

TEACHER TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT: THE NEED TO INCORPORATE VALUES.

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INTRODUCTION

This paper will examine the role of values and morals in pre-service teacher education. The term 'pre-service teacher' refers to university students studying education degrees in order to become teachers. This paper will examine how the pre-service teachers' desire to assist students with moral and character development is largely not supported in an explicit way by the training they receive throughout their education degree. The reasons for training teachers in values education will be examined, and ways to incorporate this training into current education degrees will be highlighted. Finally, a short professional development program created by the author, that aimed to educate teachers on how to teach the value of personal responsibility to students, will be examined.

The range of skills teachers have in order to carry out their job depends in large part on the breadth and quality of training they received while completing their education degree at university. The education of pre-service teachers became a responsibility of universities within the last 30 years (Campbell & Sherington, 2002). The role of universities, in relation to teacher training, is to educate pre-service teachers in the ways of being a professional teacher. Therefore, universities must first draw parameters around what it means to be a teacher, and then create degrees that capture these aspects of the profession. A recent article by O'Sullivan (2005) highlighted the reasons students give for wishing to enter the teaching profession. Overwhelmingly, students mentioned their desire to make a difference in the lives of students and to help students become their biggest and best selves. Teaching is then, as Day (1994) identified, a moral process, where teachers strive to shape, challenge, and change students' understandings for the betterment of students.

WHY TRAIN TEACHERS IN VALUES EDUCATION?

Historically, schools have considered character development part of their mission. Education has been viewed for a long time as one way in which students learn to become responsible, moral people. More recently, the Australian federal government has highlighted

the need for schools to explicitly teach values education. This idea has been largely supported by parents and the wider community, who feel that education must concern itself with developing character (Zbar, Brown, Bereznicki, & Hooper, 2003). While the government's values education framework has not included the way in which individuals treat animals, this topic fits meaningfully into this framework.

CONNECTIONS BETWEEN ANIMAL AND HUMAN CRUELTY

Research has identified links between the way people treat animals and the way they treat humans (Tallichet & Hensley, 2004). While there is considerable debate in the literature about the strength and validity of these connections, recent research has provided some interesting findings. Studies that have examined the backgrounds of infamous serial killers, such as Jeffrey Dahmer and Ted Bundy, have highlighted a history of abusing, torturing, and killing animals (Lockwood & Church, 1998; Wright & Hensley, 2003). Additionally, prior acts of animal cruelty have been associated with interpersonal violence (violence caused by one person to another person) (Merz-Perez, Heide, & Silverman, 2001), and other criminal offences (Arluke et al, 1999). Recent research by Merz-Perez and Heide (2003) and Wright and Hensley (2003) demonstrated that individuals who commit earlier acts of animal cruelty as children or adolescents are more likely to be violent toward humans as adults.

Therefore it is important and valuable to examine the moral and ethical views children hold in relation to the treatment of people and animals. Research conducted by Berkowitz, Bier and Schaffer (2003) highlighted that education aimed at developing character and compassion is best taught by trained teachers who are part of the school community, than by having external experts run the programs. While teachers value their role as adults striving to make a difference in the lives of students, they must have an awareness of their own values, and be trained in how to teach and examine values and morals, before they can fulfil their desire to support and challenge students moral development (O'Sullivan, 2005; Zbar, Brown, Bereznicki, & Hooper, 2003).

PRE-SERVICE TEACHER TRAINING COURSES

Unfortunately most teacher training courses in Australia (and Britain and America) focus on acquiring the technical skills needed to become a teacher (Cummings, Harlow, & Maddux, 2007; Lovat & Toomey, 2007; O'Sullivan, 2005; Revell & Arthur, 2007). Despite the desire of pre-service teachers to transform their students' lives and the federal governments directive that schools and teachers must implement values education, the moral dimensions of teaching are still viewed as peripheral to the training of teachers (Revell & Arthur, 2007).

Largely universities, and as a result teachers, do not directly address the way society treats its human and other-animal members.

