructive than others.

The teachers stated that it is essential that teachers share and explain their behavioural expectations to students through explicit discussion, guidance and modelling. They argued that teachers can only do all of this effectively if they engage in continual reflection about what they expect from their future students and whether their own teaching behaviour demonstrates this and is likely to procure this result. For instance:

Your expectations of a student, they have to be able to see it. I’ve noticed that going from upper school to lower school and I’m like I’ve told them to be quiet every day and they just won’t be quiet. Then all of a sudden you’re like okay, what is quiet? They have to be able to see it and hear it and even in the upper school, before you have any expectations, it has to be laid out and modelled and discussed. (Teacher 3, School A)

It’s about guiding and about offering opportunity. But it’s certainly about modelling, it’s certainly about the consistent approach and the consistent follow through. (Teacher 1, School B)

Reflecting with peers and colleagues

The teachers identified that in their own journey of undertaking values-based education, they had learnt an enormous amount about their own teaching and their own values through engaging in discussions with other teachers.

The more you get teachers sharing their own experiences and teachers learning and participating in professional development and talking about things, sometimes their own values begin to change or they begin to be really able to articulate their values. And I think that comes through in their teaching. (Teacher 1, School B)

They felt that pre-service teachers should be encouraged to create communities with each other where they focused on learning about values-based teaching and exploring their own teaching pedagogy through a values lens. In addition, pre-service teachers should engage other teaching professionals in these discussions.

So to work in a, basically developing a values community of pre-service teachers all talking about it and to be supported by teachers and other educators who operate with a values focus would be really valuable. (Teacher 1, School C)

Common language – Model of Values to Teach from

All teachers stated that discussion around values-based teaching would be enhanced by having a model to follow and common language available to frame the conversations. One teacher commented that asking teachers, particularly new or pre-service teachers, to go out and do values-based education without any model to follow would likely lead to failure. All teachers discussed that the professional development in values-based teaching they had done, and for some of them, the values-based program they had loosely followed, had enabled them to maintain the values focus across their teaching.

I actually think that if [you gave pre-service teachers a] model, that would be a great way to get pre-service teachers into it because it would be getting them to be looking at the units of work and making them have a values focus. (Teacher 2, School B)

I think [they need a] model, I think having a model brought a lot of clarity to us, I think that would be reasonable, to teach them a model, for pre-service teachers to take with them in their bag of tricks because at least then it gives them some explicit language to begin with, with the kids. (Teacher 1, School C)

The teachers at one particular school, which taught Philosophy in the Classroom, outlined a very structured model that all teachers in their school followed and how useful this was. All teachers mentioned the need for a common language to discuss values with fellow teachers and students as being integral to their success with values-based education. Having such a language meant teachers and students could engage in values-based discussions and explore and understand expectations. The teachers argued that pre-service teachers needed to be armed with a values-based education model so that they could adopt a common language with which to discuss values with their fellow pre-service teachers and future students.

Developing Connections within the School Community

Creating a commonly shared dialogue around values-based education enables pre-service teachers to establish connections that support their values focused teaching. Teachers argued that effective values-based education can only occur when teachers have developed connections with other teachers, students, schools and the wider community. It was argued that one of the key elements in values-based education is to teach children that they are connected to others and that their choices impact on other people and the world. Teachers can only teach this to students by living this reality in their teaching. The teachers felt that pre-service teachers should have access throughout their teacher education programmes to community groups and organisations that offer support and assistance to families in order to help pre-service teacher's develop and reflect on their own values. The suggestion was also made that first-year teachers would benefit from having a mentor or teaching partner.