The call for teachers to explicitly teach values and morals to their students places pressure on education degrees to skill pre-service teachers in how to do so. Teachers must be able to challenge their students' beliefs and points of view by offering different perspectives and allowing students to consider the options and make informed decisions (Sims, 2004). For teachers to be able to do this, they must demonstrate advanced critical thinking skills and have strategies in place that allow them to move students forward in their thinking with compassion, patience and open-mindedness. Most importantly, teachers must have an awareness of their own moral and value-based positions, and have spent time challenging, changing and solidifying their own beliefs.

As a teacher educator, I am aware that units within education degrees do include values-based information and situations. The subjects I teach examine human development (of which moral development is a component), student diversity and inclusiveness. These subjects, like many others within the degrees, do examine notions of fairness, equity, morality and student and teacher responsibility. Students are taught to consider their own beliefs about teaching and learning and how these may impact on their teaching style. Additionally, classroom management instruction focuses on values of respect for others opinions, student cooperation, and social responsibility.

Largely education degrees do not, however, have a focus on training pre-service teachers to become aware of their own, or teach their future students about, values and morals. Often, the expression of values-laden information is done implicitly, with an expectation that the students will understand the value position being taken. For example, the examination of moral development that occurs in one subject I teach examines theories of moral development and encourages the students to consider at what stage of moral development their students may be. We do not ask students to consider and discuss their own moral positions, the value of these, or how they would shape or challenge their students' moral positions. Additionally, within the best of my knowledge, no units focus on society's treatment of animals, nor extend our examination of responsibility to people to include our responsibility to animals. As education degrees largely do not require teachers to consider how they would teach and develop morals and values in their students (Lovat & Toomey, 2007), they fail to provide pre-service teachers with strategies or resources to use if they want to educate their students about values (and from the answers they provide when asked why they want to be teachers, we know they do want to do this).

In a survey of 97 Australian Year 7 and Year 10 humanities and science teachers examining how confident they felt with teaching students ethics, Verrinder (2007) found that half to two thirds of the teachers felt that they lacked effective strategies and resources for teaching students how to explore ethical issues. The study also revealed that 84% of teachers were interested in exploring ethical issues in the classroom and 70% wanted access to more resources and professional development on ethics teaching. These results indicate that while teachers are willing to explore complex issues with students, they lack the perceived confidence and ability to do so. If university education degrees do not offer pre-service teachers the opportunity to explore their own values and morals, examine the differing ways in which values education can be implemented, and provide pre-service teachers with useful resources to make this education part of classroom practice, teachers will continue to dream about transforming the lives of students, with no real skills in being able to do so. Day (1994) argues that this lack of exposure to notions of morality and values undermines the teacher's essential passion and leads to dissatisfaction with the profession and burnout.

THE WAY FORWARD

It is argued that in order to effectively develop and support students, pre-service teachers must be trained explicitly in the areas of moral development and values education. This training must take a broad focus and examine society's beliefs and assumptions about compassion toward other people, animals and our environment. As the federal government requires teachers to teach values, schools want to embrace values education, parents expect schools to develop their child's character, and teachers identify this area as a major component of why they chose the teaching profession, it seems remiss that universities are not skilling their graduates in these areas.

A number of researchers have offered suggestions as to how university education degrees could be adapted to include an examination of values and morals. Revell and Arthur (2007) argue that teachers must be trained explicitly in the areas of moral development and values education, as applied to other people, animals and the environment. In this way, specific subjects could be created that examine the moral responsibility of teachers to students, parents, colleagues, and the community. Within these subjects, pre-service teachers can debate the notion of teaching values to students and consider how this could be done effectively (Benninga, 2003). Sockett (1993) highlights that discussion, debate and analysis on moral issues and educational ethics will encourage pre-service teachers to reflect on their own positions. In doing so, they develop greater self-awareness and are more likely to be able to encourage their students to self-analyse.

University education faculties have within them experienced teachers, and other related professionals, who have experienced moral dilemmas throughout their careers. Applying these real-life examples to case studies that pre-service teachers can dissect and discuss offers them the opportunity to consider moral situations that may arise before they are actually faced with them (Benninga, 2003). In doing so, pre-service teachers can generate strategies to deal with these issues, and also be challenged on their current beliefs. It also enables pre-service teachers to appreciate that moral dilemmas will occur throughout their profession, and that these must be met head-on. If pre-service teachers feel that they can confidently resolve moral concerns that they may face, they are more likely to work with students to resolve the moral concerns students may face. In a similar vein, universities may call upon well-known moral educators (or other specialists with a moral focus) to give lectures to pre-service teachers (Benninga, 2003; Xiaoman & Culin, 2004). This allows pre-service teachers to hear from those who believe in developing morals and values in students, and to see the value in doing so. Sockett (1993) reminds us that the teaching of values should be embedded throughout all aspects of a teaching degree so it is seen as integral to good teaching. While current Australian education degrees do contain components of self-examination, morality and ethics, the piecemeal approach undermines the central importance of values in teacher training and sends a message to pre-service teachers that the teaching of academic skills to students far outweighs the teaching of character development.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

It is fundamentally important that pre-service teachers be skilled in the areas of values education in order to effectively teach values to their students. Of course, teachers who are currently in the field also need exposure to values education training. As part of my PhD research, I created and implemented an education program focused on teaching Personal Responsibility to Year 11 students. Personal responsibility was viewed as the willingness of students to hold themselves accountable for their choices and the personal and social outcomes that resulted. Before the program was implemented, I held a two-hour training session with the four teachers who would be implementing the program. The content of the program included teaching students to analyse their current beliefs about personal responsibility, their awareness of their emotions, their feelings around the rights they have and the responsibilities inherent in these rights, and their understandings of their wider responsibilities to their families, communities, and the world.

While all teachers felt reasonably comfortable with the content of the program, they all wanted reassurance that they would be able to teach the program effectively, and they asked for many examples of ways to discuss the ideas with students. I offered to come into each class over the 10-week period of implementation and co-teach with the teachers, and each teacher enthusiastically accepted this support. All teachers were concerned that the students may not be open to learning about values and morals, and that the students would not take the content seriously. Despite this, the teachers embraced the program as they liked that it encouraged students to examine the responsibility they have for their choices and the consequences of these choices. The teachers appeared energised by the program and willing to teach it.

The teachers ran the program over a 10-week period. After the program had been completed, I sat down with the teachers and discussed their perceptions of how the program had gone. The teachers commented that:

- they were surprised by the students' willingness to engage, share and think;
- they were surprised at their own willingness to share personal stories with their students, and the benefits that came from doing this;
- they felt that they had made meaningful connections with their students;
- they felt that the students had made meaningful connections with each other.

The teachers commented that they enjoyed teaching the program as they felt that they were helping the students become better people. They were grateful for a resource that offered them strategies and activities specifically designed to allow them to connect with their students on a deeper level, and discuss issues of morality and values. From my own observations, the teachers appeared confident in their interactions with students. I noticed that some teachers did struggle with opening up to students in relation to sharing personal stories and viewpoints. Those teachers who were able to do this received the most out of the program. Teachers send powerful messages to students through what they do in the classroom, and the discussions they will and will not engage in. Educating teachers through university degrees that incorporate values at every level would enable teachers to see that everything they do in the classroom provides an opportunity for the modelling of compassionate values.

CONCLUSION

The teaching of values and the development of character are becoming more important in Australian schools. Schools and teachers are keen to implement values-based education (Zbar, Brown, Bereznicki, & Hooper, 2003). Others with vested interests in the education of students, such as parents and the wider community, believe that core values should be taught in schools (Zbar, Brown, Bereznicki, & Hooper, 2003). Importantly, teachers desire the role of shaping, challenging and changing the lives of students for the better (O'Sullivan, 2005). Therefore it is imperative that universities revamp their education courses to include a focus on values – enabling pre-service teachers to examine their own values and morals, and enhancing their ability to teach their students to examine their values and morals. In doing so, universities will assist pre-service teachers in meeting their most fundamental goal – the ability to make a difference in the lives of students.

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Q – Delegate:

I'm a first year education student at QUT. And firstly, I'd like to say that I'm incredibly sad that I've just found out that I'm going to go through the next three years with no humane education training—but are there any academics at our school who are actively pushing for inclusion of a unit? Or even, an inclusion in a part of a unit in this field? Because I think it's incredibly important, and it is part of the reason why I got into education?