Just the most important thing is developing connections, so developing connections between you and the students and developing connections between you and the parents to have an understanding of where the kids come from, having connections with you and other staff members so you can share their experience, having connections with the community so you can share their resources and collective knowledge, maybe that idea that you're not, no longer can you stand as a teacher in a classroom in isolation because the world isn't like that anymore. (Teacher 1, School C)

Creating a Democratic Classroom Environment

Democratic classrooms are characterised by students being engaged "citizens" with a voice in their own learning (Frieberg, 1996). The teachers in the current study argued that effective values-based education can only occur when students are encouraged to take ownership of their learning and their behaviour. As such, the teachers highlighted that pre-service teachers must be willing to adopt a democratic teaching style in the classroom. For example,

Pre-service teachers need to let go a little and trust that the students will take responsibility for their learning and behaviour if given the chance. You need to create a democracy in your classroom where students are encouraged to engage and be responsible. (Teacher 1, School B)

To this end, teachers and students make decisions together around learning, assessment and appropriate behaviour. The teachers felt that the pre-service teachers they had supervised struggled to uphold the principles of a democratic classroom as they were too curriculum driven.

Pre-service teachers are very focused on content because they are trying to get their head around syllabuses, the Essential Learning's and assessing outcomes. They might design a unit of work but they are not looking at the bigger picture. (Teacher 1, School B)

Pre-service teachers struggle between what is really important, and content. They are driven by assessment, results, curriculum and accountability [for all of these things]'. (Teacher 2, School B)

Interestingly, these comments were made by teachers who had 10 or more years teaching experience. A teacher with only six years teaching experience talked about adhering to the suggested curriculum in order to ensure she was covering essential material. This may indicate that less experienced teachers feel less confident following

their instincts moment by moment in the classroom, and prefer to follow their set lesson plans without deviation. With time, experience and practice, teachers may become more willing to allow students greater flexibility in their learning and their outcomes.

I think confidence is a big thing too. It takes time to get that confidence, to feel that I can trust my gut, I can know what's going on. (Teacher 1, School C)

Making Learning Authentic

The teachers highlighted that a key benefit of values-based education is that it requires the teacher to make the learning authentic for the students. For learning to be transformative, it must change the way in which students act on and understand the world. They noted that pre-service teachers need to spend more time examining what the value is in what they are teaching. They wanted new teachers to be reflective of the ways in which the teaching they were doing would actually enhance, shape and change the lives of their students. In addition, they wanted pre-service teachers to understand that they did not teach units of work in isolation, but rather that all learning was connected and meaningful. For students to receive real value from their learning, they argued that students must engage in experiences that were authentic.

[Teachers need to] give students the opportunity to actually live and breathe what they are learning, and to make mistakes doing it, and to reflect on it'. (Teacher 2, School A)

[The content the teacher is teaching] has far greater impact on the students when it is personalised and authentic to the students'. (Teacher 1, School A)

[Pre-service teachers need to] understand that good teachers don't teach one lesson. Even if you've written down maths, it's not a singular thing you teach. All our lessons are so multipurpose, you take in so many things. And that's what keeps the kids interested. (Teacher 1, School B)

[Teachers] need to look at the big picture and ask 'why are we teaching what we are teaching?' What is the point of all of this?' (Teacher 2, School B)

Emphasis on Essential Skills

The teachers felt that there were particular skills, essential for teaching with a values focus, which should be emphasised in pre-service teacher education programs. These included questioning skills, listening skills and the ability to recognise difference in the classroom and differentiate learning accordingly.

Questioning and listening skills

The teachers felt that questioning was a key way in which teachers helped their students discover their values. The way teachers ask questions will greatly impact the response they receive from students. One teacher noted that, *'the ability to ask open-ended questions is a skill which pre-service teachers must develop'* (Teacher 2, School B). In addition, the participants in the study felt that pre-service teachers must ask questions that encourage them to learn more about their students in order to engage them in a meaningful way. They argued that teachers must listen to their students and use what they hear to help construct learning experiences that are relevant to the lives of their students. Further, the teachers felt that by really listening to their students teachers could

show that they really cared about the students and what was happening in their lives. They felt that pre-service teachers, due to the pressures imposed on them with curriculum and assessment matters, often forgot why they were teaching in the first place. They argued that working hard to develop meaningful connections with students by listening to them and their ideas would lead pre-service teachers to remember why they chose teaching as a profession.