Yes, there is me! And I have other academics coming on board. I think, largely, it's not just QUT that is lacking, let me tell you that. Most universities don't offer any real examination of values, humane education, any of that stuff, and it's terribly lacking; it's an enormous oversight. It's like Terry Lovat was saying yesterday – why did we ever not think that we needed to know this stuff and that we could teach students without this stuff? QUT, and other universities, teach about values implicitly, through their modelling, and it is happening throughout the curriculum in an implicit way. What we need to do is make this awareness and values focus more explicit.

So, I am in the process— and it really has come simply out of this symposium and being asked to be a part of it, of talking with people at QUT about how can we embed values and humane education into our curriculum for our teachers, because it is fundamental. So I'll keep you posted. Hopefully it will happen, and it will happen somewhat soon! But we'll see!

Q – Delegate:

The RSPCA does attend QUT with the Veterinary Association and the Pet PEP program at least once a year to lecture the final year students. So it's a little bit ad hoc and tacked on the end at present, but they are waving the flag out there, and that's built up a kind of opportunity for us to go to other

graduate programs at the universities around Queensland, just speaking about what's available. And that's a fantastic opportunity as well. Being built into the course would be great, but at the moment, we are tacking it on the end!

And I would love to talk with people like you, and other people here, about ways in which we can actually embed it, instead of just having it piecemeal.

Q – Delegate:

The Animal Welfare League (AWL) of Queensland has a close relationship with Griffith University on the Gold Coast where the social science training teachers actually come to the AWL League every year, en masse, i.e. many groups of them. And we also go to the campus and present lectures as well. That is due to the initiative, really, of Dr Juliet Goldman, who's also very interested in that area.

Q – Delegate:

I wonder if there's a chance that it could become part of professional development, because obviously there are teachers teaching now who could benefit from this type of training. And so, would there be potential for it to become part of professional development around the country, and then maybe, we could steal it from you, in New Zealand!?

I'm sure there is potential for that, absolutely. And it's just a matter of getting that up and running and started. But that's also something, yes, that we can think about and look into, for sure. Because, that's right, the teachers who have already left have left.

Q – Delegate:

Representing the World League for Protection of Animals, I am not involved with education in university or schools and so my question is not necessarily directed to Amanda but maybe to all educators here. I notice that a lot of effort is put into educating children, young people and children. Effort is also made to train people who are involved with industries involving animals – so in veterinary practice or people who are producing animals for food. But where do I find education for the general public? For people who are not children or not using animals in their profession? Although I acknowledge that children are our future, what about today? I am involved with so many cases of animal abuse by adults, and not because they actually are cruel people, but they simply do not know.

It's probably not a question I can answer, but animal advocate people in the room, where can we source more information?

Q – Delegate:

I'll respond from the AWL. It's interesting that you actually bring that point up, because we're in the process of developing some adult education programs that are going to be facilitated through us in our new education centre. And hopefully, that will go a little bit of the way to fill that gap, because it is area that we see is lacking, and we need to get out there and educate adults as well that are interested in learning more about the topic.

Q – Delegate:

As a linguist I would like to know if there are any synchronicities between what you want to achieve and what you might call critical literacy training for both teachers and training teachers i.e., to do critical literacy with their students? Do the students who are learning to be teachers also learn what I would call critical literacy skills, which is how to deconstruct meanings about values in conversations, texts, films, all sorts of cultural artefacts? If they aren't learning that, then they could be learning it as part of their values education curriculum, or at least, you could try and work with the people who are teaching that who might not be in your faculty as a way of getting some of the same stuff done in a crowded curriculum?

Yes, absolutely. And it's very important that we do that, that we don't add on to the curriculum; that we have to work across, smartly, with other people. And one of the things we're doing at QUT in the Education Faculty at the moment is building connections between the different schools, because there are four different schools and we often don't know what other people are doing. So we are working on doing that. And yes, I'm sure we could absolutely marry those two things. And that's the kind of thing we're going to have to start doing, if we seriously want to bring values education and humane education into part of the curriculum.

Q – Delegate:

A course by David Selby in the UK was offered as a professional development for teachers. It was under term 'global education' but had a module on humane education, which is unique. Perhaps the only other place where it is offered is Canada.

It's something I'm not sure about in an international context, but that would be something we would also want to find out about before we go implementing humane education courses, i.e. what is happening elsewhere.