They need to listen to the kids and work with the kids – that’s part of being – you’ve got to be flexible enough. (Teacher 1, School B)

It’s the same with the questioning. [Pre-service teachers] need to be able to delve that little bit deeper and be more accepting of the answers. (Teacher 2, School B)

Recognition of diversity within the classroom

The teachers felt that many pre-service teachers struggled with differentiating their instruction for diverse students in their classes. Some teachers felt that this was due to a lack of awareness that pre-service teachers had about child development, and what was expected of children at certain ages. The teachers acknowledged that while some pre-services teachers appeared to know about catering for different learning styles, and could espouse ideas such as Gardner’s theory of Multiple Intelligences, they were unable to successfully implement these theories in the classroom. The teachers argued that values-based education could only occur when teachers valued each child as an individual. To do this teachers must recognise and cater for all different learning styles and abilities, and be able to pick up why a child may not be engaging and/or learning.

[Pre-service teachers] don’t seem to know the difference between being on task and children that need to be able to fiddle and move to stay on task. They need to recognise children’s different learning styles and realise that not everybody can sit and watch and have their eyes glued on you. That’s not being a good teacher. (Teacher A, School B)

[Pre-service teachers need to understand] the different learning styles, how to pick up how that child is not – why that child’s not learning. I know [they do] the Gardner stuff – but they aren’t really taught what to do with it. (Teacher B, School B)

Yeah, so talking about if you, you know the buzz word is differentiation in the classroom, so you might do that by looking at multiple intelligences or by tiering tasks for different children’s abilities, but what it’s really saying is that you value the individual, by teaching in a particular way. (Teacher B, School C)

Discussion

In recent years, there has been a surge of research interest in the connection between quality teaching and successful student outcomes. Research suggests that a values-based education assist students and teachers in developing a deeper moral, personal and social awareness as well as increased cognitive, metacognitive, and reasoning skills (Nielsen, 2005). The outcomes of such research has led to an examination of the quality of teacher education programmes (Zumwalt & Craig, 2005). Levine (2006) argued that pre-service teacher education is a crucial link in producing quality teachers, indeed “the quality of tomorrow will be no better than the quality of our teacher force”(p. 11). The aim of this study was to gain

insight into teachers' perceptions of the skills required for pre-service teachers to effectively teach from a values-based perspective.

A major finding of the present study was that teachers viewed teaching from a values-based perspective as requiring an ongoing commitment to continual learning, critical reflection and growth, both personally and professionally. Schön (1983) used the term 'reflective practice', focusing on the ways in which people think about their experiences and formulate responses as they happen ('thinking on your feet', which he called 'thinking in action') as well as afterwards ('thinking on action'). In teaching, reflective practice occurs at all stages of the teaching process. The process of reflecting allows teachers to critique, challenge and change their own teaching choices, and become aware of the 'hidden values' that may be operating when they teach. Previous research (see Floden & Klinzing, 1990; Henderson, 1992; Koop & Koop, 1990) has also found that developing a deeper understanding of yourself and your own values is an important foundation for becoming a quality teacher and that a reflective teacher is in a better position to assist their students to learn. According to McInerney and McInerney (2010) self-awareness offers teachers the opportunity to make more informed and beneficial choices for themselves and their students, and means that teachers can explain their teaching choices and model valued behaviours to their students to enhance student cooperation and understanding.

The teachers in the present study advocated a continued emphasis and detailed discussion about reflective teaching throughout pre-service education programmes. It is not sufficient for pre-service teachers to merely have the skills of reflection but they must be able to convey their pedagogical knowledge, and how it translates into practice, to others. As a reflective teacher, pre-service teachers need to devote time to thinking about the types of knowledge and skills students with diverse needs in a democratic society need to learn, and the kind of classroom atmosphere and teaching techniques that are likely to enhance individual student engagement and learning, rather than focusing on designated curriculum and assessment.

The teachers also observed that pre-service teachers during practicum heavily focused on curriculum content and the reasons for the lesson are sometimes forgotten. This finding is not surprising. In the early years of teaching, pre-service teachers prefer to rely on designated curriculum to guide their lesson planning as they often lack the confidence to modify the curriculum according to student needs (Jimenez-Silva, Olson, & Jimenez Hernandez, 2011). They may also hold the view that an effective teacher is one who has a good content knowledge in terms of curriculum and good pedagogical content knowledge (Masters, 2009). This view has been reinforced with the introduction of National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) in Australia in 2008 - a federally administered test on reading, writing, language conventions and numeracy annually for children in grades 3, 5, 7 and 9 in which teachers are held accountable for students' test results. Research however, (see for example Abrams & Madaus, 2003; David, 2011; Goldberg, 2004) has demonstrated that there is considerable narrowing of information and educational experiences for students as more and more teachers simply 'teach to the test'. In such an environment, the content of the tests essentially become the learning goals (David, 2011), rather than the creation of a democratic and authentic learning environment that focuses on the holistic development of the student.

It is for this reason that pre-service teachers should be encouraged to engage in dialogues with other teachers to enhance their development as a teacher. Farrell (1998) pointed out the need for outside input to ensure that reflection on teaching experience goes beyond simple description. Reflection is a largely solitary activity and it is therefore important for pre-service teachers to discuss their ideas and concerns with other colleagues, students and parents and the wider school community to gain alternative view points and

perhaps different courses of action (Snowman & Biehler, 2006). It is also likely that teacher confidence will grow through self-reflection and the opportunity to collaborate with other teachers.

It would seem however, that pre-service teacher programs do not place enough emphasis on becoming a reflective practitioner in which pre-service teachers analyse their lessons, what they did and why, and how they might improve learning for their students. Pre-service teachers may spend very little time exploring their own values that underpin the lessons they create and learning activities they choose. As such, they may fail to make connections between what they are teaching students and the bigger philosophies, ideals and values that are being advocated. Academic educators need to systematically review the units comprising teacher education programs to determine the values that underpin their units, so that they can explicitly teach from a values-based perspective. In doing so, they create an opportunity where they can reflect on their own values positions with their pre-service teachers and encourage them to do the same.

Finally, the present study suggests that skills such as questioning, listening and recognition of student diversity are essential when teaching from a values-based perspective. Actively listening to students and their responses to questions allows the teacher to make accurate inferences about students themselves and their learning (Woolfolk, 2007). It also helps forge a strong relationship with students so that students feel they can be open with the teacher (Miller, 2007). Furthermore, pre-service teachers need to take into account not only what they are teaching, but also who they are teaching. Every classroom comprises students of different learning needs and abilities (Scott & Spencer, 2006). A pre-service teacher can only attend to students needs if they take the time to reflect on their own teaching and create curriculum and instruction that is student, rather than teacher focused (Woolfolk, 2007).

Conclusion

In conclusion, the teachers in the present study provided an insider's perspective of what pre-service teachers need to know in order to be effective at values-based education. These teachers suggest that being a reflective practitioner is important for a number of reasons including: the modelling teachers express in the classroom, consistency between spoken ideals and behaviour, the ability to respond sensitively and compassionately to their students and their ability to engage students in meaningful and thought provoking learning experiences. These findings support current literature that advocate pre-service teachers becoming reflective practitioners. Furthermore, the present study suggests skills such as questioning, active listening and recognising and supporting diverse student needs are essential if teachers are to teach effectively with a values focus.

It does take time and experience to become an effective teacher of values-based education. It requires knowledge about the content they teach, their students, and how they might adapt curriculum materials to enhance student learning outcomes. It would seem that more experienced teachers are in an excellent position to mentor pre-service teachers as they strive to create a democratic classroom. Pre-service teachers need to be exposed to skilled others who can model the teaching 'performance' to a high standard (Mergler & Tangen, 2010). As teachers beliefs about their ability to teach effectively and form meaningful connections with their students are formed early in their teaching career (Woolfolk Hoy, & Burke-Spero, 2005), it is essential that they are mentored by experienced teachers in values education early in their degrees.

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